

Iranian Landscape: Unity of Nature and Livelihood

The rituals and lifestyles of human beings on the earth create scenes that are understandable to the people with specialized knowledge. Traveling around the world and observing the specific landscape of each nation's land could be an endless source for acquiring landscape knowledge. The landscapes are the product of the interactions among various environmental, historical, economic, social, aesthetic factors.

The old mulberries, trees characterized by large and protruding knots and short stature, along the old streams in the central regions of Iran construct the natural landscape and are the most important narrators of the livelihoods of the inhabitants.

In these areas, obtaining and transferring water for horticulture and agriculture are important issues requiring a lot of measurements and preparation.

Width, slope, depth, material quality, and the length of the streams play a key role in transferring water. Apart from these, different trees are planted along the streams to create shadows and protect water from evaporation. Willow and mulberries are the most important trees because of their extra role in flourishing the economy.

Willow trees have tough branches which are good material for buckets and other industrial applications. The leaves of mulberries are the food for silkworms and used in the silk textile industry foundation. Both trees are also resistant to pests and do not require much care. The berry tree germinates young branches every year and their young leaves are the source of nutrition for silkworms. To increase tree nutrition, the branches are pruned from their stems and new branches are grafted in the spring. This period is synchronized with silkworm rearing schedule. Pruning each year prevents the trees from growing and extending the branches. As a result, the circumferences of the trunks increase over the years and the knots are formed around young branches.

These trees which have certain owners are used to create a shadow on the stream water and protect the stream walls and its path. That might explain why around the cities and villages of central Iran, the rows of the trees can be seen. The way the owners take advantages of the trees has influenced their special shapes over time. Nowadays, they are the main elements of the landscape, the narrator of the link between nature and the livelihood of its people.