

# Theoretical Studies to Perform a Conservation Management Method in Cultural Landscapes, with Particular Reference to Takhte Soleyman, Tekab, Iran

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**Abstract**—Cultural Landscape Conservation is an orderly process through restoring and preserving cultural and natural identity of historical sites which raises the perception and knowledge of values. The process of heritage conservation includes analytical study, recording of information, evaluation and the ultimate management.

Historical landscape is a symbol of civilization and cultural identity of the ancestors which gives meaning to the lives of its people. Therefore, any efforts through representing and protecting it, lead to the permanence of ancient culture and traditions.

The purpose of this research is surveying the ancient history and rehabilitation of Takhte Soleyman Cultural Landscape – on the basis of world Heritage conservation service principles – which includes physical contents such as paths, gardens, watermill, and the oral literature, e.g. stories, legends, songs and indigenous beliefs with regard to potential and current limitations. To achieve the aim, providing the required facilities of tourists and researchers and anticipating the future needs could be considered as a step to protect the cultural and natural components.

The research results provide a method to practical process of cultural landscape restoration and rehabilitation with emphasis on historical and natural identity of the sites.

**Index Terms**—Rehabilitation, cultural landscape, takht-e-soleyman, UNESCO, ICOMOS charts.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Rehabilitation and conservation in restoration process means proper use of historic buildings and sites - as the best option to protect them- as usual accompanies methodical changes in remaining historical work [1].

Rehabilitation comprises all of the activities that ultimately lead to survival and presentation of the past civilization and culture of a country. These activities include considering of the historical eras, all the events, and features that differentiate these ancient sites from the other areas. Selecting best case studies and key points can lead to make an optimized decision in order to managing the rehabilitation and preservation of cultural identity. In addition, through the representation of ancient cultures to the new generations, it can help them in the knowledge (recognition) of ancestor lifestyle and the history of their country.

Preservation and rehabilitation of Monuments is now become a widespread science (knowledge) in most parts of

the world, so that wherever the vestige of past cultures are found, the discussion about its preservation and rehabilitation is also raised (became propounded). This cause World Heritage Convention, UNESCO, try to assign the criteria (charters) in order to maintain these vestiges of ancient works. Outline Preservation and rehabilitation principles are the parts of the responsible management with the primary aim of maintaining and increasing the value of cultural sites.

ICOMOS (International Council of Monuments and Sites) as far as possible has determined the criteria such as the Venice Charter (1966), the Charter of Florence (1982) and Burra Charter (1981) to provide a kind of equality (balance) at the evaluation of the cultural landscapes (ICOMOS, 1982) [2].

## II. AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORICAL IDENTITY OF TAKHT-E SULEIMAN

Ganzak, Kanzak, Ganjak, Ganz-e, Janz-e ..., in Armenian Ganzaka, in Saryani "Ganzak" or "Ganzhak", in Greek "Ganzaka" or "Gadzaka" (Enayatollah, 1987). Arabian historiographer has named it "Jaznagh" or "Jazn", and mongol in that period called it "Satouragh". The other name of this city, has been "Shys" – Arabicized Jys- and the Greek historian Plutarch has addressed this city as the name of "Frad". In the other Pahlavi (ancient Iranian language) historical writings have been called "Shiej", in Shahname has been used "Chichest", in the Avesta (zoroastrian holy book) as the oldest sample of these writhings, has mentioned it as a "Chiechest" (Zarinkoub, 1984). Nowadays all of these names have been forgotten, and this site is called Takht-e Suleiman.

This ancient city in the duration of different periods has been the residence of various clans such as Manayy, Median, Achaemenid, Parthian, Sassanian, and Mongols, and all this time, it was in the heyday of its glory, in spite of this brilliant period, today only the ruined stone and brick-made place as the symbol of the Azerbaijan civilization authority has remained.

## III. THE LOCATION OF THE TAKHT-E SULEIMAN AREA

### A. Political Position

The case study is located at the Chaman rural district from the Takhte Suleiman region near the Tekab town (Tekab is located at the southeast of the West Azarbijan state) Takhte Suleiman village (Nosratabad) is the center of the Takhte Suleiman section. Tekab is limited from northwest to

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Hashrood, from northeast to ZAnjan, from west to Shahindezh and from the South and southwest to Sanandaj and saghez.

