

Bakhtiarwand Il of the Bakhtiari.

This very large group of tawaef claim they originated in the Jubal Sumac area near Damascus in Syria. Whether they fled from the tribal troubles in Syria and made their way to southern Persia, or whether they voluntarily moved looking for a new area to live is unclear. They claim, along with the Chahr Lang tribes that they are far more ancient than the Duraki and that they once ruled the region. Such claims are at least in part justified by the written reports of Arab Geographers, and historians who record the immigration into the area in the 13th century of many tribal groups, including the Bakhtiari. This is the first time the name Bakhtiari appears in the recorded accounts of the times.

They have a history which is both interlinked and independent of the Duraki Khans. Although they trace descent from the immigrant group from Syria, they do not have as complete records of their Khans, going back only to the father of Assad Khan, the leader at the turn of the 19th century. He is reputed to have been called Heidar, and must have lived in the latter half of the 18th century - a contemporary of Abdal Khan and his sons Habibullah of the Duraki. These latter lived at the time of the Zand dynasty.

The retrievable history of the Bakhtiarwand therefore remains only in the 19th century - roughly coterminous with the onset of the Qajar dynasty. At this time, Muhammad Taqi Khan of the Chahr Lang became one of the dominating figures in Bakhtiari power struggles. The Bakhtiarwand Khans and the Chahr Lang Khans intermarried with each other, both giving and taking wives.

Assad Khan contested the Duraki Khan - Habibullah power, Habibullah also at the time had trouble with the Qashqa'i who raided his territory near Qandoman. Assad Khan caused such havoc, raiding Khuzistan, Iraq and as far as Tehran, invited the intervention of the Qajar monarch - Fath Ali Shah. He sent his second son to restore order in Haft Lang area.

After much negotiation and defiance, Assad Khan, from the security of his famous Diz Malekan - the Fort of the Angels, an almost impregnable hill fortress north of Shushtar in the winter quarters - joined forces with the Shah's son, Prince Dowlat Shah (Mohammad Mirza). Assad Khan fought with the Prince's army according to tribal stories and fared well under the protection of the Prince. However when the Prince died, Assad was left without a royal patron and returned to the mountains. where he again defied the Shah, refusing to deliver up the taxes his tribe owed the government. Like Mohammad Taqi Khan, who was more of a settled chief than Assad, the brave "lion fighter" and robber, Assad fell foul of the central government, though apparently avoiding the tragic fate of Mohammad Taqi Khan and his family.

With the fall of the Chahr Lang chief, came the eclipse of the Chahr Lang family of Khans, and the stage was essentially left to the Haft Lang. The Duraki and the Bakhtiarwand vied for leadership and power.

For a time it appeared as if Assad's sons, particularly the wild Ja'far Qoli would defeat the Duraki. Although the dates are uncertain, Jafar Qoli, famous for his drunkenness and considered somewhat mad, murdered many of his relatives, including a cousin married to a Chahr Lang Khan. Woman. She was returned to her Chahr Lang relatives, and her brother Zohrab Khan in turn avenged the murder by killing Jafar's brother. The Beidarwand took a severe revenge killing and looting in Qal-e Tol-and Andeka area, particularly Qaleh Zarras. The Chahr Lang fled to Qal e Tol, the main area of Chahr Lang control. Qaleh Zaras, then passed into the hands of the Bakhtiarwand.

As well as this feuding with the Chahr Lang, Jafar Qoli Baidarwand murdered the Duraki Khan, Also called Jafar Qoli, at the Munar Pass. This very famous murder is the key point in the future rise of the Duraki Khans to total dominance over all the Bakhtiari. The murder

of Jafar took place in 1836, and is still the subject of grief stricken tribal songs. At this time the Khans still migrated like the other tribesmen. The Haft lang, according to Sir. H. Layard, were poorer and more predominantly nomadic than the Chahr Lang at the time.

