

INDIA (BHARAT) - TAJIKASTAN AND ARYANS



Dr. Gaurav A. Vyas

This book contains the rich History of India (Bharat), Tajikastan and Aryans.

This book is written by collecting information from various sources available on the internet.

ROOTSHUNT

15, Mangalyam Society, Near Ocean Park, Nehrunagar, Ahmedabad – 380 015, Gujarat, BHARAT.

M : 0091 – 98792 58523 / Web : www.rootshunt.com / E-mail : hunt2roots@yahoo.com

Contents at a glance :

PART - 1

1.	Early Tajikastan History	1
2.	Tajikastan region and Zoroastrianism	3
3.	Sugd / Sogdiana - Tajikastan Region	10
4.	Pamir / Badakhshan Region	23
5.	Avesta : Khorda Avesta	56
6.	Avesta : Vendiad (English) : Fargard 1	82
7.	Pamiri Houses	93
8.	Pamir Historical Sites	107

1. Early Tajikistan History :

While the Tajiks are passionate about their Aryan heritage and aware of their Zoroastrian roots, they do not have a sense of their early history and it is not until the rise of the Samanid dynasty in the ninth century ACE, that the Tajiks gained a sense national identity. Even their name as a group is relatively modern.

Airyana Vaeja, the land of the Aryans, the birthplace of Zarathushtra and Zoroastrianism could very well have been located in the environs of Tajikistan. The Amu Darya river, called Panj in Tajikistan, today forms the southern border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. The river (probably the northern reaches that borders Uzbekistan) is mentioned in texts as being on the boundary between Turan and the Iran of old. There are other striking clues that point to this possibilities.

Various text state that Tajikistan was originally part of the Bactrian kingdom - the Bakhdi of the Zoroastrian Avesta. Bakhdi in turn, was later a part of the greater Iranian nation.

Airyana Vaeja itself disappeared from history only to re-emerge as Iran - the name of the country ruled by the Persian Sassanian kings in 226 ACE. It is also possible that the original Aryan lands were abandoned by the Aryans because of extreme climate changes or because of invasions. Tajikistan, being on the frontiers between the Indo-Iranian nations and the Turkomans, has constantly been subject to domination by invading armies. It is also known to experience severe cold spells.

[Oxus Treasure at the British Museum Items related to the Oxus Treasure at the British Museum](#)

[Samanid Dynasty 819-1005 ACE :](#)



Samanid Territory

The Samanid dynasty was founded after the collapse of the Persian Sassanid dynasty. The dynasty was named after its founder Saman Khuda, a Iranian Tajik, who was a member of the Zoroastrian theocratic nobility with roots in the city of Balkh. Saman Khuda converted to Sunni Islam.

The initial territory governed by Saman Khoda was small. During the reign of Saman-Khuda's great-grandson, Ismail I (892–907 ACE), Samanid territory expanded considerably. In 900, Ismail defeated the Saffarids in Khorasan. Ismail's brother was the governor of Transitional at that time. The highest peak in Tajikistan is named Peak Ismail Samani.

While the Samanids allied themselves with the Abbasid dynasty that ruled Iran, they were the first Iranian dynasty to rule after the Arab conquest of Iran. They declared that declared that "here, in this region, the language is Persian, and the kings of this realm are Persian kings." Their capital was Bokhara.

Samanid rule lasted for 180 years. At its greatest extent Samanid territory included Khorasan, Ray, Transoxiana, Tabaristan, Kerman, Gorgan, and the area west of these provinces up to Isfahan. To legitimize the dynasty, the Samanids claimed to be descendants of Bahram Chobin, and therefore descended from the House of Mihran, one of the Seven Great Houses of Iran.

The Emergence of the Tajik Nation :

From 1924 to 1929, Tajikistan was part of the Soviet republic of Uzbekistan as the Tajik Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. Some soviets championed the cause of an separate Tajik republic, a cause that was resisted by the Uzbeks. A report was commissioned and in 1929 the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic was made a separate constituent republic. However, the predominantly ethnic Tajik cities of Samarkand and Bukhara remained in the Uzbek SSR. The 1929 report to the Commission in Charge of Resolving the Land Dispute between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan by Nissar Muhammadov provides interesting information, and perhaps clues to older disputes say between the ancient Aryans and Turan and later between the Iranians and the Turkoman. The following are some extracts:

"As is evident, they (Tajiks) are the heirs to the most ancient Aryan culture of Asia related to the Iranian groups of the great Aryan tribes. As a result of their many misfortunes they have deposited their material remains in many places on the Iranian plateau. Even if the Aryan population of all these places were eliminated, the remainder of its inhabitants inform us of the great civilization which had spread far and wide, away from the present center of the Tajiks. We observe a clear indication of this in the (Tajikistan) Republic and in the former Turkistan region (Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Karakyrghyzstan, and Karakalpakistan). There is a great archaeological treasure in this land yet to be unearthed and studied. Present-day Tajikistan encompasses only a portion of the Central Asian archaeological remains of the Tajiks' past. Since this is a part of the whole under the present conditions of the nation, it would be impossible to study it without extending the studies to encompass the neighbouring republics."

"To summarize, the Tajiks are the most ancient peoples of Central Asia. Even after the invasion of the foreigners, which eliminated the Iranian element or otherwise tried to assimilate it into itself in a large region, or forced it to flee to the mountains, the Tajiks survived and still occupy a considerable tract of land in Central Asia. The northern settlements of the Tajiks are in the region of the Chatqal River (headwaters of the Chatqal River are in the Tashkent district). Biskon at 42š is the northern-most Tajik settlement of that time. About half a degree south, on the slopes of the same mountain system, the northern-most settlements remain in Ferghana surrounded by Turks as well as the not-so-large groups of Tajiks of the Tashkent district. In

the eastern-most region of Tajik lands, which has separated itself from the body and gone ahead somewhat, are the independent villages on the slopes of the Himalayan mountains where these mountains join their eastern companions. Defining the spread of the Tajiks south is somewhat more difficult. The land inhabited exclusively by the Tajiks is in the south of the Turkistan mountains and the neighbouring Altai mountain to the headwaters of the Amu River (Panj River) and in other areas in Afghanistan and eastern Badakhshan which include the northern slopes of the Hindu Kush and its valleys."

"As mentioned above, the Tajiks are the oldest inhabitants of Central Asia. At some point, the Iranian element, known in Central Asia as the Tajiks, controlled this region along with northern Afghanistan, the Caspian region, Khwarazm, the regions of Bukhara, the east and west of the so-called Chinese Turkistan, and the Iranian plateau. The culture of the Tajiks' ancestors played a major role in the world as testified to by Laufer who said, "We know that at some point the Iranian peoples occupied limitless lands which included Chinese Turkistan through which they had established trade, especially with the Chinese and the Turks. The Iranians were the great middlemen connecting the West to the East. They brought the heritage of the Greeks to Central Asia and the East and carried the plants and objects of art from China to the Mediterranean. Their activities had historical and world-wide significance to a degree that without access to Chinese documents we would not be able to write the true history of this period.

"The wave of attacks and their subsequent resettlement in Central Asia adversely affected the Iranians, forcing them to either assimilate into the invaders or flee into the highlands for protection. These were places that, unlike the river valleys, were not desired by the invaders.

"The very reason that present-day Tajiks' occupy the most difficult terrain, away from the good pastures, is that their best lands and most profitable occupations had been usurped by the invaders. That which remains continues to be desired by the same invaders.

Source : <https://www.heritageinstitute.com/zoroastrianism/tajikistan/page6.htm>

2. Tajikistan region and Zoroastrianism :

Tajikistan has very interesting connections to Zoroastrianism and the history of the early Zoroastrians.

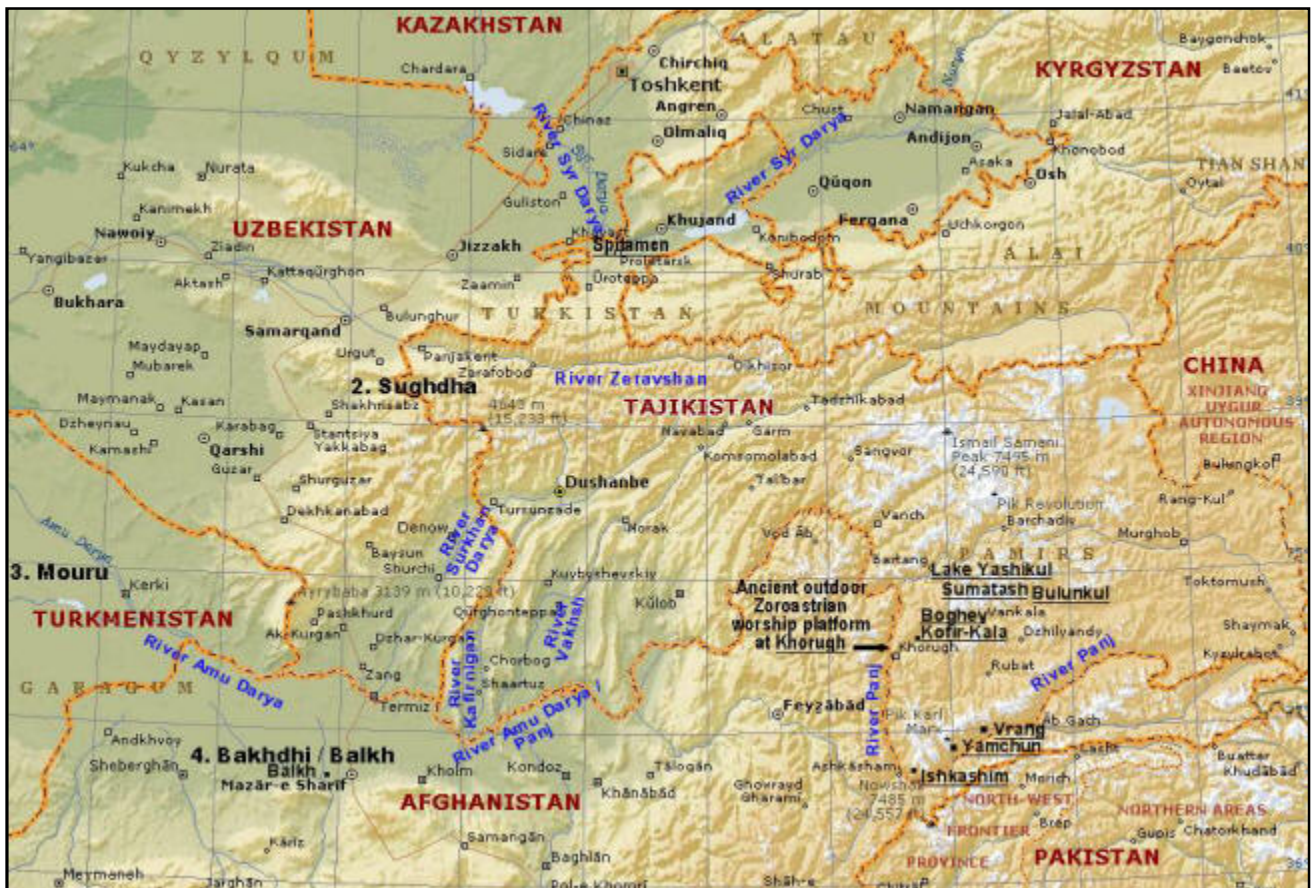
Tajikistan is a land-locked Central Asian state with a population of about seven million people. It is home to the Pamir mountains, also called the roof of the world. Ninety percent of Tajikistan is covered with mountains that contain 8,000 glaciers. The glaciers are the source of many Central Asian rivers. Tajikistan's location is to Asia what Switzerland is to Europe. However, while Tajikistan has great potential, gracious people and spectacular vistas, Tajikistan is presently the poorest country in Central Asia, its glaciers are retreating due to global warming, and its forests have been denuded.

The people of the region state that Zoroastrianism is native to their area. Some Tajiks feel that Zoroastrianism's home was ancient Sugd (ancient Sughdha), that is, the area now part of

northern Tajikistan and southern Uzbekistan. Sughdha is the second Vendidad nation*. Other Tajiks consider Zoroastrianism to be a Pamiri (eastern Tajik) religion, and yet others say Zoroastrianism is a Bactrian / Balkh / Bakhdi (the fourth Vendidad* nation) religion. Balkh is today a part of northern Afghanistan, an area with a substantial Tajik population.

* The Vendidad is a book of the Zoroastrian scriptures, the Avesta. The first chapter of the Vendidad lists sixteen ancient nations, the first of which is Airyana Vaeja, the land of the Aryans. Airyana Vaeja is the nation where Zarathushtra lived and proclaimed his religion. While the location of Airyana Vaeja remains a mystery, the next three nations listed in the Vendidad are all in and around the Tajikistan area. They are identified and numbered in the map below.

Sugd (Sughdha) and Balkh (Bakhdi) are respectively the second and fourth nations listed in the Vendidad - and they are likely the second and fourth nations to receive Zoroastrianism. Sughdha and Bakhdi probably neighbored Airyana Vaeja, the first Vendidad nation, making the rest of Tajikistan including the Pamirs strong candidates for the location of Airyana Vaeja.



Tajikistan / Airyana Vaeja locale. Base map courtesy Microsoft Encarta

Meaning of the Name Tajikistan :

The name Tajik and Tajikistan are relatively modern names. There is dissention about the origins of the name Tajik and theories abound. One theory is that the name Tajik comes from the Persian word for crown, taj. Taji would therefore mean people from the crown (of the world) perhaps refering to the Pamirs otherwise known as the roof of the world.

The word stan means place or home in Persian. Tajikistan, therefore means the home or place of the Tajik.

Iranian / Aryan Heritage :



Tajik family celebrating Nowruz Photo credit: Flickr via Wikipedia

The Tajiks proudly proclaim their Iranian / Aryan heritage and claim either Tajikistan or neighbouring Balkh as the birthplace of Zarathushtra. Within Tajikistan, the Pamiri people claim to be a separate Iranian / Aryan people.

Language & Culture :

While the languages of the surrounding states on three sides: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, have Turkic roots, the language of Tajikistan is, like the language of its neighbour to the south, Afghanistan, similar to Persian.

The connection with Iranian culture goes further. Tajikistan's music, dance and poetry - all have Iranian roots.

Anthropology :

The anthropological characteristics of a large number of the Tajiks are Indo-Iranian. The photograph to the right shows a Tajik family celebrating Nowruz. The photograph can very well be mistaken for a photograph of a family in Iran. Intermingled are other ethnic groups that are predominant in neighbouring states.

Scull Caps / Toki / Kallapush :



Ishkashim Scull Cap Image credit: Pamir.org

Scull caps are a necessary part of a person's attire in cold climates. In Tajikistan, however, the scull cap takes on added meaning. The Tajik work toki could have become topee, meaning hat in India.

The people of Tajikistan wear skull-caps with Zoroastrian and Indo-Iranian symbols woven into the design, symbols such as fire and even the swastika. The woman in the header at the top of the page is wearing a decorative scull cap. Scull caps were a common part of Zoroastrian daily attire as well as religious attire.

The scull cap is a regional and community identifier for the wearer. For instance, the people of the Pamirs wear round and flat caps and people of different religious sects within the same region may also wear group-specific scull caps. The scull caps worn by Zoroastrians in India and Iran have also at times been used as a group identifier.

Tajikistan Flag's Zoroastrian Symbolism :



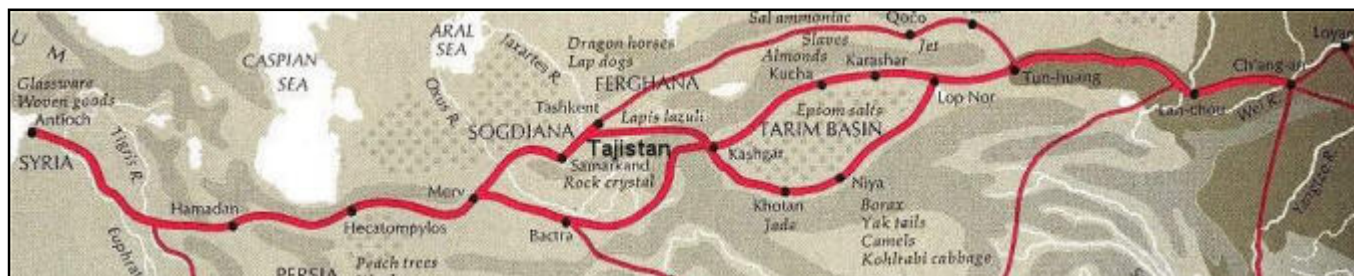
Tajikistan flag

Tajikistan's president, Emomali Rahmonov, has promoted Tajikistan's awareness of its Zoroastrian and Aryan roots in his book *The Tajiks In The Mirror of History*. This awareness has led to the incorporation of Zoroastrian symbolism in its flag.

The seven stars in the center of the flag represent the seven Amesha Spentas. The crown (taj in Persian and Tajik) represents both the name of the people and country as well as the Samanid crown.

While the green, white and red have other professed meanings, red and white are traditional colours connected with Zoroastrianism (see page 4) while green represents nature and creation.

Silk Roads :



The Silk Road Between China and Syria

The Silk Roads are not a single road, but a network of ancient roads that extended for 7,000 miles or 10,000 km. connecting Asia Minor through Iran with China's old capital at Changan (now Xian). The Silk Roads run through Tajikistan where they divide, one branch going north of the Pamirs and the other south.

The Iranian or Aryans have traditionally been involved with trade between the east and west. They developed trade between the nations to the east and west of them. Their involvement in trading made them familiar with these lands and when the time came for them to migrate, fanning out west and south along the roads.



**The Silk Road running through Kyzyl Art ashuu (pass) in the Pamirs,
the border between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan
Customs shacks can be seen down the road
The snow capped mountain is an unnamed, 5'459 m high peak
photo credit: Dietrich Meyer at Trekearth**

Deserts and Lush Valleys :



Barren Pamir valley in Tajikistan. Photo credit: dwrawlinson at Flickr

The photograph above is an example of the arid desert-like regions of Tajikistan. The country also has lush green valleys.



Lush green valley in Tajikistan

3. Sugd / Sogdiana - Tajikistan Region :

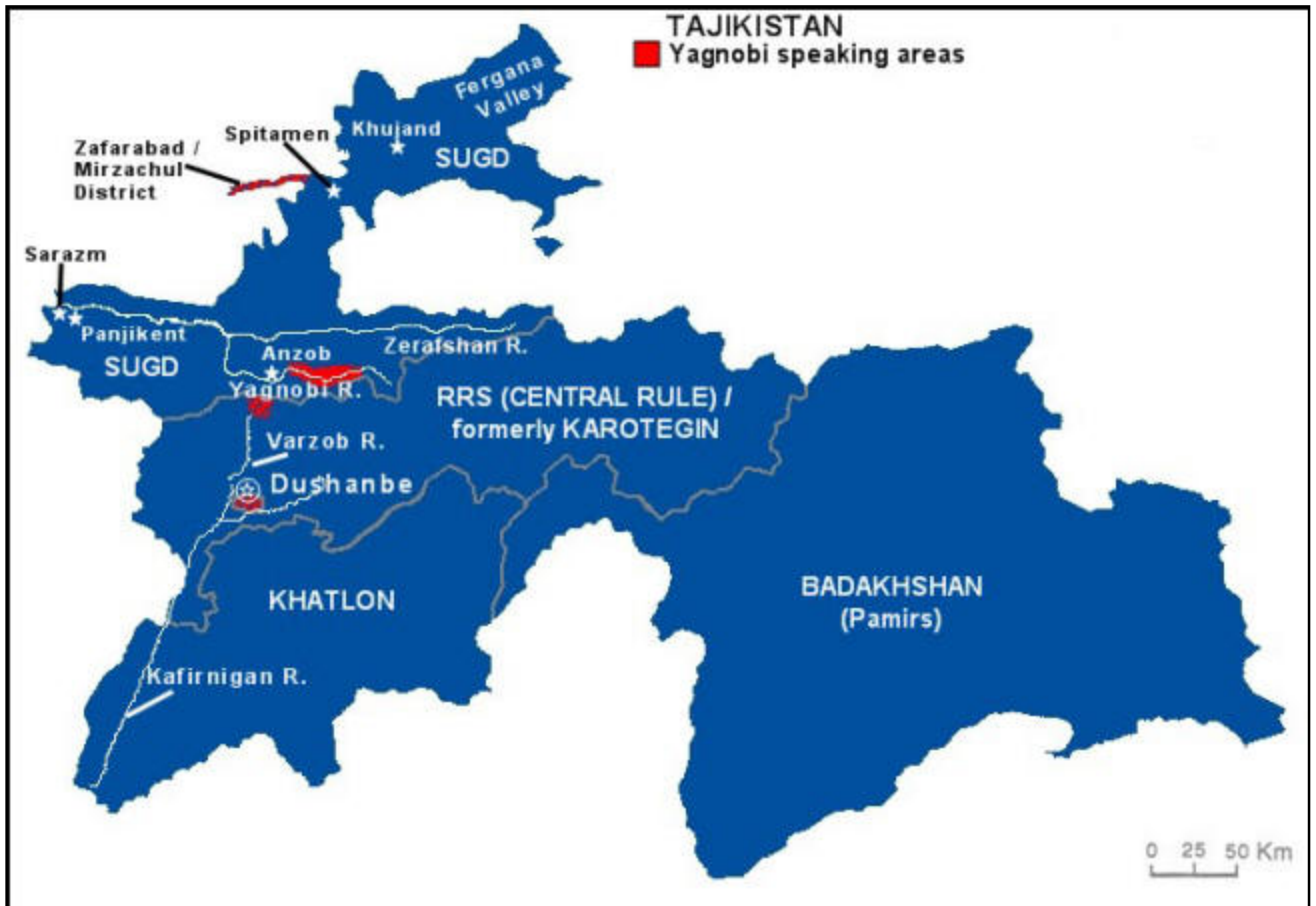
The land of ancient Sughdha (Sugd) and its Zerafshan River valley, straddles the border of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Sughdha is the second nation mentioned in the Avestan.

In Tajikistan, the ancient land of Sughdha form present day Sugd (Sughd) province. Sugd province includes the Yagnobi river valley as well as the Fergana / Syr Darya valley in the north.



Map of Turan & Sugd (Tuirya & Sughdha). Base map courtesy Microsoft Encarta

Yagnob / Yaghnob :



Zerafshan & Yagnobi rivers in Sugd Province. Yagnobi speaking areas are shaded in red.



Anzob Pass. Photo credit: Tajikistan Photo Gallery by Mikhail Romanyuk

A hundred kilometres north of Tajikistan's capital Dushanbe, over the **Anzob pass** in an eastern spur of the mountains stemming from the Pamirs, lies the mysterious Yagnob (also spelt Yaghnoobi) valley. Yagnob is taken to mean ice river and is a reminder of the very cold winters in the upper valley.

A tributary of the Zerafshan river, the Yagnobi river travels westward for 120 kilometres in a valley parallel to and south of the Zerafshan valley. The Yagnobi valley is formed by the Hissar range to its the south and the Zerafshan range in its north. At the end of the valley its swings northward to join the Zerafshan (also spelt Zarafshan, Zeravshan) River at Aini.

Some of the Sogdian traders who plied their trade along the Silk Roads between China and Asia Minor and even resided in China, came from the Yagnobi region of Sugd. The Yagnobi Sogdians have special links to Zoroastrianism. They left behind a legacy including Avestan texts written in Yagnobi Sogdian (see below). Even today, names like Rustam, a legendary Aryan / Iranian name, are common among the Yagnobi. The Yagnobi language spoken today is a dialect of the ancient Sogdian language which died out some time after the 10th century CE.

Nowadays, the Yagnobi people who remain as a distinct ethnic group number a few thousands. During the Soviet era, under the pretext that the Yagnobi were in danger of avalanches, the Yagnobi, in 1970, were forcibly resettled in the desolate plains of the Mirzachul region (Zafarabad) of northern Tajikistan where labour was needed to tend cotton fields. Many of the Yagnobi resisted and they were subjected to much brutality. The Soviets destroyed their villages and homes to prevent the Yagnobi from returning to their homes. Their religious books, the oldest of which was 600 years old, were destroyed and their ethnicity officially abolished. Why the Soviets went to such lengths to destroy the Yagnobi as a distinct ethnic group is a matter of speculation. The Yagnobi were resented by many Islamist Tajiks who felt that they were late in adopting Islam and continued to practice an ancient religion, probably Zoroastrianism or a variant.

Nevertheless, in 1983 and the years following, a few surviving and brave Yagnobis started returning to their ancestral lands. They re-established small settlements and rebuilt their destroyed homes. By 1990, when the Post-Soviet Dushanbe-based Council of Ministers passed the decision to officially re-establish all Yagnobi villages whose populations had been resettled, only about 300 people were living in the Yaghnoob valley. The Council asked the Tajik Academy of Science to support the preservation of the Yaghnoobi language (Badenkov et al., 1994, pp. 476-84; Gunja, 1996, pp. 68-69).



Yagnobi Settlement. Photo credit: Tajikistan Photo Gallery by Mikhail Romanyuk

Eternal Coal Fires :



Kuhi Malik coal fires

In the Yagnob valley, in the vicinity of Kishlak Ravat, is the Kuhi Malik gorge, famous since Herodotus, for its "fiery caves."

Here in the caves are coal deposits that have been burning for 3.5 million years, and in the process a vast underground labyrinth of caverns has been created.

The ever burning underground fires are reputed to have inspired the notion of an eternal flame in Zoroastrianism.

Yagnob Winters :



Yagnobi houses & settlement

Image credit: Silk Road Tajikistan & various locations

The Yagnob canyon is home to the Yagnobi people. When the winter snows come, the road out of the canyon becomes impassable, forcing the inhabitants to patiently wait for the snows to melt, huddled around fires on goatskins spread on the stone floors on their homes. Monica Whitlock of BBC lived with the Yagnobi and wrote a report describing how the Yagnobi are home bound during the winter. Her report paints a picture reminiscent of the Jamshedi era account of the people waiting out a severe winter in a community housing system of connected houses and narrow alleys called a Vara. The cold winters in the canyon and the Yagnobi lifestyle makes the area a candidate (as does the Pamirs) for Airyana Vaeja during the prehistoric Jamshidi era.

Spitamen :

Interestingly, in the north of Tajikistan's Sughd province, there is a town called Spitamen. It lies on the Aksuu river, and is just south of the famed Syr Darya river. The name Spitamen sounds similar to Spitama, the Avesta word used in conjunction with Zarathushtra's name (his family name?), as in Spitama Zarathushtra.



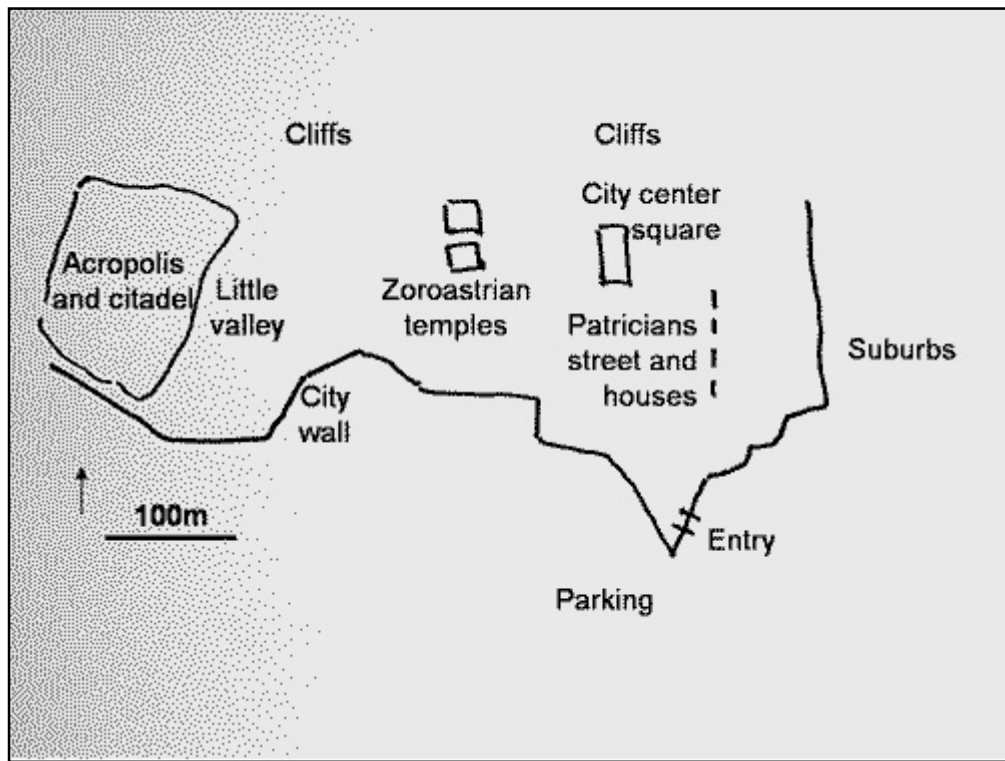
Ruins at Bunjikath, Panjikent overlooking the Zerafshan Valley.

