The Religions of the Hindukush
Vol. I  The Religion of the Kafirs

Karl Jettmar
The Religions of the Hindukush
Vol. I The Religion of the Kafirs
THE PRE-ISLAMIC HERITAGE OF AFGHAN NURISTAN

by
KARL JETTMAR

Translated from the German by Adam Nayyar

with contributions from
Schuyler Jones
and
Max Klimburg

and a Glossary by Peter S.C. Parkes
CONTENTS

List of Photographs vii

Preface 1

I. Introduction. The Peoples: Their History and Documentation
   The Peoples 8
   The History 12
   The Course of Research 17

II. North Kafiristan: Environment, Economy and Social Order
   The Kati 24
   The Prasuns 31

III. Main Concepts in the Religion of North Kafiristan
   Cosmology and Concepts of Space 36
   Gods and Demons 39

IV. The Gods of North Kafiristan
   Imra/Mara 48
   Shomde/Wushum 53
   Munjem Malik 54
   Mon/Mandi 57
   Dogumrik 63
   Indr 64
   Gish/Giwich 65
   Sanjü/Sülmech and Sanu 67
   Disani/Disni 68
   Nirmali/Shuwe 72
   Zhiwud/Zhuwut 73
   Bagisht/Opkulu 74
   Sudrem/SÚjum 75
   Nong/Zúzum 75
   The Seven Paneu 75
   Arom, Duzhi, Lunang 76
   Kshumai/Kime 77

V. Symbols of Gods, Sanctuaries and shrines 79

VI. Priesthood and Ritual Office 85

VII. Rituals of Death and Concepts of the Soul 95

VIII. Periodical Feasts 101
IX. Outlines of South Kafiri Religious Systems
   Schuyler Jones: The Pre-Islamic Religion of Waigal Valley 111
   Max Klimburg: The Religion of the Ashkun Tribal Area 112

X. The Comparative and Historical Context of Kafir Religions: New Interpretations 129
   A surviving alternative to the mainstream of Indo-Aryan religion? 130
   Kati land – centre of the Imra/Mara religion? 133
   Further innovation in Kafir culture and religion? 135
   Persistent role of the pre-Aryan component? 137
   "Andronovians" – ancestors of the Nuristanis? 139

XI. Epilogue: "Proto-Kafir" Cultures in Central Asian Prehistory 143

Etymological Glossary of Kafiri Deities, Ritual Terms and Priests, by Peter S.C. Parkes 149

Bibliography 159
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs 1 - 6 are following page 23, photographs 7 - 12 following page 120.

1. Dewa, a typical village of Prasun situated on the flat bottom of the valley. It is seen from the west as we learn from a picture published by Edelberg (1972, Fig.12). The village has a northern and southern tower. Near to the southern tower are the winter pens. Other winter pens are built on the right side of the river. Photo: M. Klimburg.

2. Pillar, shaped as a caryatid in the Put-amól in Dewa, Prasun valley. The mutilated figure represents the god Mara mounted on horseback. Photo: M. Klimburg.


4. Building explained by Klimburg as assembly hall, partly demolished. He noted tīrē as the name of this construction. Photo: M. Klimburg.

5. One of the still standing pillars in the destroyed assembly hall of Dewa. Klimburg tried in vain to get a clear identification of the deity depicted. Photo: M. Klimburg.

6. Sculpture. Female deity forming the lower part of a pillar. Photo: M. Klimburg.

7. Part of the village Waigal. In the extremely steep and narrow valleys of South Nuristan, the houses are built against the slopes forming terraces. Photo: M. Klimburg.

8. Door of the house of a rich man in Waigal (Berimdesh) with 'entangled horn' motif. Photo: M. Klimburg.


10. Verandah of a house in Waigal. The capitals of the pillars are highly stylized animal heads. The verandah was an essential part of the "clan-Temples" in the village, called kantar kôt. (cf. Jones, in Edelberg 1984:123-125). Photo: M. Klimburg.

11. Boards on the frontside of a house in the Maswi valley, Ashkun. They are decorated mainly by diagonally grooved discs. Photo: M. Klimburg.

12. Detail of a pillar in Achenu, Pech valley (Ashkun area). The two objects seen on each head (dandakū) are explained by Klimburg as horn-symbols indicating the rank acquired by the owner of the house. Photo: M. Klimburg.
PREFACE

In the ambitious series "Die Religionen der Menschheit" (The Religions of Mankind) published by Kohlhammer Verlag (Ch.M. Schröder acting as editor), the eastern part of Innermost Asia was covered by volume 20 (1970) written by G. Tucci and W. Heissig. These two scholars described and analysed the Lamaistic and non-Lamaistic spiritual heritage of Tibet and Mongolia. This book was duly translated into English (Tucci 1979; Heissig 1980) as well as several other languages.

In the original plan of this volume peoples living in the western part of Central Asia were not taken into consideration. Of course, most of their religious traditions have now been superseded by Islam, but many survivals of the past have been preserved. There is even a pagan enclave up to the present day: the Kalash Kafirs in South-West Chitral. Another stronghold of paganism was Afghan Kafiristan, almost lasting until the end of the 19th century. But these are only odd outcrops of a vast subterranean stratum. Written sources and archaeological monuments reveal that formerly there had been many different religions co-existing in the plains and mountain valleys of the large territory, several of foreign origin. Part of the relevant information has been treated by G. Widengren in volume 14 (1965) of this series, called "Religions of Iran"; but essential cultural complexes remain terra incognita. In a letter to the editor I once mentioned the following neglected topics which might be included in an additional volume:

1. Local religions, especially a surviving non-Islamic heritage in the areas west of Tibet, i.e., as observed among populations south of the main Hindukush range, also those living in valleys of Hinduraj, Karakorum and westernmost Himalaya, almost exclusively speaking either Nuristani or Dardic languages. Historians of Indo-Aryan religions did not realize the important evidence of ethnographic material collected there since the 19th century, being mainly concerned with sacred literary texts preserved from a distant past. Therefore in three volumes of the series devoted to Indian religions (11, 12, 13) not a single word is said about Aryan or proto-Aryan tribes who at different periods long ago receded into the mountains at the north-western gate of India, superseding earlier settlers (one of whose languages has survived in Burushaski).

2. The pre-Islamic beliefs and customs of the so-called Pamir-Tajiks speaking archaic Iranian languages or dialects of Dari who live not only in the Western Pamirs but also in other valleys north of the Hindukush chain (cf. Steblin-Kamenskij 1982).

The peoples of these two areas share so many features that they were treated as belonging to the 'Pamir-Hindukush Ethno-Linguistic region' (see map 1).

3. Religious survivals preserved among the Iranian Tajiks in the villages and towns of the lowlands of Afghanistan and Middle Asia.
The religions of the Turkish peoples of Central Asia. Here an earlier omission ought to be corrected, as Turkish tribes of Southern and Eastern Siberia had not been treated in the pertinent volume (3, 1962).

The editor accepted my proposal, presuming that I would be one of the contributors responsible for the first segment on Nuristani and Dardic religions. Accepting this tantalizing offer, I soon found that I had swallowed rather more than I had anticipated. As a rule an author confronted with the task of summarizing one of the major Asiatic religions is burdened by the diversity of already attempted approaches, some of them upheld by well-established schools. But here I would seldom find more than scattered material in its raw state, sometimes only casual remarks in travellers' reports, sometimes romantic descriptions influenced by fascinating ideas like the assumption that some mountain tribes were descendants of Alexander himself or at least his Greek and Macedonian soldiers.

There were some important exceptions, but the studies of my predecessors had never been properly discussed, largely because of the relative inaccessibility of many of their published contributions in German. Essential data were also hidden in unpublished field-notes, including those which I myself had collected during my expeditions in 1955/56, 1958, 1964 and 1971. So I had the peculiar task of writing a sort of compendium, summing up the basic evidence - for further analysis and completion.

My tendency to present as complete a survey as possible of this material was encouraged by the delays of one of my co-authors. So the benevolent editor conceded me the chance to have my own volume, to be called "The Religions of the Hindu Kush", the remaining material in adjacent areas to follow under the earlier conceived title "Ancient Religions of Central Asia". He even allowed me to include two field reports written by Schuyler Jones and by Max Klimburg on South Nuristan, where previously only a very limited stock of information, collected in the 19th century, was available.

The result was a rather ponderous volume, not forming an integrated entirety, particularly since religious culture of the relatively isolated "Kafirs of the Hindu Kush" posed quite different problems from that of mountain peoples living on the western borderland of Tibet: people who had clearly belonged within the Buddhist sphere of influence at one time but who seemed to have subsequently stepped outside it, maybe in a 'nativistic' reaction to Buddhism. So it seemed appropriate to further subdivide this study into three separate volumes.

The first of these is presented here. The religion of the (former) Kafirs of Afghan Nuristan is certainly the most spectacular topic in this region; however, here alone I must rely exclusively on printed sources. I never visited Nuristan, which I considered the domain of other scholars, two of them fellows of mine since our common expedition thirty years ago. On the other hand, I could amply use their advice and active help. One of them is Professor Dr Georg Buddruss who collected more mythological texts than all earlier visitors including even Robertson. The other, Dr Peter Snoy, had earlier been allowed by Buddruss to make use of this material for his doctoral thesis (1962). In this study he discussed many of the problems that I am dealing with here. He had already discovered the rather intriguing fact that deities and powerful demons in the mythology of the northern Kafir groups are represented somewhat like exogamous moieties.

The second volume will be called: "The Religious Heritage of Dardistan". No country called Dardistan is to be found on the maps: it is a modern and ambiguous term - as observed by Clarke (1977) - but no other appropriate
name is available for the area inhabited by speakers of Shina in North-East Pakistan (and India) plus their immediate relatives or neighbours in the mountains of Afghanistan and Pakistan, almost all speaking North-West Indian languages of an extremely archaic type. This linguistic group is conventionally and conveniently called "Dardic". In this region, my own fieldwork has provided me with a considerable part of the relevant material.

The third volume shall incorporate the information collected in the areas between these two major blocks and will be called "The Religious Heritage of Chitral" including both Kalash religion and the traditional beliefs of the Khowar-speakers. An appendix must deal with the scanty information we have of the speakers of Dardic languages in Southern Chitral and the border areas of Afghanistan, adding some observations made among the Pashais, neighbours of the Nuristanis and for a long time non-Muslims as well.

For protracted periods the Khowar-speakers were under direct influence of their north-western and northern neighbours, the Iranians in the Badakhshan and in the small but politically important principalities situated in the Western Pamirs. There "Pamirian", i.e., archaic East Iranian languages are spoken. So it is a pity that the complementary volume "Ancient Religions of Central Asia" was never printed, in spite of the fact that I had already translated into German a long chapter written by the Soviet scholar Litvinskij. His summary of the religions of the Pamir populations would have shown that the Tajiks of this area developed economic and religious systems radically deviating from the Dardic pattern. Men there work in the fields while cattle-keeping is done by women, with corresponding mythological conceptions that partly reverse those of the Kafirs. Craftsmen may also obtain important social positions. The clean and holy animal is the sheep, whereas goats are considered as malicious and satanical or demoniacal beings - as in many parts of Europe. Dogs are sometimes highly appreciated but horses have a positive connotation only in restricted areas (in spite of the fact that the Saka tribes, who were at least closely related to their ancestors, considered them as embodiment of the supreme deity).

However this is only a superficial approximation of the systems occurring north of the Hindukush, many of them still insufficiently analysed and evaluated.

Even for a problem to be discussed in the second volume, namely, the religious peculiarities of the Burushos, this material would have been essential.

However, the splitting of the German book allowed me to define and defend positions which had been criticized in a stimulating review (Fussman 1976); and I was able to write a substantial supplement. In the original version I did not attempt to use archaeological data as confirmation for my rather modest attempts to trace back the origins of the Nuristani religions. In fact, there were no such data in this region, except perhaps the remains of a Hindu temple erected near Chaga Sarai.

There are still no excavations in Nuristan proper today, but many important sites have been found in other parts of Afghanistan, which may be compared with contemporaneous complexes in Western Turkestan (Soviet Central Asia) and Eastern Turkestan (Sinkiang). They have opened a new approach to the problem of Indo-European movements, finally reaching the Far East. In several articles I have already stressed the relevance of this material for the archaeology of Inner Asia in general (1983a) and especially Nuristan (1981, 1981b), and these hypotheses are summarized in chapter XI.

A few words may explain my approach and interest in such historical issues. Born and brought up in Vienna, I received my academic training
there early enough (1936) to be confronted with Father Wilhelm Schmidt, the then still-active Head of the Viennese School of Ethnology. I never happily accepted his rather simplistic transformation of evolutionistic thinking, deeply rooted in the 19th century, and I found my way towards an alternative approach when I got in touch with the work of Soviet scholars after the Second World War. There, under a rather thin coating of official Marxist doctrine, I found the tendency to expand the diachronic framework as far back as possible to offer a most fruitful perspective. The sources were prepared by an integrated body of disciplines: ethnology, linguistics, palaeo-anthropology and, last but not least, archaeology. The main arena for such studies was then Northern Asia, so my first articles mainly dealt with problems raised by recent excavations in this region.

Then Adolf Friedrich, Professor of Ethnology at Mainz University, invited me to join his expedition of 1955/56 to North Pakistan and Afghanistan. He was a specialist of Northern Asia himself, but unable for obvious reasons to do fieldwork there. So he chose the mountains of Central Asia as a sort of second — and ultimately tragic love. This remarkable scholar, a man of extreme integrity, died due to the hardships of a stay in the Kalash valleys during wintertime, shortly before the end of the expedition. Thus the members of his team (including Buddruss and Snoy) lost contact for a while. Only I had the chance to return to North Pakistan, as a scientific member of an Austrian climbing expedition in 1958. I subsequently concentrated on Central Asian archaeology for many years, but finally I returned to this former subject due to the task in hand of writing this book — and discovering how little had been done in the meantime.

When Aris & Phillips were ready to print an English version, the translation was sponsored by Inter Nationes, an agency of the Federal German Government for scientific contact. The translation was quickly delivered by Dr Adam Nayyar, a former student of mine, who in the meantime did valuable fieldwork and is now scientific director of the National Institute of Folk Heritage, Islamabad.

Several other scholars to whom I owe advice and information are mentioned in the text. Apart from Buddruss and Snoy, I had personal contact with Georg Morgenstierne, Wolfgang Lentz, Lennart Edelberg, Knut Kristiansen, Schuyler Jones, Richard F. Strand and Louis Dupree. But most of these contacts were relatively late, only starting from the highly successful Hindu Kush Cultural Conference held in Denmark in 1974. With Raziq Palwal, personal contact became effective a few months ago, when he joined our Institute in Heidelberg. In 1978, during a stay in Leningrad, I met A.L. Grjunberg, who was then writing his important book on the Kati language. Later he organized a Russian translation of my volume on the religions, which will shortly be published in the U.S.S.R.

To Max Klimburg I am indebted not only for his valuable chapter on Ashkun religion. He also allowed me to include twelve of his photographs illustrating landscape and settlements in Nuristan and also the wood-carvings, which were the main decorative and plastic art of the Kafirs. It should be mentioned that Klimburg happened to be the first European since Robertson to enter the subterraneous clan temple (amol) in Prasun.

Since 1979 I have had to organize expeditions in northern Pakistan every year and to publish their preliminary results. I had already seen the necessity to take into account the rockcarvings and inscriptions of the Karakorum region, in order to augment the rather scanty historical reports on Dardistan, and I had indicated their potential relevance for the interpretation of religious revivals in the German version of this book, presenting them by
a few drawings. I had stressed the urgency of further systematic investigation.

But I was by no means prepared for what actually happened. By inauguration of this programme in 1979 under the guidance of local friends and accompanied by Professor Dani of Islamabad, we found within a couple of weeks an astonishing number of relevant sites. Since then our small team has been able to discover about 1500 inscriptions and certainly more than 10,000 carvings, forming a sequence over several millennia, and only fading out in the late Muslim period (cf. Jettmar 1980, 1980a, 1982, 1984a). It was then necessary to establish systematic collaboration with my Pakistani colleagues of the Department of Archaeology and Museums and to coopt colleagues of many countries; in order to read and interpret the inscriptions made in so many ancient scripts and languages.

The results of this new evidence for religious history will be shown in the second volume. But I must confess that deliberations which finally took form in the chapters X - XI where I discussed the problem of the "proto-Kafir" cultures of Central Asia, have been stimulated by an extraordinary experience in this context. Stumbling among boulders in the barren Indus valley, I came upon a group of typical masklike symbols of one of the most fascinating cultures of South Siberia, which I immediately recognized from my archaeological studies. In Siberia they would belong to the "Okunev Culture" which is attributed to mobile communities spread over large parts of the forest steppes in the third millennium B.C. That would have been around the time when the first waves of Indo-European tribes appeared on the Central Asian scene . . .

The "new" chapters were written directly in English. That they might be acceptable according to the exacting conventions of English scholarship is due to the help of Dr Peter Parkes. He came from Oxford to our team at Heidelberg just at the right moment. But the result was not only technical cooperation: his critical remarks and his own ideas clearly expressed and well argued were a permanent challenge during the final stage of this work. I became aware of several objections to my approach which will certainly be raised by scholars educated in a quite different intellectual tradition.

Parkes has also written an "Etymological Glossary of Kafir Religious Vocabulary" to be printed as an appendix to this book. That allowed me to use a simplified system of rendering terms, just as Morgenstierne employed in his translations.

Lennart Edelberg placed an invaluable map of the languages in Nuristan and its bordering regions at my disposal, since he was my co-editor for the volume "Cultures of the Hindukush" (1974). This map is reused here (as in Edelberg & Jones' "Nuristan" 1979).

This book tells little about the painful and humiliating experiences that necessarily accompanied conversion to a new religion. The twilight of the Kafir gods, as perceived by their last believers has been admirably described by Buddrus (1983) in a commentary to the folktales and songs relating to this sad period. His article constitutes an epitaph to the dying religion of the Kafirs, a tragic lament for a lost culture, as much as a scientific record of the events of 1895 - 1900.
1. **Song of Triumph**
   announcing the successful return of a war-party
   (*Illustration to Robertson, pp. 152-3*).
INTRODUCTION

THE PEOPLES: THEIR HISTORY AND DOCUMENTATION
The Peoples

Almost up to the end of the 19th century there existed an extensive area called Kafiristan, south of the main ranges of the central Hindukush. Here lie the headwaters of rivers which bring their waters down to the Kabul valley (Alingar, Alishang) and to the Kunar (Pech, Bashgal). This region had preserved its political and spiritual independence in spite of being almost completely surrounded by Muslim peoples. Of course they had been exposed to many attempts of proselytism by jehad (holy war) or by peaceful efforts (Kakar 1979:151). But such means proved to have only a limited success, and their neighbours soon adopted the more profitable practice of slave-raiding in this region.

The Kafirs reacted in a most effective way: by counter-raids, conducted by individuals or war-parties, which had a more than superficial similarity to head-hunting. But it must be conceded that even the population north of the Hindukush range, more peacefully disposed, was terrorized in much the same way. Internal feuds were also frequent among the pre-Islamic Nuristanis. So they were both dreaded and despised. They were branded as "kafirs", which simply means "unbelievers" in relation to Islam. Some scholars however think that they were inclined to accept and even adopt this abusive name for themselves because there had been an earlier ethnic denomination of similar phonetic form (Scarcia 1965:CXIV - CXVIII; Tucci 1977:18). Nowadays they are good Muslims, and very anxious to be called Nuristanis: as "Nuristan" translates as "Land of Light", or better, "Land of Enlightenment". How that has happened shall be discussed later. With this new regional identity, the Nuristanis are perhaps now finally emerging as an integrated people.

Only a small part of the population escaped to Chitral during the conquest, where they could preserve their religion under British protection. In fact they submitted to Islamic pressure much more rapidly than the local Chitral Kafirs, the Kalash tribe. Why this tribe should so long have resisted Islam must be treated separately in another volume. The fact is that they can still be studied as a traditional pagan or non-Islamic community, and to present the work of other colleagues in this present context would need more pages than my tolerant editor can allow.

But the final conversion was only the last chapter of a long story. Between Nuristan and the South, in the valleys of Alishang and Alingar (plus their side-valleys, in Darra-i-Nur, parts of Darra-i-Mazer, Chanki Dara, and the middle Pech valley) there was another part of "Kafiristan" inhabited by Pashai-speaking tribes. Most of the earlier reports about Kafirs do not in fact refer to the inhabitants of the remote and sheltered mountain recesses that constitute our main field of study. One must include these peripheral "Kafirs" into this survey, but this happens in a later volume, together with Dardic-speaking populations to the east.

Originally Kafiristan was much larger than present day Nuristan. In early reports there are some definite indications as to these variations in ethnic and geographical identities. The term Pashai, known since Marco Polo (Yule - Cordier 1975:164-6), was never used for the northernmost valleys. Timur clearly mentioned two different populations (Dowson 1871/1974:12-20),
and their ethnic background appears to be quite separate.

Research, mostly done during the last 50 years, indicates that Pashais and Nuristanis are related but not culturally identical groups. Nuristanis are not entirely homogeneous themselves. To be aware of their ethnic plurality is essential for our task, in order to explain often contradictory information about their beliefs and customs.

The best approach at present is to arrange the material according to the linguistic categories of Morgenstierne and his intellectual successors. The erudition of this great Norwegian scholar was admirable, his analyses being clear and convincing. Despite well-known exceptions, it is quite common in areas of relative stability and geographical isolation for linguistic and cultural boundaries to coincide. Even the frequency of bloodgroups has been shown to correspond to this language classification among the Kafirs (Bernard 1980). However it is problematic to call such linguistically defined groups "tribes". I preserve this term simply for convenience, but it would be more accurate to speak of confederations of villages, mostly confined to one valley each.

After the conversion of the area called Nuristan, languages continued to be spoken which belong to the Indo–Iranian stock, but not definitely to either of the main branches of Indian and Iranian. It is clear that a special term is needed for them. Morgenstierne proposed "Kafiri languages", while I prefer to use the less misleading term coined by Strand (1973:298): "Nuristani languages". So-called Kafirs existed outside contemporary Nuristan, so I shall reserve the somewhat ambiguous and anachronistic term "Kafir" for the religious and political domain of this entire area of the southern Hindukush in the pre-Islamic past.

As for the position of the Kafiri/Nuristani languages in the Indo–Iranian block, Morgenstierne offers two explanations: either they are a very early offshoot of the Indo–Aryan languages, or the result of a separate development, before the partition into distinctive Indian and Iranian languages took place.

A third attempt was made quite recently by Mayrhofer (1984:255). He considers Nuristani as stemming from the Iranian branch, but becoming separated at a very early stage and brought into permanent contact with Indian dialects and grammatical structures.

What this challenge implies will be discussed in the final chapter. Four languages are spoken in Nuristan: Kati is used by more than 20,000 people, being divided into several dialect groups (Strand 1973; Grjunberg 1980:27, Map). Western Kati is spoken in Ramgal, Kulum, Ktiwi (=Kantiwo), and also Papruk or Pèruk, despite the latter being situated in the eastern zone. Eastern Kati is located in the upper part of Bashgal and Skorigul, with a small enclave in the uppermost Munjan valley which was formerly a place of exile.

A third dialect group exists in Bashgal at its lower stretch towards Arandu. Here there is Kamviri, the language corresponding to the Kam and Kástó tribes; also Mumviri, a transitional dialect between Kamviri and Eastern Kati.

There is no immediate continuity between the western and the eastern territories, but there are connecting mountain paths by-passing the villages in the Parun/Prasun area. Using them, invaders coming from the west are said to have conquered Bashgal, exiling its former inhabitants. The Jáshi, now clients, are explained as descendants of these earlier aboriginal settlers. It is not known when this conquest happened and under what circumstances. In the German edition of this book, I proposed that Mirza Haidar's campaign against the Kafirs of Bolor in 1526/1527 (Elias - Ross 1895/1972:384-6) was
actually a slave raid into the Bashgal valley, decimating the population so that the Katis had an opportunity to expand. This has subsequently proved implausible: the raid was evidently directed to another area (Ishkuman). But already in the 13th century A.D., a Mongol detachment under the famous Nигудар (Yule-Cordier 1975, Supplement:21-4) crossed the mountains, and Bashgal was certainly on their route. The same exposed situation explains why Bashgal was later a dependency of the rulers of Chitral for such a long time.

The language Prasun (Paruni, Veron, Waš-вери, cf. Strand 1973:299) is spoken by a consolidated group of six villages in the upper part of the Pech valley, where three dialects are mentioned. It deviates strongly from other Nuristani languages, its peculiarities betraying a separate development in relative isolation.

Waigali is spoken in the valley known under the same name (Wāygal). Its river is a tributary of the Pech. Lately it was learnt that the indigenous name of the language is Kalāṣa-alā, the country being called Kalāṣūm. Two major dialects are known, north and south of the valley. Villages outside this well-defined territory to the east and west claim to be Kalāṣa by origin. That might imply that the name is inherited from a farspread (and more powerful) historical confederation of tribes in southeast Nuristan. This community evidently expanded, and perhaps assumed the leadership over a people living in Southern Chitral, the already mentioned Kalash Kafirs.

Language specialists have recently discovered a Nuristani dialect south of Waigal called Trēgāmī (Fussman 1972.11:22), but there is not enough material known to establish its exact position. Even less is known about the religious heritage of this area (Buddruss 1960a).

Ashkun (Aşkun, Ashkund) is spoken in Southwestern Nuristan between the Alingar and the Pech. It is divided into several "tribal groups" (Strand 1973:300) with slightly diverging dialects.

There is also Dameli, a language according to Morgenstierne (1974:6) spoken in a single village in an, eastern side-valley of southernmost Chitral. That is correct, but in the same valley several other languages are also spoken, certainly Kati and probably Bashkarik. Dameli could be the remnant of a Nuristani language, with many Dardic loanwords, or vice versa (cf.Edelman 1984).

As for the southern neighbours of Nuristan, it is known that at least many of them were called Kafirs as well; but they spoke Pashai, a language still spread over a large area (Morgenstierne 1944; 1956; cf.Wutt 1981). It is reported east of Gulbahar, formerly in the Panjshir valley, on the head-waters of the Tagao river, along the middle course of Alishang and Alingar as well as in the upper parts of the western side-valleys of the lower Kunar, including the extremely fertile Dawa-i Nur. Corresponding to this wide distribution, a partition into many dialects has been observed, arranged in four groupings according to Strand (1973:302).

Pashai is the westernmost 'Dardic' language, i.e., it is clearly Indian. "To a great extent" it shows "Sanskrit phonemic features which have already changed in the Middle Indian languages. But the borderline to other Indian languages is difficult to draw." Morgenstierne (1974:2-4) further concludes that "Pashai is the last remnant of the language of the Hindu-Buddhist civilization of Nagarāhāra, Lampāka and Kāpisha, driven into this mountain valley by comparatively recent Pashto-speaking invaders. The Kurdari Pashais on the middle Pech seem to have remained pagans nearly down to our times."

Nothing of this kind can be said about the Nuristanis: and that provokes the question whether they remained perpetually outside the orbit of the
classical Gandhāra culture.

One must also suppose that the 'exposure' of the Pashais to such urban influences would not have been identical everywhere.

At least the possibility must be considered that the populations speaking minor Dardic dialects - most of them included in the Kunar group - had not only preserved their archaic idioms, but also partial survivals of their former religion. This is not of immediate concern, since even less is known about their spiritual heritage than about their language; but for the sake of completion and clarity it may be mentioned that they exist, almost unexplored and with little chance to fill this gap in our knowledge (cf. Strand 1973:302):

\begin{itemize}
  \item Gawar-bātī (south of Arandu, the frontier town Afghanistan/Chitral)
  \item Ningalāmī-Grangalī (lower Waigal)
  \item Šumaštī
  \item Gambīrī (heavily influenced by Waigali; but the grammar is 'Dardic'. Morgenstierne 1974:5-6).
\end{itemize}

Besides these, there are dialects related to Dardic languages spread in areas further to the east. The language of Sau is an offshoot of an archaic version of Shina, as is Phalura; and the language of Wotapūr and Katārqalā has connections with the so-called Kohistani languages (Fussman 1972,II:28,30; Buddrus 1960a; 1967). Of interest is the possibility that the same political and ethnic centres, which were able to send emigrants so far into the west, may have been equally able to exercise a considerable spiritual influence.

Immediate neighbours of the Nuristanis are the Kalash (Kal'oṣa) who speak a Dardic language. Formerly they settled in scattered villages throughout South Chitral, even east of the Kunar river (in Shishi Kuh) but now they form a compact group only in Rumbur, Bumboret and Birir, also inhabited by strong and effective colonies of former Kati refugees, and now strengthened by recent newcomers.

Of the remaining Kalasha-speakers - between 3-4000 souls - nearly half have preserved their pagan religion. Graziosi gave the (allegedly) exact number, namely 1391 in 1961/63 (after Morgenstierne 1973:184-7). So they are in fact the last non-Islamic "pagans" of the Hindukush.

According to their own traditions, at least an element among the Kalash came from Southern Nuristan - where it has already been noted that the same ethnonym is used for people speaking a quite different language. Important details of their religion (the cult of certain deities, cult objects, and the design of sanctuaries) were brought by an inspired religious leader who had supposedly "studied" in Prasun. Therefore it would have been feasible to include them in this volume, but not entirely advisable, for more than technical reasons.

Finally, in the border-zone between Afghanistan and Chitral there are now direct contacts between Nuristanis and the central and even the eastern Dardic populations.

Otherwise the environment of the former Kafir religions was comprised of Iranian languages: Pashto and Persian in the southeast, south and west; Munji, Sanglechi (and Yidgha) in the north. There were further enclaves of dialects complicating the picture: e.g., Iranian Parachi in Nijrau, and Dardic Tirahi south of the Kabul river.

The Iranian languages in the north belong to the so-called Pamir group. It is not known exactly when these populations became Muslim through the Ismaelia - itself an isolated and endangered sect, giving to its members a
highly structured social and religious ideology. Archaic non-Islamic traditions are also known here. They can be interpreted through what has been preserved in the Pamirs and adjacent mountain valleys, but they belong properly within another spiritual world - not that of the Kafirs.

All these "Indo-Iranian Frontier Languages" form together a solid block, as can be seen in Grjunberg's instructive but simplified map.

The History

Apart from what is indicated by the linguistic situation - namely, at least two waves of immigration, a proto-Nuristani and a proto-Dardic one - there is no information as to what happened in respect of ethnic, political and cultural developments (including religion) in the mountains north of the Kabul river during the early periods.

The situation is therefore quite different from that in the northernmost part of Pakistan: where there is a wealth of relevant information, especially after the discoveries of rock carvings and inscriptions in 1979.

One thing is certain: the "Great Religions" of Buddhism and Hinduism were never thoroughly accepted by the mountain tribesmen. However it is necessary to consider their important and recurrent influences.

Such a peripherical position is reported for the land called She-mi or Shang-mi in (Han)Chinese chronicles, normally identified with Northern Chitral. An early source mentions here explicitly that the inhabitants did not accept the Buddhist faith, serving diverse alternative deities (Chavannes 1903:406, Pei-che XCVII:11). In a later period, however, She-mi, then under a name reconstructed to Shamarāja, is reported as Buddhistic (Fuchs 1939:447). Buddhists or not, that would pose no real problem: because even the overlords of the area, the Hephthalites, were non-Buddhists in spite of the fact that they had their head-quarters in an area of longstanding Buddhist tradition (Chavannes 1903:402).

Evidently the earlier Great Religions were less aggressive and discriminatory, and therefore they did not provoke militant "un-believers" of the Kafir type. That there was something like a spiritual rejection, a certain counter-play, is my personal interpretation, not generally accepted.

The discovery of elaborately carved stone slabs near Chaga Sarai in the Kunar valley, presently used as tomb monuments in a Muslim cemetery but clearly derived from a late Hindu temple erected around the late 7th to 9th centuries A.D., does not introduce new problems of interpretation (Lohuizen-de Leeuw 1959, Edelberg 1957). One has to keep in mind that the conquest of the Indo-Iranian borderlands by the armies of the Caliphate was a slow and difficult process. It took about 360 years to subdue the wardens of the Indian marches, the Šāhis of Kabul and Waihand (Abdur Rehman 1979). During this time the Šāhis were certainly interested in having good relations with the tribesmen in the hinterland, and maybe the temple near Chaga Sarai was erected by a returning mercenary.

Later there remained pockets of non-Muslim populations in many parts of modern Afghanistan over a long period. Participation in the highly lucrative raids of the Ghaznavids and Ghurids proved to be the best argument for Islamization. From India, mercenaries brought back not only their share of the booty, but also the new victorious religion to their villages and camps. The Ghurids themselves had their centre in an area which was still pagan in the time of Sabūktigin (Bosworth 1973:121, 227).

Only one region remained especially obstinate, and this was what has just been described as Kafiristan. Lamghān (=Laghman) had been a stronghold
of the Hindu-Šāhis when Kabul was already lost to them (Abdur Rehman 1979:4). Very soon after its incorporation into the Ghaznavid state, this area was exposed to the night attacks and ambushes of the neighbouring "infidels", as the population complained to Mahmud (G. Nafisi 1963:569. A translation of Bayhaqi's text has been made by Palwal 1977:42).

The background to such resistance was certainly that the Kafirs felt well-protected by the difficult terrain, behind "a lofty mountain" (as mentioned in the text of Bayhaqi).

There were other reasons for such raids. The lands between Laghman and Bannu were already infiltrated by Afghans who came from the Sulaiman mountains. They had submitted themselves to Sabükčīgīn and were enrolled in the Ghaznavid armies (Abdur Rehman 1979:146). That implies that a part of the original population would have been driven into the mountains, and that the fugitives from the Šāhi's army retreated in the same direction after the terrible disaster in 988 A.D. So they were probably eager to take revenge.

The strategic position of the mountain dwellers did not worsen when Islam intruded into the valleys north of the main range. Badakhshan, for example, became a refuge of the Ismaelis who did not collaborate with orthodox Muslims, their oppressors (Ivanow 1948). So there was never a complete isolation: trade has a long history here (Grjunberg 1972:10). The rearguard of Kafiristan was never seriously endangered until the final conquest.

The strength of this natural fortress was tested when in March 1398 Timur launched an attack straight from the West, using Anderab as a base and crossing the Panjshir valley. He affected to take revenge for the many cruelties inflicted by the Kafirs to their helpless Muslim neighbours; but the text of the (adapted) autobiography makes it clear that the expedition was planned and executed as an adventurous exploit of man-hunting (Elliot - Dowson 1871/1974:12-20), in order to show that brave soldiers would fight their way even into completely unknown and bewildering territory. In fact the usual skull-towers were erected in some places; but one of the detachments fell into an ambush and was massacred, so "victorious retreat" was advisable. The whole affair took just 18 days.

At the time when Babur made Kabul the centre of his domains, he could collect reliable information on the areas north of the Kabul river. Going through his notes (Beveridge 1922/1969:205, 210, 212, 214), it is seen that to him Kafiristan meant the hidden valleys in the "fastness-mountains" from which the rivers issue as torrents, evidently from narrow and difficult gorges.

South of those natural fortresses there lived people who were definitely not proper Muslims: e.g., between Nijrau in the west and Bajaur in the east. Even when they converted to Islam they are said to have remained "kāfīrlike" (Beveridge 1922/1969:213). In some cases they were attacked by the true Kafirs of the mountains; but in the case of an attack from outside, they received military assistance as, for example, did the peoples of Chaga Sarai when Babur attacked and conquered their area.

So there was an intermediate zone, mostly valleys inhabited by Pashais and Parachi speakers, which was exposed to raids from both Kafirs and anti-Kafirs. Pashai is spoken in Shutul, Ghujulan and Pachaghan (Morgenstierne 1926:18).

But evidently the most rewarding Kafir raids were directed towards the West. Here the Hindukush could be transversed by only seven roads, and the best time to cross the passes was "in three or four autumn months when the snow is less and the waters are low" (Beveridge 1922/1969:204-5). That was
also the season for Kafir highway-men. The approach was through the Panjshir valley, this thoroughfare being controlled by the Kafirs, who demanded tax from its population; but this was still no protection against evil deeds (Beveridge 1922/1969:214). Therefore it is no wonder that the Timurid Sultan Maḥmud Mīrzā (1453-1495), who ruled the land between Astarabad and Badakhshan, made two inroads into Kafiristan. These conquests brought him the title Ghāzī, but they were otherwise without lasting results.

Babur never attempted a serious attack on what he considered the real and dangerous Kafiristan, and not only because he was a diligent consumer of wine exported from this country. His expeditions had other more rewarding aims.

It is certain that ambitious and zealous rulers organized such razzias repeatedly. One of them was undertaken on the orders, or at least with the consent, of Mummad Ḥaḥīm Mīrzā: a younger and sometimes rebellious brother of the great Moghul emperor Akbar.

The volunteers who were ready to fight or to die as martyrs were motivated by the propaganda of the Naqṣbandīya dervish order, founded at Bukhara at the end of the 14th century A.D. They were a major political power throughout Central Asia in those days. The execution of a campaign to Lamghān (Laghman) was in the hands of one Darvīš Muḥammad Ḥān Gāzī. The copy of a work written in his honour by Muḥammad Sālim was preserved, being edited and translated with commentaries by Scarcia (1965).

It is said that the Kafirs of 66 valleys were chastised and forced to accept Islam; but soon afterwards the admixture between Muslim and non-Muslim customs (especially in wine-drinking) recurred, so that even in the 19th and 20th centuries European visitors found survivals of the pagan past.

Practically all areas affected by this campaign were populated by Pashais, not Nuristanis. So the few names of deities preserved in the work of Muḥammad Sālim (carefully discussed by Scarcia 1965: CXLIX-CLVI) are of extreme importance, the spiritual heritage of the Pashai-Kafirs being even more enigmatic than that of the Nuristanis.

There are no comparable reports for the 17th and 18th centuries. Only the situation described for the 19th century makes it clear that the Nuristani-Kafirs preserved their independence; and they did not stop raiding their Muslim or semi-Muslim neighbours until the very end of the 19th century.

However there are other historical reports which will need careful evaluation in the future.

The "History of Chitral" (written by Mirza Muhammad Ghufran, revised and enlarged by his son Mirza Ghulam Murtaza and translated into Urdu by Wazir Ali Shah) maintains that in the time when two branches of the dynasty, the Katur and the Khushwaq, contended for the throne of Chitral, the Khushwaq had the tendency to extend their domain farther to the West and to control the whole of Nuristan.

Shah Faramurd who became king in 1717 A.D. conquered even Jurm in Badakhshan. The Bashgali Kafirs were attacked and defeated via Begusht in Lotkuh. Another campaign was directed to the southwest reaching Chaga Sarai. Previously, Faramurd is said to have captured Lotdeh =Bagramatal, Kam =Kamdes, Veron =Prasun/Parun and Wai =Waigal, this expedition lasting a full year.

When Shah Faramurd was murdered and replaced by Muhtaram Shah Katur I in 1724, the Kafirs in the Pech valley (Central Nuristan) were not ready to pay their tributes. One of the officers of the new king residing in
Chaga Sarai sent soldiers to enforce payment. When these were killed, he moved forward with his own force, but more soldiers lost their lives, amounting to some two hundred killed in the campaign. Shah Afzal personally led a punitive expedition against the Kafirs and defeated them, but there is no mention of any tributes being restored on this occasion.

Between 1761 - 1782, Khair-Ullah, the bravest among all warlike members of the bloodstained Khushwaqt dynasty, slowly gained a grip on the whole of Chitral. Much of his time was occupied in repelling contenders to the throne with the help of fellow-believers. He was Ismaeli, and therefore fanatically supported by the populations of Northern Chitral and Gilgit valley down to Yasin. At the end of his life, there remained only pockets of resistance in remote areas; one in Bailam, where some Katur princes had constructed a fort, and where they depended on the help of the people of Bashgal for their subsistence.

Khair-Ullah is related to have had a Bashgali as a personal servant. This man supposedly accused his countrymen of being close allies of his enemies, bringing their revenues to them and even accepting their orders. Then something happened that predates the march of the "Grande Armée" of Napoleon to Russia. Khair-Ullah collected a large army, including men from Tangir, Darel and Gilgit, and invaded Bashgal via the Urtsun valley. Immediately after crossing the passes to Bashgal the army was paralyzed by heavy snowfall, so heavy that in the village where they were encamped several houses collapsed killing forty men. Khair-Ullah did not accept the advice of his trusted officers, and attacked the main village Kam (Kamdesh) which was defended by Bashgali chieftains. The population escaped, taking their cattle with them.

In the meantime his arch-enemy the Katur prince Mohtaram Shah, together with his Afghan volunteers, blocked the exit of Bashgal to Arandu. Khair-Ullah was therefore forced to cross over the pass into Urtsun. In the meantime his enemies were informed of his manoeuvre and defeated him there. Most of the spoil went to the Afghans, the men from Northern Chitral being happy to be spared, but Khair-Ullah himself and the outsiders who had joined him lost their lives.

Nothing is told about further relations with Nuristan in the "History" for a full century. There are rare exceptions: one learns that Amir Sher 'Ali - the predecessor of 'Abd al-Rahman - tried to conquer Kafiristan and convert the Kafirs (Jones 1969:184). Other historical details from this time are dispersed in the books of various authors, e.g., Masson (1842/1974,1:231-56).

Such was the preamble to Robertson's visits to Kafiristan in October 1889 and between September 1890 and October 1891. Since his published observations are still the main source for every study of this kind, one need concentrate only on the political implications of his exploration. It may be interpreted as a tentative step towards an annexation of Kafiristan, which in those days was considered among members of the British Government in India.

The events told in "History of Chitral" explain perfectly why the Katur dynasty made no attempt to preserve the position once held by the Khushwaqt conquerors. After the death of Khair-Ullah, most of his noble supporters were either killed or exiled, their followers sold into slavery together with their families. This was a shock to the strong Ismaelia community of Northern Chitral, and it led to political instability which allowed inroads from the North, from Badakhshan and Wakhan.

The Khushwaqt dynasty, now reconverted Sunnis, built up new centres of political power in Ghizar, Yasin (Wershigum) and Punyal, annexing even Gilgit. This occupied all the attention of Muhtaram Shah II (also called Katur
II or Younger Katur) who ruled from 1788-1838(!) and his successors. Internal dissensions were frequent.

One must also take into consideration that the forward policy towards Kafiristan had always been an obsession of the Khushwaqt dynasty alone; the Katur had never shown such ambitions, and they had other problems too. So it was easy to preserve good relations and a considerable influence over this region.

Moreover, a most active Pashtun statelet had emerged in the small Jandul valley, not far from Chakdarra (Swat valley) including Dir, Asmar, and even Narsat for a while. Its ruler, Umra Khan, would have been a serious competitor for every power attempting to invade Bashgal. In his strategic politics, Umra Khan even had tacit support from some ill-advised British authorities in Peshawar.

But the final fate of Kafiristan, as a political and religious complex, was decided when the Durand Boundary Agreement was signed in Kabul in 1893. To compensate many territorial losses that Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan had had to accept elsewhere, the Durand Line somewhat ambiguously included most of Kafiristan within the Amir's territory. Military movements to consume this ripe fruit started almost immediately.

The deciding attack was made in winter 1895/96 from several directions. This indicates that Sipah Salar, Chulam Haidar Khan Charkhi, was indeed a strategist. In this season the Kafirs had no chance to retreat with their cattle to the high meadows. They had to fight in the valleys against troops well equipped with modern guns produced in Afghanistan by the British Government. Even imports of German arms were allowed. The strong resistance shown by the population in the Kulum and Ramgal valleys broke down, the most obstinate Kafirs of Bashgal escaping to Chitral; but more and more "big men" became collaborators of the Afghans and embraced Islam. Of course there were several rebellions, and finally the Western Katis were deported to the plains. An invasion of mullahs was arranged by the Amir, many of them losing their lives, but in the end the whole population in Afghan territory became perforce Muslims. That a few old believers were still alive after the second world war, hiding their hopes and sympathies, was a sheer wonder for the visiting anthropologist, little more. The country received a new name: Nuristan - the Land of Light. Compared to the tyrannical measures applied by 'Abd al-Rahman to other peoples revolting against the Central Power (e.g. the Hazaras), the king acted quite moderately - certainly in deference to the British.

Schuyler Jones, who selected and edited the Secret and Political Records concerning the political history of doomed Kafiristan, now in the India Office Library (1969), presented a lively and exact description of this rather tragic series of events, as also in the first chapter of his book "Men of influence in Nuristan" (1974). Jones' book is devoted to the social developments of just one region of former Kafiristan, but it is instructive as well in revealing what happened after the loss of independence.

Some institutions of the past are still remembered. Many of them were perpetuated in a more informal way (1974:203): important works of art, such as woodcarvings heavily imbued with religious ideas of the past, were still to be seen in villages. Quite interesting details from the past were communicated by people disgruntled by modern times (Jones 1974:265).

But to close on the present day.

It will be seen that in the traditional social system the artisan classes of bari and shewala were considered as the lowest stratum of the society. Both had hopes to improve their condition by accepting Islam. Generally that
proved not to be the case, but some changes nevertheless occurred. The bari could use their skill as woodcarvers to decorate their own houses for the first time. An enterprising shewala made a career as captain in the Afghan army and, finally, not only succeeded in claiming the daughter of a "free-born" man in marriage, but also had this fact ratified by the community (Jones 1974 :110-112).

So much for social change. Many Nuristanis of different origin joined the army and became a close-knit group, almost the only rivals in determination and physical fitness to the Pashtuns. Many rose from the ranks, a tradition initiated by the famous General M. Safar Wakeel Charzai, of Waigal. Just because of this special position, many were among the praetorians of President Mohammad Daud: and therefore many Nuristanis were killed when his palace was stormed in the early morning of April 28, 1978.

Nuristanis were thus involved from the inception of fighting, which has never stopped since those days. In 1981 the foundation of an independent state between Kamdesh and Badakhshan was announced: I heard of two statelets, in apparent competition.

This historical essay could be finished by saying that the Nuristanis have reverted to what their Kafir ancestors always did in the past: fighting for their freedom, and amongst themselves; this time at least one party in the name of Islam.

The Course of Research

Up to the mid 1960s, different approaches towards the study of the Kafirs are reflected in Jones' "Annotated Bibliography" (1966). A selection of documents from the "Secret and Confidential Reports in English Archives" (between 1885-1900), based on material in the India Office Library, forms a useful supplement (1969).

Sources relevant for the political history of Kafiristan in earlier periods almost invariably contain information concerning its religious peculiarities. One could speak of such contributions to the cultural history of the Kafirs as being mostly written by their arch-enemies. The end of this tradition is represented by the autobiography of 'Abd al-Rahman and the official history of Afghanistan written by order of his son Habib Allah (Romodin 1971, Jones 1966:12).

Another tradition emerged much earlier. Again and again the cruel Kafirs - the great terror of the Muslims - were considered by non-Muslim Europeans as kinsmen by blood, sharing some common cultural heritage and therefore looked upon with sympathy. This pro-Kafir tradition has provided much of the material relevant for the historian of Kafir religion. Already at the beginning of the 17th century, the China traveller Benedict de Goes met a certain "hermit" who told him of a "city" called "Capherstam" where no Muslims were allowed, though other foreigners, presumably Hindus, could visit it. Only entry into the temples was forbidden to them (Jones 1966:79). This report and similar stories told among the Armenians prompted the Jesuit Grigorio Roiz, posted at Agra, to make the first missionary attempt. He seems to have actually entered into Kafiristan though returning disappointed with the impression that there was no fertile soil here for the Christian faith (Jones 1966:68).

The tendency to consider the Kafirs as 'honorary co-religionists' was not confined to Christians. The great British traveller Dr Joseph Wolff (the son of a Bavarian rabbi) noticed that the Jewish community of Bukhara considered the Kafirs as distant relatives, as descendants of the Lost Tribes (cf. Jones
The English inherited this tradition in the 19th century. They were also influenced by another fantastic idea prevalent in the northwestern corner of the subcontinent: namely, that the Kafirs were descendants of Greek or Macedonian soldiers in the army of Alexander the Great. With such inspiration, even second-hand information was recorded, and native agents were sent out with the task of evaluating the Kafirs as potential allies, and also to study their cultural characteristics.

Among the British to be listed in this category, Elphinstone (1839,11:373-89) certainly deserves the place of honour. It is a pity that the full report delivered to him by his informant Moollah Nujeeb was never published in its entirety (Jones 1966:36). In comparison, the contributions of Burnes, who was able to speak with Kafirs and some of their neighbours in Kabul, are "brief and second-hand", as Jones observed (Burnes 1833; 1838; 1842; Jones 1966:22-3). There are useful notes in the book of Vigne (Jones 1966:99).

Mohan Lal, the first Kashmiri to learn English, also a great traveller and brilliant diplomat, produced further notes on the Kafirs (Jones 1966:61-2). Raverty, who compiled so many known (and otherwise unknown) sources into a general ethnographic gazetteer, did much the same for what was then known about Kafiristan (Raverty 1859; 1896; Jones 1966:81-2). More important is Wood's travel-report: he alone saw Nuristan from its rear flanks, i.e., from Badakhshan in the north (Wood 1872; Jones 1966:101-2). The hopes of Christian missionaries had still not entirely evaporated. Native Christians visited Kafiristan in 1864 (Fazl-i-Haqq and Nurullah 1865/1878; cf. Jones 1966:36), and in 1882 an attempt with similar intentions was made by the Afghan Christian Munji Syud Shah (Hughes 1883).

The first linguistic investigation with substantial results was made by Trumpp, a German missionary scholar who had to leave his country after his subversive activities during the revolution of 1848 (Schimmel 1981:169-73; Jones 1966:97).

The rather confused information presented by Alexander Gardner (1853; 1898) as his authentic experiences in Kafiristan are scarcely important for the cultural heritage of the Kafirs; but rather more for the history of English travel fiction. Gardner claimed to have heard of two Europeans who had been living in Kafiristan in the late 18th century and who had either been murdered or died in captivity there. This meagre hint was then expanded by Kipling (1895) into one of his most fascinating stories: "The Man who would be King", which has now even become a popular film. However, the pedestrian scholar must regret that Kipling did not write his story a few years later: he would then have known Robertson's book, and his plot might have combined his imaginative fantasy with facts much nearer to reality, the possibilities already splendidly evoked in the framing story. Gardner's only recently published "Sketch on Kaffiristan & the Kaffirs ..." (Jones 1977) now reveals that he was almost certainly wrong in the majority of his claims, so that all his information is suspect.

At the end of this "mytho-poeic" period, the efforts made by Europeans to reach this mysterious area were finally crowned by success. The Lockhart Mission, sent out for political reasons, could get only restricted information, but photographs taken by Lockhart's associates are of great value (Jones 1969:7-9; Lockhart - Woodthorpe 1889 remained a closed archive for many years). However, Robertson's achievement (Jones 1966:83-5) condensed to a well-illustrated book (1896) overshadowed all earlier attempts. Twice he entered Kafiristan from Chitral (October 1889, September 1890-October 1891) staying mainly in Bashgal (with Kamdesh as his headquarters) but also
visiting Prasun valley. His unusually vivid descriptions remain, even nowadays, an essential basis for all research. Only in recent years has one dared to cast doubt on a few of his statements (Strand 1974b).

