

A Study of the Historical Background of Khwaja Tajuddin in Kashan

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

Kashan is one of the most important cultural and historical cities in Iran with many magnificent cultural monuments and important religious buildings, some of which have now been destroyed, and no trace of them is left. The historical and cultural complex of Khwajeh Taj al-Din is one of the most important buildings in Kashan, next to the Agha Bozorg Mosque, whose initial works dated back to the Seljuq era, but its ceilings dated back to the Mongol Ilkhanid period. This complex includes a mosque, a school, a minaret, a water tank, a khaneqah, a bathhouse, a passage, a caravanserai, and a tomb, of which only two symmetrical brick domes and other small parts are left. Khwaja Tajuddin Shirvani and his two other brothers, Khwaja Emaduddin Mahmud and Khwaja Zeinuddin, were prominent figures of the Aq Qoyunlu era in the ninth century. They built important buildings such as this mausoleum and khaneqah in Kashan, which has played an important role in the education of Islamic scholars and scientists for centuries. This research has attempted to examine this complex as part of the rich cultural history of Kashan in the past, using a historical interpretive method, based on field research and studies, and referring to documents and evidences, as well as historical evidence. There is not much information about it, although it was very important not only in terms of its antiquity but also in terms of its fame and prestige in its era. The results showed that this historical complex, which is nearly seven hundred years old, has a shrine, seminary, cistern, khanqah, bathhouse, passage and has been renovated in different periods, and the architectural features of the Ilkhanid, Safavid, and Qajar eras can be seen there. Also, its poems, paintings, calligraphy, and stone inscriptions are of special historical and cultural value. In other words, this research has tried to revive a part of the ancient history of Kashan.

Introduction

With a rich cultural, historical and civilizational history of seven thousand years, Kashan has played a major role in the intellectual, cultural, economic, and political development of Iran. The magnificent historical and cultural monuments of this city such as the Sialk Hills, the Fin Garden, fire temples and historical buildings, as well as the scholars and scientists who emerged from it such as Ghiyath-ud-Din Jamshid Kashani, are evidences of this claim. The history of the Khwaja Tajuddin complex, according to the inscription installed by the Cultural Heritage Administration in front of the complex, dates back to the Seljuq and Ilkhanid (Mongol) eras. For centuries, it has been a scientific and cultural base and currently operates as a tourist complex alongside the historical and cultural complex of Mohammad Saleh Beig and the Agha Bozorg Mosque. Currently, a number of its components, including the holy tomb, bathhouse, and cistern, remain while the rest have been destroyed due to the passage of time and the occurrence of some natural disasters such as the earthquake of 1192 AH. The geographical location and the special cultural and religious atmosphere prevailing in the city have caused its people to pay special attention to the construction of religious and cultural buildings; as Kashan has been famous for building schools and carrying out cultural activities since the Seljuq era. Although this complex, dating back to the Ilkhanid period, is older than the Agha Bozorg Mosque and Madrasa, it has not been as famous as the Agha Bozorg Mosque and Madrasa, according to historical documents.

Materials and Methods

Despite the large number of foreign tourists, the historical and cultural complex of Khawjeh Taj al-Din has unfortunately not been described properly and has perhaps remained hidden from the eyes of many people of Kashan and its literature and culture. Therefore, this study examined not only the various characteristics and dimensions of this complex but also its religious, cultural, social, and historical functions of the aforementioned complex. However, given that there are few reliable written sources and documents left about the age of this complex, this study tried to determine and confirm the age of the complex by conducting field research and using oral sources and the expertise of cultural heritage experts, including Mr. Helli.

Results and Findings

The findings of the research, according to the book, *The History of Kashan*, showed that three of the noble ministers of Jahanshah, Khwaja Emad al-Din Mahmud, Khwaja Zein al-Din, and Khwaja Taj al-Din, resigned from their positions and set off on a pilgrimage. On the way, they met the late Sheikh Mansour, the late Imam of the Friday prayer of Kashan, and settled in Kashan. Emad al-Din built the Emadi Mosque; Khwaja Zein al-Din built the Minaret of Zein al-Din, and Khwaja Taj al-Din built two high domes, a minaret, and a mosque in his name at the tomb of one of the descendants of the Imam and several judges who were in the line of Abu Dhar Ghaffari. Apparently, the proximity of the tomb and its components, such as the khaneqah and the burial place of the two Imamzades (the descendants of Imams), had a significant impact on its development. Based on field research and interviews with local elders, in the late Qajar era, the building was again neglected destroyed, but

with the efforts of the city's scholars and mystics, especially Mulla Mohammad Hassan Natanzi, it was restored. According to a document from 1304 AH, the guardianship of the ruined school of Khwaja Taj al-Din requested the religious ruler of Kashan, Hajj Mulla Mohammad Hussein Natanzi Kashani (d. 1322 AH), to prevent further destruction of the monument by appointing a guardianship. The aforementioned letter states that in the past two hundred years, when there were no new schools in Kashan, this school was in operation. Its endowments were confiscated by all people and it was completely out of use. There are also two tombs on either side of the school, the first of which is related to the two Imamzadehs (the descendants of Imams) and the second is related to the Khanaqah and burial place of Haji Mulla Mohammad Hassan. These two tombs were also destroyed and ruined.

Conclusion

The findings show that Kashan, with its rich culture and history, has many magnificent monuments and buildings, which have unfortunately been destroyed due to the passage of time and natural disasters. One of these important historical buildings is the Khwajeh Taj al-Din complex next to the Agha Bozorg Mosque, whose initial works date back to the Seljuq era, but its ceilings date back to the Ilkhanid era. This complex includes a mosque, a school, a minaret, a cistern, a khanqah, a bathhouse, a passage, a caravanserai, and a tomb, of which only two symmetrical brick domes and other small parts are left. The great families of Kashan such as Feyz, Naraqi, Natanzi were among the teachers and graduates of the Khwajeh Taj al-Din school. One of the most important features of the complex is to recognize the characteristics and architectural style of Kashan's historical buildings and the characteristics of the Seljuq and Mongol eras. However, based on the genealogy of the two Imamzadehs buried there and the text of the endowment, obtained from the Majlis Bahr al-Ansab, the original architecture of the building seems to belong to the early centuries of the Hijri; but currently, there is no trace of this type of architecture in the complex. Of course, the complex also has scientific, cultural, economic, health-therapeutic, welfare, and recreational functions. Therefore, this study tried to record complete information about this collection, so that this valuable historical and cultural heritage will be remembered to evoke the cultural richness of Kashan region.

Keywords: Agha Bozorg Mosque, endowments, history of Kashan, Khwajeh Taj al-Din collection, neighborhood, seminaries.