


ECLIPSE / DENA

August 11, 1999

There was a lot publicity in Iran regarding “the last eclipse of the century”. Iran was not the country where the total eclipse (the only one really worth watching) would last the longest but because of its climatic conditions, with clear and sunny skies, it was certainly, if not the best, one of the very good choices. As such the government had made a lot of publicity to attract foreign scientists and tourists to Iran and especially Isfahan combining the eclipse with a little “cultural tourism”.

I had planned to combine the eclipse watching tour with a mountaineering trip. My friend Majid Seghat-al-Eslami suggested Dena¹ and since it could be combined with watching the eclipse - on the way - the decision was made for Dena. I also asked another friend of mine, Tezi Baroumand, who is always ready for these ventures and has good organization skills to join us.

We ended up being a party of 12 people not including the local guide!

Majid Seghat-al-Eslami:	Professional ski instructor and all around sportsman and fitness freak.	
Shahriar Hakimi:	Young lawyer and brother of an old acquaintance.	
Mrs. Hakimi:	Charming wife of the above.	
Lotfali Khademi:	Ex Iranian ski champion and sporting goods businessman.	
Mohammad Arab:	Colleague and cousin of the above, skier, mountaineer.	
Mansoor Ehsan:	All around sportsman and frequent mountaineering and cross country skiing partner.	
Tezi Baroumand:	All around sportsman and fitness freak.	
Amir-Ali Fakhrieh:	Tezi's stepson.	
Nikou Sammak:	Amir Ali's girlfriend.	
Diran Sirinian:	Argentinian friend of Firouz Firouz who could not make it with us this time.	
Ghassem-Ali Jabbari:	Friend and customer of mine. We stayed at his brother's house in Isfahan.	
Hamdollah Moussavi:	Guide.	

At Amanieh before departure



Fin garden

After several meetings at Amanieh we decided to leave Tehran early in the afternoon the day before the eclipse, spend the night in Isfahan and drive to Dena the next day with a “crochet en route” to watch the eclipse.

¹ It is actually the name of the range of mountains but it also specifies commonly the highest peak of the range

We left Tehran at 14:45 August 10. We arrived late in the afternoon at the “Fin Garden”, a famous tourist site near Kashan (or Keshan). The site is famous for its beauty and also because it is where Amir Kabir² was assassinated in 1852.

From Fin we drove straight to Isfahan. Mr. Jabbari met us at Isfahan’s gate, took us **all!** out to dinner and then to his brother’s house where we all stayed for the night.

The next day we started in the early afternoon and arrived “just on time” in Shahreza to watch the eclipse. In these surroundings it was nothing short of a supernatural experience.



Mr. & Mrs. Hakimi under eclipse

From Shahreza we drove 1.5 hours to Simirom (The Dena range can be seen from here) which is one of the main Bakhtiari towns known especially for its namads³. About another hour and a half later we arrived in the village of Khafr (Alt.: abt. 2300 M.) which was our base camp.



Moussavi family & I

Here we met our guide and his family (BTW he as also had a charming wife whom our Argentinian friend even managed to kiss goodbye before we returned to Tehran!)

Hamdollah who came to visit us in Tehran a couple of weeks after our climb is a multi faceted person. Apart from being a mountaineer he also practices Yoga and is an amateur poet! What was actually much more impressive than his mountaineering skills or his poetry about him was that he let his wife be kissed by another man! This is unheard of in the Iranian traditional rural culture.

The next day we woke up at 4 in the morning and started climbing at 5.

Two hours later we were at the shelter had breakfast and rested for about an hour.

Amir and Nikou stayed at the shelter while Jabbari because of inadequate equipment (tennis shoes) and problems with his leg came along only up to the beginning of the snow fields and returned to the shelter. Mr. & Mrs. Hakimi together with Diran climbed up to 3'700 meters to the end of the snow fields. They had actually covered the most difficult part of the climb!

From the shelter it was another 5 hours to the summit which is at an altitude of about 4'450 meters. This highest summit of the Dena range is also called “Bijan 3” and “Gash Mastan”. According to Hamdollah there are at least six other summits in the Dena range that are at an altitude of more than 4'000 meters.

Our descent which was extremely difficult because of the slippery snow fields with inclines of up to 32° and very painful for me because of my bad knee took about 3.5 hours to the shelter and still one hour more to our base camp at Hamdollah’s in Khafr.



At the summit

² Prime minister of Naaseredin Shah Qajar and national hero

³ Felt carpet

I was totally exhausted.

We spent the night at Hamdollah's⁴ and returned to Tehran the next morning via Isfahan with refreshments at Mr. Jabbari's.

With many thanks to all who made this trip possible and especially the Jabbari family for their kind hospitality far beyond the call of duty!

J-M Houtcieff

tel.: +9821-2040119, +98911-2247652

fax / voice mail: +9821-2010185



From left front:

Majid, Diran, Shahriar, Mrs., Nikou, Amir-Ali, Jabbari, Tezi, Mohammad, Lotfali, Mansour.

email: mickyh@compuserve.com

⁴ Contact numbers (at Khafir's post office) 03275-4074, 4109 & 2509