The conquest of Kafiristan had irreversible results: not only ending the independent paganism there, but also destroying the possibility of documenting and recording its survivals. To Afghan officials in Kabul, it was important that the recruits of Islam should not be disturbed by foreign visitors who might be suspected to be sympathetic towards the pre-Islamic past. The government was equally anxious to conceal the harsh methods employed in conversion.

It was much later that restrictions on visiting this region were lifted. Voigt (1933) could still boast that he travelled through Kafiristan without any official permission, accompanied by Seydack who worked in the Afghan forestry department. Later on, fieldwork was permitted on the basis of primary interests in ecology and natural resources. That is especially true of the short visit paid by the Russian Vavilov (1959:119-39) and of the German Hindukush Expedition in 1935 (Herrlich 1938; Scheibe (ed.) 1937; Lentz 1939). Morgenstierne had to content himself with Nuristani informants whom he met in Kabul in the house of their successful compatriot Abdul Vakil, who had risen to the rank of general (1926). The Norwegian linguist got a better opportunity during a visit to Chitral. There he worked with Kati settlers who had fled from forced conversion into an area which was indirectly under English rule. However, most of these Katis had since become Muslims, only twenty men being self-declared pagans in 1929, luckily including a recitation priest who had a sizeable stock of traditional knowledge (Morgenstierne 1932). The major part of his work here has been published, the most important part after World War II (1949; 1951; 1954; 1967; 1968). The German Hindukush Expedition of 1935 had further contact with the group in Chitral which was at that time in an advanced stage of religious assimilation (Herrlich 1938:164-8). Almost simultaneously, the Chitrali prince, Hussam-ul-Mulk, encountered one of the last pagans who had been earlier questioned by Morgenstierne, and he recorded further valuable material from this man (1974).

Among the members of the German Hindukush Expedition of 1935, Lentz was the only competent ethnographic observer. Besides the book already mentioned, he published highly interesting articles (1936, 1937, 1937a, 1939/1978, 1974), but there were over one hundred transcribed texts which are still unpublished. Only some of these were used in the book of Edelberg and Jones (1979).

It is remarkable that a Kafir who had left his cultural milieu to embrace Islam should become the author of a valuable autobiographical document on Kafir traditions. This man was Azar (incorrectly rendered as 'Araz'), later given the Islamic name Muhammad Abdullah, or even Shaikh Abdullah Khan. Since he was a Kati of a powerful family, his autobiography contains useful and reliable reminiscences. This manuscript came into the hands of Morgenstierne who published an excerpt (1933), later supplemented by Kristiansen (1974). Another work of this kind comes from the Nuristani General M. Safar Vakil Gharzai (1960). There is also an article written by A.K. Ikhlas (1939) and a booklet by Shakur (1946), Director of the Peshawar Museum. To the end of this tradition belong students of Nuristani origin who had enrolled in the Department of Ethnology at Kabul University. The most promising of these native ethnographers M. Alam Nuristani, published several articles, later under the name Melabar (1977, 1978, 1978a, 1978b), before his tragic death in Kabul.

The ban on travel to this region was gradually lifted after World War II,
allowing a wave of American and European exploration. The Danes were among the first to avail themselves of this opportunity. They discovered that, contrary to the discouraging reports of the German Hindukush Expedition of 1935, an "ethnographic El Dorado" was still to be found in Nuristan (Edelberg - Ferdinand 1955/56). Their original bold expedition plan, the meeting of three different teams in the solitude of the Alashan mountains, proved impossible, and when the expedition leader, Henning Haslund-Christensen, died in Autumn 1948 in Kabul, they turned, more intensively than planned, to the major task of ethnography. The most important contribution on Nuristan has been made by Edelberg, first appointed as botanist to the Expedition in 1948 (1965, 1968, 1972, 1974, 1974a, 1984; Motamedi - Edelberg 1968).

The Indologist Buddruss spent a full winter in Prasun as a member of the German Hindukush Expedition 1955/56. He was able to collect an astonishing number of mythical texts. This was an unexpected indication that the atmosphere "charged by religion" in this valley lying in the heart of Kafiristan had still not entirely vanished. In those days a few old men still kept alive the faint hope that the 'old times' and their gods would some day return. Only a fraction of such collected material has been published by Buddruss himself (1960), the rest being generously placed at the disposal of his expedition colleague Snoy for the latter's doctoral dissertation (1962). Snoy's accuracy allows this collection to be used extensively here, and it reveals that for the problems of Kafir religion alone, the work of Buddruss seemingly matches that of Morgenstierne. Later on Buddruss revisited the area, and he was able to remove some obscurities in the most difficult texts. It is, however, extremely unlikely that such revelations may occur in the future. The Prasun people have meanwhile turned whole-heartedly to the new religion of Islam, and with the same dedication as they formerly reserved for their Kafir beliefs and customs.

Still awaiting publication are the results of investigations in the Waigal area made by Buddruss with Peter Snoy.

Not yet printed, but accessible in manuscript form, are the observations of Adolf Friedrich, the leader of the second Hindukush Expedition 1955/56, concerning the now totally converted Kafir refugees in Chitral. Snoy is still in process of editing these field notes together with his own material and commentary.

In 1962/63 the Stuttgart Badakhshan Expedition visited the Munjan valley, linked to Nuristan by important trade routes that cross high passes of the main Hindukush range. Snoy was again one of the participants, and he concentrated on this topic of trading relations (1965). The religious aspects, including valuable details obtained by informants from Wama, were studied by the Pashtun student Abdul Raziq Palwal, who joined the expedition as linguist and interpreter. In 1964 Palwal accompanied Morgenstierne into Bashgal where they met one old man who had been brought up as a refugee in Chitral under the precepts of the old religion. The results of this journey, and later studies, were presented by Palwal in a series of articles on Kafir traditions (1968, 1968a, 1969, 1969a, 1969b, 1969/1970, 1970, 1970a, 1971, 1972, 1974, 1974a). But these were only a part of his total material, and one must rely further on more recent studies made at American universities (1977).

The Austrian Max Klimburg visited Nuristan in order to prepare a comprehensive documentation and classification of its famous woodcarvings. His preliminary reports (1973, 1976) indicate that he was able to collect some formerly unknown mythical texts. His important collection of material artefacts was handed over to authorities in Kabul as a gift from the German
Government. The inventory, with many novel interpretations, was published in Germany (1981).

Nuristan had been neglected by British social anthropologists for a long time. Jones was the first to be engaged in this field of study, and his approach was systematic. He started with the useful Annotated Bibliographies, already quoted, adding a short "preliminary analysis" of the political organization of the Kam Kafirs (1967). Later on there appeared a series of most interesting articles, partly based on collaboration with Edelberg (1970, 1972, 1973/74, 1974, 1974a, 1981).

The American R.F. Strand carried out fieldwork in the Kati area, living in Kamdesh from June 1967 to May 1969. Strand gives an account of the social institutions of the pre-Islamic past varying considerably from that of Robertson (and Jones as well). Strand's material was used by Keiser (1971, 1974) in a comparison of social structure with the Pashai.

Dupree (1971) relates that he had spent six periods of research, either in Nuristan, or in adjacent areas in which he includes Wakhan.

In the meantime, Soviet scholars started to work on the Kafirs, beginning with a sadly inadequate compilation by Poljak (1959). From 1963 onwards, the linguist Grjunberg got the chance to enter Nuristan as a member of a geological expedition. Beside his linguistic studies, summarized in a book on the Kati language, he collected ethnographic data which were only partly included in his linguistic survey (1971, 1971a, 1980, Grjunberg - Steblin-Kamenskij 1974).

Any evaluation of present attempts to proceed to a general history of Kafir religion must regard the work undertaken by Snoy as most important. Hackin's earlier study (1932) was too short and too sketchy. Snoy (1962) tried to discern, within the composite cultural heritage of Kafiristan, strata of different antiquity and origin. He further presents a model of an overall cognitive system which permits comprehension of the relative position and special tasks of Kafir deities. There is, however, a potential bias in his approach: his personal experience derived from fieldwork with the Kalash rather than in Nuristan proper. The Dardic conception of ritual purity may therefore be disproportionately emphasized.

The best description and analysis of local cultures in their ecological setting is certainly the book "Nuristan", co-authored by Lennart Edelberg and Schuyler Jones (1979). Had this book treated the religious heritage of Kafiristan, an English edition of this part of my own book on the religions of the Hindukush, which had appeared four years earlier in collaboration with Jones and Klimburg, would have been perhaps unnecessary. But the authors chose not to deal coherently with such problems, possibly intimidated by my own broad treatment of the topic. This was in spite of the fact that both scholars had collected and published relevant information in this field. But perhaps they were relieved to have a reason to remain themselves on the safer ground of sociological and environmental issues that were certainly not the strongpoint of my own contribution. I have always wanted to step beyond the safety of 'verifiable' facts, in order to induce an intellectual dialogue that will generate criticism as well as confirmation. I would have liked such critical comment for this English edition (which would have been changed and perhaps improved in many points); but this was hindered by Edelberg's untimely death. We all regret his loss to scholarship, as to be seen once more in his posthumous work (1984).
Situation of the Nuristani Languages in the Pamir - Hindukush Ethno-Linguistic Region.

After Grjunberg 1981

II. The Sanowkun Ceremony
"Against one of the centre wood pillars Utah was seated. ... He was a simulacrum of a man ..."
(Illustration to Robertson, pp.461-3).
NORTH KAFIRISTAN:
ENVIRONMENT, ECONOMY AND SOCIAL ORDER

The Kati

The Prasun
1. Dewa, a typical village of Prasun situated on the flat bottom of the valley. It is seen from the west as we learn from a picture published by Edelberg (1972, Fig. 12). The village has a northern and southern tower. Near to the southern tower are the winter pens. Other winter pens are built on the right side of the river. Photo: M. Klimburg.
2. Pillar, shaped as a caryatid in the Put-amól in Dewa, Prasun valley. The mutilated figure represents the god Māra mounted on horseback. Photo: M. Klimburg.
Building explained by Klimburg as assembly hall, partly demolished. He noted tīrē as the name of this construction. Photo: M. Klimburg.
One of the still standing pillars in the destroyed assembly hall of Dewa. Klimburg tried in vain to get a clear identification of the deity depicted. Photo: M. Klimburg.
Sculpture. Female deity forming the lower part of a pillar. Photo: M. Klimburg.
Before the rivers coming down from the southern flanks of the central Hindukush reach the forelands with open meadows and moderate hills, they pass through a zone where the valleys are V-shaped. In many places they are reduced to gorges where "it is difficult to find a pathway beside the torrent which issues between overhanging rocks" (Biddulph 1880:1). This is the belt suitable for goats feeding in the oak forests; and equally for men fighting on foot, who live in villages situated on the slopes suggestive of birds' nests - where defence against so many inroads took place in past centuries.

Behind this protective zone in Inner Nuristan, in a high but more spacious landscape, the valleys are U-shaped. The bottom is often flat and offers more space for agriculture. Large horned cattle are well adapted here. In some places the density of the population is therefore considerably higher than elsewhere - a fact of political and military importance.

The major part of the interior zone is inhabited by speakers of the Kati language, although they do not form a coherent area. The Prasuns in the uppermost Pech valley drive like a wedge between the western and the eastern Kati groups.

By order of 'Abd al-Rahman the West Kati populations of the Ramgal and Kulum valleys were deported to Logar, and it was only 25 years later that they were allowed to return (Romodin 1971:262; Herrlich 1937:84-5; Buddruss 1983). There was therefore little to be expected from any subsequent research, as even a superficial glance clearly revealed the intensive Islamization undergone by them. However, even the Kantiwo people yielded only impoverished reminiscences (Grjunberg 1971) although they did not suffer similar treatment. It seems that after the Islamization internal conflicts became the main topic of interest for a while. This basic situation has not been decisively changed by recent fieldwork. Almost all essential information still comes from the East Kati land; Robertson's original field of study.

The diverse Kati myths of origin all agree insofar as they speak of rapid and vigorous expansion at the cost of others (Robertson 1896:158). Katis generally claim to have come from the South; more precisely, they immigrated into the valleys of Ramgal and Kantiwo. Bashgal was a later conquest. Linguistic and (as W. Bernhard has revealed) physical-anthropological arguments support the thesis that West and East Katis are close relatives, diverging only in recent times.

Compared to the climate of the rest of Afghanistan, Nuristan lies in a favoured corner. The arid summer period that is fatal for the farmer in the central highlands is interspersed here with showers from the "enormous towering clouds covering the main range of the Hindukush" (Edelberg - Jones 1979:23). This area benefits from the Indian summer monsoon in addition to the rainfall, brought by western winds, upon which the rest of Afghanistan depends entirely. The winter temperatures are possibly less extreme than elsewhere (Rathjens 1972:62). For these reasons viticulture is possible even at high altitudes, e.g., in the upper Bashgal valley (Edelberg 1965:Fig.25). The characteristic crops down to the 20th century were various strains of millet. Sharply differentiated "primeval" varieties of wheat and barley also occur in isolated refuges. This had already been noticed by Vavilov.
(1959: 119-39) and was a central topic for the German Hindukush Expedition of 1935 (Roemer-Rosenstiel 1937:73-86). Cultivation is done on irrigated terraces that conform closely to the contours of the slopes, thus making the fields small and irregular in shape. The fields can be tilled either with a light plough or by hoe. Little manure is available, making fallow periods necessary (Edelberg 1968). Maize is certainly a late enrichment of the nutrition, still expanding in the time when the Germans made their observation.

In the pagan past, all work related to cultivation of the fields was done by women, who also had to carry loads beside their normal domestic work. Male contributions to the subsistence consisted of looking after the livestock, youths being often appointed as herdsmen. In earlier times hunting must have been an important source of food as well as a passionately pursued sport.

Robertson's work indicates that cattle-breeding was important in North Kafiristan, and was not hindered (as among many Dardic groups) by the belief that bulls, and especially cows, are ritually impure. Equally important was goat-husbandry; but few sheep were kept. The sheds were clearly separated from the houses and served as living quarters for the herdsmen as well. Essential to the livestock economy was the intensive exploitation of alpine meadows, differentiated in spring and summer pastures. The herds were kept in the immediate vicinity of the village only in winter (Jones 1967:20; Edelberg - Jones 1979:65-91) when stall-feeding was practised. In the last decades, maize straw was used for that purpose.

Horses were rarely kept, although monuments to the dead were erected in the form of equestrian statues. Bee-keeping and wine-making were assigned to men, the grapes being trodden by foot (Robertson 1896:556; Neubauer 1952). The Kati were served by a group of craftsmen stratified according to the nature of their profession. Robertson has provided many reports about these so-called bari. He calls them slaves, and some aspects may certainly justify this classification. On the other hand, it is clear that craftsmen took up weapons on occasion and fought for their masters in conflicts between villages, and they also participated in village self-government. In a more detailed treatment later on, it will be seen how they could rise in status through feasts (Jones 1967:40-44). Robertson noted the similarities between the social hierarchy of the Kafirs and the caste system prevalent in the Indian Subcontinent.

In any event, the economy of the Kafirs, even without using all available resources, produced surplus that sufficed to support a class of technical specialists: this giving Nuristan a high degree of self-sufficiency and independence from the bazaars of urban centres. The range of goods produced by the bari became evident through the many imports from Nuristan observed by Snoy in general use in Munjan: wood and stone objects, metal goods, textiles, etc. Together they make up some fifteen per cent of the Munjani collection procured by Snoy (1965:124). It may be concluded that the existence of craftsmen rooted in the social web of every village within Kafiristan was a considerable factor in the preservation of political and ethnic independence.

The presence of highly-specialized craftsmen within easy reach relieves the land-owners of numerous tasks that would otherwise have been mandatory for them. They were provided with many implements of better quality than those ordinarily manufactured at home.

What then happened to the freed potential of leisure-time? If one pursues this question, one arrives at an astonishingly clear view of the basis upon which the rich political and spiritual life of the Nuristanis rested in the high-days of "Kafiristan".
A large part of this surplus time and energy was invested in warfare and raids that could be triggered off at the slightest offence (Robertson 1896:300, 335, 418, 561 and 564-6). Most of these conflicts were of a purely internal character and took place among Kafirs alone. But there were repeated attacks on Muslim neighbours too. In the areas bordering Kafir country, the fear excited by such deeds was so great that one can speak of a highly effective "forward defence" policy that penetrated into alien territory at the expense of the Islamic enemy. Constant internal and external warfare constituted a kind of permanent training and deterrent against would-be aggressors. Of course, this was only feasible in the mountainous environment that provided a natural protection against the punitive campaigns of organized armies. This protection was exceedingly effective: the closing of the passes in early winter threatened to destroy every careless band of invaders. The Kafirs' own losses (which naturally affected the most virile age-groups) may have acted as a regulative factor against over-population, maintaining a demographic-ecological balance.

One could raise the objection that the princes of Chitral proved occasionally successful in their dominance over certain parts of Nuristan (Wazir Ali Shah 1974) and that the Pashtuns were on the advance throughout the 19th century; but one should not forget that the Chitrali princes were masters of diplomatic skills and had a trained mountain army at their disposal. As for the famous Khushwaqt Khair-Ullah's inroad into Bashgal, this campaign resulted in disaster due to early and heavy snowfall in 1782. The Pashtuns also held war and warfare, mostly in the name of Islam, to be a self-evident part of existence.

It was of consequence that northern Kafiristan bordered the area of the Ismaelis, who were sometimes hated more by their Sunni neighbours than were the Kafirs themselves. There the Katis ventured long-distance raids, although in other times trade and barter prevailed (Olufsen 1904:173-92; Snoy 1965:101-13). There was even a Nuristani village in uppermost Munjan (Nao) that was used as a place of exile. The sensitive front of defence was in the South. Reports from the Ashkun and Waigal areas show a highly sophisticated system of warrior ranks graded according to the number of 'kills' accomplished by the competing heroes. These tendencies were perhaps strengthened after the Islamization of the formerly immunizing belt of Pashai-speakers.

The significance of these conflicts for the freedom of Kafir Nuristan and for the preservation of its economy and social order was recognized early. Robertson, and then Snoy, followed by Jones and Palwal, have already explained this state of affairs (Robertson 1896:410, Snoy 1962:171-7; Jones 1967:44-52; Palwal 1969/11:8-14).

The detailed information collected by Palwal permits the inference that the Kafirs formed war-parties of up to fifty warriors each in the event of a major conflict. In such confrontation, all men capable of bearing arms were recruited from the engaged kinship groups, but only a part of these took to the offensive, while the rest occupied strategically important positions, or formed a reserve. A task-force consisting of such bands must have been responsible for the devastation and mass murder in Badakhshan that was mentioned by Wood (1841:226).

More usual were attacks by smaller teams formed on a voluntary basis. Some of them penetrated deep into the heart of enemy territory, where they raided houses or attacked wayfarers. The latter were, as a rule, dispatched in close combat with a dagger. A proof of the kill had to be furnished by the
display of articles of clothing or such bloody trophies as a hacked-off hand or ear (Edelberg 1972:36). Otherwise a dangerous ordeal of confirmation was necessary. It may be assumed that precisely this form of warfare was opportune to the inhabitants of the Bashgal valley. It permitted the "by-passing" of their immediate Islamic neighbours and engagement in combat with the Safi Pashtuns of the lower Kunar valley (Robertson 1896:140-4).

In the autobiography of a Kati of the Bashgal area, Azar, obtained by Morgenstierne (1933:202-3) and published selectively, it is related that some of the men took a vow to do deeds of valour in the course of one year (in actuality consisting of ambushes and raids, even on defenceless women and children). Lack of success at the end of the year permitted the limit to be extended up to three years. If the would-be hero proved unsuccessful even after this extended period, he was ostracized together with his family and treated with contempt for the rest of his days. Snoy (1962:175; Elphinstone 1839,II:386) provides a whole list of sanctions used against such luckless failures. Normally, however, one either returned successfully or not at all. The victorious hero gradually gained admittance into a whole series of ranks and positions. Depending on the number of kills he had made, he and his family attained the right to wear certain emblems or to enjoy certain privileges in public feasts, such as a special share of the food, precedence in dancing, a special mark or designs on the house and, finally, a distinctive funeral monument. According to Strand 1974b:58, the killers had the right to a monumental post whose notches indicated the number of homicides. The above mentioned autobiography of Azar mentions the names of those ranks that could be attained in course of time (Morgenstierne 1933; Kristiansen 1974). Palwal is of the opinion that only the names of the most important signs and badges of rank have as yet been mentioned. A great part of Palwal's main study (1977:158-302) is devoted to this problem, while Jones has already presented additional data (1974:188-204).

On his return from a successful foray, the killer was given a reception in which the women of his own family proudly occupied a position of prominence. He had to confirm his fame as a killer within two years by inviting the whole village to a feast, and it was only after this event that he was sure of being given permanent credit for his deeds (Morgenstierne 1933:202).

Similar 'feasts of confirmation' were mandatory for the attainment of various ranks in the killer hierarchy. Increased rank required more comprehensive and lavish feasts, the symbols of higher rank also being more ostentatious. Such feasts have usually been described as 'feasts of merit', but I would prefer the alternative term 'feast of confirmation' in order to stress the fact that the exploit itself was basic and irreplaceable. The feast is a secondary act, important for the acceptance by the community. Strong religious elements appeared in the course of these feasts. They were seen as celebrations in honour of the god of war, and will be dealt with later in another frame of reference.

The 'way to glory' was described by Azar, but the structural background was recognized only later. This probably happened because Robertson had already described another kind of upward mobility in which killing was not the decisive factor. The difference between these two ways of achieving status was seen for the first time by Palwal (1969,III:17-27). Strand's research (1974b) has now supported his observation.

Clearly, there were two separate careers, one civil and the other military, whereby the 'civil career' only seems to require the presentation of
an increasing quantity of feasts for the community. A closer look will reveal another aspect: for the candidate seeking to rise in the non-military hierarchy (called *kaneash* by Robertson; but according to Strand, there is a misunderstanding here: *kaneash* is the name of the feast held by him) the attainment of ritual purity required for priesthood was a main condition. Through Palwal (1969, III:21) one learns of a month of seclusion in mountain solitude, the beard of the candidate having to be shaved. Priestly functions full of complex symbolism were expected. The 'kaneash' had to lay out an 'Adonis garden patch', which will be discussed later. Robertson thought that these were relics of an older and now little-understood tradition (Robertson 1896:466-72). I do not think it is entirely appropriate when Snoy explains these feasts as 'rites de passage' (in the broadest sense of van Gennep's term) and sees in them the manifestation of a successful life (Snoy 1962:117, 183). It should be remembered that according to Robertson even boys were permitted candidature. By so doing, they did not win an influential position, but were allowed to act as acolytes for the priests who offered the sacrifices.

Consequently religious careers existed side by side with military ones, and the former also required costly feasts to legitimize them. According to Strand (1974b:58), the killing of 400 goats and 60 cows was needed for the attainment of one of these ranks. For outsiders, or even for fellow members of the clan, the perception of religious motivation was perhaps dimmed by the entertainment provided and the prestige accruing therefrom.

It would be interesting to find out whether both of the careers were integrated into one system. One is tempted to assume that the advance in the religious hierarchy took place after the career as a killer had been completed, but any possibility of such an interpretation is belied by the fact that children were also allowed to hold religiously motivated feasts. On the other hand, one cannot reject totally the proposal that age-groups existed, whose transitional rites were celebrated by feasts of merit. There was also a group of potential warriors (Palwal 1969, III:6-8), i.e., all male members of the village community above the age of twelve.

Women could participate in feasts and thus enjoy privileges within the female part of the community. They had the right to certain symbols as well. Spheres of action otherwise reserved only for men were thus opened to them. This could perhaps be interpreted as advancement to a special kind of priesthood (Robertson 1896:207 434, 472-3, 622). Note that the goddess Disani - here also the embodiment of a total femininity - was called *utai*, i.e. 'priestess' (Morgenstierne 1951:164). The women were in no way the passive beasts of burden that the early European visitors had asserted in unison with their informants. No ladies participated in the process of exploration and research done in and on 'Kafiristan'. Perhaps they would have been more successful in finding a way into the spiritual world of their Nuristani sisters.

Robertson saw the institution of feasting as a means to political power. Strand questions this and proposes that positions of honour were important, but by no means gave the casting vote in the complicated process of decision-making (Strand 1974b:59; Palwal 1969, III:24).

The smallest unit in the political order was the household, mostly corresponding to an extended family under the leadership of a patriarch. Polygyny was common if sufficient wealth was available. In pagan times, rich men also had domestic slaves.

The Kafirs saw themselves as members of patrilineal descent groups named after a male ancestor. Jones follows Robertson (Jones 1967:37;
Robertson 1896:535) in calling these units "clans", but Strand (1974a:52-3) prefers to call them "lineages". He further differentiates between 'maximal lineages' and 'minimal lineages'. 'Minimal lineages' were formed when the name of the male ancestor was replaced by other names of his notable descendants or by fission of the group, although the name and tradition of the original larger group were retained. The feeling of belonging to the larger unit was preserved and acted to provide mutual support in case of conflict (for South Nuristan see Jones 1974:118-44).

Robertson (1896:353) says very definitely, "a man may not marry in his own clan". Friedrich (Snoy 1962:22-3) heard of rules not limited by such a boundary, but proscribing a distance ranging from at least four to seven generations leading to a common ancestor. Matrilateral reckoning was also taken into consideration: marriage with women from the mother's family or with those from the matrilateral grandmother's family were to be avoided (Jones 1967:53). Linkage based upon matrilateral ties also bound the parties to mutual aid. The relationship to the mother's brother was, as is so often the case in patrilineal societies, particularly intimate. From his mother's brother, a youth received moral and economic support, particularly part of the goods and chattels needed as bride-price for his first marriage (Strand 1974a). This meant that some moveable property was also transferred through females although the women did not inherit any land. They remained members of their agnatic unit, on loan, as it were, to the affines of their fathers and brothers. Kinship was thus reckoned in generational depth with obligations to the relatives that tended to fade in proportion to an increasing genealogical span. The furthest boundary was very remote, as genealogies of remarkable length were accepted. Morgenstierne (1950a, 1950b; Jones 1967:54) has published a comprehensive list that covers 54 generations. It was not uncommon, therefore, for all inhabitants of a valley to regard themselves as relatives.

The process of fission among some Dard groups was more formalized and required the inauguration of a separate sanctuary (this must have been the case with the Prasun also, as will be seen). The lack of such an institutionalized consolidation among the Kati strengthened solidarity in the framework of the village community. The term 'community' should be used with caution when discussing settlement aggregates approaching urban dimensions, a case in point being Kamdesh (Jones 1967:13; cf.Strand 1974a:51). To feed and entertain such a large community would have been much too costly, and further formalization of the autonomous administrative structure would then have been necessary. According to Strand (1974b:59-62), units of a size still suitable for proper management did exist and were given the name grom, translated by Strand as 'primary village'. Strand also reports that these units were further subdivided into local segments called gur, which Robertson failed to notice. That might correspond to the size of similar segments during the Islamic period, the sazi, which have been described as comprising fifty men each together with their dependants. There was one representative from each gur in the executive circle, the ure (Robertson's 'urir'). The ure had to uphold common law (Morgenstierne 1933:197-200), i.e., they were some sort of village police. Among other tasks, they had to control the beginning of agricultural activities.

The nucleus of the gur would then perhaps be an aggregation of closer relatives within a village area consisting of one or two minimal lineages, including members of weaker lineages to make up the required number of men. It is tempting to explain this procedure as derived from the wesh-system practised by not too distant Pashtun tribes (Barth 1959:64-70).
How the will of the community was articulated regarding internal and external political questions is controversial. Robertson (1896:434) believed that a two-chamber system with an 'inner' and 'outer' council existed. Through feasts of merit, one was first admitted as a jast into the outer council and then as a mir into the inner council. The priest of the village was appointed to be a permanent member of the inner council. Opposing Robertson, Strand (1974b:59) held the opinion that the jast (which according to Palwal and Keiser (1971:153) simply means 'elder') was composed of those politically active individuals who had succeeded in becoming the opinion leaders of the village by merit won through killing and feast-giving, and especially by their rhetorical and diplomatic skills. As for mir (meaning 'king'), it was merely a title conceded to the most powerful person (cf. Ferdinand 1962). It is probably a proof of the flexibility of the system that in certain cases the title of mir could be bought through expensive feasts (Strand 1974b). That the title also belonged to the military scale of rank can be surmised from the fact that the women chose a female mir in the 'war games' they played to give spiritual support to the campaigns waged by their men (Robertson 1896:527, 626).

No formal leadership seems to have existed for the higher units that were formed from several primary lineages. The East Kati area certainly had four 'tribes' spread over the Bashgal valley including the larger side-valleys of Nechingal and Pitigil, with a branch in the Dungal valley as well. Two of these segments, the Katir and Kam, were large and influential, whereas the other two, the Kashtan and Mandagal, were comparatively modest in both size and influence. It was precisely this lack of formal organization that enabled the Chitrailing princes to deal piecemeal with various factions (Kristiansen 1974:11). In view of the free power-play taking place, what were the integrative mechanisms able to maintain unity above the village level? One could point to the marriage links that formed a wide-meshed network over the Kati area (Strand 1974a:56; Jones 1967:11, 59; especially Keiser 1971). Equally important were the religious institutions yet to be discussed. The Kati could perhaps afford such an informal organization because they were numerically the strongest group in the Kafir area with no comparable opponent. The Katur princes in Chitral practised a sort of coexistence: the Khushwaqt broke this rule, much to their disadvantage. That enabled villages in the lower Bashgal valley to remain unfortified (Robertson 1896:479-80; 482-4; Snoy 1962:44).

Trade and external relations of the Kam were helped by such institutions as the suli 'bond-brotherhood', which involved the creation of kinship-relations with alien ethnic groups (such as the Pashtuns) through formal adoption. This was the basis for mutual hospitality by help of which passage even through hostile territory became possible. It is doubtful, however, whether such institutions could have survived in Nuristani groups that found themselves entangled in frontal clashes with advancing foreigners (Jones 1967:47).

This chapter started with the question as to how the men occupied the long period of leisure when they were not engaged in production, and what was done with the considerable surplus coming especially from livestock. Then came the knowledge of the constant war-parties and feasts of confirmation, and a political system that used up an immense amount of time for the informal discussion of matters. There has been no reference to seasonal feasts, as a knowledge of the religious system is a pre-requisite for understanding them. Suffice to say that long periods of celebration were observed culminating in the offering up of many animals and public feasting.
It is useful to return to the starting point of these deliberations: the natural environment. The mountain world, in which the villages of the East Katis are embedded, does not only provide natural protection and create technical problems - it is omni-present, even in the dreams and fantasies of the people. To scale the highest peaks would have been impossible for the local residents, and inaccessibility gave the peaks a numinous aura, something near, yet unreachable. Danger from wild animals scarcely exists, but pathways running over polished rocks as well as mountain torrents could reward any negligence with a rapid loss of life, fuelling superstitions about the area. Besides, the villages were separated from each other for many weeks during the high snows of winter, complete valleys being cut off from the rest of the world. For this reason, raids and ambushes were limited to certain seasons. An invasion in winter was something that the Kati were neither morally nor physically prepared for, facilitating the bold conquest by 'Abd al-Rahman's army in a winter campaign.

Periods of total isolation of course gave time for imaginative thinking, story-telling and feast-giving. Perhaps this conditioned the tendency to exaggeration and extravagant gesture that is so evident in the manner in which the feasts of confirmation were held.

The Prasuns

In the uppermost part of the Pech valley, between the West and East Katis, people speak a separate language. The local name of the area is Waši, the Kati call it Prasun. The Pashtuns use the designation Parun. Linguists call this tongue 'Prasun', revealing the nationality of their main assistants (Morgenstierne 1974:5). There is a population numbering between 2000 and 3000 souls distributed over six villages, which were formerly fortified (Voigt 1933:81; Grjunberg 1971a:267). The environmental conditions are not very different from the Kati area. Photographs published by Edelberg (1972) show a wide, slightly sloping valley floor where fields are cultivated with a light plough. Here, too, maize is expanding at the cost of millet. Formerly there was scarcely enough grain until the next harvest. The higher yield of maize is therefore more than welcome. In the old days, one depended mainly on milk products when corn was finished (Snoy 1962:43). Scheibe (1937a:126) mentions that horned cattle prevail in areas situated higher than the belt of the (evergreen) holly-oak forests. That is certainly true for Prasun. Sheep are not important and goats even less so. The rules of an alpine pastoral system can be learnt from Buddruss, indirectly through Snoy (1962:56): the pastures were formerly divided into territories allotted annually, each territory given to an average of ten (not necessarily consanguineal) families. The milk products were brought down to the valley at regular intervals (cf.Edelberg-Jones 1979:74-90).

One has the impression that compared to other regions the livestock-rearing of Prasun is more concentrated in the close surroundings of the valley. This could be connected to a basic phenomenon peculiar to the ethnic group living there, i.e., their lack of aggressive behaviour. Without readiness for immediate revenge, it was scarcely feasible to send herdsmen to distant pastures.

Also the Prasun men were evidently tillers of the soil, unique in this region, even before Islamization. Their deities had sacred fields of their own, where women were not allowed. So the men alone must have cultivated them. That men did such humiliating work must have strengthened the prejudices of their neighbours.
The Prasun Nuristanis had such a reputation of weakness and timidity that they could be blackmailed into giving presents and even tributes (Robertson 1896:79-80). Robertson's work produces the impression that the Prasuns survived only because rivalry between the other Nuristanis enhanced the annexation as they formed a 'neutral zone'. Nearly every tribe had a common border with Prasun, thus bringing marauding bands from East and West face to face there. The major conflicts were settled in the high alpine pastures with paths leading to them from distant bases of operation. That may explain the repetitive fighting between Kam Kafirs and their tribal relatives in the distant Ramgal valley.

The Prasuns bore all this: by day with caution and humility, by night in withdrawal behind the safety of their fortified villages. It was only in winter, when the passes were blocked, that the Prasuns could move about in safety. There was, however, a village by the name of Pashki (Pushigrom), that was exceptional in that its inhabitants were reputedly every bit as dangerous as the rest of the Kafirs. In Shtiwe, Robertson (1896:364) observed the departure of a war-party.

By virtue of the location of their valley, the Prasuns were not forced to join the "forward defence" of the other Kafirs. Their only Islamic neighbours lived to the North of the main mountain range in the Munjan valley (Snoy 1965:112, 121-3). Trusting the peaceful nature of the Prasuns, the Munjanis carried salt and clothing to these six villages, whence the valuable products passed to other areas. On their return journey, the Munjanis brought back products of Kafir craftsmanship. Salt export has long stopped, but the trading relationships persist and are documented in the Badakhshan Collection of the Ethnological Museum in Stuttgart.

In view of these conditions it is not surprising that no earlier report speaks of the existence of specific monuments for killers in Prasun. Herrlich (1937:232) accepted the word of an informant as a definite proof that feasts of merit - the "progressive scale of charities ... (a) primitive but well-devised combination of personal and common welfare" - was unknown here.

According to the information available from Buddruss (Snoy 1962:181-5), ranks and symbols of ranks did exist here. Palwal (1969, III:15) reports that the people of Wama had to invite the Paruni to their feasting in cases of the highest rank of honour being won. That would presuppose some sort of reciprocity.

Low respect for the Prasuns, coupled perhaps with the feeling that they are somehow strange and uncanny, finds expression in the deprecatory stories concerning their origin. It was said, for example, that they were the descendants of seven demons that were spared by the gods during a general extermination of evil spirits (Robertson 1896:161). Another story told by the Kati Kafirs of the Bashgal valley maintains that the Prasuns originate from a demon (Morgenstierne 1951:179) whose companion was the progenitor of the Kati 'slaves'. When the supreme god Imra created the Kafir tribes, described in myths as like churning butter in a great leather bag, only the residue, mixed with water, was used to create the Prasuns (Robertson 1896:385)!

On the other hand, the Prasun country undoubtedly forms the religious centre of Kafiristan. Later one learns of the location of the main temple of Imra in the village of Kushteki. Imra was also worshipped in South Kafiristan as is shown by the contributions of Klimgburg and Jones. There is a great deal of material pointing at the general recognition of the Prasun people as religious authorities. Mythological stories are often localized in the Prasun valley.
How can one satisfactorily reconcile the contempt, coupled with constant accusations of cowardice and combined with relationships to demons on the one hand, with a role as the custodians of a major religious centre on the other? Even more confusing is the report given to Buddruss (personally communicated) that a secret 'language of the gods' is in ritual use in Prasun.

The entire 'Kafir' territory seems to have encompassed an amphictyony with its main sanctuary in Prasun. This might be the reason why the Kati-speakers spared the Prasun area during their expansion.

Another explanation would be that there was a religious heritage rooted in the Kati area and accepted by the Prasuns, later becoming more valued and better preserved among these latter 'converts'. Powerless but not endangered, they then turned into religious specialists: a judicious 'division of labour'. They even made successful religious propaganda in South Nuristan and beyond. Supportive of this is the fact that the 'language of gods' mentioned above has been disclosed as a seemingly archaic and corrupted form of Kati. Essential support for such an explanation (i.e., as a secondary phenomenon) would be a more recent parallel here: that the Prasuns, once converted to Islam, became also far more ardent Muslims than other Nuristanis.

As far as the political organization of the Prasuns is concerned, Snoy was told by Buddruss that the Kasem clan in Shtiwe traced their origin to the god Imra (Mara), and that all the chiefs of Prasun originate from this clan. Even to this day, they have the right to receive tribute from the other villages (Snoy 1962:222). Later on Edelberg and Klimburg learnt that the different clans were 'worshippers' of their own special deities (Snoy 1962:143; further information from Edelberg 1972:92-3). That would lend a considerable stability to kinship groups and may justify the term 'clan'.

With the help of information by Buddruss, an expose of the intricate structure linking gods and lineages intimately can be given later, examining its effects on the politico-religious system. Here it must be noted that the Prasun area was in some respects more internally integrated than other parts of Nuristan, although the villages possibly did not enjoy the same measure of autarchy based on craftsmen integrated in the community that the Kati had.

It would in no case be advisable to present the religion of the Prasuns separately from that of their Kati neighbours. The two complexes certainly had a long period of coexistence and exchange of ideas. So these two are in many ways more closely related to each other than to the religious configurations in South Kafiristan.

In order to clarify from which area the report has been received, and thus to draw the reader's attention to the differences between the Kati and the Prasun variants, the text speaks of Imra when there is information from Bashgal, and of Mara in Prasun. Imra/Mara is used when there is identical information from both areas.

For the whole text the 'ethnographic present' tense is used for convenience, and the terms Nuristan and Kafiristan are used interchangeably in reference to pre-Islamic times.
III. The Women's Dance to the Gods when the Men are Raiding
"The dances were to Imrâ, Gîsh, Dizane, and the other deities in turn".
(Illustration to Robertson, pp. 621-6).
MAIN CONCEPTS
IN THE RELIGION OF NORTH KAFIRISTAN

Cosmology and Concepts of Space
Gods and Demons
Cosmology and Concepts of Space

How did the Kafirs, the pre-Islamic Nuristanis, understand the world around them? Where did they locate their gods and demons?

The most direct approach to this question is provided in the case of the Prasun by an analysis of semantic features of their language. According to Buddruss (1960:203-4), a single word in Prasun can mean both their own valley and the whole world. Similar reference to their valley is expressed in a complicated system of verbal prefixes. In every verb of action, direction in relation to the river and to the side-slopes of the valley is thereby expressed. The cardinal points of the compass are totally neglected.

Statements made by the Prasuns themselves reveal several alternative cosmological models. Robertson (1896:380; Dupree 1971:12; Snoy 1962:92-3) reports the belief that the universe contains three strata: the upper world, called Urdesh, consists of seven celestial levels piled up one over the other. The highest of these heavens, Il-Muni, is occupied by the god Mandi in Prasun tradition (Buddruss 1960:206). The heavens are riveted together by the North Star and a second unnamed star (Robertson 1896:657). These stars are apparently fixed onto the same axis. The picture is suitably elaborated: a girl in distress who had been pulled to heaven by a rope, viewed the earth through a shuttered peep-hole in the beard of the supreme deity (Snoy 1962:72). Strangely, there is little of the stars. Sun and moon were once taken away from the heavens and carried for a while by a mythical rider.

The middle world, Michdesh, upon which human beings live, is thought of as a large disc, and is barely elaborated upon beyond that detail. Underneath this disc is the underworld, Yurdesh, where both paradise and hell are located. According to Robertson (1896:381) heaven is called bisht; hell zozuk; but according to Elphinstone (1839,II:377) the names are barrei le bula and barrei daggar bula. Yurdesh can be reached through a hole in the ground revealed to be in the immediate vicinity of the central temple in the Prasun village of Kushteki. Anyone who was unfortunate enough to glance into this hole immediately died. There are also said to be other openings leading to the underworld (Snoy 1962:72).

It occurred to Snoy that this cosmography, in which foreign elements have clearly entered (e.g. bisht, 'paradise', corresponds to Persian bihišt), was perhaps insufficient to localize the various actions of the gods and demons without contradiction. He has therefore emphasized that the Kafirs' world has further world views, these being activated only in certain situations. In a second cosmological model, heaven is not above the earth but begins by a gradual transition from where the upper valley ends, from the pure region of mountain peaks and glaciers. A lake directly below the alpine level is considered to be the home of the gods. A large tree stands by the banks of the lake, symbolizing both human beings and gods. The river represents a link to the middle world where the Kafirs themselves live, and then flows out to the realm of the dead close to the exit of the valley. Many reports correspond with this concept: e.g., the setting afloat of gifts for the dead on the river flowing down, out of the valley (Robertson 1896:587). It has been frequently mentioned that the dead are brought down to the lower end of the valley (Snoy 1962:77-8). The lakes, where rivers emerge, are all
situated in the higher regions. Their purity and sacred quality is already indicated by their names (Buddruss 1960a:205-6).

Snøy (1962:80-1) goes further in placing a similar cosmological concept that he found among the Kalash within a vast geographical context. He mentions the appearance of similar ideas in Ceram and Siberia and believes the world-view of the Kafirs to be 'earlier in cultural-historical terms' than the 'three-tiered' model of the world. Another explanation would be the assumption that the Kafir world-view is the result of adaptation to a sharply delineated natural environment dominated by a river. Such convergences could emerge at any period, even 'later' in cultural history.

The idea that every main valley corresponds to a dominating mountain used as residence by the deities - a sort of Olympus - fits logically into this concept. But this idea is rather sparsely attested by information from North Nuristan. Only one goddess, Kshumai or Kime, is mentioned as a divine ruler of Tirich Mir, but this mountain lies outside the Kafir area. The goddess appears in many stories as an outsider of the pantheon. Perhaps she has been borrowed from Dardic neighbours, or from an earlier population subdued by both Nuristanis and Dards (Snøy 1962:84).

A third cosmological model, assuming a stratification with only two levels, seems to be equally important. This concept has a curious resemblance to what we know from such German fairy tales as 'Frau Holle' (but they are also found in Tajik folklore: Bleichsteiner 1953). In some Kafir tales, although gods and demons move around among human beings in the upper world (covered by a heaven described as a rudimentary roof), their real home is under the earth: together with the dead and the yet unborn, who were perhaps identical. The most important links between these two levels of existence are lakes and ponds. Whoever dares to jump into such lakes makes a transition between these worlds, as reported, e.g., of the lineage ancestors Pedämünd and Kuzum (Snøy 1962:74; Edelberg 1972:67-8). The same sources tell that not only the ruler over the dead, appointed by Imra, lives in these depths; but here is the proper realm of all the other deities.

One could object that the gods actually live in the lakes themselves and do not use them merely as their paths of ascent; but a remark about the god Bagisht seems to answer this objection: he is the only god of whom it is expressly said that he lives in the water (Morgenstierne 1951:168).

Even this conception is not adhered to consistently. In certain cases, the underworld appears to be a kind of dungeon into which one can freely enter, but from where one has problems of escape. In this way, the god Mon (Robertson 1896:400) succeeded to alight on the wing of an eagle. The eagle had to counterbalance the weight, using a stone as ballast.

A compromise between the idea that the gods live on special prominent peaks and the 'Frau Holle' motif would be the concept of the gods living inside the mountains and cliffs as if within a house: Kshumai opens seven windows in "one of the Mesir mountains"; Mon recognizes his mythical home when the 'eighth window' is opened (Snøy 1962:148). The son of the god Diwog is chased by the gods and escapes into a cliff, from where he cannot be ejected (Snøy 1962:141). A variant of this motif probably exists in the myth that the god Zuzum sits on a throne inside a mountain of ice (Snøy 1962:78).

The 'Frau Holle' model is compatible with the idea of a dual stratification of the universe. But in accordance with their actual environment (the basis for model No.2), both strata, parallel to each other, slope from the mountains and meadows down to the confluence of the river. So in each level there would be a pure and an impure zone. Deities, demons and the deceased
belong to the lower level, but with the same descending arrangement. The home of the gods is thus situated beneath the high alpine pastures, while the demons and the dead are confined beneath the lower parts of the valley (Snoy 1962:82). On the other hand, demons may occasionally appear in the alpine regions as well. The mighty monster that impregnates the goddess Disani emerges from a lake in the higher regions (Morgenstierne 1951:168). One sometimes has the impression that either one side of the valley, or one of two parallel valleys is especially assigned to the supernatural domain.

Incompatible with any of the conceptual models above is the belief that the middle world is spread over the body of a lying 'giant' that has been pushed downwards. It is said of this giant that he had formerly emerged from the earth (Snoy 1962:90).

One is tempted to bring order into these beliefs, assigning some of them to the Katis and some to the Prasuns. It would then be possible to point out that the Prasuns lived in houses that had two stories, one of them underground (and often containing a sanctuary). That would mean that the concept may be explained as a reflection of actual experience; but this lies beyond possible confirmation.

Despite the close connection between ideas about the structure of the universe and the local environment, indicating a long indigenous development, many Nuristanis were convinced that their tribes migrated from the South into their present valleys. Here and there are divergent explanations (Snoy 1962:38-40). Perhaps that explains why all mythical texts without exception avoid the question as to how land and men were created. There is only the rather laconic statement that the main deity 'built' the world. All attention is concentrated on the setting of a permanent and divine order in a pre-existing world, in which man has to find his place (Buddruss 1974:31).

The Kati have the tradition that the sun once came close to the earth, conflagrating all other forms of life. Only one boy and one girl, brother and sister, survived in a cave, becoming original (human) ancestors (Herrlich 1937:239).

Later on the calendar system of Nuristan will be discussed. Even intense scholarly efforts have not succeeded in explaining why the main festivals have, objectively speaking, so many divergent dates in different villages.

In any event, the world was uninhabitable in the beginning. For example, the sun and moon were absent from the sky (Buddruss 1974:31). These luminaries were arranged by the gods and protected against the wrath of demons, the deadly enemies of divine order. The gods were equally merciful in endowing mankind with the material benefits of culture, teaching the use of their gifts as well. Buddruss published a text telling how Imra, the head of the pantheon, created the water-mill, because mankind can scarcely manage without it (Buddruss 1960:202-3).

Such events fundamental for the establishment of culture are placed immediately in the valley, in the sphere of domestic experience, where many gods are linked intimately to the mighty lineages, particularly in Prasun. Occasionally, a time is clearly mentioned during which the gods were still present among mankind and gave instruction to them (Snoy 1962:130). This suggests that they later retreated to those remote levels of heaven (or underworld) that play little role in the myths. It would therefore require human initiative to interest the deities in human existence, if only for a transitory period. So man must virtually rely on his own devices, not caring too much about the life to come. (But this disposition is perhaps diagnostic of an unusual spiritual health).

Implicit within what has already been discussed is another schematic
classification that should be mentioned here: the division of the world into two spheres, male and female.

The male sphere is vaguely connected to what could be called the spiritual domain, and is distinguished by the quality of purity, reaching its maximum level in truly sacred surroundings. Certain substances, such as clear running water, the steaming blood of sacrifice, the scent of burning juniper, are pertinent to this sphere.

In juxtaposition to the above is an 'eternal-feminine' sphere. Sexuality implies that the male is attracted by being pulled downward in a ritual sense. It unfolds its uncanny powers in menstruation and birth. To this sphere is assigned dissolution, death and decomposition. The man who disturbs the order of his own sphere (through a breach of the rules of exogamy, for example) descends into this dark realm. Those never graced by access to the sacred (such as slaves and that terrible enemy, the Muslim) suffer the same fate.

On closer examination, however, the clarity of this opposition recedes. There was a goddess of birth, and also a path passing through the area of dissolution, leading the ancestors upwards to purity and protective power.

Snøy (1962:232) therefore proposed the following: it must be assumed that the penetration of any one sphere by the other sex is dangerous. Since informant and research worker both belong to the male sphere and transmit its values, an original equality of heterosexual partners could have been overlooked. Perhaps an independent and contrasting scale of sanctity, conversely dangerous for males, may exist in the female area as well. Certainly this contrastive field had elements of defiance and consolation, even if it was not quite accepted as orthodox (by men). So Snøy emphasizes that 'slaves' had the right to beat the drum, an important instrument in the sacred sphere. The participation of slaves in burial rites was also necessary.

The question now arises whether the above account is not oversimplified. As far as can be seen, apart from the 'anti-sacredness' mentioned by Snøy, there are also fields of impurity without any compensating sanctity. It is questionable to impute that the Nuristanis connected the female sphere with Muslims.

As far as 'sacredness' and 'anti-sacredness' is concerned, a complementary relation and dialogue between these forces were required to establish order in the universe. R.F. Strand told me that the picture of an exemplary life is seen in Kamdesh in terms of a balanced meal: male food, i.e., products supplied by males, such as milk and meat, must be eaten in proper proportion to female food (cereals).

Gods and Demons

In Kafir belief, the world is not only inhabited by human beings and animals, but also by quasi-invisible forces possessed of supernatural powers. Only a part of them is benevolent and requires veneration: what one would call deities. Eternal life is attributed to these beings (Snøy 1962:141-2) known collectively as Delu (Kati) or Luzu (Prasun; Morgenstierne 1951:165, 179). They correspond to the pantheons of many other religions.

Lists of members of such a pantheon are available, the oldest dating back to the beginning of the 19th century. They are certainly incomplete and could contain only generally recognized names, but Biddulph's (1880:130) claim that the Kafirs had 18,000 deities, must be an exaggeration in the Hindu tradition (Snøy 1962:125-6; Palwul 1969, II:61; Dupree 1971:13).

There was a fairly widespread version according to which the Kafirs
recognized only one 'real' god as the creator and regulator of the world. All other powers were either his emanations (such as the goddess who represents the female sphere) or were created by him to carry out his plans (Robertson 1896:382; Palwal 1969,11:63). This interpretation may have been determined by Islamic influence from its inception. There is little doubt that it became especially popular after conversion to Islam.

