In our page on Airyana Vaeja in the Zoroastrian scriptures (the Avesta’s books of Yasht (13.143 & 144), Vendidad (Chapter 1, 1-16), and Yasna (10.13-14)), we made the following observations regarding the neighbours of Airyana Vaeja:

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

**Mouru / Margiana**
The third nation listed after Airyana Vaeja in the Vendidad, is Mouru - modern day Sugd in northwestern Tajikistan and southern Uzbekistan.

**Balkh / Bactria & King Vishtasp**
The fourth Vendidad nation is Bakhdhim / Bakhdhi / Bakhdi / Balkh located in Northern Afghanistan. Among the first “hearers and teachers” of Zarathushtra’s message listed in the Farvardin Yasht (13.99) was King Vishtasp. Later texts state that King Vishtasp, a king of the Kayanian dynasty, was king of Bakhdi/Balkh, and that Zarathushtra died in Bakhdi/Balkh, killed by a Turanian. In these texts, the Amu Darya (Oxus) river formed the north-eastern border between ancient Bakhdi and Turan (Sugd). Further upstream, a portion of the Amu Darya river ran through Bakhdi. Balkh became the capital city of the Kayanian kings and ancient Airan, the successor state to Airyana Vaeja and the predecessor state to modern Iran.

Today, all three regions noted above claim Zarathushtra as their native son and make some claim to his legacy. The claims include the region being his birthplace, where he received his revelations, where he first propounded
Airyana Vaeja as Paradise - Shambhala

Weather Change in Airyana Vaeja During Jamshid’s Reign

Funerary Practices

Location of Airyana Vaeja, the Aryan Homeland

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

Aria / Aryan Nation

his religion, where he composed his message and the scriptures, and where he died. No other region makes these claims to this extent.

What this indicates is, that regardless of the veracity of the claims, there is a strong possibility that Zarathushtra travelled to these regions and that they were within travelling distance of Airyana Vaeja, Zarathushtra’s birthplace. By listing these nations separately from Airyana Vaeja, the Avesta’s Vendidis is probably also stating that the three lands were separate from Airyana Vaeja. Since Zoroastrian texts also tell us that Airyana Vaeja was Zarathushtra’s native home, we can surmise that while Zarathushtra could have travelled to these lands spreading his message, none of them was his native home.

AIRYANA VAEJA’S TERRAIN

Landscape

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

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

Rivers of Airyana Vaeja: Daraja and Daitya

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

Both rivers are mentioned as separate rivers in the Lesser Bundahishn (24.14 - 16, E. W. West in Sacred Books of the East Vol. 5, 1897): “14. The Daitya River is the chief of streams. 15. The Daraja river is the chief of exalted rivers, for the dwelling of the father of Zartosht was on its banks, and Zartosht was born there.” We read here that Zarathushtra (Zartosht in Middle Persian) was born on the banks of the Daraja River in Airyan a Vaeja (Iran Vej in Middle Persian) upon whose banks stood his father’s house. The Lesser Bundahishn at 20.32 states, “The Daraja river is in Eranvej, on the bank (bar) of which was the dwelling of Pourushasp, the father of Zartosht (Zarathushtra).”

Veh Rivers

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

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

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

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

Middle Persian texts and the Shahnameh tell us that the Amu Darya or Oxus river (see map below) formed a border of ancient Bakhdi, and that the border between Aryan (the later name form of Airyana Vaeja) and Turan was also the Amu Darya. The Amu Darya river runs from the Pamirs (where it is called the Panj) to the Aral Sea and today, to some extent, forms the border between four nations, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. A portion of the Amu Darya river runs north of present day Balkh in Afghanistan.

Regarding identification of the Veh with the Indus River, the Greater Bundahishn at 11.2.2 as translated by B. T. Anklesaria states, “The river Veh passes on in the east, goes to the land of Sind and pours into the sea in India. There they call it the river Mitran [and also call it the river Indus].” The Lesser Bundahishn translated by E. W. West, at 20.7 states, “The Mehva River they call the Hendva River...”. Hendva would be connected to Hindu. 20.9 also states, “The Veh River passes on in the east, goes through the land of Sind, and flows to the sea in Hindustan, and they call it there the Mehva River.” We note that this river is called Hendva, Mehrava, Mehra, Mitran (Mithra/Mitra and Mehr are related words, the former being the older form which seems to be the trend in the Greater Bundahishn. The Lesser Bundahishn starts with the declaration at 20.1 that two rivers flow from the north - from the Alburz (Mountains) - and that the one towards the East is the Veh River.

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

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

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

The larger river flowing into Mourum (Eng-Gk Margiana) is the Murgab River; the main river flowing through Haroyum (Eng-Gk Aria) is the Hari-Rud River; the main river flowing through Sugdhem/Sugd (Eng-Gk Sogdiana) is the Zerafshan River. The Kashka Darya also flows through Sugdhem. Sugdhem was likely bordered by the Amu Darya (Oxus) in the west/south-west and Sury Darya (Jaxartes) Rivers in the east/north-east. There are of course, other smaller rivers. The Pamirs together with the Hindu Kush and its western extensions including the Safeed Kuh and Siah Kuh mountains that border today’s Northern Afghanistan are where these rivers originate.

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

LB 13. The Daiyat river is the river which comes out of Eravanje, and goes out through the hill-country; of all the rivers named, it is in most, as it says, that the Daiyat river is full of noxious creatures. (Our note: it is significant that the Daiyat is noted as “going through hill country”.) GB 11.A.7 states “The river Daiyat comes out of Eravan and proceeds to Dubistan.” We have yet to identify Dubistan.

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

Harirud

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

Rivers of Sugdhem/Sugd

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

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

Curiously, the LB at 20.30 states, “The Kasak river comes out through a ravine (kaf) in the province of Tus (the birthplace of Ferdowsi in Khorasan?), and they call it there the Kasp river; moreover, the river, which is there the Veh, they call the Kasak; even in Sind they call it the Kasak.” Translator E. W. West feels “Sind” here is a corruption or misprint of the intended name "Seni” leading the the line reading, “even in Seni they call it the Kasak.” Seni is a name mentioned in the Lesser Bundahishn at 15.29: “the country of Seni, that which is Kinistan/Chinistan?”. E. W. West further postulates that in this context "Kinistan" may refer to Samarkand the principal city of Sugd. He goes on to identify Seni as the Saini of the Farvardin Yasht at 13.143,144, one of the five lands praised in the Yasht having holy followers. There is today the River Kashka that flows from Sugd today.

Murgab, River of Marv

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

Amu Darya (Oxus), Balkh and Termez Rivers

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

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

NOXIOUS CREATURES IN AIRYANA VAEJA’S RIVERS
The Vandidad at 1.2 (translation by James Darmesteter, SBE, 1898) states: "The first of the good lands and countries which 1, Ahura Mazda, created, was the Airyana Vaeja, by the Vanghui Daeitya. Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created the serpent in the river and winter, a work of the Daevas."

The Greater Bundahishn translated by B. T. Ankesaria at Chapter 11.4.7 & 8 states "The river Daeitya comes out of Eravnej and proceeds to Dutistan. Of all the rivers, the noxious creatures abound the most in it. As one says, 'The river Daeitya is full of noxious creatures'.

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

MOUNTAINS - HARA BEREZAITI, THE HARA MOUNTAINS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tera

The Mehr Yasht at 10.118 talks about the Sun riding rising above the peaks (tara) of the Hara Berezaiti. Tara (also spell Tera, Terak or Taera) is sometime taken to mean a specific mountain in the Hara. E. W. West translates the Lesser Bundahishn (LB) at 12.2 as "Terak of Alburz". When West translates 12.4 as "The Terak of Alburz is that through which the stars, moon and sun pass in, and through it they come back", but when B. T. Ankesarian translates 9.6 of the Greater Bundahishn (GB) as "The Tera of Alburz is that through which the Stars, Moon and Sun revolve and through which they come back", it makes more sense to read "Tera(k) as the peaks or the space between peaks through which the stars, moon and sun rise and set. Indeed, at LB 5.4. we have "As it is said that it is the Terak of Alburz from behind which my sun and moon and stars return again" and at LB 5.5, "For there are a hundred and eighty apertures (rojin) in the east, and a hundred and eighty in the west, through Alburz; and the sun, every day, comes in through an aperture, and goes out through an aperture...." Ichaporia and Humbach as well as Sethna do not translate "taera" as the name of a mountain but rather as "peak". However, it does make more sense in the contexts above to read it as several or a set of peaks rather than a single peak. But that sense of a single peak rising into the heavens is now embedded in Hindu and Buddhist mythology as well. In the Zamyad Yasht, there is no mythology in the description of the mountains. They are listed quite matter-of-factly and the word "taera" appears buried in the middle of verse 19.6 in a rather obscure manner.

Image 46x490 to 197x715

Mosaic of a snake swallowing an object from Central Asia dating to the Bronze Age (2500-1500 BCE)
Mary Boyce informs us that when the Khotanese Saka became Buddhists, they referred to Mt. Sumeru of Buddhist legends as a mountain. Mt. Sumeru in Buddhist mythology lies at the centre of the earth and according to Anklesaria's translation of GB 5B.1, "Mount Tera is in the middle of the earth."

**Principal Hara Peaks - Mount Hukaria and Daithik**

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

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

**Mount Meru / Sumeru**

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

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

**Aryan Vaeja as Paradise. Shambhala / Shangri-La**

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

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

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

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

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

[It may be of interest to those studying the weather change in Aryana Vaeja, that pollen and tree ring analysis indicates the Chang Tang plateau in Northern Tibet had a far more liveable environment than it has today - one that supported a primordial civilization - until the climate become colder and drier starting around 1500 BCE, a climate change that caused the population to migrate out of the northern plateau. This authors also feels that the ancient Aryan and Zoroastrian link to western Tibet is further exemplified by the common tradition of exposing the dead to birds. Also see our blog, Iranian-Aryan Connections with Western Tibet.

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

The mountain Yungdrung Gustek has nine Yungdrungs (swastikas) ascending like a staircase. It is not without significance that the swastika plays an important symbolic role in both the Bon and Vedic Hindu religions. In Bon, The nine swastikas represent the Nine Ways. The swastika (Yungdrung) itself is a symbol of permanence and indestructibility of the mind-stream, the wisdom of Bon. The full name of Bon is Yungdrung Bon meaning Everlasting Truth.
The four sides of the mountain faced the four cardinal directions. From the four corners, each of which represent four archetypal thought forms, flow four rivers:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Further, Yasna 9.5 (similarly, Vendidad II.1.6) also states that “in the reign of Yima, there was neither cold nor heat” - a temperate climate by definition. Additional references (see * below), state that the weather in Airyana Vaeja at the outset of the Jamshedi era was equitable. However, the Vendidad and other texts also inform us that a thousand two hundred years into the Jamshedi era, Airyana Vaeja experienced severe and long winters (for a further discussion on the Jamshedi era and the weather change, see our page Aryan Prehistory)

[*References to King Jamshid/Yima: Vendidad II.1.1-20(41) and II.1.21(42)-43(140); Yasna 9.4-5; Farvardin Yasht 23.130; Aban Yasht 5.25-26; Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh.]

FUNERARY PRACTICES

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

LOCATION OF AIRYANA VAEJA, THE ARYAN HOMELAND

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

More specifically, the observations point to the strong candidacy of the Pamir-Badakhshan region (the areas neighbouring Balkh to the east and north: the upper Amu Darya basin and the Wakhan Valley of eastern Tajikistan and northern Afghanistan), the Hindu Kush to its eastern extremity south of Balkh and bordering the Murgab and Harrud valleys, the Yagnobi, Zerafshan and Fergana valleys, as well as the Alai mountain environs in Western Kyrgyzstan.
Given that the Rig Veda is commonly thought to have been written in the Upper Indus region, we have yet one more reason to look at the area immediately to the north and north-west of the upper Indus Valley i.e. the Pamir-Badakhshan region as being a strong candidate for the homeland of the ancient Aryans, the so-called Proto Indo-Iranians.

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

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

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

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

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

ARIA

HAROYU - SIXTH VENDIDAD NATION

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

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

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

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

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

(For a further discussion please see our page on Aria / Airan / Haroyu, and the section on Aryana in our page on Airyana Vaeja, the Aryan homeland.)
Westward Migration of the Aryan Nation

If we are correct in surmising that the centre of the Aryan homeland moved westward accompanied by a contraction in its name, then the seat of the Aryan nation would have moved westward as follows:
- The original ancient Aryan homeland Airyana Vaeja in the eastern Central Asian regions identified above, and more specifically the Pamir-Badakhshan region
- The early middle Aryan nation Airan, the seat of the Kayanian dynasty, in Balkh (northern Afghanistan)
- The late middle Aryan nation known to the Greeks as Aria, located in Harirud-Khorasan area (north-western Afghanistan / north-eastern Iran), and
- The modern (2,500 year-old) Aryan nation Parsa, known to the West as Persia, which together with Khorasan became the Iran of today.

Further reading:
- Pamirs / Badakhshan
- Aryan Prehistory
- Aryan Homeland in Scripture
- Aryan Homeland Location
- Aryan Religions
- Aryan Trade
- Western Views on Aryans
Our sources for information about the pre-Zoroastrian Aryan religions are the Zoroastrian and Hindu scriptures: the Avesta and Vedas respectively, the Middle Persian Zoroastrian texts and the poet Ferdowsi’s epic, the Shahnameh.

The description of the old Aryan religions, the names of their deities, and the groups that worshipped them, are not uniformly described in our reference texts. However, in reading the texts, some common themes do emerge, themes that allow us to attempt an understanding of the early Aryan religious beliefs, customs, and groupings - as well as the relationship between the different Aryan groups.
We will examine three primary pre-Zoroastrian Aryan religions mentioned in our source texts: Mazda worship, Daeva or Deva worship and Asura worship.

1. Mazda Worship

Mazdayasni

In the Avesta's book of Yashts, verse 13.87 of the Farvardin Yasht as well as the Middle Persian Denkard at 3.35 mention that Mazda, God, was worshipped by the Aryans from the time of the first Aryan king Gaya Maretan - in other words from the outset of Aryan history. This statement is corroborated by the poet Ferdowsi's epic, the Shahnameh, and by Middle Persian Zoroastrian texts. In these texts, Gaya Maretan and his people were the first Mazdayasni meaning Mazda worshippers, the worshippers of God. The word 'mazda' is thought by some to be related to the Sanskrit 'medha' meaning intelligent or wise. In usage, the word Mazda was used to mean God, that is, a creator who caused creation through wisdom, indeed, through a divine thought. Mazda therefore can be translated as God.

Paoiryo-Tkaesha

The opening paragraphs of the Avesta's Farvardin Yasht and the Yasht's verse 13.150 also tell us that Gaya Maretan and the other Pre-Zoroastrian Mazdayasni were called paoiryo-tkaesha meaning keepers of the original ancient law. In order to differentiate early Mazda worship from the later Zoroastrian Mazda worship, we will call this original Aryan religion, Mazdayasni Paoiryo-Tkaesha.