After the Arabs invaded Central Asia in the early eighth century CE, local Sogdian rulers of the smaller principalities in the Samarkand-Zerafshan Valley fled 60 km east to Panjikent (meaning five towns, and now in Tajikistan but previously a part of Sugd) located on the River Zerafshan and further upstream.

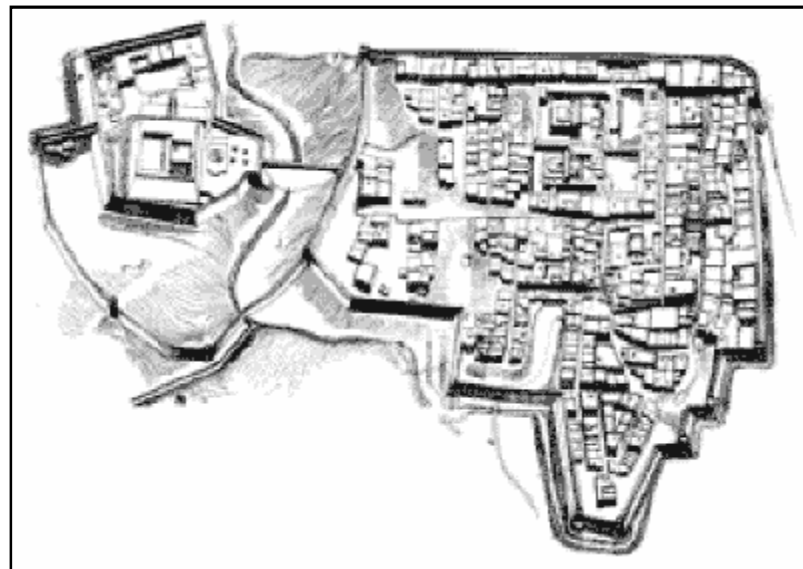
Today Panjikent (also spelt Panjekent, Panjakent, or Penjikent and derived from the Sogdian Panchekanth) is one of Tajikistan's larger cities. It is home to the poet Rudaki's mausoleum and ancient Sogdian /Zoroastrian ruins. Located on the southern slopes overlooking the city and the Zerafshan Valley - at the edge of the city of Panjikent - is the 5th century CE archaeological site of **Bunjikath**. In its day, the city was situated on the rim of a high terrace overlooking a fertile, well-irrigated valley.



Panjikent and the Zerafshan River and valley from the Bunjikath site. Credit: Explo Guide.



Site map of the ruins of Bunjikath at Panjikent. Credit: Explo Guide



Reconstructed aerial view and layout of ancient Panjikent
Image credit: Panjakent at Tourism in Tajikistan.

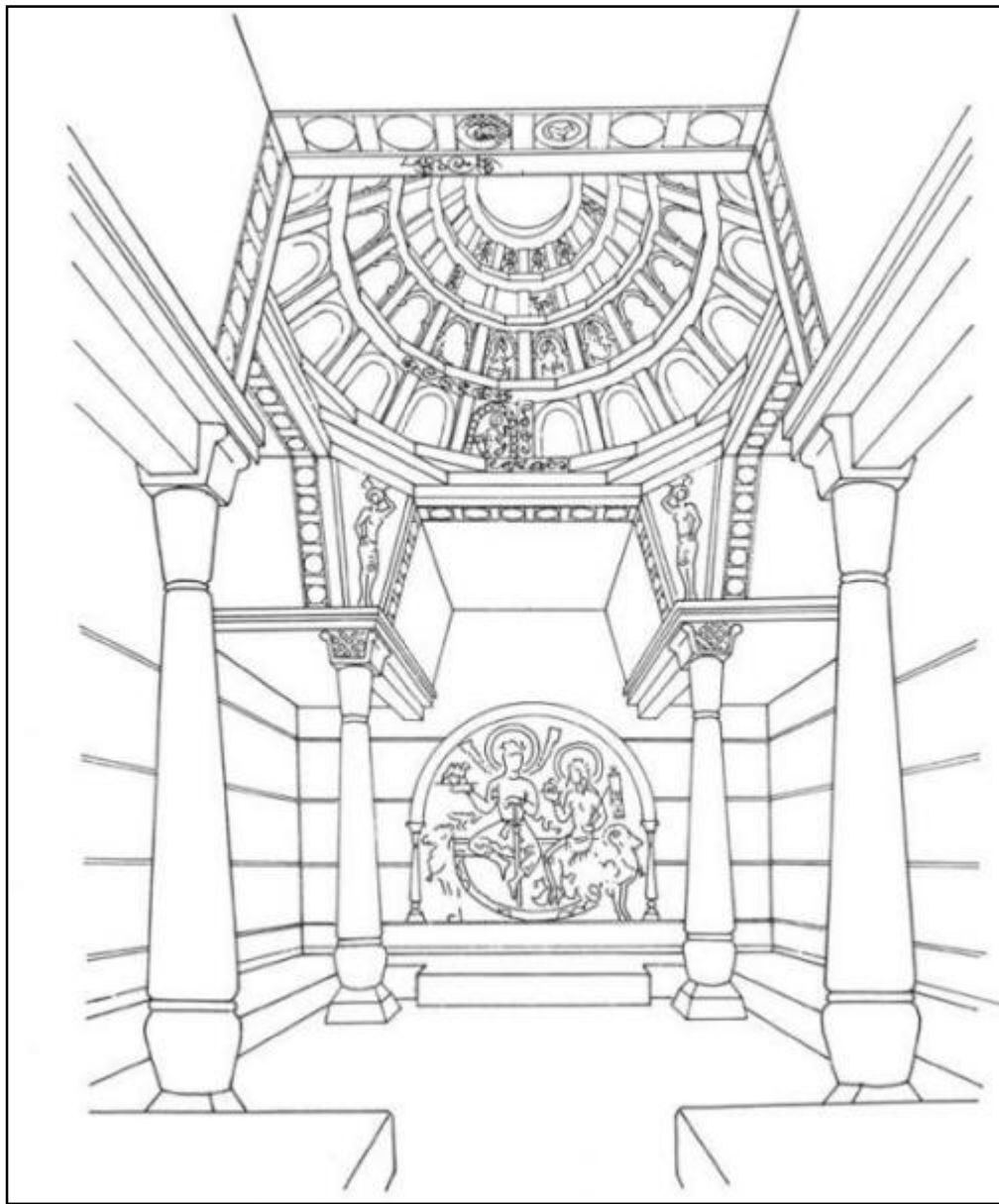
Description of the site from [Encyclopaedia Iranica](#): "Its (ancient Panjikent's) citadel (see Isakov 1979) is separated by a ravine from the shahrestan or city proper, which lies to the east of the citadel and is surrounded by fortified walls of its own. Two additional walls cross the ravine, linking the shahrestan with the citadel, and creating a unified defensive system around the entire city. The central structure of the citadel is a square fort built close to the northern part of a mountain ridge, which runs from south to north. In the end of the 7th or the early 8th century CE, a square keep was erected in the southeast corner of the fort. At the foot of the

fort and to the north of it lies the lower fortification, watered by the abundant Qaynar spring. It shows traces of habitation from the **2nd century BCE**. to the 1st century CE. This cultural layer contains remnants of ceramics, but none of buildings. To the south of the fort stood a fortified wall, which defended the citadel against attacks from the top of the ridge. There were no buildings between the wall and the fort. On a hilly site to the east of the fort once rose the richly decorated palace of **Devashtich** (708?-22 CE), which apparently burned down in 722 CE. It was an expansion and an extensive reconstruction of an earlier building, dating from the 6th century CE. Another palace from the 6th century was located in the lower fortifications.

"In the **5th century** the area of the city proper (without the citadel) measured about eight hectares. Straight fortified walls defended the settlement: the northern wall running along the rim of the terrace, and the eastern wall perpendicular to it. The southern wall ran straight only where the terrain permitted, and the western wall followed the irregular edge of the hill, departing from the overall regular design. The city walls of Panjikant in the 5th century were ten to eleven meters high, bristling with numerous towers, and punctured by embrasures in a chessboard pattern. Later the walls were made thicker, with fewer towers, a sloping façade, and no embrasures close to the foundations. The residential buildings of the city consisted of several small rooms with low wooden ceilings. All walls were made of sun-dried brick and clay. The streets and alleys intersected at right angles. The land at the city center, where two temples stood, has apparently been dedicated to sacral purposes since the founding of the settlement.

"The architectural style of the temples, which by the beginning of the 8th century CE had undergone many reconstructions, can be traced back to the traditions of Bactria. The two temples are very much alike: each consisted of a central building facing east and surrounded by a yard, which was adjacent to yet another yard to the east, with an exit to the street. A visitor walking from the street towards the main building would have seen the sacred spaces of the two yards open before his eyes one after the other, until, standing in the inner yard, he would have seen not only the portico, but also the interior of the central hall, which—not enclosed by a wall—opened directly onto the portico of the main building. At the far end of the hall there was a door leading to the cella, and on each side of it two niches with clay statues of divinities. A characteristic feature of the Sogdian temple was its openness to the rays of the rising sun and to the eyes of the laity. The passageways to the corridor, which circumvented the hall and the cella behind it opened onto the portico to the sides of the central hall. A space for the sacred fire was added to Temple 1 only in the late 5th and the 6th century CE.

"The earliest nauses of the necropolis at the edge of the ancient city, with Zoroastrian ossuary burials, date back to the 5th and the beginning of the 6th centuries CE. At the end of the 5th century the area of the city had grown to 13.5 hectares. New fortifications were built to the south and east, so part of the old walls were enclosed within the perimeter of the new ones, dividing the city into inner and outer quarters. The walls of the inner city were repaired and reinforced in the 6th and the 7th centuries. They were pulled down only at the beginning of the 8th century.



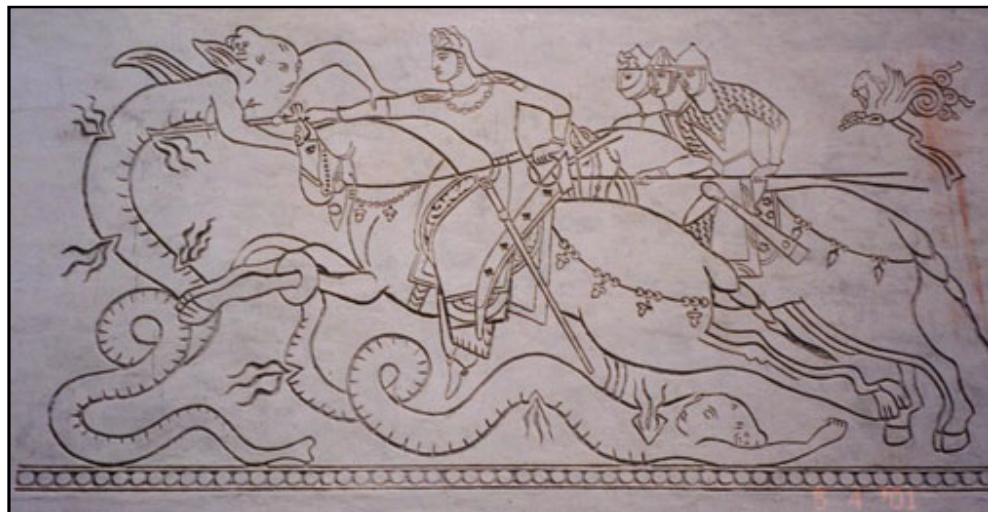
**Reception hall of a 5-7 cent. CE Panjikent house
(reconstruction by B. Marshak & E. Buklaeva; after Marshak, 2002, fig. 10).
Image credit: Encyclopaedia Iranica**

"The earliest murals in the palaces of the citadel date from the 6th century. Some of the houses built during the 6th century were two stories high, with vaulted ceilings on the lower floor, and murals on the walls of some rooms. However, during the 5th-6th centuries, no building in Panjikant could rival the magnificence of the two temples, and even the houses of the most prosperous residents seemed rather humble in comparison. In the 7th-8th centuries, though, it was the houses of the rich that set the tone of urban architecture in the city. The end of the 7th century and especially the first quarter of the 8th century marked the heyday of early medieval Panjikant. At the beginning of the 8th century the spaces between the houses became passageways (covered with vaults in places), over which towered the walls of the neighbouring buildings. Not only the dwellings of the rich, but also those of the poor were more often than not two-story buildings with vaults over the rooms on the first floor. All residential houses from that period—not only those of the rich, but also of the merely well-to-do citizens—were decorated with murals and woodcarvings. Such reception halls were found in more than a third of all houses in the city. The streets were lined with small shops and artisans' workshops,

often clustered around the bigger residential buildings. The workshops of the blacksmiths and of other metalworkers are most easily identified among the ruins (Raspopova 1980). The prosperous houses often had a few shops or even a small market built on the master's property. These commercial spaces were wide open to the street, but had no link to the living quarters of the buildings: apparently the tradesmen and small shopkeepers leased the premises from the landowners."



Ruins at Bunjikath identified as Zoroastrian temples. Credit: Explo Guide.



Sketch of a relief panel in the ruins at Panjikent. Image Credit: Tirdād Gorgāni

The murals and frescoes (some of them 15m long) portraying religious ceremonies and scenes from the famous Persian epics, and which decorated the walls of the now ruined buildings have been removed from the site and are housed in a museum in Panjikent.

In A.D. 722, Arab forces besieged and took the town. The last Sogdian ruler **Devashtich** together with others who had been retreating from the Samarkand region fled east to a fortress on **Mt. Mug** in the upper Zerafshan region. The fortress was their last refuge. However, the fortress could not stop the Arab onslaught and there the Arabs captured Devashtich and executed him after holding him prisoner for a few months. At Mt. Mug archaeologists have unearthed a treasure trove of Sogdian documents attesting to the sophistication of the Sogdian administration and legal system.

Sarazm :

About 15 km. west of Panjikent (at the border with Uzbekistan), lies the site at Sarazm - the ruins of a far older, and potentially more significant, 4th -2nd millennia BCE settlement that included a palace, fire temples, administration, public and residential buildings. The site is remarkable and is testament to a thriving Bronze Age civilization.

Recovered artefacts include objects made of copper, bronze, lead, silver and gold - items manufactured locally and traded with lands as distant as Mesopotamian and the Indus Valley.

As with Panjikent, Sarazm was built on a south-bank terrace overlooking the Zerafshan valley. There the site stretches in an west-east direction. The discovery of the ruins in 1976 were initiated by a local farmer Ashurali Tailonov who after visiting a museum in Panjikent, informed local archaeologists about a bronze axe he had found not far from his home - an axe that was similar to a bronze axe he had seen during his visit to the museum. That axe had been found in the late 19th century in Yor village, Panjikent district.



**Flattening Stone. Image credit:
Sarazm at Tourism in Tajikistan**

Sarazm stands at the transition of the Zerafshan valley from flat western low lands and eastern mountainous regions, and is strategically positioned as a mining, manufacturing and export centre on the Silk roads. It was a large ancient precious metal mining center, and the Sogdians exported the extracted gold and silver east, west and south along the Aryan trade routes. In the process the residents developed one of the largest centers of metallurgy in the Central Asia.

Bronze is an alloy of copper and tin. The making of an alloy requires a knowledge of metallurgy: how to produce high temperatures, how metals synergistically work together and

the proportions needed as well as how the molten alloy can be processed. The copper ore they used for the production of bronze was brought in from deposits located 40-50 km east of the site. The tin ore mines in the upper and lower Zerafshan valleys are the oldest in the ancient world that valued tin as being more precious than silver. One of the tin ore mines was at Mushiston, 40 km east of Sarazm, while another mine was in desert surrounding the lower Zerafshan at Karnab, Uzbekistan, 170 km west of Sarazm. High tin content (8-12%) bronze was expensive to produce and was a prized commodity. The high tin content bronze produced found in Mesopotamia, Oman and Harappa was likely manufactured in Sarazm since there are no other known sources and since the trade routes established by the Sogdians makes this proposition feasible. The bronze found in Oman could have been transhipped via Harappa and carried on coastal boats down the Indus to Oman at the entrance of the Persian Gulf. The bronze artefacts found in Oman as part of a collection of artefacts: pottery and beads from Harappa and bone combs and seals from Balkh. Fragments of large ore-crushing pestles and hammers, foundry forms, melting forges / smelting furnaces, casts, cast crucibles, as well as massive hammers for crushing ore have been found.



**Beginning of 2nd millennium BCE
Arrow and spears heads found at Sarazm
Image credit: Bronze Age in Tajikistan**

Metal and composite items found at the Sarazm site include armour, axes, daggers, knives, lance-heads, spears, pins, fishhooks, knitting needles, razors, ornaments, jewellery and decorations.

The artisans used their stone cutting expertise to make beads and pendants from agate, onyx, obsidian, lapis lazuli, turquoise, and cornelian. The turquoise came from outcrops in the desert around the lower Zerafshan about 100 km downstream from Sarazm, and from Nishapur in north-eastern Iran. The processed turquoise was traded into Mesopotamia and the Indus valley.

Also found at the site are stamps similar to stamps found at sites in Mesopotamia, Iran, Baluchistan and the Indus valley. Other items resembling those found in the Middle East, South Turkmenistan and Afghanistan include painted ceramic kitchenware have been unearthed at the site together with six furnaces used to bake twelve forms of containers such as goblets, bowls, and jugs.

Included in the finds are the remains of a woman who was buried in clothes decorated with silver, turquoise, cornelian, lapis lazuli, and jasper beads. Gold beads adorned her hair, and on her arm she had large bracelets made from sea shells. All these items underscore the extent of the international trade in which the 4th century BCE residents were engaged and their wealth.

Only a small portion of the 100-hectare Sarazm site is accessible to archaeologists. Farmed land covers a large part of the potential extent. The site is also bounded in the north and west by the villages of Sahibnazar and Gurach, and in the north-eastern by Avazali. The exposed site includes a palace complex which covers an area of more than 250 square meters, and which consists of a large corridor, a vestibule, two halls, circular altars in the center and several auxiliary structures connected by wide passages.

The etymology of the name Sarazm is unclear. Some suggestions are sar-sabz meaning the head of greenery, or sari-sabza meaning green beginning, or sari-zamin, meaning beginning of the land. These names could signify Sarazm's location between the low and high lands.

Source : <https://www.heritageinstitute.com/zoroastrianism/tajikistan/page2.htm>

4. Pamir / Badakhshan Region :

Introduction :

In the east of Tajikistan, are mountains and highlands known as the Pamirs. The Tajik province in which the mountains are located is called the **Kuhistani-Badakhshan** (previously called Gorno-Badakhshan, a name given during the Soviet occupation of Tajikistan). Kuhistani means the land of the mountains.

Greater Badakhshan :



Greater Badakhshan

The full extent of the Badakhshan (also spelt Badakshan or Badakshon) region extends beyond the borders of Tajikistan to the east, south and south-west. To the east, Badakhshan extends into land that is today part of China. To the south and south-west, Badakhshan extends into modern-day Afghanistan.

China's acquisition of eastern Badakhshan came about through centuries of westward expansion beyond ancient China and the borders of China marked by the Great Wall of China.

The division of Badakhshan between Tajikistan and Afghanistan, was a result of the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1873 that created a buffer strip between the Russian and British empires.

In these pages, unless otherwise specified, we will be dealing with the full extent of Badakhshan which we will call Greater Badakhshan / Badakshan, Pamir-Badakhshan or the Pamir region.

Pamirs & Zoroastrianism :

The Pamir-Badakhshan region is home to very old Zoroastrian historical sites and most of the Zoroastrian historical sites we have identified so far in Tajikistan, are in the Badakhshan-Pamir region. There are also enigmatic hand and feet symbols carved into the rock of the Pamir mountains. The Pamiri consider the rocks holy, saying that holy men have stepped on these rocks in the remote past.

Candidate for the Location of Airyana Vaeja :

In our discussion on the location of the original Aryan homeland, Airyana Vaeja, a strong candidate for the location of Airyana Vaeja was the general area around Tajikistan and more specifically, the Pamir-Badakhshan region.

In a related page, Aryan Homeland in the Avesta, we examined references to Airyana Vaeja in the Zoroastrian scriptures, the Avesta. In that page, we listed the sixteen nations mentioned in one of the books of the Avesta, the Vendidad. Airyana Vaeja, the Aryan homeland is the first nation in that list. Its precise location is a mystery. In the map below, the second, third and fourth nations, Sughdha, Mouru and Bakhdhi, are to the left, and the Pamir-Badakhshan region is the adjacent region of the map.

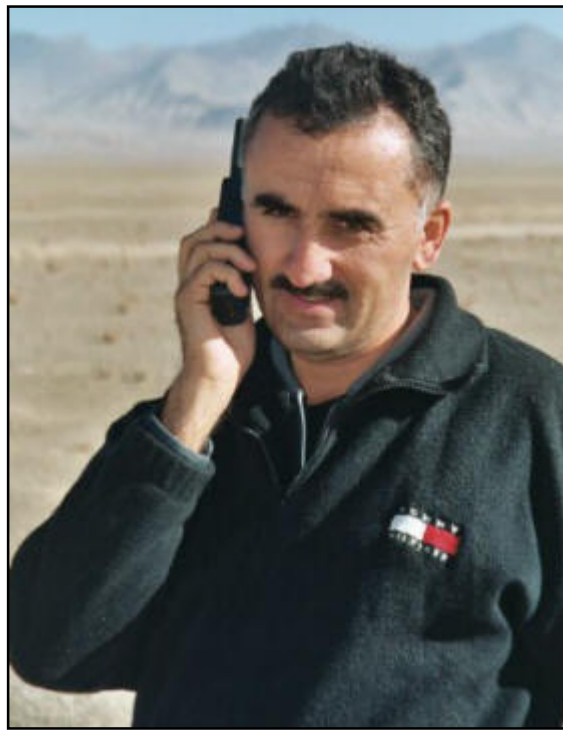


Central Asia with first Vendidad lands and possible Airyana Vaeja /Aryan homeland locale.

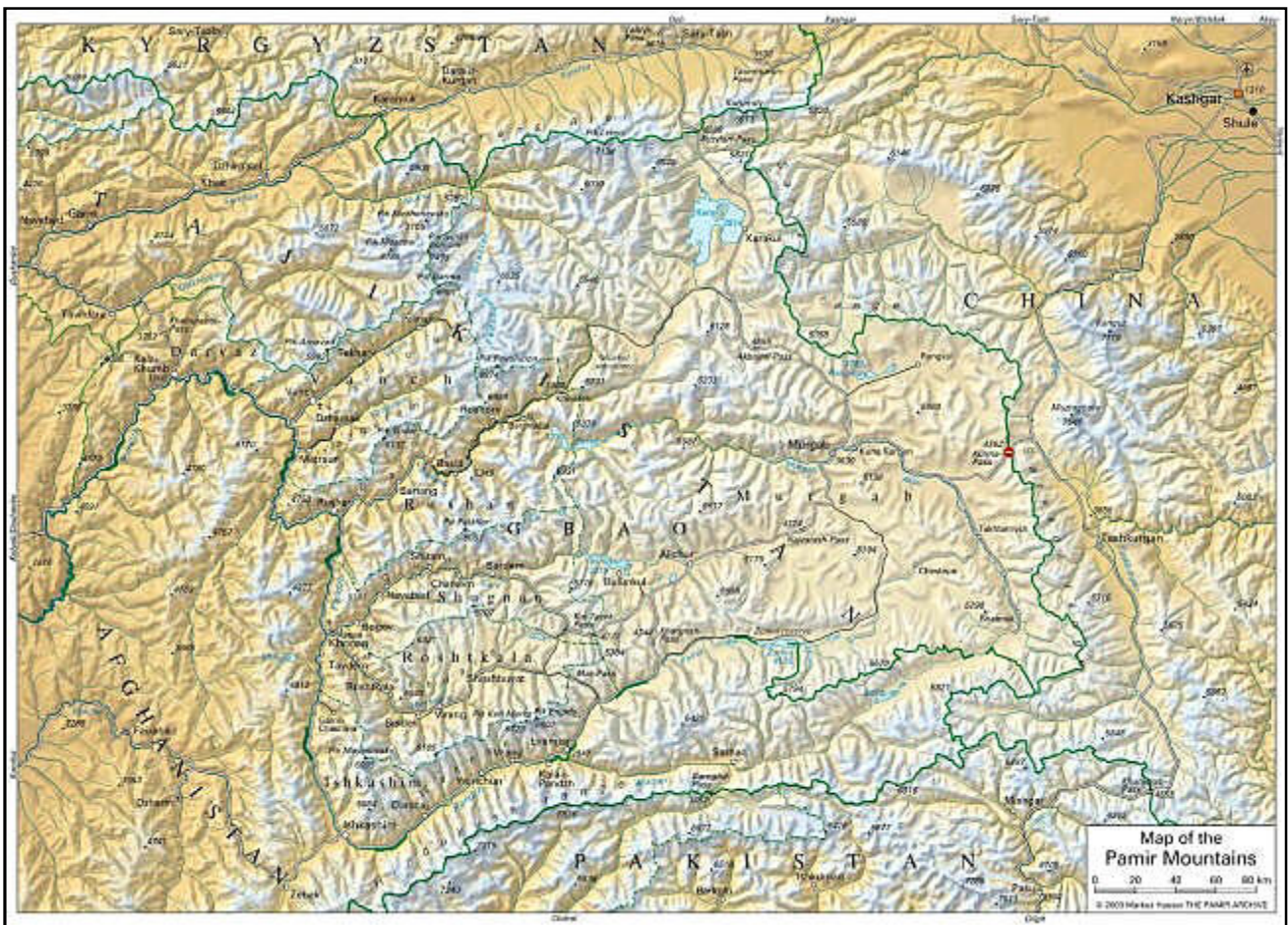
People, Language and Extent of the Region :



Pamiri woman from Tajikistan: Ferangees
Credit: Pamirs.Org



Pamiri man from Tajikistan: Yodgor
Credit: Pamirs.Org



**Map of the Pamir-Badakhshan region in Tajikistan, Eastern China and N. E. Afghanistan
By Marcus Hauser.**

Badakhshan (Badakshan or Badakshon) is a relatively modern (1,500 year-old) name coined by the Persian Sassanids (c.200-650 CE). Since shan / shon means place (the forerunner of stan, cf. Khorasan), Badakhshan means the place of Badak or Badakh. It is not clear who or what Badakh means. Badakh might refer to the area's precious stones.