The position of the 'other' deities is usually appraised as more important, also more independent, than the above version would imply. These deities are considered as existing since the beginning of the ordered universe, or were supposed to descend from beings not connected to the highest deity. However, they did not enjoy an equal amount of power, nor did they command the same degree of respect. They had separate tasks, though these sometimes overlapped. Important deities had several different fields of competence, but rarely without some semantic connection.

Generally speaking, the pantheon is stratified and ambiguous. At a lower stratum, there are deities considered to be the embodiment of the powers of nature, either generally or else linked with a specific phenomenon.

Thus the god Zuzum of the Prasuns is the master of the winter cold, Bagisht the god of all waters; Sudrem is the god of weather, but Kshumai is responsible for the rain which is indispensible for grain and fruit (Buddruss 1960:205). The goddess Lunang is the only known deity of one specific river (Buddruss 1960:202-3). She rules over the Prasun river and embodies all the fancies of the torrent’s wild spirit. She appears dancing in the form of an adorned maiden bringing either blessing or danger. Kshumai could be considered to be the mountain goddess of Tirich Mir, but that is only one of her many aspects (Robertson 1896:411).

More numerous are the deities watching over certain activities and institutions of human existence. Thus Gish is the god of war. Sudrem is the priest of all gods and hence guardian of all earthly priesthood. Wushum is the god of law. The seven Paneu bring death, and Maramalik is the guardian of the realm of the dead. A similar classification exists among the female deities: Nirmali as the goddess of birth and female functions. The daughters of Imra are responsible for agriculture, while Saranji guards the wheat granaries and the containers of clarified butter.

It is commonly believed that the gods protect different villages (or in the case of Prasun, different lineages) and are accorded special respect for this. It is tempting to see a similarity between the virtues of the various lineages and the character of their chosen gods in the Prasun area (Motamedi - Edelberg 1968:11).

The highest level of divinity is occupied by gods acting as an integrated community, though some division of labour takes place according to their respective dispositions. They are imagined as distinctive characters. One is reminded of the thesis advanced by Dumézil (1952) that the pantheon of Indo-European peoples reflected their tripartite social structure. According to this thesis, Imra, Gish and Disani would appear in complementary positions. The highest god is seen as a wise but cunning leader. By his side stand Mon (Mandi), the bold young helper and adviser, together with Gish, the rather obtuse fighter and killer. The cultivator-goddess Disani is the only goddess equal to them. As the social position of women in Nuristani society was not differentiated, Disani represents femininity in all its aspects.

The specific character of the divine community is reflected by their legacies to mankind. They did not only preach ethical norms and teach technical inventions; they encouraged territorial expansion for humans through cunning and force. The permanent occupation of the gods is certainly
the struggle against powerful demons. These demons are perhaps supernatural embodiments of the environment, namely the harsh and bewildering nature of the mountains as well as the alien peoples beyond them. Threatened from all sides, order had to be maintained and defended through real and spiritual force.

Robertson (1896:567) has characterised the situation in Kafiristan as a state of constant war interrupted by short periods of peace only when the adversaries were mutually exhausted, or when one of the contending parties was so totally defeated as to accept a subordinate position. That must have been a traumatic experience that one can readily appreciate being recast into a theological conception. Thus, the main preoccupation of the gods is not love and procreation, as in the pantheon of the Greeks, but rather to overcome dark forces. The importance of internal conflicts within the world of gods (so essential in the mythology of many other Indo-European peoples) was greatly reduced as a result of manifold external dangers. This was a community sometimes considered as a sort of vast clan grouping with feelings of solidarity that integrate some outsiders (perhaps deserters) recruited from the ranks of the demons. However, although internal conflict, banishments, and sympathy for the subdued foe are all present here, no traitor-figure comparable to Loki exists in Kafir mythology.

On looking through the texts, it appears that no love stories exist among the deities, and perhaps no marriages either. No god is said to have been born from such a union. They would appear to constitute an 'exogamous' community. Male and female partners for the gods come from that hostile quarter that are summarized under the term 'demonic'. It is only in South Nuristan (and hence in a different supernatural context) that divine couples are mentioned. There are, however, a few rites in the North that show implicit links to such couples. Gish is said to have a consort, but her origins and the nature of the relationship are rather dubious: her father was a god who had been killed for being a Muslim!

There are also several reports speaking of cohabitation between gods and human beings.

Whatever has been said so far about the demonic counterparts of the gods refers primarily to an especially powerful group of these beings. Closer examination shows more detailed categories of demons: benevolent (as long as they were not annoyed) as opposed to dangerous; powerful as opposed to innocuous (though often moody and troublesome). As has been seen, both sexes were present among them and there was a certain tendency to regard female demons as less dangerous and more cooperative than males.

There is little possibility of reconstructing a coherent demonology in spite of the fascinating researches done in the last decades by Buddruss and others. Islam has brought with it its own world of fairies and ghosts enriched by local elements from neighbouring areas.

The confusion in this matter is reflected by the terminologies used by European authors. Robertson (1896:412-5) speaks of a devil, demons and fairies. Snoy (1962:157-67) distinguishes between giants and spirits, speaking also of fairies and witches. He takes pains to elucidate ranks of differing power and purity in order to build an analogue to what is known of Dardic beliefs. This is hardly to be accepted at face value, although one appreciates that an analysis of native classification may aid clarification. The Katis give the names yush and wutr (Morgenstierne 1951:166) respectively to the large and powerful male and female demons that appear as the counterparts of the gods. According to information given to Friedrich, the collective term given to this category of demons is dew, and the female beings could also be called
daenik or balo (Snoy 1962:162; cf. Morgenstierene 1951:166). Apparently, there was another category above the dews called dewutr or perian, with the deities still further ascendant. Following Peter Parkes (personal communication) it might be useful to indicate the etymology of such loan-words (via Turner 1966), e.g.:

'daenik' from Afghan Prs. daŋdek 'witch' (ultimately T.10395)
'balo' from Prs.-Ind. bala 'evil spirit'
('dewutr' from Skr. dewa-putra T.6532)
'perian' from Prs. pari, pl. parian 'fairy'
'dew' from Prs. dev (rather than Skr. dewa T.6523), etc.

i.e., "many would appear to be recent Islamic 'translations' and not genuinely indigenous terms".

A clearly delineated category below the yush/wutr level is not recognizable.

The system in Prasun is somewhat clearer. Here too yush is the term for the male demons that fought against the gods. The name for the female partner, as Buddrus told me, is a true etymological equivalent of the above-mentioned wutr, i.e., wechi or wyechi. Edelberg (1972:48) mentions them as wöci. Other demonic groups appear in the texts gathered by Buddrus, the male and female being called weri and jeini respectively. These categories could not be classified below the yush/wechi with any degree of certainty.

Descriptions of yush by the North Nuristanis stress enormous strength and giant stature: a Prasun text relates that the top of his head reaches the heavens, short of the breadth of four fingers. The earth trembles beneath his footsteps. The yush is red, "like English soldiers in India". (One wonders whether it is the uniform or the skin and hair pigment that is meant by this remark). The large palm-print of a yush on a cliffside shows six fingers (Robertson 1896:413-4; Snoy 1962:73,158). Dwarflike demons are only rarely mentioned (Snoy 1962:74).

Wutr or wechi are never described as particularly attractive. It is said that the mother of the god Mara was a demon, and his wife was a witch. Both wives of Munjem Malik (evidently belonging to the same clan) were not forsaken without reason in favour of a beautiful, black-haired girl. One speculates as to which charming attitudes demonesses employed to fascinate their divine partners - eventually getting some understanding from what is told about the rather crude behaviour of the goddesses. When Disni wants to excite Mandi, she does not use tenderness; she simply takes her trousers off (Snoy 1962:90). Only once is the daughter of a "giant" said to have transformed herself into an enticing woman, yet she also appears as an iron chain(?). It could be assumed that these are the results of an interpretation of the world that sees the male as a daring and honourable character, while dark demonic qualities, even ugliness and crudeness are concentrated in the female (Snoy 1962:224-9).

The yush and their consorts can appear in the form of animals, sometimes powerful and radiant in a manner in no way secondary to the gods: an example is the yush who in the form of a ram impregnates Disni (Morgenstierne 1951:167). They can also appear as birds and snakes (Snoy 1962:157). There was once a daenik girl who had a liaison with a man. Her brother changed into a bear that began to gorge itself on the standing maize. The lover shot at what he thought was an animal, resulting in the eventual separation of the couple (Snoy 1962:163-4).
Demons can be killed not only by gods, but also by other demons and by human beings. On dying, their soul departs through a hole in the top of their heads (Snøy 1962:157). A demon may only be struck once, as a second blow will bring him back to life. Arrows rubbed with excrement are deadly to them (Snøy 1962:159). It is often said that demons get cut in half or into smaller pieces. A dancing demon falls apart as Mon removes the screws from his body (apparently at the joints; Robertson 1896:382). Each separated piece turns into a demon, so that seven further hydra-like adversaries must be killed. Another time, the grave of a wechi (Edelberg 1972:49) is mentioned.

The social order of the demons is roughly analogous to that of the gods. They too have a chief, which is what Robertson (1896:413-4) implies when he speaks of the 'devil' Yush. There were also their women and children, of whom the older women tend to be helpful and goodnatured. Like the gods, the demons usually appear in groups of seven.

The yush have their alpine pastures like the gods, and they also own fields that they irrigate and sow (Snøy 1962:159); but most demons are described as clumsy hunters. That implied, in the eyes of the Nuristanis, a somewhat primitive manner of life. Their predilection for millet also indicates archaic habits. Their weapon is the bow and arrow.

The rudimentary practices of the demons are described in anecdotes. An old wechi must learn how to cook over a fire-place using a tripod, a stone pot, and a wooden spoon. Earlier she had managed by placing a hand under her own body, instead of the fire, while she stirred with the other hand inside her belly (Edelberg 1972:52).

Have memories of earlier populations entered into the picture of the demons? It is said that the yush built towers and tunnels, while ruined villages with houses built close to each other are said to have been abandoned by them. Supportive of such a suggestion is the story that the Prasun are the descendants of the seven yush that were originally spared by Moni. Another variation tells how the god Bagisht spared the life of two children after the conquest of the fort of the demons and then raised them. The two children, Werek and Zuruk, became the respective progenitors of the Prasun tribe and the Kati slaves (Robertson 1896:161; Herrlich 1937:240; Morgenstierne 1951:178-9). That the giants are at home in the upper part of the valley while the gods entered from the lowlands, lends further support to this concept (Snøy 1962:82).

Other information indicates that external enemies of the Kafirs contributed to the image of the demons. The human universe of the Kafirs was limited by the boundaries of their own ethnic group, which is probably why demons were so often portrayed on horseback. They are constantly linked with iron, and are even made of this metal (Snøy 1962:158-9). One is perhaps confronted with a foreign technical achievement in the story about an underground water supply that made it impossible to take one of the forts of the demons. Mandi sleeps with the daughter of the giant, discovers the secret and destroys the subterranean channel. Tormented by thirst, the besieged giant strangles his daughter with his bare hands before being killed by Mandi. Again, a giantess is spared (Snøy 1962:149). This is in fact a motif well-known in Dardic folklore.

Robertson (1896:414) described the yush as being always malevolent. In another text compiled by Morgenstierne (1951:178-9), they are dangerous for human beings and cattle. Such demons eat humans and even Mon is endangered (Snøy 1962:159). A female demon brings the flesh of her victims to her children, who eat it, believing it to be goat meat. A female demon dies only when she is cut in half; she lives in the waters and therefore in the
underworld. Another demon flees to this spot after being surprised while cattle-raiding (Snøy 1962:74).

However, there are stories that tell of marriages between human beings and demons, and of mutual help. Especially remarkable is what Buddrus has described in his Text 40 (Snøy 1962:73-4): a girl comes into a house full of good things to eat. When she is discovered by the owner of the house, a dwarf, she marries him and bears him seven sons. She later shows these sons to her own mother. The sons of the mortal woman offer many gifts to their grandmother, but have to hide their faces before her. A boy unheedful enough, gets a gaping hole in his face, which his mother has to heal. Another story tells of a man who marries the daughter of a demon, and befriends his father-in-law. The same text also tells of a demon who gives a medicine that can cause twins to be born. In return, one of the children has to be given to him (Snøy 1962:158-160).

In yet another story, a girl who has married a demon threatens her brother with the wrath of her husband. Her son, who himself belongs to the yush, helps to kill the dangerous couple. Finally, human and demon separate: they are unsuited to each other (Snøy 1962:160).

Seven 'supernaturally created' women married seven brothers and caused them to kill their only sister. It was not clear whether or not they were female demons (Snøy 1962:75). The rest of the story follows familiar patterns.

There was a cult of yush and wutr with special regard to agriculture. This would contradict the categorical statement about the demons being basically malevolent, but Robertson (1896:412,414) explains that the acolytes only wanted to appease the demons and placate them with sacrifices. The demons were not prayed to, and no dancing was done in their honour. Robertson describes a rough altar that served this cult. It stood on the way to the upper part of the Kamdesh village. The ashes of a fire that had gone out not too long before could always be seen. People gathered here when Disani or the 'fairies' were given gifts to bless the wheat and millet fields. A fire was kindled in the middle of the field to be sown, juniper twigs, melted butter, and bread fed into it and a ritual text was recited. At the same time, however, large pieces of bread were brought to Yush (apparently the leader of the demons in this context). Yush was also served when Disani was offered a sacrifice for the prosperity of the wheat fields.

A description of the Ptilo feast reports that Fatima (probably an Islamized epithet for Disani) received eight goats, but her 'witches' were given seven kids to placate them (Hughes 1883:407-8). On the eve of the Disanedu festival, there was a dance in honour of the fairies every year, which may indicate that such fairies were identical to the beings that were previously called 'witches' (Robertson 1896:413).

One sometimes has the impression that in the 'royal household' of Disani there are several 'ladies in waiting' who are rather female demons, and also her male companions have a sinister air even though the latter are treated as gods. A wechi or a wutr is only rarely called by name. Robertson tells of Charmo Vetr, the mistress of a side-valley joining Bashgal. She eagerly protects the Kam tribe in time of war (Robertson 1896:412), in return for which she is offered sacrifices of goats and kids. There thus appears no sharp boundary between the tasks of the gods and those of the more important and powerful demons.

Many narratives are less spectacular. Robertson reports with gratitude of a fairy residing in the branches of a large tree under which he had pitched his tent by chance. Everything put beneath this tree was safe from theft. Such effective fairies are found elsewhere in this region.
Demons play an important role in the actions of the shamans during sacrifices. The shaman claims to be able to see them: he notices when they want to steal the offerings and demonstrates dramatically how he thwarts them with his powers. One observes that he receives heavy blows, and he tells of how they want to tear his clothes. Robertson relates an eye-witness account of a shaman who saw a wutr who had come especially from London to find out about the 'Frank'. The face of this wutr appeared like the moon. Robertson (1896:245) was directed to eat something particularly pure and to stay awake until midnight.

Such amusing stories have turned up in rather tortuous efforts to differentiate between several categories of supernatural beings. The information gathered by Friedrich in Chitral has been used with care, as it is evidently affected by local borrowings and modern interpretations. I have also avoided examining the concept of soul, although Snoy suspects that there is no clear boundary between the categories of soul, spirit and demon.

Morgenstierne (1951:165) notes that in the Kalash language yush is identified with bhut, 'deceased ancestor'. The effigies of the dead are dressed in red, and the yush show an affinity to this colour. But such observations are insufficient to state a definite connection between yush and the deceased.

In the same context, Snoy (1962:166-7) mentions animal tales (compiled largely by Buddruss) which are remarkably free from religious implications. Some mythological texts refer to the pure qualities of the animals in the uppermost regions - highly important motifs in the folklore of the Dardic neighbours.
IV. An Offering at Gísth's Shrine

"The congregation behaved like average religious audiences in England; that is to say, without any special enthusiasm . . ."

(Illustration to Robertson, pp. 426-7).
IV

THE GODS OF NORTH KAFIRISTAN
Already the earliest reports mention Imra as supreme deity of the 'Kafirs', and this is confirmed by Robertson and all later authors (Elphinstone 1839, II:377; Robertson 1896:381; Morgenstierne 1951:163; Snoy 1962:126-35; Palwal 1968, II:62-5). He is known as Mara in Prasun country. Imra is revered by all tribes (along with a small circle of other gods) and is seen as the Creator. He brought all other gods to life through his breath (Robertson 1896:381), making them thus subservient to him. Informants influenced by Islam compared them to God's prophets. Only the goddess Disani has a special position: she emerged from the right side of Imra's breast, which Snoy (1962:132) interprets as a direct adoption of a Greek concept, originally applied to Athena.

Most of the relevant details are mentioned by Robertson (1896:380-9). Imra seems to have created the fairies and demons as well. At another place, there are the seven daughters of Mara, whom he 'created' to watch over the fields, since he cannot be responsible for agriculture as a male. The Kati believe that he created mankind by churning inside a golden goatskin. Three women appeared first from the goatskin and settled in three different lands. He then poured water into the skin and churned some more, after which a fourth woman appeared and went to the Prasun valley. It seems probable that the three lands mentioned were Kati, Waigal, and Ashkun. However, he appears in another legend of origin that was certainly adopted from Islamic neighbours: Baba Adam, the first man, lived in Kashmir with his wife. They had forty children who paired off. When they woke up in the morning, no one could understand the language of the others. Imra directed them to migrate and populate the world.

Imra is clearly the master of life and death. Maramalik, the ruler of the underworld realm of the dead, was placed there by him, and even the goddess of birth, Nirmali, was appointed by his order.

According to the hymns collected by Morgenstierne (1951:179,180) in Kati settlements in Chitral, Imra is surrounded by a golden aura. It is questionable whether solar qualities should therefore be ascribed to him, but he placed the sun and moon in their respective places. His own place is in the sky, as he is said to live in clouds and mist. However, it should be made clear that this concept of distance between the Creator and his creation is not adhered to consistently (Morgenstierne 1951:163).

In some stories (Robertson 1896:387), Imra appears as an usurper who gains the highest position through superior cunning, and not a little arrogance. Robertson was told that the gods were not prepared to allow Imra the use of a golden bed and a golden seat, since it was their common property. Imra sat down on the bed and said he would see who had power here, and the gods submitted in bewilderment. In other texts, Imra takes over gains made by others. He acquires helpers and takes the fruits of their labour. Snoy (1962:132) has therefore suggested that the role of Imra/Mara as Creator has been exaggerated by Christian explorers and their Islamic interpreters. However, contacts with Muslim peoples have existed for several hundred years and other deities are known to have similar pretensions. They are heard of through mythical texts collected by Buddruss and published by
Snoy (1962:133, 160, 88). To this category belong Wushum and the mysterious Munjem Malik who is supposed to have murdered his father of the same name, and with whom Imra has to share his reign over the year. Reports from Prasun describe the mother of Mara as a giantess with two tusks curving upwards, and two downwards. Mara's wife is described as a witch, revealing that she too belongs to the counterparts of the gods. Such tales indicate that Imra was not the sole creator of the universe. Demons at least must have existed before him. In fact, he appears prominently in Prasun sources as the organizer and law-giver of the world; also as a cultural hero, i.e., the bringer of important cultural achievements.

According to the Prasuns, Mara presented horned cattle to humans and taught them to milk and churn as well. He created the dogs to wake mankind by their barking. He distributed wheat. Together with another man, he brought draught-animals for the plough and instructed people how to use the plough. He commanded his daughters (to whom he handed over tasks connected with agriculture) to shake the Prasuns out of their lethargy. The Prasun myth concerning the creation of the first mill by Mara is known not only from Snoy's short resume, but also from an article by Buddruss (1960:202–3). Mara tells a council of the gods about his intentions, after which he starts his work. He fashions the wheel from wheat dough and uses milk (from a goat that has recently given birth in his shed) to drive it. When this attempt ends in failure he builds the mill correctly with wood and stone, but has to ask Lunang (the goddess Nang, mistress of the Prasun river) for help. She appears as a beautiful girl decorated with little bells, but is angry because he did not turn to her in the first place. It takes much appeasing and begging before she does her job, but not without continual threats to destroy all the surrounding land.

The existence of iron in the world is ascribed to Imra. The belief also suggests that iron ore originated from the bodies of demons who had been driven into the earth (Robertson 1896:386).

Unfortunately, there is no information about the significance of the trees called Küngguri and Kundat created by Imra (Snoy 1962:129).

According to the information gathered by Buddruss (Snoy 1962:127–130) Mara has also arranged the Kafir marriage system. He is recognized as Master of the Year, and thus probably also as the regulator of the calendar. He built the first dancing-house, a building indispensible to cult life. He taught the art of carving wood to make figures of the gods and carved the very first figures himself. He was also the first to make rock-carvings. Under the name of Üskü-Mara he created the earlier homeland of "Great Maka" and their present home "Maka of the poor". He took people with him up the Pech river and set down two stones at the fork between the Kantiwo and Prasun valleys: a good stone and a bad one. The path to the chosen homeland opened where the good stone lay on the following day.

After he had taught mankind, Imra withdrew, never to be seen again. He is now in heaven.

Again, there is little consistency in the oral traditions: Imra can still cause floods and also cause water to fall again. He gives strength and renews youth. He carries a name that implies that he inspires seers.

It is not clear to what extent all the beliefs underlying the Prasun myths are shared by the Kati people. It is certain, however, that a generally recognized centre for the Imra/Mara cult existed at the main temple in Kushteki. Robertson (1896:389–392) gives a detailed description of the building which must have been unique in its size and appearance:
"The temple itself is an imposing structure, elaborately ornamented. It is between 50 and 60 feet square, and about 20 feet high. On its east side it has a square portico which covers as much space as the temple itself, and is supported on carved wooden pillars, forming a kind of rough colonnade. The portico is open to the east and south, but is boarded up on the north side. Its height is a few feet below that of the temple, and when I saw it the roof was in a dangerous state of disrepair. The carving of the pillars is supposed to be very fine. They are all fashioned after one of three designs. A favourite one is to have a row of rams' heads, one on each side of the column, extending from the top to the base. Another popular design is to carve at the foot of the pillar an animal's head, from which the horns are made to extend the entire height of the pillar, crossing and re-crossing each other at intervals, and ending above in points, between which a grotesque face appears with hands grasping each horn a few inches from the top. The third variety is of the common basket pattern. Under this portico many sacrifices are made. A large offal heap to the south showed that the offerings were cattle. There is a sacrificing stone in the colonnade, and near it one or two niches for idols. The east side of the temple on to which the portico is built, has seven famous doors of large size, and above each another smaller door. Of the seven large doors five cannot be opened; they are securely fastened up. The other two, at the south end of the east front, are thrown open on solemn occasions, when the people are allowed to enter and view the holy place. On these two doors, and in a line with them on the dummy doors and in an intervening space, are eight huge wooden figures of Imrá. The effigies are hewn out of the wood, and stand in relief against the great planks which constitute the greater part of the front or east wall of the temple. The figures are probably seven feet high, and represent Imá seated and working a goat-skin butter churn. The face of each is prodigious. The square-cut chin reaches within a hand's-breadth of the goat-skin on the god's knees. The brows and nose are, in the majority of the figures, scored with lines, while those on the two practicable doors have rough iron bells suspended between the eyes. The goat-skin churns are represented as carved all over. Above the faces of the images a large circular head-dress appears, with a horizontal line of carving across the middle, and vertical cuttings running upwards and downwards from it. Between several of the figures there are vertical rows of what appear to be intended for cows' or rams' heads. From one of these rows the heads can be drawn out of their sockets, and the glories of the interior be partially disclosed. Above the big images is a board ornamented with small figures and horns. On the outer side of the temple, to the north, are five colossal wooden figures which help to support the roof. On the south side the ornamentation is almost entirely confined to the upper part of the wall, which consists of a series of carved panels. On the west there is little or no attempt at ornament of any kind.

I was only permitted to view the interior through the peep-holes already referred to, which afforded me merely a tantalising glimpse. In the centre of the floor there is a square fireplace, from the four corners of which pillars extend to the roof of the building. On each of these pillars more than one subject had been carefully cut. For instance, on one of them were two huge faces. Facing the entrance there was in the middle of the west wall a structure which looked like an altar. It was built of clay and provided with a wooden shelf. Above this on the wall, was something which at first sight looked like a square cloth of a chequered pattern, but which I eventually satisfied myself was a design painted in squares. On the same wall, to the south, were other similarly designed but differently shaped paintings, and
drawings of animals done in the usual Káfír conventional style. I could just see a portion of the top of an idol of Imrá occupying the north-east corner of the temple. Projecting from the top of the temple and corresponding with this spot, there was a small wedge-shaped wooden structure which looked like a canopy over the idol. As far as could be seen, the walls of the temple were adorned all round with carved hats of an irregular half-spherical shape, stuck on the ends of poles. The whole temple must have occupied a great deal of time and labour for the Presuns to complete, so simple are they and so rude are their tools. It is regarded by them and by all other Káfírs as a stupendous monument to the glory of Imrá."

Close to the temple was a construction of wood and stone about four feet high. The plan-view of the construction was square, and poles crowned with rams' heads stood at each corner. Stones with natural coloured patterns on them were placed on this platform. It was believed that the stones had been imprinted by Imra/Mara himself and the patterns were a holy script. The sick and infirm gave sacrifices here, with great success.

Robertson (1896:393-4) was told that nearby, close to the river, was the entrance to the underworld: whoever dared to look into this hole would die. He was told that sacrifices of horses were made occasionally at this spot with great caution. The priests removed the stones that covered the hole and threw sacrificial blood into it over their shoulders. There was not much to be seen at the indicated spot, only a tuft of thick jungle-grass.

The "iron rod of 'Imra/Mara" was kept in a house of the village, hidden beneath juniper branches. Robertson was satisfied by hearing a description of the rod, to the relief of his guides.

An attempt has been made to reconstruct the temple, used for a while as a mosque and later destroyed by the troops of 'Abd al-Rahman. This attempt was prompted by the thesis put forward by Lentz that the complicated arrangement of the temple was linked to the calendar. It was postulated that the gates and openings are so constructed as to bring the sun's rays to shine on the central altar during the main ceremonies (Edelberg - Schäfer - Lentz 1959; Edelberg 1972:37). Robertson adds that sanctuaries to Imra existed in practically every village of Kafiristan, and also in the countryside. They are however, small, not giving room to visitors (five feet square) and are similar to the shrines of other deities. There were also simple 'sacred stones', some in the idol-houses, others in the open. Only some of them were intentionally placed in their position (Robertson 1896:399).

Apart from the rare sacrifices of horses mentioned earlier, cows were considered as appropriate offerings for Imrá/Mara. A Prasun text indicates that they were kept in special sheds (Snoy 1962:131). Goats were also slaughtered to Imra, butter and flour being immolated. In general, one asked Imra for wealth, health and good weather. It is further related that both in the Prasun and the Kati areas, there were large stretches of fertile land considered to be sacred to the gods. No one dared to use these as fields.

Buddruss thinks it possible that from the beginning Mara was not the main deity in Prasun. Perhaps he replaced Munjem Malik, mentioned earlier, and thus took over the latter's main temple (Snoy 1962:135).

Snoy (1962:222) mentions an oral communication from Buddruss to the effect that the Kasem clan in Shtiwe, from whom all the chiefs of the whole Prasun valley originate, trace their ancestry to the god Mara. For this reason, the clan receives tithes from the harvest of all the other villages of the region to this day. There is a different explanation given concerning
these privileges of the Kasem clan in the texts published by Edelberg (1972:62-9): they relate that the god came in the form of a white ram and impregnated the daughter of the clan progenitor Kuzum. He assaulted her when she was living with her seven brothers in an alpine meadow. At first, one of the brothers was suspected of incest, but miracles confirmed the divine origin of the child. A coloured cloud told of their embraces in the meadow, the wrongly accused brother became invulnerable, and the child was surrounded by a halo.

The girl's father chose to follow his daughter into the other world by jumping after her into a lake. He returned with wonderful clothes, which he put on and then slept with his wife, causing both to regain their youth.

A variant of the above is seen in a text recorded by Buddruss (Snoy 1962:75-6, 154). According to this, the girl's father meets an unnamed god in the other world who teaches him how to pray and bring justice. His informant thought the god to be Mara, which is now confirmed.

Other texts collected by Edelberg, explicitly state the connection of Mara with human beings in the following manner: Mara is supposed to have commanded the worship of the chosen girl (Suga or So'gâd) and his son (Himindu or Hemoendo; Edelberg 1972:70).

However, it is not stated anywhere whether the divine son was the ancestor of the Kasem or Kuzum clan. The relationship seems rather of an affinal nature, with the Kasem clan behaving as 'wife-givers' to the god. On the other hand, Motamedi heard that the leader of the village is considered as the son of this god (Edelberg 1972:40).

Deliberations concerning the meaning of Imra/Mara and its conclusions for a cultural history of the region are strongly influenced by the fact that an etymological derivation is possible. The Kati Imra and the Waigali Yamrâ can both be traced to the Indian deity Yamarâja (i.e. King Yama), while Mâra belong to another root (in spite of the equation of the two terms by the Kafirs, which is supported by functional considerations): i.e., the Sanskrit mära meaning 'death', thus 'god who kills or lets die'. The word Mâra is also known to the Kati (Morgenstierne 1951:163, 179 Mjor, 185), as well as a 'specialized' ruler of the realm of the dead called Maramalik (i.e., Lord Mara; with Arabic m'lek, 'chief, king').

This etymological confusion in the names of one and the same deity was familiar to Indologists (I myself learnt it from G. Buddruss). However no scholar seems to have paid attention to its local implications prior to the original edition of this study (see now Fussman 1977).

Yama had always a special relation to death (Windisch 1895:186, 304-9): as the first man who died, he had to open the gates to the other world. But his name Mâra, as well as related aspects, gained importance and popularity when he was seen as representative of all the splendours and temptations of the world, consequently placing him as the main opponent of the Buddha and his message of salvation. His daughters tried in vain to seduce the Buddha, and his countless and terrifying armies were defeated in a bitter struggle against the Ten Perfections.

For the next phase in this tentative reconstruction one must turn to the ancestors of the present Nuristanis. If there were adherents of Yama among them, hearing of the tremendous (negative) promotion of their tribal protector in the Buddhist lowlands - they must have taken some pride in this fact. The forefathers were perhaps not too different from their offspring, i.e., they heartily disapproved of the intentions of the ascetic followers of the Enlightened One. Instead of turning away in horror from the carnal pleasures and cruelties of Mara, the descriptions of his power and might merely induce
them to increase his status and that of his equivalent Yama, until this compound deity reached the dominating position in their pantheon, at the cost of other gods. In a similar manner the Kafirs claimed the murder of the Islamic saints Hasan and Hussain as their own achievement and used this tragic story to the greater glory of their god Gish (Robertson 1896:401).

Further reasons concerning the rise in status of Māra may derive from the presence of nearby Iranian tribes around at the same time, i.e., in the latter part of the first millennium B.C. Yima, i.e., the Iranian equivalent of Yama, is known to have played an important role in their world of beliefs (Widengren 1965:52–9). The first man and ruler of the Iranians had many attributes which would predispose him to take the place of Imra. It is said of him that he spread out the earth, being connected to a refuge under the earth called Vara, where the stars do not shine. He is supposed to have married a female demon, a pairika. He is not only king, but also the rich owner of cattle herds; and he combines in himself the functions of all the 'Three Estates' (according to Dumézil), war being the least of his responsibilities. This is reminescent of Imra, who uses force now and then and does heroic deeds (e.g., killing a snake-dragon), but leaves fighting mostly to his companions. He is like his Iranian predecessor, a regulator and a peaceful ruler surrounded by radiant 'solar' splendour. It is known from the Avesta that he rules over gods, devas, and human beings.

Buddruss holds this explanation to be too one-dimensional. He believes that the Buddhist tale about the world ruler, his daughters and his armies, is not only a pious allegory but reflects a positively-viewed concept that was shared by at least a party of the early Indian tribes. This would indicate that the Kafirs have preserved the non-demoniacal kernel of this Indo-European concept better than anywhere else up to present time (cf.again Fussman 1977).

Shomde/Wushum

This god was the protector of the Prasun village Diogrom, or Dewa. He is mentioned by Robertson (1896:410) under the Kati name Shomde. Morgenstierne and Buddruss came to know his proper Prasun name: Uṣum or Užum, corresponding to Šam-dē. The texts collected by both investigators clearly round off this knowledge (Morgenstierne 1949:283, 1951:165, Edelberg 1972:38).

One text (Snoy 1962:154) claims Wushum was accepted by Imra as being of equal status, another celebrates him as the highest and purest divinity. It is said that he controls gold, silver and silk, and the alpine huts housing goats, cows and calves belong to him. He is able to give presents of melted butter, cheese, cream and flour. Buddruss recorded two almost identical versions that provide a proof of the god’s power, one of which is reproduced here from Snoy's rendering (1962:74-5):

"A man named Pedämünd loses one of his cows every evening. He discovers that they disappear into a lake. A giant rises from the water. Pedämünd cuts him in half with an arrow that he has earlier rubbed with excrement. The upper half of the giant flees and disappears into the water. Pedämünd follows it and jumps into the water. He climbs a wall upon which dung has been smeared. He looks around: many people are present. A mighty personage sits on a large seat and holds court. It is the god Wushum, and Pedämünd tells of what has befallen him. He is received with honour, stays three nights there and is given two full sacks on taking his leave. He may open the sacks at home only after offering a juniper sacrifice. He returns to
the valley through a waterfall that to this day is called Pedā-waterfall. Three years had passed, and the village people who saw him, believing that he had died, thought he was a giant until they recognized him. Pedāmund had opened the sacks on the way, out of curiosity. There were snakes and frogs inside. He hurriedly closed them. At home, after the juniper sacrifice, he found in one sack a dancing stick of the kind that only men who had killed in the previous year might carry at a certain feast, but this stick was made of pure gold; the other sack contained a golden collar.

It should be noted that the hero of this story was, according to information only subsequently available, the temporary priest, (münd) of the Pedā clan. Edelberg (1972:92) transcribed the name Pod'ā.

In Dewa, Edelberg (1972:38) found that a shrine of this deity was once located to the south of the village. A wooden statue of the god stood on the southern fringe of a square space, bordered by rows of stones. The god was portrayed naked with his sex prominently exposed (the figure is now in the museum of Kabul: Edelberg 1960:256, fig.18,19). In spring, during the period of Wushum-ustu when there was still some snow lying, the people from the whole of the Prasun valley gathered here to sacrifice a cow and a large billy-goat. Blood was thrown at the figure and the meat was divided and taken home by the worshippers. Prayers for increase in the size of the herds and for a higher yield of milk were offered. Barren women begged the god to bless them with children.

In a summary of the calendar system of Dewa compiled by Edelberg (1972:86,90) Wushum is referred to as the 'goddess' of Dewa (almost certainly an error). When the inhabitants of Shtiwe came to Dewa during the Wushum-ustu to sacrifice the cow, it was killed by an arrow shot into its neck.

Munjem Malik

Munjem Malik, known from texts collected by Buddruss in Prasun, has several attributes of the highest deity. Some of these are indicative of his power and prestige. He is allowed to call the gods to a council but the god Züzum has to be given a special invitation through his grand-daughter Disani (Snoy 1962:78). It is further said of Munjem Malik that Imra appointed door guardians for him (Snoy 1962:135). His characteristics become clear in the following myth (Snoy 1962:91-3):

"Munjem Malik had two wives he did not love. While riding on his black horse he meets a beautiful, black-haired woman. He marries her and honours her by letting her sit on a golden chair. Munjem Malik had to travel. Before leaving, he gives his beloved wife a little bell which she should use to call him when she is giving birth. The two other wives (who are witches) torment her until she rings the bell. 'The earth trembled', the floor of the house split and Munjem Malik rose forth. He warns his wife not to ring so readily again. When she gives birth to a golden-haired boy and a golden-haired girl, the two witches have spoiled the bell. They then throw these children into the bull-shed. The mother is falsely convinced by the witches that she has not given birth, and so she accepts her fate. On the following day, the children sit on the horns of a bull and suck their fingers. The witches put them into a box and set them afloat in the river. The river, which is the goddess Lunang, does not wish to see them go down the valley, like other human beings, but wants them to go up the valley to Sujum-Sur, the mythical lake.
However, on the request of the boy, Lunang carries the box to Mara's meadow at the lower end of the valley. Mara accepts the children, but his wife, another witch, is suspicious of them. She pretends to be ill and asks the boy to fetch medicine from her mother. She gives him a letter. On the way, when the boy lies down and sleeps, a man named Amawal-\textsuperscript{ra} changes the contents of the letter. In this way, the boy is not killed by the grandmother, as was planned, but is honoured instead. He asks her to fill a barley-sieve with water, then to fill a millet-sieve with the collected water and to bring this to him. While the grandmother is preoccupied with fetching the water he steals his own mother's nose (cut off by Munjem Malik because she did not give birth), and a bird from a shelf in the wall, and runs away. Another bird tells the old woman what has happened and she runs after the boy. He breaks one leg of the bird in his hand and the old woman begins to limp. As she approaches him, the boy crushes the bird. The old woman and her daughter die: "Both of them had their soul in one place", namely the bird. The boy, henceforth called Munjem Malik in the story, wants to go to his own land. He goes up the valley with Mara. Mara becomes annoyed. Munjem Malik dips his hand in flour and passes it over Mara's face, saying to him, "When the spring comes, the six Prasun villages will await you. When autumn comes, you and the six Prasun villages should expect me." Upon hearing this, Mara becomes happy and returns home. Munjem Malik travels up the valley as a blacksmith, selling needles, bells, and bracelets to the women. He arrives at Kushteki. There, he lets his mother bring him a pail of butter-milk, into which he drops the ring which she had put on his finger at the time of his birth. His mother hurries to him happily, but he repels her saying that she failed to look after him and had not given him her breast. He replaces the nose on her face. She then brings him a bucket which he strokes with his finger, thus causing it to fill with beestings. He and his mother both drink from this potion. He gives his mother a stool and sits on her lap, having been transformed into an infant. Milk pours from her breasts and flows down the valley in rivulets. She feeds the infant from both breasts until the child stands erect and becomes a boy. He then goes forth to kill his father. He strikes his father with such force that he pushes him down. After toppling down his father he buries him, carrying his head up the valley to lay near Arte and his feet down the valley to lay near Agtschiu. After throwing dust on the remains he lays the valley over them and builds a house above the navel. In Arte the two witches must constantly view his father's head, which is still living, because his son had buried him alive. He allowed the valley to slope down over him."

Arte is a meadow in the upper part of the Parun-valley, where two tributaries meet. A large boulder is considered to be regarded as the head of Munjem Malik. The same place is called Urta by Edelberg (1972:40), who tells of a sanctuary dedicated to Mara there.

A wide-ranging framework of interpretation is necessary here. At the beginning, the story has a theme met with in many societies as a consequence of polygyny. The favourite wife of the absent husband is tormented by the rest of the harem. The children, in this case twins, boy and girl, are taken away to be killed. Especially remarkable is the fact that the children flee to Imra/Mara, but they are by no means safe in his house. His wife turns out to be as murderous as their own stepmothers. The children are only safe after killing Mara's demonic wife and her mother by crushing their common soul-bird. But how arose the cut-off nose of their own mother in the house of Mara's mother-in-law? That the old lady, the mother-in-law, is addressed as
'grandmother' may be nothing more than the broad use of a classificatory kinship term.

But what is the obliging commitment between Mara and the twins? Is their beautiful mother, met 'up the valley' by their consort from the clan of genuine gods? Later on it is related that one of the twins (the boy) carries the same name as his father (perhaps on analogy with the bird bearing the souls of both mother and daughter). He is on good terms with Mara. Mara is honoured in spring and summer, Munjem Malik in autumn and winter.

This would seem in some way linked to the division of the year by the Tajiks, who differentiate between the male half of the year (autumn and winter) and the female half (spring and summer). Behind this division is the belief that the water stored as ice and snow in autumn and winter fertilises the earth (regarded as female) during the period of growth in spring and summer (Andreev 1927:20). The Prasun tale however has a different emphasis. Mara owns the upper part of the world, with its mountains and meadows; Munjem Malik is under the soil, beneath those tracts where fields and villages are situated.

A similar conception of the valley is contained in a mythic text (Snóy 1962:93) narrating that a yush (demon) who reaches up to the heavens and rides a huge horse was defeated by the god Mandi, and falls transversely across the valley. So a man has to eat his way through the giant's body. This makes him so thirsty that Mandi lets him consume all the water of the river. Whoever walked along the river was not able to drink water for seven days. Snóy considers this to be a poetic exaggeration of the fact that thirsty travellers in the Hindukush cannot in many places reach the water of the river in a deep gorge. In another tale, the giant was brought to the right side of the valley (Snóy 1962:94).

That Munjem Malik makes contact with his mother disguised as a blacksmith (evidently she is under surveillance), takes a totally different aspect. He restores her nose. He acquires supernatural strength through her milk. It has yet been unnoticed that certain themes occur here that are similar to those of the Kesar Saga (Lorimer 1935,II:161-71,177): disguised as a blacksmith the Tibetan hero follows his kidnapped wife into the land of Hor. Her nose is cut off as a punishment on the beloved wife only metaphorically, as a result of which his brother (who had been killed through a fault of hers) does not return to life in human form. Also typical of Kesar is the sudden growth of supernatural powers. In a local version which I recorded in Baltistan, Kesar kills his own father after extorting the mother to disclose his hiding-place.

Snóy thought this was a "typical myth of a higher culture, involving giants or primeval beings from whose limbs the world was created" (Snóy 1962:93, cf. Baumann 1955:277). But he emphasizes that nothing is said about the cutting up or the transformation of the parts of the body into important parts of the cultural inventory. The giant forms the valley floor with his whole body. Snóy has found parallels in Nepal (Sherpas. Hardie 1957:71) and in the Panjshir valley. Andreev (1927:3) writes that the lowest village of the valley was called "the feet of Panjshir". The mythologeme 'the giant confined under the bottom of the valley' is rather an adaptation of the motif 'primordial man as substance of the world' to a local cosmic order, dividing the valley in a pure upper part and a dark one below. It should be kept in mind that the languages of the Nuristanis do not normally differentiate between 'valley' and 'world'.

"Five philosophical tracts" and other studies published recently by Soviet researchers have taught us much about the spiritual world of the
Badakhshan Ismaelis. Clearly today the Ismaelis see the human body as symbolizing the cosmos. There are seven climatic belts around the earth, man has seven parts of the body (head, chest, abdomen, and the four extremities). The rivers are analogous to the blood vessels. Bertels (1959:214-64; 1970:64-8) dedicates a large part of his description of Ismaeli cosmology to this system and its (possibly Zoroastrian) background. One must now ask whether this conception has not only international and highly sophisticated 'literary' ramifications, but also local and mythic roots.

I am grateful to Buddruss for the information that Munjem Malik actually means "Lord of the Middle", i.e. the middle region where mankind lives and works, between the pure upper sphere and the underworld.

Munjem Malik seems to be linked particularly with the village of Kushteki, thus supporting the suggestion that the main temple of Mara is built on the place where Munjem Malik's shrine once stood.

Mon/Mandi

Robertson (1896:391) states that the god Mon ranks immediately after Imra in the Kati and Prasun pantheon. Morgenstierne (1951:164, 168-174) found several variants of the name (the Prasuns call the same deity Mandi) and confirmed his dominant position, adding that Mon was the first creation of Imra and is his 'vizier' as well. He is seen either as a man with a golden quiver, or as a humped bull that grazes in golden mountain meadows. The Katis say of him that he gathers clouds, showing his connection with humidity and rain. His most important role, however, is as a fighter and victor over the demons. Later myths will be introduced connected with his name, especially among the Prasuns. There are also rather simplistic stories concerning his victories. He tricked the stupid demons into placing their fingers into the cavity of a split beam, and then pulled out the wedge that held the slit open (Hussam-ul-Mulk 1974:29).

The concept of the gods being only wilful creations of Imra is not always strictly adhered to. Therefore it is not surprising to learn that the bow and arrow used by Mon was made by his brother Kshibere (Morgenstierne 1951:173). A brother called Muskotuk is mentioned in another version from the Urtsun valley (South Chitral) related by Hussam-ul-Mulk (1974:29).

Typically inconsistent is the claim in an Urtsun myth that Mon was created by Imra's command; yet the same myth also speaks of "Mon's mother" (Morgenstierne 1951:186), and he is then praised as having himself created the world.

There were many shrines of Mon in the land of the Katis (Robertson 1896:394-400). Robertson commented, however, that the god was treated with more respect than fervour in Kamdesh and Bagramatal. The form of the shrines was not unusual, and there was a particularly well-decorated small temple in Kamu constructed by Prasun wood-carvers. Within the temple, the god was symbolized by a standing slab flanked by two smaller stones. He is honoured in the religious dances in the same way as other gods, by three circuits.

Mandi was worshipped as a guardian deity in the Prasun village of Pashki, where his most important shrine stood (Snoy 1962:147; Edelberg 1972:35-6). There was another shrine in Dewa, where the god was represented with almost grotesque features. He was shown sitting on the back of a wild goat having horns that intertwined several times. A stone lay near the village, which an eagle had used as a counterweight when it carried Mandi up out of the underworld on one wing (Robertson 1896:400). Under
normal circumstances, however, Mandi lived in the highest heaven (Buddruss 1960:206). Most of the myths collected by Buddruss speak of Mandi's huge size and prodigious strength. Robertson (1896:400) was told that two small glaciers (apparently on different sides of the valley) were his footprints. Katis and Prasuns venerate the god as regulator of the world and law-giver, but also as creator of mankind. He rules especially over streaming water. All of these are powers normally reserved for Imra, but the difference in status is stressed by emphasizing that Mandi himself is thus 'honouring' Imra (Snoy 1962:150).

The texts published by Edelberg (1972:80–81, 92) confirm this. Mandi appears in a hymn as the mediator between the highest deity and its worshippers. He has lowered a sort of rope down from heaven which is passed on to the rulers of the earth by the god Gish, bringing them in magical contact with the highest god, rather like a telephone. Mandi was also supposed to possess horns and wings.

It is remarkable that in two mythical texts (Snoy 1962:151,159) Mandi is scolded by an animal (a male goat or lamb) for being a 'refugee'. Perhaps this is because his mother (the goddess Kshumai/Kime or her daughter) did not necessarily belong among the gods from the very beginning. The question of his father is even more doubtful (Snoy 1962:146). In any case, he has a large number of relatives. There was his mother and brother, also his seven uncles and many children: seven sons and boy-girl twins. The seven sons who have been born from a 'fairy' are killed by a demon (Snoy 1962:151,159).

Two of the most important and fascinating myths ever collected in Nuristan are centered around Mon/Mandi. The first of these tells of the conquest of a fortress hanging from the heavens. This story has been recorded in 1929 from the Katis living in Bumboret (Chitral) by Morgenstierne (1951:168–174), then by Hussam-ul-Mulk (1974:28–30) in 1937 from the Katis in Urtsun, in 1955/56 by Buddruss (Snoy 1962:89–91, Buddruss 1974a) in the Prasun area, and finally by Palwal from the Katis in Bagramatal (Lutdeh).

The Prasun version as adapted by Snoy is reproduced here with minor changes (e.g., place names) along with remarks on the variants in Morgenstierne's text:

"The gods gathered. Further up the valley in Shtiwe was a house close to the sky. A giant lived there. If he were killed, the world would become good again. He had wealth. The gods decided to fight against him. They called the god Mandi. Going up the valley, they called Züzum in Tusum (=Zumu, cf.Edelberg 1972:36). Going up the valley Mandi and Züzum reached Kushteki. They called Mara. He came. They went up the valley, they reached Dewa. They called Wushum; Wushum came. They went up the valley and reached Pronz. They called Giwish; Giwish came. They went up the valley and came to the temple of Disni below Shtiwe. They called Disni; Disni came. They went up the valley, they hurried to Shtiwe and sat down at a place. The gods held council. They saw a house; Mandi entered it. There was an old woman there. She squatted by a fire to cook porridge. Mandi made a fire-place, placed three stones on it and set a pot over it. He made a ladle and showed the old woman how to cook. She wanted to give Mandi a present. He gave her a hollow bone to fill with flour, but the bone could not be filled. Then Mandi asked for information about the house in the sky. The old woman sat down to tell him: "There is a house, it is (in between) above and below, inside are seven brothers. The seven brothers have many things. They have much gold and silver. Inside they have water; inside they have fields, they sow, they have the sun". Mandi spoke: "How do they do this?" The old
woman answered: "By magic. They have pulled down the sun and the moon and brought them forth (into the house) and thus they warm their fields."

In the Kati version, recorded by Morgenstierne, the old woman alternatively explains how to render visible the rope by which the house of the giants hangs; (the teaching of how to cook is here missing). Mon meets the old woman in a mill:

"Mandi went back to the gods, but forgot what the old woman had told him. He had to return. He forgot again, and went back for the third time. Wushum followed him (in Morgenstierne's version the god Bagisht is the eavesdropper) and listened to what the old woman said. He could thus inform the gods when Mandi forgot the words on his return. Wushum made fun of Mandi because of the latter's forgetfulness. Both of them started to quarrel, but the gods reconciled them. Before the gods began their attack, Mandi had to go again to discover that the old woman was the sister of the giants. The gods shot arrows at the house of the giants, but it was made of iron, and the arrows were deflected. "O Disni, cast seeds!", they said. Mara spoke: "I shall lower the sun, and when I warm the seed so much, it will ripen earlier. Disni cast the seed. In a short time the seed ripened. "Thresh!" they said, and Disni threshed. She winnowed, and cast the chaff up the valley. After the chaff had been cast up the valley, the husks stuck to some 'wires'. The wires can now be seen - white as they are. "The house is kept up by wires from above", they thought. Mara took double-pointed arrows. He used them to cut an iron wire, a copper wire, a silver wire, a gold wire, and a steel wire. The house fell to the earth. (Morgenstierne's version speaks of a rope which is shot through by Mon/Mandi). The 'fortress of flour' fell down, but rose up again. Disni thereupon threw a basket full of sand against it. The gods hurled themselves against the door, but it did not open. Disni said to Mandi: "Look at my thighs!" She took her trousers off, and Mandi stared at her. She had very white and firm thighs. He became aroused. With all his might, he sprang with his feet against it (the door). Mandi broke the door and threw it inside. Armed with a dagger and clad in an iron coat of mail, Mandi killed all the seven giants, who could not resist him in any way. The gods dragged the giants outside and buried them. They only spared the life of a female giant, so that the people could witness whom Mandi had killed. After he had created mankind, Mandi disappeared. Later on, in another tale, it is related how this giantess eats a human being every year until she is outwitted by a priest and finally killed."

In the text recorded by Morgenstierne, the name of the old woman is Budeli. Mon is supported by Gish, Bagisht and his brother Kshibere. Palwal's version does not contain any new elements, but the one recorded by Hussam-ul-Mulk has a number of changes and additions. This version relates that Mon undertakes the destruction of the demon fortress because he seeks the sun and the moon inside it (in vain). This introduces a further myth linked to Mon: The old woman who gives him advice is also the inventor of the water-mill. Mon's brother is described as the very first smith, who has been banished to earth because of breaking a taboo. The devils or giants are called dizano, and their leader named Lazoro.

