

Folk Lore and Festivals of Gilgit and Hunza



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DEDICATION

Dedicated to My beloved Parents and Siblings.

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this Master's thesis currently submitted bearing the title, "**Folk Lore and Festivals of Gilgit and Hunza**", is result of my individual research and has not been submitted concurrently to any other institution/University for any other degree.

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Supervisor’s Declaration

I hereby declare that the M. Phil candidate **Mr. Abdul Azeem** has completed his thesis titled, **“Folk Lore and Festivals of Gilgit and Hunza”**, under my supervision. I recommend it for submission in candidacy for the Masters of Sciences in Archaeology, Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations (TIAC), Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.

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Final Approval

This is to certify that we have read the thesis submitted by **Mr. Abdul Azeem** and it is our judgment that this thesis is of sufficient standard to warrant acceptance by the Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, for the award of the Degree of Master of Sciences in Archaeology.

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For my research I visited the central library of Quaid-i-Azam University and had collected many books which are relevant to my topic. I had also visited the departmental library of Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations (QAU) and got many books of different Pakistani and foreign writers in addition to this I had also found some articles from different journals. Further I got about three books from the departmental library of History (QAU). I had also visited the Biddulph House Municipal public Library Gilgit, there I found some books as well some articles and also got some reports which will be very much helpful in my research.

I had also visited the Tourism Department and Department of Archaeology and Museum of Gilgit and had taken the interview of the Deputy Director; he had provided me some reports and pictures of the rock carvings and inscriptions of Chilas. I met many teachers of Karakorum International University Gilgit and ask them many questions and they provide me information regarding this research.

In the light of these instructions I had completed it again and finally submitted it. Till now all work which is done by me only with the help of God almighty and secondly my supervisor Dr. Sadeed Arif. I am again thankful to my supervisor who assigned me this topic and leads me in a systematic manner, under his directions. I learned many interesting and informational things which are helpful for improving my knowledge.

Introduction

Gilgit-Baltistan is one of the most spectacular regions which cover the meeting point of three mightiest mountain ranges-the Himalaya, the Karakoram and the Hindukush. The entire region of Gilgit-Baltistan is like a paradise for mountaineers, climbers' trekkers, hikers and anglers.

The region of Gilgit-Baltistan is located in northwest of Himalaya, eastern Hindukush and western and central Karakoram. Its borders touches the Wakhan corridor of Afghanistan to the Northwest, China's Xinjiang to the Northeast, the Indian controlled state of Jammu and Kashmir to the south and southeast, the Pakistani-controlled state of Azad Jammu and Kashmir to the south, and Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to the west.

Gilgit-Baltistan is home to a number of cultural entities, ethnic groups and various backgrounds. In view of the multi-cultural and multi-lingual aspects, people also have a beautiful mix of lifestyles and attitudes presenting a pluralistic society living together in peace and harmony for centuries. The region harbors diverse and endangered mountain cultural traditions. Historically these areas have been aloof from the rest of the world and their life has been revolving around livestock and agriculture.

The Gilgit Baltistan has always been at the crossroads of conquerors, raiders and travelers. Therefore, its history has been deeply influenced by the various incidences of history. The Gilgit-Baltistan have a very rich history which can be understood through periodization made by historians. It is said that small chieftains ruled Gilgit and Baltistan, until the beginning of the 19th century. They had to grapple with trivial issues amongst each other Taking advantage of their weaknesses and mutual rivalries, the Dogra regime of Kashmir annexed these territories

around the middle of the 19th century even though they found the control of the area difficult. Baltistan was administered directly by the Kashmir Government as a part of District Laddakh with Headquarters at Leh. The British Indian Government got attraction in the region following the political developments in Russian and Chinese Turkistan during the late 19th century.

The present inhabitants of the country are all Muslims, chiefly of the Shia sect, with a few Sunnis and Maulais. The principal tribes are Shins, Yeshkuns Kashmiris, Kamins, Doms and Gujars. They are again divided into several families called after the names of distinguished ancestors.

“*Hunzo*” is locally pronounced word for this region and it is considered that it is derived from the hunts, which is the Brushaski word for arrow (Willson: 2002: 34)

The ancient name of Hunza was Kanjut and lies on the Silk road from Kashghar to Kashmir. This valley was called Kanjut (Schomberg 1935:112) because it lies on the upper portion of Kanjut or Hunza River (Knight 1895:346). Four mountain ranges join this area named Karakorum, Hindukush, Pamir-Tianshan and Kunlun. Kanjut was considered as the Chinese name for Hunza. Due to the name “Hunza” it is considered that this place was once occupied by the white Huns or originally inhabited by them (Hamid 1979: 33).

Hunza is a mountainous valley in the Gilgit-Baltistan region of Pakistan. Hunza is the seventh district of Gilgit-Baltistan. Hunza is situated north-west of the Hunza River at an elevation of around 2,500 meters. It has the territory of about 7,900 square kilometres. The first capital of Hunza was Altit and later it was shifted to Baltit. It is also named Karimabad, after the name of Prince Karim Agha Khan and a popular tourist destination. The main town of Hunza is Aliabad.

There are different views about the history of Hunza by different authors. Hunza was an independent principality for more than 900 years. The state of Hunza was governed by hereditary

rulers and they used the title “*Mir*” which means ruler who was assisted by a council of Minister (Wazir). The ruling family was called “*Ayashhe*” which means heavenly (Biddulph 1971:27).

Hunza was formerly a princely state and was one of the most loyal vassals to the Maharaja of Jammu-Kashmir, bordering China to the north-east and Pamir to its north-west and it continued to survive until 1974 when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto dissolved it. This state bordered Gilgit Agency to the south, former princely state of Nagar to the east. The capital of this state was Baltit and its old settlement is Ganesh village. Hunza was an independent state for more than 900 years. In the years 1889 and 1892, the British gained control of Hunza and the neighbouring valley of Nagar through a military conquest. Then Mir Safdar Ali Khan of Hunza fled to Kashghar in China.

The tradition relates that Mayroo khan, apparently the first Muslim “*Thum* or King “of Nagar about some 200 years after the introduction of Islam, moved to Gilgit and married the daughter of Thar khan of Gilgit who bore twin sons named Monglot and Girkis. The former ruling family of Nagar has descended. The father of the twin sons was unable to settle the question of succession so he divided his state into two parts, giving Girkis in the north and the Monglot the south, bank of the river.

The spoken languages of Hunza-Nagar are Shina, Wakhi and Brushaski. The people in this area are Ismaili Shia. The literacy rate of this area is 95%. The people here can also understand and speak Urdu. This area is known as Paradise on Earth.

Hunza valley is divided into three parts i.e. Upper Hunza, Central Hunza and Lower Hunza

Upper Hunza: The area from Shiskat to Khunjab is known as “upper Hunza” and the people in this area use Brushaski and Wakhi languages for communication. This area is also called as Gojal.

Central Hunza: Central Hunza covers the area from Murtazabad to Atta abad and the language which is spoken in this area is Brushaski.

Lower Hunza: Khizerabad to Nasirabad is the area which is known as the lower Hunza. The language which is used in this area is Shina.

Such are the tribes to whom the folklore and customs appertain, but they have lived together for such a long period under the Buddhist and Muslim rulers that it is now difficult to know which of the ceremonies was originally observed by each separate tribe.

Some important festivals are:

Shino Bazono

The advent of spring in the Gilgit country brings with it the festival of "Shino Bazono," which corresponds to the English May-day.

The "AyiBoyi" Ceremony.

AyiBoyi is the name of a Gilgiti month falling next to "Shino Bozino."

The Ceremony of "Ganoni."

The inhabitants of these parts are strictly prohibited from tasting any new crop before accomplishing the "Ganoni" ceremony, which is celebrated in the middle of June, when the wheat and barley are ripe.

Nouroz

People of Hunza hold Nauroz on the third of Hamal. The Tham slaughters an ox and prepares food and brings it out to the polo-ground. He gets them to make three marks of silver (for an archery contest). The Tham and the notables and all the men and women of Hunza who got to see shows put on their best clothes and smarten themselves up. The Tham provides Nauroz clothes for the Wazir and some of the elders

Statement of the problem

The work of different scholars and archaeologists has contributed enormously to the study of archaeology of Gilgit-Baltistan but there is no systematic work done on the folklores and festivals except very few researches. Therefore the researcher is trying to fill this gap choosing this topic and trying to mention all folklores and festivals of the regions. Unfortunately these local traditions are going to end because of modern traditions. These traditions are almost left by the people as they heard from their ancestors. So it is needed to work on these traditions and preserve them in written record for the next generation.

Scope of the study

This study will try to document all folklores and festival of Gilgit-Baltistan which are now disappearing from the region. This study will provide a source to protect these traditions for the next generation. This study will also bring awareness among people of the region about folklores and festivals and they will realize the importance of these tradition.

Hypothesis

Folklore and festivals of Gilgit-Baltistan will be protected and preserve in written form and will bring awareness among the people about its importance.