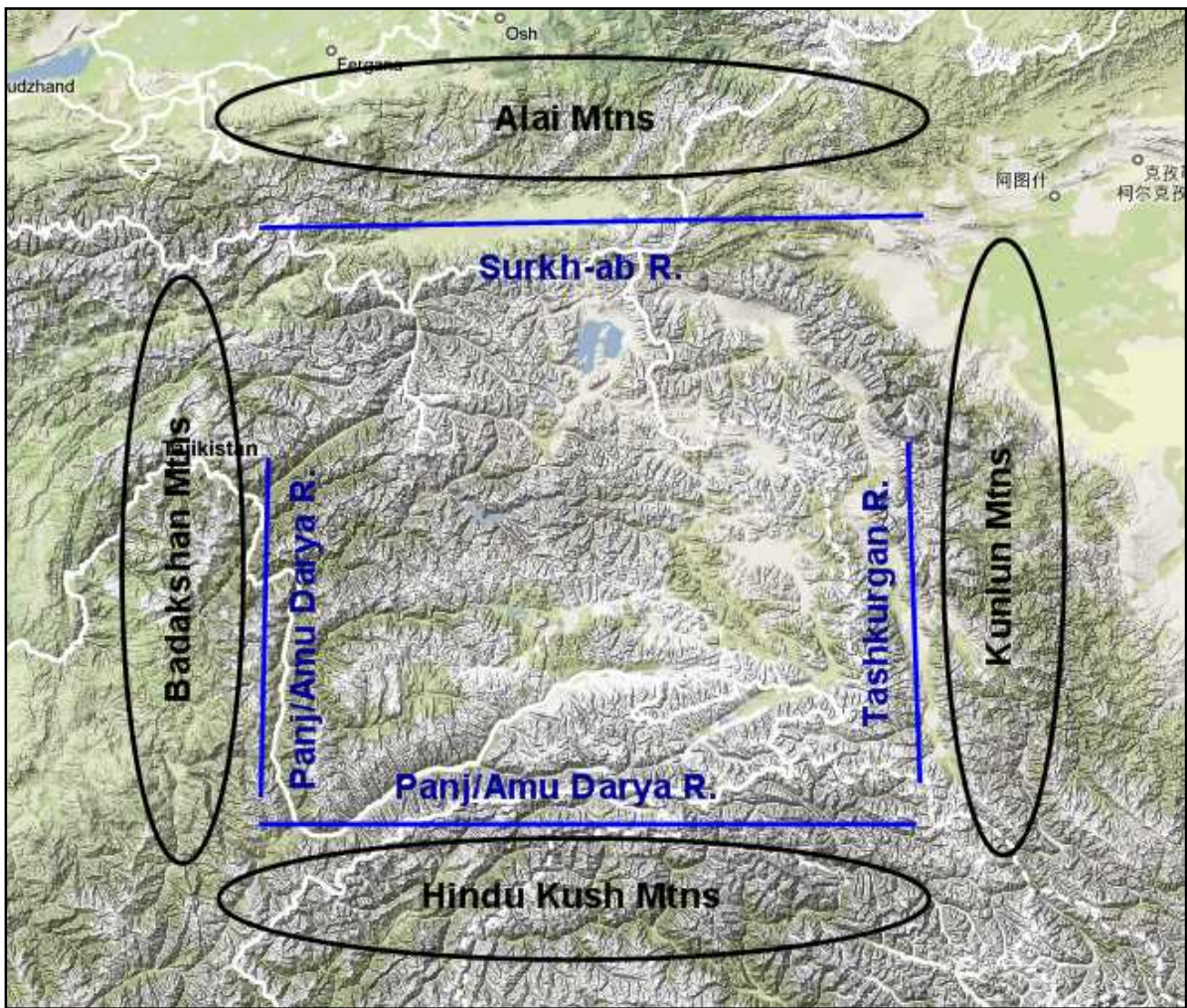
As we have noted above, we find historic Greater Badakhshan divided between Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and China. The border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan is the Panj river where it forms the Wakhan valley. The border between Tajikistan and China is the Sarykol Range, one of the Kunlun mountain ranges.

Rather than their division by the relatively modern borders that were drawn up for political reasons, the extent of Greater Badakhshan is more accurately defined by the historic kinship of the Pamiri people and the Pamiri dialects they speak.

The Pamiri-Badakhshani people claim to be an Iranian group related to, but distinct from, the Tajiks and other Afghans. They speak dialects of the Pamiri language, an eastern Iranian language indigenous to the region. Tajiki, and the Afghan languages of Dari and Pashtu, are sister Iranian, i.e. Aryan, languages.

The extent of the Pamir-Badakhshan region as defined by the ethno-linguistic distribution of the Pamiri-Badakhshan dialects and people, is as follows (from *Atlas of Languages of Intercultural Communication in the Pacific, Asia, and the Americas* By Stephen Adolphe Wurm, Peter Mühlhäusler, Darrell T. Tryon, Darrell T. Tryon. International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies. Pub. Walter de Gruyter, 1996):

- **In the east** of the region, the Pamiri dialects of Sarikoli and Wakhi are spoken across the present Tajik-China border in the Xinjiang (Xinjiang) / Kunlun Mountains. The Pamirs includes **Tashkurgan** and **Kashgar / Kashi** (presently in China) in the northeast corner (Photographs of Kashgar). The residents of Kashgar were known to have practiced Zoroastrianism and the ruins of a Zoroastrian temple can be found beside the ruins of an ancient fortress. Indeed, it is possible that some of the residents of areas in China that practice Islam today could have practiced Zoroastrianism in the past. The original Indo-Iranian inhabitants of this area have to a large extent been displaced by Turkic peoples. The Shahnameh of Ferdowsi placed Chin (China) to the east of Airan and also east of Turan (Sugd).
- **In the south**, the Wakhi dialect is spoken in the **Wakhan / Panj valley** bordered by the Hindu Kush in the south [Ivan M. Steblin-Kamenskij at Iranica, Central Asia xiii. Iranian Languages, suggests that the name Wakhan i.e. Vah-kan, is derived from Old Iranian Wahwi/Wahkshu - "good, beneficent," an ancient river name (cf. Av. Vanguhi Daitiia, the name of a river in Airiianem Vaejah)]. The Wakhi dialect is also spoken in northern Pakistan. The Vendidad nation that would have bordered the Pamiri-Badakhshan region to the south would be the seventh nation of Vaekerata (Kabul).
- **In the west**, the region continues to include the Panj valley as it turns north and includes lands further west, that is, the present Badakhshan province in Afghanistan. That province has its capital at Feyzabab (Faizabad) that sits of the Kokcha River. In ancient times, the Pamiri-Badakhshan lands would have extended west to the fourth Vendidad nation of Bakhdhi (Balkh).



Historic Badakhshan / Pamir Boundaries

- **In the north**, the Pamir region is bounded by a tributary of the Amu Darya (Oxus) the Surkhab / Surkhob River and Kyrgyzstan's Alai mountains. The Surkhab is renamed downstream as the Vakhsh and upstream as the Kyzylsu / Kysyl-suu River in Kyrgyzstan. Surkh-ab and Kyzyl-suu mean Red River. Reading the Vendidad's list of nations, at the northern and north-western boundary of the Pamirs, we find Sughdha (Sugd) - the land and nation that extended from the Fergana valley in the east to Samarkand in the west and beyond.

Nowadays, while all Tajiks are mainly Muslim, the Pamiri continue to display their distinctiveness by following the Ismaili sect of the Shia religion while the rest of the Tajiks are for the most part, Sunni Muslims.

During Taliban rule of Afghanistan in the 1990s and early 2000s, Badakhshan was the only Afghan province not controlled by the Pashtu dominant Taliban. Badakhshan was also the base of the group opposed to the Taliban, the Northern Alliance, the group that ultimately defeated the Taliban. Today, while the rest of Afghanistan is still in turmoil, Afghani Badakhshan is relatively peaceful.

Physical Features :

Po-i Mihr, the Feet of Mithra :



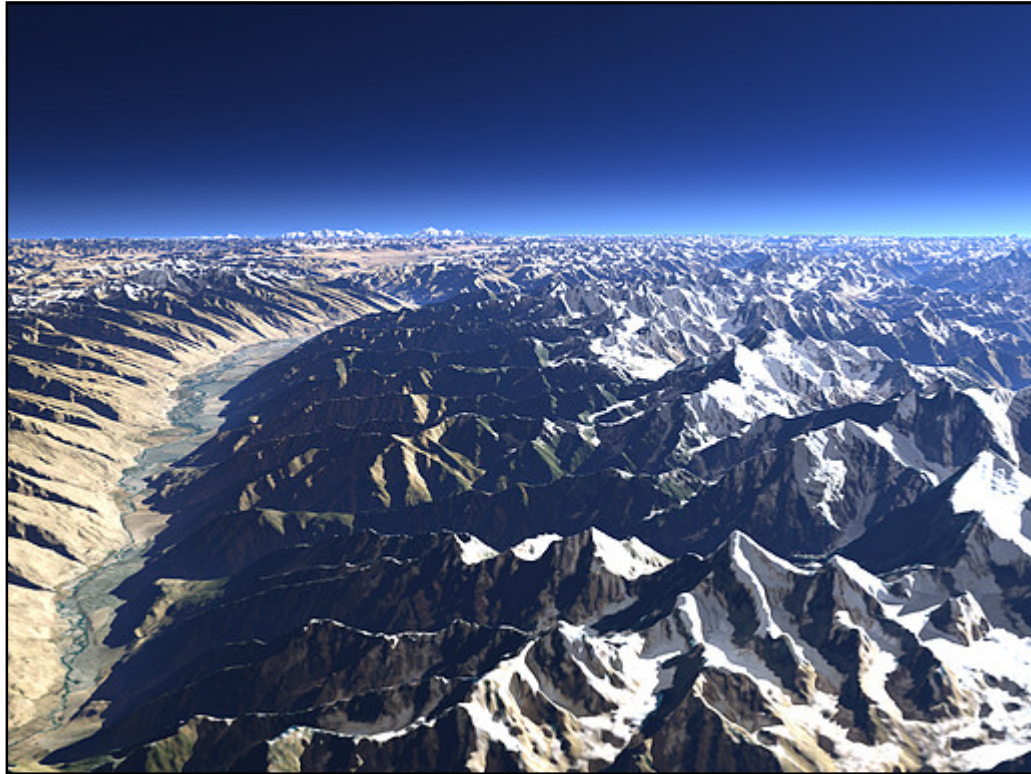
Somoni Peak. Photo: World Bank Collection at Flickr

Tajiks call the Pamirs, Po-mir or Po-i-mihr, the **Feet of Mitra**, and also Bom-i-Dunyo, the Roof of the World. Mitra is an angel in Zoroastrianism and a pre-Zoroastrian Indo-Iranian deity, an asura.

The Pamirs are home to the tallest mountain in Tajikistan. The Somoni Peak in the northwest of the Pamirs has an elevation of 7,495 m (24,590 ft), and the average elevation of the Pamir peaks is about 3,965 m (about 13,000 ft).

The Pamirs are also called the Pamir knot since several mountain ranges radiate from the knot.

The Pamirs form a connecting link between the Tian Shan, Kunlun, Karakoram, Himalaya and Hindu Kush mountain ranges.



Badakhshan's terrain

Photo credit: Christoph Hormann at Views of the Earth

Badakhshan's terrain is typified by the image on the left. The Panj River runs through the valley that stretches up from the lower left corner of the photograph curving to the right. In the part that can be seen in the photograph, the Panj River marks the border between Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

The Pamirs of Tajikistan are to the left of the Wakhan Valley, while the Hindu Kush mountains (& Afghanistan's border with Pakistan) are to the right of the valley. The high mountains on the horizon are the Kunlun Mountains presently in China's Xinjiang Uygur (Turkic) Region.

The right peak (top-centre of the photograph) is the Muztagh-Ata, and the peak to Muztah-Ata's left is Kongur-Shan.



**Panj River's Wakhan Valley & farms.
The Panj River is called the Amu Darya (Oxus) in Afghanistan
Photo credit: crazynomad at Flickr**

While the winters in the mountains as well as the highlands of the Murghab district of eastern Badakhshan, the Pamir Bowl, are harsh, the Pamirs are also home to temperate valleys.

While the mountains are rugged and the highlands stark, many of the valleys are fertile. The contrast in the landscape that is seen in the photograph of the Panj valley on the left, is typical.

The principle river of the Pamir-Badakhshan region is the upper reaches of the Amu Darya River, called the Panj River during its course in the south and west of the Pamir-Badakhshan region.

According to [Wikipedia](#), the Chinese call the Pamirs 'Congling' meaning the Onion Range, a name derived from the wild onions growing in the region.



Wakhan Valley Farms close-up
Photo credit: crazynomad at Flickr.

Topography of the Boundaries :

The area defined by the Pamir-Badakhshan region is roughly a square, with each side of the square bounded by a major river and a mountain range. The shape and topography is unique. It is unlike any other region in the area.

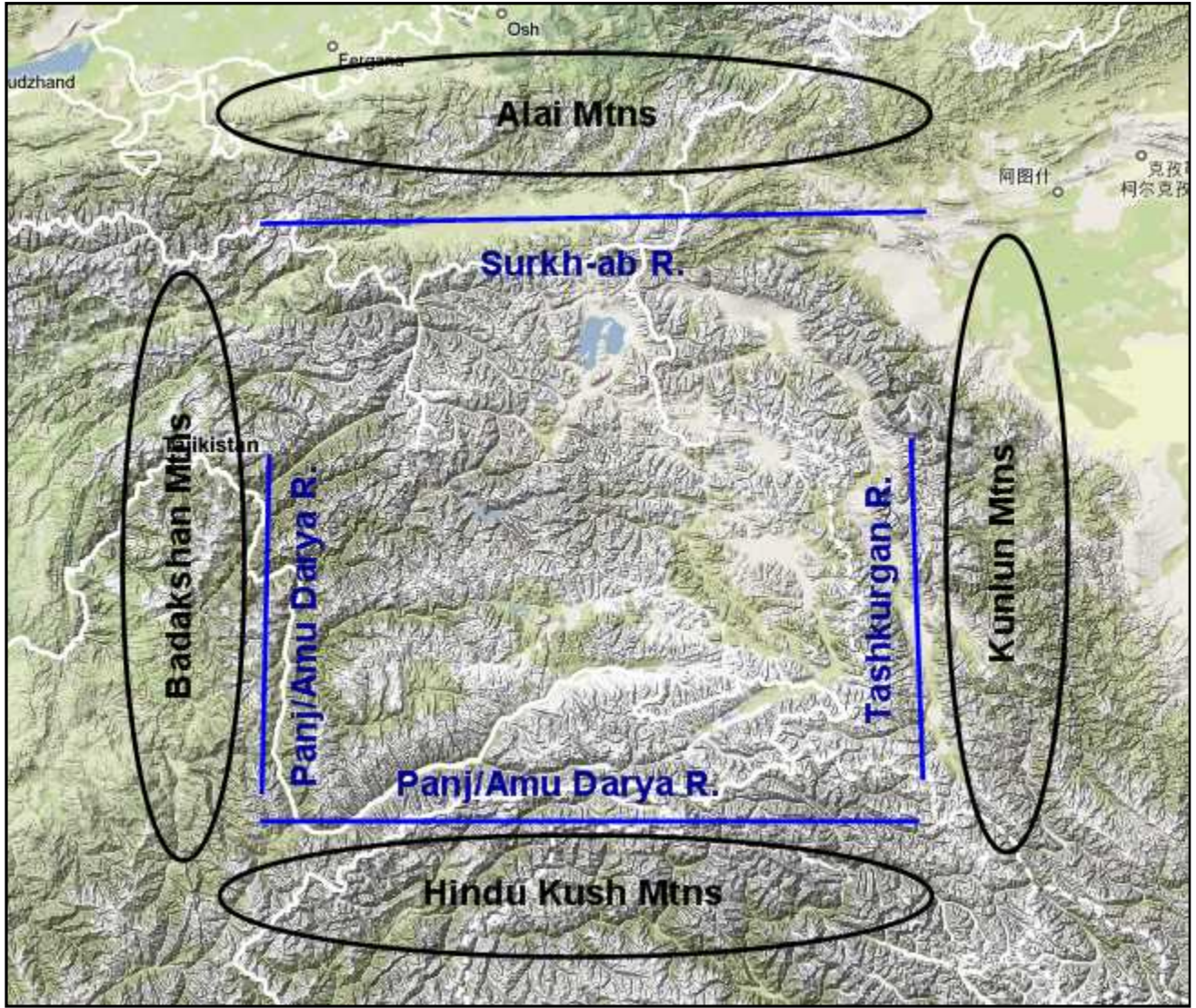
The rivers were called daryas - rivers large enough to be considered a sea or perhaps rivers that were, in the past thought to be connected to seas. The rivers flow beyond in different directions. Mountains ranges also radiate in different directions.

The Pamirs, the Himalayas and the other mountain ranges at the north of the Indian subcontinent were formed by the subduction of the Indian subcontinent plate under the Eurasian plate. The result is that earthquakes in the Pamirs are frequent and violent. Pamiri houses are constructed to cope with earthquakes. Hot springs are numerous and the tectonic forces have created gemstones and precious metals that are buried in the mountains.

The Pamir's deposits of precious stones and metals that correspond to those described as being contained in Mount Meru, the mountain that stood at the centre of the world, in the Hindu scripture, the Vedas.

Mount Meru is the equivalent of the Mount Hara Berezaiti, Airyana Vaeja's central mountain mentioned Zoroastrian scriptures, the Avesta. In the Vedas, Mount Meru is described as a four sided mountain where the four sides are made from four different precious substances: the south of lapis-lazuli, the west of ruby, the north of gold and the east of silver (or crystal).

The mountains in the south of the Pamir region do indeed contain the only lapis lazuli mines known in antiquity. The other Mount Meru precious metals and stones are also found in the region.



Historic Badakhshan / Pamir Boundaries

Passes :



Kunjarab Pass

From the southeast corner to the southwest corners of the Pamir-Badakhshan region, lie the Silk Road passes that provide access to the Upper Indus region and from there - the Indus plains - Hapta Hindu (seven Indus tributaries). In the southeast corner are three passes within 100 km of each other that connect the Tamrim Basin Kashgar and Tashkurgan (today, in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in China) to the Gojal / Hunza River valley, Gilgit and the Upper Indus valley: from east to west, the **Kunjarab Pass** (4,693 m./15,397 ft.) and two ancient passes, the **Mintaka** (4,709 m./15,450 ft.) and **Kilik** (4,827 m./15,837 ft.) passes. Kunjarab come from the Wakhi Pamiri word for blood valley. Ancient traders travelled 70 km south from Tashkurgan to the Mintaka River, and from there headed some 80 km west up the Mintaka valley and pass. In the central south of the Pamirs lies the **Baroghil / Broghol Pass** (3,798 m./12,460 ft.) through the Hindu Kush. In the southwest corner lies the **Dorah Pass** (4,300 m./14,000 ft.) that today connects Badakhshan in Afghanistan with Chitral in Pakistan.

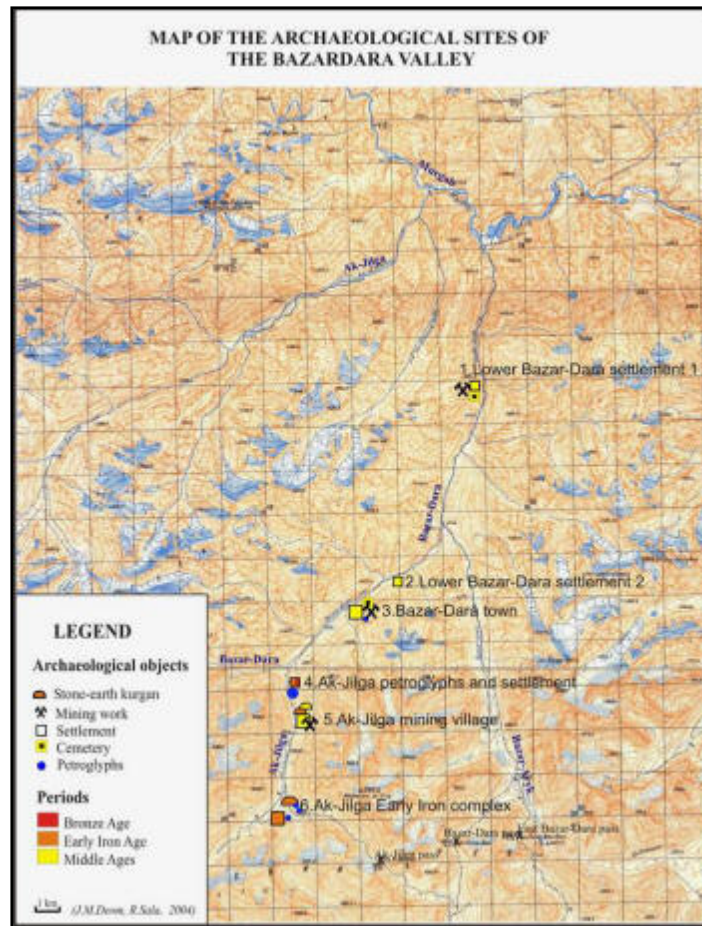
Trade :

Some of the earliest trade between the Aryan nations of the Vendidad took place out of Badakhshan with its exclusive Sar-i Sang Lapis Lazuli mines on the upper reaches of the Kokcha River, a tributary of the Panj (also called Amu Darya or Oxus) exporting Lapis as far west as Mesopotamia and Egypt and as early as the 4th millennium BCE (cf. Ancient Mesopotamian Materials and Industries by Peter Roger Stuart Moorey, p. 86). Marco Polo visited the Sar-i Sang mines during his travels along the Silk Road. The area is rich in other gemstones such as rubies and emeralds and precious metals such as silver and gold that were

actively traded throughout the ages (see Gem Hunter site). One of the Pamiri settlements that centred around silver mining, Bazar-Dara, is described below.

Many of the trade roads to the upper Indus and Kashmir valleys in the adjacent Indian sub-continent, including branches of the Silk Roads to the east and west, passed through the Wakhan corridor. This gave the Badakhshanis access to the Indian sub-continent. It also gave them a controlling position of the trade roads and one of the Zoroastrian era forts called the Zamr-i-Atish-Parast, or Fortress of the Fire Worshipers, at Yamchun served this function. It also formed a second line of defence for the Pamir / Badakhshan region to the north, the first line of defence being the Hindu Kush mountains.

Bazar-Dara :



Bazar-Dara Valley Site Map

In the central Pamirs, above the banks of the river Ak-Dzhilga / Ak-Jilga, in the valley of Murghab, are the remains of remote settlements and a mining complex called Bazar-Dara and Ak-Jilga. The Badakhshan region has historically been famous from Egypt to China, the steppes to India for its gems and precious metals. Silver was mined in Bazar-Dara and traders who plied the Silk Roads came to Bazar-Dara and stayed in its caravanserai while conducting their business. The settlements and mining complex are located at a height of 4,000 m. The six sites, accessible only by foot or helicopter, are dated 10th to 11th century ACE in the middle valley, and 5th century BCE in the upper valley.

About 1,200 - 1,500 people lived in the settlement which included an administrative complex, a fire-temple, and a bath with sub-floor (kan) heating. The size fits the first level of a Jamshidi Vara.

Water was obtained from small wells and skilfully designed water basins. In this region, the soil is frozen most of the year and trees cannot grow. The large building that is believed to have functioned as a medieval caravanserai, also has Vara-like features.

A webpage titled *Geo-Archaeological Survey of Ancient Metallurgic Centres of the Bazar-Dara Valley* contains further information on this ancient Pamiri settlement.



Bazar-Dara Caravanserai ruins

Source : <https://www.heritageinstitute.com/zoroastrianism/tajikistan/page3.htm>

Airyana Vaeja's Features :

Neighbouring Lands :

Sugd / Sogdiana :

The second nation listed after Airyana Vaeja in the Vendidad, is Sukhdho / Sughdha - modern day Sugd in north-western Tajikistan and southern Uzbekistan.

Mouru / Margiana :

The third nation listed after Airyana Vaeja in the Vendidad, is Mouru. Mouru is commonly identified with the area around modern Merv and the Murghab / Murgab river and its delta in present-day Turkmenistan - though this identification is by no means certain.

Balkh / Bactria & King Vishtasp :

The fourth Vendidad nation is Bakhdhim / Bakhdhi / Bakhdi / Balkh located in Northern Afghanistan. Among the first "hearers and teachers" of Zarathushtra's message listed in the Farvardin Yasht (13.99) was King Vishtasp. Later texts state that King Vishtasp, a king of the Kayanian dynasty, was king of Bakhdhi/Balkh, and that Zarathushtra died in Bakhdhi/Balkh, killed by a Turanian. In these texts, the Amu Darya (Oxus) river formed the north-eastern border between ancient Bakhdhi and Turan (Sugd). Further upstream, a portion of the Amu Darya river ran through Bakhdhi.

Balkh became the capital city of the Kayanian kings and ancient Airan, the successor state to Airyana Vaeja and the predecessor state to modern Iran.

Today, all three regions noted above claim Zarathushtra as their native son and make some claim to his legacy. The claims include the region being his birthplace, where he received his revelations, where he first propounded his religion, where he composed his message and the scriptures, and where he died. No other region makes these claims to this extent. What this indicates is, that regardless of the veracity of the claims, there is a strong possibility that Zarathushtra travelled to these regions and that they were within travelling distance of Airyana Vaeja, Zarathushtra's birthplace. By listing these nations separately from Airyana Vaeja, the Avesta's Vendidad is probably also stating that the three lands were separate from Airyana Vaeja. Since Zoroastrian texts also tell us that Airyana Vaeja was Zarathushtra's native home, we can surmise that while Zarathushtra could have travelled to these lands spreading his message, none of them was his native home.

Airyana Vaeja's Terrain :

Landscape :

The Meher Yasht gives us a most useful understanding of Airyana Vaeja's location. It not only helps us to rule in certain possibilities, it helps to rule out certain lands.

Verses 10.13-14 of the Meher Yasht state that the Aryan land had many mountains, valleys, and pastures (pouru vastraongho) that supported cattle (gave). It was rich in waters (afento), deep lakes (jafra varayo) and wide rivers. The land, while mountainous had alpine meadows and fertile, well-watered vales.

Rivers of Airyana Vaeja: Daraja and Daitya :

Mention is made that a significant river **Daraja** (Darejya), on whose upper banks stood Zarathushtra's father's house, ran through Airyana Vaeja. Another river in Airyana Vaeja is the Ditya, also called **Vanguhi Daitya** in Vendidad and Daitik in Middle Persian. The Vendidad at 1.2 (see) below and at 2.20 mentions the river Vanguhi Daitya in Airyana Vaeja first as the river of Airyana Vaeja and then as the river where King Jamsheed gained communion with Ahura Mazda, God. The Aban Yasht at 5.17 also speaks of the Vanguhi Daitya in Airyana Vaeja.

Both rivers are mentioned as separate rivers in the Lesser Bundahishn (24.14 - 16, E. W. West in *Sacred Books of the East* Vol. 5, 1897): "14. The Daitya River is the chief of streams. 15.

The Daraja river is the chief of exalted rivers, for the dwelling of the father of Zartosht was on its banks, and Zartosht was born there." We read here that Zarathushtra (Zartosht in Middle Persian) was born on the banks of the Daraja River in Airyana Vaeja (Iran Vej in Middle Persian) upon whose banks stood his father's house. The Lesser Bundahishn at 20.32 states, "The Daraja river is in Eranvej, on the bank (bar) of which was the dwelling of Pourushasp, the father of Zartosht (Zarathushtra)."

Veh Rivers :

The Avestan word 'vanghuhi' stems from 'vanghu' meaning good. It is contracted to 'veh' in Middle Persian. Daitya is said to relate to 'law' i.e. Zarathushtra receiving revealed law from Ahura Mazda, God. In Hindu scriptures, the Daitya are a clan of Asuras.

The river called Vanguhi Daitya in Avestan is sometimes identified as the Veh in Middle Persian Pahlavi texts. In the Middle Persian Bundahishns, the Veh River is in turn identified both as the Amu Darya / Oxus River as well as the Indus River. However, in the Bundahishn, the Daitya river itself that in Avestan passages is accompanied by the word Vanguhi is in the Bundahishn mentioned without the word Vanguhi or Veh. While the Bundahishns state that other rivers that otherwise have their own name are sometimes called Veh, the Bundahishns' Veh River which seems identical to today's Amu Darya / Oxus is the only river in the Bundahishns that is not directly associated with another name. In other words in the Bundahishns, the river is only named the Veh and we are not told if it had another accompanying or associated name.

Regarding identification of the Veh with the Oxus / Amu Darya River, the Lesser Bundahishn at 20.22 states that "the Balkh river comes out from the **Aparsen** likely Gk. **Paropamisus** (interestingly also called the **Alburz** in some modern maps.) at the eastern end of the Hindu Kush mountain of Bamikan (likely Bamian/Bamiyan), and flows on to the Veh river." Today, the Balkh river rises in the eastern Hindu Kush in Bamiyan province and flows north into Balkh province. Before irrigation reduced its flow, it was a tributary of the Amu Darya]. The Lesser Bundahishn at 20.22 also states that "The Teremet river flows away to the Veh river." Teremet is identified by West as Tajikistan's Termez today across the Amu Darya / Oxus from Balkh province. Termez would have been the gateway to the northern valley of Bakhdi/Balkh, a valley that leads to Dushanbe, Tajikistan's present capital.

*[**Alburz/Elburz/Alborz mountains:** Today, the mountains of northern Iran are called the Elburz. Wikipedia also reports, "As recently as the 19th century, a peak in the northernmost range in the Hindu Kush system, just south of Balkh, was recorded as Mount Elburz in British army maps." The name Alborz is said to derive from the Avestan Hara Berezaiti or Hara-Berez, the Hara mountains. Hara-Barez became Har-borz and eventually Al-borz. As did the legendary rivers of Airyana have their source in the Hara-Bareza (meher Yasht 10.14), the Bundahishn continues the tradition of ascribing the source of the principal Veh rivers in the Alborz.]

Middle Persian texts and the Shahnameh tell us that the Amu Darya or Oxus river (see map below) formed a border of ancient Bakhdi, and that the border between Airan (the later name form of Airyana Vaeja) and Turan was also the Amu Darya. The Amu Darya river runs from the Pamirs (where it is called the Panj) to the Aral Sea and today, to some extent, forms the

border between four nations, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. A portion of the Amu Darya river runs north of present day Balkh in Afghanistan.