Jafar Quli Khan, was returning from the winter pastures with his Mal. Their territory at that time was at Gulgir - between Masjid-e-Suleiman and Izeh. (Zarraswand territory today) They were travelling the Munar route. Above the route the animals take on Munar is a pathway called "Piadeh" which means literally "on foot". Jafar Qoli arranged to be waiting there with a certain Mowri (a duraki taifeh). The Mowri was in the pay of Jafar Qoli Bakhtiarwand, was to spy out the land and give a signal when the Duraki Khan was alone on the road. The signal was that the Mowri would take off his hat and wave it above his head. At this time the hats worn had a turban wound round it, like the present day Sayids. (called Aushur). It happened that Jafar Quli Duraki came along the road virtually alone. The signal was given, and Beidarwand Khan came on to the road and killed the Duraki. The treachery of the Mowri was discovered, and revenge taken on the family of the Mowri. His name was Zarimar. His whole family were shamed. At that time everyone wore beards and it was considered a great shame to have no beard. Every male member of the family of Zarimar (the name means snake poison - probably a nickname) had his beard shaved off and were paraded round all the taifehs seated backwards on a donkey, holding the tail.

Jafar Qoli Bakhtiarwand is still called "pedar Sag" son of a dog and also since he was a drunk called "Shurabi". The revenge of the Duraki was carried out the following year - when they went back to the winter pastures. Over a period of years I think.

Qalb Ali Khan and Elias, brother and cousin respectively of the murdered Jafar led the revenge. A famous "Shabi Khun" - night attack took place. A complicated story of catching Bakhtiarwand spies in the Duraki camp

and quietly switching camp sites in the dark. When the Beidarwand came to what they thought was the camp site of the Duraki, they instead were taken by surprise. They had among their forces two renowned warriors who were greatly feared by everyone. The story continues that a Qandali tribesman with a \*Puspor\* - a muzzle loading gun, was hidden behind a large Kunar tree. He managed to kill these two warriors from his vantage point. At this the Bakhtiarwand forces lost heart and were easily defeated thereafter. Qaleh Zarass was looted and the Bakhtiarwand, who had so recently looted and taken over this fortress from the Chahr Lang, were in turn evicted by the Duraki Khans. Many of the wives and daughters of the killed Bakhtiarwand Khans were married by the Duraki Khans. This is standard tribal practice and is supposed to seal the conflict.

The Mowri was partially involved in the fighting, presumably to try to wipe out the shame of the Mowri who betrayed Jafar Qoli on Munar. They and the Qandali, as a reward for their successful participation in the defeat and destruction of the Bakhtiarwand, were given lands in Andeka and Qaleh Zarras area. They are both still in this territory today.

It would appear, although the evidence is not conclusive, that the Bakhtiarwand tribes were removed from their territories as part of the revenge of the Duraki, and that the net effect over the following decades as the Duraki Khans consolidated their power, that they also consolidated their territorial position, forming a central block of territory inhabited almost exclusively by members of the Duraki, and scattering their Bakhtiarwand enemies in less fertile grazing pasture areas.

The contemporary distribution of pastures, suggests that the Duraki khans, who came to control most if not all of the valleys surrounding the high mountains, pushed the Bakhtiarwand and the Babdi tribes up north to the areas in which they now are to be found. The Bakhtiarwand winter pastures are now more in the foothills of Khuzistan, south of Lali area, where there is less water.

The Bakhtiarwand, unlike the Duraki, conceive of themselves as all being descended from the groups which came from Syria. They talk as if they formed a single descended group, and see themselves very much in opposition to the Duraki. In spite of this, their territories are not contiguous, the way the Babdi Bab and Raki groups are. They claim that their lands in the summer pastures in Mizdej, were also taken from them by the Duraki Khans. They were in effect being pushed into the mountains away from the fertile agricultural areas of Mizdej, and also to the north, bordering on Chahr Lang territory, particularly round Dorud, where many of the Bakhtiarwands Khans of today have much settled land and many villages.

They also claim that the Babadi in the past were their servants, presumably under the control of the Bakhtiarwand Khans, and that the Raki taifeh, which is one of the most powerful Babadi Berjui groups of the past, were in fact once Bakhtiarwand. Such claims can be neither proved nor disproved. Certainly the Babadi hotly deny they were ever servants of the Bakhtiarwand, and the Raki deny they were ever apart of the Bakhtiarwand. However it does reveal the closeness of these groups in opposition to the Duraki - the common enemy from the past.