Literature Review

A number of books and articles have been written on the rock art of Chilas. The reviews of most relevant ones are given here:

Ahmad Hassan Dani in his book *Chilas the city of Nanga Parvat (Diامر)* (1983) has beautifully described the rock art of Chilas. He tells us about the archaeological data collected from the rock art sites of Chilas and this data helps historians to reconstruct the history. Chilas was part of Silk Road, Pilgrims, Merchants, Invaders and travelers came into this area and left their culture in the form of carvings. Buddhist signs, hunting scenes, animal and giant figures, hand and foot images, Brahmi, Middle persian, Sogdian and other inscriptions are found in Chilas.

Ahmad Hassan Dani in his book *Human records on Karakoram Highway*(1983) has discussed briefly about ancients remains found in Karakoram Highway. He has discussed about Silk Road, an ancient trade route from China to central Asia. Through this route famous Chinese pilgrims visited the Karakoram region Fa-Hian came here about 400 CE. Sung-yun travelled between 518 and 520 CE and Huang Tsang visited between 630 and 640 CE. These visitors, pilgrims and invaders left their signs on the boulders of rocks and now they are playing an important role to reconstruct the history.

Dani in “Relic deposits from the Stupa near Gilgit”(*Journal of Central Asia*) has describes some stupa models and inscribed clay tablets. The tablets bear the inscriptions of Buddhist principles

in Proto-Sarada characters which are inscribed in seven lines. These types of Buddhist relics might have been made by Buddhist monks coming from Bengal during the period of Pala. This shows the link between followers of Gilgit and Bengal. This only proves that later form of Vajrayana Buddhism came to this part of from Eastern India.

Dani in “History of Northern Areas of Pakistan (Upto 2000 AD)” (2001) has been compiled the history and geography of Gilgit-Baltistan from pre-history up to 19th century. Gilgit-Baltistan is landlocked region and receives influences from Central Asia, China, Afghanistan and other parts of the world. This book comprised of the whole history of different invaders who conquered and ruled this region during different time period. The chronology of the region is started from rock art people to the independence from Dogra Raj. All events of these rulers are beautifully described by the author in this book.

“Festivals and Folklore of Gilgit” (1905) written by Ghulam Muhammad provides all the information about the festivals and folklore of Gilgit-Baltistan. This book was written by the author in the when he was Chief Clerk at the political office at Gilgit. The author mentioned different festivals of the regions during summer, winter, autumn and other events like cultivation and harvesting of crops. Besides, he written about the cultures, languages and tribes of the region as this region is culturally, linguistically very diversified. Inhabitants of this region came outside and settled here and adopted the norms and tradition of the region. In order to collect the folklores of Gilgit Agency, the writer claims that he wandered village to village and door to door as in this country "no written record of any sort" existed.

John Biddulph in Tribes of HindooKoosh, *The Geographical Journal*(1971) has thoroughly written the history and geography of Gilgit-Baltistan. The tribes of Gilgit-Baltistan and their rulers from Laddkah to Chitral are mentioned in this book. The mysteries of Dardic tribes are

also discuss in this article. The author discussed various cultures and traditional events practiced in this region and some of them are mixed with modern customs and traditions. This book is a good source of finding the actual data about the history and culture of Gilgit-Baltistan.

Lt. Col. D. L. R. Lorimer in his book *Folk Tales from Hunza* (1981) has written about the folktales and folksongs of Hunza. He beautifully discussed the songs and festivals of Hunza celebrated during different time period. These traditions are practiced by inhabitants of Hunza from ancient times. These traditions comprised of different stories of heroes, fairies, best warriors, sad stories and happy events. These songs and stories presents the famous and important events of different rulers of the region. They sung these songs in the memory of Heroes and famous personalities who contributed many things in different angles for society. These songs also comprised of supernatural powers of some strong people who did unexpected things. There is a special story behind every folk song and folk lore.

(Allen. E .Banik, Renee Taylor, 1960) “Hunza Land”: This book is written with the collaboration of Dr Allen and Renee Taylor. The diet, health and the honesty of the people of Hunza is described in this book.

Colonel R. C. F Schomberg, 2003) “Between the Oxus and Indus”. The writer of this book describes different aspects such as the life styles of the people, traditions customs and also about the geography of the Northern areas of Pakistan. Author discussed about all the districts of the region. The river Oxus rises in the Pamir, region where Afghanistan joins with China. The author has also mentioned difficulties faced by him during his visit to Gilgit agency. The trail was not easy for travelling as it is in the modern days and also there was not good living facilitates at that time.

(Irmtraud Muller-Stellrecht, Dec 1981) “Life patterns of Hunza: the Journal of Central Asia” is based on the social history and the life patterns of the people in Hunza. The history of the kingship in this valley and the occupations of the people, their hunger and other difficulties through which they survived are also described. Hunza was a small kingdom having only three small villages before 19th century. They depended on agriculture and horticulture on terraced and irrigated fields. The economic system was also based on irrigation system. 19th century was the turning point in the history of Hunza, when King Silum (Salim) had been exile in Badakhshan and from there he introduced the Ismailitic form of Islam. Ismailism is the cult of Shia sect and the believers of this sect considered Agha Khan as their spiritual leader. Their religious obligations are partly different from Shia community. Era of 19th century reflects great change regarding wealth and political power.

(Dr. Irmtraud Muller-Stellrecht, 1984) “Tribute relationship between Hunza and China: Journal of Central Asia”: it is based on the relations between Hunza and China. According to this article in 1759, the emperor of China conquered Eastern Turkestan and overthrown by the local Khoja Dynasty. This article is based on the history of the kings who ruled Hunza valley.

(John H. Tobe, 1971) “Adventure in the land of Paradise: Hunza”: The author of this book has beautifully described different aspects of Hunza valley. A brief history, geography and culture are discussed.

(John Clark, 1957) “Hunza: lost kingdom of the Himalayas”: Clark was geologist and was the one who discovered nine thousand miles of roads and trails in Kansu and Sinkiang, China. He decided to help the people of Hunza on the basis of his geological experience and medical expertise. He travelled to Hunza in the year of 1951 and 1952. On his experience, he wrote a book named: Hunza, lost kingdom of the Himalayas, in which details about the people of Hunza

is described. As Clark was geologist by profession so he was in search of minerals and metals in the valley. Some myths about this region was famous that this is the land where no poor has been found but after the long stay of Clark in this region, he mentioned the true situation and the secrets about this valley.

(Jurgen Frembgen, 1984) “Ethnographical field research on the history and culture of Nagir”:
This article is about the history and culture of the area Nagir. Basically Nagir is the nearest valley of Hunza and had cultural connection.

(Karakorum Area Development Organization: 2007) “Lifting the veil on the northern areas motifs and designs of embroidery”:
Karakorum Area Development Organization is a local community based NGO, which was started for the promotion and protection of handicraft of northern areas. It is one of the famous and active civil organizations in the northern areas of Pakistan. The book which is published by this organization gives a complete picture of the veil styles and designs of Hunza women. The unique tradition of embroidery work on the headdresses has been beautifully described in this book.

(Mughal: 1985) “Pre and Proto historic discoveries in the Karakoram highway” this article discusses about the Pak-German archaeological mission who has worked in the Northern areas. It gives the information about epigraphy and archaeology of the Northern areas. This article also described the strong relationship of the people with their culture and religion.

(Omer Farooq Zain, 2010) “A socio-political study of Gilgit-Baltistan province”:
This is the article which was published in “Pakistan journal of social sciences”. Author has beautifully described the political and social structure in Gilgit-Baltistan region. Geology and the physical position of the area are described briefly.

(Rahmatullah Beg) “Hunza the Asian Paradise”: In this book the articles, titled “Hunza, the Gate of Pakistan and Handicraft Business in Karimabad” is based on the trade and the business of Handicrafts. The first article “Hunza, the Gate of Pakistan is the brief introduction of Hunza. The history and the location of the region also described shortly. The writer mentions that Hunza is situated between three countries; China, India and Afghanistan. The population, main areas and the boundaries of Hunza are also given. The other article in the same book “Handicraft business in Karimabad” describes that initially there were very few shops of handicraft but with the passage of time it developed. The author also mentioned through this article that there are different myths and delusion which create conflicts about the history of the area.

(Renee Taylor: 1964) “Hunza health secrets for long life and happiness” Renee Taylor has personally visited Hunza and she stayed there for a couple of months. After her visit, she wrote a book regarding the health of the people in this area. She was a guest of Mir there so she did not visit the local area and she could not have close terms with people there. She knew about the land which was told by the Mir and his servants. Taylor never ventured alone to learn and know about the truth behind this facade which was presented by Mir. According to her book the people here are the healthiest and they use low fat diet mostly vegetarian diet. The main feature of this.

(Stephen R. Wilson, 1999) “A Look at Hunza Culture”: This book is totally based on the culture and traditions of Hunza. The first chapter is about the ecology of the Hunza valley in which the physical features; population, climate and animal life is described in detail. Second chapter is about technology and economics, while it is further divided into three parts. First part is named as subsistence technology, in which the occupation and hunting tools are described. Second part is named as non-subsistence technology. This part is about the art and activity, clothing and adornment, music and sports. The art and activity is beautifully written in this part. (Shabnam

Bahar Malik: 2012, pp 143-164) “The anthropology of headdress; use of caps and ceremonial headdress by women of Gilgit-Baltistan region as a symbol of their unique cultural heritage”:
This is the article which is totally based on the headdresses of Hunza valley, types of the caps, motifs, embroidery and classification about the traditional caps has been discussed with detail. This is the great material which is specifically done on the caps of women, worn in Gilgit-Baltistan.