While Snoy is very cautious in his interpretation of this myth and mostly stresses its realistic reflections of Nuristani activities (e.g., winnowing, with rising clouds of chaff), the myth also lends itself to comparative interpretation guided by etymology. According to Morgenstierne (1951:164) the name Mon/Mandi is traceable via Māndē to the word Mahā(n)deva. In the
earlier Indian texts, this word is used quite generally as an honourable title ('great god'), for example for Rudra and Vishnu (Gonda 1960:85, 254), later becoming increasingly employed as a special title for Shiva (Gonda 1963:195-252). Mon/Mandi does have many characteristics similar to Shiva, thus possibly giving a key to the understanding of the myth.

In Indian legend, Shiva was responsible for the conquest and destruction of the demon fortress of Tripura, the residence of the Asuras, which is composed of three kinds of metal (possibly the stimulus for the five metal wires in the myth). It hung from the heavens. After Indra tried in vain to take it, Shiva sets fire to the fortress with his arrows (Gonda 1963:200).

The second myth relates the recapture of the sun and the moon by the gods. The struggle for these two celestial bodies has been mentioned in two short texts by Robertson (1896:385-7), but all the characteristic themes are contained only in one myth collected by Buddruss in Prasun (1974:32-3; cf. Snoy 1962:86-9). Hussam-ul-Mulk's text provides a connection with the struggle over the demon fortress. The versions published by Edelberg (1972:47-58) from the Prasun area contain further elaborations.

Again, Snoy's summary is presented, most of which depends on Text 54 from Buddruss (Snoy 1962:86-8):

"Once upon a time, there was neither sun nor moon: it was very dark. The giant Espereg-era took the sun and the moon into a house that was built completely of gold. There was a waterfall in this house. To the left of it he placed the moon, and to the right the sun. The giant locked the door of the house. The god Mandi changed himself into a boy 'to create human beings'. He went to the mother of Espereg-era. She protected him from her son, whose arrival caused the whole world to tremble. Espereg-era adopted the boy. During the day, the giant went to hunt wild goats, while Mandi stayed home. He was allowed to eat as much honey, melted butter and wheat bread as he wanted to, but he was not allowed to open the door of the golden house. On the second day, Mandi tried to open the door, but was not successful. He leaped against the door with his feet, and it opened a little. He put his finger through the opening, and the finger became golden. The mother of Espereg-era was frightened at this act and quickly bound up the finger, telling her son in the evening that Mandi had cut himself. On the third day, Mandi leaped against the door again and managed to open it a little further, so that he could put his arm inside. His arm immediately became golden. He tried every way to remove the gold, but it stuck firmly. The mother warned him again, "We shall both be killed". They bound the arm and told Espereg-era in the evening that his arm was swollen from the wound. He wanted to examine it, but the old woman dissuaded him from doing so, and Mandi explained he had cut himself while trying to make a chair for the giant, whereupon the latter was pleased and his curiosity allayed. On the fourth day, when Mandi was alone again, he leaped against the door with all his might and struck it with his feet, thus breaking it down: within he saw the waterfall, he saw the sun and moon, and he saw a horse. He placed the sun on his right shoulder; he placed the moon on his left shoulder. He mounted the horse. "Mother, he said to the horse, where should we go? The giant will come!" The horse answered: "O Mandi, look into my right ear, there is something there." Mandi found a dagger in the ear. He took the dagger and rode out. The dark world became bright. Espereg-era began to pursue him. Mandi cut off his head with the dagger, but the giant grew seven more heads. Mandi cut off all the seven heads. Espereg-era fell to the ground. Mandi took hold of him by the feet and
dragged him over to the right side of the valley. Espereg-era spoke: "If you create human beings, then remove this mountain and flatten it (so that shadows do not reduce the warmth of the sunlight). Bring the sun and make my place warm. The millet and barley should ripen early!" Mandi replied: "I shall obey what you say." He removed a mountain from the right side of the valley and buried Espereg-era under it. Mandi then hurried to kill the old woman. "I will do you no wrong, I shall be good to you, I shall bring you to a place to be honoured and bury you there," he said to the old woman. The old woman was happy at that and submitted to her death. Mandi then went with the sun and moon on his shoulders in and out of the village of Pronz. The god Mara came from Kushteki and said to him: "If you take the sun and the moon in and out of your land, what shall the rest of us do? Give me the sun and the moon! If I, carry them upwards and bring them to the sky, it will warm the people who have sown the seed." Mandi gave the celestial bodies to Mara. Mara took them to the sky and commanded them to circle in their orbits. It is related further that Mara created mankind, gave them cattle, taught them to build sheds, to milk, and to churn butter. He created the dog to wake mankind; he taught mankind to make images of the gods and to make mills. He taught mankind many things and they learnt them. Mara then rose (to the sky) and went away."

A comparison shows that the god Mon/Mandi appears as the hero of the story in the version of Buddruss' Text 54 and in Hussam-ul-Mulk's version, whereas the hero of the story in Buddruss' Text 65 and Edelberg's Texts 6A and 6B is a figure by the name of Külûra-Esperegra, Ashpegra, or Eshpegra (Snoy 1962:88; Edelberg 1972:48-58). Curiously this name corresponds to the giant's name in Buddruss' Text 54. The belief that remains consistent throughout the different versions is that Imra receives the sun and moon (later) as a gift of brotherhood. The tell-tale gilding that happens to Mon or Ashpegra/Eshpegra, which is impossible to remove, is a very widespread fairy-tale theme (Buddruss 1974:35). One could also consider the appearance of the sun and moon as a pair to be a similarly wide-spread and unspecific motif; but the belief that a single person or a rider carries them on his shoulders is not so common. The implications of this latter aspect have not yet been exhaustively treated. Anticipating research in this direction, I would like to comment that the steles to the dead among the Bhils (who are strongly influenced by the Rajput tradition of Western India) often carry the bas-relief of a rider over whose head sun and moon appear. Koppers (1942:Fig.10; cf.Jetmar 1974:40-1) gathered numerous references to steles with such compositions from the Rajputs and the primitive tribes that imitate them. I am grateful to the late Hermann Goetz for pointing out the existence of many more monuments of this kind. He suggested that this motif should be explained as the legacy of warrior tribes that invaded North-west India in the first millennium A.D. and founded many states before their noble classes merged into the Rajput aristocracy. One could suggest that most mounted nomads reached India through the area of Kabul and in the course of their immigrations would have influenced the mountain valleys at the northern boundaries as well. A (female) deity with sun and moon in her hands or near her shoulders is a recurrent motif in Central Asiatic Art (Belenickij 1959:59-60).

The dagger being found in the ear of the horse is a motif known from the Kesar Saga: Kesar's foal carries a little knife in its ear (Francke 1902:49 - wintermyth). In the Hunza version recorded by Lorimer (1935,II:135) the same is told of the calf Brung Kapurdono. The Kesar Saga has a scene where the hero enters the house of the king of the demons with the help of a woman and kills him.
The appearance of Esperegra in the role of the most important figure of the story is not necessarily an error. Edelberg's version 6A (1972:47-58) is put together from many seemingly autonomous parts, resulting in an accumulation of the hero's deeds. According to this Esperegra is the son of a wechi, i.e., a female demon (cf. Morgenstierne 1951:165, showing several variants of this term). The Brumotul myth VIII allows one to recognize such female demons as beautiful, but also cruel and quick-tempered. The mother of the hero, however, is gentle: she lives with another female demonic being of the Jeini group (Snoy 1962:157). They promise mutually to look after the orphan son in case one of them dies. Esperegra's mother dies, but the Jeini falls a victim to the whisperings of an evil woman. She gives her foster-son a piece of bread mixed with ashes, but the child is saved. The voice of the dead mother rises from the grave and sends the child to a cow that excretes cheese instead of dung. The evil foster-mother orders the boy to kill the cow. He refuses to harm the cow, but it ceases to provide any nutrition from that moment onwards and sends him up the valley, where he meets many sisters of his mother. His foster-brother Guduza stays by him during these dissensions.

This is followed by a report about how Esperegra kills a man-eating demon and thus frees a village that was forced to give a young girl as tribute to this monster every year. The hero is then murdered by the father of the rescued girl. His aunts bring him back to life. In this way, he is able to take revenge and win the girl for himself.

The above story is followed by the story of the recovering of the celestial bodies, offering a detailed description of how the old woman (the mother of the seven demons) had crudely cooked before she was taught the proper manner: her body served as a pot, the legs were supports for the pot, the left hand held under the buttocks represented the fire and the other hand the ladle.

The story also tells of the sun and moon being secured to the shoulders of a horse that stands in a pond.

In the second version collected by Edelberg (1972:58), the first part of the story is completely missing, and the events are localized in the Prasun village of Pronz. As witness to the events are two stones still lying there. They represent the two foster-brothers after their transformation. The graves of the seven demon brothers are also supposed to be nearby (Edelberg 1972:39).

It is evident that an extensive intermixing has taken place here regarding the themes of both fairy tales and myths. They have been further enriched by beliefs stemming from direct experience, giving them an unusual power of expression.

It appears that this complex became somehow connected to a deity of regional importance for the village of Pronz. As Mandi rose to the position of the second-most powerful deity in the pantheon, the decisive deeds of valour were transferred to him. But the question remains open, whether the former hero was only subsequently identified with the giant buried under the valley. Evidently Esperegra had also certain demonic traits which were not accidental. The worship of the former hero (Esperegra) continued in Pronz with the explanation that Esperegra, and his mother had both accepted their deaths. Finally, the highest god of the pantheon may have been incorporated in the story as the definite recipient and master of the celestial bodies.

Mon also appears in a myth about the origin of the lunar eclipse. This was recorded in the Prasun area (Snoy 1962:95). The giant Guro lives in a rock between heaven and earth. He crawls into the valley below in the form of a snake. Mandi and Ciwish oppose him on the battle-field. Their helper,
Pegaileamund, changes himself into a snake too and slips into the giant's house. There he sees how the demon sleeps with his mother. When the gods, who have not been able to defeat the demon, scoff at his incestuous behaviour, the demon suspects that the moon betrayed him. He appears, and his enemies flee, even Giwish. Only Mandi prepares to fight him. He cuts the giant in half with the dagger. The upper half of the giant rises to the sky and, full of revenge, lies in wait for the moon (it is said of the moon that it has many paths, some eighteen times four hundred). Finally the demon succeeds in swallowing the moon, but the moon reappears through his truncated body and the eclipse thus ends.

The background of this story could have several ancient associations. It is evident, for example, that the giant Guro is analogous to the demonic being in the mythological stories of the Hindus who succeeds in drinking some of the ocean just churned by the gods. Discovered by the sun and moon, he is cut in two, the part with the head being Rāhu and the part with the tail Ketu. Rāhu has been trying since then to swallow the sun and moon but he cannot contain them. It is remarkable that this thematic motif is widespread in the mountains of the North-west, and one of the secondary names of Rāhu has been preserved in Gilgit: the persecutor of the moon is called Grahan or Grahn there, corresponding to the Indian Grah, i.e., the 'seizer' (Dowson, Reprint 1979:252-3).

What, then, happened to Ketu, the lower part of the demon? It is mentioned in the Brhatsamhitā (6th century A.D.) that a special relationship existed between Ketu and the peoples of the North-west - which included the Pahlawa (i.e., the Parthians), the White Huns, the Avagāna (Afghans), and the Cīna (cf.Masson–Romodin 1964:211-2).

Dogumrik

Edelberg (1972:92-3) reports that the idol of a male deity by the name of Dogumrik was present in the clan house of the Pożut/Pożuk people of the village of Shtiwe. Dogumrik was introduced to him as wakil-i-mara (Motamedi–Edelberg 1968:11, i.e., the vizier of Mara, and also as the herdsman to the daughters of Mara. Edelberg came to the conclusion that Mandi and Dogumrik must be identical, since Robertson (1896:399) had already written of Mandi being thought to be the vizier of the highest god. However, there is another well-documented deity by the name of Dagan (Dagon, Doghan) Deogan in South Nuristan (Elphinstone, Masson, Burnes, Tanner). Šnoy (1962:104,126) quoting such early sources, considers this deity to be the highest being in the pantheon of the southern tribes. Perhaps this is the same god that was taken up in the Prasun area, devalued and placed in a position identical to Mandi's. Not being a philologist, I am tempted to link all these names together.

In the German edition of this book, Max Klimburg explains that Deogan (with several variants) is a general term used for deities whose names one does not wish to use out of fear and respect. This does not rule out that the term could have been preferred for a certain kind of deity and finally became their proper name (as happened in the case of 'Mahādeva'). Tanner (1881:292), in any case, believes Deogan to be a god among others.

For the moment, one has to consider Dogumrik as a god of only local importance approximately in the same position as Mandi.
The name of the god Indr has been recorded by Robertson (1896:381, 388, 409-10). What he has to tell about him is sparse and barely creditable. Morgenstierne (1951:163) also mentions the god, who was said to be worshipped especially in Waigal. Lentz (1939:124) learned that he was venerated in the Prasun area as well. There must be some ancient connection between the name of the god and the terms of rainbow (ind'ro) and for earthquake (indr'ist), although there is no mention of any link between the god and these phenomena. Perhaps the best explanation of this would be that the deity had had a much higher function earlier and had lost most of his former power and competence. It is a solid indication that this god is nobody else than the old Aryan god Indra. This is assumed in a report of Edelberg (1965:194). The same identification was already proposed by Buddruss (1960:201) and Snoy (1962:154). Palwal (1969, II:65-8) agrees, adding a further tale: when it thunders, Indr is playing polo.

Indr was supposed once to have had his residence in Badawan (Ahmad Diwana Baba). He owned vineyards and beautiful gardens there that he had laid out and planted himself. These were suddenly claimed by Imra. A bitter struggle followed as a result of which Indr was forced to withdraw to the South. He created the mountain south of Badawan and shifted to Shkorigul, an upper tributary of Bashgal. A new attack by Imra forced him to flee to Tsárogul (Tsari-gal). According to Edelberg-Gramstrup (1971:59), Robertson included Wama in this area, today settled by Ashkuns. Palwal (1969, II:66) concludes that although Indr was known to the Katis, he should not be considered as one of their indigenous gods. Mention of him, even in the form of place-names such as Indr-Zyul, may be historical reminiscences. In fact the position of this god in the Kati area cannot have been very fortunate. Kati settlers in Brumotul told Morgenstierne that Indr was beaten in a fight with Gish, and has therefore to render the latter a tribute of wine. At another place it is said that he is 'active in wine' but the grapes belong to the goddess Kshumai (Morgenstierne 1951:177).

The religious heritage of South Nuristan is the concern of contributions made to this book by other field researchers. It may be remarked here that the wine rituals of South Nuristan (as described by Edelberg 1965:193-4) are linked with Indr or with another deity of equal status and function (Taraskan). No devaluation of the god is evident here. He owns a garden near Wama, and when the invaders from the neighbouring Achenu valley try to occupy it, he knows how to defend his property: an eagle appears; and as the intruders try to shoot at it with arrows, a landslide comes down upon them (Palwal 1969, II:67-8).

Edelberg asked how it came about that this particular god was linked to wine. He proposed that the Kafirs, like all Indo-Aryan tribes, used soma for cultic purposes (interpreted by some Indologists, including Morgenstierne, to be an intoxicating drink pressed from mountain rhubarb), but later replaced it by wine. This may have happened early enough to explain the tradition that Alexander's army met wine-drinkers in the Hindukush, worshippers of Dionysus. The transition from rhubarb to wine would give Indr a new field of activity (see Edelberg 1965:194-5).

This replacement theory would remain valid even if soma was not rhubarb, but something else, e.g., fly-agaric (as proposed by Wasson 1968) or Ephedra (cf. Gershevitch 1974). In the South, Indr remained the patriarch of a family of gods, whereby the young and strong Gish is his brother, Disani his daughter, Pano his son.
and Bagisht his grandson (Palwal 1969, II:68).

Gish/Giwish

Gish is a god worshipped especially by the Kati (known in Prasun by the name of Giwish). He seems closer to the Vedic Indra than the latter's direct (etymological) descendant Indr, who is deliberately mistreated by Gish. Gish is rash to the point of carelessness, always a successful killer and hero, a Mars of the Kafirs. It is therefore not surprising that he is considered as a rather simpleminded even doltish deity, especially in comparison with the prudent Mon (Snoy 1962:136; Morgenstierne 1968:530-2; Palwal 1969,II:96-7). He steals a calf and places it under his bull to suck, claiming that the bull has given birth to it. His opponents make fun of him, and even his worshippers seem to enjoy that.

Conforming to the spiritual concept in which Imra forms gods and human beings through his word alone, it is said of Gish that he was not born of a woman but created. He lived as a warrior and fell as a hero. His earthly name – Yazid – reveals Muslim influence (Snoy 1962:125,137; Motamedi-Edelberg 1968:11). However, there are other, perhaps older reports, that involve him in complicated bonds of kinship. In a myth collected by Morgenstierne (1951:185-6) in the Kati colony of Urtsun, his mother is called Utr (maybe corresponding to Wutr, the term for a female demon). She is supposed to have carried him for eighteen months before he broke out from her navel. In an extended version communicated by Hussam-ul-Mulk (1974:26-7), he is supposed to have spoken to her while he was still in her belly. It was only after she had planted a gigantic walnut tree with eighteen branches reaching up to the sky that he relented and became ready to make his appearance. He broke through her body and stitched her up with a steel needle. He then gave her a miraculous medicine which not only healed her, but also gave her wisdom and a radiant halo. The god then took his place on a seat of honour, while the mother had to prop up the branches of the wonderous tree with steel pillars. The branches soon bore nuts on which Gish fed his warriors in order to give them strength. Gish moved against Sami(?) with his army, working many miracles. When the warriors were hungry, he threw his spear into the ground, bringing forth sweet roots. The sacrifice of a hornless ox caused the appearance of a bridge. When his spear touched a rock, the rock would mass into a mountain and block the path to the enemy. Finally, Gish is supposed to have gone to Prasun, bellowing at three places like a bull before he disappeared forever.

One hears in other reports of a close relationship between Gish and a goddess called Sanjū (Robertson 1896:409; Morgenstierne 1951:163). Gish killed her father (the god Sanu) and played polo with his head. Sanu was supposed to be a Muslim and had tried to convert the Kafirs to Islam, causing him to be equated with the prophet Mohammed. (Robertson 1896:401). However Indra – certainly one of Gish's predecessors had already killed the father of his consort!

Gish is worshipped especially before a martial raid, during the course of this campaign, and finally at the feast of triumph following. Many of these warlike undertakings were supposed to have been ordered by him. Some of the hymns dedicated to him have been recorded (Morgenstierne 1951:180,188; 1968:534-7): they are full of praise and mention his towering fortress of iron. He can demand the sacrifice of (especially male) animals (Robertson 1896:401). During the dances that were held in his honour, no melodic instrument was allowed, just whistling and drumming (Snoy 1962:138).
Women took part in the worship of the god during the military campaigns. They prayed for rich booty, but also simultaneously prayed to Disani to bring their husbands and sons back unharmed (Snoy 1962:137). Other deities were venerated at this occasion as well, the women of a village honouring them through dancing. Robertson (1896:621-6) saw such a feast held in spiritual support of the men in Lutdeh (Bagramatal) and has given an eye-witness account of it. The identification of the women with the fighting men is remarkable: they wore the festive clothing of their husbands and borrowed axes and daggers for the dance. Some of the ladies organizing such meetings could rise to the rank of mir (royalty), by virtue of which they could ride on the shoulders of stronger neighbours. Similar rites of identification and sympathy are known from many areas where head-hunting has been reported.

Gish is honoured again at the return of the warriors. In Kamdesh, the successful killer came to the dancing place with the women of his family in order to place the proof of his victory (the clothes of the victim) at the altar that stood there. The dance then began, a suitable number of rounds being dedicated to Gish. In the intervals between rounds, the women threw grain over the heroes (Snoy 1962:138; Morgenstierne 1968:537). Sometimes, a prisoner was presented in the same manner to the god. He was then taken to the grave-yard, where he was beaten to death over the coffin of a hero who had been murdered in a particularly treacherous manner. That was certainly not the normal procedure for a human sacrifice (Robertson 1896:564). The celebrations for the killer who had returned home were perhaps relatively parsimonious, and more of a family affair, dropped if there had been casualties. The proper way to eminence needed a "feast of confirmation" which demanded long preparation.

It is understandable that Gish was offered sacrifices at further promotions in rank. His important role at feasts of merit has often been stressed. He was also offered sacrifices during the selection of the ure, i.e., the (judicial) village assembly (Robertson 1896:588; Snoy 1962:138). Gish also played an important part in the annual festivals of the Kati. Robertson (1896:584) mentions him particularly in his incomplete description of the Taska feast.

The enthusiasm with which the Kati regarded Gish was reflected in the presence of at least one shrine to this god in every village of the Bashgal area (Robertson 1896:400-1). The little door of this unenterable shrine was opened during the course of a feast at the end of April or the beginning of May (see p.107), and closed again at the beginning of July. It would be plausible to link this period with the main season of war, but two and a half months would hardly be sufficient for the active disposition of the young braves.

Morgenstierne (1951:163), who relates how the rainbow was thought to be the strap with which Gish carries his quiver, claimed there was no similar deity in the pantheon of other Kafir tribes. This can be true only to the extent that the other tribes did not have such a highly specialized and exalted deity of war. As for the god himself, it has already been mentioned that he was known in the Prasun area under the name of Giwish. In the text recorded by Buddruss, it is said of him that he is the leader in war, a rich hero, and he will contrive his campaigns to the end of the world (Snoy 1962:136). He was considered to be the guardian of a village (Pronz) together with his female partner Sanjù/Sülmech (Robertson 1896:411; Snoy 1962:137).

In the village of Shtiwe, he was worshipped together with the god Diwog as the guardian of a clan. The men of this clan were famous as gallant
fighters (but in this case the informants asserted that he is not a 'real' god). (Lentz 1939:124; Motamedi–Edelberg 1968:11; Edelberg 1972:93).

Maybe he had more general functions in an earlier period: that would explain his position (recorded by Elphinstone 1839,11:378) as the spouse of the mighty goddess Disani. According to Gardner, he embodies the earth, but Disani is the creator of all things. That would be extremely interesting, but this author is a little too imaginative (Gardner 1898:111).

Sanjū/Sülmech and Sanu

The goddess Sanjū (Prasun: Sülmech) is already known as the consort of Gish. It can be concluded from a text recorded by Morgenstierne that Sanjū belongs to the deities, having a clearly defined role within the field of female duties. She rules the stores of wheat and the vessels full of melted butter, Imra having entrusted her with the task of guarding them. She is pictured as separating the chaff from the golden wheat with a gold winnow, and is offered suitable sacrifices: bread, butter, a goat. It is also said that she rules over human beings, particularly over girls and boys. Sometimes she appears in the shape of a goat (Morgenstierne 1951:163, 176-7).

The folk beliefs of the Dards even today conceive that threshing and winnowing attracts demons who wish to steal part of the harvest. It could be suggested that this goddess was originally a demon who was converted into a guardian deity, thus entering the family of the gods. This assumption would save my thesis that the gods were conceived as a sort of 'exogamous community' or clan.

The above suggestion holds valid for some of the stories related about her: a demon kidnaps her, the mighty goddess Disani frees her again by boring a hole in a rock with her tail (Disani evidently appears as a goat) and pulling her through into the upper world by a rope (Snoy 1962:72). Sanjū's conversion to divinity was obviously not effected with agreement of the demonic group. Or, perhaps the kidnapping demon acted as a coercive agent for reluctant wife-givers?

The above is not entirely contradicted by the information that Sanjū's father was a god by the name of Sanu. As has been told, Sanu was killed by Gish because he was a 'Muslim' and had tried to convert the Kafirs (Morgenstierne 1949:283; 1951:163,187; Snoy 1962:136). As has been pointed out earlier there is no other mention of murder among gods themselves, thus making it plausible to assume that her father was in fact a kind of demon, only superficially incorporated into the pantheon.

A somewhat problematic incorporation of Sanjū into the society of the gods could explain why the nature of her relation to Gish remains so ambiguous. She is his adviser (Holdich 1910:131) but one hears from the Prasun area of how she compromises him (Snoy 1962:136). In spite of this, she shares with him the guardianship of the Prasun village of Pronz (Snoy 1962:137). She is not described as his 'legal' consort. She was rather his paramour and eloped with him.

Edelberg collected further information about the cult of the goddess in Pronz already mentioned by Robertson (1896:411), who used the name Saranj. In the centre of the lowest storey of the village tower was a medium-sized statue of the deity with naked breasts. There were stone seats around the statue. Meat was brought to her and the blood of slaughtered animals thrown on the figure. She was worshipped with singing, accompanied by two flutes and a drum. Dancing took place outside the cult room. It is said that the tower is still there, but the interior has been altered and is now in use as
ordinary living-quarters (Edelberg 1972:39, Fig. 15, 16). Klimburg reported in an unpublished paper that the deity was also worshipped in the Prasun village of Dewa in many cult houses (cf. Klimburg 1976:484). In the cult house of the Pöde clan, there was not only a statue of the deity, but also an iron pedestal with a representation of the goddess as a bird.

Later one will learn that a goddess can adopt the form of a bird when she appears as a messenger. A similar association could have occurred here. As already mentioned, this deity is called an adviser, i.e., she is well-informed about events that occur at distant places. In agreement with these attributes one can explain why the statue of the goddess was surrounded by stone seats in the village tower. Perhaps this was the council hall for the village.

Sanjü was worshipped particularly in Ktiwi (Morgenstierne 1951:163) within the West Kati area. In Bagramatal there was a special kind of bread baked in her honour (Palwal 1969, II:84).

Disani/Disni

The central position among the female deities is doubtless taken by Disani, called Disni by the Prasuns (Morgenstierne 1951:163). She is the female partner of the most powerful gods in all the known myths and belongs to the highest class, the 'leading group' of the pantheon. Her name has been mentioned by Elphinstone (1839, II:378), in other early reports as well by Biddulph (1880:131). Morgenstierne not only collected the dialect variants of her name, he also summarized her many qualities. Snoy finds her character so multifaceted that he suggests the fusion of several divinities, at least one figure absorbing a large number of traditions (Snoy 1962:143).

It is tempting to discover a deeper meaning behind this integration: that it reflects the position of the female part of the population. Women had identical tasks, with a few individual ways for expressing their personality. So one deity might stand for all of their common functions. To be sure, there is another female deity very close to the 'leading group' of the pantheon: Kshumai/Kime. But she is an apparent outsider with strong affinities to the wild forces of nature and therefore competent for hunting. Nirmali/Shuwe on the other hand is a goddess of the female physical functions regarded as impure and dangerous by men. She is not always clearly separated from Disani/Disni.

So Disani embodies for all Nuristanis the whole spectrum of the feminine person. She is not only shown to have an astonishing number of different relationships with male beings, but there are also many versions of her origin.

A grandiose conception within Kafir philosophy is to imagine the biological community as a huge tree, and simultaneously as a female being. This is reflected in a myth recorded by Robertson (1896:382-3). There is a tree growing out of a lake in a land beyond the reach of mortals. It would take nine years for an attempt to climb it, and eighteen years 'to travel from one side of it to the other'. When a god once fell in love with this tree and approached it, its trunk burst and revealed Disani at its center. The terrified god fled.

In another incomplete version, it is told that the branches of the tree were seven families with seven brothers each, the trunk being Disani, and the roots Nirmali (Robertson 1896:386).

It is therefore no coincidence that the community of the gods addresses Disani as 'mother' and she is sometimes referred to as the highest deity (Snoy 1962:141).
Without leaving the sphere of purity, she is responsible for fertility and progeny. With streams of milk cascading from her breasts (she evidently induces mothers to feed their offspring) she raises not only each individual child to maturity and strength, but the whole of mankind (Edelberg 1972:74, 76). She is known to excite sexual desire, the prerequisite to procreation. The extent of her involvement with progeny can be judged from a ritual held during the Giche feast: the married men come with torches to the altar. In front of them, in the middle of the dancing-floor, stands the shaman. He swings a cudgel and blocks their path. They force a way for themselves. The lucky one from whom the shaman snatches away the torch can be sure of the birth of a son (Morgenstierne 1968:538).

Compatible with this is the fact that Disani is at the same time a deity of death and of the dead – certainly a consoling and friendly death – who takes the deceased home into the house of the Great Mother. Snoy (1962:142) explained the bird figures on long rods seen by Robertson (1896:396) near the shrine of the deity in Kamdesh as soul symbols, which is possible and even probable. It is thus understandable that the women pray to her when they fear for the lives of their men who participate in a war-party (Snoy 1962:138, 142).

Disani is also the deity of the social order based on the bonds of kinship. Morgenstierne (1951:182-3) recorded a hymn in Brumotul, proclaiming that she made a golden fort with four corners and seven gates as well, as a golden blockhouse somewhere in the south. The texts recorded by Buddruss (Snoy 1962:139) in Prasun take up this theme and place it in an even more enigmatic context: Disni constructed a tower from which she built seven lanes leading outwards. One of these was made of gold, another of silver, the third of silk, the fourth of red silk, and the fifth green (the sixth and seventh were not described). That evokes a circular ground-plan with roads radiating from the center. The 'nine gates of mercy' – which are in the care of Disni – according to a text collected by Edelberg (1972:76) – would fit in the same design.

As has been seen, agriculture belongs to the female sphere of activity and thus to one of the functions of Disani. Robertson (1896:410) reports that particularly the wheat harvest is under her protection. In the Kafir central myth about the conquest of the demon-fort, she carries out all the female chores. She winnows (Morgenstierne 1951:173) and, according to a Prasun version, she sows and threshes as well (Snoy 1962:139). Her devotion to tillage is also seen in other Prasun texts. She is heard of cultivating the field with bells tied around her, and another time, she carries a basket full of dung, behind which Mon seeks protection from the arrows of the demons.

As clearly reported (Motamedi – Edelberg 1968:8), Disni is also the guardian of cattle and of milk products. Proof of this is given in the mythical text relating that Bagisht was fathered by a demon who raped the goddess as she bent over while milking. The division of labour clearly delineated for human beings seems not to hold true for the goddess. Perhaps this is a reminiscence of a more ancient division of labour.

A similar problem arises from Disani being called utai, i.e. priestess (Morgenstierne 1951:164; 1968:537). She has here an occupation that was not open to mortal women, as far as can be judged from the reports available. Curiously, the women of the village have no access to the altar of Disani, the deity that embodies all their characteristics (Palwal 1969, ll:74).

However, Disni was not able to escape the limitations set upon her sex. In a Prasun myth, the god Züzum abuses her as being impure (Snoy 1962:141).
Nevertheless, the aspect of purity is prevalent. Thus Disni can appear as a wild goat, and it is said that her footprints are filled with wheat grains (Snoy 1962:139). She is armed when in human form, and allegedly carries a bow and quiver. In another story, she kills with a dagger.

Robertson (1896:395) often mentions shrines to Disni, one of them near to Bagramatal. It was a wooden construction, through the windows of which one could see her statue, together with the figures of three other deities. Her temple near Kamdesh was covered by an unusual saddle-roof. There is not only a description, but also a drawing, based on a (lost) photograph, taken by Robertson (1896:397, see also 383, 591). There were also stones and rocks sacred to Disni, into which she enters (Snoy 1962:143).

Goats were slaughtered for the goddess, but the more frequent sacrifices were milk and milk products, grain and nuts (Morgenstierne 1951:164; Palwal 1969,11:74). Competitions were held in her honour and she was worshipped in many dances accompanied by flutes and clapping (Robertson 1896:617). Even the women danced for her, although not near the shrine, but at the general place of gathering (Palwal 1969,11:74).

In the hymns sung at such occasions, Disani is lauded as a beautiful woman taking part in the feast decorated with a 'golden garland! According to the context, it is more likely that a golden headdress was intended here; (Morgenstierne 1951:164).

A suitable summary of what one expects of Disani is contained in a song of praise to her (recorded in 1953 in Shtiwe. Motamedi - Edelberg 1968:10; Edelberg 1972:76). It was recited by an old man, once the leader of the clan whose guardian goddess Disni had been. The song relates:

"Oh, Disni, you are the protector of the gates of God
and moreover you have eighteen grades:
Keeper of the temple,
Giver of milk to human beings,
Protector of infants,
Well-wisher of mankind,
Bearer of welfare from God,
You keep the door of milk flowing,
You bring sensuality to mankind,
You increase what is created,
You are the one who receives permits from God,
And you are the keeper of the nine gates of mercy."

Whether the 'eighteen grades' mentioned here have anything to do with the 'seventh rank' attained by Disani according to a Kati hymn (Morgenstierne 1951:183) is not clear.

Eight of the mysterious 'gates' are the gates of heavenly riches. Only the ninth, which is a dangerous one, is on Earth. No further explanation of this is possible for the moment.

As mentioned earlier, there are contradictory conceptions about the origin of the goddess. One version links her with Imra. As already told, she emerged from his right breast. The god threw her up until she came out of a lake, whereupon the tree sheltering the goddess grew out of the lake (Roberton 1896:381-2). In a Prasun version, it is mentioned that a golden disc (Buddruss believes this to be the sun) moved away from Mara and into the sacred lake of Sujum. When Disni's golden tree with golden branches grew out of the lake, the disc placed itself on a large branch (Buddruss 1960:205; Snoy 1962:85).
According to a version attested to several times, the god Sudrem (Robertson 1896:411; Morgenstierne 1951:164) is the father of Disani. He is considered to be the priest of all gods. Disani could therefore have inherited her priestly attributes from him. Even her appearance as a wild goat could thus be connected, as he is sometimes seen as a markhor buck. The sacred lake in which the miraculous tree stands is called Sudrem Sur, apart from its regular name of Stijum (sur = lake).

Among the southern Kafir tribes (e.g., in Wama), the there highly honoured god Indr is thought to be the father of Disani (Palwal 1969,II:75). Morgenstierne (1951:167) gives the name of her mother as Nangi-Wutr, so she may belong to the demonic partners of the gods. It can be assumed that she is in some way connected with the god Nong, maybe as his consort. The goddess Lunang (described in detail by Buddruss 1960) must have her place in the same web of kinship. However, she is considered to be a āgmin, i.e., she belongs to a group of higher beings that are different from the wutr. Buddruss kindly informed me that the suffix 'lu' is the equivalent of Sanskrit 'deva' in the Prasun language.

Due to the status of her father, Disani is certainly a 'regular' member in the clan of the gods, therefore Disani's son Bagisht was fathered by an unnamed demon. Indeed, this does not hinder her from exciting Mon by her charms in order to increase his strength (Snoy 1962:141).

Since Mon has more in common with Śiva than just a name which is the latter's epithet, one wonders whether typical features of his Śakti have not entered into the personality of Disani. In the Indian religious sphere, Śiva's consort is called Pārvati, goddess of the mountains. She is thought to be the daughter of Himavat, i.e., the Himalayas. This would correspond to Disani's role as a huntress as well as to her embodiment in a wild goat. Even the fact that Nang/Nong is presumably one of her ancestors (or associates) would perfectly fit in, for he is at home in the icy heights of the mountains (Snoy 1962:78).

The more cruel aspects of Śiva's consort are also present in Disni. A myth recorded by Buddruss tells how she happened to murder her own son (Snoy 1962:141-2). Together with the son of the god Diwog, this unhappy youth (not identical with Bagisht) dared to plant grape-vines, pomegranates and nut-trees without the divine community's permission. This attempt to change the world enraged the gods and they chased both of them. Diwog's son hid himself in a boulder and the gods threatened him, saying he would have to die of thirst and hunger without water and without a mill. Thereupon, the sound of a water-mill was to be heard. Disani's son had set it in motion. Evidently, this was a further challenge to the gods, for they left Diwog's son in his hiding place and hurried down the valley to chastise Disani's son. Disni herself arrived from the opposite side, running up the valley. When the gods called to her, she intercepted the fugitive and cut off his head.

When she saw the body of her son before her, she realized her terrible mistake, turning furiously against the gods. They apologized to her, explaining that the boy had threatened the order of the world, wanting to change it, for which reason they had persecuted him. Alas, what had happened could not be repaired. To appease Disni, the gods instituted a feast: eighteen bold youths were to take part in competitions. They were to dance around a harp-player in the meeting house singing dirges. So finally Disni was consoled and consented to the gods' judgement.

In many cultures, there exists ceremonial mourning, mostly in springtime for the sake of a cruelly murdered young deity. Here we find one of such
Aetiological myths. An early Iranian parallel would be the lamentations held for Siyāwush in Bukhara (Widengren 1965:329). Shiite mourning is just one offshoot of the same perennial tradition.

It is related that the goddess was greatly honoured in the Prasun area, especially among the Pyechi clan in the village of Shtiwe (Snoy 1962:143). Edelberg and his companion actually heard that Disni was the guardian of the clan called Wāči (=Paeči or Paži). The pertinent statue of the deity, secretly concealed in their 'clan-house' since Kafir times, was rediscovered in 1963. Equally interesting are the hymns noted down during these studies (Motamedi - Edelberg 1968; Edelberg 1972:72-81).

The men of this kinship group acted as wood-carvers for the whole village; and even the owner of the house in which the statue was discovered continued the same occupation. Is this more than a casual coincidence? Disani/Disni evidently embodies the female principle as a moving and creative principle. It is related of her that the god lmra could teach the community of the gods to dance only when she joined in (Snoy 1962:133). Evidently the wood-carvers also needed her inspiration.

The deity was supposed to reside in Sudrem- (or Sūjum-)sur, mentioned earlier. There she entered a rock called Utme (Morgenstierne 1951:183).

Nirmali/Shuwe

In contrast to Disani, the deity called Nirmali by the Kati and Shuwe by the Prasun is clearly a goddess of function, responsible for child-bearing and birth as well as other impure aspects of femininity (Morgenstierne 1951:165).

Nirmali thus rules over the hut clearly separated from the village (which in Prasun is sometimes on the other side of the river, opposite to the village) in which the women either give birth or stay during their menstruation (Robertson 1896:497). There was a pole near the hut, upon which sheepskins were hung. According to Robertson, they were not primarily there to mark off the boundary so much as a warning not to pollute oneself through entry, since the building was clearly recognizable for what it was without these sheepskins; consequently there must have been another, perhaps religious reason for their display. Snoy (1962:144) points out in this connection that the care of sheep was a female occupation among the Kalash. This could explain why rams were sacrificed to Nirmali. Palwal believes that the pato mentioned in a text recorded by Morgenstierne (1951:176) is in fact this pole, also called chamen kato. The clothes of the menstruating women were hung on this mast for ritual purification.

As mentioned earlier, Nirmali is considered the root of the sacred tree of which Disani/Disni forms the trunk (Robertson 1896:386, 496-7). Thus a close connection between the two goddesses is emphasized, i.e., Nirmali is a sort of hypostasis of Disani in the purely biological sphere. She is also supposed to have made the 'gate of progeny' (Snoy 1962:144). A support of this connection is the fact that a secondary name of Disani is Shue, which could be identical to the Prasun name for Nirmali, i.e., Shuwe (Snoy 1962:144). Both goddesses are thus seen as the givers of children, sons and daughters.

On the other hand, the specialization is not consistently maintained. Nirmali is supposed to have given silver seeds along with human seeds as a gift. In a hymn recorded by Morgenstierne (1951:185) in Brumotul, it is said she makes the alpine meadows wide. Nevertheless, she fits well into the concept in which Imra is seen as the absolute ruler and creator. It is said that Nirmali has been appointed by Imra. She resides in heaven and Imra talks to her (Morgenstierne 1951:176).
Our information about the rites held for Nirmali is only incidental, as in the description of the Marnma feast (Robertson 1896:587). Palwal (1969,II:79) reports that unmarried girls let a beetle named 'nimga-ga' fly away in order to find the village from which their future husbands will come. This divination is believed to have taken place originally in the menstruation houses in front of a statue of Nirmali.

In the autobiography of the converted Kati Kafir Azar, published selectively by Morgenstierne, it is mentioned that anyone accused of an offence could free himself by taking an oath near or inside the menstruation house. This is astonishing only at first sight, since the most sinister forces are invoked at this place (as the oath on Hades among the ancient Greeks). The oath at the grave-yard also existed, the final and extreme proof being seven oaths at the grave-yards of seven villages (Morgenstierne 1933:198; Snoy 1962:220).

The boundary between Disani and Nirmali is particularly vague in the Prasun area. In a text collected by Edelberg there is a hymn to the goddess Pushashi (Edelberg 1972:37,72-74). She could be identical with Disani (Dizeile). The respect expressed to the goddess corresponds to this suggestion, less so the mention of child-bearing and nursing. In fact, an earlier article written by the same author (Motamedi - Edelberg 1968:9) Poshashi lives in the menstruation house (dibu) and is supposed to be the same goddess as Nirmik, i.e., Nirmali.

One cannot hold Edelberg responsible for these contradictions: they merely reflect existing ambiguities.

Zhiwud/Zhuwut

Evidently, another goddess existed who was in some way connected to Disani/Disni but mainly acted as a kind of messenger. A Prasun text relates how, during the fight between the gods and the giants, a goddess by the name of Zhuwut is sent by the hard-pressed gods to fetch Mandi. She sits down near the shores of the lake where Mandi lives. Fire rises and scorches her. Mandi emerges in the form of a falcon and, apparently realizing his mistake, he heals her. He promises to help the gods (Snoy 1962:148); but Zhuwut has to lead Mandi. As she turns round, she first sees a bull calf, soon after that a two-year-old bull, and finally an eighteen-year-old bull or a bull with the strength of two nine-year-old bulls. It bellows eighteen times and stirs up the dust with its horns, ready to knock down its enemies.

A very similar story was told to Edelberg (1972:71-2) by a man from the Pošuk-tadba (a clan of Shtiwe village). The goddess, who was supposed to bring Mandi to a certain game, was called 'Ziwud' or 'Jiwud'. The game was played with the gods on one side of the river and the giants on the other. Mandi appears as a calf that blows flames from its nostrils, singeing Zhiwud's wings so that she is unable to fly any more. However, she is healed soon afterwards and leads the steadily growing bull to the gods, who are terrified until they recognize the animal as Mandi, who finally helps them to victory.

In Shtiwe, the same goddess is found together with an otherwise unknown deity, Gujo, who acted as guardian of the now extinct Päçog or Pachag clan.

It should be noted that Disni herself also appears as a messenger. Munjem Malik sends her to Züzum when he needs the latter's help (Snoy 1962:78). Apparently, many variants of the messenger-goddess are possible. The reference to wings is striking, and could mean that the goddess appeared in form of a bird.
Disani's son Bagisht was already known to Elphinstone (1839:11 378) as god of the waters. Biddulph (1880:131) knew him as the master and protector of the herds. Robertson (1896:376,381,406,409) called him a popular god who rules over the floods and helps the people to gain power and wealth.

In the story of his procreation recorded by Robertson (1896:382–3), it is related that Disani was milking her cows by the banks of a lake, when she was attacked from behind and raped by a demon who had two supplementary eyes on his back. In Morgenstierne's version, this happened by the Dorah lake, and the demon came out of the water in the form of an unshorn ram. One has the impression that fertilizing seeds were contained in the water that dropped off his fleece; the goddess thus became 'pregnant among the Jeini'. According to Robertson, the birth occurred in the swift-flowing river of Prasun. In Morgenstierne's version (1951:167–8), she placed her knee upon the 'playing-stone' of the lake. The labour pains started only when the child in her belly turned himself in the direction facing up the valley. Bagisht was born and immediately showed his greatness and strength. Robertson relates that the turbulent waters became quiet and piled up on both sides as the child went to the shore to the astonishment of the spectators. A stranger explained to them that the name of the new-born child was Bagisht. In Morgenstierne's version, the mother wrapped the shining body of her son in golden clothes. But afterwards she gave him a blue shirt. She placed him on the water, which became his dominion. Bagisht can live neither with the gods nor with human beings: he is made to move about in the water.

It should here be noted that rape scenes of this sort are a permanent theme in Kafir oral literature. Mara himself is found copulating with the daughters of mortal men as a ram, or veiled in clouds, not sparing a small girl (Edelberg 1972:62–70).

The shrines to the god are consistently near waterways, particularly at the mouths of streams. Robertson (1896:406) mentions that the shrines were nothing more than simple stones, by which sheep and sometimes goats were sacrificed. According to Biddulph (1880:131), the heads of the sacrificed animals were then thrown into the water, contrary to usual practice. Robertson saw a shrine of this kind near Bagalgrom (Bagelgrom) in Bashgal.

Robertson also learnt of the existence of a shrine to Bagisht in the Prasun valley. In a hymn from Prasun, where the god was worshipped under the special name of Opkulu, the following is related: the hairy Bagisht lets the cattle move up and down the valley. He is the master of the alpine huts. A tradition deriving from Vedic ideas is possible, as there, too, flowing water, cattle and wealth are commonly linked to each other (Snøy 1962:144).

Snøy (1962:101) wonders how one could explain that the god is said to go up the valley in autumn and down the valley in spring, i.e., in the opposite direction to the movement of cattle herds. My interpretation would be that in winter-time all the main waters are high up in the mountains (i.e., as glaciers), while they only come 'down the valley' in spring floods.

A text from Brumotul tells how Bagisht spared two demon boys during the destruction of the 'flour' fortress and raised them in his own house. One of them became the progenitor of the Prasun people and the other the ancestor of the Kati slaves (Morgenstierne 1951:179). Maybe this rather unusual clemency was due to the fact that Bagisht himself is of demoniac stock.

In another myth recorded in Urtsun (Morgenstierne 1951:188), Bagisht is portrayed dancing, similar to the river-deity Lunang. Clearly the same
picture has been used in both cases to express the impetuous and erratic nature of the torrents.

Bagisht played an important role in the great festivities that segmented the agricultural year. He was worshipped in Kamdesh during the Ashindra and Diran feast. In a Prasun text made available by Buddruss, Bagisht is connected with archery (Robertson 1896:589-90; Snoy 1962:110,144).

**Sudrem/Süjum**

Robertson (1896:101, 381, 395, 409, 411) discovered little about the god Sudrem apart from his name, noted by him in two versions as Satarām or Sudaram. He was brought to life by Imra's breath, and is responsible for rain in his capacity as weather god. Above all, he is the father of Disani from his wife Nangi-Wutr.

Morgenstierne (1951:164, 181-2) heard about Sudrem (called Süjum by the Prasuns) as the priest of the gods. He was created from a juniper twig and could change into a markhor kid. But he may also appear as a great buck with a golden beard and with golden horns reaching to the sky. He lives in rivers and lakes, the sacred lake Sudrem Sur being named after him (Buddruss 1960:205-6). Palwal (1969,11:83) relates that all wild animals have to drink from this lake once, failing which they become ill, are attacked by skin irritations and finally die.

It has already been mentioned that Sudrem fell in love and approached the tree in which his daughter Disani was hidden. He fled in terror, perhaps because he recognized the danger of incest at the last moment (Robertson 1896:382; Snoy 1962:85).

**Nong/Züzum**

The god Nong has been invoked in a strange manner in one of the texts recorded by Morgenstierne (1951:165,181): "O log, come (out)!" Only recently it became clear that the god is addressed in shape of his wooden effigy here (Parkes, pers. communication). Robertson (1896:410) classifies Nong as a deity related only to Prasun. In a Prasun hymn noted down by Buddruss, he emerges from two lakes. His local name in Prasun is however Züzum (Snoy 1962:78).

Little more is known about the latter form of the deity. He is the god of the winter cold. Far above the village of Zumu, he conceals himself in the glacier of a side-valley. As the glacier melts, one sees him sitting on a seat dressed in ceremonial robes in the middle of a lake. The effects of his power are recognized in the cracking of ice and the howling of a snow storm. Buddruss (1960:205) writes that as late as 1956, an old man claimed to have seen the god sweeping down the valley in a fervent snow squall.

As god of frozen purity, Züzum is definitely a misogynist. Even Disani (his grand-daughter?) is blamed by him for her impurity as she approaches him as a petitioner. When they are travelling together, she must concede him the upper position, while she must walk nearer to the bottom of the valley (Snoy 1962:154). Züzum was fetched by the gods from the Prasun village of Zumu, where he is evidently worshipped as the local guardian deity (Edelberg 1972:36).

**The Seven Paneu**

There is more than one group consisting of seven gods thought to be
brothers. Elphinstone (1839, II: 378) mentioned two such divine brotherhoods worshipped in Kamdesh: the seven Paradik brothers, and the seven Purron brothers, all with golden bodies. The former name is mentioned (as Parade) by Robertson (1896: 381, 409-10, 422) as the designation of a single deity created by Imra. Evidently, this deity is neither important nor popular.

The most prominent fraternal group consists of the seven Paneu. They live 'with' the sun, and with Disani (Morgenstierne 1951: 174-5). Imra appointed them and gave them a golden bow and a golden quiver. He makes them all sit on the 'arrow of the sun' and 'whatever they hit is destroyed'. The Kafirs thus regarded them with awe and admiration, although it is expressly stated that they are not warriors like Mon and Gish. They are offered an annual tribute of a cow. Morgenstierne (1951: 165, 174-5) is convinced that they are identical with the Purron, etymologically connected to the Pândeva, the famous brothers and demigods of the Mahābhārata.

Information received by Palwal (1969, II: 82) in Bagramatal is perhaps important: Pano (in the form of a donkey) is an evil spirit that kills human beings. Marks of death are signs of his blows.

Summing up, it can be said that the Paneu are related to Disani in her character as deity of death. They are her executioners. But they fulfil their macabre task as hunters, never missing and without mercy. In this respect, they resemble the bcan, the demons dreaded by the Tibetans (Höfer 1971: 18-19).

The chance for such an interpretation was already perceived by Snoy (1962: 151-2). It is supported by tales collected in areas where Dardic languages are spoken. In Chitral and in Haramosh (near the boundary of Baltistan, already a Tibetan-speaking territory) I learned of demoniac hunters shooting arrows at human souls roaming about in the shape of ibexes or wild goats. If they kill the 'soul animal' of a person his or her death will occur within a few days.

Deities with related names reported from South Kafiristan have different functions. Snoy (1962: 151) brought together all the notes contained in early, mostly rather problematic sources, allowing one to consider terms like Panu, Panao, etc., as general designations used for various deities in conjunction with their respective individual names.

In contrast, the development in North Kafiristan led to connections with another set of beliefs. In this way the seven Paneu, formerly heroes of many adventures (Dowson 1979: 184-9) became the successors of demons, deeply rooted in the spiritual world of the mountain tribes.

Arom, Duzhi, Lunang

Arom belongs to the Kafir gods with very limited responsibility. He is responsible for contracts, receiving a sacrifice at the moment of a peace agreement, and also one from the Kaneash at the end of their period of probation. It must be stressed that he is worshipped only by the Kam, being the guardian deity of this tribe. Robertson (1896: 377, 381, 409, 567) was told he had seven brothers, and Morgenstierne (1951: 165) also heard of them. It is not clear whether the seven brothers are subordinate to Arom and whether they correspond to seven segments in the Kam people. The Kafirs had a model for classifying ethnic associations in which the figure seven played an important part (Snoy 1962: 153, 161; Edelberg 1972: 67, 69).

