

Topakanloo; the biggest moving tribe in Khorasan Razavi Province

Abbasali Madih

Department of Art, University of Birjand, Birjand, Iran

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ABSTRACT

Topakanloo tribe is derived from the great tribe of Zafaranloo that at the end of 16th century and in the Safavid period were moved from an area in north of Kurdesran and west of Azerbaijan to Khorasan. Great tribe of Zafaranloo had over one hundred and thirty tribes and Topakanloo is one of its great tribes. After coming to Khorasan, Kormanj Topakanloo settled in region in north of Shirvan city and Topakanloo village has been formed in this place. At that time Topakanloos were rancher and went to summer and winter quarters. Later a tribe called Roodkanloo has been derived from Topakanloo. Overall, Topakanloo has more than ten sects and each sect is composed of ten families and each family has several households. Based on the reasons it can be predicted that all Topakanloos will be sedentary within ten future years and only shepherds with their livestock go to summer and winter quarters but more limited.

KEYWORDS: Topakanloo; Khorasan Razavi; Iran; Tribe

INTRODUCTION

Through history different views have been expressed about the Kurdish movement (Kormanj) to the land of Khorasan. But we can certainly say that the Kurds movement from West of Iran to East of the country and establishment in Khorasan has not been done in one stage and in a certain time period. But it has been done in different time stages and in different forms, such as migration and forced migration. However, it is clear that the largest motion and forced migration of Accra to Khorasan has been done in the early Safavid region, from the late 16th century and early 17th century.

There are different theories about mainland of the Kurds. But many anthropologists agree with the fact that the Kurds are combination of Mud tribes and indigenous peoples of current Kurdish areas which among them Gazanis are more important. Although later, these people were dominated by Armenians, Assyrians, Arabs, Turks, Turkoman and Iranians tribes, but they dissolve all of these tribes. However due to intensity and manner of this combination, their physical type is different [1].

Using Kurdistan name for referring to a particular geographical area became common in the sixth century and at the time of Sultan Sanjar and this area also included large areas of current Kermanshah province [2].

Long ago, the word Kurd did not necessarily refer to single ethnic or religious and linguistic group, this term is used to describe a livelihood based on pastoralist and nomadic and movement for pastures, many geographers and historians called all the non-Arab and Turkish nomads herders as Kurds. Today, from the public opinion the term Kurd represents a group of people living in the West of Iran, North West, south of Turkey and parts of Syria who have various languages and religions and introduce themselves as Kurd [3].

In any case, there is no doubt that Kurdish is an Iranian language and belongs to the group of northwestern languages of Iran [4]. Today, a great similarity is visible between Kurdish and Persian. The commonalities include similar grammatical and lexical similarity of the marks of comparative and superlative adjectives, cardinal, ordinal, and fraction plurals, noun-noun, noun-adjective, common pronouns, Infinitive marker, past participle and subject marker and etc [5].

The Kurds of Khorasan region are Kormanj. The Kormanj of Khorasan was decamped at early Safavid reign to prevent the incursion of Turkmen and Uzbek to north borders. These Kormanj Kurds were consisted of three major tribes of Zafaranloo, Shadlou and Gharachorloo.

Topakanloo tribe

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Khorasan, Kormanj Topakanloo settled in region in north of Shirvan city and Topakanloo village has been formed in this place. At that time Topakanloos were rancher and went to summer and winter quarters. Later a tribe called Roodkanloo has been derived from Topakanloo. Overall, Topakanloo has more than ten sects and each sect is composed of ten families and each family has several households.

About half of the Kormanj Topakanloos migrated from Topakanloo village near Shirvan to Sarvylayat region of Nishapur looking for new pastures for their livestock between years 1250-1300 and settled in the Shoor and Shirin gap of this region. During the Qajar dynasty and end of Pahlavi period were led by Khan and had tribal life [6].

The most prominent and most famous Khans of Topakanloo in this area were Farhad Khan Farhadi and his son Ali Mohammad Khan Farhadi and after them Reza Khan Farhadi managed this tribe until year 1978 (year of Islamic Revolution of Iran).

It should be mentioned that before year 1978, Topakanloo has had about ten sects that each sect has one doyen (older) and all with their own unregulated organization are controlled by the Great Khan (family Farhadi).

