

BowerAghil Taghavi¹

¹: Department of Social Sciences, Roudehen Branch, Islamic Azad University, Roudehen, Iran
taghavi1389@gmail.com

Abstract: Undoubtedly, the most basic needs of human being for survival or comfortable life are food, clothing and house. After providing good food, cloth, and house, he can have a higher quality of life. Nowadays the house matter is one of the most basic discussions of nations and governments. From some people's point of view, house is prior to other needs of human beings, because with the house one can dispense with eating good food and wearing good cloth and spending his day. In history different tribes have used various architectural methods and houses. Iranian Turkmen tribe, who constantly migrate to find better pastures, because of their tribal life style, use an especial kind of house that is unique; called Turkmen language "Bower". These Turkmen houses have attracted many people including anthropologists. So, in the current article it is tried to completely describe the bower. [Aghil Taghavi · Bower; Journal of American Science 2011;7(7):392-396]. (ISSN: 1545-1003).
<http://www.americanscience.org>.

Keywords: Turkmen; Iran; Bower

1. Turkmen

Groups that are now named Turkmen previously were named "Ghouz" or "Oghouz", taken from the name of their ancestor "Oghouz Khan". There are different ideas for the reason of naming them as Turkmen. Some believe that they replied the Question of "Who are you" as "Turk men", which means I'm Turk. Also, some other believe that Turkmen is the same as Turk and gradually changed into Turkmen; another belief is that Turkmens were the first group of Turks who became Muslim and the word "Turkmen" is the abbreviation of Muslim Turk.

However, Turkmens are a group of yellow-skinned people who probably lived in Mongolia and then gradually came to Iran and Turkmenistan.

In "final proof," it is said that Turkmens "Oghouzes" lived in Mongolia at first. In the Chinese 8th century encyclopedia, it is mentioned that Turkmens lived in west and were named (To- Ko-Moong) there. In present time, Turkmens live mainly in Turkmenistan and Iran's Turkmen Sahara while some Turkmen groups live in Afghanistan, Turkey, and Iraq.

Being Turkmen has three basic conditions: each Turkmen must be in the Turkmens'

Pedigree or be the Turkmen's second hand children's grandchild and can speak with Turkmen accent and at last be the Hanafite Sunni Muslim (Askary et al, 1995).

Bower was Turkmen's house from a long time ago because it can meet the needs of immigrants in the best manner, and also can be stood up and closed down in a short time and make the movement of the Tribe easier. Bower is the smallest unit of Turkmens; i.e., one Turkmen family who live in it. Each bower near other bowers of relatives formed

one village (Saeedian, 1996). The geometric form of placing the bowers is indicative of social relationships of the people who live in the bower. Usually bowers of each village are located in a straight line. The neighbor bowers (Oÿ) are relative and have common pastures. Their animals graze in one folk. However, Oÿ or bower forms the village. The distance of villages changed on the basis of the capacity of pastures. The Oÿs distance from each other and the place of these bowers can demonstrate the thing that belongs to each tribe (Yazdi, 1996).

Each bower is made by wood and covers of felt in a round form; the same method as it is common among the Mongolia's nomads. The felts are made by Turkmen's artful women (Morad Nejad, 2009). Turkmen women decorate inside the bowers with their handicrafts. Turkmens sit and sleep on the felt or rugs that are woven by the women and are placed on the ground.

They hang some sacks on the walls of bowers. The bigger ones are named gunny sacks and smaller ones are named feed bag. Turkmen women use them as the drawer, to store their home tools and materials (Diba, 1996). The primary house of Turkmens, Bower, has complete concordance with their social construction. However, nowadays it is used only by a few number of the immigrant Turkmens in the north of Atrak (Yazdi, 1996).

Turkmens also called the bowers "Aghachi Oÿ" that means the wooden house. They believe that bower is the symbol of health and generosity; being the door of the bower always open without any lock is known to indicate the hospitality of the tribe.

Turkmens are interested in horse, gun, and bower. Whenever their life became difficult, they

migrated from that place and went farther and out of the reach of other tribes (Ghourkhanjani, 1981).