Ahura-Tkaesha

The Farvardin Yasht's verses 89 & 90 mention that later in Aryan history, Zarathushtra proclaimed the Ahura-tkaesha, the laws of the Lord (Ahura). If the word 'mazda' related to the creative aspect of the divinity grounded in an ultimate concept of wisdom, the word 'ahura' related to the aspect of having dominion over creation through order and laws that are innate in every part and particle of creation (cf. fravashi). Zarathushtra used these two concepts to propound a belief described as Mazdayasno Zarathushtrish Vidaevo Ahura-Tkaesho, that is, Zarathushtrian Mazda-Worship opposed to the daeva through the laws of the Lord (Ahura). For the sake of brevity, we can call Zarathushtrian Mazda-Worship (i.e. post Zarathushtra) as Mazdayasni Ahura-Tkaesha.

Since, as we have just observed, both the pre- and post- Zoroastrian religions are called Mazdayasni, many authors have assumed that Zarathushtra was a reformer of a Mazdayasni religion that predated him, rather than the founder of a new religion. While Zarathushtra may have used previous concepts and while his followers may have incorporated elements of a previous religion, or religions, back into Zoroastrianism, Zarathushtra's teachings were different enough for him to have initially experienced great difficulty in getting others to listen to him. Our section on the war of religion further illustrates the radical nature of his teachings - regardless of the words used for divinity. There are other reasons not to assume that Zarathushtra was a reformer. His concept of being a Mazdayasni was quite different from previous concepts labelled as 'Mazdayasni'. There is an explanation for these assertions:

First, Mazda-yasni translated directly simply means God-worship rather than being the name of a religion. The form and doctrine of worship before Zarathushtra was very different from that preached by Zarathushtra, just as religions today who profess a worship of God i.e. God-worshippers, are radically different. Next, it is commonly assumed that Mazda is an Avestan name for God rather than a word for God - an assumption that may lead to incorrect conclusions. The difference is that if Mazda is the Avestan word for God, saying that the Aryans worshipped Mazda since the time of Gaya Maretan is the same as saying that the Aryans worshipped God (a supreme God) from ancient times. Mazda, or God, could have had different names through the ages, or the word for God could have changed with a change in language. For instance, if Varuna (also see below), a principle asura in the Vedas, was the name for God (Mazda) at one stage in Aryan history, then Varuna worship could also be called Mazda worship or the worship of God.
A parallel to this concept is found in the Christian Old and New Testaments as well as the Jewish Torah. There, the worship of Yahweh and Jehovah, or for that matter all the Judeo-Christian words or names for God, are synonymous with the worship of God. Despite the use of different words or names for God in the different languages of the Bible, Christians do not conclude that the Bible chronicles the worship of multiple gods throughout history. Christians say that Abraham worshipped God even though the attributes assigned to the Abrahamic God might be quite different from the more modern Christian assignment of divine attributes - thereby making Judaism and Christianity related but very different religions. Similarly, we say that Gaya Maretan was a Mazda worshipper, the word or name for God in Pre-Zoroastrian Aryan history could have been Varuna or some other word / name, and the beliefs of the corresponding religions could also have been different, but nevertheless related, as would have been Varuna and Mithra worship, two asuras mentioned in the Rig Veda. In any event, Mazda worship before Zarathushtra might have been related but was quite different from Zarathushtra's Mazda worship.

The Avesta's book of Yashts, as well as portions of other Avestan books, may give us clues about the pre-Zoroastrian Mazdayasni beliefs, thereby serving a function in the Avesta similar to the Christian Bible's Old Testament.

2. Daeva or Deva Worship

[Note: The words deva (Vedic Sanskrit), daeva (Avestan Old Iranian) and div (Middle and Modern Persian) are commonly considered to be variations of the same word, div being the more modern (Middle Persian) word. While the different words may at times be applied in a similar fashion, there are times when they have different connotations.]

Deva

The devas are the gods of the Hindu scriptures.

The earliest of the Hindu scriptures, the Rig Veda provides us with information about pre-Zoroastrian Vedic-Aryan deva worship.

Daeva and Div

The daeva and div in the Avesta and other Persian texts, are evil qualities, personification of evil qualities and demons. The terms 'demon', evil person and 'negative value' (or 'base quality') are freely interchangeable in the Zoroastrian concept of the daeva or div (as mentioned earlier, div is the later version of the Avestan word daeva).

The demonization of the Rig Vedic deva, primarily Indra, in the Avesta, the naming of a book of the Zoroastrian scriptures, the Avesta as the Vi-daevu-data (modern name: Vendidad) meaning the law against the daeva, as well as the name of the religion preached by Zarathushtra: Mazdayasno Zarathushtrish Vidaevu Ahura-Tkaesho, that is, Zarathushtrian Mazdayasni-Worship opposed to the daeva through the laws of the Lord (Ahura), together signify the strong opposition of the Mazda worshippers to the daeva and the defining of Zoroastrian Mazda worship through its opposition to the daeva.

Not all the daeva in Zoroastrian and Persian texts are the devas mentioned in the Vedas. The Mazda worshippers began to use the word daeva generically to mean all demonic forces of evil. The word daeva and div came to include the personification of vices, other Aryan gods who were not part of the Vedic pantheon, as well as the gods of non-Aryan peoples.

In the chapter 32 of the Gathas, Zarathushtra speaks about the daeva, evil and the lie, a concept he introduces in Y.30.6. In Yasna 32.3 Zarathushtra states:
"At yush daeva vispaongha atk marangho sta chithrem." translated as:
But all you daeva
Are the progeny of wicked thoughts (thinking).

The manner in which Zarathushtra refers to the daeva is ambiguous. Zarathushtra refers to the daeva as a group who collectively chose evil. He does not name the daeva in his hymns. However, some of the negative qualities he speaks about - such as aeshma, wrath, and achistem mano, evil mind (Y.30.6) became named as daeva elsewhere in the Avesta.

In the Avesta's Aban (Avan) Yasht (5.94), we read of the Daevayasni, the daeva worshippers. In the Vendidad's chapter 19, the Daevayasni are juxtaposed against the Mazdayasni.

Further, a book of the Avesta, is Vi-daevu-data (the Vendidad), meaning the law against the daeva, mentions (in verses 10.9 and 19.43) Indra, a Rig Vedic deva (see below), by name. Verses 10.9 to 10.16 mention additional daeva: Sauru, Naunghaithya, Tauru, Zeihi, Aeshma, Akatasha, Zauru, Buitu, Drivi, Daiwi, Kasvi, Palishha, the daeva of Varenya (Varena) and the daeva of Mazana, presumed to be a nation (not mentioned in Vendidad's list of sixteen nations) - modern Mazandaran. Daeva mentioned elsewhere in the Vendidad are Akem-Mano / Aka-Manah (evil mind) (19.4),

Of the daeva listed in the Vendidad, only Indra has a direct Vedic equivalent. Sauru is thought to be the Vedic Sarva (sometimes used in the Vedas as a name of Shiva). Similarly, Naunghaitiya is thought to be the Vedic Nasatya. In the Vendidad, Indra operates under the auspices of angra mainyu, the evil spirit (in later texts, the embodiment of angra mainyu is Ahriman, the devil incarnate).

Deva Indra
Indra is a principle deva in the Rig Veda where he has more verses addressed to him than any other deva. In the image to the right, Indra is seen riding his elephant Airavata. Unlike the invisible, non-anthropomorphic, genderless, non-iconic Mazda, the devas are represented and worshipped as idols or graven images.

Indra's arch foe was the asura Vrita who was "manifested by the father of a youth killed by Indra. The young man had three heads, one for studying, one for eating, and one for watching. Indra was extremely jealous of the peaceful, studious youth. Finally, Indra was so enraged that he hurled a thunderbolt at him and cut off his heads." (p. 502, Dictionary of Ancient Deities by Patricia Turner, Charles Russell Coulter). Vrita emerged from the slain youth's body and was granted invincibility during night and day, to materials wet or dry, on land and on water.

Thereafter, in encounters between Indra and Vrita, Vrita was either victorious or succeeded in frustrating Indra's exploits, until that is, Indra was aided by Vishnu as the trickster (also see below). On Vishnu's advice Indra feigned a friendship and made a truce with Vrita. Then, after many years, Vishnu and Indra discovered the means to penetrate Vrita's invisibility. One day, while they were walking on a seashore at twilight - a time that was neither day nor night - the wily Vishnu gathered the froth of the ocean - which was neither wet nor dry - and threw it at Vrita standing at water's edge - a spot that was neither land nor water - engulfing and choking the asura.

We read into the myth, core values of the deva and asura worshippers, as well as the methods the deva-worshippers employed in order to co-exist for generations with the dominant asura-worshippers: bidding their time while plotting to gain power through subterfuge.

Div as Evil People
In Ferdowsi's epic, the kingdom of King Gaya Maretan was attacked by divs led by Ahriman's son - a battle that is discussed further below.

Div as Vices
The Shahnameh goes on to list in its pages nine principle vices called divs:

- Az - greed
- Niaz - desire
- Khashm - wrath
- Rashk - envy
- Nang - dishonour
- Kin - vengeance
- Nammaam - tell-tale
- Do-ruy - two-faced
- Napak-din - heretic

These divs and vices closely parallel the daeva characteristics - the demonic personification of vices - mentioned in the Avesta. The vices are considered evil by Zoroastrians and the antithesis of the virtues of an ashavan.

Nature of the Div (Evil)
Book 3 of the Denkard (a Middle Persian non-scriptural text) gives us interesting observations into the perceived nature of the div: Evil has no creative powers. If we extrapolate the statement we are led to the concept that Mazda, God, is creative [Dk 3.40: "The Self-existent is One, and God alone has created"], constructive and pure (cf. Pak Yazdan, a Pure Divinity) while the div is the dualistic antithesis - it is destructive and polluting. Therefore demonic forces cannot create. They can only pollute and contaminate, and thereby cause evil or transform something good to evil - like a drop of poison contaminating pure water and thereby transforming it from something life-giving to something deadly. When entities through an act of choice, choose evil and set about their acts of deception or destruction, they become that element of evil [Dk. 3.144 "Because of wisdom (i.e. choice) that a person is a doer of good or evil deeds". Also see Dk 3.33.]. The consequence is that since divs can only destroy, they will ultimately destroy themselves - that is the promise of Zoroastrian eschatology. However, the good must participate to bring about and facilitate that eventuality.

Other Denkard passages and Middle Persian texts question whether Ahriman and the divs exist at all. Perhaps referring to Chapter 30 of the Gathas, they postulate that existence or being is a result of the creative process from which life and goodness emerged. The evil mind (akem-mano / aka-manah), other aspects of evil, and the personification of evil, are progressions of being or existence's dual aspect - the aspect of not-being or anti-existence. The symbolic analogy here is that darkness is not an independent entity. It is the absence of light - it is not-light. Darkness is banished instantly when light emerges [Dk 3.142: Where there is much shining of light, there is permanence of light and disappearance of darkness]. The banishment of darkness is enduring if the light is enduring as with an ever-burning flame. Yet a flame is fragile. It is extinguished not by darkness, but by the lack of attention by those who must nurture it and feed it pure foods as a mind is fed the food of good thoughts and the body, good deeds. It follows that Ahriman and the divs cannot exist independently, but manifest themselves in the absence of goodness. Therefore evil would cease to be manifest if goodness were all pervasive - an ultimate goal towards which Zoroastrians dedicate themselves. Once again, the good must play an active part for without the spread of light, without the maintenance of an ever-burning flame, the darkness of evil cannot be banished [cf. Dk 3.27, 33, 34, 40, 50, 130, 132, 142.]

3. Asura Worship
The Rig Veda or other Hindu religious texts do not directly mention Mazda worship or Mazda worshippers. Rather, they mention a set of deities who carry the title asura.

The word asura is the Vedic equivalent of the Avestan ahura. Avestan words can frequently be changed to their Sanskrit equivalent by replacing h with s. Ahura is in turn said to be derived from the word ahu, meaning lord. As with the English word 'lord', ahu is a descriptive title for both a human lord (e.g. a feudal lord or landlord) and a divine lord. In the Avesta, God or Mazda, is sometimes addressed as Ahura (Lord) and sometimes as Ahura Mazda (Lord God). The use of the words in this manner can also be found in the Judeo-Christian Bible.

It is pertinent to note that in the older Veda, the Rig Veda, the term asura or lord is used (as in the Avesta) for individual gods and for people - but never for a group of gods. In other words, asura does not define a class of gods. Rather it is a title. In these older Vedic texts, the term deva, however, is used for both individual gods and the group of devas (visves devah). In other words, deva is used both as a title - a superior god - and as the name for the group of gods. Some gods with the title asura are also referred to as devas. This nomenclature changes in the later Vedic texts, where the word asura is used as a title and as the name of a group of gods, gods who had evolved into demons.

There is a considerable difference in the way asuras are treated in the older and younger Vedic texts and the difference may help us understand the manner in which the Aryan religions, and the relationship between them, evolved.

In the earlier Vedas, the devas and asuras are said to have been born of a common parent, but the asuras were the older (purva-deva) and stronger siblings - powerful and beneficent gods who merited equal if not greater respect than the devas.

In the later Vedic texts starting with the Atharva Veda, the asuras are referred to in the plural, that is as a group of deities. It is also in these later texts that the asuras are depicted as being opposed to the devas. In conflicts between the two, the asuras were invariably victorious. The devas were victorious when they used a ruse or received the help of a benefactor trickster such as Vishnu.

In the post Vedic texts such as the Bhagavad-Gita, Puranas and Itihhasas, the asuras are transformed and treated as a group of demons who possess the vices of pride, arrogance, conceit, anger, harshness, and ignorance (Gita 16.4). In the Brahmaṇa texts, the asuras are hostile and opposed to the devas with whom they are in constant conflict.

However, no individual god who carries the title asura in the Rig Veda ever appears as an inimical adversary of the deva gods in the later Hindu religious texts, and none of the gods who bore the title asura in the older Rig Veda are mentioned in these later texts. In other words, the asuras of the earlier texts are not to be considered as demons. In one later text, the Upanishad, the new character of the asuras is accompanied with a new word, sura, meaning god, thereby implying that asura meant a-sura or a not-god.

It stands to reason that the change in the way the asuras were perceived by the deva worshippers closely parallels the changes in the relations between the asura and deva worshippers. There is an acknowledgement that the asura worship preceded deva worship and that in the early years, the asura worshippers were the dominant group.

A name that appears to be common to both the Avesta and Vedas is the Vedic asura Mitra (also see below) and the Avestan Mithra. In the Vedas, Mitra is often addressed together with the asura Varuna.

While the Vedas tend to anthropomorphize all its deities, it is probable that the asuras, Varuna, Mithra and Agni were originally invisible, non-anthropomorphic, genderless, non-iconic deities (cf. the attributes of Mazda) who may have been worshipped together as Asura worship or exclusively as Mazda worship.

References:
Acura in Early Vedic Religion, Hale, Wash Edward (1986), Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass

**Differences between Deva & Asura Worship**

In his book, *The Hymns of Atharvan Zarathushtra*, Jatindra Mohan Chatterji calls the Rig Vedic devas the seen gods, and asuras the unseen gods. In other words the devas like Indra were anthropomorphic and capable of representation as idols, while the asuras like Mitra were, for the main part, non-anthropomorphic and formless.

In the Rig Veda, the devas preside over natural phenomena and the exercise of power and might while the asuras preside over the establishment of a moral and social order. For instance, the deva Indra is guardian of the weather and victory in battle earning the title sahasra-mushka, 'the one with a thousand testicles' (Rig Veda 6.45.3), while the asuras Varuna and Mitra are the guardians of the cosmic and moral laws of rita (cf. asha).