The Duraki appear to be a different type of polity. They do not all claim descent from a single ancestor. The Duraki Khans are basically leaders in the first instance of the Zarraswand taifeh only, and after the time of Nadir Shah began to emerge as powerful tribal leaders, gradually extending their control over other groups, like the Osiwand, the Qandali and the Mowri. The Duraki came into existence only recently and did not form a single territorial unit until after the victory of the Zarraswand Khans. The leaders of these groups were semi independent and joined the growing power of the Zarraswand Khans more or less as clients. None of them have any myths of having had their own Khans whereas the Babdi and Raki groups certainly do, though this is disputed.

There is much mutual hostility between the separate taifeh of the Duraki and not much intermarriage, whereas among the Babdi tribes, there has been considerable intermarriage among the Kalantars for a number of generations.

The Duraki groups therefore, interestingly the ones who came to dominate - the Zarraswand, form a centralised polity under single Leaders more as cliques, than as descent groups, and came to exhibit, as the degree of centralisation and specialisation increased between 1850 and 1930, a type of differentiation in political participation, inclusion or exclusion which affected their tribal structure, far more than it did for the Babadi or Bakhtiarwand groups. The latter in particular has retained a tribal organisation, of lineages, a segmentary structure to a greater degree than the others. The Duraki groups have developed a type of hierarchical structure, of statuses(?) as a result of the more direct involvement and administration by the dominating Duraki Khans this century. Their territories express a hierarchy of social and political status - the best pastures, closest to agricultural areas, and closest to non tribal agricultural villages, markets, and organs of the central government. The one large, and major exception to this are the Mowri tribe of the Duraki. They are the most isolated of all the tribal groups straddling the upper mountain ranges. Likewise their organisation is one typically of segmentary lineages, with no or few acknowledged leaders apart from those Kalantars appointed by the Duraki Khans. They in fact function as individuals as well as tribal leaders. The mowri are infamous for their inability to unite, work together or accept any leadership now that the Khans have gone. They are the major group, furthest from the central government.

The Bakhtiarwand have approximately 22 different taifehs. each with their own Kalantars and Kadkhodas. They are led by their own Khans, the descendents of Assad Khan, discussed earlier.

Again, importantly different from the Duraki Khans, who come from the Zarraswand, a particular Taifeh, The Bakhtiarwand Khans claim descent from the leaders of the 13th century immigrant group, and all the Bakhtiarwand taifehs are the descendants of the followers of these leaders. The Khans do not belong to any one Taifeh, but form their own family as it were.- their own dynastic lineage or family. They have ruled over their Bakhtiarwand tribesmen according to their own account ever since. This would appear likely, at least since the downfall of the Atabak rulers of Luristan, in the 14th century ( earlier)

Unfortunately I do not have much genealogical information going back as far as the descendants of Haidar Kur, but the Khawanin lineage of the Bakhtiarwand has no lineage connection with any single Bakhtiarwand taifeh.

The political fortunes of the Bakhtiarwands are reflected in the marriages of their Khans, just as is that of the Bakhtiari as a whole reflected in the marriages of the Duraki Khans. There is much more data on the marriages of the Duraki Khans, the bulk of which were primarily contracted for political reasons, clearly showing the spread of the social and political sphere of influence of the Duraki Khans.

However, there is information of the marriages of the most important of the Bakhtiarwand Khawanin, which on a much smaller scale, in a more local political arena, gives some indication of the range of political considerations, and tensions in which these Bakhtiarwand Khans, subjected to the domination of the Duraki Khans found themselves.

Only those marriages of particular political importance for leadership were remembered by the present leaders. One can, reasonably argue that the unrecorded marriages of younger brothers were a combination of close cousin marriage, and marriages with the many Bakhtiarwand taifehs. Although the data is not there, data from other taifehs who do not have dominating Khans clearly reveals the typical pattern found in Bakhtiari.