#### IV. RESEARCH PROCESS

The research process chart shows the mythology of basic studies that will be used in rehabilitation of cultural landscapes.

As in Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 the primary studies must be perfect and comprehensive.

Takhte Suleiman at the 45 km from the North East of Takab as a subdivision of West Azerbaijan is located on the natural platform with 20 meters High which has been made

of calcareous lake sediments.

#### V. HISTORICAL STUDIES OF TAKHTE SULEIMAN AREA OF

Recorded informations in ICOMOS define only the range of million years BC. But according to Iranian Historical Atlas studies (the First and Second maps), this region has been marked as a first settled villages in Iran before the Sialk Civilization ie equivalent 4000 years ago and also in the second and third millennium BC as the “Buff Ware Culture in Iran”. What is obtained from these map analysis that the flowing river and the vegetation are rich, green and thriving valley and incessantly boiling springs for living lead to use of this area as the residential region [3].

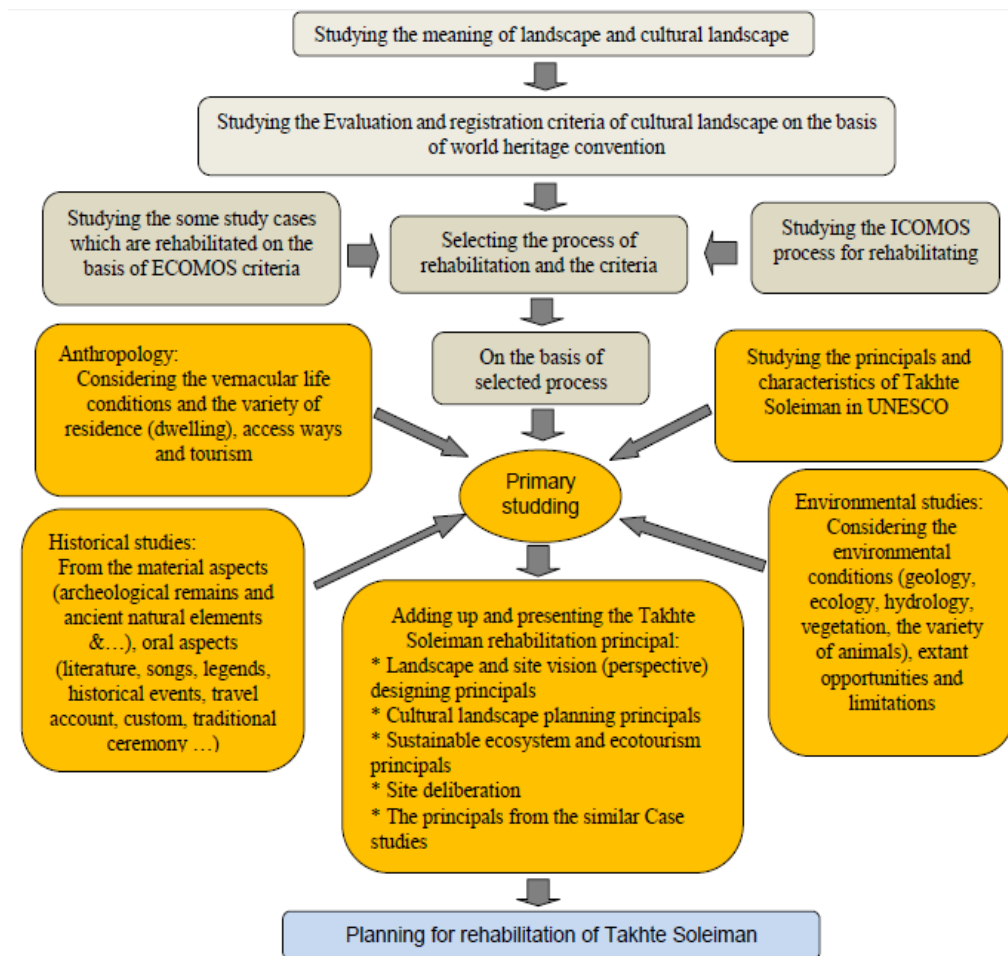


Fig. 1. This chart describes the process of rehabilitation of Takhte Soleiman cultural landscape on the basis of NPS general categories (source: Authors).