In the Rig Veda (4.42.1-6), when Varuna declares, 'I, Varuna, am the king; first for me were appointed the dignities of asura, the Lord. I let the dripping waters rise up, and through rta I uphold the sky.' Indra replies, 'Men who ride swiftly, having good horses, call on me when surrounded in battle, I, the bountiful Indra, provoke strife. I whirl up the dust, my strength is overwhelming... No godlike power can check me - I who am unsassailable. When draughts of Soma, when songs have made me frenzied, then both the unbounded regions are filled with fear.' The hymns addressed to Varuna are more ethical and devout in tone than the others, and form the most noble or high-minded portion of the Rig Veda.
If the qualities of the gods reflect the values of the worshippers, then for asura worshippers building and maintaining a peaceful society based on law and order was a priority. For the deva worshippers, the priority would have been the exercise of power through might and fear. The asuras are ethical where the devas are materialistic. While in the Rig Veda both deities and their respective allies are worshipped, Indra and deva worship clearly take precedence. The largest number of Rig Vedic hymns are dedicated to Indra - nearly 250 out of a total of 1028. Agni, an asura, is invoked in about 200 hymns, a greater number than the number of hymns dedicated to Varuna.

In Buddhism, the asuras are seen as lesser deities who are never satisfied and who continuously strive to better themselves. Zoroastrianism sees continuously striving for improvement towards excellence as a fundamental purpose of life.

The characteristics assigned to the deities and asuras reflected what beliefs the rulers and their supporting priests wished to promote in society. The ideal of continuously striving to improve oneself could have promoted ambition amongst the common people, while some rulers and priests may have thought it more desirable to promote satisfaction or resignation to one’s lot in life - a life that had been divinely ordained. Rulers and priests so inclined would have promoted deva worship that included the caste system rather than asura worship that saw working to better oneself as a virtue and not a sin.

As in our example above, the differences between what the deities and asuras represented became differences in core beliefs, values, the nature of human beings, and the organization of society. These differences appear to have become strong enough to produce a deep societal divide - a schism - with the deva worshippers on one side, and the asura and Mazda worshippers on the other side. The Mazda worshippers were the Iranian-Aryans, The deva worshippers are generally thought of as being Indian-Aryans though they could have been any of the non-Iranian groups.

**Incorporation of Pre-Zoroastrian Asuras into Mazda Worship & Zoroastrianism**

Some of the asuras such as Mitra, are included in the Zoroastrian scriptures, the Avesta, as angels (fereshtes or yazatas) and guardians or lords (ahuras/asuras) of core Zoroastrian values and ideals.

In the Avesta, the names of the yazatas are also names for core values and ideals. For instance, as an angel in the Avesta, Mithra is the guardian of the values and qualities associated with friendship. In day-to-day language, Mithra means a friend, the ideals of loyal, trustworthy, caring and kind friendship and the qualities of kindness, helpfulness and benevolence. As a core value Mithra is the value of keeping of promises.

We do not know if the incorporation of asura worship into Mazda worship took place before, during or after Zarathushtra’s time. In the hymns of Zarathushtra, the Gathas, Zarathushtra does not accommodate or incorporate the asuras in the manner that we see elsewhere in the Avesta. Indeed, depending on the interpretation of the Gathas being read, Zarathushtra can be seen as preaching an uncompromising monotheism. Regardless of the interpretations that abound, the Avesta taken as a whole together with Middle Persian literature and Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh provide the full spectrum of belief and a consistent ethic. The texts are a repository of a rich heritage consisting of some of the earliest literature and history known to humankind - a history interwoven with the references to the asuras and daevas.

**APPENDIX: HINDU RELIGIOUS TEXTS**

**Vedas**

1. The *Rig Veda* contains hymns (mantras) about the mythology and ancient Vedic practice
   (At Wikipedia: Description, Translations, also Mandalas. At Sacred Texts: Sanskrit, English.);
2. The *Sama Veda* consists mainly of Rig Vedic mantras, arranged in the order required to perform the Soma ritual. (At Sacred Texts);
3. The *Yajur Veda* contains instructions for the soma rituals in prose (at Sacred Texts); and
4. The *Atharva Veda* consists of spells against enemies, sorcerers, diseases and mistakes made during the sacrificial ritual. It also outlines royal duties and expounds on spiritual matters. (At Sacred Texts)

Each of the four Vedas are divided into two sections:
1. The *Samhita* or *mantras*, hymns, and
2. The *Brahmanas* - commentaries, interpretation and instructions for the the rituals.

The Brahmanas are further sub-divided into two sections;
1. The *Aranyakas*, description of especially dangerous rituals such as the Mahavrata and Pravargya, and
2. The *Upanishads* (see below)

**Upanishads**

The Upanishad , meaning sitting near (the teacher), are philosophical and metaphysical writings about the relationship between the soul and Brahman. Collectively, the Upanishads are called the *Vedanta*, the end of the Veda, because they appear at the end of each Veda, and because they are considered the culmination of Vedic knowledge.

**Notes on the Vedas**
The predominant deities of the Vedas, headed by Indra, are different from those in later, post-Vedic Hinduism. The central story of the Vedas is Indra's battle and eventual killing of the asura Vrita. The ritual focus is that of the yajña (cf. Avestan yasna) - the act of worship. The spiritual focus is in joining ancestral souls in the Vedic equivalent of heaven. The concept of reincarnation would enter Hinduism in the post-Vedic period. Reincarnation is not an native Aryan concept. The doctrinal focus is the purva or original mimamsa - inquiry or investigation.

Post Vedic Scriptures
1. Itihasas (epics like the Ramayana, Mahabharata). The heroes of the epics are avatars, incarnation of God, Vishnu, as human being: Rama, in the Ramayana, and Krishna, in the Mahabharata. Unlike the gods of the Vedas and the mystic all-pervading and formless Brahman in the Brahmanas, the avatars are developed loving and righteous personalities (Sacred Texts: Ramayana);
2. Puranas (mythology),
3. Agamas (theological treatises)
4. Darshanas (philosophical texts), and
5. Dharmashastras (law books)

Bhagavad-Gita
Also known as the Gita, the Bhagavad Gita (meaning the song of God) is a section of the Mahabharata where Krishna exhorts the devotee to abandon the mortal self and give oneself to the infinite love of God. By loving God a person loves the immortal self, and thereby finds harmony and peace with the universe.

Puranas
The Puranas consist of narratives ranging from the history of the universe from creation to destruction, cosmology, philosophy, geography, genealogies and myths of kings, heroes, sages, and demigods. Some individual Puranas feature a particular deity and their exploits such as Durga-Devi and her killing of Mahish-Ausra. The Puranas are usually written in the form of stories told by one person to another.

Notes on the Post-Vedic Scriptures
In the post-Vedic scriptures, the focus of veneration of Indra in the Rig Veda, is replaced by the worship of Vishnu, Shiva and (Durga) Devi. Although Vishnu was a Vedic deity, he rises to pre-eminence in the post-Vedic scriptures. The Vedic yajña is replaced by a different religious ritual called the puja.

References to Asuras - Chronological Order in Vedic texts
Rig Veda books I, VIII, X; Atharva Veda; Sama Veda, Rig Veda Khilas (supplementary chapters) and the mantras of the Yajur Veda; Brahmanas.

Further reading:
Aryan Prehistory
Aryan Homelands in Scripture
Aryan Homeland Location
Aryan Religions
Aryan Trade
Western Views on Aryans

© Author: K. E. Eduljee, Zoroastrian Heritage, 2005-14 (researched from 1979 onwards) • Contact • Page validated by W3C.org
Avesta — Zoroastrian Archives

Contents Prev vd1sbe Next Avestan Glossary


This digital edition copyright © 1995 by Joseph H. Peterson. All rights reserved.

Translated by James Darmesteter (From Sacred Books of the East, American Edition, 1898.)

Compare this chapter with the ancient description given of it in the Denkard, Book 8, Chapter 44.


Synopsis:

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

Many attempts have been made, not only to identify these sixteen lands, but also to draw historical conclusions from their order of succession, as representing the actual order of the migrations and settlements of the old Iranian tribes. But there is nothing in the text to support such wide inferences. We have here nothing more than a geographical description of Iran, seen from the religious point of view.

Of these sixteen lands there are nine, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AVESTAN NAME.</th>
<th>OLD PERSIAN.</th>
<th>GREEK</th>
<th>MODERN NAME.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sughdha (2)</td>
<td>Suguda</td>
<td>Sogdianh</td>
<td>Soghd (Samarkand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mouru (3)</td>
<td>Margu</td>
<td>Margianh</td>
<td>Marv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakhdhi (4)</td>
<td>Bâkhtri</td>
<td>Baktra</td>
<td>Balkh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haroyu (6)</td>
<td>Haraiva</td>
<td>`Areia</td>
<td>Haré(rud)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehrkana (9)</td>
<td>Varkâna</td>
<td>`Urkania</td>
<td>Gurgân, Jorgân</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harahvaiti (10)</td>
<td>Harauvati</td>
<td>`Aracwsia</td>
<td>Av-rokhaj, Arghand-(âb)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haetumant (11)</td>
<td>`Etumandov</td>
<td>Helmend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ragha (12)</td>
<td>Ragâ</td>
<td>`Ragai</td>
<td>Raî</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hapta hindu (15)</td>
<td>Hindava</td>
<td>`Indoi</td>
<td>Hind (Punjab)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
which can be identified with certainty, as we are able to follow their names from the records of the Achaemenian kings or the works of classical writers down to the map of modern Iran.

For the other lands we are confined for information to the Pahlavi Commentary, from which we get:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AVESTAN NAME.</th>
<th>PAHLAVI NAME.</th>
<th>MODERN NAME.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vaekereta (7)</td>
<td>Kâpûl</td>
<td>Kabul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urva (8)</td>
<td>Mêshan</td>
<td>Mesene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varena (14)</td>
<td>Patashkhvârgar or Dailam Tabaristân or Gîlân</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rangha (16)</td>
<td>Arvastâni Rûm</td>
<td>Eastern Mesopotamia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

The several plagues created by Angra Mainyu to mar the native perfection of Ahura's creations give instructive information on the religious condition of several of the Iranian countries at the time when this Fargard was written. Harat seems to have been the seat of puritan sects that pushed rigorism to the extreme in the law of purification. Sorcery was prevalent in the basin of the Helmand river, and the Paris were powerful in Cabul, which is a Zoroastrian way of saying that the Hindu civilisation prevailed in those parts, which in fact in the two centuries before and after Christ were known as White India, and remained more Indian than Iranian till the Moslem conquest.

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

1. Ahura Mazda spake unto Spitama¹ Zarathushtra, saying:

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

**Notes:**

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

2. 'Everyone fancies that the land where he was born and has been brought up is the best and
Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created the serpent in the river and Winter, a work of the Daevas.

2. The first of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was the Airyana Vaeja, by the Vanguhi Daitya.

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

5. Airyanem Vaeja, Iran-Vej, is the holy land of Zoroastrianism: Zarathushtra was born and founded his religion there (Bund. 20.32; 32.3): the first animal couple appeared there (Bund. 14.4; Zadspram. 9.8). From its name, 'the Iranian seed,' it seems to have been considered as the original seat of the Iranian race. It has been generally supposed to belong to Eastern Iran, like the provinces which are enumerated after it, chiefly on account of the name of its river, the Vanguhi Daitya, which was in the Sassanian times (as Veh) the name of the Oxus. But the Bundahish distinctly states that Iran-Vej is 'bordering upon Adarbajan' (29.12): now, Adarbaijan is bordered by the Caspian Sea on the east, by the Rangha provinces on the west, by Media proper on the south, and by Arran on the north. The Rangha provinces are out of question, since they are mentioned at the end of the Fargard (verse 20), and the climatic conditions of Iran-Vej with its long winter likewise exclude Media and suit Arran, where the fairest land that I have created' (Comm.)

3. Greater Bundahish: 'It is said in the Sacred Book: had I not created the Genius of the native place, all mankind would have gone to Eran-Vej, on account of its pleasantness.' — On Airyanem Vaeja or Eran-Vej, see following note.
3. There are ten winter months there, two summer months; and those are cold for the waters, cold for the earth, cold for the trees. Winter falls there, the worst of all plagues. [Hum 35: "Ten are there the winter months, two the summer months, and even then [in summer] the waters are freezing, the earth is freezing, the plants are freezing; there is the center of winter, there is the heart of winter, there winter rushes around, there (occur) most damages caused by storm."]

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

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

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

9. Vendidad Sada: 'It is known that [in the ordinary course of nature] there are seven months of summer and five of winter' (see Bund, 25).

10. Some say: 'Even those two months of
4. The second of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was the plain\textsuperscript{12} which the Sughdhas inhabit\textsuperscript{13}.

Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created the locust\textsuperscript{14}, which brings death unto cattle and plants.

5. The third of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was the strong, holy Mouru\textsuperscript{15}.

Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created plunder and sin\textsuperscript{16}.

6. The fourth of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was the beautiful Bakhdhi\textsuperscript{17} with high-lifted banner.

Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created the ants and the ant-hills\textsuperscript{18}.

7. The fifth of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was Nisaya\textsuperscript{19}, that lies between the Mouru and Bakhdhi.

Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created the sin of unbelief\textsuperscript{20}.

summer are cold for the waters...' (Comm.; see Mainyo-\textit{i-khard} 44.20).

11. Vend. Sada: 'There reigns the core and heart of winter.'

12. Doubtful.

13. Old P. Suguda; Sogdiana.

14. The plague that fell to that country was the bad locust: it devours the plants and death comes to the cattle' (Gr. \textit{Bund}).

15. Margu; Margianh; Marv.

16. Doubtful. The Gr. \textit{Bd}. has: 'The plague that fell to that country was the coming and going of troops: for there is always there an evil concourse of horsemen, thieves, robbers, and heretics, who speak untruth and oppress the righteous.' — Marv continued to be the resort of Turanian plunderers till the recent Russian annexation.

17. Bakhtri; Baktra; Balkh.


19. By contradistinction to other places of the same name. There was a Nisaya, in Media, where Darius put to death the Mage Gaumata (Behishtun I, 58). There was also a Nisâ in Fars, another in Kirman, a third again on the way from Amol to Marv (Tabari, tr. Noeldeke, p.101, 2), which may be the same as Nisaia, the capital of Parthia (Parquinisa ap. Isid. of Charax 12); cf. Pliny VI, 25 (29). One may therefore he tempted to translate, 'Nisaya between which and Bakhdhi Mouru lies;' but the
8. The sixth of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was the house-deserting Haroyu. Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created tears and wailing.

9. The seventh of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was Vaekereta, of the evil shadows. Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created the Pairika Knathalti, who claves unto Keresaspa.
10. The eighth of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was Urva of the rich pastures. Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created the sin of pride.

11. The ninth of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was Khnenta which the Vehrkanas inhabit.

12. The tenth of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was the beautiful Harahvaiti. Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created a sin for which there is no atonement, the burying of the dead.

13. The eleventh of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was the bright, glorious Haetumant.

14. And this is the sign by which it is known, this is that by which it is seen at once: wheresoever they may go and raise a cry of sorcery, there the worst works of witchcraft go forth. From there they come to kill and strike at heart, and they bring locusts as many as they want.
15. The twelfth of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was Ragha\textsuperscript{34} of the three races\textsuperscript{35}.

Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created the sin of utter unbelief\textsuperscript{36}.

16. The thirteenth of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was the strong, holy Chakhra\textsuperscript{37}.

Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created a sin for which there is no atonement, the cooking of corpses\textsuperscript{38}.

17. The fourteenth of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was the four-cornered Varena\textsuperscript{39}, for which was born Thraetaona, who smote Azi Dahaka [Zohak].

Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created abnormal issues in women\textsuperscript{40}, and barbarian oppression\textsuperscript{41}.

33. This clause seems to be a quotation in the Pahlavi Commentary.

34. Ragha, transcribed Râk and identified by the Commentary with Adarbaijan and 'according to some' with Rai (the Greek 'Ragai in Media). There were apparently two Raghas, one in Atropatene, another in Media.

35. 'That means that the three classes, priests, warriors, and husbandmen, were well organised there' (Comm. and Gr. Bd.)

36. 'They doubt themselves and cause other people to doubt' (Comm.)

37. There were two towns of that name (Charkh), one in Khorasan, and the other in Ghaznin.

38. 'Cooking a corpse and eating it. They cook foxes and weasels and eat them' (Gr. Bd.) See Vd8.73-4.

39. Varn, identified by the Comm. either with Patashkhvârgar or with Dailam (that is to say Tabaristan or Gilan). The Gr. Bd. identifies it with Mount Damavand (which belongs to Patashkhvargar): this is the mountain where Azi Dahaka [Zohak] was bound with iron bonds by Thraetaona [Faridoon]. — 'Four-cornered:' Tabaristan has rudely the shape of a quadrilateral.

40. Vd16.11 ff.

41. The aborigines of the Caspian littoral were Anarian savages, the so-called 'Demons of Mazana [Mazendaran].'
18. The fifteenth of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was the Seven Rivers.\(^{42}\)

Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created abnormal issues in women, and excessive heat.

19. The sixteenth of the good lands and countries which I, Ahura Mazda, created, was the land by the sources (?) of the Rangha\(^{43}\), where people live who have no chiefs\(^{44}\).

Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who is all death, and he counter-created Winter\(^{45}\), a work of the Daevas\(^{46}\).

20. There are still other lands and countries\(^{47}\), beautiful and deep, longing and asking for the good, and bright.\(^{48}\)

42. Hapta hindava, the basin of the affluents of the Indus, the modern Panjab (= the Five Rivers), formerly called Hind, by contradistinction to Sindh, the basin of the lower river. [Hum34: "the PhilT of V.1.18 quotes the fragment *haca ushastara hinduua auui daosha*<s>tarem hindum 'from the eastern river to the western river'.]

43. 'Arvastin-i-Rum (Roman Mesopotamia)' (Comm.), that is to say, the basin of the upper Tigris (Rangha = Arvand = Tigris).

44. 'People who do not hold the chief for a chief' (Comm.), which is the translation for asraosha (Comm. ad XVI, 18), 'rebel against the law,' and would well apply to the non-Mazdean people of Arvastân-i-Rûm.

45. The severe winters in the upper valleys of the Tigris.

46. The *Vendidad Sada* has here: taozyâka danheush aiwishtâra, which the Gr. Bd. understands as: 'and the Tajik (the Arabs) are oppressive there.'

47. 'Some say: Persis' (Comm.)
Turan

Ancient Turan was Airyana Vaeja's (the original Aryan homeland's) neighbour, a neighbour with whom Airyana Vaeja enjoyed a love-hate relationship. Later in history, the location of Airyana would move westward, and became the middle Aryan / Iranian kingdom of Airan Vej, the Iran of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh. We will call this middle Aryan / Iranian country Airan. At this point in history, the northern half of the Amu Darya or Oxus River formed the border between the Aryan lands of Airan and Turan. Both neighbours would eventually undergo a name change. While Airyana Vaeja changed its name to Iran, Turan became Sughdha and then Sugd (Sogdiana to the Greeks).

As with many ancient lands in the region, a country had a principal river that ran through it and in whose valleys the bulk of the population resided. For Turan, that river appears to be the river called Zerafshan today - a river that runs through the modern countries of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Nowadays, the lands of ancient Turan and Sugd have been divided between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan since the people in the Tajik portion are predominantly the descendants of the older Indo-Iranian peoples, the Turanians or Sogdians, while the people in the Uzbek portion are mainly the Turkic Uzbek peoples - relatively recent (in the last two thousand years) occupants of the land - invaders from the north-east who displaced the original Indo-Iranian Turanian / Sogdian inhabitants as well as Turan's north-western Saka neighbours.
Airyana Vaeja’s neighbour, Turan (or Tuirya as it was known in the Avesta’s Farvardin Yasht (13.134 & 144)), was among the first nations where Zarathushtra preached his message. The Farvardin Yasht 13.38 also mentions battles between the Aryans and the Danunam Turanam, a name commonly translated as the Danus of Turan or the Turanian Danus, the Danus being a Turanian people.

Turan and its love-hate relationship with Airyana Vaeja’s successor nation, Airan Vej, has since become the stuff of folklore and legends - legends that the poet Ferdowsi recounts in his epic, the Shahnameh. [As we had noted earlier, we will use the name Airan to identify the middle Aryan nation that succeeded Airyana Vaeja, and one that preceded Iran with Persia at its centre. The change in name also represents a westward geographical shift in the location of the middle Aryan nation’s centre. Airan would have been a confederation of kingdoms, with the principal kingdom and capital being Balkh. According to Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh, to travel from the Airanian state of Balkh to Turan, one had to cross the Jihun or Amu Darya, travelling east and north.]

The Turanian were an Avestan people. They spoke a proto Indo-Iranian language and not a Turkic language. In the Avesta, Turan is mentioned over twenty times and the Avestan references show no ethnic difference between the Tuirya and the Arya, both having common names and a related genealogy. The kinship between the two groups that existed before the coming of the Turkic tribes, is recounted in Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh, where the rulers of Turan and Airan: Tur and Iraj were brothers. Vestiges of the ancient relationship and kinship between Turan and Airan can be found in the Persian language - Turandokht, a popular female Iranian name, means daughter-of-Turan.
**Turan's Relationship with Airan (Ancient Iran)**

Ferdowsi's Shahnameh recounts the myth of Turan's kinship with Airan and also the root of Turan's on again, off again, relationship with Airan:

According to the Shahnameh, during the reign of legendary King Feridoon, the kingdom of Airan had grown to become an empire that included kingdoms from present day Turkey in the west to the Indus valley in the south - lands that approximate the extent of the sixteen nations of the Vendidad. Feridoon decided to divide his sprawling empire amongst his three sons. To his eldest son Tur, he gave the eastern lands - a nation that came to be known as Turan, named after its appointed king. To his son Iraj, Feridoon gave Airan and Hind (the Indus lands). To his son Salm, Feridoon gave the remaining western kingdoms. Tur, however, felt that as the eldest son he had been slighted, for the lands of Airan and Hind were the gems of the empire and the seat of its power. No sooner had Feridoon divided his kingdom, that this jealous and ambitious Tur persuaded Salm to join him in a plot to murder Iraj. Iraj is killed but not before his wife is pregnant with their son, a son who would later avenge the murder of his father.

As with a number of legendary myths, there lies embedded in them kernels of history. In Ferdowsi's legends, if we replace the Airan empire with the Airan people, this myth tells us that the Airan people had spread to present day Turkey in the west, the Indus valley in the south, to the borders of China in the east and the deserts of the north. This is entirely consistent with the list of nations in the Zoroastrian scriptures, the Avesta's Vendidad. As with the Vendidad list, the whole area consisted of a number of kingdoms. The people in these kingdoms who were of Aryan origin in particular, or Indo-Iranian generally, were kin but nonetheless autonomous people, sometimes independent and sometimes part of an empire dominated by one of the different members of the family. Their frequently internecine warfare, rebellion and jockeying for power is reflected in the Shahnameh's story about Feridoon's sons.

In Ferdowsi's tale, it is also telling that the eldest brother Tur was stationed in Turan, the second oldest in Airan, while the youngest was stationed in the far west. This would appear to be the order of migration of the Airanian people to the west and south. As with the older brother Turan's jealousy of being subject to his younger brother, it must have been galling for the Turanians to become a vassal state of Balkh, a younger state that had become the centre of the Airanian nation.

In Ferdowsi's legend, after the death of Iraj and Feridoon, Airan is briefly dominated by Turan. History tells us that the eastern kingdoms of Sugd (Turan's successor kingdom) and Chorasmia, while Zoroastrian by faith, moved in and out of Airan (and Persian) control, sometimes a subservient state to Airan, sometimes independent and at other times the dominant of the two kingdoms.

**Afrasiab**

In the legends of Ferdowsi, a descendant of Tur was the great mythical king Afrasiab (also spelt Afrasyab, Afrosiab, Afrosiycb), a king who became Iran's nemesis. In the Pahlavi text, the Bundahishn, Afrasiab is mentioned as Tur's seventh grandson.

The Avesta calls Afrasiab Fransayan and in later Pahlavi texts, his name changes to Frasiyav, Frasyak and Freangrasyak. Zoroastrian texts give Afrasiab the epithet mairya meaning deceitful or villainous. Siab is said to derive from the Persian siah-ab meaning black water.

**Kala‐e Afrasiab, the Fortress of Afrasiab**

In mythology, Afrasiab is said to have lived in a subterranean fortress made of metal, called Hanakana.

Today, the ruins of a fortified township located on the eastern heights above Samarkand (see photographs above and to the right), bear his name, namely, the Kala‐e Afrasiab or the Castle of Afrasiab. The name Kala‐e Afrasiab appeared in written sources towards the end of the 17th century CE.

The Kala‐e Afrasiab has been identified as the ancient capital of Turan and Sugd, and its construction is dated around 2,000 BCE (uncertain). As with a number of ruins in this region, they often sit on top of older ruins waiting to be discovered. The fortified township is about 220 hectares in area.

By the 7th to 6th century BCE, the Achaemenian Persian empire had expanded to include Turanian / Sugdian lands, and the Achaemenians made Afrasiab as a principle administrative centre of their Eastern empire. Together with Fergana Valley, the environs around Afrasiab would have formed the eastern-most extent of the Persian empire and their fortifications would have guarded the empire's eastern flank. The township built around the oasis below the fortress would grow to become the city of Samarkand (Marcanda / Maracanda in Greek or Macedonia texts) and the centre of the Sugdian culture described further in our page on Sugd, Uzbekistan.
A close-up of the walls of the Kala-e Afrasiab

Layout plan of Kala-e Afrasiab fortified township. Click the image to open a map showing Afrasiab's location
Tajikistan has very interesting connections to Zoroastrianism and the history of the early Zoroastrians. Tajikistan is a land-locked Central Asian state with a population of about seven million people. It is home to the Pamir mountains, also called the roof of the world. Ninety percent of Tajikistan is covered with mountains that contain 8,000 glaciers. The glaciers are the source of many Central Asian rivers. Tajikistan’s location is to Asia what Switzerland is to Europe. However, while Tajikistan has great potential, gracious people and spectacular vistas, Tajikistan is presently the poorest country in Central Asia, its glaciers are retreating due to global warming, and its forests have been denuded.

The people of the region state that Zoroastrianism is native to their area. Some Tajiks feel that Zoroastrianism’s home was ancient Sugd (ancient Sughdha), that is, the area now part of northern Tajikistan and southern Uzbekistan (see map below). Sughdha is the second Vendidad nation*. Other Tajiks consider Zoroastrianism to be a Pamiri (eastern Tajik) religion, and yet others say Zoroastrianism is a Bactrian / Balkh / Bakhdi (the fourth Vendidad* nation) religion. Balkh is today a part of northern Afghanistan, an area with a substantial Tajik population.

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

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

Fact Sheets on Tajikistan: » CIA » Infoplease » US State Dept. » Ismaili.net
Meaning of the Name Tajikistan
The name Tajik and Tajikistan are relatively modern names. There is dissention about the origins of the name Tajik and theories abound. One theory is that the name Tajik comes from the Persian word for crown, taj. Taji would therefore mean people from the crown (of the world) perhaps referring to the Pamirs otherwise known as the roof of the world.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SILK ROADS

The Silk Roads are not a single road, but a network of ancient roads that extended for 7,000 miles or 10,000 km. connecting Asia Minor through Iran with China's old capital at Changan (now Xian). The Silk Roads run through Tajikistan where they divide, one branch going north of the Pamirs and the other south. The Iranian or Aryans have traditionally been involved with trade between the east and west. They developed trade between the nations to the east and west of them. Their involvement in trading made them familiar with these lands and when the time came for them to migrate, fanning out west and south along the roads.

» Also see our pages: Aryan Trade & Sogdian Trade. Silk Roads. China

» Outside pages; Silk Road Tajikistan by Sunatullo Jonboboev & Sharofat Mamadambarova. Contains maps of the various Silk Roads through Tajikistan.
The Silk Road running through Kyzyl Art ashuu (pass) in the Pamirs, the border between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Customs sheds can be seen down the road.

The snow-capped mountain is an unnamed, 5459 m high peak.

Photo credit: Dietrich Meyer at Trekearth

**Deserts and Lush Valleys**

The photograph above is an example of the arid desert-like regions of Tajikistan. The country also has lush green valleys.
Zoroastrian Heritage
Author: K. E. Eduljee

Uzbekistan Region & Zoroastrianism
Uzbekistan - Eastern Frontier of Zoroastrian Lands
Present-Day Uzbekistan
Culture
Chaikhana - Tea Houses
Ovens - Tandir
Bazaar
The People of Old Uzbekistan
Turkic Peoples / Turk

Khvarizem
(Karakalpakstan Region)

Page 1

Introduction

Additional Reading:
- Khvarizem (Khorezm, Khiva & Chorasmia)
- Sugd & Turan (Sughdha, Sogdiana, Tuirya)
- Soddian Trade. The Silk Roads
- Saka (Scythians) & Fergana

Uzbekistan - Eastern Frontier of Zoroastrian Lands
Out of all Central Asian countries, Uzbekistan has perhaps the greatest number of Zoroastrian related archaeological sites - sites that span the length and breadth of the country.

Uzbekistan is home to four principle rivers on whose banks Zoroastrianism took root:
- the Amu Darya (Gk. Oxus - Amu might be a derivative of Amul, now known as Turkmenabat. The name Oxus appears to be a derivation of Vakhsh, a tributary of the Amu Darya). In the Middle Ages, Arab geographers called it Jihun or Gihon perhaps confusing it with a river in Armenia,
- the Zerafshan (also spelt Zarafshan, Zeravshan or Zarafshon - meaning sprayer of gold in Persian. At one time the Zerafshan was a tributary of the Amu Darya. Today, however, the river disappears into the desert before it can reach the Amu Darya),
- the Surkhan (Darya), and
- the Syr Darya (Gk. Jaxartes. The Syr Darya traditionally formed the eastern border of Sogd as well as the Zoroastrian lands, passes through the eastern extremity of Uzbekistan. The Syr Darya was known to Greek writers as the Jaxartes or Yakartes, a name derived from the Old Persian name Yakhsha Arta). As with the Amu Darya, Arab geographers called it the Sihun.

[Darya means sea in Persian indicating that the Syr and Amu Darya rivers were wide rivers in the past (today, waters drawn out for irrigation in the upper reaches have greatly reduced the size of these rivers.)]

The nations that formed along these rivers are among the first mentioned in the Avesta - the Zoroastrian scriptures.

The Zerafshan River passes through Turan, mentioned in the Avesta's Farvardin Yasht as a nation where Zarathushtra first spread his message. The Amu Darya formed its western border.