(Usman Ali Iftikhar: 2003) “Population, poverty and environment”:
The poverty of the whole province Gilgit-Baltistan has been given in this book. The causes of the poverty are also mentioned in this book.

Methodology

For this research qualitative and evaluative analysis will be adopted. The research will comprised of both primary and secondary data. The primary data will be collected by the researcher via interviews and visits to old age people of Gilgit and Hunza. Traditional poets and singers will also interview for the collection of the data.

Objectives

- To find the authentic sources of ancient folklores and festivals of Gilgit and Hunza.
- To compile the scattered sources into a single report.
- To bring the awareness about the importance of this importance heritage among youth of Gilgit and Hunza.
- To bring attention of different scholars on threats to the folklores and festivals.

Research questions

- What were the important festivals and folklores of our ancestors and how they were celebrated to bring peace and harmony?
- What are main causes that create a gap between elders and youth of Gilgit aand Hunza.
- What are major threats to the cultural heritage of Gilgit and Hunza.

Organization of the Study

The first part of this research is Introduction. After Introduction the next section is Chapter 1, deals with history and geography of Gilgit Baltistan. While Chapter 2 comprised of folklore and festivals of Gilgit and Hunza and last part of this study is conclusion and bibliography.

History and Geography

Gilgit-Baltistan is the region which covers the meeting point of three majestic mountain ranges i.e. Himalaya, Karakoram and Hindukash. The region of Gilgit-Baltistan is located in northwest of Himalaya, eastern Hindukash and western and central Karakoram. Its borders touch the Wakhan corridor of Afghanistan to the Northwest, China's Xinjiang to the Northeast, the Indian controlled state of Jammu and Kashmir to the south and southeast, the Pakistani-controlled state of Azad Jammu and Kashmir to the south, and Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to the west. This area is landlocked and received influences in history, from east and west, works as a cultural bridge. Its unique, important and sensitive geostrategic setting attracts many tourists, travelers, invaders, pilgrims, merchants, traders and many other people from different parts of the world especially from Central Asia. This region has preserved a great number of prehistoric and historic sites belonging to different cultural traditions. Most important, from the historical point of view are historic and prehistoric rock carvings and inscriptions which are dated back to 5000-10000 BCE (Qamar 1985: 141).

Gilgit-Baltistan consists of high mountains and deep and narrow valleys (Arif and Sarvat 2001: 21). This region have high peaks above 8000 m including the second highest peak of the world K2 and 34 peaks between 8000 and 7000 m.

GB covers an area of 62496km, 27188 sq. Miles while the population of region according to the census of 1998 the total population is estimated at 870317 lac or 0.870 m.

The region of GB is divided into two divisions i.e. Gilgit and Baltistan and these divisions are further divided into seven districts. Ganche and Skardu are districts of Baltistan division while Gilgit division has Gilgit, Ghizer, Hunza and Nagar, Astore and Diamer. Gilgit is the head quarter of GB.

GB has unique group of glaciers. This region has three highest peaks of the world outside the Polar Regions. The Siachen glacier measure 75 km in length, Hispur is 61 km, Batura is 59 km and Baltoro glacier is 55 km long. The number of glaciers measuring more than 10 km in length and exceed over a total area of 15000 km of the Karakorum is covered with glaciers. These glaciers are great sources of water to the rivers of Indus (Khan 1992: 62).

Due to its location, the people of Gilgit-Baltistan are facing extreme climate. In Gilgit climate is warm and dry and snowfall is little, however the climate is healthy. In summer, weather is hot but quite cool at night. In winter it is never cold as compared to top areas. The rainfall is very low. Chilas gets only 4 inches rainfall in a year. The hills and slopes are dry and no greenery is found and some rivulets are coming from mountains in summer. Because of this Chilas is hot and dry in summer and cold and dry in winter. In Baltistan, Hunza Nagar, Astore and Ghizer climate is very harsh. It is very cold in winter and at the great altitude snowfall is high.

History

Gilgit-Baltistan is land locked region and is located in the three great mountain systems namely Himalaya, Karakorum and Hindukash. This area continuously received influences from both the East and the West. Its natural location places the whole region at the crossroads. Many invaders, pilgrims, merchants and travelers came here and left their marks on rocks. This area has a

number of prehistoric and historic art of different origin and its discovery and scientific study pushed the history of Gilgit-Baltistan to about 5000 BCE (Qamar 1985:141).

Early history

Some records of historical events are found in interest of imperial China for a short period about the middle of the 8th century CE with great political and strategically importance. This record tells us that they were the first who explore this region and exploit the natural resources of this region. Some later research work also tells about the people who lived in this region in remote time. They left their signs in the form of rock art and call them as “Rock art people” (Arif 2002: 11).

These people continued the tradition of rock carvings as they had learned from their predecessors. They (predecessors) use stone tools like pebble tools for hunting purposes and made hunting gathering society (Hauptmann 2006: 3).

Megalith builders

New people came to this region from Northwest region of Pakistan (Swat and Chitral) who brought new technology of Megalith buildings (www.gilgitbaltistan.gov.pk). They introduced stone cutting, possibly, made their settlements on mountain slope sand along river banks. They used cyclopean wall for defense. These people started to live in mud houses as temporary settlements. They made traditional curved stone and used for worship. Their economy was based on livestock and they made terraced fields for cultivation. They used the melted water of glacier (Dani 2000: 118).

Scythians or Sakas

The Scythians ruled over the region of South Turkistan. They, later on, reached Gilgit-Baltistan through Persian lands. They settled down here and different Scythian groups ruled over the area one after another. Many historians claimed that Sakan people had travelled through Kabul valley and spread into other parts of Subcontinent. Archaeological evidence from Chilas is a Sakan Kharoshti inscription and some petroglyphs are also found from Chilas II. Scythian rock carvings have been found from Shatial, Chilas, Gilgit, and Hunza. The sacred rock of Hunza has many drawings of mounted horse riders, and ibexes of Scythian period with a large number of Kharoshti inscriptions, which include the names of Saka and Pahlava rulers (Dani 1985:5- 124). The rock carvings of Chilas have the drawings of herdsmen, Saka soldiers, ibexes and images of stupas (Dani 1983: 91-128). In Chilas II a soldier is carved in Scythian dress standing in front of a man sitting on a high backed chair. His name is written as Moga (Well know king Mause). This name is found in Taxila in copper plate of patika in the same form as Moga (Dani 1983:63-64). Saka people have left evidences of their art on the rocks of the Upper Indus and which are carved in Scythian-Siberian animal style (Jettmar 1980: 9 ;Arif 2002: 11).

Scytho-Parthians

The dynasty that reunified the destroyed empire of Azez II was the Indo Parthian kingdom of Gondophores. The Scythians were succeeded by Parthians belonging to Gondophores group, whose coins and inscriptions are found in Gandhara. One Kharoshti inscription of this ruler is found in Chilas at a point where Bhutogah meets Indus River (Dani 1991: 121). In this region Parthians movements are witnessed on a rock, two human figures are depicted dressed in Parthian style traditional long coats. In Chilas II there is a large number of inscriptions and rock

carvings of Parthian period. The Parthians were responsible for interlinking Gilgit-Baltistan with Western world (Dani 1991:122). The arrival of Parthians in this region led to political and socio-economic developments. It is difficult to say that for how long the Parthians ruled in this region (Dani 2000:127). However, many rock carvings from Chilas and around suggested that Parthians came from Central Asia and established their rule around 1st century BCE. Beside these several rock carvings of Parthian period, other animals, Chariots, designs and shapes of totally new types that were certainly borrowed from Iranian art of the time are also found here.

Kushans

Successor of Kajula Kadphises was Vima Kadphises. He was the first emperor who extended the Kushana power into the northern region of Pakistan between 1st Century BCE and 1st Century CE. At Chilas II an important inscription of Kushana period is found. This inscription includes the full royal titles of Vashishka or Vajeshka. At Alam Bridge Kushana period Kharoshti inscriptions are found. On “Sacred rock” of Hunza there are some carvings and inscriptions of Kushana period found.

The Kushans established a strong empire in Northern India and Peshawar was its capital. Under Kanishka the Kushana rule was at the peak of its glory. His empire extended from Peshawar to Mathura, Varanasi, and even Sanchi including Baltistan, Ladakh and other parts of eastern and western Turkistan. This is proved by the recovery of an inscription of Kushana King Vima Kadphises from Ladakh (Stein 1972: 36).

Through inscriptional evidences and carvings, we come to know that the Buddhism was introduced from Gandhara to Khotan, Yarkand, Kashgar and other places in Chinese Turkistan the Silk Road of Gilgit branch was used for the purpose. At this time Kushans established the

direct communications with China and Silk Road came into effective use. Under Kushana, Gilgit-Baltistan was in contact with Central Asia. Several images of the Buddha are found at Thalpan, Shing Nala, and Chilas I. These are contemporary of Gandhara art. The Kushans put Gilgit-Baltistan on a new way of growth and made the region very prosperous. They used gold for trade (Arif 2002: 12-13).