Now, we consider different types of Turkmen's bowers:

Chatmeh:

When Turkmen tribes wanted to rest in an area during summer and winter resorts, they put two porches in front of each other, and tied them from the top. In this way, they create the temporary shelter, named "Chatmeh" (Kalteh, 1996).

Göt Tokmeh:

Some Turkmen used "Göt Tokmeh" as temporary settlement for some days or some months or because of poverty. This type of house consists of "Ogh and Toynok" (the bow-shaped woods and the circle-shaped wood) that is especially proper for poor people. Therefore, it is called "Gherib Oy" (the humbly house) and because of its small size, it is also called "Kechi Jik Oy" (the small house) (Azami et al, 2003).

Agh Oy and Ghare Oy:

Among the tribes, house is not only the place of rest for family members, but also it is the place of keeping their animals, the storage of foods, the place of keeping the dairy and food products, and the storage of wheat and barley. Also, it is the place of producing handicrafts such as felt making, carpet making, etc (Saeedian, 1996).

Agh Oy or white house is the bower that has a wooden frame "Tarim", "Ogh" and "Toynok". Preparation and construction of this type of house is refers to grandness, and nobles and wealthy people are capable to make and afford it. This type of bower is named white house because of its newness and novelty. Moreover, it has white woolen felts and has white and bright view. But as time passes, due to the fireplace inside the bower, the white felts became black by the smoke, it will be called "Ghare Oy", i.e., black house (Pour Karim, 1958).

However, a bower that is covered with new and white felts is also called "Agh Oy" (white bower), and as after some times the felts became black and dirty because of sun shine and smokes, it would be called "Ghare Oy" (black bower).

2. Components of the bower

- 1- The frame of the door
- 2- Tarim
- 3- Ogh
- 4- Toynok
- 5- Ghamish
- 6- Kechi (felt)
- 7- Dorlogh Yakha
- 8- Bil youp
- 9- Düzi
- 10- Bash Youp

- 11- Erghen
- 12- Chouchi
- 13- Tarp yapar
- 14- Toynok poup

The frame of door

The door consists of a two leaf frame that is usually made by skilled local carpenters with special designs and ornaments. The lower and upper parts are called "Isteg" and the two sides are *Tarim*, which are fastened by "Sooyeh". Usually the door of bower is placed opposite of the wind and rain direction, toward the south. This would also prevent direct shining of the sun in the *Oy*, and meanwhile preserve the *Oy* from northern, western and eastern winds.

Tarim

Each bower has four *Tarims*, which their connection to each other creates the cylinder with 2- 2.5 meter angle. The height of *Tarims* is about 1.70 meters. *Tarims* are constructed in the form of a net with crossed woods. The length of each *Tarim* is about 2 meters; these woods are fastened and fixed to each other by dried and softened skin of the camel in the place of joint; of course nowadays this has become nearly impossible and they are fastened by ordinary string or ropes.

Ogh

Oghs are the bow-shaped woods that are used for connecting *Toynoks* and *Tarims*. Their approximate length is about 3.30 meters and depending on using large or small size *Oghs*, about 40- 60 *Oghs* are used in each *ogh*.

Toynok

Toynok is placed in the upper part of the frame dome of the *Oy*, which is made from circle-shaped woods and a collection of bow-shaped woods comprised its centre.

Toynok Youp

It is a rope that is hanged from the *Toynok*. When the bower is attacked or became the target of storm, the Turkmen man using this to prevent the bower from being destructed and disintegrated. Sometimes this is done by tying and binding a heavy thing such as a sack of flour or etc to it.

Ghamish

Ghamish is the same as reed; Turkmen women cut these *Ghamishes* in suitable size, split and prepare them in a thin form. After being prepared, *Ghamishes* are connected and bound with a string. Now, it is possible to make them in the form of a pipe. *Ghamish* has three sections; one section is placed behind the *Oy* and is named "Got *Ghamish*" and the two other sections are placed at its sides. In summer, Turkmen remove the *Göt Ghamish* to allow the wind enters the *Oy*.