TABLE I: THE ILLUSTRATION OF THAKHTE SULEIMAN AREA FROM THE FIRST LIFE TO THE ILKHANIAN EMPIRE PERIOD (AUTHORS)

Reign	Specifications	Illustration
Manayi duration And before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two Toloumuses</li> <li>Zendan Suleiman Mountaion</li> <li>Takhte Suleiman lake</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Familial Cemetery (Tombs with 3 to 4 meters Depth, forstailling of enemies access to the buried bones and jewelry, they filled the Cemetery to 8, 9 meters hight that seemed like the hills from a distance.</li> <li>Volcanic mountain with a conic shape belongs to 3000 BC, after volcanic activity it became as a holy place for manayi, it has an Natural and Cultural criteria such as:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>holy lake and place but after the last volcanic activity it was ejected</li> <li>historical remains of ancient manayi houses</li> <li>Natural hot Calcareous springs from the Pliocene period, that there is a local legend about them (they are the tears of the Ginns and Devils that the prophet Suleiman has imprisoned them in Zendane Suleiman Mountain when they infracted the order) for this rision it is called Zendan that means Prison or Jail.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

Achaemenian empire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential area</li> <li>Anahita temple (water goddess)</li> <li>Ablution room</li> <li>Holy lake of Takhte Suleiman</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a small village</li> <li>At the northeast of Takhte Suleiman lake, it was so important for the ancient Iranian peoples so they tried to save it clean, there was 8 stony columns around the pool with the stony bull heads on the top of them, there was no ceiling on the pool for the reflection of the sky in the water (the water has flowed slowly)               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The temple was not accessible directly just by the use of corridors.</li> <li>The bull was so holy in Zoroastrian religion (Vehouman is the name of bull god)</li> <li>The springs and subterranean canal were so valuable that if someone digged one well, would have gone to paradise.</li> </ol> </li> <li>At the east of the Water temple, that one of the holy lakes stream has flowed inside the room.</li> </ul>
Sassanian empire (an important period of Takhte Suleiman)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Holy fire temple of Azargoshasb</li> <li>Ceiling of Anahita water temple</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One of three fire temples in ancient Persian,               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>all of the kings in Sassanian period must go there for coronation,</li> <li>as a symbol of unity in country</li> <li>the emperors have dedicated the war booties to the fire</li> <li>Azargoshasb: it means the fire of Male Horse; its origin came from Pahlavi Language.</li> <li>It was placed on ancient city of Shiz (there is not any details from this city) (<i>SHIZ</i> city in ancient Armenia language: Ganzhak; in Greek: Gatsaka; in old Persian: Farazeh Aspeh that means victorious horse) (<i>Ebneh Faghih, Al Beldan</i> book, 902 A.C.)</li> <li>Shiz was The ancient Capital of Small Median Empire at the Ashkanian period too.</li> <li>The ancient legend about the Keikhosro king and his horse: in his was against the devils and darkness sojery, the fire dropped on the mane of horse and lighted up every place, for this victory it has named Azargoshasb</li> <li>The other name of the fire temple was 'Azar Khosh' (through the archeology excavation, some pipes have been found between the main fire temple and Zendan-e Suleiman Mountain for Gaz transfusion; the vestige of that gaz is remained as bubble springs. (Afshar-e Sistani, 1991, p 317)</li> <li>For this reason the holy fire was called the Eternal Fire; because it was always lighted without any ash (Aboudalaf Moser Ebn Al Mohalhel KHazraji, 1964) (he also said: that the Hormoz king has established the Takhte Suleiman from stone and Lime (because the holy lake in the middle of the Takht is calcareous) furthermore there was the Palanquin at the Khosro (Sassanian king) veranda (west portico), and on the basis of ancient writings there were the beautiful gardens in front of the Tavoos Palanquin</li> <li>But after Arab attack it has changed to Takhte Suleiman, in order to keep the temple from Arab demolition, and in that time every metaphysics phenomenon has been related to Suleiman porphyrite because of his supernatural power. (Movahedi, 1985)</li> <li>They used the holy number in ancient Persian, such as "2,3,4,7 and 8" ('7' more than all) in ornaments, stony works, in space dividing, the number of entrance, rooms, columns and ....</li> <li>All of the Sassanian emperor after coronation in Tisfoun (the capital of ancient Sassanian Empire) went there on foot and offered the gift.</li> </ol> </li> <li>they covered the roof of the water temple for preserving the water sanctity</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the other Sassanian works in Takhte Suleiman</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fortifications (1.120 Km with 3.8 m wide and 13 m high; made of stone and Sarouj (Mortar: plaster of lime and ashes or sand and egg) with 38 towers)</li> <li>entrances (2 entrance at north and southeast; there is three holes in the arch of the entrance, it seems some ladders were put at the both side of the door in these holes) (north entrance was called: royal entrance)</li> <li>general form of fire temple, royal structures (the holy lake played the especial role in this complex establishing; the main space such as entrance, royal yard, holy temple and main veranda have been placed on the lake central axis; general form: 2 square that made rectangle)</li> <li>Fire temple (about 3 fire temples: main temple (just for Mogh (Zoroastrian clergy), the place of holy fire (for keeping fire just light ash) and fire temple for the all people near the north entrance; the symbol of unity) furthermore the other relevant space: yards, gardens, priests, treasury and ....</li> </ul>
Ilkhanian empire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hunting ground</li> <li>Buildings around the holy lake at east, west and south</li> <li>The hall with 4 columns</li> <li>2 octagonal rooms in west</li> <li>kiln</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From 1270 AC, for its historical (cultural) and natural factors, was selected as a capital of Ilkhanian Empire               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For desirable pasture, and the variety of wild animals.</li> <li>this area's name in Ilkhanian duration was "Saturagh"</li> </ol> </li> <li>some shapes and pictures were used in the tiles such as octagonal and Chalipa (cross), and the animals such as deer, lion, and dragon               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some local residents, say a legend about the dragon that the shape in the tiles came from the Dragon Stream at the south of Takhte Suleiman with 3m high (Prophet Suleiman changed the Dragon that wanted to attack the Takht, to stone) (Navman, 1996, p) [4]</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