Regarding identification of the Veh with the Indus River, the Greater Bundahishn at 11.A.2 as translated by B. T. Anklesaria states, "The river Veh passes on in the east, goes to the land of Sind and pours into the sea in India. There they call it the river Mitran [and also call it the river Indus]." The Lesser Bundahishn translated by E. W. West, at 20.7 states, "The Mehrva River they call the Hendva River...". Hendva would be connected to Hindu. 20.9 also states, "The Veh River passes on in the east, goes through the land of Sind, and flows to the sea in Hindustan, and they call it there the Mehra River." We note that this river is called Hendva, Mehrava, Mehra, Mitran (Mithra/Mitra and Mehr are related words, the former being the older form which seems to be the trend in the Greater Bundahishn. The Lesser Bundahishn starts with the declaration at 20.1 that two rivers flow from the north - from the Alburz (Mountains) - and that the one towards the East is the Veh River.

We are therefore left with two Veh rivers, one identified with the Amu Darya (Oxus) and the other with the Mitran or Mehra (the Indus). Masudi in his Historical Encyclopaedia writes that the "Guebers (sic) i.e. Zoroastrians, felt that the Jaihun (Oxus) was connected with the Indus to form one river, the Veh." The ancients may have perceived the Veh as a mythical circumventing river, one that circumvented Airyana in the east and the west - perhaps even all the way around.

Rivers Flowing into Neighbouring Countries :

Verse 10.14 of the Avesta's Mehr Yasht, states that the rivers which originate in Airyo shayanem*, the Aryan abode, flow swiftly into the countries of Mourum [later Margu(sh) (English-Greek Margiana) and eventually Marv located in today's Turkmenistan], Haroyum (Aria in modern Afghanistan), Sughdhem (Sugd in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) and Khairizem [Khvarizem beside the Amu Darya (Oxus) River in Uzbekistan]. [*Note: shayanem is used to denote a few countries/lands/abodes in the Vendidad's list of sixteen nations. As "abode" or "dwelling place", the word may denote a region rather than a country, a region over which the Airya had spread by that time.]

There are very few sets of rivers that meet this description and they all originate in the mountains of Afghanistan and Tajikistan radiating westward from the Pamirs. Since 1. Bakhdhi (Balkh) is a significant omission from this list, 2. Khairizem is a nation not mentioned directly in the Vendidad's list of nations and appears to be a "younger" nation than the Vendidad nations [together with Parsa (Persia) and Mada (Media) also not mentioned], and 3. the Aryan lands are called by a slightly different name than in the Vendidad, one possibility is that this Meher Yasht description was part of the younger Avesta, by time of whose writing, the original Aryan lands, Airyana Vaeja, had begun to move westward along the northern Hindu Kush slopes, towards the Kuh-e Baba, Kuh-e Hissar and Safid Kuh - the northern Afghanistan mountain region south of Balkh. To us it is not without significance that there is a Murgab River in the Pamir highlands of Tajikistan, then in the northern Afghanistan and eventually in Pars.

The larger river flowing into Mourum (Eng-Gk Margiana) is the **Murgab River**; the main river flowing through Haroyum (Eng-Gk Aria) is the **Hari-Rud River**; the main river flowing through Sughdhem/Sugd (Eng-Gk Sogdiana) is the **Zerafshan River**. The **Kashka Darya** also flows

through Sughdhem. Sughdhem was likely bordered by the **Amu Darya (Oxus)** in the west/south-west and **Syr Darya (Jaxartes) Rivers** in the east/north-east. There are of course, other smaller rivers. The Pamirs together with the Hindu Kush and its western extensions including the Safeed Kuh and Siah Kuh mountains that border today's Northern Afghanistan are where these rivers originate.

The Lesser & Greater Bundahishns at LB Chapter 20 and GB Chapter 11.A respectively provide additional information. We reproduce here portions of the Bundahishn related to the rivers of Central Asia identified above via the Meher Yasht. However, the Bundahishns only assign the rivers Daraja and Daitya to ancient Iran-Vej (Airyana Vaeja). Regardless, we still see these lands the rivers flow through as part of greater Aryan nation, Iran-Shahr:

LB 13. The Daitya river is the river which comes out from Eranvej, and goes out through the hill-country; of all rivers the noxious creatures in it are most, as it says, that the Daitya river is full of noxious creatures. [Our note: it is significant that the Daitya is noted as "going through hill country".] GB 11.A.7 states "The river Daitya comes out of Eranvej and proceeds to Dutistan." We have yet to identify Dutistan.

The other rivers implied by the Meher Yasht are described by the Bundahishns as follows :

Harirud :

The Bundahishns make no reference to the Harirud originating in Airyana Vaeja as implied by the Meher Yasht. GB 11.A.11 "The Hari-rud flows from the Hapursen range." LB 20.16: "The Haro river flows out from the Aparsen range (Gk. Paropamisus). The source of the Harirud is just across the Hissar range from the source of the Balkh River." The Zend River "passing through the mountains of Panjistan" is a tributary of the Harirud.

Rivers of Sughdhem/Sugd :

GB 11.A.15: "The river Khvajand goes through the middle of Samarkand and Ferghana. They call it the river Khshart/Ashart/Ashard (Jaxartes/Syr Darya)." LB 20.20: "The Khvejand river goes on through the midst of Samarkand and Pargana, and they call it also the river Ashard." Khujand (cf. Khvajand) is currently a Tajik city beside the upper reaches of the Syr Darya (Jaxartes).

GB 11.A.14: "The river Zeshmund, on the side of Soghd (Sugd, Sogdiana), pours back into the river Khvajand." LB 20.19: "The Zishmand river, in the direction of Soghd, flows away towards (from?) the Khvejand river." These two statements are somewhat contradictory and a more critical translations of the originals is required. The river sounds like the Zerafshan. If this is so, the statement should read that the river flows away from the Khvajand (Jaxartes/Syr Darya) and into the Veh, the Amu Darya or Oxus. If not, it denotes another river, perhaps a tributary of the Khvajand.

Curiously, the LB at 20.30 states, "The Kasak river comes out through a ravine (kaf) in the province of Tus (the birthplace of Ferdowsi in Khorasan?), and they call it there the Kasp river; more- over, the river, which is there the Veh, they call the Kasak; even in Sind they call it the Kasak." Translator E. W. West feels "Sind" here is a corruption or misprint of the intended

name "Seni" leading the the line reading, "even in Seni they call it the Kasak." Seni is a name mention in the Lesser Bundahishn at 15.29: "the country of Seni, that which is Kinistan/Chinistan". E. W. West further postulates that in this context "Kinistan" may refer to Samarkand the principal city of Sugd. He goes on the identify Seni as the Saini of the Farvardin Yasht at 13.143,144, one of the five lands praised in the Yasht having holy followers. There is today the River Kashka that flows from Sugd today.

Murgab. River of Marv :

LB 20.21. "The Marv river, a glorious river in the east, flows out from the Aparsen range (Gk. Paropamisus)." "GB 11.A.16: "The Marv-rud, the river 'Full of glory,' in Khvarasan (Khorasan?), flows from the Hapursen range." The source of the Murgab is in the vicinity of the sources of the Balkh and Harirud rivers - the eastern extremity of the Hindu Kush Mountains. The mention of the Marv-rud i.e. the Murgab being a river of Khvarasan (Khorasan?) is noteworthy.

Amu Darya (Oxus), Balkh and Termez Rivers :

As we have stated earlier, the Lesser Bundahishn at 20.22 states that "the Balkh river comes out from the Aparsen (Gk. Paropamisus; interestingly also called the Alborz on some maps today) at the eastern end of the Hindu Kush] mountain of Bamikan (likely Bamian/Bamiyan), and flows on to the Veh river." Today, the Balkh river rises in the eastern Hindu Kush in Bamiyan province and flows north into Balkh province. Before irrigation reduced its flow, it was a tributary of the Amu Darya]. GB 11.A.17 states: "The river Balkh enters the mountain Bamian [from] the Hapursen and pours into the river Veh."

The Lesser Bundahishn at 20.22 also states that "The Teremet river flows away to the Veh river." Teremet is identified by West as Tajikistan's Termez today across the Amu Darya/Oxus from Balkh province. Termez would have been the gateway to the northern valley of Bakhdhi/Balkh, a valley that leads to Dushanbe, Tajikistan's present capital.



**Mosaic of a snake swallowing an object from Central Asia
dating to the Bronze Age (2500-1500 BCE)**

Noxious Creatures in Airyana Vaeja's Rivers :

The *Vendidad* at 1.2 (translation by James Darmesteter, SBE, 1898) states: "The first of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was the Airyana Vaeja, by the Vanguhi Daitya. Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created the serpent in the river and winter, a work of the Daevas."

The Greater Bundahishn translated by B. T. Anklesaria at Chapter 11.A.7 & 8 states "The river Daitya comes out of Eranvej and proceeds to Dutistan. Of all the rivers, the noxious creatures abound the most in it. As one says, 'The river Daitya is full of noxious creatures'."

The Indus on its part was known to have alligators which could perhaps have been identified as a form of snake. Captain John Wood in his *A Journey to the Source of the River Oxus*, (London) 1872, p. 10-11 describes his encounter with a herd of alligators while travelling up the lower Indus.

Mountains - Hara Berezaiti, the Hara Mountains :

The Mehr Yasht at 10.13 and 14 states that the Aryan abode (airyo-shayanem) was "where the high mountains (garayo berezanto), rich in pastures and waters, yield plenty to the cattle", and that when the Sun rises above the taro (peaks - see further discussion below) of the Hara, it casts its golden rays down on the abode of the Aryans.

Reading the Zamyad Yasht at (19.1) we are given the impression that the Hara was one of two concentric rings of mountains, or at least ones that "lie all around". Many authors add "encircling the earth" or words to that effect to their translations, but there are no such words in the verse. The Yasht also states two thousand, two hundred and forty four peaks rose from these mountains and names several.

The Aban Yasht at 5.21 states that (King) Hushang paid homage at the "upa upabde" (sometime translated as "base" or "enclosure". Upa means "near". We read "near the environs") of the Hara.

In Mehr Yasht 10.118, we are introduced to the term "Hara Berezaiti". The modern word Alburz is said to be derived from Hara Berezaiti. Hara Berezaiti it is said in the literature became Hara-Barez (in Yashts 5.21 and 17.24) then Har-borz and eventually Al-borz. The word "hara" is said to mean "watch, guard, defence" and is derived from the Old Iranian prefix har-meaning "to pay attention, watch over, protect". The implication is that the Hara Mountains got their name since they served as a defensive wall against invaders or plunderers. Indeed, the Greater Bundahishn at 24.24 notes that every three years, people of non-Aryan nations would gather on the Alburz (Hara) mountains in order to cause harm - perhaps sweeping down into the Aryan lands from ridges and passes. The word "berezaiti" is said to stem from "berez" meaning "height", "exalted" or even "towering". It is also said to have evolved into the New Persian words "boland" meaning "tall" or "high" and "bozorg" meaning "big" or "great". With "berezaiti" as an adjective we are left with the impression that the Hara was a high protective barrier. The one mountain range that fits this description very well is the Hindu Kush. Hindu means resident of the (upper) Indus region and Kush is said to be the same as "kush"

meaning "kill". The Hindu Kush is a natural barrier between the Indus and Kabul valleys (to the south) and Wakhan valley (to the north), and by extension the Badakshan/Pamir region.

Nowadays, Alburz/Alborz/Elburz is the name of the mountains in northern Iran. [Wikipedia](#) also reports, "As recently as the 19th century, a peak in the northernmost range in the Hindu Kush system, just south of Balkh, was recorded as Mount Elburz in British army maps (i.e. the western arm of the Hindu Kush)." The same mountains are also called the Aparsen (likely Gk. Paropamisus) in the Bundahishn. We are also given to understand that the highest peak of the Caucasus is also called "Elbrus". The poet Ferdowsi's references to the Alburz in his epic, the *Shahnameh*, lead us to the environs of Hind, perhaps meaning the mountains of the Upper Indus, the Hindu Kush, Pamirs, Karakorum and Himalayas - the Alburz or Hara Berezaiti of old. Strabo would call the Hara Berezaiti the **Taurus Mountains**, a string of mountains that ran from Turkey to the boundaries of China.

The two Bundahishns, the Middle Persian or Pahlavi Zoroastrian texts, see the Alburz (Hara Berezaiti) in two ways (see Lesser Bundahishn 20.1): one the mythical mountains that encircled the earth - the primal mountain range from which all other mountain ranges arose - and two, a specific group of mountain ranges in which two rivers at east and west of the Aryan lands had their source (and according to Zadsparam at 6.21, the source of an additional "great" eighteen rivers). We see these two aspects reflected elsewhere. The Zamyad Yasht reads in a factual manner while some other passages tend to add more fantastic elements. From the Zamyad Yasht we do get the sense that other mountain ranges rise from (perhaps radiate?) from the Hara and that it could conceivably lend its name to connected mountain chains. By the time the Middle Persian Bundahishns and other texts were written, the description is almost entirely mythological as are parallel descriptions in Hindu and Buddhist texts we describe below. In mythology, the Alburz encircled the earth - a band like the Milky Way of the heavens.

As the mythical mountains that surrounded the earth, the Alburz mountains are similar to the **Lokaloka** of the Hindu scriptures. [Lokaloka means "world-no world" and is in Vedic Hindu mythology, a magnificent belt of mountains girdling the outermost of the seven lands (Phl. keshvar / Vedic dvipa) and seas and one which separates the visible world from the region of darkness beyond. The Lokaloka is said to be ten thousand yojanas in breadth and height. The modern equivalent of a yojana is disputed and is thought to be 6 to 15 kilometres making the mythical Lokaloka some 60,000 to 150,000 km. in circumference.]

Tera :

The Mehr Yasht at 10.118 talks about the Sun riding rising above the peaks (tara) of the Hara Berezaiti. Tara (also spelt Tera, Terak or Taera) is sometime taken to mean a specific mountain in the Hara. E. W. West translates the Lesser Bundahishn (LB) at 12.2 as "Terak of Alburz" i.e. Tera of the Hara Berezaiti. When West translates 12.4 as "The Terak of Alburz is that through which the stars, moon and sun pass in, and through it they come back", but when B. T. Anklesaria translates 9.6 of the Greater Bundahishn (GB) as "The Tera of Alburz is that through which the Stars, Moon and Sun revolve and through which they come back", it makes more sense to read Tera(k) as the peaks or the space between peaks through which the stars, moon and sun rise and set. Indeed, at LB 5.4. we have "As it is said that it is the Terak of Alburz from behind which my sun and moon and stars return again" and at LB 5.5, "For there are a

hundred and eighty apertures (rojin) in the east, and a hundred and eighty in the west, through Alburz; and the sun, every day, comes in through an aperture, and goes out through an aperture...."

Ichaporia and Humbach as well as Sethna do not translate "taera" as the name of a mountain but rather as "peak". However, it does make more sense in the contexts above to read it as several or a set of peaks rather than a single peak. But that sense of a single peak rising into the heavens is now embedded in Hindu and Buddhist mythology as well. In the Zamyad Yasht, there is no mythology in the description of the mountains. They are listed quite matter-of-factly and the word "taera" appears buried in the middle of verse 19.6 in a rather obscure manner.

Mary Boyce informs us that when the Khotanese Saka became Buddhists, they referred to Mt. Sumeru of Buddhist legends as *Ttaira Haraysa*, the peak of Hara. Mt. Sumeru in Buddhist mythology lies at the centre of the earth and according to Anklesaria's translation of GB 5B.1, "Mount Tera is in the middle of the earth."

Principal Hara Peaks - Mount Hukaria and Daitik :

The Greater Bundahishn translated by B. T. Anklesaria (at 17.18) describes the Hukar (Huk-airya in the Avesta) as being the 'chief' of the summits. Huk-airya means the 'good Arya' or the 'good and beneficent Arya' - the environs of which, Airyana Vaeja, was a paradise with ideal conditions: no inclement weather, natural beauty and where the people enjoyed good health. The GB at 9.3 also states that, "As the other mountains have grown out of Alburz, in number, two thousand two hundred and forty-four mountains, that are the lofty Hugar/Hukar (Huk-airya), the Tera of Alburz, the Daitih peak...." We note that the Hugar/Hukar (Huk-airya) is described at both the chief of the mountains as well as lofty (tall - towering above others. At GB 9.7, "The lofty Hugar/Hukar (Huk-airya) is that from which the water of Aredvisur descends from the height of a thousand men." At 9.9, "The Daitih (Chakad-i-Daitik in the Lesser Bundahishn) peak is that which is in the middle of the world, of the height of a hundred men, whereon is the Chinvad bridge; they judge the soul at that place." Much attention is given to "Tera" being the name of a pivotal mountain at the centre of the earth, but in the Daitih we have another contender for this description. The height of a hundred men does not make it a very tall mountain and one suitable perhaps for a significant temple or sanctuary (see the thangka painting below). We could have two versions of the myth, one with a very tall central mountain and the other with a shorter mountain crowned by a temple or sanctuary as depicted by the thangka painting below. Both versions appear to exist currently either explicitly or implicitly, and the shorter version appears to make more sense with reality.

The combined manner in which the Hukar, Tera and Daitik are described in the Bundahishn has resonance with the manner in which Mount Meru, Sumeru, is described in Hindu and Buddhist texts.

Mount Meru / Sumeru :

The Hindu scriptures, the Vedas, refer to the Mount Hara as **Mount Meru** or **Sumeru** (the Great Meru), and describe the Himalayas as stemming from Mount Meru which itself stands at the centre of the known world. The Vedas also refer to Arya Varta as Paradesha, the original country. In the Vedas, Bharatavarsha, Ancient India, lay to the south of the Himalayas.

The Wikipedia article on Jambudvipa, the environs in which Mount Meru stands, identifies Jambudvipa with the Pamir region. In the Vedas, each of the four sides of Meru are made of four different precious substances: the south of lapis-lazuli, the west of ruby, the north of gold and the east of silver (or crystal). The Pamir-Badakhshan region was noted for precisely these precious substances and home to the only known lapis mines in antiquity. Further, the lapis mines were in the south of the Pamir region.

Airyana Vaeja as Paradise. Shambhala / Shangri-La :



Buddhist thangka showing Shambhala with Mount Meru & a temple in the centre
The two circular mountain ranges remind us of the description of the Hara and Zeredaza Mountains in the Avesta's Zamyad Yasht "lying all around" - the Zeredaza being the outer range.

As we have noted above, Zoroastrian texts describe Airyana Vaeja as being mountainous with fertile meadows and valleys. In addition, the opening words of the Avestan Vendidad's chapter listing the sixteen nations, states that if God had not made other countries beautiful in some manner, all the world would have swarmed into Airyana Vaeja on account of its great beauty and - as mentioned elsewhere in the Avesta (see next paragraph) - because of its wise king and good government, law and order, noble people and serenity. Airyana Vaeja was a paradise on earth - a land of peace and serenity, the best place to live and raise a family.

The heavenly nature of Airyana Vaeja during the Jamshidi era reached mythic proportions in Yasht 19.33, the Zamyad Yasht. Then, the weather was neither cold nor hot, there was no untruth and envy, people were undying, water and plants never drying. All because King Jamshid ruled wisely and the people lived honestly. However, when the king lost his grace and the people lost their noble ways, Airyana Vaeja became a paradise lost.

Tibetan Buddhism's book of Kala-Chakra, the Time-Cycle, and Tibetan Buddhism's predecessor religion, **Bon**, built on and popularized this concept of a lost and hidden paradise on earth, now known to the world as Shangri-La.

[The founding of the Bon religion is ascribed to Tonpa Shenrab Miwoche who was born - by some estimates 18,000 years ago - in the land of Tagzig Olmo Lung Ring. **Tagzig**, is believed to be a form of the name Tajik. (The name Shenrab sounds Iranian as well.) The doctrine taught by Tonpa Shenrab was spread by his disciples and their student-translators to adjacent countries such as Zhang-Zhung (also Zhangzhung, Shang Shung or Xang Xung - a land north of the Himalayas, which contained Mount Kailash in today's Western Tibet), India (northern Indus valley), Kashmir, China and eventually Greater Tibet. Tonpa Shenrab is reputed to have visited present-day western Tibet once. On that visit he found the people unprepared to receive the entire body of his teachings, but he prophesied that his teachings would flourish in Tibet in the coming ages. The students of his disciples continued his mission and Tibetan Bon scriptures were translated from texts in the language of Zhang-Zhung.

[Bon claims to have spread south to the Indian subcontinent and to have influenced the development of Vedic Hinduism. Perhaps pre-Tibetan Bon was a form of the primordial Aryan religion before Zoroastrianism and Vedic Hinduism. Buddhism in turn evolved out of Vedic Hinduism (c. 400 BCE). Completing a full circle, today's Bon is so heavily influenced by Buddhism that it sounds like a Buddhist sect. Perhaps some scholars may take it upon themselves to try and isolate the precepts of the pre-Buddhism Bon.

[It may be of interest to those studying the weather change in Airyana Vaeja, that pollen and tree ring analysis indicates the Chang Tang plateau in Northern Tibet had a far more liveable environment than it has today - one that supported a primordial civilization - until the climate become colder and drier starting around 1500 BCE, a climate change that caused the population to migrate out of the northern plateau. This authors also feels that the ancient

Aryan and Zoroastrian link to western Tibet is further exemplified by the common tradition of exposing the dead to birds. Also see our blog, [*Iranian-Aryan Connections with Western Tibet.*](#)]

At the centre of the land of Tagzig (called Shambhala in the Kalachakra) was Olmo Lungring which had at its centre, Yungdrung Gutsek, a four-sided mountain similar to Mount Meru / Sumeru ([see above](#)). The mountain is surrounded by temples, cities and parks. To the mountain's south is the Barpo Sogye palace, where Tonpa Shenrab was born. The complex of palaces, rivers and parks with Mount Yungdrung Gutseg in the centre constitutes the inner region (Nang-gling) of Olmo Lungring. The intermediate region (Bar-gling) consists of twelve cities, four of which lie in the four cardinal directions. The third region includes the outer land (mTha'-gling). These three regions are encircled by snow-capped mountains and an ocean.

The mountain Yungdrung Gutsek has nine Yungdrungs (swastikas) ascending like a staircase. It is not without significance that the swastika plays an important symbolic role in both the Bon and Vedic Hindu religions. In Bon, The nine swastikas represent the Nine Ways. The swastika (Yungdrung) itself is a symbol of permanence and indestructibility of the mind-stream, the wisdom of Bon. The full name of Bon is Yungdrung Bon meaning Everlasting Truth.

The four sides of the mountain faced the four cardinal directions. From the four corners, each of which represent four archetypal thought forms, flow four rivers :

- From the thought form of a snow lion flows the river Narazara to the east,
- From the thought form of a horse flows the river Pakshi to the north,
- From the thought form of a peacock flows the river Gyim Shang to the west, and
- From the thought form of an elephant flows the river Sindhu (In Persian: Hindu which later became Indus) to the south.

A few concepts emerge from the description of Tagzig's terrain within which lies the four-sided mountain, Yungdrung Gutsek. First, while our translation states the singular, a four-sided mountain, a mountain in all the related ancient Avestan, Vedic, and Bon texts frequently refers to a group or range of mountains with several peaks. For instance Hara Berezaiti contained two thousand, two hundred and forty four mountains peaks ([see above](#)). Next, from the four-sided Yungdrung Gutsek mountain(s) arose several rivers flowing in all the cardinal directions. In addition, this region was north of the northern Indus region. (Also see our section on the four-sided [topography of the Pamirs](#). It is unreasonable to expect the geographic descriptions in the ancient texts to align perfectly on a modern map. The ancients used approximations formulated from the accounts of travellers over several generations and good examples of this contention are the maps drawn by classical Western authors such as [Ptolemy](#).)

Tibetan Buddhism's Kalachakra uses the Hindu Vedic legend of Mount Meru (Avestan [Hara Berezaiti](#)) and surrounds Mount Meru with the mythic kingdom of **Shambhala**, a Sanskrit word meaning the land of peace. Shambhala, also spelt Shambala or Shamballa, is said to be the land of the Living Fire and **Gyanganj**, the home of immortal wisdom and the omniscient wise god of time (descriptions some use for Ahura Mazda, God, in Zoroastrianism). The concept, description and qualities of Shambala coincide with those for Arya Varta / Airyana Vaeja, the Aryan homeland, and help provide us with added information on its possible location.

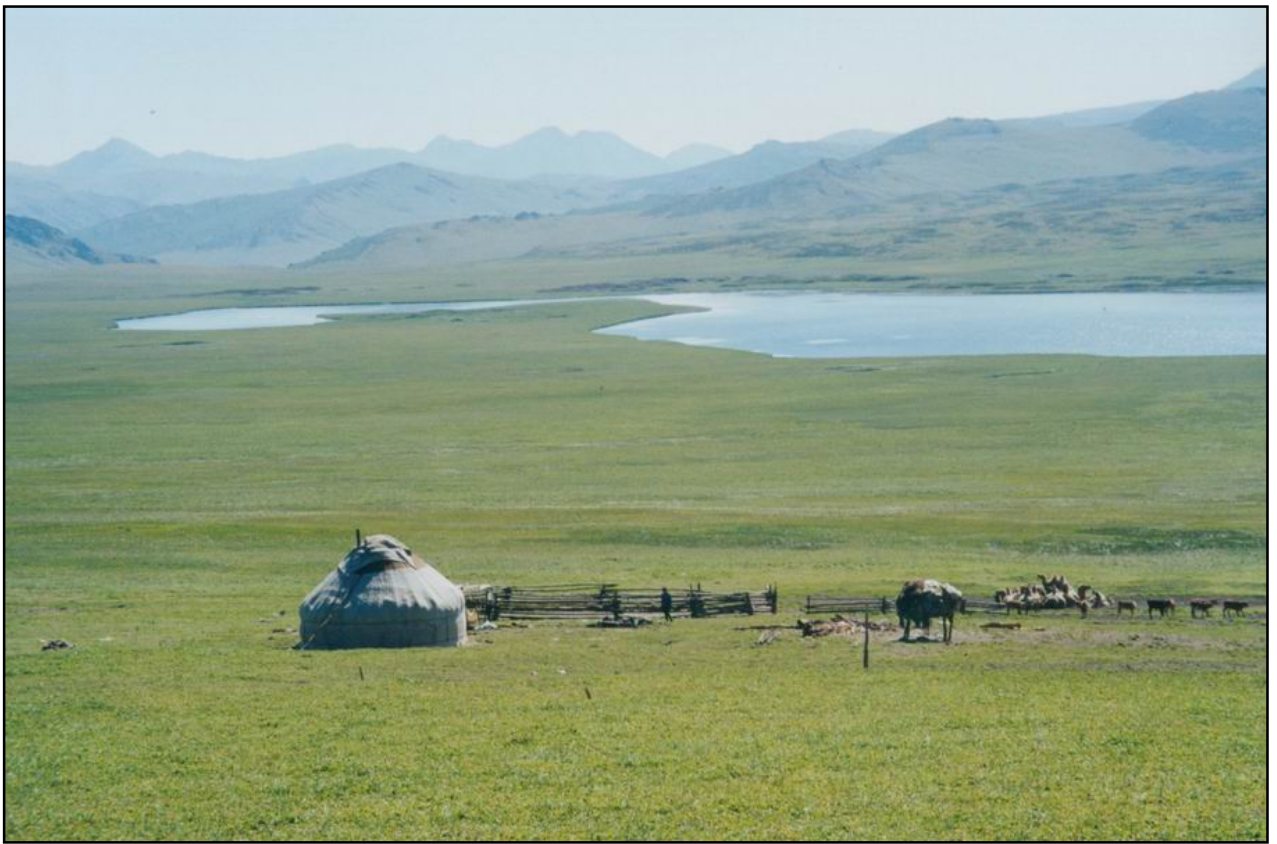
According to the Buddhist Kalachakra, Shambhala, presently hidden to the rest of the world, is a paradise of peace, tranquility, honesty and wisdom. It is home of the primordial and highest spiritual teachings, a tantra of the cycle of time now hidden from us but one that will eventually save the world from evil. Before it adopted Buddhism, the people were followers of the Mlechha, a Yavana or western, religion, some of whom worshiped the sun. Emulating the time periods in Zoroastrian eschatology which uses a cycle of time, as well as emulating the Zoroastrian concept of a final struggle between good against evil, the Buddhist legend states that as time progresses, the world around Shambhala will succumb to evil. However, three millennia after ancient Shambhala king first travelled to India and adopted Buddhism, the Shambhalians will emerge to save the world. There will be an epic battle between the righteous Shambhalians and the surrounding evil forces - a battle in which the righteous Shambhalians will prevail and defeat evil forever. As we have noted, this legend closely parallels Zoroastrian legends that presage a final struggle between the forces of good and evil in which the good, the ashavan, will prevail, transforming the world to a paradise, a heaven, on earth - the vahishtem anghuim - the transformative event being frasho-kereti.

