A new documentary, BAKHTIARI ALPHABET, takes the viewer to see the biannual migration of the Bakhtiari tribespeople of southwestern Iran. The difficult journey, involving moving whole families and all their livestock, over mountains and numerous streams and rivers, gives an understanding of a traditional way of life extending back centuries. The producer-director Dr. Cima Sedigh is a professor of education at Connecticut’s Sacred Heart University (USA). She describes how tradition meets civilization in the education system. The children of the tribe are taught outdoors in nature or at dormitory boarding schools. Their lessons include learning about the mysteries of the city, including traffic signs and buses, although the children have little use for such knowledge. The children’s real education occurs in the tribe, where they learn how to take care of their sheep, goats and chickens and how to live in harmony with nature. Ms. Sedigh points out that formal education system could be improved by teaching children information that would be better applicable to their real lives.

More information on the film, including clips, is at http://www.bakhtiarialphabet.com. For an excellent overview of the Bakhtiari migration, including many photographs, see London’s School of Oriental and African Studies website at http://www.soas.ac.uk/gallery/bakhtiari-kuch.

Wow its very interesting, do you know from where this documentary can be downloaded?
Given the extensive film exposure of the Bakhtiari, I wonder if perhaps one day their traditional lifestyle might attract tourists. Some enterprising Bakhtiari could offer a $6,995 per person adventure trekking package - complete with mule transportation, open air accommodations, lessons in goat milking, butter making, fire tending, etc. - the unique outdoor nature experience!