TABLE II: THE NATURAL FACTORS OF TAKHTE SULEIMAN (PREPARED BY AUTHORS) [5]

Area	Factors	Illustration
Takhte Suleiman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Natural hill of Takhte Suleiman</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>from 3000 years before, from the lime of the holy spring at the bottom of the lake, it has 2 streams</li> <li>the height of this truncated cone is 60 m (Hingfon and Navmen, 1995, p33)</li> <li>the legends indicate that the Takhte Suleiman is the birthplace of Zoroaster</li> <li></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Holy lake of Takhte Suleiman</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the holy lake with 60 m diameter and 46-49 m depth from the edge (near the spring it's 64m and in the hole of source is about 112m depth) real measuring is impossible because of the water velocity and salts (Hingfon and nowman, 1995, p40)</li> <li>The lake had 7 streams that turned 7 water mill around the hill. (Mostofi, 1913, p64) (Sassanian period)</li> </ul>

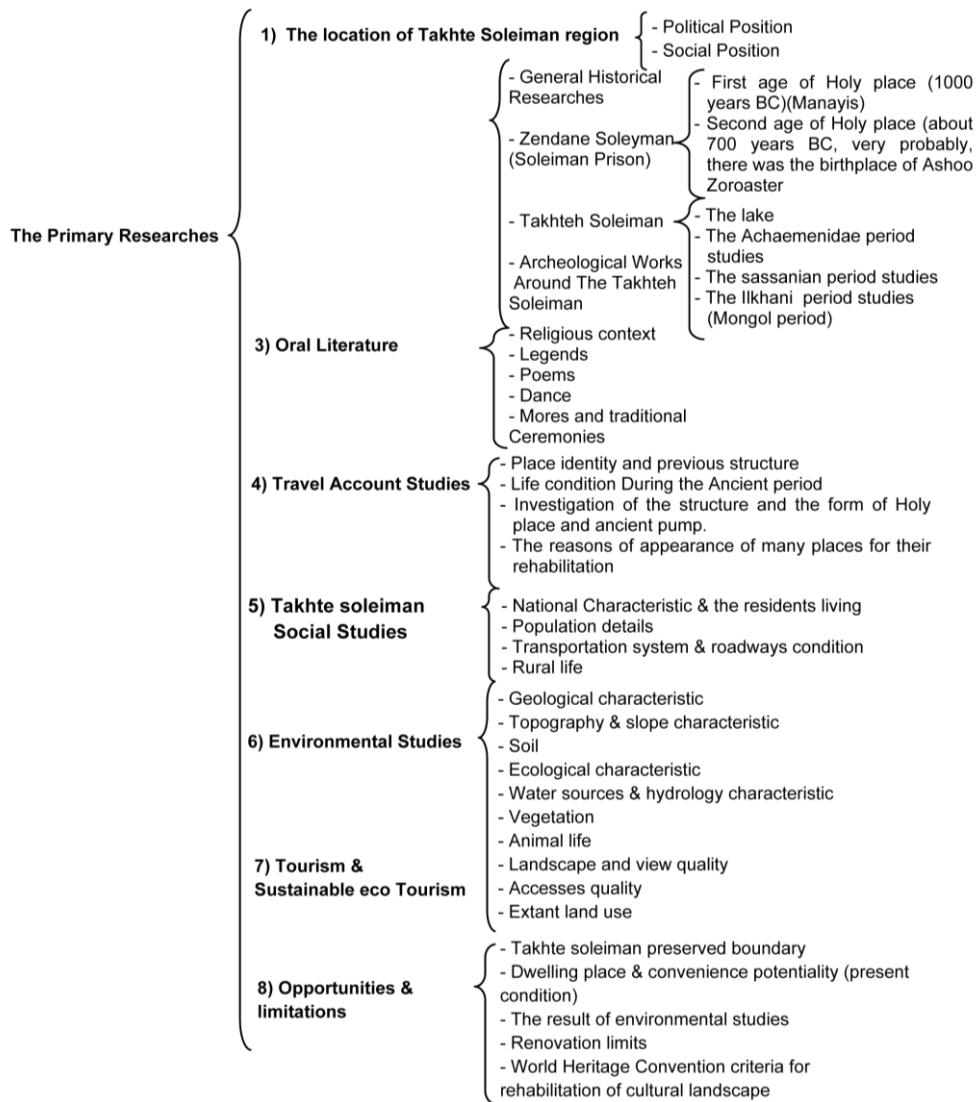


Fig. 2. Takht-e Suleiman primary studies (stages) (source: Authors).

At the beginning of the first millennium BC, the residential area around the slope of Zendan Suleiman Mountain had the appearance of an ancient holy place. The Ancient crockery identification which is found from Zendane Mountain proves that the area has been the domain of Manayyha between 830-660 BC (Fig. 4). But the holy place was abounded when the holy water subsided in the mountain (on the basis of the ancient legend this place has been known as a birthplace of Zoroaster) [6].

