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"THE ASCENT OF MAN"

Notes on "gypsies"

In Iran, but I particularly refer to southern Iran, gypsies are known by two terms. KULI and QORBAT.

Kuli - this has the meaning of ruffian, bothersome person, lewd.

Qorbat - while not specifically having the connotations of violence means stranger, outsider, therefore someone suspicious and potentially dangerous. It also means - homeless, wanderer.

The terms are used to some extent interchangeably, but kuli is the most common word.

Loosely connected with these two terms are two groups of people, I came across among the Bakhtiari.

Qorbat - which as I have pointed out refers to strangers generally, was a term used for a family of "sieve makers" who arrived in a tribal hamlet I was staying in. This family is one of many who are based in the villages of Fereidan, one of the administrative districts to the west of Isfahan. They are an occupational group who make and repair sieves, used in winnowing etc. The sieves are made of wood with sheep skin thongs. Every year in the autumn just before the harvesting in the summer quarters, they travel through the settled hamlets fixing sieves. Each family of qorbat has a sort of permanent relationship with specific villages, returning year after year.

Qorbat are an inferior group of people and marry amongst themselves. They are distinguished from kuli - gypsies proper, who are "ahangar" - ironworkers.

Kuli.

A pariah group in fact as is common all over the middle east. They are iron and tin workers.

I met up, just once with a gypsy family, and all my information is based on information I got from them. I have enclosed a number of photographs of them at work.

According to them, the gypsies are organised along lines similar to the tribes. They called themselves "Il Fiuj" Il means tribe.

They are internally structured, although very loosely I should think in descent groups with chiefs and sub chiefs. This group said they lived and had houses in Majid i Suleiman, and stayed there working throughout the winter. In the late spring, they migrate through the mountains in individual units and spend the summer months wandering from tribal camp to camp, hamlet to hamlet, and peasant villages, repairing and making iron and tin equipment.

I am rather vague I am afraid on their movements, but they said that they do not just stick to the Bakhtiari. Shiraz seems to be a centre of their activities and a Swiss anthropologist has told me that she came across a single group of people in Kerman who called themselves Fiu.j. I suspect this "tribe" of gypsies travels all over the south of Iran plying their trade.

No tribesmen would marry into this group. Their status is definitely inferior, as are most blacksmiths.

They identify themselves as coming from Shiraz, but before that, they or their people came from "Hindustan" - India. They look strikingly different from the Bakhtiari, with the fineness of feature one associates with Indians. The clothes they wear are much the same as the Bakhtiari except they are heavily tattooed and bejewelled.

They would appear to act as independent "clients" in spite of their reported tribal organisation, but I am sure that their organisation into large descent groups is accurate enough. At least half of the year they must spend split into these separate family units. They marry within their own group of course.

The family was camped on the edge of the tribal village I was staying in, and consisted of an old couple, their married son, and their children. They were very friendly to me, though I noticed at a local wedding going on at the time, the married son was not too welcome at the wedding dance. He was very "brightly" dressed.

Photographs 1-5 show the old man at work. The bellows used are standard hand bellows used all over the middle east. I have seen exactly the same in films from Morocco. Photo 1, shows the old lady working the hand bellows, pumped alternatively. The forge is merely a fire well stoked with wood and dung, the fire area being surrounded by stones. Once they set up their small forge in one place, they are reluctant to move too often. so the usual practice I think is to set up

Ten families I was told was enough to provide for a whole Taifeh or sub tribe.

Photos 2-5, show the old man, banging away on his tiny anvil. It is hard work, since I doubt if the temperature generated is really hot enough, but they obviously manage well enough. They do all the iron work. As far as I can make out they are the only people who do. They make axes, long pins, iron equipment for the harvesting equipment, for settled villagers etc. iron parts for riding equipment such as stirrups etc., shoes for donkeys (only the front hooves are shoed). But in fact nowadays horses are few, and I suspect only good equipment is available from the towns and cities. Bits and stirrups are not needed for pack animals, and only woven goat hair ropes are used for halters without bits etc. They also repair the iron and tin parts necessary in water mills.

See photos 6 - 10.

Photo 6. Water mill set deep within the mountains.