Shambhala has both an outer temporal and an inner spiritual meaning. In the outer meaning, Shambhala is a land that is only accessible to the pure in heart. Those with impure motives will lose their way in the intervening deserts and mountains, blinded by storms. Representing the inner meaning, some thangka paintings of Shambhala depict the kingdom surrounding Mount Meru as an eight-petal lotus - a symbol for the heart chakra and an indication that Shambhala is to be found in a person's heart.

This author therefore proposes that since Shambhala, the land surrounding Mount Meru, is identified as the Vedic Arya Varta, and since the Vedic Arya Varta in turn corresponds to the Avestan Airyana Vaeja (which contains Mount Hara), that the land surrounding Shambhala, Mount Meru and Airyana Vaeja are intimately linked if not the same land. If this author's association is correct, what all four traditions, Zoroastrian, Hindu, Bon and Buddhist, have preserved, is the topography of ancient Airyana Vaeja - a land of fertile valleys and alpine meadows ringed by high snow-capped high mountains.



Yak grazing in the Fergana Valley adjacent to the Pamirs



Yak grazing in the Fergana Valley adjacent to the Pamirs

Weather Change in Airyana Vaeja During Jamshid's Reign :

(Note: The name Jamshid is a later version of the name Yima-Srira or Yima-Khshaeta, meaning Yima the radiant, in the Vendidad. In the Avesta, Jamshid is called Yima son of Vivanghat, while in the Vedas, he is called Yama son of Vivasvant.)

According to Zoroastrian texts as well as Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, legendary king of Airyana Vaeja, King Jamshid, initiated the observance of Nowruz, New Year's day on the first day of spring. For King Jamshid to take this step, Airyana Vaeja must have experienced the beginning of spring and the end of winter around the spring equinox or March 21.

Further, Yasna 9.5 (similarly, Vendidad II.I.6) also states that "in the reign of Yima, there was neither cold nor heat" - a temperate climate by definition. Additional references (see * below), state that the weather in Airyana Vaeja at the outset of the Jamshedi era was equitable. However, the Vendidad and other texts also inform us that a thousand two hundred years into the Jamshedi era, Airyana Vaeja experienced severe and long winters (for a further discussion on the Jamshedi era and the weather change.

[*References to King Jamshid/Yima: Vendidad II.I.1-20(41) and II.I.21(42)-43(140); Yasna 9.4-5; Farvardin Yasht 23.130; Aban Yasht 5.25-26; Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*.]

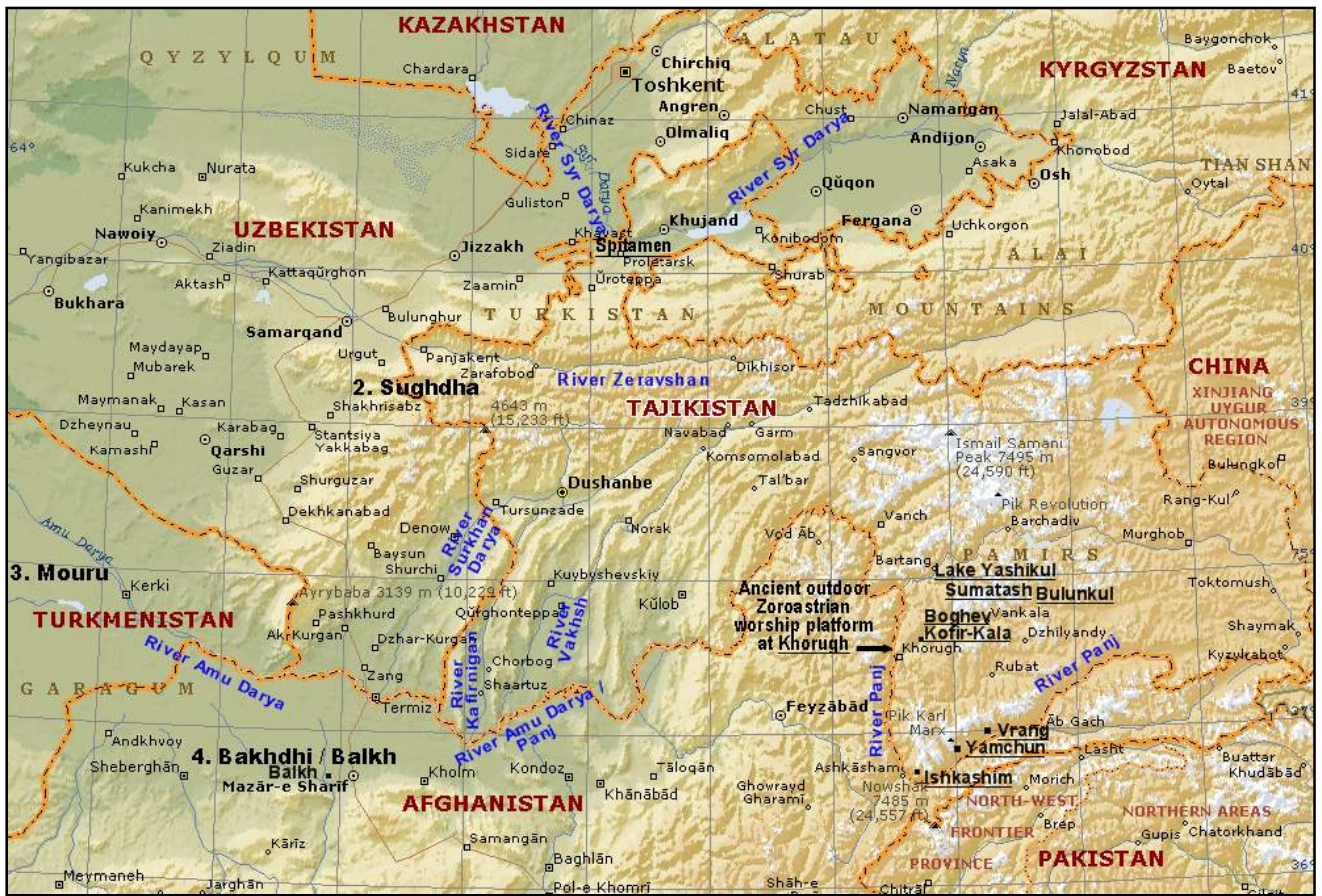
Funerary Practices :

Zoroastrians and Tibetans share the practice of exposing the bodies of their deceased to birds or prey, and to our knowledge they are they only two cultural groups in the world to have employed these practices with any consistency and as an intrinsic part of their traditional / religious rites of passage. They actual methods employed were quite different and the are no records of the Tibetans using towers of silence, dakhmas. This might indicate that while the conditions under which the ancient Tibetans and Zoroastrians lived were similar, they could have been neighbours but not compatriots.

Location of Airyana Vaeja, the Aryan Homeland :

These observations, together with observations throughout this web site, point to a location for Airyana Vaeja, the ancient Aryan homeland, in the general vicinity of Tajikistan, southern Uzbekistan, northern Afghanistan, and south-western Turkmenistan.

More specifically, the observations point to the strong candidacy of the Pamir-Badakhshan region (the areas neighbouring Balkh to the east and north: the upper Amu Darya basin and the Wakhan Valley of eastern Tajikistan and northern Afghanistan), the Hindu Kush to its eastern extremity south of Balkh and bordering the Murgab and Harirud valleys, the Yagnobi, Zeravshan and Fergana valleys, as well as the Alai mountain environs in Western Kyrgyzstan.



Central Asia with first Vendidad lands and possible Airyana Vaeja /Aryan homeland locale

Language Proximity of Central Asia with the Upper Indus Supported by Archaeology :

Given that the Rig Veda is commonly thought to have been written in the Upper Indus region, we have yet one more reason to look at the area immediately to the north and north-west of the upper Indus Valley i.e. the Pamir-Badakhshan region as being a strong candidate for the homeland of the ancient Aryans, the so-called Proto Indo-Iranians.

The language of the Rig Veda and the Old Avesta are so close that they are commonly thought to be dialects such as that spoken in two neighbouring provinces and that further, they emerged from a common language philologists call Proto Indo-Iranian, another name for the language of united ancient Aryans.

Panini, the author of a grammar on Classical Sanskrit which was derived from the Vedic language was a resident of Pushkalavati, **Gandhara**, which is now part of modern-day Charsadda District in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, formerly known as the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan and which included the Swat Valley now in northern Pakistan as well.

In the Swat-Chitral region, numerous archaeological sites have yielded graveyards dating between the second quarter of the second millennium BCE and the late centuries BCE, and with associated features leading the sites to be categorized as the Gandhara Grave Culture. The artefacts excavated from the sites show similarities and links with Central Asian as well as lower Indus Valley sites. The use of shell, coral and ivory were likely brought in via trade routes from the lower Indus plains and foothills.

A significant rock shelter site was excavated in the spring of 1967 near the township of **Ghaligai / Ghalegay** located on the east bank of the Swat River, some 12-15 km south of Mingora towards Barikot. At Ghaligai, the Swat Valley is a kilometres wide, flat, flood plain. Here, the river has many branches and frequently changes course. The valley itself is well cultivated and the crop fields slope gently down towards the river. Watercress and pumpkins are popular crops. Hills rise sharply for the valley. The eastern hills separate the Swat Valley from the Indus and Buner valleys while on the other side the western hills lie the Dir and Chitral valleys. The site has provided evidence of uninterrupted occupation for 3500 years starting from the second half of the 3rd millennium BCE. Three Carbon 14 dates of the earliest/lowest level give date from 2970 to 2930 BCE. artefacts from this level include pottery some with their inner surfaces burnished (presumably to make them water-proof from the inside). Some pottery shapes are similar to those found in Turkmenistan sites (Murgab Delta and the Kopet Dag hill base). Other artefacts found at Ghaligai as level as Kili, Gul Hohammad, Sarai Kala, Jalilpur and Gumla show striking similarities and evidence of trade of non-native materials primarily within the Aryan nations but also as far as the Arabian peninsula and China.

In a valley to the west of Ghaligai, archaeological finds at the **Balambat site near Timergara** (also spelt Timurgarh/Timargarha) and dated to 1500-600 BCE, show links with artefacts found in the lower Indus Valley site Mehrgarh as well as in Central Asian sites. [Balambat lies on the west bank of River Panjkora while Timergara lies across the river on the east bank. The name mean Timurgarh place of Timur (the Moghul king). The Wikipedia page states that fire altars have also been found at Balambat indicating the resident to be "fire-worshippers" (sic). We are not concerned with the insulting language used in the Wikipedia page - rather, indications of the close links to an early Aryan settlement.

Aria :

Haroyu - Sixth Vendidad Nation :

There is a country that the classical Greeks and western authors called Aria (also spelt Arian, Aarii) and which they located around present-day Harirud River (Old Ir. Harayu, Gk. Arios) in north-western Afghanistan's Herat Province. (Note that the classical authors made a distinction between Aryana, all the Aryan lands, and the state of Aria which was part of Greater Aryana.) Ptolemy (90-168 CE) 6.17 and Strabo (63/64 BCE - c. 24 CE) 11.10.1 describe Aria and its location in some detail - a location close to the lands we have identified above for Airyana Vaeja. In addition, the Harirud region or present-day Herat province, are commonly identified with the sixth Vendidad nation Haroyu as well as the Achaemenian nation of **Haraiva** (a name that could have been derived from Arai-va). It is significant that the majority of inhabitants in Herat city, Herat Province's capital, are ethnic Tajiks, since the Tajikistan region is a strong candidate for the location of Airyana Vaeja, the Aryan homeland.

Aria is a candidate for the middle Aryan nation of **Airan**, the kingdom that features in the poet Ferdowsi's epic, the Shahnameh, and one that was formed after the Aryan nation had migrated westward. Were it not for Aria's identification with Haroyu the sixth Vendidad nation, we would be compelled to consider it as the possible location of the original Airyana Vaeja. The border between Airan and its eastern neighbour, Turan / Sugd, was the middle to lower reaches of the Amu Darya (Oxus) river. The Airan of the Shahnameh had Balkh as its capital and therefore would have included the kingdom of Bactria / Balkh / Bakhdhi as a principle kingdom. Airan was bordered by Sistan to the south.

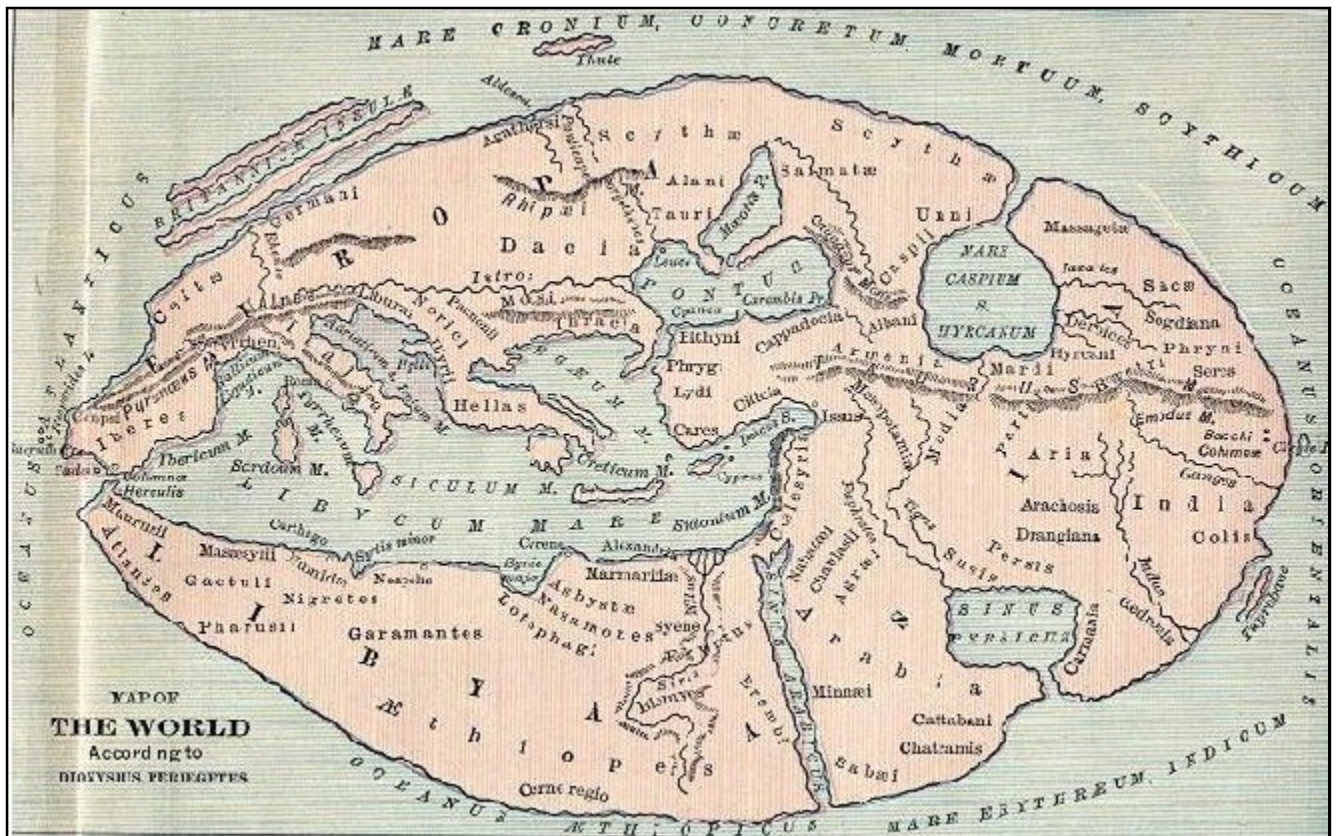
Arrian (c.87-145 CE) in *Anabasis* 4.6.6 states that in antiquity, Aria was considered as particularly fertile and rich in wine. This reference by Arrian to Aria having been particularly fertile in antiquity may refer to the memory of Aria's predecessor nation, Airyana Vaeja, being very fertile and a paradise on earth (rather than the present location).

Under the Sassanian dynasty (c.224 - 649 CE), the territory of Airan / Haraiva was transformed to the eastern quarter of the empire called Khurasan, Khur-a (from Khursheed meaning sun) and san (cf. stan meaning the land or place). Together, the name meant land of the (rising) sun. Greater Khorasan extended east to the Amu Darya (Oxus) River.

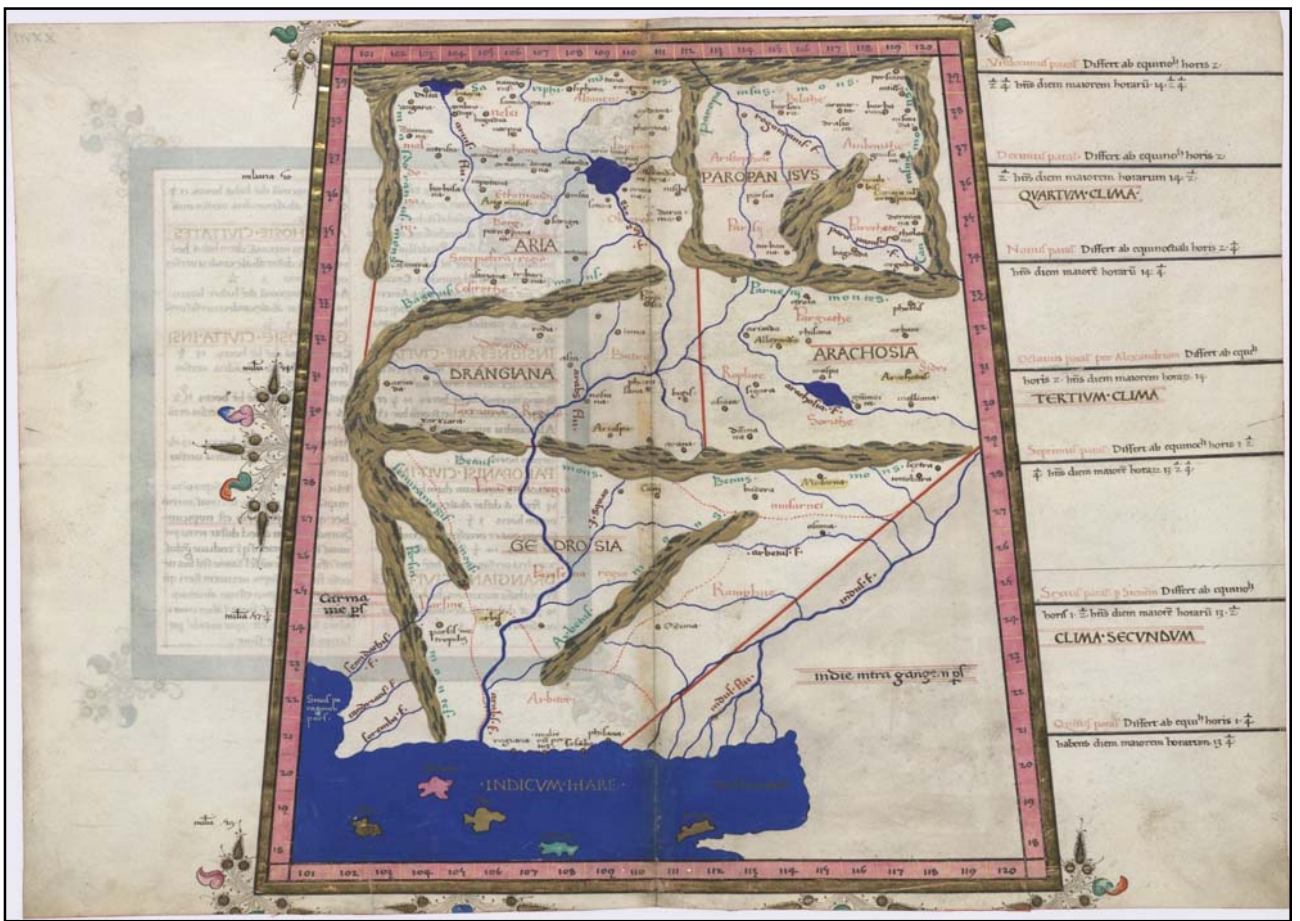
The maps below show the nations of the region from a Greek / European perspective. The borders and location are approximate at best, and often in error, as they are drawn from the descriptions in the classical texts. They nevertheless provide us with invaluable information. Note the mention of Aria, its location and prominence which is even more sticking in the map of the world according to Ptolemy.



1823 Lucas map showing nations c200 BCE



Map based on the descriptions of Dionysius c. 405 BCE



Reconstruction of Ptolemy's map of Aria and neighbouring states

Westward Migration of the Aryan Nation :

If we are correct in surmising that the centre of the Aryan homeland moved westward accompanied by a contraction in its name, then the seat of the Aryan nation would have moved westward as follows:

- The original ancient Aryan homeland Airyana Vaeja in the eastern Central Asian regions identified above, and more specifically the Pamir-Badakhshan region
- The early middle Aryan nation Airan, the seat of the Kayanian dynasty, in Balkh (northern Afghanistan)
- The late middle Aryan nation known to the Greeks as Aria, located in Harirud-Khorasan area (north-western Afghanistan / north-eastern Iran), and
- The modern (2,500 year-old) Aryan nation Parsa, known to the West as Persia, which together with Khorasan became the Iran of today.

Source : <http://www.heritageinstitute.com/zoroastrianism/aryans/location.htm#location>

5. Avesta : Khorda Avesta :

13. FRAWARDIN YASHT ("Hymn to the Guardian Angels")

Translated by James Darmesteter (From *Sacred Books of the East*, American Edition, 1898.)
The Fravashi [*Phl.* Farohar] is the inner power in every being that maintains it and makes it grow and subsist. Originally the Fravashis were the same as the Pitris of the Hindus or the Manes of the Latins, that is to say, the everlasting and deified souls of the dead (see §§ 49-52); but in course of time they gained a wider domain, and not only men, but gods and even physical objects, like the sky and the earth, etc. (§§ 85-86), had each a Fravashi (see *Ormazd et Ahriman*, §§ 111-113).

This Yasht is to be divided into two parts. The former part (§§ 1-84) is a glorification of the powers and attributes of the Fravashis in general; the latter part (§§ 85-158) is an enumeration of the Fravashis of the most celebrated heroes of Mazdeism, from the first man, Gaya Maretan [Gayomard], down to the last, Saoshyant.

The latter part is like a Homer's catalogue of Mazdeism. The greater part of the historical legends of Iran lies here condensed into a register of proper names. This enumeration is divided into seven chapters:

The first (XXIV, §§ 85-95) contains

the names of several gods, of the first man, Gara Maretan, the first law-giver, Zarathushtra, and his first disciple, Maidyo-maungha;

The second part (XXV, §§ 96-110) contains the names of the disciples of Zarathushtra, most of them belonging to the epical cyclus of Vishtaspa (Gushtasp);

The third part (XXVI, §§ 111-117) is of uncertain character, and no name contained in it is found in the epical legends;

The fourth part (XXVII, §§ 118-128) seems to be devoted to the heroes of the other keshwars and to mythical beings, born or unborn (§§ 121, 122, 127, 128);

The fifth part XXVIII, § 129 is devoted to Saoshyant alone;

The sixth part (XIX, §§ 130-138) is devoted to the heroes before the time of Zarathushtra;

The seventh part (XXX, §§ 139-142) is devoted to the holy women of Mazdeism from Hvovi, Zarathushtra's wife, down to Srutat-fedhri, Vanghu-fedhri, and Eredat-fedhri, the future mothers of his three unborn sons.

The second, third, and fourth enumerations all end with the [180] name of Astvat-ereta (that is to say, Saoshyant), which shows that they do not refer to successive generations, but to three independent branches, which are each developed apart down to the time of the Saviour.

<p>O. May Ahura Mazda be rejoiced! ... Ashem Vohu: Holiness is the best of all good... I confess myself a worshipper of Mazda, a follower of Zarathushtra, one who hates the Daevas and obeys the laws of Ahura; For sacrifice, prayer, propitiation, and glorification unto [Hawan], the holy and master of holiness. Unto the awful, overpowering Fravashis of the faithful; unto the Fravashis of the men of the primitive law¹; unto the Fravashis of the next-of-kin, Be propitiation, with sacrifice, prayer, propitiation, and glorification. Yatha ahu vairyo: The will of the Lord is the law of holiness....</p>	<p>NOTES:</p> <p>1. The so-called paoiryō-tkaesha: the primitive law is what 'is considered as the true Mazdayasnian religion in all ages, both before and after the time of Zarthosht' (West, <i>Pahlavi Texts</i> I, 242, note 1); cf. § 150.</p>
<p>I.</p>	
<p>1. Ahura Mazda spake unto Spitama Zarathushtra, saying: 'Do thou proclaim, O pure Zarathushtra! the vigour and strength, the glory, the help and the joy that are in the Fravashis of the faithful, the awful and overpowering Fravashis; do thou tell how they come to help me, how they bring assistance unto me, the awful Fravashis of the faithful².</p>	<p>2. Cf. § 19.</p>
<p>2. 'Through their brightness and glory, O Zarathushtra! I maintain that sky, there above, shining and seen afar, and encompassing this earth all around.</p>	
<p>3. 'It looks like a palace, that stands built of a [181] heavenly substance³, firmly established, with ends that lie afar, shining in its body of ruby over the three-thirds (of the earth)⁴; it is like a garment inlaid with stars, made of a heavenly substance, that Mazda puts on, along with Mithra and Rashnu and Spenta-Armaiti, and on no side can the eye perceive the end of it.</p>	<p>3. Reading <i>mainyu-tâshtô</i>; cf. Yt10.90, 143, and in this very paragraph <i>vanghanem mainyu-tâshtem</i>.</p> <p>4. A division of the earth different from and older than the division into seven keshwars; cf. Yasna 11.7; this division was derived by analogy from the tripartite division of the universe (earth, atmosphere, and heaven).</p>
<p>4. 'Through their brightness and glory, O Zarathushtra! I maintain Ardvi Sura Anahita, the wide-expanding and</p>	<p>5. Yt5.1.</p>

<p>health-giving, who hates the Daevas and obeys the laws of Ahura, who is worthy of sacrifice in the material world, worthy of prayer in the material world; the life-increasing and holy, the flocks-increasing and holy, the fold-increasing and holy, the wealth increasing and holy, the country increasing and holy⁵;</p>	
<p>5⁶. 'Who makes the seed of all males pure, who makes the womb of all females pure for bringing forth, who makes all females bring forth in safety, who puts milk in the breasts of all females in the right measure and the right quality;</p>	<p>6. §§ 5-8 = Yt5.2-3.</p>
<p>6. 'The large river, known afar, that is as large as the whole of all the waters that run along the earth; that runs powerfully from the height Hukairya down to the sea Vouru-kasha.</p>	
<p>7. 'All the shores of the sea Vouru-kasha are boiling over, all the middle of it is boiling over, [182] when she runs down there, when she streams down there, she, Ardvi Sura Anahita, who has a thousand cells and a thousand channels; the extent of each of those cells, of each of those channels, is as much as a man can ride in forty days, riding on a good horse.</p>	
<p>8. 'From this river of mine alone flow all the waters that spread all over the seven keshwars; this river of mine alone goes on bringing waters, both in summer and in winter. This river of mine purifies the seed in males, the womb in females, the milk in females' breasts⁷.</p>	<p>7. §§ 4-8 = Yt5.1-5.</p>
<p>9. 'Through their brightness and glory, O Zarathushtra! I maintain the wide earth made by Ahura, the large and broad earth, that bears so much that is fine, that bears all the bodily world, the live and the dead, and the high mountains, rich in pastures and waters;</p>	
<p>10. 'Upon which run the many streams and rivers; upon which the many kinds of plants grow up from the ground, to nourish animals and men, to nourish the Aryan nations, to nourish the five kinds of animals, and to help the faithful.</p>	
<p>11. 'Through their brightness and glory, O Zarathushtra! I maintain in the womb the child that has been conceived, so that it does not die from the assaults of Vidotu, and I develop in it the bones, the hair, the ..., the entrails, the feet, and the sexual organs.</p>	
<p>12. 'Had not the awful Fravashis of the faithful given help unto me, those animals and men of mine, of which there are such excellent kinds, would not subsist; strength would belong to the Druj, the dominion would belong to the Druj, the material world would belong to the Druj.</p>	