Post Kushans

During the time of Shahpur, the Sassanian Empire was extended in the east and Gilgit-Baltistan came under its control. The Sumerians ruled in the beginning of 3rd century CE. This new connection brought a new cultural trend in this region from Central Asia. As a result two types of inscriptions are reported from this region i.e. Sogdian and Bactrian cuneiform writing. Most of the Sogdians were merchants who travelled in different directions. This proves the brisk trade between China and Central Asia through this region (Dani 1991:131). Prof. Karl Jettmar interprets that the Shatial Bridge was a junction point in the trade system maintained by Sogdians. In the Upper Indus valley near Shatial, there was one main emporium. Here the merchants coming from the south presented their stocks and exchange took place. Many Sogdian inscriptions have been found at the sites of Thor, Oshibat, Dadam Das, Thalpan, and Ziarat. During this time Buddhism was on its way of progress.

The Huns

There is no exact information about the ethnic identity of Huns. However, it is generally believed that they comprised several tribes. They are known by different names such as Huna in Sanskrit, the Hun in American, the Hsiang-nu in Chinese, the Ephthalites in Persia, the Xiun in Sogdian accounts and the Huna in European history. They came from Central Asia. Huns were warriors

and were very strong people. The great Hun ruler mu-tum prided himself on being the “leader of all those who shoot arrow from horseback” (Govan, 1939:103). The great Chinese wall was built in 246 BCE by emperor Shih-Huangti of the Chin dynasty to protect his empire from the attacks of these invaders. Exactly this type of horse is carved on the rocks throughout Gilgit-Baltistan in 5th century CE. The scene can be seen at Shatial, China, Gilgit, and Hunza and on many other rocks. The warriors who invaded Afghanistan and afterward turned to the east conquering Kashmir and parts of India were called white Huns (Jettmar 1972-1986:193; Dani 2000:141). They fought not only with the earlier Kadarite Kushans but also extended their rule to Tibet and China (Dani 1991:136).

The Huns were against Sassanian and Roman Empire. It looks like that the old Silk Road must have suffered during this period due to this crisis. The Huns are also said to have destroyed Buddhism as they burned many monasteries. As a result decline of Buddhism started and the Buddhist monasteries lost their donations which they received from earlier rulers. Important change in this period is the inter-linking of all the regions of empire into a closer cultural bond. As a result influence of Kashmir art found on the rock engravings of the Chilas and influence of Chilas Buddhist rock engravings in China and Far East (Dani 1991:135). From a Kabul inscription we know about the last ruler of Huns, who was Yudhishthira who had succeeded Narendraditya Khinkhila. Yudhishthira ruled here for 24 or 40 years in about 670 CE or 657 CE (Dani 2001:149; Arif 2002: 14).

PatolaShahi or PalolaShahi

Gilgit-Baltistan was ruled by the Patola, Palola or Balol in 6th, 7th and 8th centuries CE. Their kings were known as Patola Shahis. They were Buddhist and developed many branches of

Buddhist Art and had friendly relations with rulers of Kashmir and T'ang emperors of China. They are known as Pa-lo-lai in Chinese account and Bolar in Muslim sources (Dani 2001:163). Inscriptural evidence collected by O.V. Hinuber tells us about the rulers of Patola Shahi. Only in one inscription at Hodour, alternative spelling of PatolaShahi is given as palola Shahi. Morgenstierne (Morgenstierne, Irano-Dardica, (Wiesbaden 1973) mentioned that Palola is the name of Dardic tribe. Fussman discovered four Brahmi inscriptions of 5th-6th century CE the first inscription found from Alam Bridge site speaks about Sri Palalo Jo Hastibhro, the successor of Sri Palola. The last three inscriptions tell us about the coming of the Buddhist monk. These inscriptions clearly show the presence of Palola Shahi Dynasty in Gilgit-Baltistan region around fifth century CE (Dani 2001:150; Arif 2002: 14-17).

Dardic people

These people are new comers who have been known as Dards by G.Tucci. (Dani 2001:119). According to some historians Dardic people live in Gilgit-Baltistan in the time of Achaeminid Empire. Their economic activities were mining gold and this led them to trade. At Chilas O. von Hinuber says clearly that the Maharaja of the Dards was the overlord in the Indus valley. Chilas was one of his districts. They remained as a strong power, as Buddhist (Jettmar 1974-1986: 194).

Mediaeval History

In about eighth century CE changes in international politics of Gilgit-Baltistan took place. With this change of mediaeval history of Gilgit-Baltistan, Arab invasions started in Central Asia. Tibetan also came into this region. After the invasions of Arabs the power of Patola Shahis became weak. Unfortunately the Medieval history is not documented completely. Only some

folklore is preserved by people. These folklores tell about two religions; Buddhism which was accepted by earlier rulers. Second religion is Islam which was brought to this region by new rulers. (Dani 2001: 163-164).

Folklore and Festival of Gilgit and Hunza

The cultural heritage of Hunza is rich and full of colours. It can be judged through various festivals which are celebrated in Hunza. The people of Hunza exercise their traditions and heritage strictly but with the passage of time different traditions extinct and different customs are going to disappear. It can be said that Hunza is the home for many festivals concerning to culture, faith and normal life. The festivals and the customs which the people here follow are very much different from the rest of the country in different manners. Here is the brief overview of festivals.

Festivals of Hunza and Gilgit

The festivals of Hunza are broadly divided into two categories

- Religious festivals
- Cultural festivals

Religious festivals in Hunza

There are various festivals which are celebrated religiously in Hunza. A brief introduction of these festivals is given below.

Nowroz Festival

Nowroz or Noroz is basically a historical occasion which is also followed now days in these areas and in the areas of Afghanistan, Iran or in Shia community. The history reveals the secret

that there are some special events which have been celebrated for a long time in central Asia, Iran and subcontinent. In those special events “Noroz” is one of the festivals which convey a new spirit with blooming tress and harmony amongst the tenants of the region. It was an official festival of Delhi, Agra, Bukhara, princely states of Hyderabad and Awadh for about thousands of years.

When Pakistan came into being many Arabian clerics with suuni community promulgated against this event and the festival of “Noroz” eventually gone into dimness. The festival of “Noroz” is not celebrated in Pakistan due to different negative myths related to this event but it is celebrated in the rest of the world, including Iran, Afghanistan etc. But interestingly to note that the Ismaili community including Shia faith in Pakistan also celebrate this day with enthusiasm as Eid. On this day they offer prayers in “Jamat khanas” and “Imam Bargahs”. The average educated urban people do not know about this event in Pakistan. The other biggest community after Ismaili and Shia’s are Parsi or Zoroastrian community, the basic purpose to celebrate this event for Parsi people is to conserve the ancient pre Islamic heritage of Iran. Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta, Multan, Kashmir and especially Gilgit-Baltistan are the areas in Pakistan where this event is celebrated.

Festivities of Nowroz in Hunza

In Northern areas of Pakistan Chitral, Hunza, Gilgit and Baltistan, it is a socio- religious festival. It is also celebrated in the other parts of Pakistan like Baluchistan and urban centres of Karachi and Lahore. It corresponds on 21st of March, and the celebrations continue for weeks. In Gilgit Baltistan or Hunza the main trait of Noroz is to giving gift of eggs to friends and especially playing the games of polo, volley ball, hockey, and football, tug of war alongside folk dancers,

songs and music exhibition of handicraft. The special kind of food called “Bikak” specially cooked for this event in Hunza. Small girls enjoy playing rope. The people dress up this day like Eid and they offer prayer in Jamat khana or in Imam Bargahs.

Eid-e-Ghadeer

Eid-e-Ghadeer is the anniversary in the honour of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) last sermon at Ghadir Khumm, which was occurred on the 10AH in Islamic calendar. It is the event which is followed or celebrated by Shia community and is the basis of their confirmation of Ali Ibn Abi Talib’s succession to Muhammad. According to their believe Muhammad (PBUH) declares raising his hand before the people on the vast plain of Arabian Peninsula that “Ali is the master of those who assume me their leader” and prayed oh, lord love those who love Ali and hate them who keep hostility towards Him. On the other hand, in Sunni community this occasion is not celebrated because they do not deny the day of sermon but this belief that Muhammad (PBUH) did not said anything like this. And they also believe that there is no Eid like Eid-e-Ghadeer. So there are different schools of thoughts regarding to celebrate this event. But Sunni community did not celebrate this day.

Didar Mubarak

The purpose to celebrate this day is the remembrance of first visit of spiritual leader Imam Shah Karim Alhusaini to the region. His followers in any part of the world call this day as “Didar Mubarak”. In many villages of Gilgit Baltistan, a special march along with bands appears and visits all localities to celebrate the happiness of their beloved Imam.

Salgirah Mubarak

The other event of Ismaili community called Salgirah Mubarak, which is celebrated in the honour of the birthday and Imamat day of 49th Imam Shah Karim Alhusaini (Aga Khan) Mountain lightening in the night turns Hunza valley into a twinkling garden. Some common religious festivals which are celebrated in Hunza are those which are practiced in Pakistan and the other Muslims in the whole world as well.