Photo 7. Water mill in Doab, a settled tribal hamlet.

Unlike people like the Baluchi tribesmen who carry querns and grind their wheat every day, the Bakhtiari do not. When moving etc., they carry flour. All over the mountains water mills are to be found where the tribal people can have their flour ground for a fee, usually a proportion of their wheat. The water is led along a specially built channel and then forced down a narrow wooden chute, lined if possible with tin. This constricts the flow, increasing the pressure which turns the grinding stone, see photo 8. The wooden chute in this photo is for the grain which flows down into the hole and then ground. Photo 10 shows the wooden construction with which one can regulate the speed of the grinding stone.

There are a few necessary iron parts in this process and the gypsies both make and repair them.

Gypsies do not keep sheep at all. They are paid for their labours in kind.

That is really all the information I have about the gypsies. Details of their forging techniques beyond the fact that they seem simple in the extreme I just do not have I am afraid.

### Agriculture

This is an exceedingly complicated matter, in the process of extensive changes due to the land reform programme undertaken by the Persian Government in 1962. This concerned the ownership of land. When I was in Iran the tribal population was just beginning to be affected very radically by this policy, which at that time was very ambiguously worked out concerning tribal lands. The tribal people themselves did not fully understand this programme and were under considerable stress, at one stage believing that they would lose their grazing lands if they did not put them under the plough. Not having ploughs presented them with some difficulty and the slightly hilarious night time activity of raiding for ploughs and ploughing up land in the dead of night took place.

Although the Bakhtiari are semi nomadic and have for centuries practiced minimal forms of agriculture, not all of them are in a position to make the transition from nomad to cultivator with ease.

For the first time it is becoming necessary for them to prove their traditional rights to land; not all of them can do this; and even worse many different people can produce title deeds issued by various khans in the past quite fraudulently, for the same piece of land. As far as I know the government has refused to accept the legality of any of these title deeds, preferring to accept the legality of current possession-in-use as their criteria of legality. Since life with the tribes basically consists of a variety of nefarious extra legal wangleings in which local kalantars in the past have deliberately not registered they in fact "own" in the sense of having income in rent, in kind from crop shared plots, largish tracts of arable land. Under the new reforms many of these kalantars with unregistered land have lost this land - i.e. lost the income they enjoyed from this land. Others have been more successful in avoiding this sort of thing happening.

For the ordinary tribesman land holdings tend to be small. I am sorry to harp on about the complications involved, but I'll give a very brief sketch of basic land holdings, for an average tribesman.

Winter quarters - 1. grazing land - jointly grazed by oulads, the smallest descent groups.

2. agricultural land - usually individually owned and worked by families.

- a) irrigated - for wheat. Gives higher yield.
- b) unirrigated - wheat and barley. Low yield, and completely dependent on climate.

Most land in winter quarters is unirrigated. Rains must come regularly for the crop to be successful. There are I think three rains in the winter, starting in November with the last not long before the New Year in March. Each rain is essential and if they come late, early or too heavy, or too light, then disaster can strike.

For example, one year I was there the rains came late - around the beginning of December and they came terribly heavily. This did not affect the sown wheat too much, although yields the following spring were lowish, but it had a distrous effect on the sheep. Grazing grass was non existent till the rains came, they were late which meant the sheep got very weak, especially after a very hard and arid migration back from the summer quarters. The new grass grew very fast and very lush with the heavy rains, and it was too much, apparently, for the sheep. Too rich after a very frugal four months. They all caught a flue and died in their hundreds of thousands. It was a national economic disaster and wiped out the entire flocks of thousands of tribesmen. This one late and heavy rainfall will take about seven years to be overcome - about the time it takes to build up a herd of 50-60 sheep.

It is tragic to see the capital of a person that has taken years to build up disappear over night. The nomadic equivalent of a stock market crash of the magnitude of 1929.

3. Gardens - for trees, beans, grapes etc.  
Require irrigation, Usually a stone tank is built to collect rain Water.

So again dependent on rains, but the water can be stored. Mash Barat Hajipur, the Kalantar of the Osiwands has a large garden in which he

grows tomatoes, and a successful plot of beans. Pomegranate trees, mulberries, orange and lime trees, but in 1966 lack of rain killed most of these trees.