Another local god of the East Kati area is Duzhi. All that is known of him is that his altar (a stone) is located next to that of Bagisht at the bank of the river. Unlike Bagisht, he does not receive the sacrifice of a neat, but
the modest one of a male goat (Elphinstone 1839, II:378; Robertson 1896:409-10, 588-9).

The goddess Lunang, is the mistress of the Prasun/Parun river. All that is known about her has already been presented in the pages dealing with Imra/Mara. She appears as a young girl, mischievous and dangerous as the torrent she rules over; she does, however, let Mara bring her to work the water-mill as a blessing to mankind.

Kshumai/Kime

This goddess, also called Kushumai, and Kime in Prasun, is an embodiment of nature, endowing mankind generously with gifts, but moving playfully away from their grasp (Morgenstierne 1961:164,186).

Kshumai appears as a goat, probably a wild goat (Robertson 1896:384). She resides in the highest mountain of the Hindukush, Tirich Mir (Snoy 1962:84-5), but also appears from a lake in the mountain's vicinity. In the Prasun texts collected by Buddruss, she is said to give gifts of male goats. She herself is a herds woman of these animals and knows how to milk them, throwing her long breasts over her shoulders when she does so (Snoy 1962:145-7).

Sprouting vegetation and ripening fruit, especially grapes, belong to her. She is offered sacrifices at harvest-time, perhaps because she controls the rain necessary for growth (cf. Morgenstierne 1951:175,177,181).

Any allusion to her being Imra's creation is missing; more than anything else, she gives the impression of being an alien and ambivalent guest in the Kafir pantheon. This perhaps explains her being honoured after all the other gods by crude and humorous dances (Robertson 1896:617-8). The character of this deity is splendidly displayed in a myth recorded by Robertson: the gods gathered at the foot of the Tiwak Pass, between Skorigul and Prasun. Kshumai hurried down Tirich Mir in the form of a goat and mixed with the gods. It is not said why she did this; perhaps it was to eavesdrop on them. The wise Imra recognized her, approached her and threw her suddenly into the stream. She struggled out of the water, ran up the steep rock and kicked stones loose, thus causing them to rain down upon the gods to annoy them. Imra told the others who had been responsible for the trouble. Kshumai was admonished and told to behave herself in the future. She mollified the gods by giving them a sumptuous feast on silver dishes that she fetched from Tirich Mir (Robertson 1896:384-5).

Tirich Mir lies far outside the actual Kafir area, in the Chitral region of the Dardic Khowar speakers, only its peak being visible in Kafiristan. One wonders whether a deity of Dardic provenance entered the Kafir pantheon in the guise of Kshumai (Snoy 1962:145-7). A hymn recorded by Morgenstierne (1951:175) in Brumotul (Kalash country) lends support to this derivation. Kshumai appears in the dress of a Kalash woman wearing a cowrie headdress, collared cloak and shawl.

The belief was widespread that either Kshumai (herself the youngest of seven sisters) or the eldest of her seven daughters gave birth to Mon/Mandi (Morgenstierne 1951:164,186). In both of the versions recorded in Prasun, the seven girls were molested by a 'giant', who kidnapped one every day. The last remaining girl asked for help from a tree (which in one version stands in the middle of a lake), addressed the tree as mother and begged for help. The tree burst open and encompassed her. The demon thus could not seize the girl (Snoy 1962:145-7).

Finally, Kime, or her eldest daughter, left the tree on a ray of light.
She had become pregnant. By the seven brothers of Kshumai all other deities were invited at the birth. They gathered and called a harpist who sang a hymn to Mandi, the earth-leveller. The earth trembled. The gods prepared to flee. As they turned around, the crucial event had taken place: Kime held a radiant boy. The harpist announced: "the man who will level this world has arisen!" and commanded the gods to disperse to their respective places.

Snoy considered whether Imra could be the anonymous father of the divine child. The beam of light could signify impregnation. It is difficult to understand, however, why such a divine origin is not given praiseworthy mention in the hymns, for which reason one must assume that the father was a demon. Elphinstone (1939, II:378) heard that 'Koomye' is the wife of Adam, but this would be a version of South Kafiristan.

A demon as genitor would explain the accusation (mentioned earlier) curiously made by a lamb or a goat that Mon is a 'refugee' or deserter (Snoy 1962:146,148).

Robertson (1896:411) saw a statue of Kshumai with prominent sexual features in a dancing house of the Prasun area. Perhaps this was one of the clan houses described by Edelberg, (Motamedi – Edelberg 1968: 7-11), and Klimburg (1976:483-5). In fact Kshumai was the guardian of the extinct Porjiga clan (Edelberg 1972:93). Elphinstone (1839,II:380) reports that an 'idol' of the goddess stood at an almost inaccessible height south of the village of Kamdesh. A shrine in which she was worshipped along with other deities is also mentioned (Robertson 1896:395). However, the regional differences between Prasun and Kati are noticeable.

Palwal (1969,II:80-1) suggests that one should differentiate between the goddess of vegetation Kshumai, the mountain goddess Krumay, who lives in Tirich Mir, and a deity named Kamri who is offered sacrifices by individual men in times of sickness or need. This means that the complex personality of deity, maybe of heterogeneous origin, was again in a state of dissolution.

I am grateful to Buddruss for indicating that there is no direct etymological linkage between Kshumai and Kime (there are Kati variants for Kime, e.g., Krumai). The goddess referred to as Murkum in the Shina area can also not be directly linked to them. These names may sound similar to non-linguists; more importantly there are similarities between Murkum and Kshumai that seem scarcely superficial. However, the question must be raised whether several interrelated deities of pre-Indo-European populations have contributed to a parallel development here.

This hypothesis, which goes far beyond earlier suggestions concerning Dardic origin, could provide the explanation for many other observations, including peculiarities in the grammar and lexicon of the Nuristani languages.

V. Gîsh's (the War God) Shrine
"...the smoke of the sacrificial fires arose almost daily, and it was no uncommon circumstance for a dozen or fifteen goats to be offered at one time."
(Illustration to Robertson, pp. 113-4).
SYMBOLS OF GODS, SANCTUARIES AND SHRINES
Dealing with deities and festivals, Snoy (1962:104-55) often mentioned religious monuments or shrines, although he did not treat them in a separate chapter. One of Palwal's studies (1969/70,V:130-46) has now compensated for that deficiency. However, important discoveries were published in later years by Edelberg and Klimburg, and these lead significantly beyond the earlier state of research based almost entirely on Robertson's descriptions.

Very often, a simple stone or rock of unusual dimensions at a noticeable spot suffices as an altar and symbol of divinity. Elphinstone (1839,II:379 n.) heard from his main informant, Moollah Nujeeb, that the selection of a crude and quite ordinary object was accounted for as an intentional symbol that represented the ineffability and ambiguity of deity. The sacred stone was then sprinkled with blood and dusted with flour. Some of the deities required no more than a stone to represent them. In many cases, the stone or stones formed an integral part of a holy precinct, the cultic scenery where the worship of the gods took place. Often, a stone was either placed or chosen at a spot having a large tree, a pond or a river in the background (Robertson 1896:389). There was a boulder at the top of a mountain in South Nuristan, supposed to be the favourite residence of a deity (Palwal 1969/70,V:131).

Until recently, such stones played an important part in the fantasy and rituals of the villagers, demonstrating their suitability as religious symbols. In the Paruni village of Pronz, Klaus Ferdinand took a photograph of the mullah, calling the faithful to prayer and standing on the very stone that was formerly the symbol and altar of Ashpegra (Edelberg 1972:39, Fig.17).

The statues of the gods are in fact rather schematic monuments. They had caught Robertson's interest, and Edelberg described and analysed them in two of his articles (1960; Motamedi – Edelberg 1968). Palwal (1970,VI:21-52) tried to record statistically the peculiarities of the figures carved from wood, their poses and characteristic details of their decoration. It is clear that the different areas had semantic and stylistic tendencies of their own. It is Klimburg's intention to compile a major study on Nuristan, being a synopsis of secular and religious craftsmanship in wood. During the expedition necessary for this task (sponsored by the German Research Society – DFG) he discovered important works of art, mainly wood-carvings deriving from the Kafir past (Klimburg 1976, 1981). Klimburg's pieces, collected in the course of his fieldwork, were presented to the Kabul Museum; but enterprising dealers brought further specimens to Switzerland. So they are now scattered in European (or American) collections. Whether this was a kind of looting, or the only means of salvage, will only emerge in the future.

Confusion is caused by the fact that in many valleys (but not in Prasun) effigies of ancestors co-existed with figures of gods. Since the statues available are nearly all from the war booty of 'Abd al-Rahman, there is no information about meaning and origin. One can differentiate only on the basis of iconographic criteria available from Robertson's book, some old photographs, such as those taken by the Lockhart-Mission (see Lockhart - Woodthorpe 1889) and the observations made among Kati refugees in Chitral. It is remarkable, and not at all helpful for our investigations, that the Kalash did not make sculptures of their gods, at least in modern times, but only figures of the dead. In their shrines the Kalash deities were represented by boards decorated by specific carved patterns. At least in one case such a
pattern can be explained as the abstract rendering of a female deity (Graziosi 1962).

A recently discovered statue showing a woman sitting on a wild goat can be identified with near certainty as the statue of Disni, although to my knowledge she is nowhere described in the mythical texts as a goat-rider (Motamedi - Edelberg 1968:6, Fig.1 and 2).

At least a part of the figural and non-figural patterns in the decor of houses and shrines of Nuristan had a religious meaning. Other patterns on private houses denoted the ranks and positions of the owner. The information concerning meaning and systematic position of various patterns given by Palwal (1969/70:142-6), in the lectures of Alam Melabar-Nuristani and by Klimburg (1976:586-7) are not totally in accordance with each other. I feel that the caution made by Jones repeatedly (1974:189,205,239,252), namely, that "meaning varies according to village and informant", is indeed necessary. One gets the impression that the continuity of information has been broken, and the unhappy informants tried in vain to offer merely plausible explanations.

Stones or figures of gods, were placed in buildings situated in the vicinity of a village. Robertson (1896:394) described these shrines as being six feet high, with a base about five foot square: "The lower two-thirds or three-fourths are made of rubble masonry, built between wooden frames of squared timbers. The top part is often entirely of wood with a door or window in front, through which the idol, or the sacred stone which does duty for the idol, may be seen". The chamber resting upon the solid plinth was thus much too low to be a cult room permitting entry to worshippers. So it could be called protective sanctuary concealing the deity. Several such 'idols' were sometimes found in a row, in which case the construction housing them had a wide facade with several windows. In some cases, posts rose from the corners of the shrine, decorated with all kinds of war-trophies in order to commemorate successful raids. Only in the Prasun valley were such shrines crowned with wedge-shaped roofs, protecting the seated image of the god. They were covered with wood carvings and kept in good condition (Robertson 1896:396).

The famous lmra temple of Kushteki was in fact a sumptuous version of such a 'protective sanctuary' rather than a place for gatherings and sacrifices. Offerings were usually done in the veranda built in front of the hall. The description given by Robertson has already been mentioned in an attempt to explain the configuration and orientation of this seemingly unique building (Robertson 1896:389-92; Edelberg - Schäfer - Lentz 1959).

It seems to me that this temple was designed to impress those who were not permitted to enter it, to stimulate their phantasy, and that is indeed what happened. Not long ago, Klimburg was told that the temple contained 70 statues, some of which were concealed during the period of assimilation to Islam.

In the East Kati country, the ceremonial dances to honour the gods, and most other ceremonies as well, were held in a place of gathering attached to the village, or, in the case of a very large village, to major segments (Jones 1967:13). It consisted of a level piece of land about thirty metres square, with a rude altar "formed of two upright stones with a horizontal on top" and at least one sitting-platform at the periphery. A large hall was adjacent to this open space. This was the dancing house, which in Kamdesh was ten metres square in plan and four metres high. The side-walls were constructed of wooden beams, and no stones were wedged in the spaces between the beams, so that curious spectators - the women and girls of the village - could
thrust their heads and shoulders restfully in the intervals. Two rows of pillars carried the weight of the heavy roof. In the middle, between two richly-carved posts was a fire-place, above which a smoke-hole opened (Robertson 1896:494-5).

Robertson further explained that nearly all the gromma constructions in the Prasun area were half underground. In Dewa, for example, they were accessible by way of long sloping ramps. Such public buildings were unusually large, and were also used to house guests. There was a small shrine in one corner, within which was the statue of a god. The four central pillars were shaped in the form of grotesque figures - in fact caryatids with shieldlike faces and exaggerated genitals.

Klimburg (1976:484) discovered the remains of the assembly hall, described by Robertson. Two of the main pillars were still standing, and he says that this sanctuary was called tirë. Buddrus had not seen it (most probably the roof was still intact) but he heard the name ērē and got important information.

In the same village, Dewa, Edelberg visited an assembly hall of a different type (square-roofed, with a central pillar and benches along the four sides) which he called amal (1972:38). According to Klimburg the name of this construction is tēlē, being especially designed for major decision-making procedures and initiation-rites for boys. Klimburg says that amöl is quite distinct, meaning the 'temple' of an individual lineage. Klimburg claims to have discovered in 1972 and 1974 six buildings of this kind in Dewa and Pronz "still more or less complete with their original decorations". He thinks that "the house of the Shtevgrom priest" described by Robertson (1896:491-3) was such an amöl. That seems probable, and therefore here is Robertson's vivid and lucid text in full:

"I carefully examined the house of the Shtevgrom priest. From the roadway, a 3 feet 6 inch doorway opened on to a short ladder, by which the floor of the dwelling-room was reached. That apartment was twenty feet square, but only seven feet high. The roof was supported by numerous pillars, all of which were grotesquely carved into a supposed resemblance of gods or goddesses. Four pillars, carved with more than usual care, bounded the hearth in the ordinary way. Each was made to resemble, more or less, a man on horseback. The horseman was given an enormous face, shield-shaped, 1½feet long by ten inches at the broadest part, the brows. The chin was not more than an inch and a half from the top of the diminutive horse's head. The rider's left hand rested on the horse's neck. What at first sight looked like an enormous ear, turned out to be the horseman's right arm grasping a weapon. The tiny animal itself was given a little stand, such as a toy horse has. The nose of the effigy was scored by parallel lines intersected at right angles by similar parallel lines. All the other pillars in the room were similarly carved into grotesque male or female forms, except that they were not provided with horses. Above the hearth, which was seven feet square, there was a wooden structure four feet square, which projected above the level of the roof about four feet. This was roofed, and in one corner of it there was a smoke-hole of a foot square. This peculiar chimney is very common in Presungul. From the dwelling-room a ladder led into a lower apartment, which was not more than five feet in height. There was yet another room, lower still, which was reached in a similar way. There it was possible to stand upright. From this lowest apartment a tunnel ran under the village wall to the river-bank. A second tunnel, which I was solemnly informed had been originally constructed by Yush (the devil), burrowed under the village tower or citadel."
Later, the nature of the rituals that took place in such subterranean buildings will be discussed in detail. For the moment, only one aspect is essential: again it is seen that in spite of correspondence between the Kati and Prasun pantheons and institutions, sharp differences also existed.

The village-collective dominated among the Kati. At feasts, the community with the priest in front was facing the gods. As will be seen, the priest was helped by a whole group of assistants who had bought recognition among the community through costly feasts. In contrast to this, in Prasun every lineage had a protecting deity of its own, the covenant based on real or assumed kinship ties. A large part of the cult took place in the intimacy of half-under-ground "clan houses". Whoever was received there was fed with food prepared from the income originating from the fields sacred to the god. One was, as it were, the guest of the deity.

There were still cults and gatherings that included the whole village (for which exclusive purpose the ērē places were built), but even here the segments had a special role. This alone would explain the restricted importance of the 'feasts of merit' in Prasun, at least their different elaborations. It will be seen how the rise to the rank of a clan priest was coupled with a heavy burden of expense. Some feasts gave the right to build special houses in elevated positions looking down on the village, or to wear ribbons on the front of the dress. Ladies were allowed to have shoes embellished with markhor or goat-hair tassels (Snöy 1962:185).

From the material available, it is difficult to specify precise functions for the defensive towers classified by Edelberg (1972:39) under 'religious places'. In any case, Edelberg's descriptions mention that the village tower in Pronz contained a cult hall in which the figure of a deity stood. A note in his work of 1968 mentions that he saw a tower in Shtiwe linked with the Mara temple (Motamedi - Edelberg 1968:14,Fig.3 text). As it appears that all the gods in the Prasun area (with the exception of Mara, whose special position is shown by the central temple in Kushteki) are worshipped within the framework of clan cults, one could almost assume that each tower corresponded to a clan house and contained a supplementary cult hall for the senior citizens, "who had sumptuous and prolonged" meals there. Buddrus told me that such a building was called 'tower of the old men'.

This assumption is seemingly contradicted by other information orally conveyed to me, again by Buddrus, that the location of the towers was determined by considerations of defence. The towers protected the exposed and easily accessible points of the settlement. However, it may be assumed that the maintenance and defence of each tower was entrusted to the lineages. That would be the explanation for Klimburg's otherwise confusing assertion that 'shrines to the gods' were present outside the fortified settlements in Prasun. These shrines were "built like towers and easy to defend". Evidently, such towers were outside, but not very far from the village as can be seen in a photograph taken by Edelberg in 1948 (1972:Fig.4 i.e., like watch-towers).

On the other hand, there were also small and unfortified shrines scattered over the fields. Buddrus found out that such sanctuaries are located respectively in the middle of the lots reserved by the clan to maintain their amal house, which is looked after by their acting priest. Such land is called 'god's land' and a hymn is sung when it is irrigated (Buddrus 1960:204). Women may not enter this area. The different types of sanctuaries and their relative hierophants form an integrated system that doubtlessly developed under locally specific conditions, lasting over a long period. The anthropologist Bernhard is of the opinion that the racial peculiarities of the
Parunis (e.g., blood groups) definitely speak for a long phase of isolation and consolidation (Bernhard 1980).

While discussing the religious systems of the neighbouring Dard people, sacred trees will be mentioned frequently. These belong to species that are either of great economic importance (such as the holm-oak which provides winter fodder for the goats) or have leaves containing aromatic oils (such as the juniper) which can be used as incense and quasi-intoxicant. Similar customs existed in Nuristan during the Kafir period (Robertson 1896:395,424,461,524,631; Snox 1962:215; Morgenstierne 1951:164). The küngguri tree, created by Mara himself, may well have been juniper. Buddruss heard of a 'golden' tree, called kundat (cf. Snox 1962:129). But comparatively little is known of such ethnobotanical topics since the more dramatic aspects of Kafir ritual practice have diverted the attention of the few interested visitors in the past.

VI. Invoking the Gods
"... he attentively watched the bow, while with a rapid utterance he named the Káfir gods one after the other . . ."
(Illustration to Robertson, pp. 420-2).
VI
PRIESTHOOD
AND RITUAL OFFICE
In relation to this chapter, an interesting monograph has appeared since the original German edition of this book (Frembgen 1983). But happily, not too much of my survey has become obsolete.

The priestly hierarchy of the East Kati or, more precisely, of the Kam was described sufficiently in Robertson's book (1896:415-8). One set of persons was responsible for the complete pantheon.

At the apex stood the *uta* (cf. Frembgen 1983:32-49), the high priest, with considerable political power. He was responsible for a particular 'tribe' of the East Kati (cf. Jones 1967:5, Map), and was picked from a lineage endowed with charismatic qualities, of which he was the head. He had to be present at all official ceremonies and personally carry out bloody sacrifices, helped by numerous office holders, men and boys. For this reason, Snoy translates *uta* as 'sacrificial priest'. The Uta also had to perform certain dances alone (Robertson 1896:471), in which he was allowed to approach exalted shrines (Tanner '1881:292).

As the Uta was constantly in a condition of highest purity, he had to obey many precautionary rules. Many places were forbidden to him, such as grave-yards and 'receptacles for the dead' (Robertson 1896:416), i.e., the wooden coffins. He even had to avoid the paths leading to such places. He was permitted to enter the house of mourning following a death only after a statue to the deceased had been erected. Slaves could cross the threshold of his house, but were forbidden to approach near the fire-place.

He enjoyed many privileges: he had the right to two pieces from every sacrificial animal (or a double portion) and was given precedence at all formal occasions. He had the right to sit on a chair of honour in front of his house without holding the otherwise required feasts. The chair of the last Uta of Kamdesh mentioned many times by Robertson (1896:116,159,277-8, 393) under the name Lutkam Chandlu Merak was purchased in Kabul by Klimburg (1981:181-2) and is now in the Kabul Museum.

The Uta could obviously not carry out his duties at all places simultaneously. The villages that lay at a distance from the political centre of the tribe had Utas with locally limited powers. Jones (1967:37-8) suggests that such 'vice-Utas' were members of the same lineage and even close relatives of the major dignitary.

At the time Robertson was in Kamdesh, the Uta who helped him greatly was evidently in a powerful and independent position. This title had already been handed down by ancestors for the past six or seven generations in direct line of descent (Robertson 1896:138). The emphasis on this fact might mean that this occurrence was not common, although even Elphinstone (1839, II:379) and Raverty (1859:364) mentioned heredity.

Incidentally, the priests wore a special head-dress (Robertson 1896:506).

The most important assistant of the Uta was the *debilala*, by Frembgen called *debulal* (1983:75-80) following Palwal (1970, VII:30-1; 1977:151-154). He recited hymns to the deity during the sacrifice. He stood by the side of the Uta during the big dances in honour of the gods, thus also occupying the centre of events. He had to obey certain taboos because of his ritual purity (Robertson 1896:416,642; Morgenstierne 1951:161).

It is not known what were the criteria for the selection of the Debilala. Obviously, he was required to have knowledge of the hymns and mythical
texts, rhetorical ability and perhaps mastery of the harp.

This position did not necessarily imply any political power. However, according to Palwal (1970, VII:31-6) he had to praise defunct and also living heroes, and that gave him considerable influence. Palwal (1969, IV:40; 1970, VII:31-2) brought attention to a female singer of genealogies, acting during the mourning ceremonies and during the rite of name-giving to a newborn child, i.e., in matters under the competence of the ladies. Robertson (1896:596, 637) mentions her activities, but not her title: namshuvulali.

There was a third religious functionary, the pshur (Prasun: pashki), an "individual who is supposed to be the subject of temporary inspiration" (Robertson 1896:416). His title has often been translated as 'shaman' (Siiger 1967:72; Dupree 1971:14). Snoy (1962:209-11) uses the term 'trance-priest', perhaps because he wishes to leave the question open as to whether the similarities between the Pshur and the shamans of Siberia are due to a chance convergence, or must be explained by diffusion or common origins. A review of the problems has been presented by E. Friedl (1965). I have contributed to this discussion and so has Frembgen (1983:87-99).

In any case, a peculiarity distinguishes the Pshur from the northern shamans: he does not make his appearance in clearly structured séances, but during the feasts and sacrificial celebrations. He gives expression to the general excitement and knows well how to dramatise the impact of supernatural powers. When the smoke of the sacrificial fire rises and the blood of the animals flows, he loses his consciousness, stares vacantly, a part of his body begins to tremble, and he rages sometimes like a madman. It is then said that he sees the deities and the demons. He feels himself beset by them and tries desperately to drive them away, so that they do not steal the offerings (Robertson 1896:414-418).

This condition may be called a kind of socially structured madness, frenzy possession, or even pious emotion. It is clear, however, that the Pshur conveys the commands of gods and demons.

There are rites where he plays the leading role, especially during the feast for the god Gish (Robertson 1896:402). Robertson emphasizes that some Pshurs could exercise considerable influence on the Kati. With their revelations, they were capable of inciting bloody warfare; on the other hand, they were often despised.

If a prophecy proved to be false, they could be treated harshly. One often heard that the Pshur of the Bashgali people were all liars and cheats, and were themselves not convinced of their capabilities. It was scarcely a coincidence that the Kam engaged a Pshur from the Mandagal area, but then drove him away because of his failures (Robertson 1896:417-8).

The peculiar position of the Pshur can be explained by the contradiction between the arrogant assuredness and severity of the Kati tribe, carried to extremes by the people of Kamdesh, and the professional eccentric instability of the Pshur. It was a part of the expressive role of the ecstatic Pshur absorbed in his task to go about bare-foot and in torn clothes.

In the milder world of the Prasun Kafirs, the discrepancy between the ideal temperament of the ethnic group and that of the trance-priest was less irreconcilable, so the Pashki was here an esteemed figure.

Apart from the Pshur, there were other soothsayers who ascertained the will of the gods from the oscillation of a bow balanced over the crossed thumbs of both hands in a ceremony in which the Uta was present.

Another rite was performed when the women were concerned for the safety and success of their men who had left on a war-party. Two women approached each other, each with an arrow balanced on the palm of their
outstretched hand. The behaviour of the arrows to each other provided the answer to the queries (Robertson 1896:422-3).

What is known today about the Kati feasts of merit cannot any longer be pressed into the rather simple scheme proposed by Robertson. The most extensive study of this topic was done by Palwal (1977). The result is similar to that conceived by Strand (1974b). There were certainly two ascending scales of rank parallel to each other, one requiring military and the other peaceful achievements. I explained already why I would consider 'feasts of confirmation' as the more appropriate term.

Material from the Prasun area available to Snoy up to 1962 was insufficient to show the specific traits in the system of priesthood there.

Robertson (1896:415) learnt that each Prasun village had a sacrificial priest, some of the rich elders being considered men of great sanctity. But he saw one only and from a distance. His dress of office including armature and bells, caught Robertson's attention: it was revealed that he was the owner of the house in Kushteki, where the iron pillar was preserved (Robertson 1896:529).

There must have been recitation-priests here as well, since a myth reports how such a priest accompanied his singing with the Kafir harp as in the Kati area (Snoy 1962:210). The trance priest of Prasun was consulted in case of illness, like a Siberian shaman. He inhaled juniper smoke, a practice well-known among eastern Dardic neighbours. While reciting his songs, he fell on one knee and declaimed with a trembling tongue (Robertson 1896:417).

The picture today is rather different because of Edelberg's studies (Motamedi - Edelberg 1968; Edelberg 1972) and Klirnburg's observations (1976:483-5), although a full understanding of the changed state of affairs is possible only from unpublished information communicated by Buddruss. There were certain deities or divine couples being linked to certain lineages. Some deities were responsible for more than one kinship unit, while other gods had no protégés in certain villages (Edelberg 1972:esp. 91-3).

As has been seen before, a statue of the guardian deity was placed in the cult house of the lineage. There seem to have been certain connections between the respective lineage deities and the character and practical specialization of the lineage under their protection.

In each clan one man, called münd, had temporary authority to perform the necessary rituals. Only he was permitted to enter the sacred area around the image of the deity, and he lived with his family in the cult house. As has been mentioned, there was also his right to use the yield of the fields at the disposal of the whole lineage in the name of the deity. However the duties attached to this post were so onerous that only the rich could afford this honourable but economically devastating occupation. If a member of the clan felt himself capable of this task, he could win the office by a ceremony involving the placing of a torch at the door of the hitherto officiating priest. Then the former officiant had to cede his post to the new aspirant.

A story about the god Wushum may be recalled here; a man named Pedämünd enters the underworld while chasing a giant and receives a bag of gifts from Wushum.

There is actually a lineage in Dewa (where Pedämünd was supposed to have lived) which, according to Edelberg (1972:38,92), is called Natak or Podlä (also Pedei). According to one of Klirnburg's unpublished lectures, one of the pillars in the pertinent clan house was a representation of Wushum; the main deity however was Sülmeč. In the meantime, more is known of such carved pillars as images of other gods and goddesses. There exist photographs taken in situ on location there, but most of the pillars were
illegally exported, as is sadly stated by Klimburg (1981:155-7). It is a sheer miracle that so many of them had survived the vicissitudes so far, and it is quite possible that any remaining pillars have been destroyed by religious zeal in the meantime. However Pedâmünd is not a proper name: it is the title of the officiating priest, who in the other world needs the protecting deity of his lineage. A ceremonial stick and collar may belong to his official dress.

Buddruss had recorded a further story having the same content in which the visitor to the underworld is called 'Pedekushte'. It is not clear what the second part of the name means (Snoy 1962:75).

A being named Pegaileamünd (Snoy 1962:94-5) appears in the story of Mandi's victory over the demon Guro, and he was initially thought by Snoy to be a god. Today, he reveals himself as the münd of the famous Pegailea clan (now extinct according to Edelberg 1972:91). He has magic powers and can change himself into a snake.

Buddruss informed me that a general explanation for this system would be that Mandi had installed the clan cults when he shaped the world into a primordial and eternal order. There is also the comment that Disani aroused the Pyechi clan, evidently the same unit called Wächi, or Pächi, by Edelberg (1972:93), to worship her (Snoy 1962:143). Since the initiative is taken by a female deity, one may mention one idea that is frequently documented in the Dardic area: creative inspiration emerges from the female sphere, and sexual tension brings the male to activity. Klimburg believes that this is very near to the roots of Tantric customs (1976:487).

One can imagine a similar kind of relationship between Disani and the hero Karuta, whom she "took as a worshipper" (Snoy 1962:143), and helped him in his feats of arms. He, in turn, established her cult in Dewa (Edelberg 1972:59).

The relationship between lmra and the Kusum (Päžgum) clan of Shtiwe stems from carnal intercourse. As has already been said, the god is supposed to have attacked and impregnated the adolescent daughter of the clan ancestor (Snoy 1962:75-6; Edelberg 1972:62-72).

Until recently this clan was so respected that they could demand a tribute from all the other inhabitants of the Prasun valley. Evidently, the head of the clan was the headman of the village. Motamedi noted that he was honoured as the 'son of the god' and controlled a sacred field, the yield of which he distributes among the poor (cf.Edelberg 1972:40). The informants of Edelberg, and Klimburg, confirmed that in detail. The name of the man leading the Kusum (Päžgum) clan was called Kuzum himself. He owned the house in which the statue of lmra was formerly erected, the head of the Wächi clan being also called Wächi. One has the impression that he was a famous bard, for he accompanied his songs with a four-stringed harp (cf.Edelberg - Jones 1979, photograph 42). Could this mean that apart from the changing clan priests, there was another series of hereditary clan chiefs who performed the function of the Debilala? (Edelberg 1972:63,72).

Apart from these priests who were linked to certain deities, there was no place for an Uta with universal competence. Such an institution in an area of such heightened sacred awareness would scarcely have been necessary or reasonable. It is odd, therefore, to learn from Jones (1970) that there was an 'Uta clan' in the Waigal area. They originally came "from Prasun". Maybe there is some confusion, and one should rather substitute 'Utai': i.e., the clan was called after Disni in her function as priestess. This idea was expressed by Alam Melabar Nuristani (1971:486).

There is no talk about female officiants, not even with such tasks as the Namshuvulali of the Katis, but rather unexpectedly Buddruss noted down a
text during his visit to Prasun in 1970 telling about a rite necessary for a
good harvest. The only source so far is a private communication to Frembgen
(1983:56). The text is rendered here in somewhat shortened version:

A member from the Psni-clan had to act as 'Walorga' (i.e., 'the man
jumping to the left bank of the river'). On a certain day in winter, the
Walorga undressed in his house and ran down to the river. I would assume
that his goal was Disni's temple, on the left (= eastern) bank. The men of
the village tried to stop him: if they succeeded, the year was expected to be
good, blessed with fertility. The man's head were then coloured with the
blood of a freshly slaughtered young sheep, and two baskets full of diluted
cow-dung were thrown on him. Afterwards he cleaned himself near the
bridge by bathing in the river, and then he approached the female house of
seclusion. Here the unclean women, either in menstruation or after childbirth
hailed him with an extremely indecent song.

If the Walorga was not stopped before reaching the river, a goat had to
be killed for him, the meat being given to him after his head was smeared
with the blood.

It is not clear whether the segments of the story are really in the right
sequence - cleaning in the river would make much more sense after the visit
to the house of seclusion. But the meaning is obvious any contact between
the pure and the impure sphere (at the spiritual debit of the former) is
necessary in order to bring about this sort of libidinous tension which seems
essential for fertility.

Robertson (1896:381) states explicitly that the gods of the Kafirs were
worshipped "by sacrifices, by dances, by singing hymns (Lâlu Kunda), and
by uttering invocations (Namach Kunda)." The gods "are propitiated by
songs, dancing and feasting, which includes sacrifices, and never in any
other way." He is quite adamant on this point (Robertson 1896:615).

The hymns mentioned have since been partially recorded in phonetic
transcription with translations (Morgenstierne 1951; 1967; 1968), and through
tape recordings as well (thus preserving the melody. Edelberg 1972; several
specimens are included in Edelberg - Jones 1979 where Alwad contributed a
separate chapter on music, 141-147). Photographs show the reciters in the
course of narration and indicate the type of instrumental accompaniment
(Edelberg 1972, Fig.26, 29). According to Alwad, only a small part of the
material collected by Lentz, Grjunberg, Sommavilla and Pressl has yet been
properly studied and edited.

Robertson (1896:431) supposed that in the Prasun valley the songs were
recited only by a soloist, while among the Kati "responses from the
congregation" were usual. Most of the hymns, however, were not dedicated to
the gods, but rather to heroes and the ancestors of the clan group

Robertson stressed that the dance was a totally natural and spontaneous
means of expression for the Kafirs. He asserted that the children while
playing, and youths while walking, fell unselfconsciously to dancing. He
noted that even the limbs of his porters moved to the rhythm of an inner
melody while they rested.

Joy and sorrow is expressed in this manner. If someone is lying
seriously wounded, or mortally ill, neighbours gather at his home to sing and
dance, perhaps to cheer him up or to awaken the spirits of life (Robertson
1896:615). As Raverty (1896:99) reported, wild dances in which the men
stood opposite the women took place before the departure of warriors for a
dangerous undertaking. Ultimately, the lights were extinguished, and the
feast ended in a sexual orgy.
Kafir ritual is only part of a more general tendency and capacity to give shape and iridescence to all emotions encountered in everyday life. It is thus not surprising that there is a wide range of expression: from simple gestures, culminating in rites where the dance is an intrinsic religious activity, an act of invocation or gratitude. Robertson (1896:615) tried to make a classification for the Kati (with whom he lived for a considerable time) in which he distinguishes between six more or less religious occasions leading to the dance. He treated most of these special events in Chapters XXIII and XXIV of his work.

Dance as a manner of worshipping the important deities of the pantheon was the culmination of most of the feasts (Robertson 1896:616-20). It took place in the house of assembly, the gromma: a fire blazed in the middle of the big hall, with the bori musicians (pipers and drummers; Palwal 1969,11:37) sitting on one side. Facing them on the opposite side was the officiating priest (Uta) flanked by the Pshur and the Debilala. These were surrounded by a circle of men who had reached a high rank by holding feasts of merit. Robertson calls them Jast. Everyone, except the Pshur, had decorated themselves and carried signs of their rank. Ceremonial axes glinted in the hands of the dancers.

The Uta proved to be a master of the dance, setting the pace. He shook at one place, he stamped towards the hearth, and pulled himself back while the surrounding circle of devotees continued a few steps further.

Three rounds had to be completed for every god invoked, starting with Gish and ending with Kshumai. Evidently, certain melodies (which Robertson could not distinguish) and different dance-steps, special types of accompaniment and rhythms, were selected for different gods. The excitement rose to a high pitch during the dance for Gish, while the dance for Kshumai that ended the sequence was wild, strange, and clearly lewd.

Except for the last deity, the Debilala behaved with ceremonial solemnity, singing hymns for every god invoked. The Pshur behaved as ferociously as could be expected of him. According to Robertson, he danced like a drunken man.

The tightly-packed audience encouraged the dancers and formed the chorus. Sometimes a group of women danced between the clans and the Jast in small circular movements, spinning around constantly. They were decorated in their finery and wore their horned caps; but with dirty faces and clothing they formed, at least for Robertson (1896:619), "very depressing objects". Little wonder, perhaps, that they were "largely ignored by their menfolk" on these occasions.

Dances outside the gromma, usually on its roof or in front of it, were not as solemn as those held inside. No ceremonial clothing was worn, and the priest joined in with the rest. Women did not take part. Hymns were recited, and the congregation responded. Robertson's description (1896:620-1) evidently refers to dances for the ancestors, for living and dead heroes.

Whoever aspired to the ranks of the consecrated had to hold a dance-feast in his own home, where the guest had to be fed. The host assumed the priestly role of Uta, standing between the Debilala and Pshur. A few men took over the part of the Jast, and one or two women of the host's family also participated. Everyone came to this curtailed representation of the great dance-ritual of the gromma wearing their best finery. The Kafir harp was played in accompaniment to the singing (Robertson 1896:627-8; Alvdal 1954).

There was one occasion when women took over the dance ritual, conducting the worship of the pantheon from Gish to Kshumai and reciting
hymns alternately, wearing male clothing and carrying weapons. As mentioned previously, this substitution was intended to provide spiritual support for their men while they were on war-parties (Robertson 1896:621-6). They acted with so much fervour and devotion that Robertson found their exertions no less exhausting in performance than those of their sons and husbands.

The intensive participation of women at ceremonies of mourning was very different. They appeared in ragged garments with their hair down and formed an inner circle around the corpse. They occupied this position, even in ceremonies for those fallen in raids in which a straw effigy was substituted for the corpse. Death, like birth, belonged essentially to the female sphere. Therefore the ladies on such occasions were given food first of all, and even the acting 'priest', the Namshuvulali, was a woman (Robertson 1896:634-42; Frembgen 1983:81).

For the dances accompanying the erection of an effigy to the dead, women again formed the inner circle; but they appeared (along with the men) adorned and decorated only if the effigy was being erected for a man (Robertson 1896:220,645-7).

Generally speaking, the Kafir dances required much practice and exhausted all the energy of the participants. They were taken seriously, apart from planned lapses into ludicrous moments, and awakened such excitement that the great sequence involving ceremonial rounds for all important deities was repeated many times without interruption. The dance was expected to manifest both tension and creativity, as a hymn recorded in Prasun shows: Mara ordered the gods to dance, but they could do so only after Disni appeared – another hint that inspiration derives from the female side.

According to Friedrich, there was a dance on which the leading Urirs tied flour sieves on their heads (Snoy 1962:107, 123). In this manner, they asked Imra to let the sun rise again. One would imagine that such a ceremony took place at the winter solstice; but the date given for this feast was in the last week of February.

The second peak of religious emotions was reached by immolations, bloody sacrifices playing the central role. Goats and cattle were most favoured for this purpose, sheep being less often sacrificed and mainly in connection with the chthonic spirits. Once a year was a horse sacrificed at the spot supposed to be the entrance to the nether world, and this animal had to be imported from Badakhshan (Edelberg 1972:37).

The blood sacrifice of the Kafirs was described by Elphinstone (1839,II:379-80) in great detail. Robertson (1896:423-6) also provides a graphic description, and Snoy (1962:213-5) has presented a summary. Flour, ghee, vessels of wine and water are placed in readiness by the altar. A fire is kindled, the sacrificial animal being brought before the altar. The priest appears barefoot, cleanses himself by washing his hands and then sprinkles the animal. The sacrificial victim is supposed to show its assent to die by shaking itself. To achieve this, water is poured into its ear: a simple but effective method of securing the 'auspicious shiver', already well-known in antiquity. Small quantities of food are then thrown against the altar and into the fire, after which the Uta kills the animal by cutting its throat. Exclamations of the believers (such! = be pure! Elphinstone 1839:379n.), with gestures and sounds of kissing, accompany the sacrifice. The blood is collected, thrown over the altar and into the fire, and sometimes also onto the people present. The head is then separated by twisting, and singed in the fire for a short time. If the Debilala is present, he recites hymns to the deity to whom the sacrifice is being offered. Simultaneously, the wildly
gesticulating Pshur gives expression to the state of mind of the sacrificers in an ecstatic and often grotesque manner.

Cattle are killed by an axe-blown through the spine at the neck. Sheep are sacrificed with less ceremony, but still in a condition of high purity.

Snøy (1962:214) rightly points out that the aspect of the offering as a personal deprivation (in order to express submission under the will of the deity) is secondary here. According to Robertson, all slaughtering is ceremonial and must be carried out according to strict rules. The shock at seeing the cruel killing of the animal may involve an agitated disposition which contributes to the religious experience. This is not dealing with an offering in the modern theological sense, but with a sacrificium as this word was understood in pagan Rome. The meals of the participants, which sometimes follow immediately after the sacrifice, and sometimes after their return to their houses, were also considered a part of the sacred act.

For some occasions offerings of cereals, fruits and milk prevail, and the libation of milk and wine. Those present always received a share of these offerings. The meal eaten together can be considered to be a rite of communion, as Snøy suggests. Even at feasts to the dead, the spirits of the dead have to be satisfied with half of the donations, the rest being eaten by the mourners.

Fire is indispensable to the sacrifice and is considered to be pure and sacred, although no indications for a fire-cult exist. Torches play an important role in many rites. However, there is no need to trace these back to Zoroastrian influence (Snøy 1962:215-6).

The custom of dipping arrows in the blood of the victims, and shooting them in all directions, probably serves to extend the area of blessing (Robertson 1896:468).

The reverse effect (i.e., a systematic pollution) is surely attained through the practice of shooting arrows smeared with excrement. Such arrows do not only cause the sacred lakes to overflow, thus threatening the valley with devastation. Strangely, such arrows are thought to be fatal to giants. The belief that such missiles can pierce the sphere of demonic impurity is one of several possible explanations (Snøy 1962:315).

It has already been said that birth in the menstruation house was supposed to release the forces of extreme impurity, especially threatening to men. It has also been determined that the same forces could be seen as bringing a kind of counter-sacredness, judged as negative only from the male point of view. Food, the nature of which remained unknown to men, was eaten in the women's 'Nirmali house' (Snøy 1962:144). Nothing is known of the rites performed there. All that is known is the length of the seclusion period after birth, and of the purification rites and days of rest following (Robertson 1896:596-599).
VII. A Dance with Effigies
"Then from out of the stamping throng the faces of someone long dead and gone would gaze upon me."
(Illustration to Robertson, pp. 216-7).
RITUALS OF DEATH AND CONCEPTS OF THE SOUL
Among the rites de passage, compiled by Snoy (1962:177-80) there is little information about weddings in a religious context. Jones collected his material mainly in South Nuristan, where former hypotheses about lineage, exogamy and bride-price are confirmed (Jones 1974:144-63). But the available reports from North Kafiristan concerning the rituals of death, burial and the erection of monuments to the dead, indicate a closed system (Robertson 1896:630-651; Snoy 1962:187-193; Palwal 1969,IV:21-43).

The dead were laid out in public, wearing the adornments and signs of rank won during their lifetime. A woman of reputation had a wreath of juniper twigs and boots decorated with markhor hair, with garlands made from ears of corn to decorate her bier. The sorrow and affection of the community for the departed were expressed by loud wailing, in which women played a leading role, kissing gestures, hymns, dances and mock fights.

During the mourning for a fallen warrior, the guests wore no jewellery, the men wearing a goatskin over their normal clothing, while women appeared in ragged shawls.

Feeding the guests was a part of the death ceremony and placed a heavy financial strain on the bereaved. For this reason, the member of a rich family was mourned for three days, while one day sufficed for the corpse of a poor family. Children were buried without ceremony, according to Palwal in vessels made from stone or clay (1969,IV:37-8; cf.Dupree 1971 with photograph).

If it proved impossible to retrieve the body of a warrior killed in alien territory, one tried to bring at least his head back to the village. For a ceremony of mourning in the absence of the body, a figure of straw was made (according to Palwal, an effigy of millet straw) and dressed in the best clothes of the dead man. At the end of the mourning ceremonies, the figure was burnt at the burial place. If the retrieval of the body was delayed, the effigy could be used for at least a part of the ceremony. Palwal notes that the feast could last three, nine, or even up to twenty days, the necessity of having a straw effigy increasing with time, especially in the hot days of summer.

The corpse was brought to the grave-yard after the end of the mourning ceremonies. The men, especially those of high purity, turned back before reaching it. In the end only the women and the 'low-caste' bari carrying the corpse remained.

Above ground burial in wooden coffins was a general practice in North Kafiristan. Jewellery and food was buried with the corpse, the men also being buried with the weapons corresponding to the rank they had won in their lifetime. Many of these coffins had formerly been used as containers for grain, and were presumably not allowed to be placed directly on the ground (Schomberg 1938:40; Dupree 1971:16-7). Only distinguished or very rich people had a coffin to themselves; others had to share their last resting place with other members of their family, or with the heads of fallen warriors. Very rarely, the coffin was protected by the construction of a wooden shelter which was left to slow destruction by weathering.

Burial was followed by a longer period of mourning, during which the priest could not enter the house of the deceased which had been rendered impure after his death. The spouse of the deceased was bound to total withdrawal, although only for a limited period.
Among the Kati, the phase of mourning and impurity for the rich and distinguished dead culminated after a year, marked by the construction and setting up of wooden figures of the dead (Robertson 1896:645-51; Edelberg 1960:275; Snoy 1962:190-2; Newton 1963). These figures were carved by 'slaves' and were paid for according to fixed rates depending on the type. They showed symbols of honours won, which also publicised the amount of expenditure undertaken by family members of the deceased for the feasts entitling the erection of the figure. The amount spent determined whether the figure would be portrayed sitting or standing. A man could also be depicted mounted on horseback, or even on a double horse with twin heads. Some carvings had a manikin playing a musical instrument sitting on the left arm of the main figure.

The iconography of these figures has been discussed (Edelberg 1960; Palwal 1970, VI). What interests one most of all here is what is known about the events leading to the setting up of an effigy, as well as its further role in the cult of the dead.

Before such a figure was taken out of the village, it was honoured in the same way as the dead person, or his straw effigy: it was addressed, the glory of the deceased was related, and gestures of kissing showed the piety of the guests who were fed all day (Robertson 1896:215-26). One danced around the wooden figure or with it (i.e., a 'slave' carried the figure on his back and joined the circle of dancers).

Finally, the figures were set up beside earlier effigies near a path or a bridge, often in the vicinity of the grave-yard, but not inside it.

The effigies remained an object of lasting reverence, and offerings were made to them at certain feasts in which women played a leading role. The faces of the effigies were then rubbed with melted butter (Robertson 1896:587). In case of an illness in the family of the deceased, the blood of a slaughtered animal was smeared on the effigy. There was a strong conviction that worship of the effigies would bring rewards, and the fear was equally strong that negligence might bring retribution (Robertson 1896:414-5; Palwal 1969, IV:25).

Apart from these wooden figures, there were stone menhirs, often several feet high, as monuments to the dead. Perhaps a sort of oblong platform built from boulders on the wayside was insufficiently explained as a sort of resting-block for it had a seemingly religious or commemorative meaning (Robertson 1896:648; Snoy 1962:190). Small statues raised on posts were set up near the village, with notches cut into the posts to indicate the number of homicides achieved by the hero thus represented. Snoy suggests that these were erected during the lifetime of the warriors, who were honoured in this way on achieving a degree of rank in the killer hierarchy: however, the reports from which he draws his information originate in South Kafiristan, probably in the case of monumental poles, but not effigies (Fazl Huq and Nurullah 1878:730; Masson 1842, I:233; Elphinstone 1939, II:386). Palwal has provided comprehensive information about the monumental gateways of wood and stone constructed in honour of certain persons. He also recorded a hymn recited during the ceremony held at this occasion (Palwal 1969, IV:27-8).

Although the ceremonies of mourning are known, little is known about the concept of the soul upon which these ceremonies are based. Robertson (1896:380-1) writes that the word for 'soul' can also mean 'breath'. At death, the soul becomes a shadow called partir, which can be seen in dreams. Buddruss heard that the shadow leaves the body through the fontanel (Snoy 1962:203-4). These partir go to the subterranean realm of the dead,
Yurdesh, where both paradise (bisht) and hell (zozuk) are located. Unrepentant sinners burn in the eternal fires of hell. Maramalik watches over the dead, letting no one return. These beliefs seem to reflect concepts of neighbouring 'higher' cultures, and contradict other elements of belief whereby the souls of the dead can continue to help or hurt their descendants.

What specific merits or misdemeanours would qualify a person for hell or paradise? Who decided the fate of the soul? Already Elphinstone (1839,11:377) had mentioned generosity and hospitality as the most important Kafir virtues. Unlike many other peoples, the Kafirs have no mythical account describing the judgement of the dead. Buddruss heard of a deity acting as a judge or arbitrator, but human souls are not mentioned in this context (Snoy 1962:74).

No narrative giving the reasons and explanation for the erection of effigies to the dead is available. That these effigies are erected a year after death can be explained by economic considerations, but they could also imply a belief in a transitional period after death lasting for one year. It could be assumed that the costly erection of such monuments favours the soul of the deceased and ensures a good position in the hereafter, analogous to such gains by feats of merit performed during his lifetime. Again, available sources do not help much here. Palwal (1969,IV:21-2) thinks that the position of the deceased could be raised to a (quasi-)divine level, but with one essential difference: the cult of the gods was communal, while that of the deified ancestors was specific to their immediate family, extending only secondarily and occasionally to their village or tribe. Furthermore, women were allowed to participate actively in the 'private' ancestor cult, though not in the cult of deities (cf. Elphinstone 1839,11 : 377,382).

There is also the suggestion that the dead return to the house of Disani, where they live happily (Morgenstierne 1951:187; Edelberg 1972:76-7). It has been said that this goddess protects and represents the biological substance of the people. It is therefore conceivable that the souls of the dead come together in her house to give their energy to the living, and perhaps to be reborn in the same clan. This could be linked to the unique manner of name-giving described by Elphinstone (1839,11:381). The new-born infant is placed at the breast of its mother, and the names of its ancestors are recounted. The child is given the name recited at the moment it begins to suckle.

Other methods of Kafir naming rites existed, but all were aimed at finding the right ancestral name-donor through a sort of trial. There is a strong suggestion that characteristics of the name-donor were thought to be 'reborn' in the child and perhaps that the ancestral spirit itself was thus reincarnated (Palwal 1969:IV:28-31).

The concept of the community of dead ancestors is strikingly reflected in the following story: a man called Kanshit Turuk was kidnapped by spirits and had to climb down a ladder to the underworld, where he saw his ancestors. They sat on their chairs of honour and leaned on their dancing-axes. The ruler of the dead, Maramalik, ordered him to listen to their glorious biographies so that he could relate them at feasts after his return to the upper world. When Kanshit Turuk confessed that his poor brain could not remember so much, he was sent home in disgrace. As punishment, only daughters were born to him. A fellow villager called Karink was captured in his place and was able to fulfil the honourable task of relating the biographies of the Kati ancestors of Bagramatal, starting from the two brothers Mara and Tangial to the present day (Palwal 1969,IV:30,32).
Palwal reported the sequence of collective sacrifices to the dead followed by feasting in Bagramatal. He mentions particularly the special role played by women. Another memorial ceremony for the dead, 'atuna wiśt', is also mentioned by him (Palwal 1969, IV: 23-27). Robertson (1896: 587-8) has already described the Marnma feast in this context, the most interesting detail of which is that the women clean the menstruation house to hold a private feast in this rather gloomy environment.