<p>13. 'Between the earth and the sky the immaterial creatures would be harassed by the Druj; between the earth and the sky the immaterial creatures would be smitten by the Druj; and never afterwards would Angra-Mainyu give way to the blows of Spenta-Mainyu.</p>	
<p>14. 'Through their brightness and glory the waters run and flow forward from the never-failing springs; through their brightness and glory the plants grow up from the earth, by the never-failing springs; through their brightness and glory the winds blow, driving down the clouds towards the never-failing springs.</p>	
<p>15. 'Through their brightness and glory the females conceive offspring; through their brightness and glory they bring forth in safety; it is through their brightness and glory when they become blessed with children.</p>	
<p>16. 'Through their brightness and glory a man is born who is a chief in assemblies and meetings, who listens well to the (holy) words, whom Wisdom holds dear, and who returns a victor from discussions with Gaotema, the heretic. 'Through their brightness and glory the sun goes his way; through their brightness and glory the moon goes her way; through their brightness and glory the stars go their way.</p>	
<p>17. 'In fearful battles they are the wisest for help, the Fravashis of the faithful. 'The most powerful amongst the Fravashis of the faithful, O Spitama! are those of the men of the primitive law or those of the Saoshyants not yet born, who are to restore the world. Of the others, the Fravashis of the living faithful are more powerful, O Zarathushtra! than those of the dead, O Spitama!</p>	
<p>18. 'And the man who in life shall treat the Fravashis of the faithful well, will become a ruler of the country with full power, and a chief most strong; so shall any man of you become, who shall treat Mithra well, the lord of wide pastures, and Arshtat, who makes the world grow, who makes the world increase.</p>	
<p>19. 'Thus do I proclaim unto thee, O pure Spitama! the vigour and strength, the glory, the help, and the joy that are in the Fravashis of the faithful, the awful and overpowering Fravashis; and how they come to help me, how they bring assistance unto me, the awful Fravashis of the faithful.'</p>	
<p>II.</p>	
<p>20. Ahura Mazda spake unto Spitama Zarathushtra, saying: 'If in this material world, O Spitama Zarathushtra!</p>	

<p>thou happenest to come upon frightful roads, full of dangers and fears, O Zarathushtra! and thou fearest for thyself, then do thou recite these words, then proclaim these fiend-smiting words, O Zarathushtra!</p>	
<p>21. "I praise, I invoke, I meditate upon, and we sacrifice unto the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful. We worship the Fravashis of the masters of the houses, those of the lords of the boroughs, those of the lords of the towns, those of the lords of the countries, those of the Zarathustrotemas; the Fravashis of those that are, the Fravashis of those that have been, the Fravashis of those that will be; all the Fravashis of all nations, and most friendly the Fravashis of the friendly nations;</p>	
<p>22. "Who maintain the sky, who maintain the waters, who maintain the earth, who maintain the cattle, who maintain in the womb the child that has been conceived, so that it does not die from the assaults of Vidotu, and develop in it the bones, the hair, the, the entrails, the feet, and the sexual organs;</p>	
<p>23. "Who are much-bringing, who move with awfulness, well-moving, swiftly moving, quickly moving, who move when invoked; who are to be invoked in the conquest of good, who are to be invoked in fights against foes, who are to be invoked in battles;</p>	
<p>24. "Who give victory to their invoker, who give boons to their lover, who give health to the sick man, who give good Glory to the faithful man that brings libations and invokes them with a sacrifice and words of propitiation,</p>	
<p>25. "Who turn to that side where are faithful men, most devoted to holiness, and where is the greatest piety, where the faithful man is rejoiced, and where the faithful man is not ill-treated."</p>	
<p>III.</p>	
<p>26. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who are the mightiest of drivers, the lightest of those driving forwards, the slowest of the retiring, the safest of all bridges, the least-erring of all weapons and arms, and who never turn their backs.</p>	
<p>27. At once, wherever they come, we worship them, the good ones, the excellent ones, the good, the strong, the beneficent Fravashis of the faithful. They are to be invoked when the bundles of baresma are tied; they are to be invoked in fights against foes, in battles, and there where gallant men strive to conquer foes.</p>	
<p>28. Mazda invoked them for help, when he fixed the sky</p>	

and the waters and the earth and the plants; when Spenta-Mainyu fixed the sky, when he fixed the waters, when the earth, when the cattle, when the plants, when the child conceived in the womb, so that it should not die from the assaults of Vidotu, and developed in it the bones, the hair, the, the entrails, the feet, and the sexual organs.	
29. Spenta-Mainyu maintained the sky, and they sustained it from below, they, the strong Fravashis, who sit in silence, gazing with sharp looks; whose eyes and ears are powerful, who bring long joy, high and high-girded; well-moving and moving afar, loud-snorting, possessing riches and a high renown.	
IV.	
30. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful; whose friendship is good, and who know how to benefit; whose friendship lasts long; who like to stay in the abode where they are not harmed by its dwellers; who are good, beautiful afar, health-giving, of high renown, conquering in battle, and who never do harm first.	
V.	
31. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful; whose will is dreadful unto those who vex them; powerfully working and most beneficent; who in battle break the dread arms of their foes and haters.	
VI.	
32. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful; liberal, valiant, and full of strength, not to be seized by thought, welfare-giving, kind, and health-giving, following with Ashi's remedies, as far as the earth extends, as the rivers stretch, as the sun rises.	
VII.	
33. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who gallantly and bravely fight, causing havoc, wounding, breaking to pieces all the malice of the malicious, Daevas and men, and smiting powerfully in battle, at their wish and will.	
34. You kindly deliver the Victory made by Ahura, and the crushing Ascendant, most beneficently, to those countries where you, the good ones, unharmed and rejoiced, unoppressed and unoffended, have been held worthy of sacrifice and prayer, and proceed the way of your wish.	
VIII.	
35. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, of high renown, smiting in battle, most strong,	

shield-bearing and harmless to those who are true, whom both the pursuing and the fleeing invoke for help: the pursuer invokes them for a swift race, and for a swift race does the flier invoke them;	
36. Who turn to that side where are faithful men, most devoted to holiness, and where is the greatest piety, where the faithful man is rejoiced, and where the faithful man is not ill-treated.	
IX.	
37. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who form many battalions, girded with weapons, lifting up spears, and full of sheen; who in fearful battles come rushing along where the gallant heroes go and assail the Danus.	
38. There you destroy the victorious strength of the Turanian Danus; there you destroy the malice of the Turanian Danus; through you the chiefs are of high intellect and most successful; they, the gallant heroes, the gallant Saoshyants, the gallant conquerors of the offspring of the Danus chiefs of myriads, who wound with stones.	
X.	
39. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who rout the two wings of an army standing in battle array, who make the centre swerve, and swiftly pursue onwards, to help the faithful and to distress the doers of evil deeds.	
XI.	
40. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful; awful, overpowering, and victorious, smiting in battle, sorely wounding, blowing away (the foes), moving along to and fro, of good renown, fair of body, godly of soul, and holy; who give victory to their invoker, who give boons to their lover, who give health to the sick man;	
41. Who give good glory to him who worships them with a sacrifice, as that man did worship them, the holy Zarathushtra, the chief of the material world, the head of the two-footed race, in whatever struggle he had to enter, in whatever distress he did fear;	
42. Who, when well invoked, enjoy bliss in the heavens; who, when well invoked, come forward from the heavens, who are the heads of that sky above, possessing the well-shapen Strength, the Victory made by Ahura, the crushing Ascendant, and Welfare, the wealth-bringing, boon-bringing, holy, well fed, worthy of sacrifice and prayer in the perfection of holiness.	

<p>43. They shed Satavaesa between the earth and the sky, him to whom the waters belong, who listens to appeals and makes the waters flow and the plants grow up, to nourish animals and men, to nourish the Aryan nations, to nourish the five kinds of animals and to help the faithful.</p>	
<p>44. Satavaesa comes down and flows between the earth and the sky, he to whom the waters belong, who listens to appeals and makes the waters and the plants grow up, fair, radiant, and full of light, to nourish animals and men, to nourish the Aryan nations, to nourish the five kinds of animals, and to help the faithful.</p>	
<p>XII.</p>	
<p>45. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful; with helms of brass, with weapons of brass, with armour of brass; who struggle in the fights for victory in garments of light, arraying the battles and bringing them forwards, to kill thousands of Daevas. When the wind blows from behind them and brings their breath unto men,</p>	
<p>46. Then men know where blows the breath of victory: and they pay pious homage unto the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, with their hearts prepared and their arms uplifted.</p>	
<p>47. Whichever side they have been first worshipped in the fulness of faith of a devoted heart, to that side turn the awful Fravashis of the faithful, along with Mithra and Rashnu and the awful cursing thought of the wise and the victorious wind.</p>	
<p>48. And those nations are smitten at one stroke by their fifties and their hundreds, by their hundreds and their thousands, by their thousands and their tens of thousands, by their tens of thousands and their myriads of myriads, against which turn the awful Fravashis of the faithful, along with Mithra and Rashnu, and the awful cursing thought of the wise and the victorious wind.</p>	
<p>XIII.</p>	
<p>49. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who come and go through the borough at the time of the Hamaspathmaidem; they go along there for ten nights, asking thus:</p>	
<p>50. 'Who will praise us? Who will offer us a sacrifice? Who will meditate upon us? Who will bless us? Who will receive us with meat and clothes in his hand and with a prayer worthy of bliss? Of which of us will the name be taken for invocation? Of which of you will the soul be worshipped by</p>	

you with a sacrifice? To whom will this gift of ours be given, that he may have never-failing food for ever and ever?'	
51. And the man who offers them up a sacrifice, with meat and clothes in his hand, with a prayer worthy of bliss, the awful Fravashis of the faithful, satisfied, unharmed, and unoffended, bless thus:	
52. 'May there be in this house flocks of animals and men! May there be a swift horse and a solid chariot! May there be a man who knows how to praise God and rule in an assembly, who will offer us sacrifices with meat and clothes in his hand, and with a prayer worthy of bliss.'	
XIV.	
53. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who show beautiful paths to the waters, made by Mazda, which had stood before for a long time in the same place without flowing:	
54. And now they flow along the path made by Mazda, along the way made by the gods, the watery way appointed to them, at the wish of Ahura Mazda, at the wish of the Amesha-Spentas.	
XV.	
55. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who show a beautiful growth to the fertile plants, which had stood before for a long time in the same place without growing;	
56. And now they grow up along the path made by Mazda, along the way made by the gods, in the time appointed to them, at the wish of Ahura Mazda, at the wish of the Amesha-Spentas.	
XVI.	
57. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who showed their paths to the stars, the moon, the sun, and the endless lights, that had stood before for a long time in the same place, without moving forwards, through the oppression of the Daevas and the assaults of the Daevas.	
58. And now they move around in their far-revolving circle for ever, till they come to the time of the good restoration of the world.	
XVII.	
59. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who watch over the bright sea Vouru-Kasha, to the number of ninety thousand, and nine thousand, and	

nine hundred, and ninety-nine.	
XVIII.	
60. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who watch over the stars Haptoiringa, to the number of ninety thousand, and nine thousand, and nine hundred, and ninety-nine.	
XIX.	
61. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who watch over the body of Keresaspa, the son of Sama, the club-bearer with plaited hair, to the number of ninety thousand, and nine thousand, and nine hundred, and ninety-nine.	
XX.	
62. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who watch over the seed of the holy Zarathushtra, to the number of ninety thousand, and nine thousand, and nine hundred, and ninety-nine.	
XXI.	
63. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who fight at the right hand of the reigning lord, if he rejoices the faithful and if the awful Fravashis of the faithful are not hurt by him, if they are rejoiced by him, unharmed and unoffended.	
XXII.	
64. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who are greater, who are stronger, who are swifter, who are more powerful, who are more victorious, who are more healing, who are more effective than can be expressed by words; who run by tens of thousands into the midst of the Myzdas.	
65. And when the waters come up from the sea Vouru-Kasha, O Spitama Zarathushtra! along with the Glory made by Mazda, then forwards come the awful Fravashis of the faithful, many and many hundreds, many and many thousands, many and many tens of thousands,	
66. Seeking water for their own kindred, for their own borough, for their own town, for their own country, and saying thus: 'May our own country have a good store and full joy!'	
67. They fight in the battles that are fought in their own place and land, each according to the place and house where he dwelt (of yore): they look like a gallant warrior who, girded up and watchful, fights for the hoard he has treasured up.	

<p>68. And those of them who win bring waters to their own kindred, to their own borough, to their own town, to their own country, saying thus: 'May my country grow and increase!'</p>	
<p>69. And when the all-powerful sovereign of a country has been surprised by his foes and haters, he invokes them, the awful Fravashis of the faithful.</p>	
<p>70. And they come to his help, if they have not been hurt by him, if they have been rejoiced by him, if they have not been harmed nor offended, the awful Fravashis of the faithful: they come flying unto him, it seems as if they were well-winged birds.</p>	
<p>71. They come in as a weapon and as a shield, to keep him behind and to keep him in front, from the Druj unseen, from the female Varenya fiend, from the evil-doer bent on mischief, and from that fiend who is all death, Angra Mainyu. It will be as if there were a thousand men watching over one man;</p>	
<p>72. So that neither the sword well-thrust, neither the club well-falling, nor the arrow well-shot, nor the spear well-darted, nor the stones flung from the arm shall destroy him.</p>	
<p>73. They come on this side, they come on that side, never resting, the good, powerful, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, asking for help thus: 'Who will praise us? Who will offer us a sacrifice? Who will meditate upon us? Who will bless us? Who will receive us with meat and clothes in his hand and with a prayer worthy of bliss? Of which of us will the name be taken for invocation? Of which of you will the soul be worshipped by you with a sacrifice? To whom will that gift of ours be given, that he may have never-failing food for ever and ever?'</p>	
<p>74. We worship the perception; we worship the intellect; we worship the conscience; we worship those of the Saoshyants; We worship the souls; those of the tame animals; those of the wild animals; those of the animals that live in the waters; those of the animals that live under the ground; those of the flying ones; those of the running ones; those of the grazing ones. We worship their Fravashis.</p>	
<p>75. We worship the Fravashis. We worship them, the liberal; We worship them, the valiant; we worship them, the most valiant; We worship them, the beneficent; we worship them, the</p>	

<p>most beneficent; We worship them, the powerful; We worship them, the most strong; We worship them, the light; we worship them, the most light; We worship them, the effective; we worship them, the most effective.</p>	
<p>76. They are the most effective amongst the creatures of the two Spirits, they the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who stood holding fast when the two Spirits created the world, the Good Spirit and the Evil One.</p>	
<p>77. When Angra Mainyu broke into the creation of the good holiness, then came in across Vohu Mano and Atar.</p>	
<p>78. They destroyed the malice of the fiend Angra Mainyu, so that the waters did not stop flowing nor did the plants stop growing; but at once the most beneficent waters of the creator and ruler, Ahura Mazda, flowed forward and his plants went on growing.</p>	
<p>79. We worship all the waters; We worship all the plants; We worship all the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful. We worship the waters by their names; We worship the plants by their names; We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful by their names.</p>	
<p>80. Of all those ancient Fravashis, we worship the Fravashi of Ahura Mazda; who is the greatest, the best, the fairest, the most solid, the wisest, the finest of body and supreme in holiness;</p>	
<p>81. Whose soul is the Mathra Spenta, who is white, shining, seen afar; and we worship the beautiful forms, the active forms wherewith he clothes the Amesha-Spentas; we worship the swift-horsed sun.</p>	
<p>XXIII.</p>	
<p>82. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the Amesha-Spentas, the bright ones, whose looks perform what they wish, the tall, quickly coming to do, strong, and lordly, who are undecaying and holy;</p>	
<p>83. Who are all seven of one thought, who are all seven of one speech, who are all seven of one deed; whose thought is the same, whose speech is the same, whose deed is the same, whose father and commander is the same, namely, the Maker, Ahura Mazda;</p>	

<p>84. Who see one another's soul thinking of good thoughts, thinking of good words, thinking of good deeds, thinking of Garo-nmana, and whose ways are shining as they go down towards the libations.</p>	
<p>XXIV.</p>	
<p>85. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis: that of the most rejoicing fire, the beneficent and assembly-making; and that of the holy, strong Sraosha, who is the incarnate Word, a mighty-speared and lordly god; and that of Nairyō-sangha.</p>	
<p>86. And that of Rashnu Razishta; That of Mithra, the lord of wide pastures; That of the Mathra-Spenta; That of the sky; That of the waters; That of the earth; That of the plants; That of the Bull; That of the living man; That of the holy creation.</p>	
<p>87. We worship the Fravashi of Gaya Maretan [Gayomard], who first listened unto the thought and teaching of Ahura Mazda; of whom Ahura formed the race of the Aryan nations, the seed of the Aryan nations. We worship the piety and the Fravashi of the holy Zarathushtra;</p>	
<p>88. Who first thought what is good, who first spoke what is good, who first did what is good; who was the first Priest, the first Warrior, the first Plougher of the ground; who first knew and first taught; who first possessed and first took possession of the Bull, of Holiness, of the Word, the obedience to the Word, and dominion, and all the good things made by Mazda, that are the offspring of the good Principle;</p>	
<p>89. Who was the first Priest, the first Warrior, the first Plougher of the ground; who first took the turning of the wheel⁵ from the hands of the Dæva and of the cold-hearted man; who first in the material world pronounced the praise of Asha, thus bringing the Dævas to naught, and confessed himself a worshipper of Mazda, a follower of Zarathushtra, one who hates the Dævas, and obeys the laws of Ahura.</p>	<p>5. The wheel of sovereignty (?); cf. Yt10.67; this expression smacks of Buddhism.</p>
<p>90. Who first in the material world said the word that destroys the Dævas, the law of Ahura; who first in the material world proclaimed the word that destroys the Dævas, the law of Ahura; who first in the material world</p>	

declared all the creation of the Daevas unworthy of sacrifice and prayer; who was strong, giving all the good things of life, the first bearer of the Law amongst the nations;	
91. In whom was heard the whole Mathra, the word of holiness; who was the lord and master of the world, the praiser of the most great, most good and most fair Asha; who had a revelation of the Law, that most excellent of all beings;	
92. For whom the Amesha-Spentas longed, in one accord with the sun, in the fulness of faith of a devoted heart; they longed for him, as the lord and master of the world, as the praiser of the most great, most good, and most fair Asha, as having a revelation of the Law, that most excellent of all beings;	
93. In whose birth and growth the waters and the plants rejoiced; in whose birth and growth the waters and the plants grew; in whose birth and growth all the creatures of the good creations cried out, Hail!	
94. 'Hail to us! for he is born, the Athravan, Spitama Zarathushtra. Zarathushtra will offer us sacrifices with libations and bundles of baresma; and there will the good Law of the worshippers of Mazda come and spread through all the seven Karshvares of the earth.	
95. 'There will Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, increase all the excellences of our countries, and allay their troubles; there will the powerful Apam-Napat increase all the excellences of our countries, and allay their troubles.' We worship the piety and Fravashi of Maidhyo-maungha, the son of Arasti, who first listened unto the word and teaching of Zarathushtra.	
XXV.	
96. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Asmo-hvanvant; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Asan-hvanvant. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Gavayan. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Parshat-gaush. the son of Frata; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vohvasti, the son of Snaoya; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Isvat, the son of Varaza.	
97. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Saena, the son of Ahum-stut, who first appeared upon this earth with a hundred pupils. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Fradhidaya. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Usmanara, the son of	

<p>Paeshata. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vohu-raochah, the son of Franya; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Asho-raochah, the son of Franya; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Varesmo-raochah, the son of Franya.</p>	
<p>98. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Isat-vastra, the son of Zarathushtra; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Urvatat-nara, the son of Zarathushtra; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hvare-chithra, the son of Zarathushtra. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Daevo-tbis, the son of Takhma. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Thrimithwant, the son of Spitama. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Daungha, the son of Zairita.</p>	
<p>99. We worship the Fravashi of the holy king Vistaspa; the gallant one, who was the incarnate Word, the mighty-speared, and lordly one; who, driving the Druj before him, sought wide room for the holy religion; who, driving the Druj before him, made wide room for the holy religion, who made himself the arm and support of this law of Ahura, of this law of Zarathushtra.</p>	
<p>100. Who took her, standing bound, from the hands of the Hunus, and established her to sit in the middle [of the world], high ruling, never falling back, holy, nourished with plenty of cattle and pastures, blessed with plenty of cattle and pastures.</p>	
<p>101. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Zairi-vairi; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Yukhta-vairi; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Sriraokhshan; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Keresaoekhshan; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vanara; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Varaza; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Bujisravah; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Berezyarshti; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Tizyarshti; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Perethu-arshti; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vizhyarshti.</p>	
<p>102. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Naptya; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vazhaspa; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Habaspa. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vistauru, the son of</p>	

<p>Naotara. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frash-ham-vareta; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frasho-kareta. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Atare-vanu; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Atare-pata; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Atare-data; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Atare-chithra; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Atare-hvarenah; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Atare-savah; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Atare-zantu; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Atare-danghu.</p>	
<p>103. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hushkyaothna; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Pishkyaothna; We worship the Fravashi of the holy and gallant Spento-data. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Basta-vairi; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Kava-razem. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frashaoshtra, the son of Hvova; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Jamaspa, the son of Hvova; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Avaraoshtri.</p>	
<p>104. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hushkyaothna, the son of Frashaoshtra; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hvadaena, the son of Frashaoshtra. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hanghaurvaungh, the son of Jamaspa; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vareshna, the son of Hanghaurvaungh. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vohu-nemah, the son of Avaraoshtri, To withstand evil dreams, to withstand evil visions, to withstand evil ...(?), to withstand the evil Pairikas.</p>	
<p>105. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Mathravaka, the son of Simaezhi, the Aethrapati, the Hamidhpati, who was able to smite down most of the evil, unfaithful Ashemaoghas, that shout the hymns, and acknowledge no lord and no master, the dreadful ones whose Fravashis are to be broken; to withstand the evil done by the faithful.</p>	
<p>106. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Asha-stu, the son of Maidhyo-maungha. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Avarethrabah, the son of Rastare-vaghant. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Bujra, the son of Dazgaraspa. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Zbaurvant;</p>	

<p>We worship the Fravashi of the holy and gallant Karesna, the son of Zbaurvant; who was the incarnate Word, mighty-speared and lordly;</p>	
<p>107. In whose house did walk the good, beautiful, shining Ashi Vanguhi, in the shape of a maid fair of body, most strong, tall-formed, high-up girded, pure, nobly born of a glorious seed; who, rushing to the battle, knew how to make room for himself with his own arms; who, rushing to the battle, knew how to fight the foe with his own arms.</p>	
<p>108. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Viraspa, the son of Karesna; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Azata, the son of Karesna: We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frayaodha, the son of Karesna. We worship the Fravashi of the holy and good Arshya; Arshya, the chief in assemblies, the most energetic of the worshippers of Mazda. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Darayat-ratha; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frayat-ratha; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Skarayat-ratha.</p>	
<p>109. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Arshvant; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vyarshvant; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Paityarshvant. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Amru; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Chamru. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Dratha; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Paiti-dratha; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Paiti-vangha. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frasha-vakhsha. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Nemo-vanghu, the son of Vaedhayangha.</p>	
<p>110. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Visadha. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Asha-vanghu, the son of Bivandangha; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Jaro-danghu, the son of Pairishtira; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Neremyazdana, the son of Athwyoza. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Berezishnu, the son of Ara; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Kasupatu, the son of Ara. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frya. We worship the Fravashi of the holy ASTVAT-ERETA.</p>	
<p>XXVI.</p>	

<p>111. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Gaopi-vanghu. We worship the Fravashi of the holy and gallant Ham-baretar vanghvam. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Staotar-Vahishtahe-Ashyehe. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Pouru-dhakshti, the son of Khshtavaenya; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Khshoi-wraspa, the son of Khshtavaenya.</p>	
<p>112. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Ayo-asti, the son of Pouru-dhakshti; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vohv-asti, the son of Pouru-dhakshti; We-worship the Fravashi of the holy Gaya-dhasti, the son of Pouru-dhakshti; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Asha-vazdah, the son of Pouru-dhakshti; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Urudhu, the son of Pouru-dhakshti. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Khshathro-chinah, the son of Khshvoi-wraspa.</p>	
<p>113. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Ashahura, the son of Jishti. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Fraya-zanta; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frenah, the son of Frayazanta; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Jaro-vanghu, the son of Frayazanta. We worship the Fravashis of the holy Asha-vazdah and Thritha, the sons of Sayuzhdri. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vohu-raochah, the son of Varakasa. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Arejan-ghant, the Turanian. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Usinemah.</p>	
<p>114. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Yukhtaspa. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Asha-skyaothna, the son of Gayadhasti. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vohu-nemah, the son of Katu; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vohu-vazdah, the son of Katu. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Asha-saredha, the son of Asha-sairyach; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Asha-saredha, the son of Zairyach. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Chakhshni.</p>	

<p>We worship the Fravashi of the holy Syavaspi. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Pourushti, the son of Kavi.</p>	
<p>115. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Varesmapa, the son of Janara. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Nanarasti, the son of Paeshatah; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Zarazdati, the son of Paeshatah. We worship tke Fravashi of the holy Gaevani, the son of Vohu-nemah. We worship the Fravashis of the holy Arezva and Sruta-spadha We worship the Fravashis Of the holy Zrayah and Spento-khratu. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Varshni, the son of Vagereza. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frachya, the son of Taurvati. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vahmae-data, the son of Mathravaka, We worship the Fravashi of the holy Ushtra, the son of Sadhanah.</p>	
<p>116. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Danghu-sruta; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Danghu-fradhah. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Aspo-padho-makhshti; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Payanghro-makhshti. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Ushtazanta. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Asha-savah, We worship the Fravashi of the holy Asho-urvatha. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Haomo-hvarenah.</p>	
<p>117. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frava. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Usnaka. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hvanvant. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Daeno-vazah. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Arejaona. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Aiwi-hvarenah. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Huyazata. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hare-dhaspa. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Pazinah. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hvakhshathra. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Asho-paoirya, We worship the Fravashi of the holy ASTVAT-ERETA.</p>	
<p>XXVII.</p>	
<p>118. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hugau. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Anghuyu.</p>	

<p>We worship the Fravashi of the holy Gauri; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Yushta, the son of Gauri [or, the holy Gaorayana]. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Mazdra-vanghu; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Srira-vanghu. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Ayuta. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Suro-yazata.</p>	
<p>119. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Eredhwa We worship the Fravashi of the holy Kavi. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Ukhshan, the son of the great Vidi-sravah, known afar. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vanghu-dhata, the son of Hvadhata; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Uzya, the son of Vanghu-dhata; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frya.</p>	
<p>120. We worship the Fravashi of the holy one whose name is Ashem-yenhe-raochau; We worship the Fravashi of the holy one whose name is Ashem-yenhe-vereza; We worship the Fravashi of the holy one whose name is Ashem-yahmai-ushta. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Yoishta, of the Fryana house. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Usmanara, the son of Paeshatah Paitisrira, to withstand the evil done by one's kindred.</p>	
<p>121. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Spiti, the son of Uspasnu; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Erezraspa, the son of Uspasnu. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Usadhan, the son of Mazdayasna. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Fradat-vanghu, the son of Stivant. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Raochas-chaeshman; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hvare-chaeshman We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frasrutara; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Visrutara. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Baremna. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Visruta.</p>	
<p>122. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hvaspa; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Chathwaraspa. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Dawra-maeshi. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Fraora-ostra [Fraoraosa], the son of Kaosha. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frinaspa, the son of</p>	

<p>Kaeva. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Fradat-nara, the son of Gravaratu. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vohu-ushtra, the son of Akhnangha. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vivare-shvant, the son of Ainyu.</p>	
<p>123. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frarazi, the son of Tura. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Stipi, the son of Ravant. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Parshanta, the son of Gandarewa. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Avahya, the son of Spenta [Spengha]. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Aeta [Aetava], the son of Mayu [Mayava]; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Yaetush-gau, the son of Vyatana. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Garshta, the son of Kavi.</p>	
<p>124. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Poursu-bangha, the son of Zaosha. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vohu-data, the son of Kata. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Baungha, the son of Saungha [Saunghangha]. We worship the Fravashis of the holy Hvareza and Ankasa. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Aravaoshtra, the son of Erezvat-danghu. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frachithra, the son of Berezvant. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vohu-peresa, the son of Ainyu.</p>	
<p>125. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Paro-dasma, the son of Dashtaghni, a Miza [Muzha] man of the Miza [Muzha] land. We worship the Fravashis of the holy Fratira [Fratura] and Baeshatastira [Baeshatastura]. We worship the Fravashi of the holy and pure Avare-gau, the son of Aoighimatastira [Aoikhmatastura]. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Gaomant, the son of Zavan, a Raozhdya man of the Raozhdya land. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Thrit, the son of Aevo-saredha-fyaeshta, a Tanya man of the Tanya land.</p>	
<p>126. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Tiro-nakathwa, of the Uspaeshta-Saena house.</p>	