## VI. THE NATURAL FACTORS OF TAKHTE SULEIMAN

After explanation of the old manayid -and before it- vestige (2000, 3000 BC) from the ancient existing maps, an important part of this paper is the introduction of natural factors as the Criteria for the Cultural Landscape exploration. For this reason, some specialities have been mentioned in the below table.

## VII. TRADITIONAL CEREMONY

### A. Piteh Shahim — Agricultural Ceremony of Zoroastrians

The third ceremony of traditional customs is “Piteh

Shahim” from 17 to 21 September, (21 to 25 of Shahrivar in Pahlavi Months) for thanksgiving from the blessing of God especially the agricultural products as the conclusion of summer symbol. On the basis of the Zoroastrian customs in this ceremony all of the priests and public wear the clean clothes with white hat for men and scarf for woman and put the variety of fruits such as “apple, water melon, melon” and milk, mirror, brazier, and holy plants such as “myrtle and garden thyme” and ... on the white tablecloth. Thereafter the priests stand in front of the table and one of them read the Avesta (holy book of Zoroaster). In this ceremony on the basis of usual tradition, some nuts “Lark” that is composed of 7 kinds of dried fruits such as “walnut, almond, fig, date and ...” and the fresh fruits pieces are distributed among the audience and pour people. The last stage is pouring the mixed of garlic and vinegar in the streams of the Takht-e Suleiman holy lake. Some of the people drink this water or take it by themselves.

On the basis of some Uoga teacher’s belief, the water and the place of this lake is one of the earth “Chakra” (the spot of earth that has energies). Always in spring, the variety of meditation programs are took place around the holy lake of Takht-e Suleiman [7].