The soul or the life-force can appear in shape of a bird, as told in the myths of the Prasuns. The killing of this spirit double can have fatal consequences, as is told in one of the narratives that the life-force of mother and daughter was contained in one and the same bird (Snøy 1962: 74-204). Father and son (or mother and daughter) may have identical or almost identical names, making it sometimes unclear which generation is being referred to. The concept of an inherited life-force seems implied.

Snøy (1962: 159-160) noticed that in one of the texts collected by Buddruss, the children of a female demon were fed on human flesh by her. But when they speak about their food, they say that they got the rib of a he-goat.

Human souls as game to supernatural hunters is also the background of a myth concerning the seven Paneu, as all the narratives known from Morgenstierne and Palwal indicate (Morgenstierne 1951: 165, 174-5; Palwal 1969, II: 82).

The female ancestors of the main tribes of Nuristan were created by Imra through churning, like butter in a leather bag. Snøy pointed out that this legend appears to be a regional mutation of a main motif in Hindu mythology, namely the 'churning of the milk ocean'. According to local custom, a leather bag is substituted for the milk churn in the Kafir version. A Prasun myth presents mankind as being created from water by Imra. Elsewhere one hears of human beings being sown as seed (Snøy 1962: 203).

In conclusion, it must be stressed that any attempt to bring such diverging information into a coherent system (such as the assumption of several complementary soul-substances) would stem from a misguided application of literate rationality, following a 'modern' theological synthesis. The ancient Kafirs were far from such sophistry.
VIII. New Year's Day Ceremony

"The Debilála chanted the praises of the goddess, the people joining in the refrain at regular intervals."

(Illustration to Robertson, pp. 582–3).
PERIODICAL FEASTS
Snoy (1962:97-124) discusses the Kafir feasts in a comprehensive chapter entitled "Forms of Temporal Experience", re-interpreting reports from earlier authors (esp. Robertson 1896:578-95) in the light of Lentz's investigations and theories (1936:22-3; 1937; 1937a; 1938; 1939/78; 1974) and hitherto unpublished material (reports of Buddrus and Friedrich). Edelberg's work on the Prasuns (1972:83-97) has also been considered. At my disposal were only the published parts of the autobiography of Azar. Palwal (1977:316-22) tried to collate the calendar he recorded in Ramgal, with that noted down by Robertson in Bashgal.

What can be presented on this basis is a preliminary summary, not a conclusive synthesis. A detailed study awaits future scholarship. However, it would be a simplification to suggest, as has been done, that the calendar in North Kafiristan was, fundamentally based on livestock-rearing while the South Kafir calendar was based on agriculture. According to Edelberg (1972:83) the intervals in the calendar of North Kafiristan are related to the needs of livestock-husbandry in conjunction with agriculture and handicrafts. One of the meanings of the festivities was to mark the inception and conclusion of economic or fighting activities.

The delineation and rough division of the year is primarily determined by observing the movements of the sun. The rising and setting of the sun is related to certain points on the mountain skyline from a fixed location; rays of sunlight penetrating inside special buildings, and the shadows cast by certain monuments, could also be of use as points of reference. Such temporal parameters are, however, only approximate, giving rise to variance from village to village. Robertson (1896:579) explained this as a device to allow people in one valley-community to attend the same feast in different villages, which is certainly a sound idea.

Despite Robertson's rejection of geography as a determining factor, I feel that the different heights of the villages may have caused climatic differences to be taken into account; moreover, there were oscillations each year, obliging the villagers to act closely in rhythm with the phases of vegetation. The priest who determined the dates (and hence the beginning of the times for grazing and cultivation) may have allowed himself to be influenced by the melting of snow and the condition of the fields. So there are quite divergent dates, by European reckoning, for one festival in different years (Snoy 1962:105).

Basic units of time last at least twenty days in North Kafiristan. This corresponds perhaps to the time needed for collecting a suitable quantity of milk products, or the normal time for grazing a pasture, but even this period is not strictly adhered to. Lentz (1939:91-4) mentions "Kafir months", each of which culminates in a feast. I think that the use of the word 'month' can be confusing, as it could be mistaken to mean periods of equal length. It must also be admitted that there were feasts lasting not one but several days, so one cannot give an exact date. However, the most essential differences would be introduced by the fact that in some places (e.g., Kamdesh) the New Year started in midwinter, but in others, from the spring equinox. Palwal (1977:316) even believes that there existed some three systems side by side, the third starting in the fall. That would effectively redistribute the dates for some of the most important festivals in different areas.
To date, the main synopsis of the feast-calendar in any part of former Kafiristan was compiled by Robertson (1896:578-95) and commented by Snoy (1962:104-14). These surveys are the basis for my following exposition, concerning the Kati. However, one should be aware that Palwal recorded the ritual calendars of the Kati in three areas: in Bagramatal, in the eastern part of Kati-land, and two others in their western region, in Kalam and in Ramgal. But he reproduced in his thesis only the material from Ramgal, considering it most important and consistent. He added some information taken from the unpublished manuscript of Prof. Abd al Rauf Benava. In several respects it is useful to refer to Palwal's thesis (1977:315-22) where some conjectures are confirmed; but on the other hand one has to face new problems.

Snoy (1962:105) starts his review with the Giche festival which, according to Robertson (1896;583), was held on the 16th and 17th of January 1891 in Kamdesh. It is supposed to have marked the beginning of the new year. There were purification rituals and fire rites with the participation of women in ceremonies to increase human fertility, whereby the shrine of the goddess Disani played a central role. The older boys were given their first trousers at this feast to indicate their arrival at manhood.

These activities give me the impression that this was a midwinter feast that had become somewhat displaced in the calendar. Palwal's data (1977:317) are a most welcome confirmation - in Ramgal it started as early as December 22nd, and it lasted 10 days. The reminiscences of Azar provide more, and quite other details (Kristiansen 1974:18-20). The ceremonies lasted twelve days: in the first seven days, the customary dances took place, wood was gathered on the eighth and juniper branches were brought on the ninth day. On the eleventh day, an offering of bread, ghee (melted butter) and juniper twigs were thrown into the fire in honour of the god Mon, after which the other gods were also honoured.

Figures of domestic animals and their herdsmen were then ceremonially constructed from willow twigs with an invocation to the deity to bestow fertility on the animals. Animal figures were also painted with black paint on the walls of houses.

The effigies were destroyed on the following day to fashion long bundles, one for each household. These bundles were fifteen to twenty feet long if dedicated to men, while those for women and children were smaller, six to ten feet, even unborn children in the womb were taken into consideration. The rest of the willow twigs were massed together again and made into torches with juniper twigs tied to them. During the night, bread was prepared and each deity was offered their share. Finally, festive clothes were put on and the houses purified by fumigation with these torches.

The people then went to the shrine of Disani, led by the Debilala and the Pshur. The entrance to the shrine was decorated with willow bundles dedicated by persons chosen by the Pshur. The Pshur communicated with the deity through invocation and singing. Musical instruments were not permitted. The celebrations consisted of the usual ritual dances culminating in a sumptuous meal. Seven days later figures similar to the earlier ones were made from willow branches, these being worshipped and finally burnt.

The Veron feast, recorded by Robertson on the third of February 1891 (according to Palwal however as 'Urivo' on the 11th of January 1971), culminated in a sumptuous meal, offered by the village executive, the urir, financed possibly by the proceeds of fines levied by them. Friedrich provides the supplementary information that the fresh selection of assembly members followed at the end of this period (Robertson 1896:583-4; Friedrich Ms.:431-2; Snoy 1962:105-6).
A few days after the Veron feast began the Sanowkun ceremony, which Robertson (1896:449,461-6) observed between the 11th and 13th of February 1891. The candidates for the rank of just, 'eldership', then entered a decisive phase of religious activity which would finally qualify them for their post. From then on, they were limited in their mobility - they could not leave the village and had to preserve a state of ritual purity. Contact with dogs was especially polluting.

The sacrificial priest (uta) happened to be also a sponsor and candidate for promotion at the feast observed by Robertson (cf. his illustration of this). Dressed in sumptuous clothes, parts of which were imported from the lower Kunar valley, he leaned back regally on one of his house pillars. Sitting on a low chair, he held his hereditary dancing-axe and had a juniper twig stuck in his turban headdress. His young son sat opposite, taking advantage of the occasion to obtain the right to wear his trousers of manhood. That reveals that this feast was an integral part of the festal activities, starting with the new year.

The public worship took place in the house of the feast-giver, with the usual dances, blood sacrifices (two selected male goats) and invocations. The sacrificial blood was sprinkled over the hosts, father and son, and the guests vied with each other in praising the Uta and his deceased father while receiving rich presents. Debilala and Pshur played their traditional roles. The sister and daughter of the host were prominent during the dances.

The Kaneash ceremonies continued over the next two days, the feast-giver and candidate being given a special headgear, much like a halo, again with a juniper twig over the forehead. Every repetition of this expensive ceremony would be rewarded by permission to add another juniper twig.

One of the religious activities required of the Kaneash was the cultivation of a miniature field of wheat (Robertson 1896:466-8), made by preparing a square patch of earth with sloping sides near the south wall of the house and sowing seed in it. The young shoots were already a couple of inches high when Robertson visited the Uta's house on 25th of February 1891. In connection with this little field, the candidate undertook a ritual in front of the fire, the reason for which Robertson could not discover. Grain, cedar twigs, water and ghee all lay ready; evidently, the water was consecrated by a burning twig, followed by offerings. Thereafter, the wheat grains were thrown into the fire fed by the cedar twigs and burnt while the ghee was poured over them. The comparative scholar knows of similar rituals elsewhere and is tempted to use them for an explanation here (Dostal 1957:80; Snoy 1962:121,235-6). Miniature fields of this kind are called 'Adonis gardens', their making being an essential ritual in the fertility cults of the ancient Near East. Their existence in the Indian Subcontinent is equally well known. It may be assumed that the intention was to effect a magic influence on the yield of the soil, though one must bear in mind that the social system of the Kafirs has a rigorous sexual division of labour. Men were usually not responsible for agriculture, women being the regular tillers of the soil. Thus the growing of an Adonis garden could mean that the candidate has somehow extended his personality and competence so far that he is able to adopt a specifically female activity. The fire ritual in the evening would then symbolize the privilege to be in charge of the hearth, which again was a female activity. Maybe the watering of the miniature garden may have been a relevant part of the ritual. Here is the same tendency that made 'bisexuality' such a characteristic trait of priesthood in similar cults of the Near East.

On the 18th of February 1891 the Taska feast began, in the course of
which the boys of a section of the village were allowed to obscenely abuse the men of another section. On the following day, the usual dancing feasts for the gods were held and on the 20th of February the boys danced again. On the 21st of February, a ritual competition took place by throwing an iron ball, called shil. It is about the size of a tennis ball, but with very irregular facets. Imra allegedly made a couple of these when he created the world, and these were subsequently discovered in running water. One of these balls still lay in a spring above Kamdesh in Robertson's time. The winner of the competition had the expensive right to hold a feast in honour of Imra and was allowed to keep the ball on a 'bed of wheat' till the next year (Robertson 1896:584-7; Snoy 1962:106-7). The same feast was held in Ramgal according to Benawa (quoted by Palwal 1977:318) in the beginning of February.

The Marnma feast held on the 8th of March 1891 was to honour ancestors, and all activities were therefore initiated by women. They offered the effigies of the ancestors various kinds of food which they washed away with water, and then retired to the Nirmali house for a joyful feast with singing and dancing. On their return from the house, they challenged the men with teasing and sexual allusions. Again, food was laid out for the dead and was washed away with water. The rest of the prepared food was eaten by the respective families of the dead (Robertson 1896:587-8; Snoy 1962:107).

Friedrich also heard about this feast. His description tallies generally with the above, but shows discrepancies in respect of the date. Similarly, the Marvon or Munvon feast is described by Azar, with the comment that it was held twenty days before the beginning of the new year (evidently reckoned to be at the spring equinox). (Friedrich Ms.:433-4; Kristiansen 1974:20-1). Palwal (1977:319) says that this feast, called Marvana, took place on the 17th of March in Ramgal.

According to Robertson, the Duban feast was held between the 19th and 29th of March. The Uuir and their chief for the following year were selected on the first day. Robertson was not sure about the significance of this feasting period and the specific rites held at that time. There were dances, processions, hymns and, of course, feasting. The Pshur played a major part (Robertson 1896:588; Friedrich Ms.432; Snoy 1962:107-8). According to Palwal, the Uuir took over their functions in Ramgal at this time.

The meaning and purpose of the Ashindra feast held on the 6th of April 1891 according to Robertson (1896:588-9) is imprecise. A procession came down the Kamdesh hill to the river where simple boulders stood as sanctuaries for the deities Bagisht and Duzhi (=Doohee? cf. Elphinstone 1839,11:378). Bagisht was offered an ox, Duzhi a male goat. By way of exception, the Kaneash were also allowed to leave the village. Competitions of all kinds were subsequently held, particularly a cult race over a wheat field. The meat of the sacrificed animals was eaten, after which all returned singing to the village (Friedrich Ms.434-5; Snoy 1962:108). Maybe there is a correspondence here to the Ashra feast known in Ramgal (Palwal 1977:319).

Towards the end of April (between the 20th of April and 4th/8th of May 1891), the period of festivities in honour of Gish began. The door of his temple was opened, while slaves beat the drum in his honour at sunrise and sunset. During this time, and the four days that followed, the Pshur went through the village, his face smeared with flour, and "tongueless" iron bells swinging from his hands. A crowd of boys followed him, bleating like goats. The Pshur sometimes turned round and chased them, trying to hit them lightly with the bells and throwing them handfuls of walnuts. The house he chose to return to, in order to put away the bells, was considered specially blessed, and its inhabitants hurried to sacrifice a male goat. During this whole
ceremony the Pshur was in trance, so he was considered pure and sacred. The Uta and the Kaneash came with him, trying to appease him. Robertson (1896:401-5) mentions no name for this feast, and it is not included in his synoptic calendar. But it is certainly identical with the Gish Namuch mentioned by Azar (Morgenstierne 1933:201) as already noted by Snoy (1962:111).

According to Raverty (1859:353-6), at the end of this "grand and ancient festival which continues from twenty to forty days", the braves go for killing or to be killed. Raverty gave a graphic and maybe somewhat exaggerated description of ceremony preceding their departure:

"... the whole of the people - male and female, young and old congregate on the green in front or in the centre of the village, where all assemblies take place ... singing and dancing - are kept up with great spirit, until about midnight, when on a given signal, the lights are suddenly extinguished; the men rush on the women; and each man seizes the hand of the nearest female, or one whom he may have selected before hand, if he can manage to approach her in the scuffle which now ensues. He then takes her away to some private place and retains her until the morning. On these occasions it makes very little difference who the fair one is, whether his own wife or that of another - his own daughter or sister or another's; and as might be supposed, very ludicrous, as well as painful mistakes, are apt to occur. This particular day is called the Chilum Chuti ... and takes place about the Hindú month of Sirád ...

The day succeeding the Chilum Chuti, and the last of the festival, all the people assemble together, and those who are desirous of making an inroad into the territories of their Muhammadan neighbours, get up and stand on one side. On this, one of the elders, or chief men of the tribe arises, and like a Kowál or Bard proceeds to harangue the audience on the deeds and the prowess of their ancestors; how many Muhammadans they had killed in their lifetime; how many of their villages they had plundered and destroyed; and enjoins them to take example therefrom. If there should be any one amongst the assembly distinguished for his actions against the enemies of their faith, they are recounted and enlarged upon, as also the deeds of any other individuals the orator may recollect.

When the bard has finished his address, the people, with the exception of those who have come forward to invade the country of their enemies, disperse to their several homes, and the latter make arrangements for their departure on the crusade.

Until they have matured their plans, and the expedition is ready to depart, no individual of the party either eats or sleeps in his own dwelling; and in whosessoever house he may happen to be in the evening, there he sleeps for the night.

When the morning arrives for the warriors to set out, the people of the village or villages, as the case may be, give them provisions and wine for their journey; and those requiring arms are supplied with them. Some conspicuous hill or other place is then determined on, at which a beacon-fire is to be lighted on their return, in order that the villagers may come out to meet them. The necessary fuel or combustibles for this beacon is then got ready and piled up at the appointed place; and in case any one might be so malicious as to set fire to the pile, or that it might accidentally take fire, all other persons are strictly forbidden to approach the spot, under pain of severe punishment."
As for the credibility of this tale, it should be remembered that Elphinstone (1839, II: 380) was already familiar with sexual promiscuity during Kafir ceremonies.

The Diran feast was held on the 9th of May 1891, relieving the Kaneash of their tiring tasks for the year. The villagers then went to the shrine of Imra, preceded by the Uta, sprinkling water with a juniper twig. The god was offered wicker baskets filled with flour and with a sculpted piece of bread on top. The leader of the Urir then made an offering to Bagisht at another place. The offering was thought to be conveyed to his shrine in some mysterious manner through the air. The feast ended with an archery competition (Robertson 1896: 589-90). More detailed was the information given to Friedrich by a Kati man living in Chitral (Ms: 434-6; Snoy 1962: 110).

The departure of the cattle to the high pastures was celebrated in Ramgal in the last days of May (Palwal 1977: 319). Friedrich also heard of a Kati festival, called 'Minsi' before the herds left in the first days of June. A sacrifice was made to Imra and meat distributed among the villagers.

The Gerdelov feast held on the 30th of June 1891 could not be described in detail by Robertson (1896: 590), since he did not observe it personally. Syud Shah, who saw the same feast on the 19th of June 1882, reported a sacrifice at a holy stone of Imra (Hughes 1883: 406; Snoy 1962: 111).

Robertson mentioned many picturesque dances during the Patilo feast, held on the 30th of June 1891. Syud Shah, who saw this feast on the 19th of June 1882, recounts that eight goats were slaughtered in honour of Fatima (most probably the goddess Disani) and eight kids in honour of 'witches', who would be the demonic companions of the goddess. (Robertson 1896: 590, Snoy 1962: 111 after Hughes 1883: 407-8).

The important feast of Disanedu was celebrated in 1891 between the 9th and 12th of July, beginning with offerings for Disani and Gish. Animals were slaughtered with offerings of bread and large quantities of cheese, relatively abundant in this season. The major part of the cheese was carefully divided among the men, while the meat was cooked on the spot. The women brought bread, but were not allowed to participate in the male feasting.

The door of the Gish temple was then closed by the Pshur, who had earlier opened it. This part of the ceremony strongly recalls the Roman custom of opening the gates of the Janus-temple when the army took to the field, and to close them only after a successful return. But the Kafir raiders returned in scattered groups, certainly some of them much later than the middle of July. Perhaps the closing ceremony indicated only the beginning of the period of returning warriors, when young braves were expected anxiously by their families. The usual dances took place the next day; and on the day following a formal meeting was held whereby the Jast and three women appeared as dancers. An evidently staged fight followed: horseplay in which interspersed women also took part, after which the women were given licence to splash water on the men and to duck them under water (Robertson 1896: 590-95; Snoy 1962: 112).

Azar mentions a three-day feast called Ishtri-chal-nat (cf. Robertson 1896: 592 Stritilli nát). P. Parkes recorded this festival under the name of Istri-chilit-nat, 'woman-outlaw-dance', i.e., 'dance of eloping women' in the Kati villages of Brumotul and Kunisht. He believes that adultery and wife-elopement, expressly encouraged by ritual licence during this festival, may have had an analogous importance in the social and political organization of the Afghan Kafirs as that described in his forthcoming book on the Kalash tribe. The summer dancing mentioned by Azar and Robertson would appear to correspond to the libidinous "night-dances" (rat-nat) held by the Kalash at
this time, associated with pastoral and agricultural fertility in early autumn.

The feast mentioned by Robertson was held four days after Disanedu. Syud Shah (Hughes 1883:422) dated it 1st of July 1882. The same author gives the curious report of an "Ayeshah" idol being worshipped for fortune in war against the Muslims at this occasion. The favourite wife of Mohammad is evidently alluded to here and can be identified with Disani, responsible for the safe return of the warriors (Snay 1962:112-3).

There is another account of Azar, mentioning a Nilon feast held at the time of greatest heat and again connected to the throwing of water - once more reminiscent of the Holi festival in India. Normal clothing was worn for seventeen days, but even the Jast appeared fully dressed during the last three days (Kristiansen 1974:17-8).

Friedrich learned of a period called Nilone between the 7th and 21st of July. Snay (1962:113) suggests the name must be connected to the Nilu feast; yet that was held, as will be seen, on September 17th and 18th 1891 in Bashgal (Robertson 1896:578). The difference might be explained by the supposition that the former date (not exactly communicated to Friedrich) was that of the introductory part of the Nilone period, certainly including Disanedu. The full Nilone period must have lasted for approximately three months, with several feasts "featuring" Disani and Gish.

Robertson (1896:471,472,595) was no eye-witness of the Munzilo feast, held on 17th of August 1891, but he learned that the candidates for the rank of jast had to arrange for food at the feast. The kaneash and their female partners played a leading role in the dancing. Four pairs of couples appeared in the sequence following: on the first day, one couple appeared and danced; on the second day, the second couple appeared together with the male partner of the first pair, and on the third day, the third couple, reinforced by the men of the preceding pairs. On the last day, all the Kaneash danced with the lady of the last couple. Meals for the guests were provided by the male in the morning, and by his female partner in the evening. The Kaneash from the upper half of the village had to sleep at the shrine of Disani, those from the lower half near the shrine of Gish. Finally, the men had to shave their heads and beards, leaving only the Kafir scalp-lock exposed. The inclusion of Munzilo into the Nilone period is evinced by the deities then addressed.

The last event in Robertson's calendar of feasts (1896:578,595) is the Nilu, held between the 17th and 19th of September 1891. It started on the evening of the 17th with a dance of elaborately dressed boys, followed by rites at Imra's shrine, this time without slaughterings, and finally the usual rounds of dancing to honour the whole pantheon. According to Robertson (1896:572), feasts were held during this time to enable those already promoted to Jast to attain a still higher grade called Mir, i.e., 'king'. One should connect this feast with information contained in Benawa's manuscript (Palwal 1977:320):

"For ten days in September drums are played morning, noon, and night in honour of Gish; (with the performance of the rite the season of warfare is closed); the heroes who have slain enemies during the past season make their promised sacrifices to the war-god and feast their fellow warriors."

Friedrich also heard that successful killers, decorated with all the insignia revealing their rank, had to dance at the end of the Nilone period
So I think that this feast may have had an aspect not observed by Robertson: it marked the end of the period when warriors were still expected to return.

In the feastless period following, 120 days according to Robertson (1896:578), there was according to Friedrich (Snoy 1962:113) still some celebration for the return of the cattle from the high pastures. Otherwise, food was distributed in the name of the ancestors, perhaps in October. That there was a long series of minor celebrations in autumn, mostly connected with economic activities, is not entirely confirmed by Palwal (1977:320-1).

Snoy (1962:114) received information about the Prasun calendar from Buddruss. Allusions to gods and their feasts are remarkably rare in the material compiled by Lentz (1978:12). In any case, Snoy's short description shows this small but strongly united valley to have an integrated system of feasts with intentionally staggered ceremonies, so that feasts could be celebrated at different places with the participation of the same group. At the end of the winter feasting time, all the men who had won fame as killers went in procession through the six villages to be honoured. There was a whole series of competitions, dances and countless meals held on such occasions.

Meanwhile, Edelberg (1972:83-93) has published new information about calendars from the villages of Pashki, Kushteki, Dewa, Pronz and Shtiwe in Prasun, part of which are in dual versions. This is a most valuable contribution, despite confusion and misunderstanding resulting from almost eighty years of Islamic rule. So far, I am unable to find any reasonable correlation between the days of feasting in some Prasun calendars (Kushteki II, Shtiwe) and those of the Kati feasts in Bashgal. It is interesting to note the discrepancy between statements based on seasonally phased activities (all intervals being multiples of six) and the statements of an old man who mentions just nine feasts. This could reflect the extent of recent Islamization, but it could also imply the existence of a religious calendar parallel to a purely economic one.

A system of pilgrimage also seems to have existed, where people from other villages visited the main temple of Imra at Kushteki at the feast marking the new year.

After this supplementary information, one can now turn back to the Kati system of feasting. One has the impression that life was determined by several regularly phased peaks of activity with 'interference phenomena' sometimes intervening.

One of these activities was livestock-husbandry, where a sudden surplus of milk products could occur. The vagaries of agriculture would be another factor, though this could only have a secondary effect on a male-determined calendar, since it is a female activity. The female sphere includes mourning for the dead and the cult of the ancestors. Vows at the departure of the warriors, returning during a long and anxious period, and the final presentations of successful heroes, form an extended dramatic performance - while other dates were determined by achievement of specific status at feasts of merit. All this must be orchestrated by a system controlled through observing the rising points of the sun on the mountain skyline. These observations must in turn have given other points of reference for interpretation.

The feasts of merit, arranged periodically by their sponsors, have then been included to show this seasonal integration, though Robertson separates them, thus creating the appearance of two unrelated schemata.

If an attempt is made to classify the deities according to the order of their invocation during a feast, the results are not always in accordance with
One comes across a divine couple who completely dominate the period of warlike activities.

IX. Wine-Making

"... he had to be frequently checked to prevent the juice from overflowing the receiving vessels."

(Illustration to Robertson, pp. 558-9).
OUTLINES OF SOUTH KAFIRI RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS
The Pre-Islamic Religion of Waigal Valley

by

Schuyler Jones

Waigal Valley lies on the southern watershed of the Hindu Kush mountain range in Afghanistan. It is a narrow, north-south oriented V-shaped valley with steep, boulder-strewn sides. The Waigal River itself is of no great size; at its confluence with the Pech River it is less than 20m wide, and shallow enough to wade across most of the year.

There are nine politically autonomous and economically independent villages in Waigal Valley and perhaps a total of 10–12,000 Waigali-speaking people altogether. The people of the valley live in permanent villages which are located approximately 2000m above sea level - the altitude which generally coincides with the upper limits of the evergreen oak forest and the lower limits of the coniferous forest. Even today these villages are extremely isolated. Not only are there no motorable roads in the valley, one cannot even travel with horses or use donkeys as pack animals, so difficult are the trails.

The climate is 'continental dry' with seasonal extremes of hot and cold, marked differences between day and night temperatures, and swift changes from one season to the next. The spring rains are followed by a long hot summer with occasional showers of great intensity. By late October there is frost at night and snow begins to fall in November. Often so much snow falls in winter that villages are cut off from each other for weeks at a time.

The village economy combines cereal agriculture on irrigated hill terraces with transhumant animal husbandry of an 'alpine' type. Nowhere in the valley are ploughs used; the traction spade (actually a wooden fork) is the implement used for turning the soil. The main crops are millet, maize, and barley. Wheat is the preferred grain and below 1900m altitude it predominates. Above that height wheat is less successful and millet and barley are more common. Millet is the staple grain, but each year more maize is grown: unlike millet, it is hardy enough to withstand the occasional wind and hail storms of late summer.

All matters pertaining to arable agriculture are in the hands of women. The primary economic responsibility of the men is the care of livestock. These are mainly goats, but cattle and sheep are also important. Villagers describe typical livestock proportions by saying that if a man had 100 goats, then he would have some 10 cows and five sheep. A wealthy man in Waigal Valley is described by villagers as one with 500 or more goats and a proportional amount of cattle and sheep.

On a certain day in spring, approximately at the Vernal Equinox, all livestock are taken from the winter stables, and the summer grazing begins on a series of successively higher pastures. It is in the mountain pastures during summer that the men make cheese and butter, returning to the village with their flocks in autumn after the harvest has been completed.

Autumn, particularly the month of October, is a happy season. The harvest is over, the herdsmen have returned from the mountains with their flocks, and winter has not yet begun. There is butter and cheese, walnuts,
grapes, and honey, and, if it has been a good year, plenty of grain. It is
during this season that weddings usually take place, for there is an
abundance of food to satisfy the requirements of the marriage feasts.

In the Kalashum village of Nisheigrām in Waigal Valley there is a great
stone called Digas-tūn or Pragde-tūn rising at the juncture of the streams
which drain the tributary Adrugal and Moraigal Valleys. Morgenstierne
(1954:319) has recorded Prak de as the name of a god in Zhönchigal. On top
of this stone is a gigantic boulder called Mara-wāt, Mara being the Creator,
equivalent to the Kati Imra, which was placed there long ago by an
ancestors from the clan of Patul (Patul-dari).

In pre-Islamic times this was the religious centre of the village. Near the
peak of this towering rock was a house or temple, the foundations of which
can still be seen. Here were kept trophy weapons that had been captured on
raids. Lower down, on the east side of the rock, was another building
belonging to the religious leader (Uta) of the village. Low status people such
as bari or ēwola craftsmen could neither approach this house nor take part
in the religious observances at any village shrine other than the one called
alamorig, set specially aside for their use.

According to local oral tradition there was a time when the villagers had
no proper religious beliefs. One of the elders tells the following story:

"Long ago some people of the clan of Uta (Uta-dari) came here from
Parun Valley. The most important of these men was Grošera. He wore fine
clothing. He went to Digas-tūn and mixed wine, butter, and the leaves of
some plant together and threw the mixture on the fire. The smoke drifted all
over the valley. The people could smell it. Each family brought a goat to be
sacrificed. The blood of the sacrificed animals was then thrown into a corner
of Grošera's house. It was these people, the Uta-dari people, who brought
religion here. They were very important men. There were no Nishei people
like them."

What kind of religion is referred to here? It must be admitted at the
outset that very little is known about the pre-Islamic religious traditions in
Waigal, and with each passing year surviving ritual knowledge recedes,
becoming more and more part of an esoteric 'mythology' known to an
ever-diminishing number of elders.

Certainly it was a polytheistic religion, in which cosmological beliefs were
refracted among several distinct categories of supernatural beings. The
supreme deity was Mara the Creator, corresponding to Yamrai, Yimra or Imra
elsewhere (Morgenstierne 1951:163). Morgenstierne reported that Mara was an
indigenous Paruni word, but it was commonly used by my informants in Waigal
village and Nisheigam, and this is consistent with the story that the
pre-Islamic religion was imported into Waigal Valley from Parun.

Lesser deities had specialized powers and responsibilities: such as those
relating to agriculture, the weather, or to health. Lower still in the hierarchy
of supernatural beings were those spirits concerned with the well-being of
individual clans. It was the responsibility of the religious leader or 'priest'
(Uta) of the village to act as a mediator between the human community and
that of the supernatural beings who exercised power over the world of the
villagers. In a parallel manner it was the responsibility of clan leaders, and
the heads of individual lineages, to maintain a satisfactory harmony with the
supernatural beings associated with their particular kin group. For example,
the village of Nisheigam has its own exclusive guardian spirit, Gurastar
parā (cf. Turner 1966:8048). In the village there are two resident patrilineal
clan groupings which are exclusive to that village. The very large majority of residents belong to one or other of these major clans. They are either members of the clan of Astan (Astan-dari), which has as its spirit Ayan panāū, or they are members of the clan of Patul (Patul-dari), which is protected by Aštīgar panāū. Members of these two clans are called atroţan (high-born) and they form a kind of free ruling class in the village. All other residents belong to one of two politically disadvantaged and socially inferior groups of hereditary craftsmen (bari/šewala), who up until 1895-97 were occasionally bought and sold as slaves. These craftsmen are the leather workers, potters, basket makers, wood carvers, builders, and smiths of Nuristan. This pattern of stratification is repeated in each of the Kalashum villages of Waigal Valley. Hierarchical social structure, an overriding reality of village ceremonial life, was seemingly reflected in the spiritual hierarchy of their religious life.

Each clan had an exclusive deity or guardian spirit localized, for purposes of religious observance, in the clan leader's special house. In Parun Valley this took the form of a religious effigy carved in wood which was placed behind the hearth against the back wall of the house opposite the door (see Motamedi-Edelberg 1968). In Waigal Valley, in addition to clan spirits, each lineage had its own spirit or deity which received ceremonial offerings in the home of the senior elder of each lineage. There was thus a close correspondence between religious organization and segmentary social organization. There is some evidence to suggest that each nuclear or compound family may, at some time in the past, have also had its own special household shrine. Even today in the ordinary Kalashum house the space between the hearth and the back wall of the main room (amā) is a high-status area where people rarely sit. One is reminded of Siiger's observations (1956:28) among the Kalash of Chitral that "...the space between the hearth and the back wall of the ordinary houses are imbued with a certain pure or sacred quality, and several strict precautions, particularly regarding the women, protect them from pollution." Further information on this and related problems are to be found in Peter Parkes' paper Descent Group Structure Among the Kalasha ('Kalash Kafirs') of Chitral (in Jones-Parkes 1984).

Social-hierarchical values are attached to several categories of space in the main room of a house in Waigal Valley (see Jones 1974:102-6). Corresponding to these spatial zones, there are both formal and informal sanctions regarding the seating arrangements for people of different status or rank. As one enters the door and walks toward the opposite wall of the amā, one passes from a low status area to areas of increasingly higher status. The conventions are these: low status people (e.g., bari/šewala) sit near the door; men on the right, women on the left. The bari and šewala are not allowed to pass beyond the first pair of columns. The space on the left immediately inside the door is reserved for unmarried daughters and daughters-in-law who have not yet given birth. The head of the house and his male peers sit on the right side of the room between the first and second columns. The highest ranking male present is seated next to the second column on the right, closest to the back wall of the room and the hearth.

I suggest that what is today largely expressed in secular terms of social convention may have had its origins in a yet earlier form of the pre-Islamic religion than that which was abolished at the time of the Afghan invasion of 1896-1900. Although none of my informants said anything to suggest that there had been individual household shrines in the late 19th century, this does not necessarily mean that they did exist at some earlier period. Certainly we do know from field research carried out by Lennart Edelberg in
Parun Valley that each clan there had its own special clan-house, home of the clan leader, and containing a wooden statue to which offerings were made to ensure the well-being of all clan members (Motamedi-Edelberg 1968).

In Waigal Valley the nine Kalashum villages are divided into two sections or divisions. The northern section, called Vardesh kilo-kara or Varjan kilo-kara, consists of the villages of Waigal (itself comprising two villages: Perinta or Prainta and Bergele), Ameshdesh, Jamach, and Zhönchigal. The southern division of the valley is called Chema Nishei or Birdesh or Amuš kera, and consists of the villages of Nisheigram, Muldesh, Chimi, Kegal, and Want.

This division of the valley into northern and southern parts is not just a social or political convention, nor is it a simple geographical convenience. The two groups of villages trace their descent from different origins, speak different dialects, and have other distinguishing cultural characteristics.

Although further investigations may cause us to revise this view, it now seems that each clan (dari) in each village in the northern division of the valley had a special 'clan-house' with certain unusual architectural features, notably an enclosed verandah, not found on ordinary houses (see Jones-Parkes 1984; Edelberg 1984). These clan-houses are called Kantar kōt or Kantar amā. Morgenstierne (1954:319) cites Lumsden (Kaantar) and Norris (Kantaur) and gives the local meaning as 'of a god'. In a private communication Edelberg explained that according to his informants in Zhonchigal Kantar kōt is the 'clan-house', while Kantar amā refers to the priest's private home - a dwelling without an enclosed verandah. I am of the opinion, however, that the two terms are synonymous. Investigations in Nisheigram revealed that there is a Kantar kōt there which was the home of a folk-hero named Demuta. For this reason it is sometimes called Demuta kōt (Jones 1972).

In the villages of the southern division of Waigal Valley there is some evidence from Nisheigram to suggest that each lineage (mota) had its own Kantar kōt. These are not different in external appearance from ordinary houses. They lack the enclosed verandah which is the special distinguishing mark of clan-houses in the northern part of the valley, though the columns inside the amā are sometimes carved with special designs, particularly pairs of human faces.

In the village of Zhonchigal there is a kantar kōt which is regarded locally as the oldest house in the village. The amā contained a shrine and the enclosed verandah, which has a bench running along its length, was the place where important political and religious meetings were held. According to the present owner, whose patrilineal ancestor built the house, "this is where important decisions were made; agreements made in this house at sunrise were binding. They came here for important meetings because this was a holy place". The enclosed verandah is called Berim amā (Edelberg's informants referred to this verandah by the term krō).

The Religious Leader (Uta)

The rank or title of Uta is described by Kalashum informants as meaning variously, 'father', 'master', 'leader', 'religious leader', "...like a judge", and as "...the highest authority in religion and law". One informant in Waigal village said that Uta (Urta) was "like a king" (see Turner 1966:14176). Certainly there is abundant evidence to show that in this status was combined considerable religious and political influence. Uta was in charge of the
shrines, he determined when religious observances would be conducted, judged the worthiness of all animals offered for sacrifice and, as stated earlier, was the principal link between the community and the guardian deities. The following story, part of the oral traditions of Waigal village, affords a glimpse of the role played by Uta in village affairs.

"Long ago there lived near Waigal village a monster [Yūṣ, demon, ogre. See Turner 1966:10395]. The place where he lived was called Yūṣ-tā, 'the place of Yūṣ'. Every year this monster ate one man from Waigal village. The people were afraid. They went to the great mountain of Kaṣ-tūn ['white rock'] to pray to Mar[a] for help. When they were returning to their village they saw a very large bird [dē, deh, 'god', i.e., the god appeared to them as a bird]. When the people saw this they knew that their prayers would be answered. The bird killed the monster. The place that had been known as Yūṣ-tā [place of the monster], now became known as Dē-tā [place of a god]. They built a shrine there. Inside the shrine, beyond the wooden door which only Uta could open, was the golden bird [sūn-niŋca] which had killed the monster."

None of these 'golden birds' have, as far as we know, survived the conversion to Islam, but the 'myth' which tells of their existence is supported by certain secret and political records of the Government of India. It is reported that in 1896, during the Afghan wars against Kafiristan, the Afghan Commander-in-Chief, Ghulam Haider Khan, sent the Amir 'Abd al-Rahman "20 golden birds and 10 golden idols" which he had looted from the shrines of Kafiristan (Jones 1969:217. See also Morgenstierne 1954:320, "Taraskeen Nor[rīs], a silver idol in the form of a bird". Possibly the wooden bird shown as Fig. 41 in Klimburg 1981:188-189 bears some relationship to the oral tradition recorded above.

This story is told to explain why each spring, on the first day of the New Year, all the people of Waigal village followed Uta to the shrine at Dē-tā for special ceremonies which included the sacrifice of a goat, the blood of which was poured on the supposed remains of the monster lying just outside the shrine.

Also contained in this shrine was an iron ball (de-gara, 'oath'. See Morgenstierne 1954:246) which could be used by Uta on certain occasions to determine if the truth was being spoken. For example, a warrior's rank and status depended upon the number of Muslims he had killed. Ordinarily, he would take the turban or cut the ears from his victim to take back home as proof of his success. Sometimes, if it was not too far to travel, he would bring the head to display as a trophy. But if a warrior lay in ambush and, from a distance, fired into a group of Muslims, killing one, he might be unable to return with proof of his deed: for the dead man's companions would probably carry away his body and property. When the warrior then returned home, he would visit Uta in order to have his claim verified by ordeal. The shrine at Dē-tā was opened by Uta, the iron ball (de-gara) removed, and placed in a fire. When the iron ball was red hot it was taken from the fire and, in the presence of Uta, the warrior would place his hands near to the glowing ball, in the heat of it, and swear by Mara that he had killed a Muslim. Having survived this powerful ordeal, he was given full credit for the kill.

It is also said that if a person broke one of the village laws (deši šara) he would be conducted by Uta to this same shrine where he would be forced
to swear to uphold the laws of the village in future.

Uta had certain rights and prerogatives. He was entitled to a share of every animal sacrificed and he alone was allowed to move his livestock on to the next pastures two or three days ahead of everyone else.

In the village of Zhöncigal informants assured me that the office of Uta passed from father to son, but in Waigal village I was told that it was an achieved rather than an hereditary status - a result of feast-giving on a lavish scale. I conclude that the requirements differed in the two villages. My colleague Dr Peter Parkes (see Glossary) however suggested that these apparently diverse views could be explained as aspects of the same thing: i.e., the Uta was perhaps always chosen from one particular clan, but within that 'hereditary' group selection for office may have been based on merit largely attained by feast giving.

The Seer or Shaman

Whereas Uta acted on behalf of the entire community in its dealings with the supernatural world, the seer (wřēḏā, del) acted predominantly on behalf of individuals who wished to obtain information from the supernatural. The seer could interpret dreams, reveal the name of a wrong-doer, and discover the cause of an illness by determining which supernatural being had been offended. He could then recommend to his client a course of ritual action. As one informant put it: "a person with a problem would go to the seer and give him a present and explain the problem. The seer would go into a trance, and when he woke up he would solve the problem."

The most common divining technique involved the use of a bow - a method also known in the Bashgal Valley and witnessed by Robertson (1896:418-422) on November 28th, 1890. The seer would take the bow and sit with his elbows on his knees, his hands extended in front of him with clenched fists together, thumbs uppermost. The bow would be placed so that the string lay across his thumbs, the bow itself being suspended beneath. The bow was considered to indicate responses in one of two ways: either by observing its initial movement or subsequent oscillations. For example, where a simple 'yes-no' type of response was sufficient, the bow would swing from side to side to indicate a negative answer, or back and forth to indicate a positive answer. More commonly, however, a list of names would be recited and the name that was uttered simultaneously with the first movement of the bow was considered that of the individual or deity involved.

One informant in Nisheigram gave this example: "All the weapons captured in war were put in the house at Dīgas-tūn. If any of them were found to be missing, the wřēḏā would take a bow and balance the string across his thumbs. He would then recite the names of possible suspects. At the moment the bow began to move, the name he uttered was that of the thief. The seer did this even after Islam came. If a person was ill, he would use the bow to find out which god desired a sacrifice."

The Calendar System

The outstandingly authoritative work on calendar systems throughout the Hindu Kush and Pamir regions is that by Wolfgang Lentz (1939). For the 1978 edition of this classic work Professor Lentz has prepared a detailed fifty page survey and analysis of publications on the subject that have appeared since the first edition of his pioneering work. The few remarks that I offer here are those of a non-specialist whose field research was for the purpose of
examining entirely different problems.

Each village in Waigal Valley has its own calendar of 12 months, each of which are considered to consist of thirty days (see examples in Jones 1974:267-75). The first month of the New Year occurs in spring, approximately at the Vernal Equinox. The summer and winter solstices are well-known phenomena and most adults can at once indicate those places in the mountains surrounding their village where the sun seems (to use their term) to 'stand' or 'sit': i.e., those points on the horizon where sunrises and sunsets seem not to vary for several days during the solstices.

In most calendar systems there is a common problem of harmonizing solar and lunar reckonings. The fact that months and years cannot be divided exactly by days, and that years cannot be divided exactly by months, has led, for example in the case of our Gregorian calendar, to the device of intercalation: the periodic insertion of additional 'leap-days' to supplement cumulative losses of synchrony over several years. This problem, however, does not seem to arise in Waigal Valley because no one keeps exact track of the days. Although most men, if asked, will say that "each month has 30 days", the end of one month and the beginning of another is not, as far as I was able to discover, determined by an actual count of days, nor is it marked by recurrent phases of the moon. In the Kalashum calendars it is the Solar Year and the natural seasons which are of practical importance, and the months appear to be constantly adjusted as the year progresses. These ad hoc adjustments are made by the elders of each village independently of other villages, a fact which is consistent with the political and economic autonomy enjoyed by each Kalashum village.

What actually happens is that, within a given village, different elders have their own private systems for keeping track of the months. Often in the course of the year a man will use several different techniques, or a combination of checks, to obtain the required information about the advance of the seasons. Thus he may note where the early morning sunlight, as it passes through the door of his house, strikes the rear wall of the building. Or he may note where the sun sets in relation to a prominent mountain peak or ' notch' in the mountains, as viewed from a special place on his rooftop. He then confers with others who have been making their own observations. Recent fieldwork by Peter Parkes provides valuable data about calendar systems among the neighbouring Kalasha of Chitral, especially the fact that "Two or three goat stables in each valley have specially constructed 'sun pillars' (suri-thā) which are used as fixed observatories" (Parkes, 1983:183).

The beginning of a new month may be indicated by the flowering of a certain bush. In Kegal, the end of winter and the beginning of the month of Uştūmdüm-bal is said to be marked by the flowering of the kanta bush. "We plant in the next month (Pačal-bal)." It could be argued that there is no need to determine the exact end of any month; it might even be suggested that there is no need to count the days in a month. The important thing is to determine the beginning of the next month. To this end, two or more elders, each using his own time-honoured system, keep an eye on the advancing seasons in each village. They confer together, indeed, they argue heatedly, about the signs and in the end, when all the evidence has been weighed and all the arguments heard, they reach a decision by consensus, and a new month begins.

The primary function of the traditional calendar was to ensure that the timing of each stage in the annual agricultural cycle was sufficiently accurate to obtain optimum results. From early spring to late autumn a complex series
of economic activities must be carried out. Closely connected with these are the important religious ceremonies concerned with the weather, spring planting, summer solstice, harvest, and winter solstice. The calendar, economic activities, and religious observances were thus really inseparable factors of traditional life in pre-Islamic Nuristan. Lennart Edelberg (1965) has additional information about pre-Islamic beliefs and practices, including a calendar from Zhönchigal (See also Edelberg 1968 as well as Lentz 1978. In his study Kalender og økologisk balance i Hindu-Kush (1974) Edelberg discusses these problems further.

One of the earliest and most important religious occasions of spring is that of the ritual planting of a small field on the first day of Berčal-mas (Nisheigram calendar). In pre-Islamic times this rite was performed by the Uta, but now the ceremony is carried out by an influential village elder (deši düştük). All the lineages (mata) of the village contribute to the purchase of a cow which is sacrificed by the düştük (elders). While one of the elders supervises the division of the meat, the deši düştük takes a small bag of millet and paces across the field, scattering the seed and murmuring prayers in a ritualised sowing of the first grain of the year to ensure a good harvest.

The winter solstice, known in Waigali as 'asa-nišini, translates literally as 'ashes sitting' or 'sitting in ashes'. The people of Waigal Valley denote the solstices as the points in the surrounding mountains where the sun appears to rise or set in exactly the same place 'for fifteen days'. They say that the sun 'sits' in that place. Following the solstice comes 'asa ošte, 'ashes flying', 'rising', when the sun leaves 'asa nišini and begins the journey back toward the other solstice. As mentioned, the place where the sun appears to 'sit' on the surrounding mountain skyline are well-known to villagers and are used as directional reference points all the year round. Thus a man may say that he is going hunting in the direction of the winter solstice.

In pre-Islamic times the winter solstice coincided with a communal celebration in which the old people are said to have consumed great quantities of wine and then, when intoxicated, to have thrown the ashes of the fire at each other. Elphinstone (1815) records this same celebration in Appendix C which is devoted to extracts from Mulla Najeeb's 1809 report on 'Cauffristaun'. We may speculate that the celebration would have had some connection with getting the sun started on its return journey. Parkes' (1983) research has shown that the Winter Festival (Chaomos) of the Kalasha is connected with the sun. "During [the sun's] annual journey she is said to wear out seven sets of clothes every day. When she reaches her natural home (miřū) in the mountains, the fairies tie up the sun and demand payment for the clothes they have provided. The food offerings given on the seven main days of the Chaomos festival, when the sun is 'tied up' are said to be used to pay off her debts" (Parkes 1983:183).

The work carried out by Edelberg, Lentz, and Schäfer (1959) suggests that in the pre-Islamic time solar observations for calendrical purposes may have been (1) carried out only by religious leaders, (2) that religious ceremonies thus conveniently kept pace with the advancing seasons and the associated agricultural activities, and (3), that in at least one case, a pre-Islamic temple was specially constructed so that on a certain day a beam of sunlight would pass through an opening in the wall and illuminate a statue of a deity, thus simultaneously marking the beginning of the New Year and the first day of spring.

All this suggests, in turn, that the present uncertainty among elders about the calendar and the wide variety of checks they use to determine the month is perhaps due to the fact that the specialized calendrical knowledge of
the priests has been lost and the solar observatories - the pre-Islamic temples - have been destroyed. Nevertheless, it may still be possible to determine by careful measurements and observations whether or not the kantar kót ('clan-houses') of Waigal Valley could have been used as solar observatories in the same way as the main temple of Imra at Kushteki in Parun. Here I should introduce a note of caution expressed in a personal communication from Karl Jettmar:

"You mention the idea that the pre-Islamic calendar involved exact solar observations, and that special buildings may have served as observatories for this purpose. But I wonder if this was always the case, and whether the frequently mentioned 'uncertainty' of time-reckoning did not serve a pragmatic end. You rightly indicate that the arrangement of agricultural tasks would be closely connected with the festal calendar. Some flexibility would therefore be of practical advantage, so that optimal dates could be chosen in any year (according to seasonal variations). Village elders need not necessarily have been aware of such discrepancies.

It is recognised that some scholars may have over-systematized the calendrical aspects of religious observances elsewhere, and that almost any monument can be ingeniously construed as having a special astronomical 'orientation'. One should first consider whether or not the timing of feasts in different villages, according to altitude and crop conditions were not already discrepant in pre-Islamic times."

Since this was written Peter Parkes' very rich ethnographic field study of the neighbouring Kalasha has become available. He was able to check daily on time-reckoning calculations throughout a full year (December 1975-May 1977) and found that lunar reckoning (months of about 28 days) is highly important, but is integrated within a stable solar system (for the timing of major religious festivals) with exact sightings from 'observatories' serving to periodically adjust the monthly calendar. This fresh data provides corroboratory evidence to support the work of Wolfgang Lentz.
7. Part of the village Waigal. In the extremely steep and narrow valleys of South Nuristan, the houses are built against the slopes forming terraces. Photo: M. Klimburg.
8. Door of the house of a rich man in Waigal (Berimdesh) with 'entangled horn' motif. Photo: M. Klimburg.
Verandah of a house in Waigal. The capitals of the pillars are highly stylized animal heads. The verandah was an essential part of the "clan-Temples" in the village, called kantar köt. (cf. Jones, in Edelberg 1984: 123-125). Photo: M. Klimburg.
11. Boards on the frontside of a house in the Maswi valley, Ashkun. They are decorated mainly by diagonally grooved discs. Photo: M. Klimburg.
Detail of a pillar in Achenu, Pech valley (Ashkun area). The two objects seen on each head (dandakū) are explained by Klimburg as horn-symbols indicating the rank acquired by the owner of the house. Photo: M. Klimburg.
The Religion of the Ashkun Area

by

Max Klimburg

Most of the Ashkun Kafirs live in the inaccessible south-western part of Kafiristan, their small villages concentrated in the three eastern side valleys of the Alingar river. Of a total of 25 settlements, there are seven villages in the Titin valley in the south, including the seventy houses of the important village of Nakara and five in the Bajai-gal to the north. The central settlement area is between these two valleys in Maje-gal. The largest village, Kulatan (approximately sixty houses) lies on the route between Titin and Bajai-gal to the eastern settlement area of Ashkun in the Pech valley beyond the 3,500 metre high Duñda pass. The Ashkun village of Achenu (approx. seventy houses) lies in the middle of the valley, while the large Wama village (approx. three hundred houses) is high above the Pech valley, adhering to the cliff sides like a swallow’s nest. Nevertheless, Wama people are not considered to belong more than linguistically to the Ashkuns, who regard them a "non-Kafir" ethnic group.

