The Intertwinement of Maryan Nomad's Settlements with Historical Settlement of Taleshan

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Introduction

The variety of Iran's ecological structures has created many cultural landscapes. Cultural landscapes illustrate a combination of man's persistent life and the art of land modification by means of natural environment and in the form of human settlements in the past ages. Currently, the human society's development in addition to the scientific progresses, man's increasing use of resources and negative consequences of tourism development without any correct design and optimal management in natural historical areas, has led to the destruction of ecological and historical structures of cultural landscapes. The new consideration of general environmental protection has been the context for protecting biological historical areas and settlements. Natural and historical region of Talesh with special ecological characteristics is one of the most valuable and attractive areas which has settlements of 4500 years old. One of the valuable parts of Talesh cultural landscape, especially in Agh-evlar Maryan studying region of Talesh countryside near Karganrood River, is the permanent and seasonal settlements of local nomads. These settlements with special architecture, methods of utilizing local materials, correct location and particularly various times of building, have specific persistent and attract many tourists. On the other hand, the development of new constructions and villa building of surrounding cities has led to the gradual destruction of cultural landscapes of the region. Identifying these settlements and the way of their being spread by means of new technology of telemetry has created the basis for the general environmental protection of their cultural characters. In addition, the presentation of rules for developing the new buildings to match with the cultural landscape leads to stable tourism development.

Considering that cultural landscape is a combination of man, nature and history, we can conclude that all cultural landscapes have originated from nature or have been developed in nature and the continuance of their lives depends on the nature. Natural resources such as natural structure of the earth (geomorphology), groundwater structure (underground streams, springs, aqueducts) and surface water (rivers, lakes and seas), plantation structure (trees, bushes and covering plants specially the local ones), wild life, weather, climate and other natural factors make a dynamic background on which humankind changes, evolves and is permanently developing.

Materials and Method

Taking the general purpose of the study into consideration and introducing the natural historical bed and Agh-evlar Maryan cultural landscape in terms of a cultural landscape, in the process of studies, an analysis of natural bed characteristics and the historical and archeological features of the monument and works scattered throughout the plains and along Karaganrood river valley, has been carried out.

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The criteria of analysis have been identified based on the modern definitions of cultural landscape in international conventions. Due to the variety of cultural landscapes in different countries, the presence of different natural biotic variables, human and cultural resources and what has been left from ancient civilizations all over the world, the cultural landscape criteria have gradually got accomplished during several conventions.

In this study, modern technologies like satellite data processing and image analysis have been applied, in addition to field studies and environmental interpretations, together with different scientific data such as geology, botany, hydrology, hydrogeology, Tectonic, etc.

**Study area**

Special characteristics of Iran’s geographical region and the variety of its ecological structure have created many cultural landscapes. One of these valuable cultural landscapes is located in the heights of Talesh, called Taleshan. This special geographical area is located along the western coasts of the Caspian Sea, from the north of Anzali Lagoon to Kura River’s deltas and estuaries in Northern Talesh. Their western border separates from Ardabil with Talesh Mountains’ ridge. The ethnic area of Talesh begins from Gilan’s Rudbar and it elongates from Eastern Kapurchal Tamghan and Salian town to Shirvan (The Republic of Azerbaijan) encompassing the whole eastern lateral of Northern Alborz – Talesh Mountains and its coastal plains. The most important water stream of the area is Karganrood River. Talesh area has three important points in term of geographical position, influencing the formation of its settlements:

A. The foothills position and also the western mountains covered with forest, with the height of more than 10 thousand meters

B. The crossing of Karganrood River – as the biggest river of Talesh- with a permanent stream of water and rocky bed, and also, the stream of Kalfarood which flows 6 kilometers down to the Southeast, and Navrood in the distance of 7 kilometers from the east

C. The variety of area’s climates, considering its location on the skirts of Talesh Mountains on one hand, and its location on the Caspian Sea coast, on the other hand. Actually it is located in two different types of mountainous climates with cold winters and mild summers in high yaylaki parts like Agh-Oular Maryan and damp and mild climate around the low coastal parts.