He had a hut/house built there to protect his garden which apparently was raided a lot by neighbouring non Osiwand tribesmen. Some of his poorer relatives worked this plot for him, and were allowed to plant their own wheat and barley.

Usually the proportion of wheat to barley sown, is 5:1. Temptation for tribesmen to use low grade seed wheat which is cheaper but gives lower yields. Only the wealthier tribesmen feel able to invest in higher quality seed. The yield varies enormously from zero in a bad year to 200 seed per seed sown. Plots are measured in a number of ways, by time taken for a plough to work, by the amount of seed sown (in weight) and so on. For example, Mash Barat had a plot (one of many) which was sown with 160 mann of wheat. - 1 mann - 7 kilos. In a poor year he expected a yield of 1,000 mann - good year could be 2,500. Good seed wheat cost at the time 6/- approximately. So his outlay was about £50, and the income he was expecting from 1,000 mann of wheat for grinding came to about £250 to a maximum of £550. Mash Barats family would consume at least half of this.

I was told that a family of 9 people would need 200 mann of flour, i.e. 1,400 kilos, per annum to live on. This would be a plot of land which could carry 50 mann of seed wheat. Just under 1 hectare. Probably 50% of Bakhtiari land holdings are under 3 hectares. Mash Barats 160 mann field was about 3 hectares. Very roughly the proportion of irrigated to unirrigated land for most of the Bakhtiari would be 1:5 or less.

Summer quarters 1. Grazing land - communally owned on the higher slopes. Animals come down to valley floors and graze the stubble after the September harvest.

2. Agricultural land. Same as for winter.  
Harvesting in September.

In other words the tribes have two harvests per year.

A Bakhtiari who cultivates in both summer and winter quarters has a hard life. He makes the spring migration with his family and animals, settles them high on the slopes of the summer quarters and then the young men promptly return to the winter quarters and bring in the harvest in May. Then they come again and join their

families and flocks later in the summer. Bring in the autumn harvest in September, sow the next years seed of wheat and barley and then make the autumn migration back to the winter quarters. The leanest time of the year is the winter from December to February when stocks of everything begin to get low.

The actual pattern of agricultural activities will depend on the comparative quality of land in summer and winter quarters. Some tribes have more fertile land in the summer quarters than the winter, and vice versa. Settlement patterns depend therefore on where the best land is for agriculture. The Qandali have better land in Khuzistan, so they are settling more and more in their winter quarters. The Babadi have better land in their winter quarters so they are settling there more. The Osiwands settle in Khuzistan, largely because their summer quarters were stolen by the Khans about 50 years ago. Their winter quarters around Lali are awful, but the Oil company has water pipes which provide them with water they would not normally have, thus making settlement in Lali plain possible.

Other tribal sections think the Osiwands are in a bad way because of their difficult land situation.

Other examples. Babadi - summer quarters good, growing settlement.  
winter quarters - not such good pasture.  
They migrate even when they have no sheep.

Qand'ali - winter quarters are better. Andeka just north of Masjid -i-Suleiman is heavily settled in sizable villages. Lots of oak trees in this area and constant fights about what are called the shaking rights - who has the right to acorns. In effect a Bakhtiari can juggle how he concentrates his economic life, choosing between agriculture in summer and winter quarters and also grazing and nomadizing. It will vary from year to year. Some years he may concentrate on agriculture, rather than migrate. Not everyone migrates, not everyone migrates every year.

However the main ethic is nomadic life, so that nature of their attitudes to agriculture are primarily that of a nomadic people. It is relatively inefficient. See photograph A. The extreme bottom of this photograph shows the south side of a valley traversed by a small fast flowing river. This is grazed by nomads, and also worked agriculturally. It is unirrigated land owned and worked by a section of the Qandali. Standard practice is to leave half the land fallow for a year, so at any one time only half of the area owned by anyone nomad

is under cultivation.

The nomads bring in their autumn harvest - the photograph is of the summer pastures, then they plough the land once, sow the seed wheat and move back over the mountains to winter pastures. The result is a poor yield.