Of course the Topakanloos who did not migrate from Topakanloo village in Shirvan in past century are now living in the same place and so called sedentary. But now migrated Topakanloos to Sarvylayat region of Nishapur have been scattered in three cities of Nishapur, Sabzevar and Esfaraen and most of them have settled. However, currently, about 300 families with 400000 have a nomadic life and move to summer quarters (summer places) and winter quarters (winter places) [7].

According to the socio-economic census in 1999, Topakanloo tribe in Nishapur has a population about 306 households and 1842 people [8].

Topakanloo move to summer and winter quarters is done in several stages. At first, they move to Myanband (places between summer and winter quarters) then they move to winter quarters then they return to summer quarters. Topakanloos' summer quarter is located in the north of Nishapur city and at Klider heights, mount Mohammad Bik and Shah Jahan Esfaraen.

Myanband (area between winter and summer quarter), includes plains between Nishapur, Sabzevar and south of Esfaraen. Topakanloo winter quarter is around Bardaskan and Kashmar cities and mostly around Daroone, Anabd and Shahrabad cities. Of course a few of these people go to Feyzabad and Mahvelat towns in Torbatheidariye city as their summer quarters and also some of them go around the city of Marzadaran (Mozdooran) and margin of Khatoon bridge in south of Serakhs town.

Time and route of Topakanloo move from summer quarters to winter quarters

Topakanloos move from their summer quarters (Klilar foothills, M. Bik and Shah Jahan, in south of Binalud highlands) to Myanband (south of Nishapur) in early August and by early September, everyone with their herds arrive to Myanband. After about two months and in the early November movement to winter quarters begin. Migration from Myanband to winter quarters lasts two months and at the end of December settle in winter quarters.

Topakanloo in the Myanband south of Nishapur divide into two main branches. A few go to south (Kashmar and Bardaskan) and Mahvelat of Torbatheidariye and a group also move from the margins of Kalshoor and after passing Dizbad, Sangbast and Abrovan they go to Marzadaran and Baghbaghoo in Serakhs city and they return through this route. Movement from winter to summer quarter begins in the fifteenth to thirties of Farvardin and after about 2 months, they return to their summer quarters.

Equipment and manner of transport

It is noteworthy that now family members, including women, children and living equipments are carried by truck in direction of migration and settle in expected places in the summer quarter and Myanband and winter quarters and only shepherds with their livestock go on foot through specified directions. However, in the past about 20 years ago, camels, mules, horses and donkeys were used to carry living equipment and family member.

Camel was the main vehicle for moving family members and their equipments in the past. Camels that were used by Topakanloos were from two races: One was Arabic (Arvaneh) race which had slender and small body but were fast and another race was Bokharaei with bulging hump and the larger size in order to carry 300 kg load. In the past, Nomads travelled 20 to 30 km daily. While now, in a couple of hours families and living equipments are carried by truck.

Topakanloos' tents and housing in the summer and winter quarters

In summer and winter quarters, Topakanloos live in tents which are called Black tent. The house of nomads in Myanband and winter quarters is a combination of tents and temporary houses made of mud brick which most of them are used to keep livestock.

Most of tents are made of goat hair, felt, cloth and Tarpaulin. Tents are in various sizes and water does not penetrate to them.

Conclusion

Based on the following reasons it can be predicted that all Topakanloos will be sedentary within ten future years and only shepherds with their livestock go to summer and winter quarters but more limited:

1. Shortage of pasture due to recurrent drought in recent years
2. Increasing the value of land and pastures around the villages and towns in the path of the nomads and lack of owner's permission to grazing livestock by herders and non-native nomadic
3. Destruction of pastures to build factories and create numerous industrial estates and construction of infrastructure such as dams on the mountain pastures
4. Unwillingness of Family members of nomads especially young people to continuing mobile and nomadic life
5. The rapid growth of urbanization in the region and younger members' desire of tribe to use servicing, recreational, educational and entertainment facilities available in cities
6. Lack of planning and presenting support services, such as health insurance and retirement services by the government
7. Creating growing livestock centers (industrial and semi-industrial) [9].

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