Later in history, by the Achaemenian era c. 500 BCE, we find no mention of Turan in either Persian or Greek records. There, in the location where we would except to find Turan we find Sugd instead, leading us to conclude that Turan became Sugd or Sugdha (Gk. Sugdiana), the second nation listed after Airyana Vaeja (Aryan homeland) in the Avesta's Vendidad. Ancient Sugdha spanned land that is now part of both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. While Tajikistan has a province called Sughd, a province that includes the Fergana valley (also shared with Uzbekistan), the lands within Uzbekistan are part of the provinces of Samarkand, Jizzax, Syrdarya and Fergana. Sugd was the Central Asian hub of the Silk Roads.

The Southern Uzbekistan lands around the river Surkhan were part of the fourth Avestan nation, Bakhthi or Balkh. The Surkhan is a tributary of the Amu Darya, which, having originated in the Pamirs (present day Tajikistan and likely a part of the ancient Aryan homeland - Airyana Vaeja), passed through Bakhthi on its way to Khirizem.

The lower reaches of the Amu Darya supported the nation of Khairizem mentioned in the Avesta's Mehr Yasht. Khairizem's name would change to Khwarizm by the time the Bundahishn was written. In the old (western) Persian language of the Achaemenians, Khirizem was called Uvarazmiya a name which the Greeks wrote as Chorasmia. Khirazem (Chorasmia) was a nation of the Saka, a Scythian-like people, and the region today contains a large number of Zoroastrian-related archaeological finds.

The nations we have listed, did not all exist simultaneously. Turan appears to have been the earliest of the nations. Khirizem on the other hand appears...
to be one of the later states - created after the close of the Vendidad's writing, but before the creation of Media and Persia.

**Present-Day Uzbekistan**

With a population of 24,755,519 (July 2000), Uzbekistan is the second most populous of the Central Asian countries after Afghanistan (31,889,923 - 2007). Like the other Central Asian countries, Uzbekistan is landlocked.

The modern capital of Uzbekistan, Tashkent (Toshkent), is located to the east of the Syr Darya river and adjacent to the historic lands of Fergana where two rivers join to make the Syr Darya (and incidentally, home to oil and cotton fields).

**Culture**

Uzbeks take pride in being hospitable people, a tradition of hospitality that has been extended to strangers from other lands since the times when traders plied their trade along the Silk Roads. Symbols of this tradition are the tea houses or chaikhanas.

**Chaikhana - Tea Houses**

Chai-Khanas or Tea-Houses are time-honoured gathering places in Uzbekistan. Chai-Khanas or Tea-Houses are common throughout Central Asia, Iran and Northern India - the old Persian lands and lands through which the Silk Roads passed. They even share the same name, chai-khana, regardless of the language spoken in that country. In the chai-khana, traveller found a place to rest their weary feet, sip a cup of tea, eat wholesome food at a reasonable price and mingle with the local folks.

Today, since caravans along the Silk Roads have long since ceased, the chaikhanas have become meeting places for friends and the community. They remain for the visitor a place where they can mingle with the locals and sample Uzbek cooking that includes shashlik, a kabob cooked and served on a long flat metal skewer, pilau (rice with meat and vegetables), kazan kabob (fried meat with potatoes) and other wholesome cooking.

Many Iranians and Indians will find Uzbek foods and the methods of food preparation to be familiar. For instance, the Uzbeks have a pastry stuffed with meat and onion called a somsa, similar in concept to the Indian samosa, but one with its own local flavour.

**Ovens - Tandir**

Chai-Khanas or Tea-Houses are time-honoured gathering places in Uzbekistan. Chai-Khanas or Tea-Houses are common throughout Central Asia, Iran and Northern India - the old Persian lands and lands through which the Silk Roads passed. They even share the same name, chai-khana, regardless of the language spoken in that country. In the chai-khana, traveller found a place to rest their weary feet, sip a cup of tea, eat wholesome food at a reasonable price and mingle with the local folks.

Today, since caravans along the Silk Roads have long since ceased, the chaikhanas have become meeting places for friends and the community. They remain for the visitor a place where they can mingle with the locals and sample Uzbek cooking that includes shashlik, a kabob cooked and served on a long flat metal skewer, pilau (rice with meat and vegetables), kazan kabob (fried meat with potatoes) and other wholesome cooking.

Many Iranians and Indians will find Uzbek foods and the methods of food preparation to be familiar. For instance, the Uzbeks have a pastry stuffed with meat and onion called a somsa, similar in concept to the Indian samosa, but one with its own local flavour.

**Ovens - Tandir**
A further custom that Uzbeks share with other Aryan cultures is the clay ovens, called tandirs, used to bake Uzbek breads - an oven similar to the Indian tandoor. The bakeries are often located in or near bazaars, and are yet another place where a travelling trader could in days past, have found food to eat.

**Bazaar**

The bazaar, a form of marketplace common to many countries of the region, takes on special significance in Uzbekistan. The bazaars of Samarkand and Bokhara lay of the cross-roads of the Silk Roads, with branches going to Persia, Asia Minor and Europe in the west, India in the south, China in the east and the Saka countries in the north. In the days before sea trade eclipsed the trade along these roads, the bazaars featured wares from countries near and far.

**The People of Old Uzbekistan**

The people of the Avesta, the Airya (the people of Sughdha and Bakhdhi) as well as the Saka and people of Khairizem, were some of the earliest inhabitants of the lands that are now part of Uzbekistan - lands that eventually became part of the Persian Achaemenian empire until the defeat of the Achaemenians by Alexander of Macedonia in 330 BCE.

Alexander decided to stop his eastward advance at the Syr Darya since it formed the eastern boundary of the Persian empire. There in 329 BCE, he hastily put together a city naming it Alexandria Eschate meaning Alexandria the Furthest. In the city, he stationed a garrison and settled a group of retired wounded veterans from his army's invasions. Many of the Greek and Macedonia soldiers and veterans married local women and developed their own community, but not before 23,000 of the colonists revolted after Alexander's death, demanding to be sent home. They were not successful.

By the 2nd century BCE Greek / Macedonian control of lands east of the Oxus was nominal at best. The Saka and Sogdians had harassed their way to a measure of autonomy.

About two hundred years later, around the turn of the millennium, peoples from the north east, the Turkic people and Mongols gradually started to move in to the lands occupied by the Saka, lands that bordered the reformed Persian empire. The pressure the Turks and Mongols exerted would eventually displace the original inhabitants and push them westward. Of the Mongols and the Turks, the Turks would be the ones that would form the majority population in Uzbekistan.
The Turkic peoples and their Mongol cousins are thought to have originated in the areas in and around the Altai Mountains of Siberia. Gradually, the Turkic peoples occupied large tracks of Siberia and the Northern Uyghur / Xinjiang Province of Northwest China. Groups emerged from within the Turkic peoples, some of whom were the Karluk (Uygur and Uzbek), Kipchak (Kyrgyz and Tatar) and Oghuz (Turkmen). To avoid confusion with the Turk of modern day Turkey, in these pages we will use Turkic to mean those people who originated in Siberia and settled in Central Asia.

While the Turks and Mongols share much in common they have nevertheless developed separately. Today the Turkic peoples are mostly Muslim while the Mongols are mostly Buddhist. The Turkic peoples have for the main part left their original lands while the Mongols returned to their original lands after their era of conquests. The Turkic peoples have also intermingled with the peoples in the lands to which they migrated, while the Mongols have maintained their identity.

In ancient times, the two groups were allies and while the population of the Turkic peoples far outnumbered the Mongols, the Mongols appear to have asserted most of the leadership within any alliance. The Mongol armies of Genghis Khan for instance contained large numbers of Turkic soldiers.

Both the Mongols and the Turkic peoples were a nomadic people who raided their south-western neighbours for food and plunder. They were ruthless and killed entire Indo-Iranian settlements without mercy. The barbaric and cruel qualities that Ferdowsi ascribes to the Turanians are more correctly applied to the Turko-Mongols. (Also see Arrival of the Turkic Peoples in our Khvarizem / Chorasmia page.)

Within the last two thousand years, Chinese expansionism into territories beyond the Great Wall of China and into territories occupied of the Turkic peoples, displaced the Turks, pushing them westward (today Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia are part of China). In turn, the displaced Turkic peoples - sometimes on their own and sometimes allied with the Mongols - pushed the Indo-Iranians west and south populating the vacated territories. After a few generations or whenever they sensed any weakness, the more populous Turks displaced the descendants of the original Mongol overlords. Today, it is the Turkic peoples that populate Central Asia, Asia Minor and the Russian steppes, while the Mongols have either been assimilated into the local population or have returned to Mongolia.

Tamerlane (1336 - 1405 CE), born at Kesh near Samarkand, a member Barlas tribe rose to power and assumed control of Central Asia. While Turkic in identity and language, he claimed Mongolian ancestry from Genghis Khan. During Tamerlane's time, what is today Uzbekistan was still mainly Iranian in character. He felt the people of Khorezm were a threat to his power and ruthlessly displaced entire populations. The change to a mainly Turkic identity took place when the Uzbeks, a confederation of Turkic tribes, moved into Central Asia at the beginning of the 16th century CE, displaced the successors to Timur, and established their control of Samarkand in 1512 CE. After the Uzbeks had consolidated control, they divided the area into three states with Bukhara in the centre, Khiva to the north, and Khokand (Fergana) to the east.

Curiously, in the Central Asian states of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, the mainly Turkic residents identify strongly with the Indo-Iranian heritage of the area.

» Top
Nomadic Turkic family relaxing outside their pastoral Yurt
CONTENTS

Turkmenistan Region

Turkmenistan Region & Zoroastrianism
Overview
Turkmenistan and Zoroastrianism
Silk Roads
Kopet Dag Mountains
Kara Kum Desert
Nisa, Anau, Kopet Dag Foothills
Nisaya, Nisa
Raphael Pumpelly - Champion of a Central Asian Cradle of Civilization
Anau
Fredrik Hiebert
Why Pumpelly Remains Unknown
Resumption of Anau Excavations
Ancient Kopet Dag Foothill Townships
Mouru - Gonur 1
Mouru & Murgab River Delta
Region & Zoroastrianism
Tepe or Depe

MOURU - MERV
TURKMEENISTAN REGION PAGE 4

Turkmenistan Region Pages:
» Page 1: Turkmenistan Region Introduction
» Page 2: Nisaya - Anau & Ancient Kopet Dag Foothill Townships
» Page 3: Mouru - Gonur

Search Our Site:

Google Search
LOCATION

As with Gonur, Merv lies in the Murgab river delta, the area generally considered to be the ancient land of Mouru, the third Vendidad nation.

The ancient city of Merv (Persian Marv), lies 30 km east of the city of Mary (a corrupted form of Merv) capital of the province, or vilayet / welayatlar, of the same name located in south-eastern Turkmenistan bordering Afghanistan. The province has an area of 87,000 square kilometres and a population of 1,146,800 (1995 figures). It is claimed that in medieval times, Merv was the largest city in the world.
Merv lies on one of the main arms of the ancient Silk Roads that carried trade between Europe and Africa and the Far East. Historically, Merv was also an important departure point for the 180 km journey across desert northwest to ancient Amul (today Turkmenabad) located on the banks of the Amu Darya river. The ruins of ancient Merv are located near the small town of Baram Ali, a Russian garrison town established in the early twentieth century.

The broad delta of rich alluvial land created by the Murgab river, which flows northwards from Afghanistan, forms an oasis at the southern edge of the Kara Kum Desert.

ENDANGERED SITE

In 1987 the Government of Turkmenistan established an archaeological park to protect the sites of the old walled cities, some extra-mural areas, and outlying buildings, thereby protecting the site from agricultural encroachment and improving access to the monuments. In 1999, the United Nations declared Merv a World Heritage Site. Despite these actions, in 2000 the World Monuments Watch placed Merv on its list of the world’s 100 most endangered sites.

HISTORY & CITIES OF MERV

The ruins of Merv contain a succession of ancient cities developed over a period of 2500 years at the heart of the oasis formed by Murgab river delta, and close to the course of where the main river channel flowed in ancient times. Together, the cities of Merv once encompassed over 1200 hectares.

Predating the earliest ruins uncovered so far, Merv was part of the third Avestan nation of Mouru. Unless earlier ruins are discovered, it would appear that Mouru was centered at Gonur, an older city and one that appears to have been abandoned as the residents moved south to the sites of Merv.
Erk Kala

The oldest of Merv’s ruins, Erk Kala (a modern name meaning citadel castle), date from the 5th century BCE. Constructed by the Persian Achaemenians, Erk Kala appears to have been the central city of Margush as it was known to the Achaemenians serving as an important administrative and trading centre. It lay at the hub of the spectacular Silk Roads along which trade between the furthest reaches of the Persian empire flourished.

The site is some 12 hectares in size and lies 17 metres below today’s surface. Buried under more than 1,500 years of buildings old and new, it is virtually inaccessible to archaeological exploration. Little is therefore known about this enclosure. It is possible that the ruins of an earlier city lie beneath Erk Kala’s ruins.
Gyaur Kala

With the defeat of the Achaemenians by Alexander in the 4th century BCE, Merv came under Macedonian rule. After Alexander's death, the lands he had conquered became the Seleucid Empire ruled, one of his generals Seleucus I (312-280 BCE). Seleucus' successor, Antiochus I (280-261 BCE), began a massive expansion of the city at Merv, constructing a walled city nearly two kilometres across called Antiochia Margiana (today called Gyaur Kala) and covering some 340 hectares. He converted the earlier city of Erk Kala into a citadel that lay within the new walled city. Gyaur Kala was to remain occupied for a thousand years. The Seleucid dynasty succumbed to the Parthians in c 250 BCE, and the Parthian rule gave way to Sassanian rule in 226 CE. The Parthians and Sassanians continued to maintain Merv's Gyaur Kala as a major administrative, military and trading centre. The defences were repeatedly rebuilt and strengthened. The vitality of the city during these times is reflected in the wealth of archaeological objects recovered from the excavations within Gyaur Kala. The city did suffer harsh times and destruction during destabilizing migrations and invasions from nomadic tribes. During the 5th century CE, Merv was probably the base for a disastrous Sassanian campaign against the Hephthalite Huns, when many of the Sassanian elite were killed.
The Persian Sassanians were defeated by the Arabs in 649 CE. During the rule of the second Arab caliphate, the Umayyads (660 - 750 CE), Merv became the capital of Khorasan (the 'eastern land') and a centre of further Arab expansion. By the seventh century CE, koshks such as the Kiz Kala or Kyz Kala (see photograph on the page banner at the top of this page), stand alone buildings defended by striking, massive, corrugated walls had been constructed west the city walls.

Persian geographer, traveller and writer, Al-Istakhri (c 951 CE), wrote that, “For its cleanliness, its good streets, the divisions of its buildings and quarters among the rivers and gardens..., their city (Merv) is superior to the rest of the cities of Khorasan.”

Like Erk Kala, Gyaur Kala also lies buried under a millennium and a half of construction on top of its ruins.

To the east of Gyaur Kala, the Arabs built a separate walled town, Shaim Kala, to house colonists from over-crowed Basra. Sadly, Shaim Kala has been largely destroyed by a Soviet-planned village. Shaim Kala is not outlined in the satellite image plan above.