The population of the Ashkuns could together not be more than 5,000, of which about 3,000 live in the actual Ashkun area west of the Duñda pass. The total population estimate is less than 3,500, if Wama is excluded.

Scarcely any research has been done in the area, and the information about it is accordingly limited. There are only two travel reports from the nineteenth century before Islamization of the area: two Afghan Christian missionaries travelled through Ashkun in 1859 (Fazl Huq and Nurulla 1878) and the Englishman H.C. Tanner tried to reach Wama in 1880. He was unable to achieve his goal because of ill-health, and his report on Wama is therefore secondhand (Tanner 1881:278-301). In recent times, the research by Morgenstierne (1929:192-289) and the German Hindukush Expedition in 1935 (Scheibe, ed.1937) provided new data. Edelberg (1965:153-200) made important discoveries in Wama in 1949 (1965:153-200), which were supplemented in the sixties by Palwal’s research (1969,II:61-88; 1969,III:6-27). The central Ashkun area remained untouched thereafter until the author began his fieldwork there in Autumn 1971.

The ecological environment of the Ashkuns is not very different from that of the Waigal Kafirs, with whom they are linguistically related. The same intensive terraced cultivation is found there, the miniature plots being worked with a harrow. There is also the same livestock and alpine economy specialized in goat-rearing. The strict division of labour is similar to the usual practice in the whole of Kafiristan. As in Waigal, the Ashkuns live in terraced villages with houses constructed on a wooden scaffolding. The wood used for construction is not the Himalaya cedar, but mostly pine (pinus excelsa) that grows there despite harsh conditions. These conditions are not only determined by the climate, but also by the rocky nature of the landscape.

It is this rocky structure of the Ashkun area that renders it almost inaccessible, making life difficult for people there. The Ashkun Kafir sees
himself confronting an inimical environment consisting of lofty cliffs, deep gorges, wide slopes littered with boulders and paths endangered by rock falls. The living space is constricted, leading to interminable struggle against the threatening sterile stone.

In view of such conditions, it is not surprising that the earlier conceptual world of the Ashkuns was strongly influenced by dynamical ideas. More than anywhere else in Kafiristan, there was a dominant belief in a power connected to the hunt and culture plants. Exalted magical beliefs were connected with hunting men and animals, giving rise to practices similar to head-hunting.

These beliefs in power and fertility led to rich feasts of merit, ancestor worship, cult activities in honour of mighty 'rock-gods' and other spirits, and protective rituals. Taboos form a rigid regulating structure, particularly in the avoidance of the impure and the unripe. This results in a strict division of labour between the sexes, the banning of women during menstruation and childbirth from the village, avoidance of graves, the prohibition of certain foods and ways of touching, rigorous adherence to the cultivation and harvest calendars, and countless other rules.

The dependence on powerful and protective help from supernatural powers has been documented convincingly in their myths and religious beliefs. Apart from the widespread cult of the gods, and associated sagas, there are myths telling of the supernatural origin of local heroes and clan founders; stories of successful meetings with benevolent spirits, of magical treasures in lofty lakes, of sacred animals, trees and stones, and, not least of all, the belief in the magical effects of killing human beings and animals.

Four narratives are summarized below by way of illustration.

The story of Zožotr Sur tells of the discovery of a mysterious treasure in mountain lakes or ponds:

"Once the herd of an Ashkun grazed near the lake (sur) in the land Zožotr. One day, the herdsman noticed that one of his cows did not give any milk. When the same happened on the following day, the herdsman decided to watch the cow during the day. He saw to his astonishment that as the cow approached the pond, a calf came suddenly out of the water and began to suckle at the cow. The pond dried up simultaneously and the herdsman saw a wonderful treasure in it. He thereupon hurried to the village to fetch help. As the same scene repeated itself on the following day, his helpers caught hold of the calf while the herdsman went into the dried up pond to get the treasure. Suddenly the earth trembled and the calf turned into a man who promised his terrified captors all of his wonderful treasure if they let him go. They agreed, and the magical being declared his wish to fight to the death with the herdsman, who in the meantime was busy bringing out the treasure. If the pond filled with milk, it would mean that the calf man was killed, but if it filled with blood, the herdsman would be dead. The duel ended with the death of the herdsman, and the pond filled with blood. The calf man came out once more to collect his treasure that had been piled up at the side of the pond, but left behind a golden goblet and a golden dagger. These were taken back to the valley, where the goblet proved to be very beneficial, as barren women who drank from it became fertile."

The mention of the golden goblet could be connected to the silver rō or ürei goblets used primarily to drink wine in the whole of Kafiristan. Magical beliefs about them could possibly derive from their high prestige value.
A narrative from Nakara illustrates a fruitful meeting with a benevolent spirit:

"Once a villager named Swatak met the female spirit Wutrik and addressed her as "mother". At this, she became favourably inclined and ordered him to suck on her overlong breasts. Soon after, Swatak became a great hero and his descendants proved to be unusually successful."

A myth from Wama describes the supernatural origin of the two founding ancestors of Wama:

"An eagle sat on the shoulders of an unmarried girl, whereupon she brought the twins Tramu and Dawan into this world. After a few weeks, they demanded bows and arrows and exhibited astonishing capabilities. A few years later, when Wama was threatened by 4,000 enemies, the boys were given powerful bows with giant arrows. They massacred the attackers, each arrow killing forty enemies. Twelve men survived the fray. The two young boys became the founders of the two large clan groups, to which belong all the inhabitants of Wama, excepting the bari artisan class."

A song of praise from Kota-gal near Kulatan shows the desired relationship between a successful man and his guardian deity:

"I have so much power that I can graze my herd behind the Kretimun mountain, although this area belongs to the god Kretimun-Panao. No one can help me as much as Panao, who is well-disposed towards me. I am in the high meadows all the time, I come down to the village only to hold big feasts. If I am sick, Panao helps me. He protects my herd, since I have no brothers or sons. My herd is unharmed, protected by Panao."

Invocations for protection and aid to supernatural powers were mostly in the form of cult activities to honour special deities. Care was also taken to ensure that various other deities (such as the spirits of the dead) were not offended. A successful person could attribute his success to a good relationship with his god and his ancestors, while persons experiencing failure could only hope to improve their fate with the help of a bloody sacrifice.

The sacrifices were offered to powers determining life, viz., the male deity Panao, the female Wutr or Otr (cf. Morgenstierne 1951:165), and the highest god Imra, although the latter was not so important for the Ashkuns as elsewhere. He was the god of Being. The main feast in his honour marked the beginning of the year. Near the end of January, the incidence of the sun on a certain tree or stone near the village marked the first date of Imragamās ("Month of the Imra bull") and the beginning of the new year. Each village sacrificed a fattened bull in honour of Imra and held an archery competition, the winner of which had to invite the whole village to a New Year's feast (cf. the festival of Shilarigajor at Kamdesh. Robertson 1896:585-7, "the throwing of the shil")

The various Panaos were perhaps analogous to the nature spirits or deities called De or Dew in other parts of Kafiristan. They were thought to
be in control of all the negative powers that led to natural calamities (pestilence, sterility, malformation, etc.). The Wutr was seen mainly as the goddess of vegetation. Details of the early world of beliefs among the Ashkuns cannot, however, be reconstructed with any degree of certainty.

The Panaos were supposed to live on high mountains (mun), of which there is no dearth in the Ashkun area. Thus geographically fixed, the respective Panaos became local gods exercising powers beyond 'their' individual villages. This was specially true for Lutkari Panao, the god of Kulatan, who controlled great powers of fertility. Saramun Panao, thought to be resident in the small locality of Gora west of Kulatan, was famous as guardian of health and protector against bodily defects. The Plossa Panao (probably identical with Pulispanu of the Afghan Christian missionaries Fazl Huq and Nurulla, 1878), the major god for a few hamlets east of Kulatan, was regionally important as a rain god and helper during pestilence. Similar powers were attributed to Passamun Panao, the god of Achenu. Indermun Panao, the god of Nakara, was celebrated as guardian of fruit and wine, while the neighbouring Malek Panao was believed to guard the nut trees. Numerous other Panaos such as Milarimun Panao, Mutikumun Panao, Kretimun Panao, et al., presumably had only local importance. Altogether, more than two dozen Panaos with an equal number of 'divine mountains' were worshipped and invoked.

The deities Wutr and Utr were less numerous, but also lived on high mountains. These were thought to be very dangerous, and if met with had to be addressed as "Mother" so as not to arouse their anger. Disani and Poluknalai were both greatly feared and were possibly seen in connection with the animal world. It is certain that Disani was invoked as mistress of the animals almost everywhere to protect the herds in the high pasture. She could change herself into a goat, for which reason she was often called Atali-Disani, "Disani of the crossed horns". Poluknalai was worshipped in the small but very important high pastures of the Ashkuns, i.e., on the very high mountain landscape of Papala northwest of the Duńda pass. She also ruled over the eastern ascent to the pass, and travellers were advised to offer a goat at a certain place in her honour. Karigutr, Itsa'utr and Sulut were all vegetation goddesses and were invoked by sacrificial fires amidst growing plants. Cult activities to honour a deity, particularly a Panao, usually took place at the zeta place of sacrifice built near the village, or on a slope of the locally dominant divine mountain. Such a place was in certain cases reminiscent of megalithic platforms. A good example for this is the zeta of Nakara. Stones or trees served as cult objects. Wooden figures too were presumably used, except in Wama. Stone seats in a semicircle around the cult object were reserved for important men of the village, but could simultaneously represent various clans, as in Indra in Wama. The cult place and its immediate surroundings were taboo for women.

The ritual sacrifice must have been very simple, and a male animal, usually a goat, was killed as the cult object, presumably without the presence of the trance priest Pshara. "Sacrificial priests" do not seem to have existed in Ashkun proper. At Wama the high rank of Indra-Uta and Prakde-Uta was known, and both may have carried out bloody sacrifices. The cult object and the sacrificial fire fed with juniper twigs were sprinkled with blood as a respected relative of the sacrificer or the actual "master of ceremonies" of the village made certain requests to the deity being honoured. Some of the sacrificial blood was perhaps drunk. The animal was then eviscerated and roasted in the fire. The meat was distributed while half-raw and the meritorious men got the best and largest pieces. Wine was drunk along with
the meat on special occasions.

The sacrifices were held in the open and there were no temples in the Ashkun area, except in Wama. Thus the most important Žetů cult place of the Ashkuns was in the middle of the Papala area: and open place, where the four blood-encrusted wooden effigies of the deities Lutkari Panao, Inder (or Indermun Panao), Suramun Panao, and Poluknalai stood. These four deities were offered animal sacrifices by the village elders of all Ashkun settlements (except the ones in Bajai-gal) in October in the Ashkun month of Senundrashmās. There may have been a ‘harvest-thanksgiving’ rite associated with the animal-cult here; but sadly this cannot be definitely ascertained.

In Achenu, sacrifices were made before a cult figure representing the local god Passamun Panao. There were also reports of a demon named Innat, who allegedly carried off one daughter each year from one of the twenty most respected families. To prevent this, dances by twenty selected girls and animal sacrifices were arranged at the Innat feast in the month of Mishalmās.

The special position of Wama is reflected in the old religious beliefs strongly influenced by the Kati area. The local pantheon chiefly consists of Inder or Indr, Giwish, Imra, Prakde and the seven daughters of Inder (one of whom was Disani, the goddess of women). Each of these five deities had a temple and a cult statue, Deogan, identifiable through different attributes: Inder by the golden bird Sunnyase, Giwish by weapons, Prakde by horns, Disani by long hair, breasts, and numerous bells. The Imra statue was not marked by any special attribute.

Tanner's description of the frightening images of the Deogan in Wama results from informants who themselves knew of it from hearsay: "... Deogan was a wood carving of a grim being who sat with his tongue between his teeth in a fearful grimace and prepared to strike with a club or heavy object. The god was armed with a dagger and a musket, and his eyes were so highlighted with paint or gold leaf that they seemed alive" (Tanner 1881:292). The description obviously fits the war god Giwish, who is still known today as Giwishtukura, "Giwish carved from wood".

The major god of Wama was Inder, who enjoyed much honour because the extensive fruit garden Indrakun near the village was ascribed to him. This garden was famous in the whole of Kafiristan for its wine culture (cf.Edelberg 1965; esp.165, plan of the garden) and a few other items of interest: an elaborate irrigation canal cut in rock and stone, and four equally ingenious basins for pressing and fermenting the wine. The place of gathering and sacrifice Indtrā, was located in the middle of the garden, with a cult statue of the god and seats for the representatives of different clans. The great annual feasts were held there, particularly the New Year's feast at the end of January and the long Inder feast at the beginning of November. The wine lying ready in the basins was mostly drunk at the Inder feast.

The layout of the garden, the elaborate stone-work and the wine culture are even today thought to be the work of Inder, who once came from India with his younger brother Giwish. Inder settled in Wama, Giwish in Kantiwo. One day, Inder sent his brother to India to fetch fruit and flower seeds. When Giwish brought these, Inder hid them behind his back and let Giwish choose. In this way, Giwish received the flower seeds and Inder the fruit seeds. He used the latter to plant a great fruit garden with vines. When Giwish received a basketful of grapes from Inder, his envy knew no bounds and he hurried to Wama to throw large rocks into the garden. This proved to be useless, as Inder (according to Palwal's version of the myth 1969,11:70-1) used the rocks to construct the canal and to make the basins for the wine. Giwish thereupon relinquished his claim and returned to Kantiwo.
In another story, Inder later took a wife who bore him seven daughters and one son, whose wisdom alarmed the father. Once he ordered Passamun Panao to build a bridge over the Pech river. When working hard, the son complained of tiredness and hunger. Inder told him to drink the milk from the pot standing there, but without destroying the cream layer. Cleverly Passamun Panao bored a hole into the pot and suckled the milk beneath the cream. In fury, his father slew him. Full of remorse, Inder fled to India, and his family scattered. The inhabitants of Wama took possession of his house and garden. In his house, they discovered many objects of gold, among them figures of a bull and a hen, which they converted into cult objects. In the garden, they found the elaborately constructed canals and basins, as well as the secret of wine-making. As a sign of respect to Inder, it was forbidden to take fruit from the garden Indrakun without permission. Breaking this rule meant that the offender was flung down from a high cliff.

These two myths show a cultural component of Kafiristan indicating an orientation towards horticulture and agriculture. In contrast, Snoy emphasized another component of hunting and livestock-rearing (Snoy 1962:231), showing characteristics of early hunters.

The hunting component shows itself in the widespread hunting and animal cults, particularly among the Ashkun and their close relatives, the Waigalis. The hunting and skull cults indicate traditions similar to head-hunting. A man was worth something only after he had killed an enemy. To increase his worth, he had to kill more, and regular hunting parties thus went out to the immediate and farther vicinity for this purpose. The potential victim was every inhabitant of enemy territory, whether Muslim or Kafir, man, woman or child, and all kills were valued equally. If the hunt was successful, some trophies (head, scalp, ears, clothing, weapons) were carried in a triumphant procession back into the village and exhibited during the victory feast. In Nakara, arrows were shot at the heads. In larger villages, there were trophy houses to preserve the booty of the man-hunt.

The more ambitious could aspire to further symbols and titles of honour. Proof of four kills meant the right to take the title of Bahadur and to wear clothes of honour and symbols of rank. Eight or twelve kills earned the title of Duri Bahadur or Tri Bahadur, the headdress decked with pheasant feathers becoming proportionally more elaborate. The garments of honour were decorated with embroidered ornamentation with little bells hanging from the belt and trousers. A Bahadur always danced in grand attire with a ceremonial axe in his right hand.

A Bahadur was allowed to erect the 1-1½ metre post called shakerakatai in the main gathering place of the village and mark his successes on it. Each kill was recorded by putting a willow twig through a previously bored hole in the post, and tying it around the post to a ring called shakera. The top of such a victory monument was always decorated by a red cloth.

Even greater than the previous honours were those for gaining the rank of a Sunari feast-giver. It is not clear whether a Bahadur rank was a pre-condition or not. Sunari could be the shortened form of Sunari Bahadur. At Achenu and Wama this rank was called Malada, resp. Malada-Batur. At Wama this meant seven, at Achenu four kills to get the title of Batur, resp. Badur. Whatever the case, the Sunari feast-giver had to give three big feasts within three years, those invited coming from neighbouring as well as remote villages. Since the individual villages were presumably invited in turn, there was a large number of separate invitations.

A Sunari Bahadur enjoyed the greatest honours. He could sit on the seat of honour shingesta and drink wine from the silver goblet ro. At large feasts
and at his burial, a wooden cruciform stretcher of honour dalpalanga was carried about in a dance, wrapped in a red shirt. The head of the dalpalanga was capped by a silver goblet. If the Sunari Bahadur owned more than one goblet, the base from all but one of them was detached and the cups laid over one another, crowned by the goblet still with a base.

The Sunari Bahadur also had the right to construct a monument sunarikötok at a place visible from the village. This shrine was man-high and made of stones piled upon one another.

Finally, a Sunari Bahadur was given the greatest recognition that an Ashkun village could offer: during the first autumn of his death and after, a post (del), the size of a tree was erected near his grave at the occasion of a great feast. The top of this del showed a schematic depiction of the deceased, crowned sometimes with a silver goblet. Holes bored in the del indicated the number of enemies killed. A del was a monument to a great ancestor who (according to the Afghan Christian missionaries Fazl Huq and Nurulla 1878) was honoured by beating the great drum mundoo for the first five anniversaries following his death.

The highly developed ancestor cult stipulated the worship and depiction of the great ancestor in the interior of the house. Stylized heads, symbols of rank and general status symbols were carved into the four supporting columns, and a certain supporting board at the rear wall could even depict the whole figure.

The depiction of heads on pillars and boards in the house was surely connected with a prevalent skull cult. A result of this cult was the determined effort to bring back into the village at least the head of a relative killed far away. Looted heads were kept carefully for exchange. Among the Waigals, and possibly also the Ashkuns, it was customary to rebury the bones some time after the first burial. The skull was buried with special honours in the reburial.

As in the rest of Kafiristan, the Ashkuns also buried their dead in coffins built above the ground. Burial was also possible in the numerous existing rock cavities, forming e.g., an easily blocked-up grave chamber, which could have served to hinder the wandering of the decomposing body still believed to have a soul. One could therefore see the grave-houses constructed over the grave of a respected man in Waigal, and presumably also in Ashkun, as an abode for the soul of the dead man. Only after the decay of the body would the soul escape through a hole in the roof. The platforms constructed nearby were thus places of rest for the spirits of the dead.

The male spirits of the dead could, as Morgenstierne (1951:165) and Snoy (1962:166) consider, be identical with the well-known and often much feared spirits Yush or Yosh. This can be assumed from the human heads depicted in houses in Wama, called Žintsesha or Žintse heads. Since Žintse or Žitse is the Ashkun designation for Yush, and is most probably connected to the apotropaic images of the great ancestors in the case of the heads, Žintse and Yush are possible identical with the male spirits of the dead.

Benevolent Žintse were guardian spirits and entered men and protected them in martial conflict. A particularly successful warrior was thus believed to be protected by the Žintse.

Malevolent Žintse were thought to appear in the form of bears and thus feared. A bear killer was always greatly honoured, and bear heads carved in houses commemorated such successes.

Benevolence from the spirits of the dead depended on regular food offerings and feast-giving. In Wama, torchlight processions and masked dances were arranged in honour of these spirits during the month of
Žintseimās at winter solstice. This was presumably the great Ashkun feast of the dead and of winter, followed almost immediately by the New Year's feast. The Chaumos of the Kalash (Siiger 1956:23-4) and the Giche in Kamdesh (Robertson 1896:583) were similar. Since the latter two feasts were accompanied by the annual initiation of the children, an analogous system in Ashkun might be assumed.

The cycle of feasts for death and resurrection in Wama was preceded by treating the bones of respected ancestors. In the month of Atiogrāmās, the coffins were opened, and the bones of the great ancestors rubbed with fat. Evidently, the last source of life rested in the bones, and the life substance of the ancestors was thus preserved. The typical belief among hunters of a bone-soul thus exists in Wama. It is not known whether such a concept can be found in the whole of Kafiristan.

X. Memorial Gateway

"Such monuments can only have been erected after the expenditure of much labour. They were very effective in appearance."

(Illustration: Robertson p.17, corresponding to p.651).
THE COMPARATIVE AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT
OF KAFIR RELIGIONS: NEW INTERPRETATIONS
A surviving alternative to the mainstream of Indo-Aryan religion?

I shall try now to present some more or less promising interpretations of Kafir religion.

One approach is by way of historical linguistics, i.e., by etymological investigation of words and terms relating to the historical and cultural background. Morgenstierne, the founder of this school (Fussman 1980:453) was also the main collector of such linguistic material in the field. Buddruss has done intensive and exact work too, being Morgenstierne's intellectual successor in scholarship on Northwest Indo-Aryan languages. Their studies were evaluated by Turner (1966, 2nd ed.1973) and Fussman (1972). We can therefore base our deliberations on very carefully assessed material. Palwal joined Prof. Morgenstierne on one of his trips (1964, with a stay of three weeks in Bagramatal), so he may also be considered related to this school. However Palwal's accumulated studies with important observations were only published partly or as manuscripts (e.g., 1977:28-38). Edelberg (e.g., 1972:67-69) received valuable advice from Morgenstierne, to whom he presented much of his own material.

Working on the German edition of this study, I quoted Morgenstierne's etymological reconstructions whenever I realised their importance. But I certainly did not employ all such material known so far, as I considered it to be the task of specialist linguists. My friend Buddruss was far better equipped for this purpose, and his advice made me aware of the hazards awaiting non-linguists here.

In otherwise friendly reviews (1976, 1977), Fussman stressed that there were considerable lacunae in my account, and to demonstrate it, he presented supplementary etymologies relating to the religious vocabulary of Kafiristan; so I may conveniently refer to his results. Fussman includes what Morgenstierne (1951) and Buddruss (1960; 1974) had both observed, together with the necessary quotations, so I may here simply concentrate on his conclusions:

1. The Kafiri words for 'god' can be traced to Sanskrit dévó (Turner 6523). In all four Nuristani languages, a 'Sanskrit' (i.e., Early Indian) etymology is also possible for the terms denoting 'heaven' - divó in Sanskrit (T 6331) - in the languages of Ashkun and Waigal. In Kati a composite form, together with another root, must be considered (Fussman 1977:27-8; 1972:114-6).

2. In accordance with my own contribution, Fussman (1977:28) discerns three classes of demons:
   a) The first category, mostly but not exclusively male demons of considerable power, correspond to Kafir deities in several respects. Their name, Yush (Robertson), can be derived from Sanskrit yakṣa (T 10395) in all four languages (A: yuš, yuš, Pr:yuš, Kt:yuš).
   b) Female demons, usually friendlier to humans and therefore also considered as fairies (parī in Persian), have a name derived from vātapatrī ('daughter of the wind' in Early Indian) in all Nuristani languages (T 11495 and T 14797; A: wūṭrī, W.: wōtr, wōtrī, Kt: wūṭr, wetr, Pr: wyāčī; besides these there is Kati dewutr derived from dévó and putrā (T 6532).
   c) Female demons, not all of them malicious (as characterized by
Fussman 1977:28) are known to the speakers of Kati (dänik), Waigali (denik) and Prasun (jeini). Their denomination is seemingly derived from dänínï, 'female attendant on Kālī' (T 5542). The name of the male partner of the jeini, Pr: weri, remains without convincing explanation.

As for the priestly functionaries, only one of them can be explained, the name of the divine hymnsinger in Kati deb-lole is interpreted as an Indo-Aryan compositum derived from daïva- (T 6574) 'divine, divine strength, fate', and *lalla (T 10972), 'inarticulate noise' (Fussman 1977:28). Overeager attempts at Indo-Aryan reconstructions starting from Kati (w)uto are not convincing, according to Fussman (1977:28-9).

However, of 16 or 17 deities it is possible to find correspondences under some ten headwords listed in Turner's monumental Comparative Dictionary of Indo-Aryan Languages. The least problematic are as follows:

1. Imra (Imrō) 〈 Yama-rāja
2. Moni (Mōn, Mōne) 〈 Mahā-deva
3. Gish (Gyīṣ) 〈 *Gav-ēṣa
4. Bagisht (Bagyiṣṭ) 〈 *Bhagiṣṭha
5. Sataram, Sudaram (Sudrem) 〈 Sudharman
6. Inter (Indr) 〈 Indra
7. Nong (Noṅ) 〈 nāga
8. Dizane (Dīṣāṛi) 〈 Dhiṣanā
9. Nirmali (Nirmalī) 〈 *Nirmatikā
10. Krumai (Kūṃṛāi) 〈 Kumārikā

Another deity, only reported from Ashkun, can be added:

Blama-dē 〈 Brahma-deva


Evidence resulting from such etymological studies was clearly expressed by Fussman (1977:27,47): Religious terms used by the Kafirs of (present day) Nuristan are either Indian in derivation or inexplicable. Later on he says quite bluntly that all essential components of the Kafir pattern remind one the Early Indian pantheon.

In the same text an even more challenging statement is presented: The linguistic and religious heritage of Nuristan (Kafiristan) may correspond to an archaic stage of development which existed when the Iranian tribes had already started to diverge, but before the spiritual world reflected by the Vedic texts had been consolidated ː later contacts with the Indian world, further down in the lowlands, being scarce. Such interaction would have been possible only through the mediation of the Dardic-speaking populations on the eastern and southern borders of Kafiristan.

A solid basis for this assumption can be recognized in the map of the "Pamir-Hindukush Ethnolinguistic Region" published in Grjunberg's Kati Language (1980:28). There we find Nuristan in the north and west surrounded by Iranian languages ː some of an archaic type. In the south and east all 'traditional' neighbours are Dards. This encapsulation would go back to an early period, hardly later than the beginning of the first millennium B.C. In this way Fussman sees few chances for later contacts.

I should add immediately that Fussman has modified his position in the meantime. He characterises his earlier formulation as intentionally provocative. Fussman has qualified his ideas as a result of Grjunberg's work and after conversation held in Kabul in 1982 with Qazi Gholam Ullah. He concedes that the connections between Nuristan and India were perhaps more complex (and long-lasting) than he had earlier appreciated. (Fussman 1982:204; Fussman and Qazi Gholam Ullah Abhari 1983).
To make my own position more lucid, and to put it in an 'historical' setting, I shall start from his original provocative formulation: because it expresses what other scholars - Morgenstierne and Buddruss - had in mind, leaving perhaps too much to the imagination of the reader. Fussman sees clearly that the mythical texts recorded in Kafiristan can only seldom be connected with one of the most "famous mythical concepts of Ancient India, alluded to in the hymns of the Rigveda".

Buddruss made two earlier attempts in this direction, one already in 1960, the other (1974:33) being concerned with the theme of 'liberation of the waters', related in a text he himself had collected (Text 54, 65; Snoy 1962:86-9). The monster (analogous to Vṛṭṭra) has locked them up in a rock, in the Kafir version "God Imra slays the monster (and his mother) or splits the rock and makes the water stream forth".

As the sun is often mentioned in the same context, Buddruss supposes that the myth about the conquest of sun and moon by a deity from a subterraneous chamber (where they were fixed on either side of a water cascade) derives from the same mythical concept.

There is one further complex to be considered in this connection. The house of giants, which hangs from heaven by a rope or by metal threads, is finally opened by Mandi who kills the inhabitants (with one exception). I mentioned that this is almost certainly related to Tripura, the residence of the Asuras, which Shiva destroyed.

Maybe Indologists were not so eager to stress this parallel, because it would indicate that Mandi/Mon has 'replaced' Shiva: i.e., the latter deity assuming a superior position only in the post-Vedic period (not even for Fussman an easy concession - until recently).

Even if we admit that many changes must have occurred in four thousand years of divergent developments, the results of such comparison seem rather meagre; and we must suspect that there was always a considerable distance or rather diverging tendencies prevailing in the spiritual worlds of Kafir tribes and other Indo-Aryan tribes invading India. The Indian heritage was soon taken care of - and under the purist redaction - of Brahman thinkers.

But is this compatible with the fact that so many names of Kafir deities are of Indo-Aryan origin? The answer proposed in the German edition was clear and determined: I stressed the fact that terminology is one thing, and religious practice another one. The religions of Kafiristan were open systems, especially up to the time, when the kingdom of the Hindu Śāhis collapsed. Thence the mountain stronghold of the Nuristanis was almost completely surrounded by Muslim powers. But in earlier periods the Nuristanis reacted to major changes and spiritual movements in the neighbouring lowlands. Even when they preserved the pristine names of their deities, the spiritual conceptions connected with them were adapted to political, social and technical responses to the specific ecological setting. Foreign ideas were readily taken over when fitting in their preconceived system.

By this way I explained the elevation of Imra to sovereignty in the Kafir pantheon. My hypothesis was that the Kafirs perhaps knew of a deity with the name and the attributes of Yama; but then they learnt that by the Buddhists this god was regarded as the supreme ruler of all worldly affairs - full of temptation and splendor, and therefore detested by the followers of the Saviour. If they were already kafir-minded in those days, i.e., reluctant to accept foreign values involving renunciation of their traditions, we may
infer that they saw Yama as their 'chosen god', expressing their distinct group-personality. They became his supporters. Such an explanation is not entirely far-fetched: because we know of similar religious inversions in the turbulent spiritual history of the Near East, e.g., the Yazidi veneration of the Satanic deity Melek Tā'ūs. The Kafirs themselves boasted that Gish had killed Ali, Hasan and Hussein. They declared that Yazid had been his early name (which implies that they joined the losing Umayyad party against the 'Abbāsids.)

Māra, which means "Killer" in Sanskrit, was originally a surname of Yama in his most sinister aspects. He was well known in Kafiristan in his special deathly quality: in Waigal without changing his name, in the Kati-land as Mara Malik. The Prasuns however used the name Māra for the ruler of the universe. I explained this as part of a similar creative misunderstanding, supposing that the Prasun people used the 'second name' for a god who had already by far transcended his proper sphere.

I understand that this proposal was considered as a sort of sacrilege by Indologists.

Buddruss and Fussman (1976:205; 1977-48) were both convinced that the correspondence between Buddhist legends and Kafir conceptions cannot be explained by a late influence (on the Kafirs, of course). Both traditions might rather imply that Yama/Mara was a deity of great importance in the popular religion of the Indo-Aryan tribes, more popular than revealed in Brahminical texts.

The basic ambiguity of the god's personality is stressed by Fussman, quoting Wayman who wrote that there are in fact two Yamas: a divine Yama of solar nature, the proto-type of immortality, and a dreadful Yama, personification of the evil in man and of his inevitable death (cf.Wayman 1959:131; Fussman 1977:49).

Fussman recollects quite well that Mara plays no important role in the earlier biographies of Buddha. Most of the relevant texts are from the post-Mauryan period, or still later. But he proposes that Yama/Mara would have had his adherents not among the elite or in Brahman circles; his place was within the folk religion of certain 'tribes', especially those living in the north-west. For the first time, the Buddhist schist reliefs of Gandhara show Mara in his full power.

On this basis, Fussman proposes that the Indo-Aryan tribes had no necessarily unified conception of their pantheon. Besides the normal hierarchy, where the rulership is shared by Mitra, Varuna and Indra, each taking a special aspect of this function, there is another system of ideas featuring Yama as the divine king defeating Indra.

According to the same explanation, the idea that Indra was defeated by Yama (or another god of war in the name of Yama) existed as an alternative to the established (orthodox) system for a long time, representing a sort of protest movement among tribal Aryans.

Kati land - centre of the Imra/Mara religion?

Indeed, this is a fascinating interpretation: but it fails to explain the fact that at least three of the Kafir tribes did not venerate Imra/Mara as their main god from the beginning. The rise of Imra/Mara to the supreme position was almost certainly the result of a religious movement that evidently arose from the area settled by Western Katis. The material already presented in the German version of this book contains the relevant evidence. I can here
only point out the essential arguments:

Strong religious influences infiltrating from the Kati area are indicated by the fact that the language of the gods, used for cultic purposes, turned out to be an archaic form of Kati. Since from the three deities claiming top position in the local pantheon two have a pronounced local character - Shomde/Wushum and Munjem Malik - the conclusion seems unavoidable that the deity brought by the Kati immigration was Imra/Mara. Here and there we see efforts to integrate both inherited and superimposed beliefs. The situation is expressed by contracts of mutual respect, which supposedly were concluded between Munjem Malik and Imra/Mara. The position of Esperegra also must have been much more important in earlier times: maybe he was a local deity, as he shares many traits with Munjem Malik.

Shifting attention to South Kafiristan, we have Schuyler Jones' clear statement that 'religion' was brought to Waigal by men from the Uta clan of Parun. Since there can certainly never have been a period when there were no local beliefs and customs, religion must here mean the 'new' religion with Mara as supreme deity. It is expressly said that his main sanctuary is in Prasun: the famous temple at Kushteki.

Otherwise, the religious system, with more details described by Edelberg (1965:166-176), seems to have had more in common with Parun than with the Kati area. Each clan had one of the strangely named deities as special protector: Taraskan may correspond to Indra; Nada is a male god or demon protecting the crops against other spirits; and Ma'de may correspond to Mon (Palwal 1977:31) but is described as servant to Nada; Kasū is the tutelary god of the craftsmen. No special adherents are mentioned for Praq'de and Suči-pari, evidently a mountain deity guiding travellers in difficult terrain. Yamaraí seems to be somewhat special and perhaps an outsider to the original pantheon. His sanctuary, in Waigal proper, is clearly separated from other shrines.

We hear that a Uta in Waigal, one of the descendants of the pagan Imra-missionaries, could preserve his high position not only in spiritual matters but also as judge and political leader up to the end of the pre-Islamic period (cf. Jones 1974:190,192,199-200).

As for the Ashkuns, most of their deities have names which cannot be so easily submitted to the same etymological analysis as their fellows from the northern part of Nuristan - except that in most cases a composite epithet contains the word panao. It is explained according to Morgenstierne (1951:165) as probably derived from Pāndava. Ashkun Pan'au is equated with one Sahib kalan (Trumpp: Adrik pānō) and with Waigali Pan'a or "seven divine brothers". Klimburg presents a surprising crowd of such gods, most of them only of local importance, protecting individual villages, but others entrusted with general duties. Already the report of the Afghan Missionaries in Kafiristan (Fazl Huq and Nurulla - 1865:204-5) mentioned Pulispana, Adrakponu and Mtikaponu. One of them appears as a late 'descendant' of Indra: Indermun-Panao. Indicative of his association with Indr is that he is in care of fruits and grapes.

If one transfers the argument of Fussman to this topic, one could say that we are tracing here a third pantheon: with several gods considered as brothers, and with only one female partner embracing all of them. This may appear strange; but the Pāndavas are enigmatic enough in their Indian form and could in fact have a mythical background as a group of non-Aryan deities. Perhaps even the order of the pantheon in North Kafiristan was influenced by such an aboriginal conception.

According to Klimburg the community of deities in Wama - i.e., in the
Pech valley with direct connection with Kantiwo (settled by Katis) and Parun - had a quite different structure. Four male gods are mentioned: Indra (Inder or Indr) still keeping the leadership of the pantheon; then Giwish, Imra and Prakde. Disani is the most important goddess, but she is regarded as one of 'seven daughters' of Indra. Relationship with Kati conceptions is witnessed by the fact that the most powerful priest was called Uta, explained as "one acting for Indra".

So we find here a possibly earlier pantheon, showing an indigenous reaction to non-local deities and supported by what might be conjectured as a "pro-Indra party". But supporters of other cults may have been more aggressive, so we learn that Indra finally "ran away to India".

The same conflict, certainly not among the gods themselves but among their followers, was pending in the Bashgal valley. Indra seems to have lost his residence in Badawan, with all his former creative powers, and slowly retreated southwards. We find survivals reminding one of his former splendour, being here in an area certainly occupied by the victorious Katis. Did they themselves introduce the Imra cult, or did the spread of the new religion come after their conquest of Bashgal?

However it occurred, the result of such observations is that the Imra religion was not typical for all Nuristani tribes. It was probably spread from the original Kati territory in the west in accordance with the strong position of this tribe. But here we encounter an area which had Iranian populations as neighbours, and not only beyond the main range of the Hindukush. The Panjshir valley bordering the Kati-land was a major thoroughfare between Tokharistan and Gandhara, certainly used by Buddhists and non-Buddhists.

In this way, my hypothesis that Iranian influence plus a 'negative reaction' to Buddhist preponderance in the surrounding lowlands is not entirely irrelevant in discussing the various aspects of Imra/Mara.

There is however no need to assume that Yama was a complete outsider in the various conceptions of the pantheon, which surely existed side by side. Only this final promotion would have happened later than supposed, and certainly not without connection with the world beyond the mountain ranges.

An argument for my hypothesis is that Maramalik who was created by a refraction of Imra/Mara's personality had 'by order' to accept a position where no vacancy existed till then: the rulership over the realm of death. Disani/Disni was well disposed for this task, it being one of the main ideas of all Kafir religions that the grave-yard belonged to the female sphere. Women also had a prominent position in the cult of the ancestors.

We heard about a fortress or fortified village, constructed and ruled by Disni, which had a most interesting ground-plan: the inhabitants of this fortress could hardly be other than the ancestors. I shall be able to present further evidence pointing in this direction.

In this connection it is significant that in the nether world where Maramalik rules there are a paradise and a hell, Bisht and Zozuk (Robertson 1896:381), both being derived from Islamic terms but certainly with a long tradition going back into pre-Islamic Iranian religion. We have no reason to suppose that they were imported by Robertson's interpreters.

Further innovation in Kafir culture and religion?

That brings us to the next problem. Conceding with Fussman that the relations between the Kafirs and Northern India, even outside the Dardic zone, were more complex than hitherto realised, I have only to add that not
only Imra's origin but his later career may have something to do with the Iranian tribes living in adjacent valleys. As various Kafir symbols and titles of honour indicate (turban; titles like Bahadur and Malik), the borders between Kafiristan and the surrounding tribes and states were never completely blocked. Even 'iron curtains' have holes here and there, as seen in the Chitrali ruler's inroads of the 18th century. Chances for interrelations were indeed better in the early pre-Islamic period.

Several scholars including myself perceived that the silver-cups, already mentioned by Elphinstone (1839, II: 373-4) although seen for the first time by Edelberg (1965) (and later acquired repeatedly by local dealers and European researchers), were perhaps related to similar goblets made from precious metals and used in the second half of the first millennium A.D. These were characteristic regalia of the nobility of the nomads, and spread into adjacent countries like Sogdiana (Jettmar 1972, Jones 1981).

In the 19th century axes of a special form were spread throughout Chitral, Gilgit, Hunza/Nagir and Baltistan and in the Indus valley near Chilas (cf. Biddulph 1880:91 & Pl.). They had a more than superficial similarity with the dance-axes of the Kafirs depicted in Robertson's book (1896:315). Good drawings and even photographs are contained in Edelberg and Jones (1979: 47, 107, pl. 25, 101). The wide range of diffusion might be explained by some late contact, knowing that the Khushwaqt princes ruled large tracts of Nuristan. But this weapon is depicted in ancient rock engravings in a very restricted area around Chilas, always in a specific context, which suggests its significance as a political or religious symbol. Since such petroglyphs were made at the end of the first millennium A.D., we might assume that there was a cult of a "war-god" brought into the mountains by returning mercenaries who had served in the armies of the Hindu-Sāhis. The next step would be to ask whether a similar diffusion brought the weapon - and its role as symbol - to the ancestors of the Kafirs. This problem is already discussed in a separate article (Jettmar 1984a: 185-91). I have to add that decorated round shields also suddenly appear as a main motif of the rock-carvings. We should perhaps compare them to a main motif in the wood-carvings of South Nuristan. In the "Energy Flow Chart" designed for the book on Nuristan (Edelberg - Jones 1979:119) these wheel-shaped motifs are used as a symbol of the sun, for obvious reasons.

In Robertson's description of wooden memorial effigies (1896:645-7), a special category is mentioned where the dead person to be honoured is represented sitting astride a couple of horses. Such effigies were considered as a sort of luxurious exaltation - like posing him on a throne - only granted when bereaved kin were ready to invite the mourners to a three-day feast. When the banquet was excessively generous, such an uncomfortable seat was even conceded to a deceased lady.

One wooden statue of this type has survived in the Museum of Peshawar (Shakur 1946: Plate VII, 2), and here we see that Robertson's account does not entirely tally. The rider is sitting on two horses which have together only one crupper with one pair of hindlegs, the bodies diverging: so here are four feet in front with two heads. Does this chimera only represent costly extravagance, or can we trace this motif back to something which makes better sense?

A special group of coins of Kanishka I (Göbl 1984, Pl. 7/61) show the protecting deity (mozdooano) on a horse with two heads. This peculiarity was seen and commented upon (Duchesne-Guillemin 1960), but the coincidence is not as convincing as I was first inclined to believe. There are not two bodies; only the head is duplicated.
There is another, more persuasive explanation. In antique and even medieval art, the frontal representation of a chariot posed a problem to the artist. Only the frontal part of the horses would be seen, the vehicle being almost completely obscured. Therefore in early rock-carvings a sort of bird's-eye view is preferred, 'flattened' transversely as are both animals and man. One of the possible solutions for the frontal view was to show the draft-animals, normally horses, rampant on either side, diverging from a central position lower than the stand or seat of the driver. This technical solution was accepted by artists for centuries. In the Kabul Museum there is a representation of the sun-god Sūrya, where this arrangement can easily be seen. It is one of very few marble statues that can be dated to the Turk-Šāhī period (late 7th to early 9th centuries A.D., Kuwayama 1976:375-6). Even closer parallels are to be found in the material presented by Bussagli (1955) as typical renderings of the divine chariot belonging to the noble equipment of mostly solar deities.

We may conclude that riding was an activity seldom if ever used in warfare by the Kafirs, being an expression of an exalted status matching the gods. Riding a chariot would be considered still superior, so that depiction as a charioteer would be the most conspicuous and extravagant privilege. As chariots became rare in the lowlands, the meaning of this assemblage would be lost - and the rider had to sit on twin horses, diverging from one crupper.

We would be able to present more of such arguments, for instance, we could point out technical innovations like iron-smithing (including the complementary ideology cf. Jettmar 1957) and the use of the horizontal water-mill which were certainly introduced after the ancestors of the Nuristanis entered the mountain valleys. But the general tendency is already clear. Nuristan was never in complete isolation during the "historical" periods: that means, in the time when states known to us by name existed outside the mountainous region. We should keep in mind that the political centres of the Kushan empire were near at hand. The distance between the dynastic sanctuary Surkh Kotal (Fussman 1983a) and the northwestern corner of Nuristan is less than 200 km on the map. Even if the armies of the Kushans were unable to enter the mountains, it is plausible that the proto-Kafirs would have come down of their own free will to serve as mercenaries, or for raiding. This situation may explain the linguistic connections with what Morgenstierne rather curtly dismissed as the "culturally and politically unimportant Munji north of the Hindukush". Munji is now recognised to be a last offshoot of the dominant Bactrian language which was officially used in the northwestern part of Kushan domains.

Persistent role of the pre-Aryan component?

There are other vexatious problems which had not been treated so far, namely, why the social and religious system of the former Kafirs had so many institutions unfamiliar to indologists but well known to anthropologists working in geographically remote parts of the world.

Before I started to present my own explanations, this was clearly seen by Heine-Geldern (1957:281-2):

"Today we know that the Kafirs were basically an early offshoot of the Vedic Aryans. One can hardly overestimate the amount of light which a thorough knowledge of Kafir culture might have thrown on the social and religious life of the ancient Aryans of India and Iran. Moreover, the Kafirs
had a graded society, combined with degree-taking rites reminiscent of the 'feasts of merit' of the Nagas and Kuki-Chin of Assam and of various Indonesian and Melanesian tribes. Was this a trait of ancient Indo-Aryan culture? In view of certain features of Vedic ritual this does not seem inconceivable. Or had these customs spread from the East along the Himalayas? Impossible to tell on the basis of the scant knowledge we possess."

I would add that the trance-priests of the Kafirs were in many respects similar to the famous shamans of North Asia. So we face a similar situation regarding yet another local institution.

I think that in previous publications I have tentatively formulated one of the possible solutions, not differentiating as clearly between Nuristanis and Dardic peoples as I would now:

Such ethnographic traits could be explained as the heritage of populations living in the Hindukush long before the Aryan invaders absorbed them. In an early article on the subject (Jettmar 1959a:93), I wrote:

"Are we to expect new light also on the religious and social life of the ancient Aryans of India? In this respect I am not too optimistic. In the pantheon of the Dardic peoples of the Karakorum there is no god comparable to the lmra ... . The most pronounced spiritual complex of the Dards, their hunting beliefs, is intimately connected with a sort of ibex or goat worship which is totally foreign to Aryan ideas. May not the culture of aboriginal tribes, with an economy based on hunting, goat-breeding and rather primitive agriculture, burst through here, triumphing over the traditions of the Aryan invaders, even though the latter's language was taken over?

We know that all Dardic and Kafir languages contain a considerable foreign, non-Aryan element. Moreover, the people of the famous Prasun tribe in the very heart of Kafiristan, dark-skinned, with very broad faces and heavy features, differ racially from the rest of the Kafirs. There can be little doubt that old, non-Aryan elements, perhaps related to the Burushaski speakers of the remotest valleys of the Karakorum, can be traced among the other Dardic peoples, too. This may enable us to establish, by careful analysis, traits antedating the immigration of the Aryans, more than three thousand years ago, traits which today are still alive. Or may, perhaps some at least of these non Aryan elements have been introduced by later immigrations from the north or the west? As long as no archaeological excavations have been made we cannot hope for a definite answer."

Now, 25 years later, I would say that such a possibility should still be taken into consideration, but not many additional arguments were brought to the fore (except perhaps Bernhard 1983:42). The situation, indeed, would be different, if we would take into consideration the Dardic area and the rock carvings discovered there. So we must refer to the following volumes. There are certainly weak points in these deliberations. If the pre-Aryan settlers were strong enough to develop a sort of merit or prestige economy plus trophy-hunting, why were they unable to resist the Aryan invaders? The Burushos moreover have no clear place in such an argument. Their economy and ideology are more strictly based on agriculture than that of their Dardic neighbours.
"Andronovians" - ancestors of the Nuristanis?

1. When I was preparing a book on the "Arts of the Steppes" (in effect a 'cultural history' of the mounted nomads; German edition 1964, English edition 1967), I learned that Soviet scholars had created an elegant socio-economic model in order to explain the apparent transition from complex farming (with agriculture and animal husbandry) to pastoral nomadism. I gave a summary of their ideas in the following way (1966:611):

"Grjaznov, the leading Soviet archaeologist in this field, put forward the theory that the transition was actually the logical consequence of the economic development which took place in the heyday of the agricultural steppe cultures. There existed a strict division of labour between the sexes; tilling of the fields was the task of the women, while animal husbandry was that of men. Looking for new meadows, the men pushed further and further away from the villages into the lonely steppes. Finally a part of them broke loose, taking their wives with them, and housing henceforth in their carts. This new mobility enabled them to raise more horses than ever before and to gain, by this way, superior military strength. This forced other groups to join the new pattern of life, and in this way warlike nomadism was diffused like a chain reaction throughout the whole steppe belt."

The transition did not lead immediately to massive inroads into the settled areas bordering the steppes and to the exploitation of the sedentary population, permanently subjugated. For a while the mounted warriors acted only as raiders and mercenaries. Even therefore there is an explanation at hand (Jettmar 1966:612-3):

"The 'Early Nomads' (a term coined by Soviet archaeologists) had still in many respects preserved the heritage of their prenomadic days. Evidently they preserved close relations with settled groups, farmers and artisans. Age-grades were highly important to them, and young warriors had their own organisation. Indeed bands of them started out on raids of their own. Sheer political power alone was not all-important, military success not decisive. Victory had to be presented to the community as a whole and formally accepted. In this way it was transferred to a higher level and preserved for the next world. This task was accomplished by trophy hunting, feasts of merit and the erection of megalithic monuments. Today it is clear that most of the kurgans (erected mounds on top of graves) in the steppes belong to this period and were provided with rings of stones, menhirs etc. As a consequence the burial rites were extremely elaborate and diversified. They were intended to perpetuate the social and ritual position of the dead man."

This spectacular transformation would have taken place in the northern part of the steppe-belt of Eurasia including the Pontic area, Kazakhstan and parts of Siberia extending eastwards to the basin of the Yenisei. In this enormous region we know a large number of sites and graveyards since the second quarter of the second millennium B.C. They were conceived as "Timber Grave Culture" and "Andronovo Culture", the latter being sometimes subdivided into several complexes.

In the meantime it was observed that Andronovo sites spread far to the south. They occur in Southern Turkmenia and on the upper reaches of the Amu Darya. Andronovo pottery or ceramics which show definitely Andronovo
influence by shape and decoration were found even farther south, on the
Iranian plateau.

Isolated sites of the Andronovo Culture were discovered in the mountain
valleys of the Tienshan (Arpa, 3000 m above sea-level) and in the Eastern
Pamirs (Kyzyl-Rabat). Here Andronovo people were certainly not farmers
since agriculture is practically impossible at such an altitude (Členova
1984:89).

Coming to the main point: the Bronze Age cultures of the steppes were
identified by several Soviet scholars with the still undivided Indo-Iranians.
The same group of scholars assumes that the first waves moving from the
northern steppes to the south, not later than the 13th century B.C., were
none other than the pre-Vedic "Aryans". The remaining groups which slowly
followed their steps became linguistically differentiated as the Iranians, a
large part of them accepting a warlike nomadic life-style.

In this hypothesis I saw an opportunity to explain several ethnographic
peculiarities of the early Nuristanis and their Dardic neighbours. I proposed
that institutions such as feasts of merit and trophy-hunting evolved in the
time when the Indo-Iranians expanded southwards. A part of them, speaking
Aryan languages but sharing many institutions with the pursuing Iranians,
retained their social setting when they entered the most secluded valleys
south of the main range of Hindukush. Of course I realized that such a
process was impossible without major changes and a sort of re-interpretation
of the cultural heritage due to the extreme and specific environment.

We might add that only a minor part of the Iranian nomads used Haoma
(= Soma) as the holy hallucinogenic drug: thus they earned the name Sakā
haumavargā 'the haoma-(?) taking Sakas'. The more common practice was
inhalation of intoxicating vapour (of cannabis in many cases) produced by
burning or roasting. Apparently the smoke of juniper used by the mountain
peoples in the Hindukush has similar effects: therefore we might say that
Iranian nomads and Nuristanis share some sort of proto-shamanistic tradition
already incipient in the Early Bronze Age.

2. All these efforts and speculations were in vain: for the main premises of
the thesis just presented can no longer be upheld in the light of modern
archaeological evidence (even when some Soviet archaeologists, e.g. Členova
1984:103, stick to their cherished and somewhat outmoded conceptions).