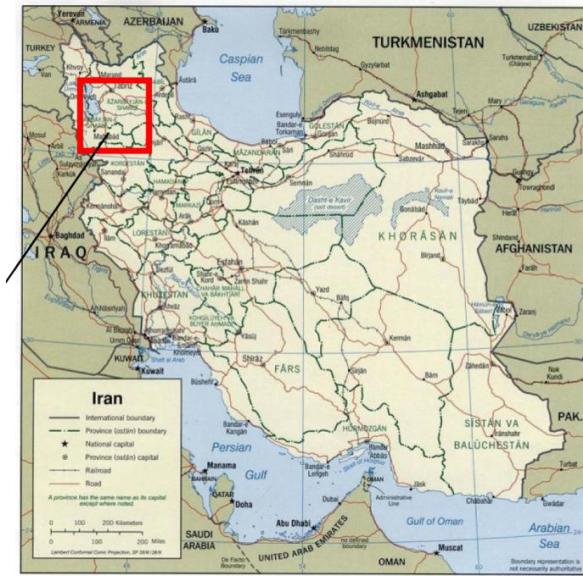
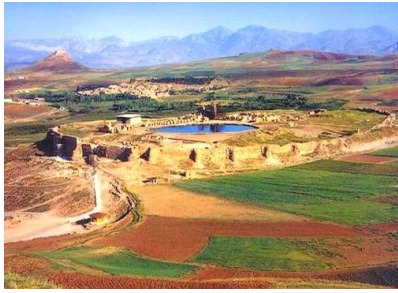


Fig. 3. Location of Tekab town and Takhte Suleiman region and the view of Takht-e Suleiman and Zendan Suleiman (source: <http://dalahoo.com>, accessed date: 12 July, 2010).



Fig. 4. The traditional Zoroastrian Ceremony at Takhte Suleiman Hill, around the holy lake (Navman, 1996, p).

One of the holy plants which is used in fire temole and cultivated in holy gardens by the priest, is "Hom". This plant is fragrant and causes intoxication.

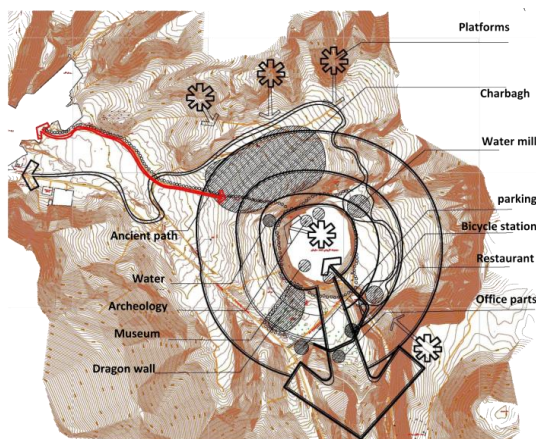


Fig. 5. The different vestiges location around the Takhte Suleiman on the basis of the testimonies (maps, pictures, texts and ...) (authors).

## VIII. CONCLUSION

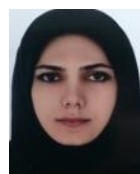
The historical and natural researches show that the Takhte Suleiman Cultural landscape in addition to cultural specialities that have been registered in ICOMOS, has the natural potential as 2nd and 3rd criteria of cultural landscape deliberation. Furthermore the oral literature such as legends and poems are the parts of culture that should be registered in ICOMOS documents.

On the basis of ancient maps, ancient travel documents and some of the ruined vestige can be rehabilitated such as:

- 1) Charbagh Gardens from the east to north side of the Takhteh Suleiman.
- 2) Water mills at northeast and northwest.
- 3) The historical way between north entrance of Takhte Suleiman and Zendaneh Suleiman
- 4) Dragon wall and stream at the south of Takhte Suleiman
- 5) Ancient streams around the Takhte Suleiman
- 6) Holy gardens in Takhte Suleiman
- 7) Ancient City of Shiz
- 8) Incompleted archeological explorations
- 9) Natural landscape of Zendane Suleiman
- 10) Natural landscape of Takhte Suleiman and its holy lake
- 11) Hunting gardens of Ilkhanian period
- 12) Ancient Zoroastrian ceremony

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