Kechi (felt)

Keche is used for covering the frame and skeleton of the bower and is prepared by Turkmen women and girls from the wools of sheep during some days. To cover the bower three types of felt are used as follows:

a) **Dorlegh:** It is constructed from four rectangle-shaped parts and used for covering the *Tarims*. It covers all rounds of the bower.

b) **Ozuk:** They are two trapezoid-shaped felt that cover the *Oghs*.

Dorlegh and Ozuk are made from ropes, so when they are put on the bower, they are bound and fastened to the frame by the rope.

c) **Serfek or Serpek:** *serpek* has a circular shape and has a diameter of about 2 meters that cover the *Toynok*, also the brim of *Serpek* is rope-made but it is usually bound with some pieces of these ropes to the frame and skeleton of the bower and other ropes are left free. Thus, whenever they want, they can push half of the *Serpek* aside to send the fireplace smoke out of the bower or to let the sun light shines inside the bower. One of the advantages of covering a bower by felt is preventing the heat loss and entering the cold weather inside, as well as stopping the humidity and damp.

Dorlogh Yakha (Yagha)

When *Tarims* are put together and the circle shape of bower was complete and *Tarims* were connected together, a piece of colorful woolen ribbon that is woven by women with the width of about 30 centimeters and a length of equal to the size of bower, called *Dorlogh Yagha*, is bound all around the *Tarims* for their firmness.

Bil Youp

Another colorful woolen ribbon that is thinner than *Dorlogh Yakha*, called "*bil Youp*" is bound a few centimeters upper *Dorlogh Yagha* for more firmness of the *Tarims*.

Düzi

All around of *Ogh's* bowers are bound each other with the thin knitting ribbon, called "*Düzi*", to prevent its dislocation. *Düzi* is prepared from the wool of sheep and by skill of Turkmen women and girls.

Bash Youp

A thin cotton ribbon prepared by Turkmen women and girls is used to bind *Oghs* in the place of joint to the *Tarim*. In this way, the frame will be established.

Erghen

It is a thick rope used for keeping the bower stable and constant against winds and storms. To this end, the rope (*Erghen*) is hanged behind *oÿ* from both sides and its two ends are connected to the wooden pegs, "*Chouchi*", which are hammered to the ground.

Chouchi

They are two wooden pegs, which are hammered at the sides of the bower and are connect each other with a rope, called *Oghen*. This would protect bower against winds and storms.

Tarp Yapar

It is a felt placed on the bower in winter or in the cold days, when the weather is temperate, the *Tarp Yapar* is rolled on the top of the door.

3. The inside view of a bower

The inside space of the *oÿ* is in the form of a big circle that is like a building with some rooms. However, it does not have separated parts but each part of the interior space is used for a special task and has a particular application.

a) The front section near the entrance door is the place of put the shoes off.

b) In the centre of the *Oÿ* with a little inclination to the front part, there is a fireplace that is distinguished by the mud wall.

c) In the left side of the entrance door, there is a place, called "*Chali*", to store the provisions, foodstuffs, and milk and producing cheese and butter. Logoshva, in the book of "Iran's Turkmen", called this place "*Ash Bouri*" that is the place of producing food (Logoshva et al, 1982).

d) When one enters a tent or bower, there is a frame in the left side, called "*Beverte Lar*", where quilt and mattress are put on it and also the large leathern bottle of oils are put on it.

e) The partition between "*Beverte Lar*" and fireplace is the place of women and girls' sitting.

f) In the right side of the door is the place of keeping the newborn lambs and kids that is separated from other parts by a mat. Logoshva in his book "Iran's Turkmen" named this part as "*Ashligh Bouri*" and wrote this part is for men and at that place grains, flour and so on are kept there.

g) The right part of the fireplace is called "*Ojagh Bash*" and is the place of receiving guests.

h) The back part of the fireplace is the place of sitting men and guests.

i) And finally, the end part of the tent or bower is named "*Vib*" and is the sleeping place of the family members. In big families "*Vib*" is separated to some parts by a curtain that is called "*Toti*".

