



## DARYĀ-YE NŪR

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**DARYĀ-YE NŪR** (lit., “sea of light”), one of the largest diamonds in the world, kept and exhibited in the Jewel museum of the Central bank of Persia (Bānk-e markazī-e Īrān). It was mined in the famous Golconda diamond fields in southern India and, with the Kūh-e nūr (lit., “mountain of light,” now part of the British crown jewels), was brought to Persia in 1151/1739 as part of the booty from Nāder Shah’s Indian campaign. During the unstable period following the assassination of Nāder Shah in 1160/1747 it was held in turn by his grandson Šāhroḡ, [‘Alam Khan Arab Ḳozayma](#), and Moḡammad-Ḥasan Khan Qājār (Jamālzāda, p. 6; *Ḍokā’*, p. 60) and finally came into the possession of Karīm Khan Zand (1163-93/1750-79).

In 1209/1794 the Daryā-ye nūr was removed from the armband of Loṭf-‘Alī Khan, the last Zand ruler (1203-09/1789-94), by [Aḡā Moḡammad Khan Qājār](#) (1209-11/1794-97) in Kermān; it was then inserted in the armband worn by successive Qajar kings. It was the favorite gem of NāsĀer-al-Dīn Shah (1264-1313 /1848-96); when wearing armbands became outmoded in the latter part of his reign he wore it variously on his watchband, chest, and hat (Jamālzāda, p. 7). Finally, it was incorporated into one of the royal aigrettes (*jeqqa*), placed within a golden frame decorated with images of the Kayānī crown and two lions and suns ornamented with 475 small brilliants and four rubies (see *Ḍokā’*, p. 60). Moḡaffar-al-Dīn Shah (1313-24 /1896-1907) wore it on his karakul cap during his European tour in 1321/1902 (Meen and Tushingham, 1968, p. 53). When Moḡammad-‘Alī Shah (1324-27/1907-09) was forced to abdicate and took refuge in the Russian legation in Tehran, he took



the crown jewels, including the Daryā-ye nūr, with him; he returned it to the Golestān palace museum only under pressure from the constitutionalists (Taqīzāda, pp. 146-48; Jamālzāda, p. 7). Reżā Shah (1304-20 Š./1925-41) and Moḥammad-Reżā Shah wore it on their military caps en route to their coronations, in 1305 Š./1926 and 1346 Š./1967 respectively (Meen and Tushingham, 1968, p. 53).

The Daryā-ye nūr is a flawless pink diamond, the sixth largest known in the world; it is a rectangular, step-cut tablet, 41.4 x 29.5 x 12.15 mm. Reports of its weight vary between 182 and 186 carats. One of the facets is incised with the words “al-Solṭān sÂāḥeb-qerān Fath-‘Alī Šāh Qājār 1250.” At present the Daryā-ye nūr is set in a frame 2.8 x 2.1 in (Meen and Tushingham, 1968, p. 53; Dōkā’, pp. 60-61).

See [CROWN JEWELS](#).

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(YAḤYĀ DOKĀ’)