The other side of this valley is owned by a Khan, a poor member of one of the dynastic families. He lives in a small hamlet, and is an agriculturalist. He has constructed an irrigation canal and has a lot of land under irrigation. He grows wheat, barley, grapes mullberry trees, poplars and walnut trees, beans and a variety of vegetables.

Directly opposite the spot I took the photograph from are patches of wheat and barley, fields ploughed waiting for seed wheat. This is his unirrigated patch on the higher slopes. Again he leaves half his land fallow, and also practices crop rotation, growing beans on fallow land.

He is a very efficient farmer, and has high yields. He despises the tribes on the opposite side of the valley for their inefficiency, poor techniques and lack of care.

He of course is not a nomad and has no sheep to speak of.

The photographs of the water mill are from his hamlet. All the tribesmen in the area come to his mill to get their wheat ground into flour - for a fee of course.

Another nomadic technique, that is found in this valley as well as many others, is for hamlets to be left empty for half the year. Many of the tribes in this area have built houses, and the valley is dotted with tiny hamlets of 4 to 6 stone houses very rudely built, where they live for the summer, and leave empty after they have migrated back to Khuzistan. Such deserted hamlets can be seen all along the migration route. Photograph E is of a hamlet in Shimbar.

Another source of food are the wild herbs which grow on the higher slopes, and these are collected and dried during the migration and afterwards. Mushrooms, wild garlic, leeks and other greens are the most common. They provide a welcome addition to a meagre diet. Their mushroom stews are marvellous as is their wild garlic chopped into yoghurt.



In more settled hamlets in areas where there is water for irrigation, what becomes crucially important are the way water is divided. Water rights are always being fought over, especially for the irrigation of gardens. In the summer quarters for example, poplar trees are grown in gardens. Fuel and wood is non-existent in this area except for in irrigated gardens. Poplar trees are used for house beams etc. Rights to trees are carefully protected.

The khan I have written about above, see Photograph A, always has trouble with passing tribesmen. His hamlet is slap in the middle of the siwand tribal migration route and his gardens, orchards (apple, plum) and wheat is always being raided.

As soon as the tribes come close to settled areas there is trouble. It is so much easier to steal than to grow, it is also faster.

Oulads, the minimal descent groups are the units that settle down together. Lali plain is dotted with dozens of villages like this, each hamlet inhabited by several families of close relatives, usually all cousins, descendants of an ancestor four generations back.

Some wealthier nomads have settled houses in both summer and winter quarters and move between houses, often flying their families over by aeroplane, with shepherds looking after their sheep on the migration.

I hope this should give some idea of the complexity of the way nomads in fact exploit an environment in which agriculture and sheep farming is possible.

Tribal agriculture results in a rather different form of land holding, from peasants who are not generally organised into large kin descent groups

Although agricultural land is individually worked, it tends to be owned by descent groups. Any continuously worked piece of land will be owned by members of a descent group. In other words, lineages tend to immobilise tracts of land, through time. Neighbours will be close kin, and land will not be allowed to be alienated through rent or sale to non-close kin.

A hamlet made up of close kin settlers will work their area of land and inherit this land through their male ancestors. The net effect of this is that tribally held agriculturally exploited land, could not be sold to strangers without permission of all those kin

concerned. One does not get absentee landlords as amongst the peasant held areas. Many tribal Kalantars "own" more land than they can work themselves and rent out tracts of land to their own tribesmen on the usual sorts of crop sharing agreements found throughout Persia.

Tribal village land is not divided into "dong" 6 equal parts and then more and more subdivisions, where single owners control or own "dong".

The fertile agricultural land on the fringes of Bakhtiari territory, was usurped, bought or gifted by the central government to the Bakhtiari Khans, so that their considerable wealth was based on agricultural produce rather than animals. This point is very important, since the permanence of land is greater than wealth vested in animals. No politically powerful tribal leader has emerged unless he has at some stage transformed his animal wealth into land.

In the early years of this century, Bakhtiari khans owned individually dozens of peasant villages, obtaining revenue to the amount of 4 fifths of the total produce.

At no time have local tribal leaders, the kalantars ever owned a village. They own that which they work for themselves or which they rent out to relatives from the same taifeh.

A reflection of the kin based tribal organisation is that in the mountains most tribal villages are under 200 people, and predominantly owned by small lineages composed entirely of close relatives by descent.