Sultan Kala

By the beginning of the eighth century CE, suburbs had risen near the Majan canal which flowed a kilometre west of Gyaur Kala city wall. When Abbassid Abu Muslim established dynastic power in February 748 CE, he relocated the government buildings and major bazaars from the ancient city to a location near the suburb. Merv prospered at this site under the Abbassids and Tahirids, but went through a period of decline when political power moved to Nishapur and Bukhara.

The Seljuks arrived in the eleventh century CE and revived the city, establishing Merv as their eastern capital and calling it Marv al-Shahijan (today called Sultan Kala). In the process, they built fortification walls around the suburbs, a task that was completed at the end of the eleventh century during the reign of Sultan Malikshah (1072-92 CE).

Sultan Sanjar (1118-57 CE) is credited with construction of a fortified citadel, the Shahriyar Ark, in the northeast corner, and two additional walled suburbs that extended the city to the north and south. The Shahriyar Ark citadel enclosed a palace complex, administrative buildings and residences for the elite.

In 1221 CE, a Mongol army advanced on Merv and its cavalry rode around the walls for spent six days looking for the weak points. The terrified residents negotiated a surrender which only served to open the gates and allow the Mongols to enter, after which they proceeded to massacre the townspeople and burn the town.

The city remained occupied, an impoverished shadow of its former self, until the Timurids integrated the area into their empire in the late 14th century CE.

Abdullah Khan Kala

In the 15th century CE, in preparation for establishing Merv as his capital, Timurid king Shahrukh (1405-47 CE) founded a new planned settlement, now known as the Abdullah Khan Kala, a kilometre south of Sultan
Kala. The new town covered some 46 hectares. Shahrukh instituted a major building program, rebuilt the irrigation system, and is credited with construction of the dam at Merv. Construction came to a halt when Shahrukh decided to establish his capital in Samarkand instead. Resumption of development of Merv had to wait until Shaybanis' reign (1500-98 CE) who built the fortification walls.

In the post-medieval period Merv remained a provincial center, a small town of less than a square kilometre that notwithstanding its diminutive size, boasted, one of the strongest fortification of its time. A mosque, madrasa and reservoir were situated in the center of the northern section, with a citadel in the north corner.

**Bairam Ali Khan Kala**

A rectangular extension known as Bairam Ali Khan Kala was constructed to the west of Abdullah Khan Kala in the eighteenth century. These two sites were probably in use until the early nineteenth century. By the time the Russians arrived in 1885 CE, the site had been abandoned and many of its buildings had been dismantled to provide bricks for new construction.

Additional reading: UNESCO document no. 886
Turkmenistan in Persian means the land of the Turkmen. The capital city of Turkmenistan is Ashgabat (Ashkhabad), a name with Persian roots loosely meaning the city of love.

Turkmenistan is one of the landlocked countries of Central Asia with a population of about 5 million people. The country's greatest extent from west to east is 1,100 km, and its greatest north-to-south distance is 650 km. Its highest point is Mount Ayrybaba (3,137 meters) in the Kugitang Range of the Pamir-Alay chain the lies in the far east.

Turkmenistan's history is closely intertwined with the history of early Zoroastrianism.

Also see Wikipedia - Turkmenistan, Wikipedia - Geography of Turkmenistan, CIA Factbook, Photo Gallery.
Mouru is identified as the Margush of Achaemenian texts, Margiana in Greek texts, and modern-day Merv (located close to Mary and near Bayramaly - see map above). Merv is located in the Murgab river delta, the Murgab being a river that runs north from Afghanistan into Turkmenistan and ends in a delta that disappears into the ground north of Merv. Seventy kilometres to the north is the Bronze age site of Gonur-Tepe. When Gonur was in its prime, the river delta would have extended further north from its present extent making the lands around Gonur very fertile.

Nisaya is identified with Nisa (or Nissa located close to the capital, Ashgabat). Both are situated in the shadow of the Kopet Dag mountains that rise up from the Turkmen plains to the Iranian plateau.

Turkmenistan's late President-for-life, Saparmurat Niyazov, wrote in his book the Ruhnama, that Zarathushtra preached in Mouru and the Murgab delta. From our analysis of Avestan passages, this assertion is plausible since Zarathushtra could have travelled from Airyana Vaeja to Mouru. However, the declaration by archaeologist, Victor Sarianidi, that Zoroastrianism originated in Gonur cannot be supported by our analysis. According to the Avesta's Vendidad, Zarathushtra's home was Airyana Vaeja. Mouru and Nisaya were neighbouring lands (lands that he could well have visited).

In the years following the age in which Zarathushtra lived, the Aryans started to migrate west along the Silk Roads, and the fertile region along the northern slopes of the Kopet Dag mountains (presently running along the Iran-Turkmenistan border) became part of greater Iran - ancient Airan (as Airyana Vaeja came to be known in later years). In the poet Ferdowsi's epic, the Shahnameh, the land of Turan, originally part of ancient Airan or Iran, was gifted by King Feridoon's to his son Tur. A dispute arose and Turan broke away and thereafter frequently engaged in warfare with the mother country. The border between the Airan and Turan was the Amu Darya or Oxus river. Today, the Amu Darya river runs along Turkmenistan's eastern border, and to the east of the border lies Uzbekistan. The central and northern reaches of Uzbekistan are likely candidates for the location of ancient Turan.

Around 600 BCE, the region of today's Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were integrated into the legendary Airan lands as part of the Achaemenian Persian empire, with eastern Turkmenistan becoming part of the Persian province of Khorasan.

Silk Roads
One of the arms of the ancient Silk Roads ran through Merv, Gonur and Nisa. The discoveries of artefacts from Sumer In Mesopotamia and Harappa in the Indus Valley in the ruins of towns at the base of the Kopet Dag mountains (see below), are changing commonly held beliefs about the Silk Roads. The ancient residents of these towns were trading with these distant lands during the Eneolithic Age (between the late 4th and the late 3rd millennia BCE).
The Kopet Dag (also spelt Köpet Dag or Koppeh Dagh) mountain range runs along the border between present-day Turkmenistan and Iran, and extends for about 650 km (404 mi), from near the Caspian Sea in the northwest) to the Harirud (in Turkmen, the Tejen) River to the southeast. The lower mountains are on the Turkmenistan side, while the higher mountains are on the Iranian side. The Iranian plateau lies to the south and west of the range.

As far as mountain ranges go, the Kopet Dag are not very high. The highest peak on the Turkmenistan side, Mount Shahshah, rises to 2,940 m (9,646 ft), and is located just southwest of the capital Ashgabat. On the Iranian side, the highest summit is Kuh-e-Quchan, rising to 3,191 m (10,466 ft).

A number of small rivers and streams run down from the Kopet Dag. The river valleys form natural corridors for transit between the Turkmen plains and the high Iranian plateau. Before they disappear into the desert to the north, the rivers create a fertile zone of valleys, deltas and oases at the foot of the mountains. It is in these fertile areas at the foot of the Kopet Dag, that we find the ruins of many ancient settlements and cities.

The Kopet Dag mountains themselves are characterized by dry and sandy slopes, plateaus, and steep ravines. They lie over the meeting point of the continental tectonic plates, the movement of which results in severe earthquakes exceeding seven on the Richter scale. The earthquakes have destroyed many of the ancient settlements that were built along the foothills and adjoining plains.

**Kara Kum Desert**

The Kara Kum (Karakum or Garagum) desert covers about 75% of Turkmenistan. Kara Kum means black sands. The desert is sparsely inhabited by nomads some of who live in yurts or portable circular abodes. As a consequence, the main concentration of Turkmenistan's population is along the Iranian border, the Murgab basin, the Amu Darya river and the Caspian coast.
Balkh & Zoroastrianism

Overview

Balkh & Zoroastrianism
Kayanian Dynasty
Topography of Balkh
Bactrian Camel
Silk Roads Trading Centre
Multi-Ethnic Population

Ancient Balkh City, Cheshm-e-Shafa. Surkh Kotal, Barmaki
Ancient Balkh City
Cheshm-e-Shafa. The City of Infidels
Surkh Kotal / Atashkadeh-ye Sorkh
Kowtal
Ancient Fire Temple of Naubahar / No Gombad
The Barmaks / Barmaki / Barmakiyan

Ai Khanum
Ruins at Ai Khanum / Ai Khanoum (Alexandria on Oxus)
Plate from Ai Khanum (Alexandria on Oxus)

Sheberghan, Yemshi Tepe & Talayeh Tepe / Tillya Tepe
Sheberghan

Zoroastrian Heritage
Author: K. E. Eduljee

Banner image above: The ruins of the ancient city walls of Balkh / Balkh - more than a kilometer in diameter

Map of Balkh (Balkh / Bactria - N. Afghanistan, S. Uzbekistan, W. Tajikistan). Click to enlarge

Balkh & Zoroastrianism
Balkh is the fourth nation in the Avestan Vendidad's list of nations - Airyana Vaeja (homeland of the Aryans) being the first. Balkh is the ancient Avestan name while Balkh is the modern name for both the region and its
Ruins at Yemshi Tepe
Ruins at Talayeh Tepe / Tillya Tepe
Examples of the Bactrian Gold Ornaments
Example of Poor Quality Pseudo-Scholarship
Safeguarding the Bactrian Treasure

**Dashly**

Location of the Dashly Sites
Dashly 1
Dashly 3
Dashly 3 Plan Drawing, Yantra Motif and Textile Designs
Dashly East
Dashly South
Aq Chapur

During the middle period of Aryan history - as the Aryans moved west from Airyana Vaeja towards present day Iran - Bakhtdi (Balkh as it is known today) became the principle kingdom of the Aryan confederation of kingdoms called Aryan, and the eponymous city of Balkh was its capital. As the seat of Aryan rule moved westward to what is the Iranian province of Khurasan today, Balkh became part of greater Khurasan and remained an important regional capital as well as a cultural and trading centre.

According to Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, it was during this middle period of Aryan history that Zarathushtra (in later language, Zardhusht) carried his message (see *Shahnameh* page 30) to the kingdom of Bakhtdi [this is, however, a latter tradition. Bakhtdi is not mentioned in the Farvardin Yasht which lists four nations connected with Zarathushtra's ministry. For a further discussion on the lands of Zarathushtra's ministry see our page on Airyana Vaeja]. One latter tradition informs us that Zarathushtra established himself and died in Balkh. Some authors conclude that in addition to Bakhtdi / Balkh being one of the areas of Zarathushtra's ministry, that he was also born in Bakhtdi / Balkh. The Avesta, however, states that Zarathushtra was born in Airyana Vaeja (cf. his father's house was in Airyana Vaeja), and the Vendidad lists Airyana Vaeja and Bakhtdi as separate nations, Airyana Vaeja being the first and Bakhtdi the fourth.

Given that the traditions speak to Zarathushtra being born in Iran Vej (Middle Persian for Airyana Vaeja)

Bakhtdi would come to be known as Bakhtrish during Achaemenid times (675 - 330 BCE), Bactra city and greater Bactria from the Greek version of its name during Alexander's and the Seleucid occupation (330 - c. 246 BCE), and briefly Takharistan or Toharistan after the overthrow of the Seleucids. In 246 BCE, allied with Parthava (Parthia), Bakhtdi (Balkh) was one of the first Aryan nations to revolt against Seleucid rule. The "great and noble city" as Marco Polo called it, was destroyed by first by the Arabs and eventually by Mongols in 1220CE. Today, the site of the kingdom and its ancient city is called Balkh, and the once mighty kingdom has been reduced to the fairly small province in Afghanistan. Balkh's provincial capital is now Mazar-e Sharif, a city some twenty kilometres east of Balkh city. Our discussion on Bakhtdi includes the Greater Bakhtdi lands (see map above).

**KAYANIAN DYNASTY**

Bakhtdi's King Vishtasp (in later language, Gushtasp), a king of the Kayanian dynasty, was a contemporary of Zarathushtra. Vishtasp accepted Zarathushtra's teachings and became the patron king and defender of Zarathushtra's Mazdayasni faith.

The founder and first king of the Kayanian dynasty was Kai Kobad (also spelt Kay Qobad or simply Kaikobad) known to the Zoroastrian scriptures, the Avesta, by his older name Kavi Kavata. On the north Tajikistan bank of the Amu Darya River, close to the archaeological site of Takht-e Sangin, is a site called Takht-e Kobad meaning the throne of Kobad. About 40 km to the north along the banks of a tributary of the Amu Darya lies another site called Kai Kobad Shah meaning King Kai Kobad. We are not aware of any other region that ties itself so directly with the Kayanians.

There is an enigmatic section of the Middle Persian Zoroastrian text, the Denkard at verse 34 of Book 7 regarding the inheritance of the Aryan Farr (the Khvaraneh) by Kai Kobad and from Kai Kobad as E. W. West translates, "it came to Patakshrobo, son of Aiyrelshva, son of Taz, who was king of the Arabs....". In verse 35, the Farr goes to Kay Arash, a descendant of Kai Kobad. For some reason, the word "Taz" or "Tazi" in medieval Iran (Persia) came to be associated with the Arabs perhaps because it was a homonym with a similar sounding word denoting an Arab group. Such a translation in this context creates a disruption for the inheritance or passing of the Farr from one king to the next also defines the genealogy of Aryan kings and it would seem odd that an Arab would be inserted as king between two Kayanian kings. Other writers have suggested that the word "Taz" in this context specifically applies to the Tajiks.

**TOPOGRAPHY OF BALKH**

History very literally flows through and around Bakhtdi. The central portion of a river famous in legend and history, the Amu Darya River - the section that is downstream from the Sherabad
Balkh’s desert formed the border between Bakhdhi and Sugdha (the second) in the northwest of Bakhdhi. The upper part of the Amu Darya River - upstream from the Sherabad River - ran through the heart of eastern Bakhdhi until it entered the Badakhshan / Pamir region. Across the Amu Darya, the kingdom of Sugd lay to the north, while the Badakhshan region and Pamir mountains lay to the east and northeast. The kingdom of Mouru (Merv) lay to Bakhdhi’s northwest and west, and the kingdom of Haroyu (Harirud) lay across its south-western border.

The southern and south-eastern borders of Bakhdhi was formed by the Hindu Kush (meaning Hindu killer) mountains. The name Hindu Kush leads us to believe that the fifteenth Avestan nation, Hapta Hindu, the seven Indus lands, lay across the Hindu Kush, the mountains forming the border between the two nations, and further that the relations between the two neighbours on either side of the Hindu Kush were not always peaceful.

The topography of ancient Bakhdhi included the varied landscape of fertile plains, deserts and rugged mountains. Balkh’s desert lies to the north towards the Amu Darya River. The desert is famous in the legends of Firdousi’s Shahnameh.

The kingdom was renowned through the known world for its beauty, abundant crops, and a large variety of fruits. There are several almond and apricot orchards. While certain parts of Balkh are still relatively fertile, war and poor leadership has reduced the once famed land to a dusty shadow of its former self.

In ancient Bakhdhi, an excellent breed of sheep was raised in green lower slopes of the Hindu Kush mountains. Bakhdhi was also famous for a breed of camels known today as the Bactrian camel.

**Bactrian Camel**

The two-humped Bactrian camel, if we may be forgiven this term, the work-horse of the caravans that plied the Silk Roads radiating north and south, east and west out of Bakhdhi. It was particularly suited to this task for it could carry heavy loads over great distances and through extremes in climate and temperature - from freezing cold to blistering heat.