Thus, the existing settlements in the area which were formed in the past centuries are created under the impacts of these conditions; in fact, they show a part of Taleshan’s culture and civilization. Currently, the form and dispersion of villages, the decampment route and Nomads’ seasonal encampment place have not changed since old times, although there have been the urbanization phenomenon which has led to the migration of villagers’ and Nomads’ to dispersed cities in coastal part. Identification and location of these settlements as a part of cultural landscapes is very important in general environmental protection of the area. Determining the geographical limits of these settlements is also significant in determining the border of cultural landscapes of natural and historical areas of Taleshan.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

Although there is an ambiguity in the date of Talesh heights’ inhabitation, it is known that the first human groups who got on these heights were the ranchers in search of fresh grasslands, who migrated from the west. Since the geographical condition did not let the ranchers stay the whole year in one range, they designed a nomadic society.

Gilan Province consists of two parts that are coast-plain and foothill-mountain in the west and the east. In its western and southern parts which are mountainous, ranching is common. This activity has always been done in a nomadic way of go and return. Because of the intimate connections between plains and mountains on one hand, and the impossibility of continuous and permanent use of heights and their skirts on the other hand and also the optical utilization of them for the ranchers because of the availability of grassland and water resources and good climatic and seasonal conditions, these people has continued their nomadic style. Nowadays, in addition to the semi-nomadic ranchers, in warm season of the year, many villagers and urban population use mountainous settlement for their pastime, and enjoy the clean and sedative air of the heights. Considering the vastness of farming activity which limits the possibility of foddering the livestock because of the lack of pasturelands, and also the plain inhabitants’ tendency...
toward heights as the first place of their settlement, the connection between plain and mountain is made through these two ways:

A. The encampment of farmers, especially the rice-planters, which begins from the last days of Khordad. Their yaylaq is located in average heights (Mianband) and they return to their permanent settlement for rice harvest in the middle of Mordad. They often use the motorway for the one-day go-and-return. This kind of encampment from rural and urban points of the area is based on the habit of escaping from warm low lands, and it is also done for passing the free time and keeping a few big livestock.

B. The encampment of ranchers in the form of semi-nomads and shepherds without doing any farm of activity which is done in qishlak, mianband and yaylak.

The qishlaki area of the nomads is located in the west of the region until the beginning of the dense forests and in summer, qishlaki villages are evacuated from population, because the nomads encamp to the heights (mianband and yaylaq) and in winter the qishlaki villages get populous again as the nomads return.

**Conclusion**

The variety of environment and human activities in this area has led to the birth of nomadic lifestyle. Although the first human groups in Talesh heights were looking for fresh grasslands, because of the particular geographical condition of the area, seasonal settlements have occurred. Also, the proficiency in ranching, natural conditions of the area, keeping and raising the livestock, rich pastures, escaping from the warm weather of low lands in summer and vice versa in winter have been the causes of persistence and survival of this phenomenon.

In general, the causes of nomadism and semi-nomadism in Talesh can be the following:

1. The need of yaylaq and mianband for getting pastures for livestock in warm seasons.
2. Past record of settlement in heights and downward motion and having fields in yaylak and mianband.
3. Existence of rich pastures in mianband and yaylaq and the need for using them.
4. Proficiency in ranching and not having the knowledge of farming and gardening activities.
5. Climatic and natural environmental conditions.
6. The old tradition of encampment.
7. Using the clean climate of mountain often with ranching especially for rice-planting ranchers.

The durability and survival of the structural form of nomadic and semi-nomadic settlements from past centuries show that how the local residents with a complete knowledge of climatic characteristics and their residences’ environmental traits have established their settlements. In addition, the remnants of their settlement in several centuries ago in comparison to the early destruction of new buildings, show the harmony of the form and the natural material retrieved from their environment and the way these materials was used for building rural and nomadic shelters and huts.

**Key words**

Ecological structures, cultural landscapes, integrated conservation, Agh evlar maryan