4. The stages of establishing or standing up a bower

Standing up a bower is the duty of women but men help them. Sometimes the neighbor women help each other and do this work (Moeen, 1955). After determining a propitious and lucky day, they select a suitable ground that is a little higher than other parts for standing up the bower. When these things were done, some air shooting were done that means

informing happiness and starting the new life. After preparation of the ground, at first they put and installed the frame in the ground, and first put the lower parts of the frame in the ground. Then, the sides that are related to the frame are put in their place and its upper parts will be installed, and firmly are bound the frame of door by the rope. Then *Tarims* are placed in two sides of the door and are firmly bound to the frame of door. Also, four pieces of *Tarims* are bound together and create a cylinder with 2-2.5 meters angle. The height of *Tarim* is about 1.7 meters.

After formation this cylinder, they bind the surrounding by *Dorlogh Yagha* that is a woven woolen ribbon and its width is about 30 centimeters and bind another ribbon a little upper that is thinner and is called *Bil Youp*. Then, the *Oghs* are connected to the *Tarims* and *Toynok*. *Oghs* are some bow-shaped woods that are jointed to the intersection of *Tarims* on the one end and connected to the holes of *Toynok* on the other end. *Toynok* is the upper part of the *oյ*'s frame dome and has a circular shape, with many holes around it. In this stage, men help women. One man hold the *Toynok* by a wooden beam in the centre of the bower and women connect the *Oghs* to the *Toynok* and bind this junction with a string. Also, they bind the *Oghs* by another thin ribbon that is called *Düzi* to prevent its motion.

At this time, the first step that is constructing the frame and skeleton of the bower that looks like a big cage is finished. Then, the frame is covered with some felts with different names.

The first felt is *Dorlogh* that is wound around the *Tarim*. The second one is *Ozuk* that consists of two trapezoid parts and cover the *Ogh* parts. The third one is *Serpek* with a circular shape that covers *Toynok*. Then, these felts are bound firmly to the frame of the bower with the ropes, which are placed in them. After putting these felts, Turkmen cover all around the bower by a piece of mat that is called "*Ghamish*".

In this way, standing up a bower will finish. Before covering inside of the bower with carpets, they cover the floor with a type of grass, *Gholder ghen*, that is frequent in the desert and prevents penetration of moisture.

Removing and closing down the bower is easier than its standing up, and is exactly reverse of the works done for its standing up.

Some mores of standing up a bower

Turkmen have special mores at the time of standing up a bower. Usually standing up a bower is the women's duty and its repairing and mending is of men's duty. When everything is ready for standing up a bower, some air shooting were done that means informing happiness for starting the new life.

After standing up the wooden frame "*Oյ*", they connect a rope to the "*Toynok*" that hang from it, called "*toynok Youp*". They bind a handkerchief that contains some money to the upper part of the rope. Turkmen's youth try to take the money. That money is named "*Baylegh*" (Goli, 1986). After standing up an "*Oյ*", its owner sacrifices a sheep and makes a delicious food with it that is named "*Chekderme*" and gives it to people.

Another mores of Turkmen is that if a person is died in the *Oյ*, the remaining members of his family change the place of *Oյ*.

The oldest woman of the family connects the felt of "*serpek*" to "*toynok*". The *Oյ*

that a father gives to his son usually is stood up in the right side of the father's *Oյ*. This case is returned to this fact that the elder son is the right hand of his father in life matters (Taghavi, 2009).

Turkmen try to stand up an *Oյ* in a good and lucky day. And in this case, they asked from their local and neighbor clergy man. Some Turkmen believe that the seventh day of each month is good and suitable for standing up an *Oյ* (Kamali et al, 1995).

5. The main reasons of using bower

The climate specifications, finding a new *Yourt* for animals grazing, made Turkmen busy during several centuries. They had agricultural and animal husbandry life, each of which was done in a different place; agriculture was done at the side of rivers and in the following months they forced to migrate to other places for finding good pastures for their animals. In fact they always migrated to find good and suitable pastures. In such conditions, they had to make homes with light components and easy standing up and closing down. Since Turkmen were dependent on the animal husbandry economy, and because of their constant movement and migration, and also to meet social and economical needs and fitness to natural conditions or finding fertile pastures, it was necessary for them to use some houses called "bower" and sometimes by gathering some bowers, a village (*Obeh*) was formed (Nadimi, 2008).