In fact regions of the mountains, particularly in the south west near Izeh, agricultural settlements have existed for centuries.

The actual movement of any nomadic group will depend on the nature of their agriculturally worked land which has to have some sort of attendance, otherwise it becomes non viable. So families are sometimes split into three, some permanently settled in summer, some in winter, and some who migrate between their fixed houses. Some people have settled villages at either end, some one village in summer or winter and the other half of the year spent in tents. Sometimes the "house" is composed simply of four walls with a tent slung over the top for protection.

There is always a careful adjustment to micro ecological conditions within the macro ecology of transhumance, moving for climatic reasons between summer and winter.

### Migration routes.

1. Rah i Mumar. starts from Jali plain. first main pass is over the Mumar range. Path very narrow along a cliff face- single file only.

A days ride takes one on to Shimbar valley. This is a rest spot for the tribes. It is the territory of the Mowri taifeh. All passing taifehs have the right to stay here for two or three days grazing their flocks. Every defile has an encampment in it separated by a kilometer or so. In the spring this area is very lush- has wild bear. Plenty of marvellous scenery - the valley surrounded by mountains some of which are snow capped.

Shimbar can be more easily reached from Andeka area. This area is inhabited by the Qand'ali taifeh. One approaches Shimbar from the south via Andeka. The Oil co. have built a road deep into this area- probably the quickest way to get into Shimbar. Lots of tribal sections move from Andeka up into Shimbar over a route that is easier than the Mumar pass. Filming the movement of camps and of their flocks best at this point (shimbar). The flocks usually move ahead of the camp groups and are brought into the camp only in the evening for milking etc.

There is one village on one of the mountain slopes, but a film crew would need to be independent with own tents etc, or attach itself to a travelling camp group. Tents are usually raised in this valley for the stop off. In my experience the tents are only put up if the weather is foul or if they intend stopping for several days.

I was in Shimbar on the 21st April. There are probably tribesmen moving through this valley for the whole month of April most years.

An easy ride for a day takes one to Chelow Valley. This is a congregating place for the Osivand taifehs if one can be there at that time. They formed one enormous encampment for a couple of days one year. Some of this area is given over to wheat cultivation. At night the mountain sides are dotted with dozens of camp fires. Also belongs to the Mowri. This taifeh is very large indeed and lives in the central part of the mountains from Shimbar to the Bazuft river. They are predatory. All the passing taifehs are fare game for theives. The mowri are renowned theives and a nasty lot. The Kalantar of the Mowri, there are in fact several, used to be a crook called Mulla Vali. He was very old when I met him in 1964 so may well be dead.

After Chelow valley the tribes begin to move into higher mountain country, just north of Susan. There are a couple of passes within a days ride of each other.

One is called the Khans road or the women's road, Rah i Zan. It involves a clamber down a fairly precipitous rocky slope marked in places with spots where in the past women fell into the valley below to their death. Visually this part is superb with a view of Susan and the mountain range opposite that is spectacular. In places the path is very narrow. No mounted traffic or pack animals can come this way. The women and children and the sheep only can use this. Would make a splendid spot to film- if you went there with a group. Traffic is thin here and not everyone uses this pass.

A long valley follows and then a pass called Hazar Chamch - this means the pass of a Thousand Hazards. Also called the pass of vultures and thieves. This is a sheer rock face difficult for loaded animals to negotiate. It took us all of six hours to get up and over. Collapsing animals, exhausted people etc. We camped at the foot of this the night before, loaded up, climbed over and had to ride or stagger another four hours before reaching a suitable grazing site. It was a twelve hour day without a break. Very spectacular especially from the top of the pass. Splendid backward view of one range of mountains and ahead the largest snow capped range of the lot including Zarde Kuh (Yellow Mountain) which is 15,000 ft high. Again the only way is to be with a group and film it on the way up. It is called the pass of thieves because the top of the pass is very narrow and at this point lots of Mowri thieves lurk to make off with the odd sheep as they straggle up and over more or less in single file. A camp who is careless or does not have enough personnel to protect its animals is in trouble. The odd accident often happens here. The loss of a loaded donkey can spell real trouble. Once saw a cow (very valuable) take a nose dive down this cliff face accompanied by most spectacular screams of dismay from the inconsolable owner. A lucky sound recording of this sort of event makes the drama and loss come alive.