- Eid-ul-Fitr
- Eid-ul-Azha
- Eid Milad-un-Nabi

Cultural Festival in Hunza and Gilgit

Seed Sowing Festival

This is the two day festival, the purpose of which is to open the farming season in Hunza, Gilgit and Baltistan, but this ceremony depends upon the weather conditions.

In different areas of Gilgit-Baltistan this season starts in different months.

Hunza valley: Last week of February

Gojal valley: 6th March

Baltistan: 21st March

On this festival people of this area used to make special kind of food called 'Mul' in local language, made with flour and eat with butter.

Pirkhithn: Day 1 ceremony of seed sowing

On this day people of the community gather at some common place, where they pray for the good production of crops. In the evening plant named: 'pishpishunuk', is picked by the people of the area and made two wooden arrows called 'suthors' and later after dinner they pass the wooden arrows or 'suthors'.

Bophaw: Day 2 ceremony of seed sowing

Next day the ceremony is performed by caliph, which is called Bophaw. The family member of famous tribe walks traditionally to their house having local plant named: 'Yarz' and then this plant is used to keep on the fire and where ever the smoke of the plants moves, it is believed by local people that production of the crop would be more. Caliph prays for the unity, success and production of the crops. And after the prayer the elder from the tribe sprinkle water on seeds. On this day parents bring their small children from 1 to 3 years old and touch their hands to plough and crops for better future.

Seed sowing is known by different names in different languages:

Balti: Tab Thowa

Brushaski: Bophaw

Wakhi: Thagm

The Ginani festival (21st Jun to 12th July)

It is celebrated in the last weeks of June when the crop is ready to harvest. This event is called Ginani in Hunza and Ganoni in Gilgit. The main important feature of this event is traditional

food. The guardian of the family goes to the field and brings some wheat straws which are unwrapped. Grains are mixed with local yogurt and presented along with a special food called Dhirum Phitte. The history of this event is very old and it has been celebrated in Hunza with great zeal. It is said about this festival that this was very much popular before the construction of Karakorum Highway, for the whole community depends upon agriculture as means to survive.

The inhabitants of these parts are strictly prohibited from tasting any new crop before accomplishing the "Ganoni" ceremony, which is celebrated in the middle of June, when the wheat and barley are ripe. The Rajah or headman of the village fixes and proclaims throughout his district the days for the performance of this ceremony, which is carried out in the following manner. On the afternoon of the day fixed the people set out to their fields with loaves fried in butter, which are greedily eaten at a corner of the field by all the members of the family. After this they cut some ears of barley, bring them to their homes, and keep them for a while on a fire. These husked and roasted grains are now put in a small basin filled with milk or curds. Of this milk every member of the family takes three wooden spoons full. Then national dances and vainglorious songs continue till late in the night (Muhammad 1905).

The Shino Bazono Festival

The advent of spring in the Gilgit country brings with it the festival of "Shino Bazono," which corresponds to the English May-day. It lasts about fifteen days, beginning in the middle of February and ending about the beginning of March. As indicating that the long cold winter is at an end with all its accompanying hardships, and that spring is nigh, bringing with it warmth and life and a renewal of the scanty stock of provisions ' which has run dangerously low during the past months, the festival is hailed with much rejoicing by the simple Gilgit folk. In order to

observe this feast rightly, the people, twelve days before its commencement, put ten seers of wheat into a wooden basin. They fill this up with water and keep the mixture wet for five days, after which they take it out and place it in a small pit dug for the purpose in the ground, over which stones are heaped. The wheat is left in this pit for four days, after which the grain begins to germinate. It is then taken out, dried and ground in one of the Gilgit mills. The flour so made is called diram, and of it a sweetmeat is compounded the month by adding some water, oil of apricots and walnuts to the flour and cooked whole without the addition of any sugar. This sweetmeat has been tasted by and is called wailai diram. It has a sweet flavour in spite of the absence of sugar; the fact being regarded as in a way miraculous. The remaining flour is utilized for making small flat loaves called diram phiti. This bread is eaten with raisins and combination is called dracha bhat. The feast is not, however, wholly of a vegetarian. In the month of "Nos" (about November) each family kills several sheep, and is dried for future use. A leg and a tail are, however, set apart to be cooked on Bazono," and are then eaten with the dracha bhat. The feast, which has been partaken of by all the members of the family being over, dancing commences and the following song is sung:

- (1) Aju kal oota la Draroo aju kal chirring ga oota.
- (2) Goom di chhani tharega, aju kal chirring ga oota.
- (3) Ghi di chhani tharega, aju kal chirring ga oota.
- (4) Mos ai chhani tharega, aju kal chirring ga oota.
- (5) Mon di sarai tharega aju kal chirring ga oota.
- (6) Ash to sho dez ik alo aju kal chirring ga oota.

Translation:

- (1) May this year come again, oh Brethren, may such a year come again
- (2) We will have our stores filled with wheat, may such a year come again
- (3) Much ghi will be produced, may the next year be such a one!
- (4) Quantities of meat will be stored, may the next year be such a one!
- (5) Our vessels will be filled with wine, may such a year appear again!
- (6) A blessed day has come to-day, may such a year appear again!

At noon all the fighting men assemble and make preparations for polo, while the procession ascends to the roofs of the houses on each side of the road along which the procession to the polo-ground will pass. In their hands are long slender sticks, with which the procession passes, they belabor their heroes unmercifully. Koliwals are specially the victims of this castigation. They are the trading community of the country opportunity of paying off old scores is one not to be lost. An unpopular gener may consider him fortunate if he escapes from the hands of these viragos payment of a forfeit of gold dust. Next comes the turn of the Raja or chief, who gauntlet mounted. Galloping through, he salams with both hands to the women side, but even he is not allowed to pass without the bestowal of liberal largess of subjects. It must be admitted that the ladies generally let him off lightly, for doubt they have their reasons. Possibly their position at court depends on it. At the arrival of the procession at the polo-ground, a goat is killed on one of the goals. This sacrifice is called "Bazono-ai-Karai." The goat's head having been cut (is attached to it; the players then touch the head with their polo-sticks. After the drum-beater sets off at a run holding the end of the cord, to which the goat is attached behind. After him, rides the raja or

Tarangfa of the village, who strikes repeatedly with his stick till they reach the opposite goal. This ends this part of the festival. Polo then begins, and, as is the fashion in these parts, is continued without intermission till the evening of the great day.

The "Ayi Boyi" Festival

Ayi Boyi is the name of a Gilgiti month falling next to "Shino Bozino." The day fixed for performing the ceremony was publicly announced by the Ra throughout the village. All the boys and young men of the village assembled in the afternoon at a place just below the Ra's dwelling. The Ra used to sit on the roof of the house surrounded by his private servants, and a heap of walnuts was laid before him, while his followers laid a heap of ashes near them. The Ra then threw all the walnuts among the people below, who scrambled for them. While they were thus employed a heavy shower of ashes was hurled down by the Ra's servants upon them. In the merriment which followed, the people would rush towards the Ra, endeavoring to seize him or his servants, if they were strong enough to do so; while if they proved to be the weaker, the chiefs followers would turn the tables against them. Should the chief himself or any of his suit fall into their hands, he was only released on the payment of a suitable forfeit; but, should the struggle result in the favor of the chief and his party, the prisoners made from among the people were released after a few days' captivity.

Thomoshalling

This event is celebrated on myth, according to which there was a cruel ruler whose name was Shiri Badat, he used to slaughter kids as his favorite food. A plan was made with the help of his daughter to kill the cruel king and the plan worked. So this event is basically linked with that death day, and this is called Thomoshalling in Hunza. This event is celebrated in the late

November. People celebrate this by taking fire from their houses to a common place where they put on collective fire to celebrate the death of Shiri Badat.

"Talino" and "Nisalo" Ceremonies

In the reign of Shri Badat, a Buddhist Chief of Gilgit, three princes named Khisrau, Jamshed and Shamsher, the sons of Azur, a chief of Skardu, are said to have arrived at Danyore, a village situated about four miles east of Gilgit at the junction of the Gilgit and Hunza rivers. They were the first Muhammadan chiefs who started from Skardu to conquer and subdue the hill States of Hunza, Nagar and Gilgit. They had succeeded in capturing the two former States, and it was now the turn of Gilgit to fall into their hands. The people relate an interesting story about their arrival and their obtaining possession of the fertile tract of Gilgit proper. They say the princes were born of fairies and arrived at Danyore flying on wings from the lofty mountains where the fairies live. One day they saw a wild cow grazing on the "Danyore Khoh," a hill at about two miles distant from the place they were sitting. The elder brothers, Khisrau and Jamshed, requested the younger, Shamsher, to shoot the cow with his bow and arrow. Shamsher out of respect for his elder brothers said that he could not shoot first, but he was overruled and compelled to carry out the request. He then took up his bow and arrow and aiming at the cow shot her with such dexterity that her body was pierced by the arrow. The Danyore people were much surprised to see this skill of Shamsher, and ran away noisily to the hill to fetch the body. They found the animal lying half-dead of the wound caused by the arrow, which had penetrated the heart. The cow was brought to the village and placed before the princes, who ordered the liver to be roasted and served. When the meat was brought in, 'Khisrau and Jamshed remarked that it would be seemly on Shamsher's part to eat it himself, as it was the result of his skill. In vain did Shamsher try to make them join. He was thus obliged to eat it himself, but he had not taken more than three

