

Jagat Gosain

Jagat Gosain (Persian: جگت گوسین‎; died 19 April 1619) meaning 'Mistress of the World',^[1] was Empress consort of the Mughal Empire as the wife of Mughal emperor Jahangir and the mother of his successor, the fifth Mughal emperor Shah Jahan.^{[2][3]} She is also known as **Jodh Bai**^{[4][5]} and was given the posthumous title of **Bilqis Makani**^{[6][7]}

By birth, she was a Rajput princess of Marwar (present-day Jodhpur) and was the daughter of Raja Udai Singh (popularly known as *Mota Raja*), the Rathore ruler of Marwar.^{[8][9]}

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Family

Known most popularly as **Jodh Bai**,^[10] the Jodhpur princess,^[11] Jagat Gosain belonged to the Rathore clan of Rajputs and was a daughter of Raja Udai Singh,^[5] the ruler of Marwar (present-day Jodhpur).^[12] Udai Singh was popularly known by the sobriquet *Mota Raja* (the fat king).^[13] Her grandfather was Maldeo Rathore,^[14] under whose rule Marwar turned into a strong Rajput Kingdom that resisted foreign rule and challenged the invaders for northern supremacy. Maldeo Rathore refused to ally with either the Sur Empire or the Mughal Empire after Humayun regained control of North India in 1555. This policy was continued by his son and successor Chandrasen Rathore.^[15]

After the death of Maldeo Rathore in 1562, a fratricidal war for succession started and Chandrasen crowned himself in the capital Jodhpur. But his reign was short lived as Emperor Akbar's army occupied Merta in the same year and the capital Jodhpur in 1563.^[16]

After the death of Rao Chandrasen in January 1581, Marwar was brought under direct Mughal administration. In August 1583, Akba restored the throne of Marwar to Udai Singh, who, unlike his predecessors, submitted to the Mughals and subsequently joined the Mughal service.^[16]

Marriage to Jahangir

Jagat Gosain



17th century portrait of Jagat Gosain

Tenure	3 November 1605 - 19 April 1619
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Born	13 May 1573 Jodhpur
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Died	19 April 1619 Agra, Mughal Empire
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Burial	Suhagpura, Agra
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Spouse	Jahangir
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Issue	Begum Sultan Shah Jahan
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Dynasty	Rathore
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Father	Udai Singh of Marwar
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Religion	Hinduism
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After submitting to the Mughals, Udai Singh decided to give his daughter Jagat Gosain in marriage to Akbar's eldest son, Prince Salim. Certain other Rajput nobles did not like the idea of their kings marrying their daughters to the Mughals as they considered it a sign of humiliation and degradation. As a result, Kalyandas Rathore of Siwana threatened to kill both Udai Singh and Prince Salim. Akbar, in return, ordered the imperial forces to attack Kalyandas at Siwana. Kalyandas died fighting along with his men and the women of Siwana committed Jauhar (the Hindu custom of mass self-immolation by women).^[17]

Jagat Gosain married the 16 year-old Prince Salim (later known as 'Jahangir' upon his accession) on 26 June 1586. Although the marriage was a political one, Jagat was known not only for her beauty and charm but for her wit, courage, and spontaneity of response - all of which greatly endeared her to her husband during the early years of their marriage.^[18] In 1590, she gave birth to her first child, a daughter, named Begum Sultan, who died at the age of one.^[19] On 5 January 1592, she gave birth to Salim's third son, who was named 'Khurram' ("joyous") by his grandfather, the Emperor Akbar. The prince, who was to become the future emperor Shah Jahan, was Akbar's favourite grandson and in the words of Jahangir "was more attentive to my father [Akbar] than all [my] children... He recognized him as his own child."^[10]



Portrait of Jagat Gosain

Just prior to Khurram's birth, a soothsayer had reportedly predicted to the childless Empress Ruqaiya Sultan Begum (Akbar's chief wife)^{[20][21]} that the still unborn child was destined for imperial greatness.^[22] So, when Khurram was only six days old, Akbar ordered that the prince be taken away from Jagat Gosain and handed him over to Ruqaiya so that he could grow up under her care and Akbar could fulfill his wife's wish, to raise a Mughal emperor.^[22] Jagat was consoled with a magnificent gift of rubies and pearls.^[23]

Ruqaiya assumed the primary responsibility for Khurram's upbringing and he grew up under her care.^[24] The two shared a close relationship with each other as Jahangir noted in his memoirs, that Ruqaiya had loved his son, Khurram, "a thousand times more than if he had been her own [son]."^[25] Khurram remained with her until he had turned almost 14. After Akbar's death in 1605, the young prince was allowed to return to his father's household, and thus, be closer to his biological mother.^[22] In the intervening years, Jagat had given birth to her third (and last) child in 1597, a daughter who died in infancy.^[19]

Jagat Gosain seems to have lost her husband's favour quite early on in their marriage,^[26] more so after the arrival of her arch-rival in the imperial harem, Nur Jahan, of whom Jagat was scornful. Jahangir had married her in 1611 and from the time of their marriage until his death, Nur Jahan was indisputably his most favourite wife.^[27] Even prior to his marriage with Nur Jahan, Jahangir's chief consort and Padshah Begum was his wife, Saliha Banu Begum, who held this position from the time of his accession in 1605 till her death in 1620, after which these honorable titles were passed on to Nur Jahan.^[10]

Death

Jagat Gosain died on 19 April 1619 at Agra.^[28] Jahangir noted the death briefly, saying simply that she had "attained the mercy of God." After her death, Jahangir ordered that she be called Bilqis Makani ("the Lady of Pure Abode")^[29] in all of the official documents.^[30]

She was buried in Suhagpura, Agra.^[31] Her tomb consisted of a high dome, gateways, towers and a garden situated in the cantonment area. All of this was blown up in 1832 with gun-powder, for the sake of its site and material, stone and brick, which the British needed.^[32]

In popular culture

- Jagat Gosain is a principal character in Indu Sundaresan's award-winning historical novel *The Twentieth Wife* (2002)^[33] as well as in its sequel *The Feast of Roses* (2003).^[34]
- Nayani Dixit portrayed Jagat Gosain in EPIC channel's critically acclaimed historical drama *Siyaasat* (based on the *Twentieth Wife*).

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External links

- [Jehangir and Shah Jehan](#)
- [The World Conqueror: Jahangir](#)
- [Tūzuk-i-Jahāngīrī Or Memoirs of Jahāngīr](#)

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