

## Persistent geotop, an original example of landscape and natural environment (Case study: “Koohrig” of Mehriz in Yazd Province)

Farzane Sadat Dehghan<sup>1\*</sup>, Seyed Amir Mansouri<sup>2</sup>

1. M.Sc. in Landscape Architecture, University of Tehran. Teacher at Technical and Vocational University, Yazd, Iran

2. Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture, University of Tehran, Nazar Research Center, Tehran, Iran (seyedamir.mansouri@gmail.com)

Received: October 31, 2017

Accepted: September 6, 2018

### Extended abstract

#### Introduction

Natural resources are valuable and important parts of environment. The nature of landscape elements of Koohrig along with mentality and beliefs of the people is the determining factor of interactions between people and with these places. Study on extraterrestrial landscapes and geotop is important from many different aspects, because these landscapes in the world are diverse and their various scientific dimensions have a wide range. Considering these phenomena, planning to understand the behavior of tourists in order to have a better understanding and beginning the tourism organizing in the site, and entering of it to the landscape science is essential for high quality exploitation and perfecting the environment, while preserving and maintaining them. The lack of general understanding, and specialized, applied and case studies on unique natural landscapes and mismanagement has led to harmful interventions and alternations in these landscapes. In the present study, Koohrig geotope located in Mehriz city, Yazd province was selected as a case study. This landscape is one of the natural legacies that has been subjected to improper human alternations due to lack of knowledge and mismanagement. This has led to an inefficient exploitation and in accordance with the capacities of the environment, which has led to a destruction. According to the discussed issues, this article seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between the natural features of Mehriz Koohrig and human interactions?
2. What are the landscape features of the existence of a ritualistic-cultural perspective in Mehriz Koohrig?
3. What are the criteria for the interventions methods and quality improvement of Mehriz Koohrig Landscape?

#### Materials & Methods

This research is a qualitative investigation that analyzes the phenomenon of Koohrig in various aspects of phenomenology. The researcher implemented the method of interviewing with experts in the field. On the other hand, the research was carried out by looking at the historical and cultural aspects, and behavioral changes of people at different times, and the method and cause of motivations in people's interactions with the landscape and the relationship between them. Most of the research was done by field research and hermeneutics phenomenology method, and parts of the research information has been gathered in documentary and library form.

#### Conclusion

Findings on the first question:

1. Holiness and spirituality of Mehriz Koohrig. Apart from the sanctity of certain mountains, the mountains have a special spiritual solitude and have certain forces that in some cases (such as Koohrig) these positive forces are more powerful because of certain reasons (such as sand bedding). Therefore, they lead to inner peace and developing mental and spiritual growth.
2. Exclusive natural and extraterrestrial attraction of Mehriz. The distinctive contrast of sands from the background, and other wind erosion landscapes such as mount Oshtorkhorma stimulate the imaginations and dreams of the people and their beliefs.

\* Corresponding Author:

E-mail: FDB1111@Gmail.com

3. Geographical situation of Mehriz Koohrig bedding. This natural phenomenon is facing the city, and it is surrounded by other natural features at the same time, consisting of mountain and a small plain. This natural plain bedding is also visible at the top of the mountain, giving an extra mental and ritual power to the visitors.
4. The unique features of Mehriz Koohrig for health and the opportunity for cultivating the soul. Moving through the natural hard passable paths is basically a kind of mystical cultivation. The reason for this is the formation of body harmony and comprehensive physical, mental and emotional health state of the body as a result of hiking the sand mount.
5. The presence of relaxing and refining environment of Mehriz sand mount and enhancing the intuitive perception of human kind. Seeing Mehriz sand mount and being in the place is an expression of the almighty and a sign of his existence and power.
6. The tendencies, attitudes and beliefs of the people. Religions such as Islam has highly respected the nature. They also invite people to thinking, recognition, and progressing in that.
7. The proper condition for attendance and interacting with the Mehriz Koohrig. Despite the environment of the sand mount, this phenomenon has the potential for people attendance in its hot environment. As a result, the position of the sand mount and nearby mountain places the sand concentration in a shadow and favorable conditions more quickly.

Findings about the second question:

1. The existence of heroes, fictional stories and holy beliefs to the Koohrig with physical signs
2. The femininity of the environment in the mounts milestone
3. Illuminating a candle in sand mount
4. The proximity of lower stream gardens and farms to the chapel
5. Sacrificing and vowing in the mountains
6. Conducting religious and ritual acts all together

Findings about the third question:

1. There have been some damaging interventions and alternations in the landscape of the Koohrig. These organizational and developmental changes were not helpful, and they have brought more serious damages to identity, environment quality and the landscape. The lack of planning, correct investigation without understanding the identity and potentials of this geotop, and consequently not performing any interventions, inappropriate designing and mismanagement is the reason of these alternations and damages.
2. Objective and separated perspective of the body from its meaning and its non-terrestrial aspect, or sudden changes to the body and meaning.
3. The fragmentation of quantitative and qualitative factors in the landscape of the Koohrig. The consequences of the landscape fragmentation include reducing the scale and disturbance in the visual, functional and perceptual dimensions, which, eventually have adverse effects on the identity of the environment.

Four main criteria should be considered to design and organiz the sand mount. These criteria include:

1. Conservation of the sand mount, the core of the landscape and opportunities, while exploiting and responding to different human needs;
2. Understanding the capacities, talents, and natural features of the sand mount in order to exploit them;
3. The development of acquired qualities (such as the cultural aspect of sand mount) and natural alterations by the organic process, and elimination of inappropriate interventions, barriers to discontinuity and peripheral disruption;
4. Expansion and connection of body, meaning and identity with the context;

In the interventions and the present planning, a vast majority of these factors are ignored. Furthermore, the function is the opposite of these criteria.

### Discussion of Result

The interactions of people with the sand mount and their attendance was unified with the religious perception and beliefs of the society, but today they are justified by scientific explanations or personal perceptions of being positive. Furthermore, they are adapted to their inner needs and their pleasant feelings and they find meaning in it. Eventually, these unique geotop and landscapes, together with the interactions of people, will become persistent perspectives in their minds. It will make sense of the identity of that landscape for the inhabitants, and it is a mirror reflecting the culture of the ancient people of that nation. The need to preserve, these heroes and myths, which is the first cultural consequence of the interaction with these particular sights, is also very important and precious in terms of interpretation, better understanding of the subject, the growing recognition of the effects and decoding most scientific issues and cultural-identity roots in these phenomena. The unique identity of sand mount landscape, combined with the religious-cultural interactions of the people, has made it a lasting perspective. The sustainability of a landscape has direct relationship with the effectiveness of certain intrinsic (physical and non-physical) properties of the landscape, as well as the type and amount of people's

mental-objective interactions with it. The sand mount has some criteria that led it to be a lasting and unique geotope. Today, this natural landscape and its area are subjects to damage by human intervention, which threatens the sustainability of it. As a result, to preserve these landscapes from human factors, its physical and non-physical sustainability components must be survived.

**Keywords:** Koohrig, persistent geotops, qualitative development, unique natural landscapes.

Archive of SID