I was here on 26th April so only two days from Shimbar without trouble. 2 days later at the crossing ~~of~~ of the Bazuft river at Qale Bazuft (Fortress) There is a ruined fortress at this point, which is where most of the tribes cross. This is a dangerous maneuver if the river is flooded and many people have been drowned in the past. Lots of animals get drowned even in a simple crossing. There is now a bridge I believe but if conditions are not too bad I would imagine it would not be difficult to film them swimming across if compensation was offered for any losses. Usually takes a whole day to cross and then dry out. Always some accidents, animals slipping, wet equipment etc. Can be very dramatic

It is also very noisy, good sound effects.

From this point the road ~~divergence~~ diverges. The Babadi and Bakhtiarwand swing north over Zarde Kuh and up to Chehel Gird the end point of the migration for them.

The Osiwands and the Qandali use the Charri pass to the south of Zarde Kuh. Some years the snow is so bad that the Zarde Kuh route is closed and the Charri pass becomes very crowded. This is the major snowcapped range they have to cross and can be dreadful. Melting snow is not so dramatic visually but is much more dangerous underfoot. This area is wooded with dwarf oak trees and from here the tribes fashion their tent pegs and tent poles. It takes a while to get over the pass although it is not desperately difficult. It is about 12,000 ft. The problem is not to get stuck up on the pass at nightfall, no choice of camp site is important. We camped in the wood of oak trees, suffered a two day halt in a rain storm unable to pitch the tent and were constantly attacked at night by thieves. Had two pitched gun battles.

The other side of the Charri is called Doab valley. This is the summer quarters of the Qandali. This point is relatively accessible from the Isfahan side, the latter part on horseback only. From here on settlement takes place with Doab dotted with hamlets. A days ride takes one to a string of sizable villages and peasant held land.

The first hamlet reached after Charri belongs to Seifullah Khan, and is called Seifabad. I lived here for a month and they know me well.

Further along are the following villages. Dashtak- peasant owned, then Ali Kuh. This village is owned by the Shahmorwand section of the Osiwands. They have been settled here since the time of Nader Shah. The story on this is a fascinating one. The Bakhtiari fought in Nader Shahs invading army on its way to India. The contingent of Bakhtiari were in fact responsible for the successful taking of Qandahar. They did this after Nader had repeatedly failed and they did so on their own initiative. One of the leaders of these successful Bakhtiari was a man called Ali Mordun, who was made head of the Bakhtiari as a result and given title deeds to land. Ali Mordun was an ancestor of the Duraki Khans and they owe their land holdings and ultimate power from this point. One other leader in the taking of Qandahar was a Shahmorwand tribesman and as a reward he was given the ownership for his section of what is now Ali Kuh.

The Osiwands swing south past these various villages and then cut through a spectacular gorge called Tang i Darkesh Warkesh. Visually spectacular. It is just north of a village called Ardal, which is a local administrative centre. South of this area is Zarraswand territory and heavily settled. This is the area owned by the Leaders of the Bakhtiari. As far as nomads are concerned these are the extreme limits of their territory- scenically less spectacular than the routes themselves.

There are motor roads all over this area and is about six hours drive from Isfahan. The tribes stay up in the mountain ranges till June or thereabouts grazing their animals shearing the sheep buying supplies from neighbouring villages in the valleys below. Towards August they move down into the valley floors grazing on stubble. August and early September are very quiet months. Those that have settlements here reap their harvest etc so scenes of an agricultural nature winnowing wheat etc abound. This is the time for weddings etc and other celebrations. Late September the tribes start on the return trek. The whole area is arid, brown, dry at this time of the year.

Early spring before the migration starts is also the time of weddings etc in Khuzistan. Also about a week before Now Ruz (now Year) the 21st March is an interesting ceremony of jumping over fires. Everyone jumps over a blazing fire- wiping out the evil and bad of the previous year preparing to start the new Year anew.

I think I have mentioned the main place names of most use to you on this particular route.