Among the other reasons for using *Oյs*, we can point to the following:

- a) It is resistant against wind, storm and earthquake such that even if a bower is overturned, no family member will be injured.
- b) Its standing up, closing down, and carrying is easy and will be done quickly.
- c) Facilities, conditions, and necessary things for its preparation and construction existed in the area abundantly and most of the required equipments are prepared from bestial products and ranchmen that are easily accessible at little costs.

d) Easy ventilation of the air inside the bower in hot or cold weather.

One of the basic needs of each human being to survive is house. The house has so many varieties among different tribes. Because of their tribal and nomadic life conditions to find new pastures, Turkmen tribes in Iran's Turkmen Sahara use a kind of house that is called "Bower". Choosing this type of house has particular benefits. Bower has different types that are used according to the duration of stay in one area; if the staying is for a short time, they use simple kinds of the bower and proportional to the duration of the stay, it will be complicated. For standing up a bower, different tools are used, most of which are constructed from Turkmens' bestial products and are hard, firm, light and inexpensive. One of the main benefits of bower is its apparent and external form that is made in a manner that prevents entering the wind and rain and is resistant against storms.

Turkmens have special mores and customs in standing up a bower; some of them include: shooting some air shoots, hanging a handkerchief that contains money, sacrificing a sheep, changing the place of bower after the death of a family member, standing up a bower in a good and lucky day, performing the dirk dance and so on.

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Aghil Taghavi
Department of Social Sciences
Roudehen Branch, Islamic Azad University
Roudehen, Iran
E-mail: taghavi1389@gmail.com

References

1. Asghar Askary Khanghah & Mohammad Sharif Kamali, Iranian Turkmen, first edition, Myths publication, Tehran 1374, p 30 &31.
2. Saeedian, Abdolhosein, Iran's people, life and knowledge publication, Tehran, 1375, p 817.

3. Papeli Yazdi, Dr. mohammad Hussein and others, the house of Turkmen tribes, geographical researches chapter, Ferdousi university, p 16.

4. Ana Morad Nejad, Dr. Rahim Berdi: the geographical look to Bandar Turkmen, Makhtoom Gholi Faraghi, 1387, p 162.

5. Bogoliof, Turkmen carpets, Naz Diba,, Iran's Carpet, p 36.

6. Papeli Yazdi, Dr. mohammad Hussein and others, the house of Turkmen tribes, geographical researches chapter, p 15.

7. Ghourkhanjani, Mohammad Ali, Nokhbe Sifiye, by tries of Mansoureh Etehadieh and Sirous Saazondian, Iran's history publication, Tehran, 1360,p 34.

8. Kalteh, Ibrahim: introduction to know Turkmen tribes and clans, Haji Talaiee publication, 1375, p16.

9. Azami Rad, Gonbad Dordi: look at Turkmen's material and spiritual culture, compiler publication, 1382, p 66.

10. Saeedian, Abdolhussein, Iranian people, p 819.

11. Pour Karim, Houshang "Inche Boroun", art and people magazine, October 1347, N 74, p 41.

12. Logoshva, Bi Bi Rabeë, Iran's Turkmens, Sirous Izadi, Shabahang, Tehran, 1359, p 60.

13. Moeen, Asadollah, the historic Geography of Gorgan and plain, book talent joint stock company publication, 1344, p 94.

14. Goli, Aminollah, the social and political history of Turkmens, science publication, 1366, p 304.

15. Taghavi, Aghil: anthropology of Iran's Turkmens, first edition, Makhtoom Gholi Faraghi publication, 1388, p 150.

16. Kamali, Mohammad Sharif and Asgari Khanghah, Turkmen Iranians, fictions (Asatir), 1374, p 113.

17. Nadimi, Kamaloldin: investigations about culture and civilization of Golestan Province people, Makhtoom Gholi Faraghi publication, 1387, p 44.

3/5/2011