or four slices, when both his elder brothers took flight into the air and disappeared. Shamsher also tried his utmost to follow his brothers, but the meat just taken by him had worked such an effect on his body that he could not even rise a little above the surface of the earth, and reproaching himself with the deed which had caused his separation from his beloved but faithless brothers, he remained content to pass his future days in the village. The inhabitants of Danyore who had seen his marvelous act, considered him, on account of his being "fairy born," of a race superior to their own, and always showed him much respect and obedience. After a lapse of some months he related to a large gathering of the villagers around him, that he had just seen a big markhor frolicking hither and thither on the Hapukor Mountain (above Naupur and Naikoo villages), and that he wished to shoot it at once with his arrow. They were very surprised to know that he had seen a markhor from a distance of more than four miles, and they would not have believed him had they not already experienced his miraculous power of sight on the occasion of his shooting the cow, and had they not believed him to be fairy-born. They all therefore expressed their pleasure at his wish to shoot the markhor. Shamsher then aimed at his victim, and, shooting the arrow with all his might, cried out that he had killed the markhor, to the great joy of the villagers, many of whom expressed their wish to accompany him in fetching the dead animal. They went up the hill via the Naupur stream and found the markhor lying on the self-same spot that had been pointed out by Shamsher, and they all heartily congratulated him on his success. The sun was high and the day hot, and the men, who were tired, searched for and found a spring well shaded by trees. There they slept for awhile. Miyo Khai Soni, a daughter of Shri Badat, used also to live on the same mountain near the spring, in order to pass the hot summer days. A maid-servant of hers happened to come there to fetch water, and was surprised to find that some strangers were sleeping near the spring. She returned at once and reported the matter to

her mistress, who became very angry and ordered all her maid-servants to capture and bring them before her. This was done. Shamsheer was a youth of handsome and comely appearance, and as soon as the princess saw him her rage fled, so that she forgot every angry word she had thought of as befitting the occasion, and very politely and amiably asked after his health and the cause of his coming up the mountain. She was so much struck and pleased with his refined behavior and elegant manners that she at once exclaimed " I might call thee a thing divine: for nothing natural ever saw so noble." Shamsheer asked for her permission to leave and go down the hill, but this was refused and the party was amiably invited to stay the night. They devoted much of their time to conversation, and Miyo Khai modestly showed her preference by listening to the stories of the prince's adventures and deeds of valour from his own lips. At last he gained a tender place in her heart. The moment was a critical one for Shamsheer, who thanked her courteously for her favorable consideration and told her that the idea of her giving her hand to a foreigner like himself would prove a sorrow to all concerned when the news reached Shri Badat. These words were hard to bear, and the soft-hearted princess began to weep and fell down at his feet. This action of Miyo Khai produced a sudden effect on the heart of Shamsheer, who feeling for her unbearable grief, lifted her up from his feet and gently consented to their union, in spite of the fate that might await them at her father's hand. The princess was pleased beyond expression, and her subsequent devotion is a proof of her feelings. She ordered all her maid-servants to appear, and explained to them her desire. She also informed them how dear she was to Shri Badat and that this would cause him to listen to her appeal. But if any of them should tell the news, she must consider her life as at an end, and her property confiscated. They all trembled at the words of their mistress, and with due respect expressed themselves to the effect that her happiness was their heartfelt desire, and that they were extremely glad to know of this selection;

and they promised that nobody else should hear a word about this engagement from their mouths. The marriage ceremonies were secretly performed on the same night, and Miyo Khai was, some people say, named Sakina, but according to others her name became Nur Bukht. Next morning Shamsheer allowed his Danyori companions to go down to their village, with instructions to keep what they had seen a secret. Shamsheer became filled with the desire to make himself ruler of Gilgit, and began to instigate his wife to murder her father and to raise the Danyori people secretly against him. Sakina, whose passions had mastered her sense of duty, prepared to take her father's life for the sake of her beloved stranger. Shri Badat, being the descendant of giants, had no fear of being attacked by sword or arrow, as these weapons had no effect on his body, and no one knew what his soul was made of. The first thing, therefore for Shamsheer to inquire was the secret of Sri Badat's soul. So, on a certain day, in order to gratify this desire, and to prove the trust his wife had in him, he prophesied that as soon as the leaves of a certain tree should decay and become yellow, she should no more see her father. It happened that the leaves of the tree decayed much earlier than usual, and Sakina, thinking that it meant the death of her father, went down the hill lamenting; but she was much surprised to find that he was still alive. She related to her father that a few days ago a certain fakir had gone up the hill and had foretold that as soon as the leaves of a certain tree should turn yellow she should unfortunately find herself an orphan. On this day the leaves of the tree had turned yellow, and considering this an ill omen, her filial love had caused her to present herself at his feet, but she thanked God it was not so, and that the fakir's statement had proved false. Shri Badat said in reply, "O my affectionate daughter, nobody in the world can kill me, as no one knows of what my soul is made. How can it be injured until someone knows its nature? It is beyond a man's power to inflict harm on my body." Sakina said that her happiness depended on his life and

safety. As she was dearest to him in the world, he should have no hesitation in informing her of the secret of his soul. She would, moreover, be able to forestall any unfavorable omens, and to show her filial love by devoting her life to- the safety of her kind father. He used much finesse in turning the topic of conversation, and made much pretence in order to keep his secret from his daughter, in spite of her pertinacity. His paternal love at last compelled him to grant her wishes, and he informed her that his soul was made of ghee (butter), a substance which cannot be melted without much heat; and that whenever she should see a large fire burning in or around his fort, she must consider it the last day of his life. But he did not know that he was putting his life in danger by confiding in a weak-hearted woman, who was being used to take his life. Miyo Khai passed a few days with her father and then went up to her hill-abode, where she found her beloved Shamsheer anxiously awaiting her arrival. To him she related her conversation with Shri Badat. He was extremely glad to receive this description of Shri Badat's soul, as he was prepared to spare no pains in taking his life. The information acquired now led him to think of the speedy fulfillment of his hopes. He is said to have sent for his Danyori companions secretly, who had accompanied him to, the hill, and whose loyalty was unquestionable, since they believed him to be born of a fairy. The cruelty of Shri Badat knew no bounds, so that he had earned the title of man-eater; and his subjects were already looking for an opportunity of getting rid of the tyrant in order to save the lives of their innocent children. In a few words therefore Shamsheer won the Danyore men's approval of the plot against the life of Shri Badat, adding that he was now master of the secret of their ruler's soul. They agreed to lend a helping hand to Shamsheer and to raise the subjects secretly against their merciless chief. On finding that the majority of the people had joined him, Shamsheer fixed a date for accomplishing the deed by burning a large fire late at night round the fort of Shri Badat. A few days before the appointed day, he sent down Sakina to her

father with instructions to keep the secret, while he himself went down to Danyore village to make his preparations. At about 3 a.m. on the night appointed for the purpose, all the people turned out of their homes with torches in their hands and a quantity of wood. Shri Badat's fort was situated about 200 yards east of the present Gilgit polo-ground on the site of the houses of the Bairai family. The people were still some way from the fort when Shri Badat's spirit began to feel uneasy. He therefore asked his daughter to go out and see, what was the cause of his restlessness? This undutiful and faithless woman, who had a perfect knowledge of the conspiracy, went out and returned after some delay, in order to let the people come closer, and said that there was nothing to be feared outside the fort. But Shri Badat's increasing uneasiness brought him out of his room. He found himself in a very awkward position, having by this time been surrounded by the enemy, who had succeeded in planting large fires round the fort. In this predicament he had no time to consider the necessity of punishing his wicked daughter, but at once jumped up in the air and took wing towards Chotur Khan, a snowy tract in the Ishkoman Valley. He is said to have rested at Yashpur (a deserted village near about 12 miles west of Gilgit) Hinzil, where he requested somebody to bring him a cup of cold water. The village had a plentiful produce of grapes, and the inhabitants used to make wine from them. The man therefore brought out a cup of wine to Shri Badat, who refused, saying angrily that, seeing that he had come there after having escaped from a fire which had done great injury to his soul, it was improper for the man to give him wine instead of cold water, which was what he had asked for. But none would bring him water, and, being thus dissatisfied with the treatment of the villagers, he cursed the place, saying that it would be totally ruined and laid waste, so as to produce no grapes again. It happened in the following year that the glacier which afforded a supply of water for the village melted away, thus effectually destroying the village cultivation forever. From

Yashpur Shri Badat went to Chotur Khan and hide him there under a big glacier, where he is still said to have his abode. The people have a firm belief that 'he will re-appear at Gilgit to renew his rule over them with redoubled fury. Being afraid of his regaining the kingdom, the people are in the habit of burning big fires in their homes throughout the night of the anniversary in November on which Shri Badat was driven from Gilgit, in order to keep away his ghost if it return. On this night no one ventures to sleep, but to while away the time they are in the habit of dancing and singing round the big fires. This ceremony is called "Talino." There is, however, a family of Kulchins (the kitchen servants of Shri Badat) who do not take part in the performance of the ceremony; for they are still loyal and faithful to their master, and are still desirous of his returning to his own. This is the only family now residing at Gilgit who are well-wishers of Shri Badat. It is curious that they should have escaped injury at the hands of the opposite party. On the afternoon of the following day each family kills five goats for every house, as a token of their happiness at being free for one more year from the re-arrival of the cruel chief the meat is dried and kept to be cooked during the following months. It is said that the meat of the goats killed on this day does not turn bad, even if kept for years. This ceremony is called by them "Nisalo" (Leitner 1985; Biddulph 1880).