An alternative route runs from Izeh, Deh Diz, Shalil, Dopulan to Ardal. This route is short and fairly straight forward. Called the Bakhtiari Road or the Lynch road. It is the old caravan route, and is dotted with fortresses all along the way. It is about 150 miles from start to finish travelled mostly by Zarraswand tribesmen.

Probably the best starting point is to elicit help from the Oil Co. in Masjid i Suleiman. An Oil co. town and now headquarters for many Bakhtiari sections. Introductions could be arranged with the Kalantars of the Qandali who have a house in M.I.S. They also own lots of land in Andeka. A feasible approach is to get an interpreter from the Oil Co. and introductions from them to any of the local leaders. They could provide you with a camp group to travel with and/or pass you on through the part of the mountains you want to visit.

The Kalantars will have accurate knowledge of who is where and in what numbers, where and when to catch groups of nomads on the move.

Qandali Kalantars

Yawar Sultani and Eskandar Sultani. They are youngish men and rather go ahead. Are wealthy. Have villages and cultivation in Deab their summer quarters. They know who I am.

They should be in Masjid i Suleiman in March. Probably the last 2 weeks in March are the best time to make arrangements in this area.

An alternative to Andeka are to make contact in Lali, about 45 kilometers north of M.I.S.- motor road, with the Osiwand Kalantar who lives there. His name is Mash Barat Hajipur. He owns a lot of land and lives all year round in Lali. He does not migrate. He is a rather stupid man and a bit of a crook but he knows me well. I lived with him for a month or two and migrated twice with his dead brother's son Jangi Hajipur. This is the group of people I know best. I was known as Agha Daoud Khan. Jangi is about 30 years old and has often been in trouble with the gendarmes and the secret police. Last I heard of him he had to flee into the mountains. He may be married now and a bit more responsible. They are the people who travel over the Munar route.

Yet another alternative is to make contact with the Babadi taifeh. They live in and to the north of Lali. Their summer quarters are close to Zarde Kuh in an area called Kuh rang and Chelol Gird. They use the Munar route as well. One of their more important Kalantars is called Jafer Qoli. Identify him as the Kalantar. He is a fine man, very tall and knows me, though not well. The Babadi are a very strong taifeh and could all provide good film-making. He may be a little more difficult to make contact with. He does have a house in Lali and should be thereabouts in March.

Make clear to the Oil co. that you know who these various people are and that you want to visit Andeka, Shimbar, Susan, Chelow, Qale Bazuft one way or another.

You want to a) travel a bit with specific camp groups to film them on the move.

b) you want to fly around from place to place. Towards the end of April you could fly several places based from M.I.S., and film whoever happens to be crossing at Bazuft, or Hazar Chameh pass. You could meet up

possibly with a group in Dazuft to take you up to Zarde Kuh for example.

Approaching the Bakhtiari from Isfahan you will have to work through a town called Shahr Kurd- the provincial capital. This whole region close to the mountains is called Chahar Mahal( 4 districts) . Marvellous agricultural area with dozens of sizable peasant, part-tribal, completely tribal villages. The tribes do not arrive here until late May so may not be of too much use.

There is a motor road as far as Kuh Rang the seat of the Babadi. At this time of year is lush green. Lots of wandering tribesmen around but it is not the spectacular region. South west of Shahr Kurd is Khans territory and that of the Zarraswand. To arrive in from Isfahan means you would have to go hunting up people- not always easy. Far better to start from Khuzistan.

In Khuzistan an other alternative might be to drive or fly to Qal Tol the village in which the Chahar Lang Khans used to live. Close by is Mungasht mountain range over which the sections of chahr Lang in this region migrate. I have only visited this area and do n t know anyone. The old Khan I visited in 1963 is now dead, so Oil. Co. only could help.

This should provide you with sufficient alternative names of groups and chiefs for you to be able to make contact with at least one to make arrangements to do your dry run. Interpreters are feasible because so many people speak English in the Oil Co.

Other points of possible interest.

Most taifehs have their own musicians who form a separate group. The musicians are often also circumcisers. Music is flute and drums. Very rhythmic. Male dancing is really a mock fight with sticks. Violent and should film well. Folk songs are also splendid.

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David H.M. Brooks.  
Durham University  
November 1970.