I was among the first who recognized the major weakness of the position
I had taken for a while, and I formulated more than ten years ago
(1972a:75–81) all counter-arguments known to me. The essential point is that
the Bronze Age cultures of the northern steppes like Timber Grave and
Andronovo evolved too late: in the first half of the second millennium B.C.
Their techniques and arms remained rather simple, not adapted to
far-reaching conquests. An identification of the Bronze Age cultures of the
steppes with the Indo-Iranians is therefore unlikely. We cannot even assume
that a complex like Andronovo represents the body of the undivided early
Iranians. Indeed, we see that the "Andronovians" participated in the
formation of peoples which we may recognize in literary tradition. But these
peoples are the distinctive northeastern Iranians, the Sakas and their
relatives. They were able to move southwards only after a major
transformation into warlike nomads of the Scythian type. During earlier
contacts and infiltrations they may have played a more subordinate role.

It is certainly interesting that the Andronovo population entered the
mountains long before, but this is relevant not so much for the origin of the
Nuristanis as for the mountain dwellers who spoke - and still speak -
'Pamirian' languages of East Iranian type. Moreover, there is no reason to assume the existence of institutions like age-grades, feasts of merit, erection of megalithic monuments and trophy-hunting for the first periods of the Bronze Age of the steppes. Their functional value arose during the period of transition. Solid evidence is not available until after the end of this process.

So the existence of rather similar institutions among the early nomads and their immediate ancestors on the one hand, and the Nuristanis on the other hand, does not mean that there existed actual connections. Parallel development may occur in rather divergent environments provided that some basic conditions exist in both cases. We may speak of structural correspondence, but not more in this instance.

This was substantially my position when I wrote the German version of this book. In order to emphasize that there is no historical connection with apparently similar elements in other areas, I avoided the term "megalithic monument". Instead of "feast of merit" I used the uncommon but more concrete expression "feast of confirmation". Even trophy-hunting was regarded by me as an appropriate feature in a system of warfare consisting of individualistic raids. The maintenance of a defensive zone by terror aroused in many murderous expeditions and operating for many centuries must lead to a complicated system of symbols and rewards for the most effective fighters.
XI. Lament of Nílíra's Father
"Sunra . . . and Nílíra, Utah's son-in-law, were killed during a raid on the Tsárogul people."
(Illustration to Robertson, pp. 351-3).
XI

EPILOGUE: "PROTO-KAFIR"-CULTURES

IN CENTRAL ASIAN PREHISTORY
To pursue archaic origins seems to be in an incorrigible human tendency - so just when I found my way to scholarly resignation over these issues (in 1973/1974) others kept the quest alive by claiming that the Kafir religions somehow preserve trends which had been lost by nearly all other Indo-Iranian peoples. Parpola (1974:97) was one of them:

"As far as religion is concerned, I would venture the suggestion that the proto-South Aryans separated from the proto-Aryan when the soma cult had not yet developed. Instead, the horse sacrifice was of paramount importance, and also chariot races and other competitions as well as cattle raids, and epic poetry (in gāthās or ślokas) including panegyric nārāśāmsas and dānastutis, played a great role in the culture; the king appears also to have had priestly functions. In the mythology traces of which survive in the Kafir religion, the duplicate myths of the late books of the Rgveda, etc., the slayer of the Dragon was Trita (and not Indra), the first mortal was Yama (and not Manu); Dhiṣañā was an important goddess, etc. These "proto-South Aryans", who occupied both northern Iran as well as northern India, would seem to have called themselves dāsa "man", and their gods asura "lord"."

We see that Parpola was already well ahead on the track leading to Fussman's "problématique nouvelle" (1977). Moreover it is important that Dhiṣañā is mentioned in this context. One could even venture to assume that this deity was already brought even earlier by Indo-European immigrants (the so called Tokharians) to Central Asia. A deity (or deities) by name and function corresponding to the Aryan goddess, was evidently known to South Germanic tribes in the time of Tacitus (Ström 1975:94). In North Germanic texts we find clear hints that this goddess was responsible for the sphere of death, ruling over (female) ancestors (Ström 1975:165-167; cf. Johansson 1917).

Equally important was a paper written by Burrow. I quote the most relevant statement (1973:126):

"The colonization of North-West India by the Indo-Aryans was an extensive operation, lasting over generations, which could only have been carried out on the strength of an extensive population base immediately outside the sub-continent. That is to say that before these migrations Proto-Indoaryans must have been in occupation of large tracts of eastern Iran and western Afghanistan (such as Bactria, Areia (Haraiva), Arachosia, and Drangiana), which only at a later period came into the possession of the Iranians. One would also not expect that the migrations into India left these countries empty of Proto-Indoaryans, but rather that this was a movement of the surplus population, so that when the Iranians took control of this territory they would find the Proto-Indoaryans settled there, and that in due course of time the latter would be absorbed into and merged with the later-coming Iranians."

Moreover, Burrow taking up the ideas of L.H. Gray (1927) postulated that in some areas the veneration of the Indo-Aryan deities, the Daēvas, was perpetuated by a faction of the population, the "Daēvayasnas". Maybe such
conservative groups were descendants of the earlier Aryan settlers, but Iranians had also been attracted. The propaganda of the worshippers of Ahura Mazda was definitely aimed at their conversion or extermination.

Maybe there remained pockets where the earlier stratum was dominant for a while. Burrows writes (1973:135-6):

"The earlier history of the Zoroastrian religion was confined to eastern Iran as delimited by the above-mentioned frontiers, but eventually the defences of the Proto-Indoaryans to the west were overcome, and this was followed by massive Iranian immigration into central and western Iran. In view of the extreme hostility of the Iranians towards the "Mazanian daēvas" this westward movement is not likely to have taken the form of a gradual and piecemeal infiltration, but of a deliberately organized military campaign and crusade against the heathen, and it is not unlikely that a reflection of these events is to be seen in the later legendary account of the wars against Mazandaran in the Shāhnāmah, even though these have been set back in time to the reign of Kai Kāūs. As a result the Medes became masters of central northern Iran, and instead of Mazāna we hear in the future only of a truncated Mazandaran occupying the mountainous territory to the south of the Caspian sea."

If we would accept this thesis in the main points as done for good reasons by Gnoli (1980:199) and partly by F.R. Allchin (1981:341), we may blankly say that the ancestors of the Nuristanis represent another pocket of this kind. But they remained safe and unmolested as soon as they retreated into the shelter of the mountains.

Such deliberations became important when Soviet scholars started the excavation of Bronze Age sites in Southern Uzbekistan and Tajikistan as well as in Northern Afghanistan. Here we are certainly in one of the areas where the "Proto-Indoaryans" had to rally before they moved to the South-East and near the places where Zoroaster was teaching his new religion - according to Burrow still in the second millennium B.C.

Sarianidi with Afghan counterparts and Askarov with his team excavated settlements, fortresses, temples, and palaces as well as graveyards. They belong to local variants of the formerly unknown Oxus culture. (This useful term was coined by Francfort 1981:199), since Sarianidi (e.g., 1977) and Askarov (1973, 1977) could not agree to a common designation). The Oxus culture can be divided into several stages, starting in the early centuries of the second millennium B.C. and leading over to the time when the Achaemenid Empire included this area as the rich and important Bactrian satrapy. The great inscription of Surkh Kotal and related documents clearly show that the local population spoke an East Iranian language. This could be seen as an argument against the thesis of Burrow that there was a change from the Proto-Indoaryans to the Iranians, but since he explained this process by a sort of infiltration, it is compatible with the archaeological evidence.

Maybe a similar infiltration but coming from the south, is revealed by the so-called "Kusali"-complex. In these burials skulls were found which are quite similar to those found in the post-Harappan sites of the Indus valley. The pertinent pottery includes types which occur in the graveyard 'H' at Harappa and in the so-called Jhukar culture (Askarov 1984:94-6). This means that the spectacular finds at Shortughai (Francfort-Pottier 1978; Bernard-Francfort 1979) indicating a local colony of the Harappans, are not so isolated as it seems at first view. So there must have been perpetual exchange of ideas; material goods and humans between the land of the Oxus
and that of the Indus.

Perhaps the infiltration coming from the south was controlled, even organized by Aryans conquering the Indus basin, so that the agricultural basis in the homelands was preserved and consolidated.

That leads us to the next question: The farming communities on both sides of the Oxus do not seem well-prepared for an invasion of South Asia. The population was rather peacefully tilling the soil. Not many arms are found in the graves. Bones of horned cattle were found, but there were no horses.

So I concluded that there was even in those early days a situation similar to what I had seen myself in Afghanistan: pastoral groups were living in a sort of symbiosis with sedentary farmers. Their archaeological remains are much more difficult to detect, and I suspect that the modern local population so far was more successful than the Soviet archaeologists: only a few years ago, hundreds or even thousands of bronzes were on sale in the souvenir shops or open in the streets of Kabul - the result of illicit digging in the northern plains of Afghanistan as a sad consequence of the professional excavation. An examination of the photographs taken from this enormous material proves the existence of many types which were so far not found in the graves of the sedentary farmers.

Some of these types may still belong to the third millennium B.C. if we take better documented specimens from other areas into consideration. Others must not be necessarily earlier than the inventory of the graves. It should be mentioned that such enigmatic types have close relations to certain bronze groups in the Near East, just where we have to reckon with an early stratum of Aryans.

My proposal was summarized in a paper which I read during a conference of the South Asian Archaeologists held in Berlin in 1979 (published 1981:300):

"If I take into consideration the general tendency to reckon with the existence of migrant populations which is difficult to be grasped already during the third and second millennia B.C., then it seems quite possible to me that a part of the still enigmatic bronze objects came from the graves of nomads, perhaps without pottery of their own, or from their ceremonial centres if they had no graves.

It is by no means impossible that some tribes of the nomads had no graves at all. Perhaps a part of the Iranians took over this tradition (Humbach 1961). Certainly the Kafirs who entered the valleys of the Hindukush already in the second millennium B.C., kept it up almost to the present day. When Alexander fought the mountain tribes there, he ordered to burn down the graves of the locals - evidently the wooden chests as today - in order to prevent a night-attack (Lentz 1938). In the Tarim Basin the exposure of dead bodies is attested back at least to the Han period (Bergman 1939:61-140).

But this does not mean that all pastoral tribes had the same burial customs. In the Vachš valley there were catacombs under kurgans (Tigrovaja Balka, P'jankova 1974). In the Biškent valley a variety of rituals existed, some of them showing Vedic influence (Mandelštam 1968, Litvinskij/Zeijmal/Medvedskaja 1973)."

My proposal that there was a symbiosis between farmers - who are well documented by excavation - and the rather shadowy pastoralists is not new. B. Allchin (1981:324) stressed that even the mature Indus culture with its urban centres would not remain stable without "a matrix of complementary communities at various levels, among which nomadic or partly nomadic pastoralists were a major element". Possehl (1979:546-8) tried to show in
which regions, on both sides of the Indus, such nomads must have been prevalent — only betrayed by 'empty spaces' on the archaeological map. In the Indus basin, however, the situation was different from that in Middle Asia: It is probable that in Middle Asia including the area of the Oxus culture farmers and pastoralists spoke related languages. If so, they belonged to the same ethnic stock, to the 'Proto-Indoaryans'. Even if there had been a different substratum (Dravidian? cf. Sarianidi 1977:167) then it must have been assimilated already during an earlier period.

It is even possible that the pastoralists were an offshoot of a population with a mixed economy which had lived in Southern Turkmenia since Neolithic times: Chlopin (e.g., 1975:71) conjectures from around the sixth millennium B.C.

A decision is only possible when we know where the original homeland of the Indo-European speakers was situated. (For evaluation of the far diverging theories cf. D'jakonov 1982, 1982a, and Gamkrelidze – Ivanov 1984).

The lack of any clearcut boundary between farmers and herdsmen would have the result that nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes were actually pioneering the somewhat slower but equally effective expansion of agricultural communities into the heart of Asia — as in the Zeravshan valley (Isakov 1981), to Southern Siberia, throughout the Tarim Basin and perhaps further afield (Jettmar 1983a:38–9). Maybe nomads were the traders who brought real silk to the people of the Oxus culture — still in the second millennium B.C.! (Askarov 1973:134).

Another aspect of this symbiosis may have been that the complicated sanctuaries of the Oxus culture were used and venerated by farmers and pastoralists as well. I am focussing on the round temple and the so-called palace excavated by Sarianidi (1977:34-50) at Dashly 3 and another "mandala-shaped" palace at Sapallitepa found by Askarov (1981, cf. Brentjes 1981). Together the different tribes formed an amphictyony, a league of neighbours devoted to the same deities.

In this context it must be mentioned that I made an attempt to explain the enigmatic structures attributed to Disani in some mythic texts of the Prasuns (a castle with four corners and seven gates, a tower from which seven streets diverge, a building with nine gates of mercy) as faint reminiscences of such ceremonial centres (Jettmar 1981a:226–7).

Certainly such a hypothesis was a relapse into my earlier speculative tendencies — but this may be permitted in an atmosphere created by new archaeological discoveries.

The recently discovered bronzes of Afghanistan show clear affinities to types well-known in Near East (Amiet 1976, 1977, 1978). On the other hand, there are archaeological connections with South Siberia. That opens new ways to the interpretation of other mythological complexes as well which occur like erratic blocks in Kafir traditions.
ETYMOLOGICAL GLOSSARY OF KAFIRI RELIGIOUS VOCABULARY

by

Peter S. C. Parkes

In view of the special significance of etymological considerations in appraising the cultural-historical background of Kafir religion (Chapter X; Fussman 1977), it seemed it might be useful for the general reader to bring together the scattered results of cumulative scholarship in this field in the form of an appended Glossary to this volume.

The primary source here, upon which all subsequent discussions have depended, remains Morgenstierne's detailed list of Kati (and equivalent Kafiri) deities and mythological figures that accompanied his 1951 article "Some Kati Myths and Hymns" (Acta Orientalia 21, pp. 163-6). Almost all of the Sanskrit, or reconstructed early Indo-Aryan, etymologies that were proposed by Morgenstierne in this article and in other works (e.g. Morgenstierne 1949: 283-4 on Prasun deities; 1954: 319-20 on Waigal deities) were adopted by R. L. Turner in his Comparative Dictionary of the Indo-Aryan Languages (1966).

Turner's magisterial volume is of exceptional value for our purposes: in its collation of the greater part of known Kafiri vocabularies together with those of all historical and modern Indo-Aryan languages, this material being arranged under head-words which correspond in phonetic structure to the earliest known form of Indo-Aryan, i.e., the language represented in the Rg Veda. (But on the special problems of Kafiri phonetic reconstruction to such I.-A. 'roots', see Turner's Introduction, p. ix). Apart from its primary value for scholars of Kafiristan, in allowing one to trace immediate cognate terms within the Kafiri/Nuristani language group and also with historically related Indo-Aryan languages (i.e. between Kafiri and 'Dardic', or the N.W. Indo-Aryan group), Turner's Dictionary provides a convenient, short-hand system of reference for most Kafiri words: indicated by T + his head-word number. I have also reproduced several of the initial head-word entries from Turner (i.e. the most archaic denotations of religious names and terms) where these seemed semantically relevant to problems of Kafiri etymology; however only textual sources from the Rgveda (RV.) and Atharvaveda (AV.) are cited here.

Many of the least questionable Indo-Aryan etymologies of Kafiri deities and ritual terms listed below have already been discussed in detail by G. Fussman (1976; 1977), to which the enquiring reader must refer. Fussman's authoritative analysis both reappraises the earlier work of Morgenstierne and Turner as well as offering several new interpretations which have been incorporated here. The works of G. Buddruss (e.g., 1960a; 1973; 1974) have also contributed important insights into Kafir religion from the perspective of historical linguistics, especially in relation to the language and myths of Prasun. I am grateful to Prof. Buddruss for his detailed comments and corrections to an earlier draft of this Glossary, and for allowing me to incorporate some of his unpublished material on Prasun (marked 'B' below).

Kafiri deities and ritual terms are listed initially according to the
simplified orthography used throughout this book (see italicised page references), followed by phonetic transcriptions in the respective Nuristani languages, usually where these have been recorded by Morgenstierne or Buddruss.

Abbreviations:

Kt. Kati (mainly E. Kati; see Morgenstierne 1951)
Pras. Prasun (see Morgenstierne 1949)
Wg. Waigali (see Morgenstierne 1954)
Ashk. Ashkun (see Morgenstierne 1929; 1934)
Kal. Kalasha (see Morgenstierne 1973)
Pers. Persian
Skt. Sanskrit
M. Morgenstierne 1951 (pp. 163-6); otherwise M(morgenstierne) + date of publication, as listed above.
B. Buddruss, personal communication.
Arom (Kt. Arōm)  
guardian deity of Kam (E. Kati) tribe, with 'seven brothers' (76), M. sūt-Arōm bī. Possibly connected with Kt. arō, rō 'rich, noble' (T1329 + ?).

Bagisht (Kt. Bag(y)št)  
Kati 'god of wealth', especially concerned with livestock and water (74-5); son of the goddess Disani, and identified with the Prasun deity Opkulu. M. suggested a possible Skt. form *Bhagīṣṭha ('most prosperous one', T9346). See Fussman 1977: 32 (especially on the problematic retention of -g- here. ? <*-gg-).

'barrei le bula/barrei daggar bula'  
Kafiri terms for heaven and hell according to Elphinstone (36). 'barrei-' recalls Kal. (? Kt.) parīṭi 'paradise' (T7799g); but le/daggar probably equals Kt. lēi/dīgar 'good/bad' (cf. Pras. īgar 'dirty, evil' Buddruss 1960a: 203 n.10).

Blamade (Ashk. Blamadê)  

daenik (Kt. dānīk, Wg. dēnîk; see cognate Pras. jēnî)  

Dagon, Deogan (Wg.-Ashk. 'Dagon', 'Dogan', 'Doghum', 'Dogham', etc.)  
name or paraphrase of the 'supreme deity' in southern Nuristan (Waigal and Ashkun) according to many 19th century reports (63). Lentz (1938: 135) recorded Wg. do:y'ēn 'benevolent spirits' (=Arab-Pers. ājnī). M. (1954: 319, Wg. Dogan) proposed *dē + E. Pashai ān, etc. 'big' (T4424.2), i.e., 'great god'; but Klimburg's translation of Ashk. Deogan as simply 'cult statue' (125) seems more likely (i.e. dē 'god' + T3998 = 'wooden idol'; cf. M. (1973: 154) on Kal. Dalgōn 'carved wooden face in altar').

de, 'dew'lu (Kt. de, Wg. dē, Ashk. dēi; Pras. lū)  
Kafiri term for 'god' (123, 130.). T6523 & 14619: dēva- 'heavenly' m. 'a god' RV. See Fussman 1977: 27-8. But 'dew' (41-2) derived from Pers. dev 'demon'.

delu/luzu (Kt. dēlu; Pras. lūzū)  

dewutr (Kt. dewutr; Wg. dōṭr)  
'fairy', category of spirit (42) and name of the 'king of the fairies'. M. and M. (1954: 252). T6532: dēvaputra- m. 'son of a god', dēvaputrī f.

Disani/Disni (Kt. Disāri; Pras. Disni)  
goddess of the female sphere (68-72) and divine 'priestess' (utai; 69). M. T6813: dhiśāna- f. 'name of a goddess' RV., dhiśāna- m. 'name of an evil spirit' AV. (cf. Ashk. dōsāni 'ogress' as well as 'name of goddess'). Ashk. 'Atali Disani' is translated by Klimburg (124) as Disani 'of the crossed horns' (cf. Wg. aṅțala-śīn id.).

Diwog (Pras.)  
'Dizano' (Kt.)
family of 'seven devils' living in heavenly fort (M. 1951: 169 n. 9, 173 n. 1 B*e-niňať 'Demon City'? 'Flour-Castle') defeated by Mon (59). Kt. diz- 'to create' (T14621); but perhaps somehow confused with the goddess Disani.

Dogumrik (Pras.)

Duzhi (Kt. Důži)

Espereg-era, 'Ashpegra' (Pras. B.: asparag-arā)
Prasun hero-god (equivalent to Mandi/Mon), rescuer of sun and moon; or alternatively his giant adversary who stole the luminaries (60-2). See Buddruss 1974. Name with suffix arā < T10679: rājan- 'chieftain, king' (cf. Wg. erā-manas, M. 1954: 228).

Gish (Kt. Gyış, W. Kt. Giwış; Pras. Giș, Giwēș, Gawiș)

Gujo (Pras. B.: Goč, Gaču)
tutelary lineage deity of Shtiwe village, Parun (73).

Guro (Pras. B.: Gurō; ? = Kt. g'u-ru 'eclipse')
giant of Prasun 'living in a rock between heaven and earth' whose torso devours the moon at eclipses (62-3). Kt. g'u-ru 'eclipse'. T4363: grāha-. . . 'seizing'. Cf. T4382: grahā-. 1. 'seizing' 2. 'rapacious animal living in water'. Khowar grah = 1. 'eclipse' 2. 'water animal which swallows moon or sun when eclipsed' (Cf. T4364). B., however notes indigenous association with Pras. gurō 'cruel' (T4522; ? somehow assimilated with the above).

Himindu/Hemondo (Pras. ?)

il-munj (Pras. il-münji)
highest heaven in Prasun cosmology (Kt. Urdesh) occupied by Mandi/Mon (36). ? Pras. al'i 'heaven, the upper world' (T250) + ?

Imra (Kt. Imrō; Wg. Yamrāi; Pras. Yumrā; Ashk. Imrā; see Pras. Mara)

Indr (Kt. Indr, Indr; Pras. B.: īdr + Kt.)
patriarchal god of South Nuristan, especially in Wama where associated with a wine cult (64-5). Ashk. 'Inder, Indr' (125). M. T1572: indram- 'the god Indra' RV. Cf. M. (1973: 154) on Kal. ln(dr-). Kafiri terms for 'rainbow', 'earthquake', etc. (64; T1577 & 1582) derive from early 1.-A. india- compounds, but do not seem to be associated indigenously with the Kafir god. See Fussman 1977: 32.

Jeini (Pras. jeńi, gyēni; see daenik)
'ogress', female counterpart to male 'weri' demons (42). Prasun cognate of Kt. and Wg. 'daenik' (q.v., T5542).
Kantar (Wg. 'Káantar')
name of god in Waigal (115) preserved in Kantar-köt 'clan temple' (lit. 'tower-fort' T3500). Kantar also glossed as 'heavenly' (Jones & Parkes 1984; Klimburg 1981: 172).

Kashau (Wg.)

Kshibere (Kt. Kšebeše)
artisan brother of Mon (57).


Kumrai/Inkumrai (Kt. Kùmrači, Kùmrči; see Kshumai)

Lunang (Pras. luNaň; see Nong and Nangi-wutr)
Prasun river goddess (49, 77) classed as 'jeini' spirit (71). Buddruss (1960a: 24 ff.) explains as lā 'god' + 'Nang' (< T7039: Nāgā- m. 'snake'; but the latter also generates Pras. Noň, M. 1949: 319!). See Fussman 1977: 36-8.

Maka (Pras. B.:māka)
mythical name of primordial land of Prasun (49).


Mara (Pras. Māra; see Imra)


Munjem Malik (Pras.; ? Kt. Minā Malik, see Mara Malik)
Prasun valley-giant and 'Lord of the Middle (Region)' (54–7). Pras. munē 'middle' (T9804; cf. Kt. mē) + Arab-Pers. Malik. ? Ruler of Underworld: Kal. conception of Min(ँ) Marā (Kt. Minā Malik) indicates identity (or confusion) of this local Prasun deity with Mara Malik (q.v.).
Nangi-wutr (Kt. Nañi-würt; see lu-Nang and Nong)  
wife of Sudrem/Süjum and mother of Disani/Disni. M. : "daughter of Nong?" (i.e., -putrī-); but see 'wutrī' 'female demon' and Pras. lu-Nang. (T7039).

Nirmali/Nirmik (Kt. Nirmalī; Pras. Nirmik; see Shuwe)  

Nong (Kt. & Pras. Noñ; see Züzum)  

Opkulu (Pras. Opkulū, Upkulū)  

Paneu (Kt. Pāneu; Wg. pañā(u); Pras. Pañë; Ashk. Panōũ, etc.)  
'seven divine brothers' associated with Disni (75-6). Wg. pañāu/pārā (Buddruss) appear as clan or village tutelary deities (113-4), while Ashk. 'panao' (Klimburg; cf. M. 1929: 272) are numerous localized male deities (123-5). M. : <Paṇḍaṇa. T8048: pāṇḍava- m. pl. 'the five sons of Pāṇḍu'; but see Fussman 1977: 34. ? Cf. Pashai deity 'Pändād' (Scarcia 1965: 114-15).

Paradik (Kt.)  
'seven divine brothers' (Elphinstone) possibly connected with Prak-de/Paráde (75-6) and the seven Paneu or Purron deities (q.v.).

Pegaileamund (Pras.)  
divine helper of Mandi and Gish against the Guro eclipse-giant (62-3). 'Pegelya' (extinct clan of Kushteki; Edelberg 1972: 91) + münd 'priest, clan headman' (cf. Pedā-münd, 53; see münd in Pt. II)

Poluknalai (Ashk.)  
local goddess of Ashkun (124) also recorded as 'Pañoknaʁay' (Palwal II, 1969: 81-2).

Prak-de/Paráde (Kt. ? 'Paráde'; Wg. & Ashk. Prak-dë)  
name of a god, possibly associated with the seven Paradik/Purron brothers (76; recorded by Jones in Waigal, 113, and by Klimburg in Ashkun, 124-5).

Purron (Kt.)  
'seven divine brothers' (Elphinstone), possibly variants of the seven Paneu (76). Cf. upper Wg. dialect pārā for pañāu (Buddruss).

Pushashi (Pras. ? pašå-si (M.1949); B. : pəšasį)  
'female demon' (Morgenstierne); Prasun epithet for Disani/Disni and (?/or) Nirmali/Nirmik (Edelberg; 73). M. (1949 :283): = Skt. piśāci. Adopted in Turner, T8216: piśācī- m. ...piśācī- f. 'demon' AV; but this etymology cannot be substantiated in view of Buddruss' -ś-. See B. : pašasį-amāl 'birth-house', presided over by the goddess, under 'dibu' in Part II below.

Sanu/Sanru (Kt. Sārũ, Sānũ; Pras. Sāũ)  
a 'Muslim' (? demonic) antagonist of Gish and father of Sanjū (M. : 115); see below.
Sanju/Sulmech/Saranji (Kt. Sāņjū, Sāranji; Pras. Sūlmeč)

harvest goddess who 'rules over the wheat-bin' (M.), daughter of Sanu and consort of Gish (67-8). M.: *Sān + jū 'daughter'. As 'golden bird' (68) cf. Pras. sū 'gold' and see Klimburg (1981: 188-9) on a 'cult bird of Sūlmeč (Sōlmeč-akākōg)'. M. (1949: 283; see Hymn VI p. 308) also recorded Pras. "Sanjū, Wutā Sanjō = Disnī?".

Shomde/Wushum (Kt. Šam-dē B.; ? Šam-dē; Pras. 'Uṣum, 'Uṣumu)

an important god of Prasun with major shrine at Dewa/Diagram (53-4). ? Cf. perhaps Kt. šom (?) 'sacrifice' (M.: 176), Wg. šom 'tribute' (see under T12397, although this must be erroneous in view of B.'s revised rendering ś- for M's ś-).

Shuwe/Shue (Pras. B.; Šuē)

names or epithets of the goddesses Disni and Nirmik in Prasun (72-3). ? Formed from Pras. verbal root -šu- 'to suckle' (M. 1949: 301), i.e., 'Nurtress'. ? = Pashai deity 'Srwy' (Scaria 1965: 116).

suchi (Wg. sūčī)


Sudrem/Sūjum (Kt. Sudrem; Pras. Sūjum)

priest among the gods and father of Disani/Disni (67-8). Associated with 'primordial lakes' in upper Prasun (Sūjum-sur) and beyond upper Bashgal (Kt. Sudrem-sar, Dorah Lake; 71). M.: "Cf. Skt. Sudharman, n. of a son of Manu". T13470: sudhārman- 'well maintaining' ... 'name of a being reckoned among the Viṣve devāh' ... 'pl. name of various classes of gods'. See Buddruss 1960a: 208.

Taraskeen (Wg. Trask'īn)

god of Waigal with bird-shaped silver or golden idol (116). Wg. sun-niṇca/nigerū 'golden-bird', Ashk. 'sunnyase' (125): sun 'gold' + niṅacā 'sparrow, bird'. Cf. the golden bird of Sūlmech under Sanju/Sūlmech above.

Urdesh (? Kt.; see Yurdesh)

celestial realm of three-tiered universe according to Robertson (36).

B.? <*upra-deš; but -deš (T6547) usually = Kt. gṛom.

Utr (Kt. utzun Ūtr; see wutr)

'mother of Gish' (65). ? Variant of Kt. wutr 'female demon'. Cf. Lentz (1938: 135) Wg. ō:tr 'evil spirit'.

Weri (Pras.)

'male demon' in Prasun (42). Fussman (1977: 28 n.25) proposes <vīrākā- 'little man, name of a hero' (see T12056; ? conceivably derived from e.g., Kt. wetr(i) below <*weti as alternative to w(y)aži ?). ? Cf. Kt. 'Weri' (43) as demon progenitor of Prasun tribe ('Viron', Kal. Wetr).

wutr/wechi (Kt. wūtr, wetr; Wg. wōtri(i); Ashk. wōutr, wūtrī; Pras. w(y)aži)

'fairy', 'female demon' (41-5); but Robertson's 'vetr' appear as both male and female. M. suggested *vātaputrī- 'daughter of the wind', T11495 (and T14797), which Buddruss (1973: 45) notes as "phonetically unobjectionable, but semantically not really provable". Cf. Kal. worōti 'male(!) fairy' (M. 1973: 158).

Yurdesh (? Kt.; see Urdesh)

lower, Underworld realm of three-tiered universe according to Robertson (36; 98).
Yush (Kt., Pras. yuṣ; Wg. yūṣ; Ashk. yuṣ) demon, ogre, devil (42-5). Robertson: Yush also name of 'chief of demons' (44). Ashk. yuṣṭrīk 'ogress'. M. T10395: yaksā- m. 'a supernatural being'. Cf. Kal. jaq, Shina yac 'demon'. See Fussman 1977: 35–6.


Žintse/Žitse (Ashk.) (?) demons and/or ancestor spirits in Ashkun (127). 'Žintseimās' (128) evidently corresponds to Lentz (1939: 135) džidzʾei/džītse:i, although the latter month is there reported to occur after the 'winter solstice'.

Zuzum (Pras. B.: Zūzum) god of glacial ice and winter in Prasun, identified with Nong (75). Nb. should not be confused with Sūjum (see above), although this deity is also associated with a lake, Zūzum-sur, near Pashki. See Buddruss 1960: 27. B.: ? cf. Pras. zū 'ice'.

II KAFIRI RITUAL TERMS AND INSTITUTIONS


de-ta (Wg. de-tā; Ashk. žētā) 'shrine' in Waigal (116) and Ashkun (124). 'place of god' (T6523 + T13753).

dibu' (Pras. Dūbū, place-name; see pshor) Edelberg's (mistaken) term for women's 'house of impurity' in Prasun, presided over by goddess Nirmik (73). M. (1949: 281) recorded Pras. zwāt as 'birth house', <*jant- (T5109). Buddruss (B.) explains that Edelberg has actually recorded the local place-name, near Shtiwe, where such a house was located. B. further clarifies that there were two such houses of impurity in Prasun (unlike the single 'pshor' house of the Kati): a) šanī-bā tā'menstruation-shelter/cave' b) pāšāṣi-amāl 'birth house' (lit. sanctuary of the goddess Pushashi).

Jast (Kt. ļešt; Wg. duštö; Pras. M.: ľšték, B.: aştek)
'elder', 'senior', political leader (30). Term of seniority, perhaps
over-formalized by Robertson as a distinct political office in Bashgal
ff.). T5286: įyešṭha- 'first, chief', įyešṭhā- 'eldest', m. 'eldest brother'
RV.

'kaneaš' (Kt. koňejaš; ? on-jista-mač)
candidate for festal rank who also served as ritually 'pure' officiant
(Robertson, 28). Strand (1974b: 58) indicates this is a misnomer for a
kind of feast (koňejaš 'feast-breakfast'). Palwal (1977: 235-6, 244-7)
replaces kaneaš with (? Kt.) 'on-jista-mach' or 'man of sanctity'
(Frembgen 1983: 116-18); but the latter seems a corrupt rendering of
Kal. őňešta-muč 'sacred officiant' (? T791; Parkes 1983: ch.8, cf. M.
1973: 77 "onješta").

'kunda' (Kt.)
Kati term for religious invocation (Robertson, 90), including hymns
('lala-kunda' with T10972) and prayers ('namach-kunda' see namach).

münd (Pras. münd; cf. Uta)
clan 'priest' (living in amal/amol) in Prasun, where religious
responsibilities for deities were allocated by descent group (88-9). The
münd was probably also a festally-achieved office of 'headmanship'
within the clan (tadba), ? deriving by a line of succession from its
apical ancestor, also known as the münd (? 'head') of the clan (see
T10247: mūrdhān- m. 'cranium, head, top, chief, beginning' RV.
(→ Ashk. muń 'mountain peak', 124 and B. now confirms Pras. münd also
as 'crest of mountain').

'namach' (Kt. nāmoc; see 'kunda')
Kati term for prayer, invocation (90). Rare pre-Islamic loan-word from

pashki (Pras. M.: paški, B.: paški; see Kt. pshur; cf. Wg. dil/ideal)
trance-prophet, 'shaman' in Prasun (87), equivalent to Kt. pshur. M.
(1949: 269): paški1; Buddrus (1983: 83): paški (see Frembgen 1983:
99-102). If cognate with Kt. pshur, see Fussman 1977: 28 n.27; cf.
perhaps T8011: paśyā- 'seeing, rightly understanding' ... paśyoko- m.
'seer' (Buddhist Hybrid Skt.); but this is implausible with Buddrus'
rendering -ṣ-.

pshor (Kt. pšor; see Pras. dibu)
women's house of impurity among Kati (72-3, Robertson 1896: 497). M.
(1973: 86) connects with Kal. baš'ali id. <*baša:r, id. (? T11594); but
the latter was recorded by Parkes as baš'ali (B.: "if indeed -ṣ-?
<upaśrayati 'refuge', T2254).

pshur (Kt. pša; Ashk. 'pshara'; see Pras. pashki)
trance-prophet, 'shaman' among Kati (87) and Ashkun ('pshara' 124).
Fussman (1977: 28 n.) suggests <Skt. pari + ș- (?). See comments on
paš'au 'seer' (Parkes, ispr'ap-paš'au 'dream-seer'; cf. M. 1973: 132
paš-. T8012, 8134); but again phonetically irreconcilable with -ṣ-.

such! (Kt. suč; Pras. šū)
T12511: *śucya- 'to be purified'. Cf. Kal. id. and verb suč'ek 'to
purify'.

157
tīrē/tēlē/tē (Pras. tīrē; see amal/amol) communal assembly hall in Prasun (82). Klimburg (1976:484) distinguishes 'assembly halls' (tīrē) from 'dancing houses' (tēlē), but Buddruss (1983: 85 n.21) only notes the term tīrē. B. has now clarified that Klimburg's 'tīrē' is properly t-īrē 'down-in the (underground) ālē hall', i.e., recorded with the locational prefix t-; while tāla is the 'dancing-place' or 'dancing-platform' in the middle of Prasun villages (also including a covered building, like the gromma halls of Bashgal. Cf. Robertson 1896: 493-4).


Uta (Kt. utō, wutō, Ut'el; Pras. uto, wutā; see münd) 'high-priest' among Kati of Bashgal, where this office was inherited within the 'Uta-dari' clan (86). Similar titles recorded by Jones in Waigal (113; cf. Jones 1970), by Klimburg in Wama (124), and by Palwal (1977: 147-8) among the W. Kati of Ramgal, indicate a more informal 'priestly' role associated with a festal rank of this title (Nuristani 1971; Palwal 1977: 250-53; cf. Pras. wūt 'hero'). M. (1949: 277) proposed Kt. utō < Prakrit *hottaa < hōtraka; adopted in T14176: hōtrakā - m. 'assistant of the hōtr priest'. 2. hōtrakā- ... 2. MIA *hottaa → Kt. wūtō, utō 'high priest'; but see critical discussion in Fussman 1977: 28-9. If 'uta' is basically a festal rank, a more abstract connotation of 'highness' might be appropriate (cf. Pras. münd), e.g. ? T1907 (cf. T1804).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbreviations

Afghanistan  - Afghanistan (Historical and Cultural) Quarterly, Kabul
AJ  - Afghanistan Journal, Graz
AO  - Acta Orientalia, København
BEFEO  - Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, Paris
CAJ  - Central Asiatic Journal, Wiesbaden
East & West  - East & West, New Series, IsMEO (=Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, Roma
Inst. Sml. Kult.  - Institutet for sammenlignende kulturforskning, Oslo
JAS  - Journal of the Asiatic Society, London
JASB  - Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta
JRAS  - Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, London
MAGW  - Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft, Wien
NTS  - Norsk tidsskrift for sprogvidenskap
SA  - Sovetskaja arkeologija, Moscow
VDI  - Vestnik drevnej istorii, Moscow
ZS  - Zentralasiatische Studien (des Seminars für Sprach-und Kulturwissenschaft Zentralasiens der Universität Bonn. Wiesbaden

Aarne, Autti - Thompson, Stith

Allchin, B.

Allchin, F.R.

Alvad, Thomas
Amiet, Pierre
1976 Antiquités du désert de Lut. - II. Revue d'Assyriologie et
d'Archéologie orientale, LXX/1:1-8.
1978 Antiquités de Bactriane. La revue du Louvre et des Musées de
France, XXVIII:153-164.

Andreev, M.S.
Tadžikistana i iranskich narodnostej za ego predelami. Taškent.

Askarov, A. (A.)
1973 Sapallitepa. Taškent.
1977 Drevnezeemledel'českaja kul'tura épokhi bronzy juga Uzbekistana.
Taškent.
1981 Južny Uzbekistan vo II tysjačeletii do n.è. in: Ethnic Problems of
the History of Central Asia in the Early Period (Second Millennium
1984 Problema stanovlenija rannegorodskoj kul'tury na juge Uzbekistana
i ee zvjazi s Indostanom. Drevnie kul'tury Srednej Azii i Indii: 87-
97. Leningrad.

Barth, Fredrik
1959 Political Leadership among Swat Pathans. London School of Economics.
Monographs on Social Anthropology, No.19. University of London.

Baumann, Hermann
1955 Das doppelte Geschlecht. Ethnologische Studien zur Bisexualität in

Belenickij, A.M.
1959 Novye pamjatniki iskusstva drevnego Pjandžikenta. Opyt ikonograf-
ičeskogo istolkovanija. Skul'ptura i živopis' drevnego Pjandžikenta:
11-86. Moscow.

Benawa, Abd al-Rauf
1977 The Kafir Customs, Proverbs, and Songs. MS., Kabul.

Bergman, Folke
1939 Archaeological Researches in Sinkiang. Reports from the Scientific
Expedition to the Northwestern Provinces of China under the Leader-
ship of Dr Sven Hedin, VII,1. Stockholm.

Bernard, Paul, et Henri-Paul Francfort
1979 Nouvelles découvertes dans la Bactriane afghane. Annali dell'Istituto

Bernhard, W.
1980 Die Verteilung der ABO-Blutgruppen und Häufigkeit des Rh-Faktors
(D) bei verschieden ethnomischen Gruppen im Hindukush (Kafiren,
1983 Beiträge der physischen Anthropologie zum Geschichtsverständnis
der ethnischen Gruppen im Hindukusch. Ethnologie & Geschichte:
34-51.

Bertel's, A.E.
1959 Nasir-i Khosrov i Ismailizm. Moscow.
1970 Pjat' filosofskihh traktatov na temu "afák va anfus". Kritičeskij
tekst, ukazateli i vvedenie v izučenie pamjatnika A.E. Bertel'sa. Pod
redakcijej i s predisloviem B.G. Gafurova i A.M. Mirzoeva. Moscow.

Beveridge, A.S.
1922 The Bābur-nāma in English. Translated from the original Turki Text
Biddulph, John

Bleichsteiner, Robert

Bosworth, C.E.

Brentjes, Burchard

Buddruss, Georg
1973  Archaisms in Some Modern Northwestern Indo-Aryan Languages. German Scholars on India, I. Varanasi.

Burnes, Alexander
1838  On the Siah-pash Kaffirs - with specimens of their language and costume. JASB VII/1:325-333.
1842  Cabool, A Personal Narrative of a Journey to, and Residence in that City in the Years 1836, 7, and 8. Appendix IV. London.

Burrow, T.
1973  The Protoindoaryans. JRAS:123-140.

Bussagli, Mario

Chavannes, Edouard M.
1903a  Documents sur les Tou-Kiue (Turcs) occidentaux recueillis et commentés suivis de notes additionelles, 1, 2. Paris.

Chlopin, I.N.

Clarke, Graham E.

Členova, N.L.
1984  Arkheologičeskie materialy k voprosu ob irancakh doskifskoj épokhi i indoirancakh. SA 1:88-103.

D'jakonov, I.M.
1982  O prarodine nositelej indoevroepejskikh dialektov, I i II.

161
Dostal, Walter

Dowson, John

Duchesne-Guillemin, J.

Dumézil, G.

Dupree, Louis

Edelberg, Lennart
1972 Some Paruni Myths and Hymns. AO, XXXIV:31-94.

Edelberg, Lennart (posthumous)
with contributions by T. Funder and S. Jones

Edelberg, Lennart, and Klaus Ferdinand

Edelberg, Lennart & Lis Gramstrup
(in collaboration with Kirsten Ewers Andersen and Schuyler Jones)

Edelberg, Lennart, with Albert Schäfer and Wolfgang Lentz

Edelberg, Lennart, and Schuyler Jones
1979 Nuristan. Graz.

Edelberg, Lennart, Schuyler Jones, Georg Buddruss

Edelman, Dzhoi I.
Elias, N. (Editor) - Ross (Transl.)

Elliot, H.M., and J. Dowson (ed.)

Elphinstone, Mountstuart

Ferdinand, Klaus

Francfort, H.P.

Francfort, H.-P., et M.-H. Pottier

Francke, A.H.

Frembgen, Jürgen

Friedrich, Adolf

Fussmann, Gérard


Fussmann, Gérard, et Qazi Gholam Ullah Abhari
1983b Un récit Kam-Viri sur les coutumes pré-islamiques de Kamdesh. Ethnologie & Geschichte:180-204

Gamkrelidze, T.V., - V.V. Ivanov
1984 K probleme prarodiny nositelej rodstvennykh dialektov i metodam ee ustanovlenija. VDI 2:107-122.
Gardner, Alexander
1853 Abstract of a Journal Kept by Mr. Gardner During his Travels in Central Asia, with a Note and Introduction by M.P. Edgeworth. JASB 22:283-305, 383-386, 431-442.

Gershevitch, Ilya

Gharzai, Moh.Safar Wakeel
1960 Nooristan (in Persian). Kabul 1339 A.H.

Ghufran, Mohammad Mirza

Gnoli, Gherardo

Göbl, Robert

Gonda, Jan

Gray, L.H.
1927 The 'Ahurian' and 'Daevian' vocabularies in the Avesta. JRAS:427-41.

Graziosi, Paolo

Grjunberg, A.L.

Grjunberg, A.L. - Steblin-Kamenskij, I.M.

Hackin, J.
1932 The Mythology of the Kafirs. Asiatic Mythology, a Detailed Description and Explanation of the Mythologies of all Great Nations of Asia (by various authors):57-60. London.

Hardie, Norman
1957 In Highest Nepal. London.
Heine-Geldern, R. von

Heissig, Walther

Herrlich, Albert

Hoefer, Andras

Holdich, Thomas
1910  The Gates of India (being an Historical Narrative). London.

Hughes, T. P.

Fazl Huq and Nurulla

Shahzada Hussam-ul-Mulk

Ikhlās, Abdul Khalqi

Isakov, A.

Ivanov, W.

Jettmar, Karl


1980 Felsbilder und Inschriften am Karakorum Highway. CAJ XXIV/3-4: 185-221.


1982a Rockcarvings and Inscriptions in the Northern Areas of Pakistan. Institute of National Heritage. Islamabad.


Johansson, K. F.

Jones, Schuyler


1970 The Waigal 'horn chair'. Man, 5/2:253-257.


Jones, S. & P. Parkes

1984 'Ethnographic Notes on Clan/Lineage Houses in the Hindukush' and 'Clan Temples and Descent Group Structure among the Kalasha (Kalasha Kafirs') of Chitral'. Proceedings of the Sixth International Symposium on Asian Studies, Hong Kong, 1984: 1155-1176.

Kakar, Hasan Kawun


Karetzky, Patricia Eichenbaum


Katz, Jonathan


Keay, John


Keiser, Robert Lincoln

1971 Social Structure and Social Control in two Afghan Mountain Societies. The University of Rochester Ph.D.


Kipling, Rudyard


Klimburg, Maximilian

Kohl, Philip L.

Koppers, W.

Kristiansen, K.

Kuwayama, Shoshin

Lentz, Wolfgang

Litvinskij, B.A. - Zejmal, T. I. - Medvedskaja, I.N.

Lockhart, W.S.A., and R.G. Woodthorpe

van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, J.E.

Lorimer, D.L.R.

Maksimenkov, G.A.
1968 Okunevskaja kul'tura i ee sosedy na Obi. Istorija Sibiri, tom 1. Leningrad.
Mandel'štam, A.M.
1968  Pamjatniki èpokhi bronzy v Južnom Tadžikistane. Materialy i
issledovanija po arkheologii SSSR, 145. Leningrad.

Masson, Charles
1842  Narrative of Various Journeys in Balochistan, Afghanistan and the

Masson, V.M., - V.A. Romodin
1964  Istorija Afganistana, I. Moscow.

Mayrhofer, Manfred
1984  Lassen sich Vorstufen des Uriranischen nachweisen? Veröffentlich-
ungen der iranischen Kommission, Nr. 13:249-255. Österr. Akademie
der Wissenschaften. Wien.

Melabar (=Nuristani), M., Alam
1971  The Waigal 'horn chair'. Man, 6:486-487.
1977  A Native Account of the Folk History of Kalashum, a Region of
1978  A Native Account of the Folk History of Kalashum, a Region of Nur-
1978a  The Role of Endr in the Mythology of Ancient Nuristan, I. Afghan-
istan 31/1:49-58.
1978b  The Role of Endr in the Mythology of Ancient Nuristan, II. Afghan-
istan 31/2:33-49.

Morgenstierne, Georg
C I-2.
1929  The Language of the Ashkun Kafirs. NTS 2:192-289.
Serie C III-1.
1933  A Káfir on Káfir laws and customs. Göteborgs Högskolas Årsskrift
(Donum natalicum Oscari von Sydow oblatum) 39/2:195-203.
1944  Indo-Iranian frontier languages, III, 2: The Pashai Language. Texts
1949  The Language of the Prasun Kafirs. NTS 15:188-334.
50   Oslo.
1954  The Waigali Language. NTS 17:146-324.
1956  Indo-Iranian frontier languages, III, 3: The Pashai language. Vocab-
1967  Some Folk-Songs from Nuristan. To honour Roman Jakobson, Essays
on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. 1378-1392. The Hague.
1968  Mythological Texts from the Kates of Nuristan. Mélanges d'indianisme
à la mémoire de Louis Renou. Publications de l'Institut de civilisation
1973a  Indo-Iranian Frontier Languages, IV: The Kalasha Language. 2nd

Motamedi, Ahmad Ali, - Lennart Edelberg

Nafisi, Sa'ed
1963  Tarikhi Bayhaqi (in Persian), (History of the Ghaznavids). Tehran
1342 H.
Neubauer, H.F.

Newton, Douglas
1963 Funerary Figures of the Kafirs. Natural History, 72/6:40-47.

Olufsen, O.

Palwal, A. Raziq

History of Former Kafiristan, Kabul:
V, 1969/70 Idolatry of the Kafirs. Afghanistan, XXII/3-4:130-146.
1972 The Mother Goddess in Kafiristan. The Place of the Mother Goddess in the Religious Dualism of the Kafir Aryans, Afghanistan. A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in The Department of Geography and Anthropology. MS 84 pp.

1974 The Kafirs' Ranks and Their Symbols. HCC:64-68.

Parkes, P.S.C.

Parpola, A.

Pljankova, L.T.

Poljak, A.A.
1959 Nuristan (Kafiristan). Kratkie soobščenija instituta Vostokovedenija, XXXIII:79-86.

Possehl, G.L.

Raverty, H.G.
1859 Notes on Kafiristan. JRASB (and Proceedings), XXVIII:317-368.
Rehman, Abdur
1979 The Last Two Dynasties of the Śāhis. Islamabad.

Robertson, G.S.


1974 Native Accounts of Kom History. HCC:22-23.


1974b A Note on Rank, Political Leadership and Government among the Pre-Islamic Kom. HCC:57-63.
Strom, Ake V., und Haralds Biezais

Tanner, H.C.

Trumpp, E.D.

Tucci, Giuseppe - Walther Heissig

Tucci, Giuseppe
1979 The Religions of Tibet. London.

Turner, R.L.

Vavilov, N.I., (i D.D. Bukinič)

Voigt, Martin

Wasson, R. Gordon
Soma - Divine Mushroom of Immortality. (Place and year of printing not indicated).

Wayman, A.

Wazir Ali Shah

Widengren, Geo

Wolff, Joseph

Wood, John

Wutt, Karl

Yule, Henry, (and Henri Cordier)
THE RELIGIONS OF THE HINDUKUSH

Our knowledge of the remote and inaccessible regions of the Hindukush is as yet incomplete and only in modern times have Western scholars been able to begin to study them. Professor Jettmar's book is very important to our understanding of the religions and cultures of the remote tribes of this area. These religions are of special interest in that they were created and preserved by that very remoteness. The author describes the Kafirs of north-eastern Afghanistan who worshipped gods, some of whose names are familiar to us from the Vedas, with sacrificial rites which can be compared to those of the Classical west. Even today, eighty years after their conversion, essential contributions to our knowledge are being made, as the chapters by Schuyler Jones and by Max Klimburg on the Ashkun region show. To the east of the Kafirs, on Pakistani territory, live the Dardic Kalash whose religion shows astonishing dynamism even in the face of unavoidable decline. Although the Shina-speaking Dards were converted to Islam (or Lamaism) another tribal religion remained alive and apparently outlasted Buddhism. Finally Professor Jettmar describes the religion of the Kho, the original Dardic people of Chitral. Here in this book, we have for the first time a comprehensive exposition and discussion of the many problems that the investigation of the Pamirs and Hindukush involves and this translation from the German should prove very valuable to all scholars of the region.

Vol I The Religion of the Kafirs ISBN 0 85668 163 6
Vol II The Religion of the Dards ISBN 0 85668 291 8
Vol III The Religions of the Chitralis ISBN 0 85668 368 X

Details of other publications are available from the publishers, ARIS & PHILLIPS LTD, TEDDINGTON HOUSE, WARMINSTER, WILTSHIRE, BA12 8PQ, ENGLAND.