Garukus

This event is celebrated in Hunza after the festival of Thomoshalling and before Bofow to welcome the spring season. Head and feet of slaughter animals and different other traditional food are cooked on this day.

Silk Route festival

The historians are of the view that thousands of years ago, there was a path along with the River Indus, which was discovered by a Chinese traveler named Faxian in the 4th century. He pointed out that the path is just like a very thin line to cross and reach the mountainous area Hunza. Marco polo has followed Silk route in 13th century on the great North road. The Karakorum highway has given an easy life to the inhabitants of this area and due to this reason AKCSP (Agha Khan Cultural Service Pakistan) organized many events to re evaluate the ideas and also for increasing the better relationship with the bordering areas.

Some of the customs of Hunza make their cultural heritage different from the other parts of country. And these people are strictly following their traditions and customs, here are the major customs of Hunza elaborated briefly.

Folklores of Hunza

Hunza River valley: Detection

The discovery of this area is old but it took time to visible, in front of the people. According to local traditions or folk myths in 1870s, this area was explored by a British General with a soldier on horseback. Hunza was a small kingdom, which was located in an isolated valley 100 miles long and only one mile wide, at an elevation of 8,500 feet. The Hunza river valley was completely covered by mountain zenith (Frembgen 1964). Hunza is now a part of Pakistan, also known as Northern areas of Pakistan, sharing borders with Afghanistan, China, India and Kashmir. It is a difficult pass of about 13,700feet to reach Hunza. When British entered in the valley, they found that abrupt and rocky sides of the valley lined with garden plots, fruit trees

and animals. Gardens in this area were watered with full of mineral glacier, from Ultar glacier. The wooden canal was hung from the sheer cliffs by steel nails, which was hammered in the wall. The river below deposit was carried up the side of the valley to fill the gardens and Ultar peak escalating above Baltit, the capital of Hunza.

Difficult and treacherous trail or way to this valley has kept the inhabitants of this place isolated. In late 1950s, majority of the children had never seen any wheel or a jeep and they did not notice any plane landing at Gilgit airport, which is situated only 70 miles away from Hunza. In the words of John Clerk “he could see three peaks above 25,000feet and 11glaciers, all at once from Shish par Glacier Nullah neglecting Hunza valley” in his book named: Hunza, lost kingdom of Himalayas (Clark 1957).

The life of the people living here is also as difficult as the pass or trails of the region. The people who were as a community in the below of terraced garden area, had no cars or wheeled carts so they have to carry grains and other materials at the back of themselves or on the back of animals (Ibid: 1957). The area of Hunza or the whole Gilgit-Baltistan has nothing in abundance except disintegrating rocks. As there was not enough resources so the things which were available in the area was expensive including the fuel for heating and cooking and also the food or fodder for the animals (Ghazali 2005). So people mostly try to depend on local resources like they used to wear the dresses which were made by sheep skin because sheep is the animal which found in every house in this area and also bedding was at that time made with sheep skin. The original valley had only rocks and few local plants.

The history by the folk tales tells that Mir Muhammad Ghazan Khan 1 ruled 1864-1886 and during his time he sent his brother a cloak which was infused with small box and murdered his uncle and other brothers but facts is still unknown about this myth. He was killed by Safdar Ali

Khan in 1886 and he became new ruler of Hunza. Mir Safdar Ali Khan escaped to China, when in 1891 voyage of 5000men by British colonel attacked and was replaced his half brother Mir Muhammad Nazim Khan, died in 1938, whose death is also mysterious and it is considered that his son was involved in his death. This chain of rulers continues and ends Mir Muhammad Jamal Khan who was ruler when Pakistan was came into being and died in 1976.

Hunzakuts or Aryan tribes people of Dardistan

There is a conflict about the origin of the people of Hunza. There are different schools of thought associating with the origin of Hunzukutz. One of the renowned schools of thought is that Hunza people belonged to one of the Aryan tribes of Dardistan. Hunza is a city state of Pakistan and small mountainous kingdom in the Himalayas (Wilcox 2011). There is not any written history or evidence about this land but traditionally its two thousands descendants of three soldiers of Alexander the great, settled in this area and married with Persian women. According to the local tales these three soldier deceived Alexander the great and before Alexander decided to gave punishment for disloyalty they escaped and fled to Hunza. The Hunza valley was heaven for them because of its remote and secure location. When these generals arrived, Hunza valley was lightly populated. Now Hunza became an independent monarchy. The king used the title of Mir. British disturbed the ruling organization of Hunza. The ruler of Hunza believed his small kingdom equal to China and concurrent himself to Alexander from him claimed descent. But when British came in 1870s, he took them for campaigners seeking to make Queen Victoria as vassal (Potovanja 2010).

When British came in this area, they reported 8000 people were in good health and lived long lives (Ibid: 2010). The skin of Hunzukutz is fairer and they are taller than their neighboring

countries. Although the people are Muslims but only the wives of rulers used to cover themselves with veils while rest of the women do not used to wear veil (Wilcox: 2011). Different style of dresses has been seen by doing research from ancient times to modern age and there is a brief view of this research:

A young women worn robe having long sleeves with standing collar and silver buttons, of which red challis flowered with yellow is embroidered. Pillbox is in red color and wrapped with cream color cloth and worn leather shoes in soft brown color (Wilcox 2011). Another young woman is shown with her hair in tress and she also have red pillbox, on which multi color embroidery of red, yellow and white has been done. This girl was covered with scarf which was also decorated with handmade embroidery of red, black and white motifs.

The costumes which were worn by men for performing ancient war dances were heavy Chinese silk robes in red and dark blue colors. Some of the robes were bordered with gold and white color. The costumes or robes dates back as from the period when Chinese emperor paid tribute to Hunza. It is believed that the robes, curved shields and swords are cherished more than three centuries back.

A girl in Hunza who was collecting precious sticks for fuel in the wood was wearing full cotton dress with red and grey color and orange color was inserted on the leather shoes. All these examples show that the people in this area used to wear royal type of dresses having full embroidery and bright and sharp colors. John Clark in 1950 reported about children with black, brown and pale hair. The people who were chose to live in this valley; it may be a reason that this valley was segregated. The local men there took wives from neighboring areas and Hunza women said to have been beautiful (Clark 1957). Unfortunately Hunza people had poor land and the inhabitants of Hunza fear from starvation in spring time when food ran low in this area. This

valley had no soil as such. There was only ground rock and muck of animals was spread on gardens as fertilizer to crops and trees. Truth about the Hunza river valley is that this was a land with shortage of everything. Animals were limited as there was not enough grazing land in the lower area for them. Animals like goat, sheep and Yaks stimulated to the higher mountains in summer for meager vegetation. It is worthy of note that the diet is very much different which they use in winter and which is used in summers. The herdsman always had a lot of milk while the rest of the people in valley suffered a lack of it.

Myth about Hunza vegetarian

The people of Hunza were not vegetarians. In summers they desist on eating animals because animals were the main source of their food in remaining 10 months of the year. They take high fat diet especially in winters including, butter, yogurt and cheese made from goat, sheep and Yak milk and they used mostly saturated fats. Hunza people were vegetarian just for two to three months.

Phitti or Hunza bread and local accounts

The bread which the people of Hunza used to eat is called Phitti in their local language and they made this bread at their homes. This is one of the main aspects of their culture which they also used to embroidery on their dresses. They made hard flat bread from the grains which grow in their own gardens. This kind of bread was not distinct made by some Northern American Indians. The method which they used for this Phitti is the grains are crushed between two rocks to make coarse flour, then mix water and roll it into the flat pancake shape. Dough was cooked vaguely on top of a heated rock, when there was not metal pan for cooking. This is the special ingredient which they used to eat in their daily food. During my research tour, I was living with

the local family of Hunza and I personally experienced that on daily basis one of the family member made this local bread or Phitti in home. They used different other ingredients including eggs, oil and different nuts also. But it depends, some people made it by simple and some used to make adding other ingredients. Indeed in modern times this “phitti or Hunza bread” is made in electric or gas oven while in ancient times rocks were used.