<p>We worship the Fravashi of the holy Utayuti Vit-kavi, the son of Zighri, of the Saena house; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frohakafra, the son of Merezishmya, of the Saena house. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Varesmo-raochah, the son of Perethu-afzem.</p>	
<p>127. We worship the Fravashis of the holy Asha-nemah and Vidat-gau, of this country. We worship the Fravashis of the holy Par-shat-gau and Dazgara-gau, of the Apakhshira country. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hufra-vakhsh, of the Kahrkana house. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Akayadha, of the Pidha house. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Jamaspa, the younger. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Maidhyo-maungha, the younger. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Urvatat-nara, the younger.</p>	
<p>128. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Raochas-chaeshman; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hvare-chaeshman; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Fradat-hvarenah; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Varedat-hvarenah [Vidhat-hvarenah]; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vouru-nemah; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vouru-savah; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Ukhshyat-ereta; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Ukhshyat-nemah; We worship the Fravashi of the holy ASTVAT-ERETA;</p>	
<p>XXVIII.</p>	
<p>129. Whose name will be the victorious SAOSHYANT and whose name will be Astvat-ereta. He will be SAOSHYANT (the Beneficent One), because he will benefit the whole bodily world; he will be ASTVAT-ERETA (he who makes the bodily creatures rise up), because as a bodily creature and as a living creature he will stand against the destruction of the bodily creatures, to withstand the Druj of the two-footed brood, to withstand the evil done by the faithful.</p>	
<p>XXIX.</p>	
<p>130. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Yima, the son of Vivanghant; the valiant Yima, who had flocks at his wish; to stand against the oppression caused by the Daevas, against the drought that destroys pastures, and against death that creeps unseen.</p>	

<p>131. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Thraetaona, of the Athwya house; to stand against itch, hot fever, humours, cold fever, and incontineny, to stand against the evil done by the Serpent.</p> <p>We worship the Fravashi of the holy Aoshnara, the son of Pouru-jira.</p> <p>We worship the Fravashi of the holy Uzava, the son of Tumaspa.</p> <p>We worship the Fravashi of the holy Aghraeratha, the demi-man.</p> <p>We worship the Fravashi of the holy Manushchithra, the son of Airyu.</p>	
<p>132. We worship the Fravashi of the holy king Kavata; We worship the Fravashi of the holy king Aipivanghu; We worship the Fravashi of the holy king Usadhan; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Arshan; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Pisanah [Pisinah]; We worship the Fravashi of the holy king Byarshan; We worship the Fravashi of the holy king Syavarshan; We worship the Fravashi of the holy king Husravah [Haosravah];</p>	
<p>133. For the well-shaped Strength, for the Victory made by Ahura, for the crushing Ascendant for the righteousness of the law, for the innocence of the law, for the unconquerable power of the law; for the extermination of the enemies at one stroke;</p>	
<p>134. And for the vigour of health, for the Glory made by Mazda, for the health of the body, and for a good, virtuous offspring, wise, chief in assemblies, bright, and clear-eyed, that frees [their father] from the pangs [of hell], of good intellect; and for that part in the blessed world that falls to wisdom and to those who do not follow impiety;</p>	
<p>135. For a dominion full of splendour, for a long, long life, and for all boons and remedies; to withstand the Yatus and Pairikas, the oppressors, the blind, and the deaf; to withstand the evil done by oppressors.</p>	
<p>136. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Keresaspa, the Sama, the club-bearer with plaited hair; to withstand the dreadful arm and the hordes with the wide battle array, with the many spears, with the straight spears, with the spears uplifted, bearing the spears of havoc; to withstand the dreadful brigand who works destruction, the man-slayer who has no mercy; to withstand the evil done by the brigand.</p>	
<p>137. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Akhrura, the son of Husravah;</p>	

<p>To withstand the wicked one that deceives his friend and the niggard that causes the destruction of the world. We worship the Fravashi of the holy and gallant Haoshyangha; To withstand tke Mazainya Daevas and the Varenya fiends; to withstand the evil done by the Daevas.</p>	
<p>138. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Fradhakhshti, the son of the jar, To withstand Aeshma, the fiend of the wounding spear, and the Daevas that grow through Aeshma; to withstand the evil done by Aeshma.</p>	
<p>XXX.</p>	
<p>139. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hvovi. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Freni; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Thriti; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Pouruchista. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hutaosa; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Huma [Humaya]. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Zairichi. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vispa-taurvashi. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Ushtavaiti. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Tushnamaiti.</p>	
<p>140. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Freni, the wife of Usenemah; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Freni, the wife of the son of Frayazanta; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Freni, the wife of the son of Khshoiwraspa; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Freni, the wife of Gayadhasti. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Asabani [Asabana], the wife of Pourudhakhsti. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Ukhshyeinti, the wife of Staotar-Vahishtahe-Ashyehe.</p>	
<p>141. We worship the Fravashi of the holy maid Vadhut. We worship the Fravashi of the holy maid Jaghrudh. We worship the Fravashi of the holy maid Franghadh. We worship the Fravashi of the holy maid Urudhayant. We worship the Fravashi of the holy maid Paesanghanu. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hvaredhi. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Huchithra. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Kanuka. We worship the Fravashi of the holy maid Srutat-fedhri.</p>	
<p>142. We worship the Fravashi of the holy maid Vangu-fedhri; We worship the Fravashi of the holy maid Eredat-fedhri,</p>	

<p>who is called Vispa-taurvairi. She is Vispa-taurvairi (the all-destroying) because she will bring him forth, who will destroy the malice of Daevas and men, to withstand the evil done by the Jahi.</p>	
<p>143. We worship the Fravashis of the holy men in the Aryan countries; We worship the Fravashis of the holy women in the Aryan countries. We worship the Fravashis of the holy men in the Turanian countries; We worship the Fravashis of the holy women in the Turanian countries. We worship the Fravashis of the holy men in the Sairimyan countries; We worship the Fravashis of the holy women in the Sairimyan countries.</p>	
<p>144. We worship the Fravashis of the holy men in the Sairimyan countries; We worship the Fravashis of the holy women in the Saini countries. We worship the Fravashis of the holy men in the Dahi countries; We worship the Fravashis of the holy women in the Dahi countries. We worship the Fravashis of the holy men in all countries; We worship the Fravashis of the holy women in all countries.</p>	
<p>145. We worship all the good, awful, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, from Gaya Mareta [Gayomard] down to the victorious Saoshyant. May the Fravashis of the faithful come quickly to us! May they come to our help!</p>	
<p>146. They protect us when in distress with manifest assistance, with the assistance of Ahura Mazda and of the holy, powerful Sraosha, and with the Mathra-Spenta, the all-knowing, who hates the Daevas with a mighty hate, a friend of Ahura Mazda, whom Zarathushtra worshipped so greatly in the material world.</p>	
<p>147. May the good waters and the plants and the Fravashis of the faithful abide down here! May you be rejoiced and well received in this house! Here are the Athravans of the countries, thinking of good holiness. Our hands are lifted up for asking help, and for offering a sacrifice unto you, O most beneficent Fravashis!</p>	
<p>148. We worship the Fravashis of all the holy men and holy women whose souls are worthy of sacrifice, whose Fravashis are worthy of invocation.</p>	

<p>We worship the Fravashis of all the holy men and holy women, our sacrificing to whom makes us good in the eyes of Akura Mazda: of all of those we have heard that Zarathushtra is the first and best, as a follower of Ahura and as a performer of the law.</p>	
<p>149. We worship the spirit, conscience, perception, soul, and Fravashi of men of the primitive law, of the first who listened to the teaching (of Ahura), holy men and holy women, who struggled for holiness; we worship the spirit, conscience, perception, soul, and Fravashi of our next-of-kin, holy men and holy women, who struggled for holiness.</p>	
<p>150. We worship the men of the primitive law who will be in these houses, boroughs, towns, and countries; We worship the men of the primitive law who have been in these houses, boroughs, towns, and countries; We worship the men of the primitive law who are in these houses, boroughs, towns, and countries.</p>	
<p>151. We worship the men of the primitive law in all houses, boroughs, towns, and countries, who obtained these houses, who obtained these boroughs, who obtained these towns, who obtained these countries, who obtained holiness, who obtained the Mathra, who obtained the [blessedness of the] soul, who obtained all the perfections of goodness.</p>	
<p>152. We worship Zarathushtra, the lord and master of all the material world, the man of the primitive law; the wisest of all-beings, the best-ruling of all beings, the brightest of all beings, the most glorious of all beings, the most worthy of sacrifice amongst all beings, the most worthy of prayer amongst all beings, the most worthy of propitiation amongst all beings, the most worthy of glorification amongst all beings, whom we call well-desired and worthy of sacrifice and prayer as much as any being can be, in the perfection of his holiness.</p>	
<p>153. We worship this earth; we worship those heavens; We worship those good things that stand between (the earth and the heavens) and that are worthy of sacrifice and prayer and are to be worshipped by the faithful man.</p>	
<p>154. We worship the souls of the wild beasts and of the tame. We worship the souls of the holy men and women, born at any time, whose consciences struggle, or will struggle, or have. struggled, for the good.</p>	
<p>155. We worship the spirit, conscience, perception, soul, and Fravashi of the holy men and holy women who struggle, will struggle, or have struggled, and teach the</p>	

Law and who have struggled for holiness. Yenhe hatam: All those beings to whom Ahura Mazda... Yatha ahu vairyo: The will of the Lord is the law of holiness....	
156. The Fravashis of the faithful, awful and overpowering, awful and victorious; the Fravashis of the men of the primitive law; the Fravashis of the next-of-kin; may these Fravashis come satisfied into this house, may they walk satisfied through this house!	
157. May they, being satisfied, bless this house with the presence of the kind Ashi Vanguhi! May they leave this house satisfied! May they carry back from here hymns and worship to the Maker, Ahura Mazda, and the Amesha-Spentas! May they not leave this house of us, the worshippers of Mazda, complaining!	
158. Yatha ahu vairyo: The will of the Lord is the law of holiness.... I bless the sacrifice and prayer, and the strength and vigour of the awful, overpowering Fravashis of the faithful; of the Fravashis of the men of the primitive law; of the Fravashis of the next-of-kin. Ashem Vohu: Holiness is the best of all good.... [Give] unto that man brightness and glory, give him the bright, all-happy, blissful abode of the holy Ones.	

Source : <http://www.avesta.org/ka/yt13sbe.htm#section30>

6. Avesta : Vendiad (English) : Fargard 1 :

Translated by James Darmesteter (From *Sacred Books of the East*, American Edition, 1898.)
Compare this chapter with the ancient description given of it in the *Denkard*, Book 8, Chapter 44.

For an analysis see Mary Boyce, *Zoroastrianism : Its Antiquity and Constant Vigour* (Columbia Lectures on Iranian Studies, No 7) (Costa Mesa, Mazda Pub, 1992, pp. 3 ff.) and A. Christensen, *Le premier chapitre du Vendidad* (Copenhagen, 1943).

Synopsis:

This chapter is an enumeration of sixteen perfect lands created by Ahura Mazda, and of as many plagues created in opposition by Angra Mainyu.

Many attempts have been made, not only to identify these sixteen lands, but also to draw historical conclusions from their order of succession, as representing the actual order of the migrations and settlements of the old Iranian tribes. But there is nothing in the text to support

such wide inferences We have here nothing more than a geographical description of Iran, seen from the religious point of view.

Of these sixteen lands there are nine, as follows :

AVESTAN NAME.	OLD PERSIAN.	GREEK	MODERN NAME.
Sughdha (2)	Suguda	Sogdianh	Soghd (Samarkand)
Mouru (3)	Margu	Margianh	Marv
Bakhdhi (4)	Bâkhtri	Baktra	Balkh
Haroyu (6)	Haraiva	`Areia	Harê(rud)
Vehrkana (9)	Varkâna	'Urkania	Gurgân, Jorgân
Harahvaiti (10)	Harauvati	`Aracwsia	Av-rokhaj, Arghand-(âb)
Haetumant (11)		`EtumandoV	Helmend
Ragha (12)	Ragâ	'Ragai	Raî
Hapta hindu (15)	Hindava	`Indoi	Hind (Punjab)

which can be identified with certainty, as we are able to follow their names from the records of the Achaemenian kings or the works of classical writers down to the map of modern Iran. For the other lands we are confined for information to the Pahlavi Commentary, from which we get:

AVESTAN NAME.	PAHLAVI NAME.	MODERN NAME.
Vaekereta (7)	Kâpûl	Kabul
Urva (8)	Mêshan	Mesene
Varena (14)	Patashkhvârgar or Dailam	Tabaristân or Gilân
Rangha (16)	Arvastâni Rûm	Eastern Mesopotamia

The identification of Nisaya (5) and Chakhra (13) remains an open question, as there were several cities of that name. We know, however, that Nisaya lay between Balkh and Marv. The first province Airyanem Vaeja, or Eranwej, we identify with the medieval Arrân (nowadays known as Karabagh).

There must have been some systematical idea in the order followed, though it is not apparent, except in the succession of Sughdha, Mouru, Bakhdhi, Nisaya, Haroyu, Vaekereta (numbers 2-7), which form one compact group of north-eastern provinces; the last two provinces, Hindu and Rangha (numbers 15-16), are the two limitroph provinces, east and west (Indus and Tigris); and the Rangha brings us back to the first province, Eranwej, whose chief river, the Vanguhi Daitya, or Aras, springs from the same mountains as the Rangha-Tigris.

The several plagues created by Angra Mainyu to mar the native perfection of Ahura's creations give instructive information on the religious condition of several of the Iranian countries at the time when this Fargard was written. Harat seems to have been the seat of puritan sects that pushed rigorism to the extreme in the law of purification. Sorcery was prevalent in the basin of

the Helمند river, and the Paris were powerful in Cabul, which is a Zoroastrian way of saying that the Hindu civilisation prevailed in those parts, which in fact in the two centuries before and after Christ were known as White India, and remained more Indian than Iranian till the Moslem conquest.

FARGARD 1. Sixteen perfect lands created by Ahura Mazda, and as many plagues created by Angra Mainyu.

1. Ahura Mazda spake unto Spitama¹ Zarathushtra, saying:

I have made every land dear (to its people), even though it had no charms whatever in it²: had I not made every land dear (to its people), even though it had no charms whatever in it, then the whole living world would have invaded the Airyana Vaeja³.

Notes:

1. Or Spitamide. Zarathushtra was descended from Spitama at the fifth generation.

2. 'Everyone fancies that the land where he was born and has been brought up is the best and fairest land that I have created' (Comm.)

3. Greater Bundahish: 'It is said in the Sacred Book: had I not created the Genius of the native place, all mankind would have gone to Eran-Vej, on account of its pleasantness.' — On Airyanem Vaeja or Eran-Vej, see following note.

2.⁴ The first of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was the Airyana Vaeja⁵, by the Vanguhi Daitya⁶.

Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created the serpent in the river⁷ and Winter, a work of the Daevas⁸.

4. Clause 2 in the Vendidad Sada is composed of Zend quotations in the Commentary that illustrate the alternative process of creation: 'First, Ahura Mazda would create a land of such kind that its dwellers might like it, and there could be nothing more delightful. Then he who is all death would bring against it a counter-creation.'

5. Airyanem Vaeja, Iran-Vej, is the holy land of Zoroastrianism: Zarathushtra was born and founded his religion

there (Bund. 20.32; 32.3): the first animal couple appeared there (Bund. 14.4; Zadspram, 9.8). From its name, 'the Iranian seed,' it seems to have been considered as the original seat of the Iranian race. It has been generally supposed to belong to Eastern Iran, like the provinces which are enumerated after it, chiefly on account of the name of its river, the Vanguhi Daitya, which was in the Sassanian times (as Veh) the name of the Oxus. But the Bundahish distinctly states that Iran-Vej is 'bordering upon Adarbajan' (29.12); now, Adarbaijan is bordered by the Caspian Sea on the east, by the Rangha provinces on the west, by Media proper on the south, and by Arran on the north. The Rangha provinces are out of question, since they are mentioned at the end of the Fargard (verse 20), and the climatic conditions of Iran-Vej with its long winter likewise exclude Media and suit Arran, where the summer lasts hardly two months (cf. § 4, note 6). The very name agrees, as the country known as Arran seems to have been known to the Greeks as `Ariana (Stephanus

Byz.), which brings it close to our Airyanem. On the Vanguhi Daitya, see following note.

6. The Vanguhi Daitya, belonging to Arran, must be the modern Aras (the classic Araxes). The Aras was named Vanguhi, like the Oxus, but distinguished from it by the addition Daitya, which made it 'the Vanguhi of the Law' (the Vanguhi by which Zarathushtra received the Law).

7. 'There are many Khrafstras in the Daitik, as it is said, The Daitik full of Khrafstras' (Bund. 20.13). Snakes abound on the banks of the Araxes (Morier, *A Second Journey*, p. 250) nowadays as much as in the time of Pompeius, to whom they barred the way from Albania to Hyrcania (Plut.)

8. Arran (Karabagh) is celebrated for its cold winter as well as for its beauty. At the Naoroz (first day of spring) the fields still lie under the snow. The temperature does not become milder before the second fortnight of April; no flower is seen before May. Summer, which is marked by the migration of the nomads from the plain to the mountains, begins about the 20th of June and ends in the middle of August.

<p>3. There are ten winter months there, two summer months⁹; and those are cold for the waters¹⁰, cold for the earth, cold for the trees¹¹. Winter falls there, the worst of all plagues. [Hum 35: "Ten are there the winter months, two the summer months, and even then [in summer] the waters are freezing, the earth is freezing, the plants are freezing; there is the center of winter, there is the heart of winter, there winter rushes around, there (occur) most damages caused by storm."]</p>	<p>9. Vendidad Sada: 'It is known that [in the ordinary course of nature] there are seven months of summer and five of winter' (see <u>Bund. 25</u>).</p> <p>10. Some say: 'Even those two months of summer are cold for the waters...' (Comm.; see <u>Mainyo-i-khard 44.20</u>).</p> <p>11. Vend. Sada: 'There reigns the core and heart of winter.'</p>
<p>4. The second of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was the plain¹² which the Sughdhas inhabit¹³. Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created the locust¹⁴, which brings death unto cattle and plants.</p>	<p>12. Doubtful.</p> <p>13. Old P. Suguda; Sogdiana.</p> <p>14. The plague that fell to that country was the bad locust: it devours the plants and death comes to the cattle' (<i>Gr. Bund.</i>)</p>
<p>5. The third of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was the strong, holy Mouru¹⁵. Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created plunder and sin¹⁶.</p>	<p>15. Margu; Margianh; Marv.</p> <p>16. Doubtful. The <i>Gr. Bd.</i> has: 'The plague that fell to that country was the coming and going of troops: for there is always there an evil concourse of horsemen, thieves, robbers, and heretics, who speak untruth and oppress the righteous.' — Marv continued to be the resort of Turanian plunderers till the recent Russian annexation.</p>
<p>6. The fourth of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was the beautiful Bakhdhi¹⁷ with high-lifted banner. Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created the ants and the ant-hills¹⁸.</p>	<p>17. Bakhtri; Baktra; Balkh.</p> <p>18. 'The corn-carrying ants' (Asp.; cf. <u>Farg. 14.5</u>).</p>
<p>7. The fifth of the good lands and countries which I,</p>	<p>19. By contradistinction</p>

Ahura Mazda, created, was Nisaya¹⁹, that lies between the Mouru and Bakhdhi.

Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created the sin of unbelief²⁰.

to other places of the same name. There was a Nisaya, in Media, where Darius put to death the Mage Gaumata (Behishtun I, 58). There was also a Nisâ in Fars, another in Kirman, a third again on the way from Amol to Marv (Tabari, tr. Noeldeke, p.101, 2), which may be the same as Nisaia, the capital of Parthia (Parqaunisa ap. Isid. of Charax 12); cf. Pliny VI, 25 (29). One may therefore be tempted to translate, 'Nisaya between which and Bakhdhi Mouru lies;' but the text hardly admits of that construction, and we must suppose the existence of another Nisaya on the way from Balkh to Marv.

20. There are people there 'who doubt the existence of God (Comm.)

8. The sixth of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was the house-deserting Haroyu²¹.

Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created tears and wailing²².

21. Harôyu, Old P. Haraiva (transcribed in Greek and Latin 'Areia Aria instead of `Areia Haria, by a confusion with the name of the Aryans); P. Harê (in Firdausi and in Harê-rûd; Harât is an Arabicised form. — 'The house-deserting Harê: because there, when a man dies in a house, the people of the house leave it and go. We keep the ordinances for nine

	<p>days or a month: they leave the house and absent themselves from it for nine days or a month' (<i>Gr. Bd.</i>) See <u>Vd5.42</u>.</p> <p>22. 'The tears and wailing for the dead,' the voceros. The tears shed over a dead man grow to a river that prevents his crossing the Chinwad bridge (<u>Saddar 96</u>; <u>Arda Viraf 16.7, 10</u>).</p>
<p>9. The seventh of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was Vaekereta²³, of the evil shadows.</p> <p>Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created the Pairika Knathaiti²⁴, who claves unto Keresaspa.</p>	<p>23. Vaêkereta, an older name of Kabul (Kâpûl: <i>Comm. and Gr. Bd.</i>); perhaps the Ptolemeian Bagarda in Paropanisus (<i>Ptol. VI, 18</i>).</p> <p>24. The Pairika, in Zoroastrian mythology, symbolises idolatry (<i>uzdes-parastih</i>). The land of Kubul, till the Moslem invasion, belonged to the Indian civilisation and was mostly of Brahmanical and Buddhist religion. The Pairika Khnathaiti will be destroyed at the end of the world by Saoshyant, the unborn son of Zarathushtra (when all false religions vanish before the true one; <u>Vd19.5</u>). — Sama Keresaspa, the Garshasp of later tradition, is the type of impious heroism: he let himself be seduced to the Daeva-worship, and Zarathushtra saw him punished in hell for his contempt of Zoroastrian observances.</p>

<p>10. The eighth of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was Urva of the rich pastures²⁵. Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created the sin of pride²⁶.</p>	<p>25. Urva, according to <i>Gr. Bd.</i> Mēshan, that is to say Mesene (Meshnh) the region of lower Euphrates, famous for its fertility (Herod. I, 193 [?]): it was for four centuries (from about 150 B.C. to 225 A.D.) the seat of a flourishing commercial state. 26. 'The people of Meshan are proud: there are no people worse than they' (<i>Gr. Bd.</i>)</p>
<p>11. The ninth of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was Khnenta which the Vehrkanas²⁷ inhabit. Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created a sin for which there is no atonement, the unnatural sin²⁸.</p>	<p>27. 'Khnenta is a river in Vehrkanā (Hyrcania)' (<i>Comm.</i>); consequently the river Jorjan. 28. See <u>Vd8.31-2</u>. [<i>Hum2</i> 228 (shyaothna yānaô-vaeipya): "pederasty"]</p>
<p>12. The tenth of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was the beautiful Harahvaiti²⁹. Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created a sin for which there is no atonement, the burying of the dead³⁰.</p>	<p>29. Harauvati; `Aracwsia; corrupted into Ar-rokhag (name of the country in the Arabic literature) and Arghand (in the modern name of the river Arghand-âb). 30. See <u>Vd3.36 ff.</u></p>
<p>13. The eleventh of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was the bright, glorious Haetumant³¹. Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created the evil work of witchcraft.</p>	<p>31. The basin of the EtumandroV or Erymanthus, now Hermend, Helmend, that is to say, the region of Saistân.</p>
<p>14. And this is the sign by which it is known, this is that by which it is seen at once: wheresoever they may go and raise a cry of sorcery, there³² the worst works of witchcraft go forth. From there they come to kill and strike at heart, and they bring locusts as many as they want³³.</p>	<p>32. In Haetumant. — 'The plague created against Saistan is abundance of witchcraft: and that character appears from this, that all people from that place practise astrology: those wizards produce ... snow, hail, spiders,</p>

	<p>and locusts ' (<i>Gr Bd.</i>) Saistan, like Kabul, was half Indian (Maçoudi, II, 79-82), and Brahmans and Buddhists have the credit of being proficient in the darker sciences.</p> <p>33. This clause seems to be a quotation in the Pahlavi Commentary.</p>
<p>15. The twelfth of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was Ragha³⁴ of the three races³⁵.</p> <p>Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created the sin of utter unbelief³⁶.</p>	<p>34. Ragha, transcribed Râk and identified by the Commentary with Adarbajjan and 'according to some' with Rai (the Greek 'Ragai in Media). There were apparently two Raghas, one in Atropatene, another in Media.</p> <p>35. 'That means that the three classes, priests, warriors, and husbandmen, were well organised there' (Comm. and <i>Gr. Bd.</i>)</p> <p>36. 'They doubt themselves and cause other people to doubt' (Comm.)</p>
<p>16. The thirteenth of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was the strong, holy Chakhra³⁷.</p> <p>Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created a sin for which there is no atonement, the cooking of corpses³⁸.</p>	<p>37. There were two towns of that name (Charkh), one in Khorasan, and the other in Ghaznin.</p> <p>38. 'Cooking a corpse and eating it. They cook foxes and weasels and eat them' (<i>Gr. Bd.</i>) See <u>Vd8.73-4.</u></p>
<p>17. The fourteenth of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was the four-cornered Varena³⁹, for which was born Thraetaona, who smote Azi Dahaka [Zohak].</p> <p>Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created abnormal issues in women⁴⁰, and barbarian oppression⁴¹.</p>	<p>39. Varn, identified by the Comm. either with Patashkhvârgar or with Dailam (that is to say Tabaristan or Gilan). The <i>Gr. Bd.</i> identifies it with Mount Damavand (which</p>

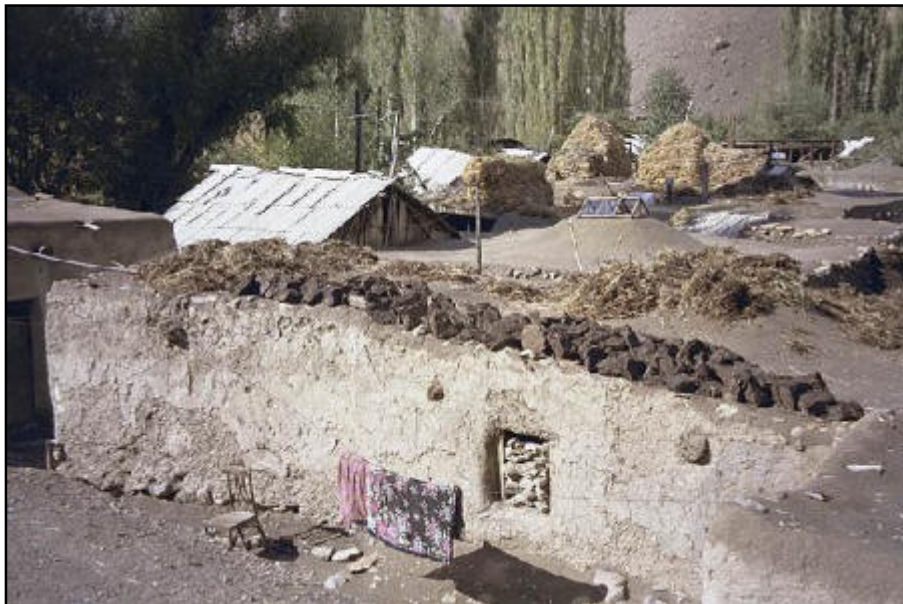
	<p>belongs to Patashkhvargar): this is the mountain where Azi Dahaka [Zohak] was bound with iron bonds by Thraetaona [Faridoon]. — 'Four-cornered:' Tabaristan has rudely the shape of a quadrilateral. 40. <u>Vd16.11 ff.</u> 41. The aborigines of the Caspian littoral were Anarian savages, the so-called 'Demons of Mazana [Mazendaran].'</p>
<p>18. The fifteenth of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was the Seven Rivers⁴². Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created abnormal issues in women, and excessive heat.</p>	<p>42. Hapta hindava, the basin of the affluents of the Indus, the modern Panjab (= the Five Rivers), formerly called Hind, by contradistinction to Sindh, the basin of the lower river. [Hum34: "the PhIT of V1.18 quotes the fragment <i>haca ushastara hinduua auui daosha<s>tarem hindum</i> 'from the eastern river to the western river'.]</p>
<p>19. The sixteenth of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was the land by the sources (?) of the Rangha⁴³, where people live who have no chiefs⁴⁴. Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created Winter⁴⁵, a work of the Daevas⁴⁶.</p>	<p>43. 'Arvastin-i-Rum (Roman Mesopotamia)' (Comm.), that is to say, the basin of the upper Tigris (Rangha = Arvand = Tigris). 44. 'People who do not hold the chief for a chief' (Comm.), which is the translation for asraosha (Comm. ad XVI, 18), 'rebel against the law,' and would well apply to the non-Mazdean people of Arvastân-i-Rûm.</p>

	<p>45. The severe winters in the upper valleys of the Tigris.</p> <p>46. The <i>Vendidad Sada</i> has here: taozyâka danheush aiwishtâra, which the <i>Gr. Bd.</i> understands as: 'and the Tajik (the Arabs) are oppressive there.'</p>
<p>20. There are still other lands and countries⁴⁷, beautiful and deep, longing and asking for the good, and bright. [Hum2 54: lands and regions, beautiful,-deep, esteemed, brilliant and bright.]</p>	<p>47. 'Some say: Persis' (Comm.)</p>

Source :

http://www.heritageinstitute.com/zoroastrianism/outsidepages/avestaorg/vendidad_trans.htm

7. Pamiri Houses :



Pamiri house with hay and dung on the roof. Credit: Pamir.Org

The Pamiri houses, while outwardly primitive looking, are a repository of Pamiri cultural and religious tradition. They have flat roofs used for drying hay, apricots, mulberries or dung for fuel. Some roofs can be seen stacked high with hay.