Folklores of Gilgit

The Legend of Shri Badat: The Man-Eater

Once upon a time there lived a chief at Gilgit named Shri Badat. He was in the habit of obtaining a sheep daily from his subjects. One day, when eating his dinner, he was much surprised to find that the meat was tastier than before. He ordered his kulchin (darogha of the kitchen) to find out where the sheep was brought from. The kotwal concerned was sent for, and he stated that he had got this sheep from a woman of the Barmas village. She was ordered to appear at once. The woman, who did not know the reason of this sudden call, was much frightened at being brought before the chief, whom she had never seen before. Trembling as she approached the court, she was much relieved on hearing Shri Badat's questions and cheerily replied as follows:

"Peace be ever upon thee, O thou great King of Gilgit! The mother of this sheep had died a few days after its birth, and the lamb being very beautiful was very much admired by me. Thinking it a hardship to lose the lamb as well as the ewe, I fed it with my own milk until it was able to graze. A few days ago the same lamb was presented to your Highness." Shri Badat was very pleased on hearing this story, and gave the woman a liberal reward and dismissed her. Sitting alone, he began to think over the cause of the tastiness of the meat. He argued that when the meat of a lamb which had for a short time only sucked the human breast, was so excellent to the taste,

the meat of the human being who is always nourished by human milk would certainly be better than that of an animal. Coming" to this conclusion, he gave orders that a tax of human children should be levied in future instead of sheep, and that their meat should always be served at his dinner. In this way he became a man-eater.

Yathini

Adjacent to and on the southern side of Basin, a village about three miles west of Gilgit, there stands a cliff at the junction of the Kargah and Naupur nullahs. A large image of an erect Buddha has been sculptured on the rock-face, about 30 feet above the ground. It is without doubt a sculpture of ancient date and shows that the valley was once inhabited by a race professing Buddhism. The people call it "Yathmi (giantess), and relate an interesting story about it. They say that she was the sister of Shri Badat, a King of Gilgit who was the descendant of giants. She lived on the said rock and, being a man-eater like her brother, was in the habit of killing and devouring half as many of the men as happened to pass by, leaving the other half unmolested. The princess continued this practice for a long period, to the great distress of the inhabitants, until a certain Danyal named Soglio, feeling the loss of so many people dear to his heart, devised a successful plan of murdering her in order to save his beloved countrymen. With the above design in his mind he set out for the place with a party of brave and bold men. Reaching the spot he burnt a small fire at the foot of the said rock, and his companions took their seat around it in a small circle. The Danyal, according to his usual custom, put some chili (juniper) leaves on the fire and inhaled its smoke. Thus driving himself into a state of ecstasy, he commenced dancing and singing some magic incantations, which were repeated by his companions. The Yathini was elated at the prospect of more victims. As soon as she approached the Danyal he stepped forward and addressed her in a song, of which the following is a translation: "Have not you heard, O

lovely princess, that your father has expired to-day?" Hearing this sad news, she struck her breast with her right hand. Soglio, who had with him some long iron, nails, thrust one of them through her hand, as it lay on her breast, with such rapidity and strength that the nail penetrated her chest and went far into the rock behind. Soglio then sang another song, in which he sang as follows: "Have not you heard, O charming princess that your brother has also died to-day? On this she struck her second hand on her thigh. Soglio quickly pierced this with another sharp nail. The Yathini was thus firmly fixed to the rock, and was unable to move, or to take revenge. The party was much delighted at this success of the Danyal, who further turned her into a stone by his prayer, and even more delighted were the inhabitants when they heard of the good news. The unfortunate Soglio requested the people to bury him on his death near the Yathini, as otherwise she would return to life and continue her cruelties. The people, who had now obtained their desire, held a private council to discuss the matter. They argued that no one could tell when and where Soglio would die, and whether they would be alive or able to procure his body at the time, should he die in some far-away country or by drowning in the river, in which case the Yathini would recommence her practices with renewed ferocity. After a long debate they thought it best to assassinate Soglio at once. A man was appointed to accomplish the horrible task, which he did, and Soglio was at the same time buried close to the figure on the rock (Muhammad 1905).

Danyals (Shamins)

There are some men and women of these parts who are called Danyals. When they are worked up into a state of frenzy the giants and fairies instruct them concerning the future of the country, the chiefs, etc. Whenever a chief is inquisitive on the subject of his future, he sends for the Danyals as well as the local musicians. A bundle of green chili leaves is then brought, and some of these, with a little ghi, are put into a small fire and burnt in an enclosure set apart for the

purpose. As soon as the smoke rises, one or two Danyals push their way towards the fire and begin to inhale the smoke, until they lose their senses and commence to dance to the noise of the drums. They also eat some of the extremely bitter leaves of the "chili" (*Jtmiperus macrocarpa*) while dancing. The music then becomes fast and furious, and the onlookers cheer loudly. The Danyals glance from time to time towards the surrounding trees, among which the giants and fairies have taken up a position. After a short dance the Danyals place their hands on the shoulders of the drum-beaters and their ears on the drums, as if they are very attentively listening to what the drums says. In a short time they again commence dancing, and sing the; prophecies they have been told by the drums. If there be anybody presents wearing red clothes when Danyal is dancing, the Danyal is much annoyed and rushes at him. No man clad in red' clothes is therefore allowed to be present. After an hour's dance the performance closes, and one or two strong men appear in the circle, and the Danyals climb upon their backs and are carried away out of the enclosure to a house, on which after a short rest they recover from their frenzy. I once asked a Danyal woman of Gilgit how she had become a Danyal, and after long hesitation she related to me the following story: "When about seven years of age I used to go with my flocks to the distant pastures on the hills. Once I saw a fairy sitting on a Chili tree and eating its leaves. Her eyes were brilliant and large, with thick eyebrows, which were high above the eyes and almost joining the hair of her head. She came towards me and asked me to accompany her, saying that her house was built of gold, and that I should be well feasted there. Hearing this I lost my senses, and as I was then standing on the edge of a stream, I fell down into it and got a severe wound on the right thigh. Some of the shepherd boys who were also feeding their flocks at some distance saw me fall; and, hastily taking me out of the water, carried me to the village. My father then killed a goat in order to ascertain if I were really under the power of the fairies, and I drank

all of its blood, but I was unconscious of what was going on around and remained in this state for about ten days without taking any food. During this time the number of giants and fairies which appeared to me increased to fourteen, of whom seven were Muhammadans and seven Hindus, each sect remaining apart. Their queen, who was Hindu, was clad like a fakir and had gathered her hair on the top of her head, upon which she wore a cap. They brought and showed me different kinds of food, but gave me nothing to eat (Leitner 1985; Biddulph 1880; Muhammad 1905).

Conclusion

Gilgit Baltistan is home to a number of diversified cultures, ethnic groups, languages and various backgrounds. It is home to people belonging to all regions of Gilgit Baltistan as well as from other cities of Pakistan and abroad. This multitude of cultures is because of the strategic location of the region. As Gilgit Baltistan is a multicultural city and there are a lot of different languages spoken which has an effect on the attitudes of people as well. Many citizens are following the old traditions and customs while others are enjoying a modern lifestyle which is influenced by other cultures, media and education.

Festivals have both social and economic angles. In the chaotic and stressful planet we inhabit where happiness is overshadowed by negativity and insecurities, the need was felt for something that could bring some positivity and celebrations. Thus the birth of festivals happened giving us opportunity to forget all our worries and celebrate the positive side of life even if for few days.

Festivals act like stress releaser and help us to balance our emotions. More positivity naturally lowers negativity. It also provides an opportunity to reduce friction bringing together and bind estranged friends and relatives in a bond of love.

Nothing brings people together like festivals. It plays a pivotal role in nation building bringing people from every religious economic and social background together. If we look at the fascinating journey of human evolution, we understand that human beings do not invent or create something unless it is required. There is no written history that when exactly festival celebrations started but in Ancient Greece and Rome, festivals were celebrated linked with religion, social organization and political processes.

Agriculture has significantly contributed to the tradition of festival celebration in addition to religions, folklore and traditions. It is such a vital resource that many festivals across the planet are associated with harvest time. Religious festivals like Christmas, Rosh Hashanah, Diwali, and Eid have gathered cultural significance too over the centuries. Events of historical significance, such as important military victories or other nation-building events generally called Victory Day also provide the impetus for a festival. An early example is the festival established by Ancient Egyptian Pharaoh Rameses III celebrating his victory over the Libyans.

Festivals are contributing greatly to a sense of belonging for religious, social, or geographical groups, contributing to social cohesiveness. Festivals that focus on cultural or ethnic topics also seek to inform community members of their traditions; the involvement of elders sharing stories and experience provides a means for unity among families.

On the economic front Festivals provides stimulus to economic activities. It provides employment opportunities to people and reportedly Basant was banned back in 2005, around 150,000 people in Lahore and 180,000 people in Gujranwala and Kasur had lost their jobs due to the ban on kite flying. Recent ban on Valentine Day also deprived many from earning by selling flowers, gifts and balloons.

Festivals have historically been a great source of entertainment especially before the advent of mass-produced entertainment. Entertainment is important as it brings people together and is a good way for the entire family to bond. It diverts people's attention from their demanding lives and amuses them in their leisure time.

In the backdrop of recent terrorist attacks in Pakistan, it becomes all the more important to revive and celebrate the many festivals that are either banned by the government or ignored by the

society at large as being unsacred. Pakistan is home to dozens of having different festivals. To provide an enabling environment to them to celebrate their festivals would certainly bring all communities together, familiarizing with each other customs and traditions and thus helping in nation building in true sense.

In Gilgit Baltistan festival played vital role to keep the people of the region in peace. There are many ethnic groups live together and celebrate festivals collectively. It is needed to preserve these festivals for next generations to keep this unity forever.

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