Most older houses have few, if any, windows to the outside. Instead, the outer rooms face an inner sanctum that has a skylight. This helps keep the cold out. The elements of its design are rich in Zoroastrian symbolism and meaning.

King Jamshid's Vara :

King Jamshid was a legendary king of the Aryans. In the legends, the mountainous land of Airyana Vaeja, the Aryan homeland, enjoyed a temperate climate and King Jamshid instituted the celebration of New Year's Day on the spring equinox, March 21. However, later during the Jamshidi era, Airyana Vaeja was gripped by severe and long winters, and in order for his people to survive these winters, Jamshid developed a type of dwelling and settlement called a vara.

The Jamshidi concept was for the vara to be a self-contained, self-sustaining communal dwelling area built according to a set of uniform principles. There were to be separate areas for humans and animals, as well as for seed and hay storage. Fruit trees and crops were to be planted within the vara area. Water for the inhabitants and crops was to be brought to the vara via a channel and stored in a reservoir. Designated festivals also included a sharing of food resources. In addition, during the Jamshidi era, clay began to be used as a building and construction material for the first time. The houses of the vara were to be constructed using clay and wooden pillars.



Yagnobi houses & settlement

The older Pamiri and Yagnobi settlements and houses that have survived, fit the concept of the Jamshidi vara quite well - more so than dwellings elsewhere in the region. The first European visitors to the Pamir region were surprised to find functioning settlements in areas they considered to be desolate and inhospitable. Pamiri houses also incorporate Aryan religious symbolism into their construction, symbolism that is part of Zoroastrian heritage. The Vendidad (2.42) tells us King Jamshid also "brought religion into the vara."



Karakul Village on the Karakorum Highway, Pamirs, China

Zoroastrian Symbolism Inside Pamiri Houses :



**Pamiri house below Varshed. Note the beams protruding from the side
Photo: Yodod at Flickr**

The Number Seven :

Pamiri houses base their layout, elements and construction on the number seven. Adding to the significance is that the seven elements and features of Pamiri houses are all part of Zoroastrian Heritage. Both view the incorporation of seven elements into their practice as being particularly auspicious (in a more practical sense, organizing life and community in such a fashion allows for the preservation of a heritage, wisdom gained over centuries and the preservation of best practices). A brief overview of the role of seven elements in Zoroastrian practice is as follows:

In Zoroastrianism, the seven aspects of divinity (Amesha Spentas) and the seven elements of the corporeal creation (gaiety) are central to the Jashne / Jashan (thanksgiving) ceremonies. In Gahanbar / Gahambar ceremonies, the seven acts of piety are added significance. The Nowruz (New Year's) table spread has seven items represent the seven elements of divinity, creation, piety, ethics, values and best practices.



**The main room in a house in Khorog
Note the raised platform along the sides
Photo: Yodod at Flickr**

In Pamiri houses, the seven aspects of creation correspond to the seven Zoroastrian elements and are represented as follows:

The three living, **sang** or **sandj**, areas represent the :

1. Human,
2. Animal, and
3. Vegetable aspects of creation.

4. The floor, **chalak**, represents the earth.
5. The hearth or stove in the room represents fire.
6. & 7. The raised platforms along the sides of the room, the **loshnukh** and **barnekh**, represent air and water.

These symbolisms are repeated for the construction of the skylight.

It will be seen that preserving this system of seven elements, best practices and guiding principles that have been made part of religious practice is a method of preserving and communicating ageless wisdom, a concept that translates in Zoroastrianism and Amesha Spentas. The incorporation of the seven elements and best practices in the design and construction of Pamiri homes results in dwellings and settlements that are uniquely suited to the the best and worst the environment in which people live. The outcomes are houses that are earthquake resistant with a strong wooden frame and walls of stone and plaster (as prescribed for the Jamshidi Vara). During an earthquake the walls may peel outward from the frame, but the frame will remain standing. The Pamiris simply build the collapsed walls back up around the frame. The layout and construction are very energy efficient and allow for not just survival in a harsh environment, but an enjoyment of the bounties of nature that can be nurtured in harsh environment that other communities would rather abandon.

While we are on the subject of numbers, each number from one to seven has a particular significance in Zoroastrianism (culminating in the number seven). The odd numbers, one (the unity of God), three (good thoughts, words and deeds), five (gahanbars / gahambars) and seven (Amesha Spentas) are of particular significance in ritual and practice representation. Even number concepts are interwoven between the odd number concepts. For instance, two represents the fundamental coexistent dual and dichotomous nature of creation, both spiritual (mainyu) and material / physical (gaetha).

The Five Pillars :



Anahita Pillar
Note the white and red colours



Surush Pillar
Note the sun motif
Credit: Pamir.Org

Five main wooden pillars support the roof in the main central room. They represent the five Yazatas or Izads: Surush (variously pronounced Soroush or Saroosh), Mehr, Anahita, Zamyod and Azar.

1. Khasitan Shokhsutun - Surush / Soroush :

The pillar representing Surush (guardian of conscience & intuitive wisdom), the Khasitan Shokhsutun, is found to the left of the entrance to the main room. It has carved sun symbols. The pillar was previously made of juniper (see our page on Barsom), a sacred tree and symbol of purity, the smoke of which has healing and disinfectant properties. Today, however, junipers are scarce. If there is a child in the home, its cradle is placed close to this pillar.

[Note: **Sacred trees**. The juniper could very well have been used for religious ceremonies in the same way that sandalwood was used by Zoroastrians in India. The juniper and willow both play an important role in Tajik customs. The tamarisk was also used in Iran. All have medicinal, healing or disinfectant properties cf. haoma in Zoroastrian tradition - a legendary tree or family of plants with medicinal properties. Also see our page on Barsom.]

2. Vouznek-sitan - Mehr :

The pillar symbolising Mehr (guardian of the light of honesty, friendship and kindness), the Vouznek-sitan, is found diagonally left from the entrance. Since Mehr is the symbol of love and commitment, during weddings, the bridal couple sit next to this pillar in the hope of being blessed with barakat, good fortune and happiness. Tradition requires that in addition to her own father and future father-in-law, the bride requires a third 'father', a person who while standing next to this pillar, ritually uncovers the brides face from seven veils during the wedding ceremony - seven being an auspicious number in Zoroastrian tradition.

3. Kitsor-sitan - Anahita :

The pillar symbolising Anahita (guardian of waters and the spirit of sustenance and nurturing), the Kitsor-sitan, is found diagonally right from the entrance. It is the place of honour for the woman at her engagement ceremony. Her engagement apparel, a red dress, bracelets, rings and ear-rings also represent Anahita. Anahita is also the guardian of fire and the stove or family fire is kept closest to this pillar which is also the centre of fire-related rituals.

4. Poiga-sitan - Zamyod

5. Barnekh-sitan - Azar :



Zamyod and Azar Pillars
Note the connection. Credit: Pamir.Org

The fourth, Poiga-sitan, and fifth, Barnekh-sitan, pillars are joined to show the closeness of the relationship between Zamyod (guardian of earth and the spirit of being grounded, practical and productive) and Azar (guardian of fire and the spirit of truthfulness, goodness and the light of wisdom) respectively. The crossbar is carved with Zoroastrian era symbols, frequently including a central depiction of the sun, and is sometimes decorated with the horns of a Marco Polo sheep (*Ovis poli*).

The fourth pillar is the place of family and private prayer and is considered the place of honour for the religious leader or a chief guest. The chief guest will normally leave a small symbolic space next to him/her against the pillar showing that it is reserved for the religious leader.

Mourning ceremonies, with the lighting of a ritual lamp or candle lit for three days, are carried out close to the fifth pillar.

The Beams :



The ceiling beams and skylight opening
Photo credit: Ben Paarmann at Flickr

The pillars support two main supporting beams representing the material and spiritual worlds. The first beam runs across the Surush and Mehr pillars and the second across the remaining three pillars.

The main beams support thirteen intermediary beams, six over the fireplace representing the six directions: east, west, north, south, upper and lower, and another seven representing the seven Amesha Spentas.

The total number of beams including the subsidiary beams varies between 49 and 72 according to the size of the house and local tradition.

The Raised Platforms :



The hearth within the platform. Credit: Pamir.Org

There is a raised platform approximately 50 cm. high that runs around the inside walls of the house.

The platform is used for sitting, sleeping, as a kitchen table or for placing household objects. Beneath the platform is a storage area.

In older style homes built before the introduction of metal stoves, the family hearth would have been inserted within the raised area so in the photo to the left. In modern homes, the stove stands in the open floor area

The Skylight :



The skylight

The skylight in the main room is built with four concentric square box-type layers representing earth, water, air and fire, the latter being the highest, is first touched by the sun's rays. The construction of the skylight makes it protrude above the roof line - an excellent feature that must evidently prevent snow from accumulating around and above the skylight. The amount of wood used in the construction of the skylight and the subsequent strength of the ceiling is amazing.

Danish 1898-99 Pamir Expedition :

The second Danish Pamir expedition of 1898-99 account states: "It is also remarkable in having a resident agricultural people at so very high an altitude." "The native Garans told us that many of the inhabitants live up on these terraces without ever descending the mountains ; partly, it would seem, owing to the difficulty in climbing and down the heights, and partly owing to their dread of meeting wicked people and spirits and demons (cf. devs or demons in the Avesta and Vendidad) outside their native place, which is all the world to them."

"The towns of these people are of mud houses, built so closely together that the roofs almost form one large flat, across which it is possible to walk over the whole town." "Between the houses there are narrow passages through which it is just possible to squeeze oneself, and, being like so many mazes, it is very difficult to find one's way through the towns."

"Through the stable a small channel is generally conducted to a small reservoir of water; and on the platform mulberry trees are often planted, under the shade of which the people of passing caravans can rest and take their meals."

"... they seem always to aim at building them in one particular style ; their arrangements of detail are everywhere the same, alike for the rich and poor. The hearth-room is everywhere alike in Vakhn and Garan ; indeed the poor have only this one room in their houses in which both man and beast consequently pass the winter together (cf. Jamshedi Vara)."

"...one goes through a low wooden door into a small room where are platforms built of mud on both sides. This is the so-called Meheman-khanah (Shugnan) (guest room), where strangers are received-not being allowed into the inner room where dwells the family of the master of the house. On these platforms are placed primitive agricultural implements and the large household articles for which there is no room in the inner apartment.

"From thence another small low wooden door leads into the hearth-room (khrun), which is mainly reserved for women, and into which only their husbands and nearest relatives are allowed to enter. Several closely connected families often live together. We, as specially well-recommended guests, were allowed to enter the hearth-room after the women had withdrawn.

"The roof of the hearth-room, like the roofs of the other rooms, consisting of rafters covered with fagots and hay, with a layer of mud on top, rests on four strong hewn wooden pillars, which are always ornamented with wreaths of ears of corn. The custom of crowning columns with flowers and branches is found in the Zoroastrian religion of the Parthians-or rather in the mixture of religion whereof this creed consisted. In a low-relief from the time of the Parthians is a Magian consecrating a holy column crowned with wreaths. As the Parthian realm embraced all Bactria, it is possible that the custom may have originated as far back as from that period."

The Symbolism of Colours :



White and red in dress. Credit: Pamir.Org

The colours used for decorating the home (see the photograph of the Anahita Column above) as well as for clothes are white and red. White symbolizes light, milk, purity, goodness and honesty - essentials for human well-being. Red symbolizes the sun and blood, the source and essence of life. Red also symbolizes fire and flame.

The tradition of using white with red for accentuation, continues with the Zoroastrians of India. Red flowers are interspersed among the white flowers used in ceremonies. Red is added to white chalk designs used to decorate the threshold of doorways. Indian Zoroastrian have borrowed from the Hindus of India, the practice of applying a red paste to the forehead of, say, a couple getting married. The use of black is avoided as it symbolizes ignorance and evil.

Decorative Designs :

In preparation for New Year's day, Nowruz, a willow wreath (in the form of a circle containing a cross) is dipped in flour and used to draw figures and designs on the walls and columns of the main room. The concept of this practice is very similar to the chalk designs used by Zoroastrians in India during festivities or Jashans.

The Willow and Baresman :



**Man from Oxus region
of Central Asia
holding a baresman**

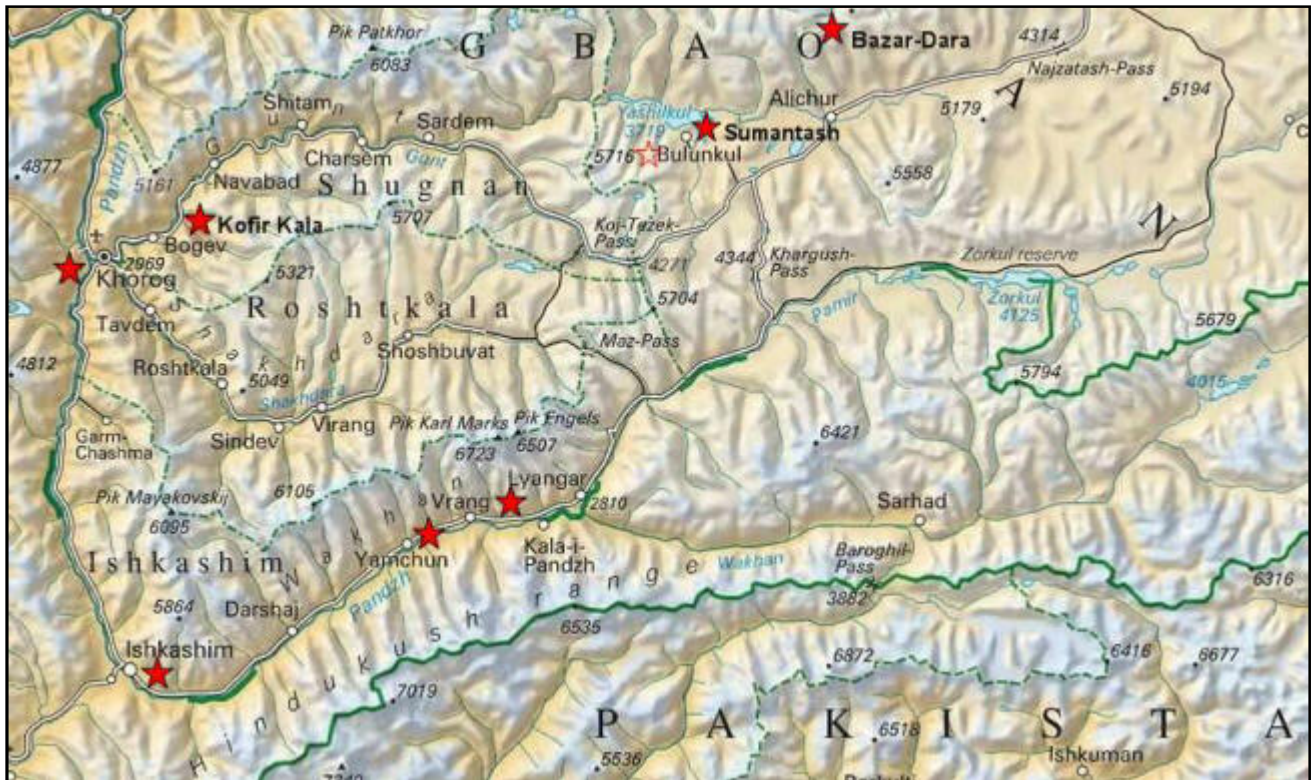
In addition, to the flour designs, at Nowruz, stripped willow twigs are bound together, in a practice reminiscent of the baresman bundles used in Zoroastrian ceremonies, and placed between the beams as an auspicious harbinger of abundant crops in the new year. Since in spring the willow is the first tree that 'wakes up' after a long sleep - for the Pamiri people, the willow is the symbol of new life.

The willow twig is also used on other occasions. During wedding ceremonies, a willow twig is used to lift the bride's veil. An arrow made from a willow is also shot through the skylight.

One additional and unfortunate use of the symbolism of the willow twig, was its traditional use to announce a divorce. When a husband wanted to divorce his wife, he took a stick of willow and broke it above her head.

Source : <https://www.heritageinstitute.com/zoroastrianism/tajikistan/page4.htm>

8. Pamir Historical Sites :



Pamir Region of Tajikistan. Red stars indicate Zoroastrian historical sites

It is noteworthy, that the Zoroastrian historical sites we have located in Tajikistan are all in the Pamirs. The map below is a map of the region in which the sites are located. Click on the map to open a larger map of the Pamirs.

The worship areas are also all on elevated levels. This conforms to the *Shahnameh of Ferdowsi's* (and the Avestan Vendidad's) description that when legendary King Jamshid developed the four professions, he "made its place of service on the mountains."



Elevated outdoor worship area at Kofir-Kala, Bogev. Credit: Pamir.Org

Khorugh (also spelt Khorog) is the capital of the Gorno-Badakshan Province which includes the Pamir area. It is located on the banks of the Gunt river at its confluence with the River Panj (also spelt Pandzh, Pyanj, Pyandz) on the western slopes of the Pamirs at the meeting point of the Rushan, Shugnam and Ishkashim ranges.

The Panj river becomes the Amu Darya further west after joining with the Vakhsh river. The Panj river also forms part of Tajikistan's southern border with Afghanistan.

Khorugh / Khorog also lies on a branch of the ancient Aryan trade road (also called the Silk Road) that skirted the Pamirs from the south and passed through the Wakhan valley between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. A branch of the trade route probably ran along the banks of the Gunt river through Bogev and east into the heart of the Pamir heights.

Kofir-Kala Outdoor Worship Area at Bogev :

Thirteen kilometres east of Khorog, on M41 - the road from Khorog to Bulunkul and the Pamir heights - and located on a high cliff dominating the Gunt valley and Bogev village, is the Kofir-Kala complex of ancient ruins. The ruins consist of the base of a fortress with a citadel as well as the remains of two circular outdoor worship structures (see image above right). The location of the worship center conforms to the Zoroastrian practice of worshipping on high ground.

In ancient times, this complex was a well-protected center of worship that served the Shugnan / Shugnon area - the Gunt valley and mountainous region immediately east of Khorog.



The village of Bulunkul near Lake Yashilkul looking south

Ritual Site at Lake Yashilkul, Pamir Heights :

Further east of Bogev and the Kofir-Kala complex we find a site identified as the ruins of an ancient Zoroastrian worship area.

The site is located at Sumatash, close to the village of Bulunkul, where the estuary of the Major Marjanai river flows in to Lake Yashilkul (blue water).

The area surrounding the ruins is isolated and lies in a desolate part of the central Pamirs at an elevation of 3,700 meters or 12,200 feet. The rugged and stark beauty of the surroundings is haunting.



Ritual site at Sumantash, Lake Yashilkul

For an ancient worship site to be located in an area that nowadays has no immediate surrounding population, may indicate that at one time there was a community living in the around the ruins - an area could have been abandoned at some point in the distant past. A loss of population may in turn indicate that the Pamir heights were more habitable in the past and that some event caused the climate to change and the land to become less habitable. Nowadays, the summers are cool and the winters cold. There is hardly a tree in sight and the landscape is bleak. Snow can fall in the middle of summer.

To the northeast of the village Bulunkul and Lake Yashilkul lie the Murgab river and valley, where there are over 50 stone-age settlements. Petroglyphs and other rock carvings, several dating from the late Palaeolithic period (8,000 BCE), of the sun and horse carriages ascribed to a Mithraic culture can be found here.



Lake Yashilkul (blue water) looking northeast. Credit: Pamirs.Org

Panj Valley :

If instead of travelling east from Khorugh / Khorog, we travel south along the ancient Aryan trade road (also called the Silk Roads) that ran beside the Panj River valley, we come to **Ishkashim** (also spelt Iskashim) at the entrance to the Wakhan valley that runs along the base of the northern Hindu Kush mountains. The Wakhan valley is now shared between Afghanistan - a modern contrivance engineered by the Russians and British in order to provide a buffer between their empires. In the past it would have been an integral part of the Pamir-Badakhshan region. The Hindu Kush (meaning Hindu killer) was in all likelihood the border between the Zoroastrian/Iranian and Hindu Aryan lands.

There are ruins of a number of fortresses along the north bank of the Panj guarding the trade road, the valley below, and the southern flank of the Badakhshan-Pamir region. According to the locals, the fortresses were occupied by Zoroastrian armies and even housed fire temples. One of the fortresses at Yamchun is called Zamr-i-Atish-Parast, or Fortress of the Fire Worshippers.

If the area and its fortresses were conquered and occupied by Alexander of Macedonia, the fortresses would probably have reverted back to Zoroastrian rule in the 2nd century BCE.

About seventeen kilometres east of Ishkashim / Iskashim, close the village of Namadgut / Namadguti, is a fourth century BCE citadel called Khakhka.

Khakha (Khakhka) Fortress :

Travelling along the north (Tajik) bank of the Panj past the town of Ishkashim lies the village of Namadgut / Namadguti. Close to the village are situated the ruins of Khakha (also spelt Khakhka) fortress. Said to have been built in the 3rd century BCE, the ruins have now been reduced to a collection of crumbling jagged stone walls. As with most ruins in the Wakhan valley, the ruins were previously unprotected and at the mercy of locals, their herds and souvenir hunters. Now, reportedly, armed 'soldiers' crop up from behind the ruins and rob travellers of their money at gunpoint.



**Remains of Khakha (Khakhka) Fortress' walls overlooking the road east from
Ishkashim
Travel Adventures**



**View from Khakha (Khakhka) Fortress overlooking the river Panj
Travel Adventures**

Yamchun :



**Zamr-i-Atish-Parast, or Fortress of the Fire Worshippers at Yamchun looking south.
The Hindu Kush mountains**

Yamchun :



View from the fortress at Yamchun over-looking the Wakhan valley and Panj river and across into Afghanistan. Credit: Pamirs.Org



Close up of the Zamr-i-Atish-Parast, or Fortress of the Fire Worshippers, at Yamchun

Continuing our travel east from Ishkashim, we come to the imposing fortress at the village of Yamchun.

Located on the slopes above the village, we will have travelled some seventy-two kilometres east from Ishkashim along a branch of the ancient Aryan trade road (also called the Silk Road).

The fortress at Yamchun once stood guard over the trade route and the immediate stretch north bank of Panj river's Wakhan valley.

Like Khakha fortress, Yamchun fortress is also dated to the 3rd century BCE, though age estimates in the literature vary greatly.

The fortress is known locally as Zamr-i Atish-Parast meaning 'fortress of the fire worshippers'. While Zoroastrians are incorrectly referred to as fire worshippers, what this name does is to confirm that the Badakhshan-Pamir area was an ancient Zoroastrian stronghold. The fortress is said to have housed a fire temple.

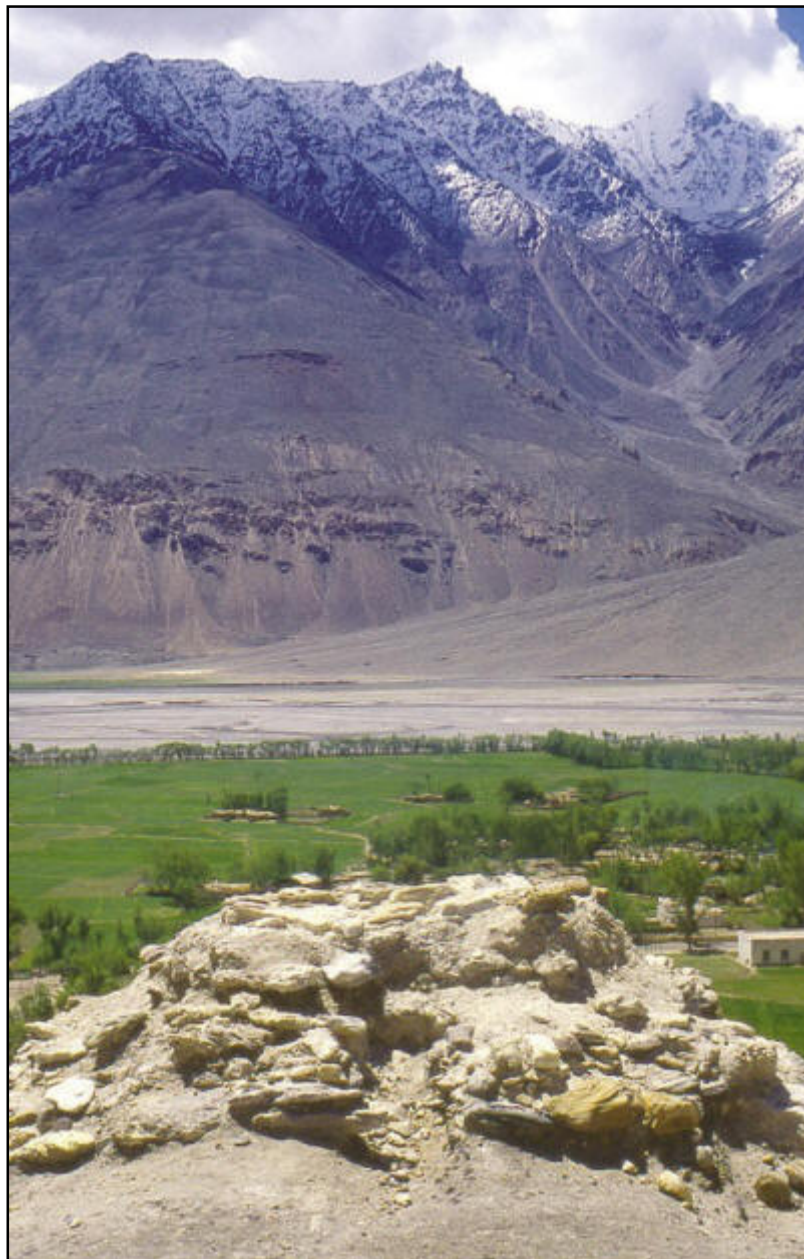
The fortress could have housed the rulers or governors from the time of the last Achaemenian kings of Persia.

Vrang Outdoor Worship Platform :

Just east of the village of Yamchun is the village of Vrang. On the slopes of the mountains north of the village and overlooking the Panj is another Zoroastrian worship platform.

In the photographs above and to the left, the mountains in the background, that is, to the south, are the Hindu Kush or the Hindu Killer. The foothills are in present-day Afghanistan, while the snow covered peaks are the Hindu Kush mountains in Pakistan.

On the other side of the Hindu Kush mountains lies the northern reaches of the Indus, the Hindu as it was called by the Iranians. More specifically, the upper reaches of the Indus which included Kashmir and the Punjab were called Hapta Hindu, the seven Indus (rivers and tributaries). After a schism between the Indo-Iranians, the Hindu Kush would have formed the first line, the river Panj the second line, and the fortress at Yamchun, the third line of defence against any invading armies from the south.



**Looking south-east from the worship platform.
The village of Vrang is immediately below.
The river Panj flows at the foot of the Hindu Kush mountains**



The worship platform above Vrang looking south-west towards Yamchun



**View north-east from the Vrang worship platform.
The Wakhan valley, Panj river and Hindu Kush mountains are seen to the right of the
image**