While the Silk Roads have long since fallen into disuse, the Bactrian camel is still prized throughout the region as a beast of burden. The camels have a remarkable ability to go without water for months at a time, but when water is available they can drink up to 57 litres at once. When well fed, the camels store excess food in their humps which become plump. When food is not readily available, the camel uses this stored food and the humps shrink and lean to one side. They are steady walkers and fast runners. They can walk consistently for hours at an end, and they have been recorded as running at speeds up to 65 kmph / 40 mph. As pack animals, they are able to carry 170-270 kg / 375-600 lbs at a rate of 47 km per day, or 4 kmph over a period of four days. They can swim. See well and have a keen sense of smell.

It is no wonder that they were the preferred pack animal for caravans, and they must have played a significant role in Bakhdhi being a major trading centre on the ancient Silk Roads.

Bones of the camel have been found in the region dating back to the first half of the third millennium BCE. By the late third and early second millennium BCE, images of the Bactrian camel were being used
in the iconography of copper stamp seals and figurines found in the Kopet Dag hills of neighbouring Turkmenistan, but which are thought have originated in Bakhdi / Bactria.

Silk Roads Trading Centre

As with all the other Avestan Vendidad nations, Balkh lay on the Aryan Trade Roads (also called the Silk Roads) and was a significant centre of trade as well as a stop over point. Balkh lay at the junction of the east-west route (between China and Asia Minor) and the north-south route between Merv, the northern lands beyond and India in the south. The route through Balkh was the preferred route for traders between the west and India as it was shorter and provided the easiest route through the Hindu Kush.

Even today, the Provincial capital Mazar-e Sharif is an important trading centre, importing goods for distribution throughout Afghanistan and exporting goods to the rest of Central Asia. Locally grown almonds and apricots as well as other dried nuts and fruits have their own bazaar and are exported. A fledgling silk industry, a traditional Aryan occupation, has also started to re-emerge.
MULTI-ETHNIC POPULATION

There is perhaps no greater testimony to Bakhdhi / Balkh being at the cross-roads of the Aryan world and trade than its multi-ethnic population. Broken up today into a multitude of northern Afghan provinces, greater Bakhdhi / Balkh is home to several ethnicities native to its surrounding regions. The pared-down province of present-day Balkh has a majority Tajik population (which may speak to the original Aryan migration from the east) surrounded by Uzbek and Turkmen populations. Also present are Pashtuns and Hazaras. In war ravaged Afghanistan, Balkh is a relatively peaceful province.

The languages spoken are Dari Persian spoken by ethnic Tajiks (50%), Pashto (27%), Turkmen (11.9%) and Uzbek (10.7%).
The Buzkashi is a team sport and a public tournament where the goal is for riders to grab the carcass of a goat or calf (often headless) from the ground while riding a horse at full gallop and to pitch it across a goal line, into a target circle, or into a container. Opposing riders try to stop others from picking up the carcass or carrying it to the goal. The opposition can be fairly violent.

External page of interest:
- Bactrian Documents from Ancient Afghanistan
- Ai Khanum / Ai Khanoum (Alexandria on Oxus)
- Sheberghan, Yemshi Tepe & Talayeh Tepe / Tillya Tepe
- Dashly
- Top

Further reading: Location of the Aryan Homeland, Airyana Vaeja
0. May Ahura Mazda be rejoiced!....
Ashem Vohu: Holiness is the best of all good;
I confess myself a worshipper of Mazda, a follower of Zarathushtra, one who hates the Daevas and obeys the laws of Ahura;
For sacrifice, prayer, propitiation, and glorification unto [Hawan], the holy and master of holiness.
Unto the awful, overpowering Fravashis of the faithful, the awful and overpowering Fravashis; do thou tell how they come to help me, how they bring assistance unto me, the awful Fravashis of the faithful; be propitiation, with sacrifice, prayer, propitiation, and glorification.
Yatha ahu vairyo: The will of the Lord is the law of holiness....

I.

1. Ahura Mazda spake unto Spitama Zarathushtra, saying: 'Do thou proclaim, O pure Zarathushtra! the vigour and strength, the glory, the help and the joy that are in the Fravashis of the faithful, the awful and overpowering Fravashis; do thou tell how they come to help me, how they bring assistance unto me, the awful Fravashis of the faithful;'
2. 'Through their brightness and glory, O Zarathushtra! I maintain that sky, there above, shining and seen afar, and encompassing this earth all around.

NOTES:
1. The so-called paapyo-tkaesha: the primitive law is what is considered as the true Mazdayasrían religion in all ages, both before and after the time of Zarthosht' (West, Pahlavi Texts I, 242, note 1); cf. § 150.
2. Cf. § 19.
3. 'It looks like a palace, that stands built of a [181] heavenly substance, firmly established, with ends that lie afar, shining in its body of ruby over the three-thirds (of the earth); it is like a garment inlaid with stars, made of a heavenly substance, that Mazda puts on, along with Mithra and Rashnu and Spenta-Amrta, and on no side can the eye perceive the end of it.
4. 'Through their brightness and glory, O Zarathushtra! I maintain Ardi Sura Anahita, the wide-expanding and health-giving, who hates the Daevas and obeys the laws of Ahura, who is worthy of sacrifice in the material world, worthy of prayer in the material world; the life-increasing and holy, the flocks-increasing and holy, the fold-increasing and holy, the wealth increasing and holy, the country increasing and holy;'
5. 'Who makes the seed of all males pure, who makes the womb of all females pure for bringing forth, who makes all females bring forth in safety, who puts milk in the breasts of all females in the right measure and the right quality;
6. 'The large river, known afar, that is as large as the whole of all the waters that run along the earth; that runs powerfully from the height Hukaiyra down to the sea Vourukasha.'
7. ‘All the shores of the sea Vouru-kasha are boiling over, all the middle of it is boiling over, when she runs down there, when she streams down there, she, Ardvi Sura Anahita, who has a thousand cells and a thousand channels; the extent of each of those cells, of each of those channels, is as much as a man can ride in forty days, riding on a good horse.

8. ‘From this river of mine alone flow all the waters that spread all over the seven keshwars; this river of mine alone goes on bringing waters, both in summer and in winter. This river of mine purifies the seed in males, the womb in females, the milk in females’ breasts.

7. §§ 4-8 = Yt5.1-5.

9. ‘Through their brightness and glory, O Zarathushtra! I maintain the wide earth made by Ahura, the large and broad earth, that bears so much that is fine, that bears all the bodily world, the live and the dead, and the high mountains, rich in pastures and waters;

10. ‘Upon which run the many streams and rivers; upon which the many kinds of plants grow up from the ground, to nourish animals and men, to nourish the Aryan nations, to nourish the five kinds of animals, and to help the faithful.

11. ‘Through their brightness and glory, O Zarathushtra! I maintain in the womb the child that has been conceived, so that it does not die from the assaults of Vidotu, and I develop in it the bones, the hair, the entrails, the feet, and the sexual organs.

12. ‘Had not the awful Fravashis of the faithful given help unto me, those animals and men of mine, of which there are such excellent kinds, would not subsist; strength would belong to the Druj, the dominion would belong to the Druj, the material world would belong to the Druj.

13. ‘Between the earth and the sky the immaterial creatures would be harassed by the Druj; between the earth and the sky the immaterial creatures would be smitten by the Druj; and never afterwards would Angra-Mainyu give way to the blows of Spenta-Mainyu.

14. ‘Through their brightness and glory the waters run and flow forward from the never-failing springs; through their brightness and glory the plants grow up from the earth, by the never-failing springs; through their brightness and glory the winds blow, driving down the clouds towards the never-failing springs.

15. ‘Through their brightness and glory the females conceive offspring; through their brightness and glory they bring forth in safety; it is through their brightness and glory when they become blessed with children.

16. ‘Through their brightness and glory a man is born who is a chief in assemblies and meetings, who listens well to the (holy) words, whom Wisdom holds dear, and who returns a victor from discussions with Gaotema, the heretic:

‘Through their brightness and glory the sun goes his way; through their brightness and glory the moon goes her way; through their brightness and glory the stars go their way.

17. ‘In fearful battles they are the wisest for help, the Fravashis of the faithful.

‘The most powerful amongst the Fravashis of the faithful, O Spitama! are those of the men of the primitive law or those of the Saoshyants not yet born, who are to restore the world. Of the others, the Fravashis of the living faithful are more powerful, O Zarathushtra! than those of the dead, O Spitama!

18. ‘And the man who in life shall treat the Fravashis of the faithful well, shall become a ruler of the country with full power, and a chief most strong; so shall any man of you become, who shall treat Mithra well, the lord of wide pastures, and Arshtat, who makes the world grow, who makes the world increase.

19. ‘Thus do I proclaim unto thee, O pure Spitama! the vigour and strength, the glory, the help, and the joy that are in the Fravashis of the faithful, the awful and overpowering Fravashis; and how they come to help me, how they bring assistance unto me, the awful Fravashis of the faithful.’

II.

20. Ahura Mazda spake unto Spitama Zarathushtra, saying: ‘If in this material world, O Spitama Zarathushtra! thou happenest to come upon frightful roads, full of dangers and fears, O Zarathushtra! and thou fearest for thyself, then do thou recite these words, then proclaim these fiend-smiting words, O Zarathushtra!

‘I praise, I invoke, I meditate upon, and we sacrifice unto the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful. We worship the Fravashis of the masters of the houses, those of the lords of the boroughs, those of the lords of the towns, those of the lords of the countries, those of the Zarathustrotemas; the Fravashis of those that are, the Fravashis of those that have been, the Fravashis of those that will be; all the Fravashis of all nations, and most friendly the Fravashis of the friendly nations;

22. ‘Who maintain the sky, who maintain the waters, who maintain the earth, who maintain the cattle, who maintain in the womb the child that has been conceived, so that it does not die from the assaults of Vidotu, and develop in it the bones, the hair, the entrails, the feet, and the sexual organs;

23. ‘Who are much-bringing, who move with awfulness, well-moving, swiftly moving, quickly moving, who move when invoked; who are to be invoked in the conquest of good, who are to be invoked in fights against foes, who are to be invoked in battles;

24. ‘Who give victory to their invoker, who give boons to their lover, who give health to the sick man, who give good Glory to the faithful man that brings libations and invokes them with a sacrifice and words of propitiation,

25. ‘Who turn to that side where are faithful men, most devoted to holiness, and where is the greatest piety, where the faithful man is rejoiced, and where the faithful man is not ill-treated.”

III.

26. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who are the mightiest of drivers, the lightest of those driving forwards, the slowest of the retiring, the safest of all bridges, the least-erring of all weapons and arms, and who never turn their backs.

27. At once, wherever they come, we worship them, the good ones, the excellent ones, the good, the strong, the beneficent Fravashis of the faithful. They are to be invoked when the bundles of baresna are tied; they are to be invoked in fights against foes, in battles, and there where gallant men strive to conquer foes.

28. Mazda invoked them for help, when he fixed the sky and the waters and the earth and the plants; when Spenta-Mainyu fixed the sky, when he fixed the waters, when the earth, when the cattle, when the plants, when the child conceived in the womb, so that it should not die from the assaults of Vidotu, and developed in it the bones, the hair, the entrails, the feet, and the sexual organs.
29. Spenta-Mainyu maintained the sky, and they sustained it from below, they, the strong Fravashis, who sit in silence, gazing with sharp looks; whose eyes and ears are powerful, who bring long joy, high and high-girded; well-moving and moving afar, loud-snorting, possessing riches and a high renown.

IV.

30. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful; whose friendship is good, and who know how to benefit; whose friendship lasts long; who like to stay in the abode where they are not harmed by its dwellers; who are good, beautiful afar, health-giving, of high renown, conquering in battle, and who never do harm first.

V.

31. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful; whose will is dreadful unto those who vex them; powerfully working and most beneficent; who in battle break the dread arms of their foes and haters.

VI.

32. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful; liberal, valiant, and full of strength, not to be seized by thought, welfare-giving, kind, and health-giving, following with Ashi's remedies, as far as the earth extends, as the rivers stretch, as the sun rises.

VII.

33. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who gallantly and bravely fight, causing havoc, wounding, breaking to pieces all the malice of the malicious, Daeva and men, and smiting powerfully in battle, at their wish and will.

34. You kindly deliver the Victory made by Ahura, and the crushing Ascendant, most beneficently, to those countries where you, the good ones, unharmed and rejoiced, unoppressed and unoffended, have been held worthy of sacrifice and prayer, and proceed the way of your wish.

VIII.

35. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who form many battalions, girded with weapons, lifting up spears, and full of sheen; who in fearful battles come rushing along where the gallant heroes go and assail the Danus.

36. There you destroy the victorious strength of the Turanian Danus; there you destroy the malice of the Turanian Danus; through you the chiefs are of high intellect and most successful; they, the gallant heroes, the gallant Saoshyants, the gallant conquerors of the offspring of the Danus chiefs of myriads, who wound with stones.

IX.

37. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who rout the two wings of an army standing in battle array, who make the centre swerve, and swiftly pursue onwards, to help the faithful and to distress the doers of evil deeds.

X.

38. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who sit in silence, gazing with sharp looks; whose eyes and ears are powerful, who bring long joy, high and high-girded; well-moving and moving afar, loud-snorting, possessing riches and a high renown.

41. Who give good glory to him who worships them with a sacrifice, as that man did worship them, the holy Zarathushtra, the chief of the material world, the head of the two-footed race, in whatever struggle he had to enter, in whatever distress he did fear; who, when well invoked, come forward from the heavens, who are the heads of that sky above, possessing the well-shapen Strength, the Victory made by Ahura, the crushing Ascendant, and Welfare, the wealth-bringing, boon-bringing, holy, well fed, worthy of sacrifice and prayer in the perfection of holiness.

43. They shed Satavaesa between the earth and the sky, him to whom the waters belong, who listens to appeals and makes the waters flow and the plants grow up, to nourish animals and men, to nourish the Aryan nations, to nourish the five kinds of animals and to help the faithful.
44. Satavaesa comes down and flows between the earth and the sky, he to whom the waters belong, who listens to appeals and makes the waters and the plants grow up, fair, radiant, and full of light, to nourish animals and men, to nourish the Aryan nations, to nourish the five kinds of animals, and to help the faithful.

XII.

45. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful; with helms of brass, with weapons of brass, with armour of brass; who struggle in the fights for victory in garments of light, arraying the battles and bringing them forwards, to kill thousands of Daevas. When the wind blows from behind them and brings their breath unto men,

46. Then men know where blows the breath of victory: and they pay pious homage unto the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, with their hearts prepared and their arms uplifted.

47. Whichever side they have been first worshipped in the fulness of faith of a devoted heart, to that side turn the awful Fravashis of the faithful, along with Mithra and Rashnu and the awful cursing thought of the wise and the victorious wind. And those nations are smitten at one stroke by their fifties and their hundreds, by their thousands and their tens of thousands, by their tens of thousands and their myriads of myriads, against which turn the awful Fravashis of the faithful, along with Mithra and Rashnu, and the awful cursing thought of the wise and the victorious wind.

48. And those nations are smitten at one stroke by their fifties and their hundreds, by their thousands and their tens of thousands, by their tens of thousands and their myriads of myriads, against which turn the awful Fravashis of the faithful, along with Mithra and Rashnu, and the awful cursing thought of the wise and the victorious wind.

XIII.

49. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who come and go through the borough at the time of the Hamaspathmaidyem; they go along there for ten nights, asking thus:

50. 'Who will praise us? Who will offer us a sacrifice? Who will meditate upon us? Who will bless us? Who will receive us with meat and clothes in his hand and with a prayer worthy of bliss? Of which of us will the name be taken for invocation? Of which of you will the soul be worshipped by you with a sacrifice? To whom will this gift of ours be given, that he may have never-failing food for ever and ever?'

51. And the man who offers them up a sacrifice, with meat and clothes in his hand, with a prayer worthy of bliss, the awful Fravashis of the faithful, satisfied, unharmed, and unoffended, bless thus:

52. 'May there be in this house flocks of animals and men! May there be a swift horse and a solid chariot! May there be a man who knows how to praise God and rule in an assembly, who will offer us sacrifices with meat and clothes in his hand, and with a prayer worthy of bliss.'

XIV.

53. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who show beautiful paths to the waters, made by Mazda, which had stood before for a long time in the same place without flowing:

54. And now they flow along the path made by Mazda, along the way made by the gods, the watery way appointed to them, at the wish of Ahura Mazda, at the wish of the Amesha-Spentas.

XV.

55. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who show a beautiful growth to the fertile plants, which had stood before for a long time in the same place without growing:

56. And now they grow up along the path made by Mazda, along the way made by the gods, in the time appointed to them, at the wish of Ahura Mazda, at the wish of the Amesha-Spentas.

XVI.

57. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who showed their paths to the stars, the moon, the sun, and the endless lights, that had stood before for a long time in the same place, without moving forwards, through the oppression of the Daevas and the assaults of the Daevas.

58. And now they move around in their far-revolving circle for ever, till they come to the time of the good restoration of the world.

XVII.

59. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who watch over the bright sea Vouru-Kasha, to the number of ninety thousand, and nine thousand, and nine hundred, and ninety-nine.
60. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who watch over the stars Haptoiringa, to the number of ninety thousand, and nine thousand, and nine hundred, and ninety-nine.

XIX.

61. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who watch over the body of Keresaspa, the son of Sama, the club-bearer with plaited hair, to the number of ninety thousand, and nine thousand, and nine hundred, and ninety-nine.

XX.

62. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who watch over the seed of the holy Zarathushtra, to the number of ninety thousand, and nine thousand, and nine hundred, and ninety-nine.

XXI.

63. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who fight at the right hand of the reigning lord, if he rejoices the faithful and if the awful Fravashis of the faithful are not hurt by him, if they are rejoiced by him, unharmed and unoffended.

XXII.

64. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who are greater, who are stronger, who are swifter, who are more powerful, who are more victorious, who are more healing, who are more effective than can be expressed by words; who run by tens of thousands into the midst of the Myazdas.

65. And when the waters come up from the sea Vouru-Kasha, O Spitama Zarathushtra! along with the Glory made by Mazda, then forwards come the awful Fravashis of the faithful, many and many hundreds, many and many thousands, many and many tens of thousands,

66. Seeking water for their own kindred, for their own borough, for their own town, for their own country, and saying thus: ‘May our own country have a good store and full joy!’

67. They fight in the battles that are fought in their own place and land, each according to the place and house where he dwelt (of yore): they look like a gallant warrior who, girded up and watchful, fights for the hoard he has treasured up.

68. And those of them who win bring waters to their own kindred, to their own borough, to their own town, to their own country, saying thus: ‘May my country grow and increase!’

69. And when the all-powerful sovereign of a country has been surprised by his foes and haters, he invokes them, the awful Fravashis of the faithful.

70. And they come to his help, if they have not been hurt by him, if they have been rejoiced by him, if they have not been harmed nor offended, the awful Fravashis of the faithful: they come flying unto him, it seems as if they were well-winged birds.

71. They come in as a weapon and as a shield, to keep him behind and to keep him in front, from the Druj unseen, from the female Varenya fiend, from the evil-doer bent on mischief, and from that fiend who is all death, Angra Mainyu. It will be as if there were a thousand men watching over one man;

72. So that neither the sword well-thrust, neither the club well-falling, nor the arrow well-shot, nor the spear well-darted, nor the stones flung from the arm shall destroy him.

73. They come on this side, they come on that side, never resting, the good, powerful, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, asking for help thus: ‘Who will praise us? Who will offer us a sacrifice? Who will meditate upon us? Who will bless us? Who will receive us with meat and clothes in his hand and with a prayer worthy of bliss? Of which of us will the name be taken for invocation? Of which of you will the soul be worshipped by you with a sacrifice? To whom will that gift of ours be given, that he may have never-failing food for ever and ever?’

74. We worship the perception; we worship the intellect; we worship the conscience; we worship those of the Saoshyants;

We worship the souls; those of the tame animals; those of the wild animals; those of the animals that live in the waters; those of the animals that live under the ground; those of the flying ones; those of the running ones; those of the grazing ones.

We worship their Fravashis.

75. We worship the Fravashis.

We worship them, the liberal;
We worship them, the valiant; we worship them, the most valiant;
We worship them, the beneficient; we worship them, the most beneficient;
We worship them, the powerful;
We worship them, the most strong;
We worship them, the light; we worship them, the most light;
We worship them, the effective; we worship them, the most effective.

76. They are the most effective amongst the creatures of the two Spirits, they the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, who stood holding fast when the two Spirits created the world, the Good Spirit and the Evil One.

77. When Angra Mainyu broke into the creation of the good holiness, then came in across Vohu Mano and Atar.

78. They destroyed the malice of the fiend Angra Mainyu, so that the waters did not stop flowing nor did the plants stop growing; but at once the most beneficent waters of the creator and ruler, Ahura Mazda, flowed forward and his plants went on growing.
79. We worship all the waters; 
We worship all the plants; 
We worship all the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful. 
We worship the waters by their names; 
We worship the plants by their names; 
We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful by their names.

80. Of all those ancient Fravashis, we worship the Fravashi of Ahura Mazda; who is the greatest, the best, the fairest, the most solid, the wisest, the finest of body and supreme in holiness; 
81. Whose soul is the Mathra Spenta, who is white, shining, seen afar; and we worship the beautiful forms, the active forms wherewith he clothes the Amesha-Spentas; we worship the swift-horsed sun.

XXIII.

82. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the Amesha-Spentas, the bright ones, whose looks perform what they wish, the tall, quickly coming to do, strong, and lordly, who are undecaying and holy; 
83. Who are all seven of one thought, who are all seven of one speech, who are all seven of one deed; whose thought is the same, whose speech is the same, whose deed is the same, whose father and commander is the same, namely, the Maker, Ahura Mazda; 
84. Who see one another’s soul thinking of good thoughts, thinking of good words, thinking of good deeds, thinking of Garo-nmana, and whose ways are shining as they go down towards the libations.

XXIV.

85. We worship the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis: that of the most rejoicing fire, the beneficent and assembly-making; and that of the holy, strong Sraosha, who is the incarnate Word, a mighty-speared and lordly god; and that of Nairyo-sangha.

86. And that of Rashnu Razishta; 
That of Mithra, the lord of wide pastures; 
That of the Mathra-Spenta; 
That of the sky; 
That of the waters; 
That of the earth; 
That of the plants; 
That of the Bull; 
That of the living man; 
That of the holy creation.

87. We worship the Fravashi of Gaya Maretan [Gayomard], who first listened unto the thought and teaching of Ahura Mazda; of whom Ahura formed the race of the Aryan nations, the seed of the Aryan nations.

We worship the piety and the Fravashi of the holy Zarathustra; 
88. Who first thought what is good, who first spoke what is good, who first did what is good; who was the first Priest, the first Warrior, the first Plougher of the ground; who first knew and first taught; who first possessed and first took possession of the Bull, of Holiness, of the Word, the obedience to the Word, and dominion, and all the good things made by Mazda, that are the offspring of the good Principle; 
89. Who was the first Priest, the first Warrior, the first Plougher of the ground; who first took the turning of the wheel from the hands of the Daeva and of the cold-hearted man; who first in the material world pronounced the praise of Asha, thus bringing the Daevas to naught, and confessed himself a worshipper of Mazda, a follower of Zarathustra, one who hates the Daevas, and obeys the laws of Ahura.

5. The wheel of sovereignty (?); ct. Yt10.67; this expression smacks of Buddhism.

90. Who first in the material world said the word that destroys the Daevas, the law of Ahura; who first in the material world proclaimed the word that destroys the Daevas, the law of Ahura; who first in the material world declared all the creation of the Daevas unworthy of sacrifice and prayer; who was strong, giving all the good things of life, the first bearer of the Law amongst the nations; 
91. In whom was heard the whole Mathra, the word of holiness; who was the lord and master of the world, the praiser of the most great, most good and most fair Asha; who had a revelation of the Law, that most excellent of all beings; 
92. For whom the Amesha-Spentas longed, in one accord with the sun, in the fulness of faith of a devoted heart; they longed for him, as the lord and master of the world, as the praiser of the most great, most good, and most fair Asha, as having a revelation of the Law, that most excellent of all beings; 
93. In whose birth and growth the waters and the plants rejoiced; in whose birth and growth the waters and the plants grew; in whose birth and growth all the creatures of the good creations cried out, Hail!

94. 'Hail to us! for he is born, the Athravan, Spitama Zarathushtra. Zarathushtra will offer us sacrifices with libations and bundles of baresma; and there will the good Law of the worshippers of Mazda come and spread through all the seven Karshvares of the earth.

95. 'There will Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, increase all the excellences of our countries, and allay their troubles; there will the powerful Apam-Napat increase all the excellences of our countries, and allay their troubles.'

We worship the piety and Fravashi of Maidhyo-maungha, the son of Arasti, who first listened unto the word and teaching of Zarathushtra.
96. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Asmo-hvanvant; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Asan-hvanvant. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Gavayan. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Parshat-gaush, the son of Frata; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vohvasti, the son of Snaoya; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Isvat, the son of Varaza.

97. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Saena, the son of Ahum-stut, who first appeared upon this earth with a hundred pupils. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Fradhidaya. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Usmanara, the son of Paeshata. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vohu-raochah, the son of Franya.

98. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Isat-vastra, the son of Zarathushtra; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Urvatat-nara, the son of Zarathushtra; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hvare-chithra, the son of Zarathushtra.

99. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Isat-vastra, the son of Zarathushtra; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Urvatat-nara, the son of Zarathushtra; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hvare-chithra, the son of Zarathushtra.

100. Who took her, standing bound, from the hands of the Hunus, and established her to sit in the middle of the world, high ruling, never falling back, holy, nourished with plenty of cattle and pastures, blessed with plenty of cattle and pastures.

101. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Zairi-vairi; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Yukhta-vairi; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Sriraokshhan; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Keresaokhshan; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Varana; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Varaza; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Bujsravah; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Benezyarshiht; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Tzyarshiht; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Perethu-arshti; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vizhyarshiht.

102. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Naptya; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vazhaspa; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Habaspa; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vistauru, the son of Naotara. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frash-ham-vareta; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frasho-kareta. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Atare-venu; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Atare-pata; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Atare-data; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Atare-chithra; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Atare-hvarenah; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Atare-savah; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Atare-zantu; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Atare-danghu.

103. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hushkyaottha; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Pishkyaottha; We worship the Fravashi of the holy and gallant Spento-data. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Basta-vairi; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Kava-razem. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frashashatnara, the son of Hvova; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Jamasp, the son of Hvova; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Avaaroasthi.
104. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hushkyaotna, the son of Frashaoshtra; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hvadaena, the son of Frashaoshtra. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hanghaurvaungh, the son of Jamaspa; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vareshna, the son of Hanghaurvaungh. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vohu-nemah, the son of Avaraoshtri, To withstand evil dreams, to withstand evil visions, to withstand evil ...(?) to withstand the evil Pairikas. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Mathravaka, the son of Simaezhi, the Aethrapati, the Hamidhpati, who was able to smite down most of the evil, unfaithful Ashemaghas, that shout the hymns, and acknowledge no lord and no master, the dreadful ones whose Fravashis are to be broken; to withstand the evil done by the faithful.

106. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Asha-stu, the son of Maidhyo-maungha. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Avarethrabah, the son of Rastare-vaghant. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Bujra, the son of Dazgaraspa. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Zbaurvant; We worship the Fravashi of the holy and gallant Karesna, the son of Zbaurvant; who was the incarnate Word, mighty-speared and lordly; In whose house did walk the good, beautiful, shining Ashi Vanguhi, in the shape of a maid fair of body, most strong, tall-formed, high-up girded, pure, nobly born of a glorious seed; who, rushing to the battle, knew how to make room for himself with his own arms; who, rushing to the battle, knew how to fight the foe with his own arms.

108. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vraspa, the son of Karesna; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Azata, the son of Karesna: We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frayaodha, the son of Karesna. We worship the Fravashi of the holy and good Arshya; Arshya, the chief in assemblies, the most energetic of the worshippers of Mazda.

109. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Arshvant; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vyarschant; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Paityarschant. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Anru; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Chamru. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Drratha; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Paal-dratha; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Paal-vangha. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Prasha-vakhsah. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Nemo-vanghu, the son of Vaoedhayangha.

110. We worship the Fravashi of the holy VIsadhah. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Asha-vanghu, the son of Bivandangha; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Jaro-danghu, the son of Pairishtra; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Neremyazdana, the son of Athwyoza. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Benezishnu, the son of Ara; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Kasupatu, the son of Ara. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frya. We worship the Fravashi of the holy ASTVAT-ERETA.

111. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Gaopi-vanghu. We worship the Fravashi of the holy and gallant Ham-bareta vangham. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Staatar-Vahhishtahe-Ashyehe. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Pouru-dhakhsthl, the son of Khshhtavaenya; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Khshoi-wraspa, the son of Khshhtavaenya. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Ayo-asti, the son of Pouru-dhakhsthl; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vohv-asti, the son of Pouru-dhakhsthl; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Gaya-dhastli, the son of Pouru-dhakhsthl; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Asha-vazdah, the son of Pouru-dhakhsthl; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Khshhoi-vraspa, the son of Khshhtavaenya.

112. We worship the Fravashi of the holy and gallant Karesna, the son of Fraya-zanta; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frenah, the son of Fraya-zanta; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Jaro-vanghu, the son of Fraya-zanta. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Ashahura, the son of Jisth; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Fraya-zanta; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frenah, the son of Fraya-zanta; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Jaro-vanghu, the son of Fraya-zanta. We worship the Fravashis of the holy Asha-vazdah and Thrla, the sons of Sayuzhstri.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vohu-raochah, the son of Varakasa.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Arejan-ghan, the Turanian.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Usinemah.

114. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Yukhtaspa.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Asha-skiyeothna, the son of Gayadhasi.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vohu-nemah, the son of Katu.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vohu-vazdah, the son of Katu.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Asha-saredha, the son of Asha-sairyach.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Asha-saredha, the son of Zairyach.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Chakhshni.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Syavaspi.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Pourushht, the son of Kavi.

115. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Varesmapa, the son of Janara.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Nanarasti, the son of Paeshatah.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Zarazdali, the son of Paeshatah.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Gaevani, the son of Vohu-nemah.
We worship the Fravashis of the holy Arezva and Sruta-spadha
We worship the Fravashis Of the holy Zrayah and Spento-khratu.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Varshni, the son of Vagerza.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frachya, the son of Taurvat.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vahmiae-data, the son of Mathravaka.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Ushtra, the son of Sadhanah.

116. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Danghu-sruta;
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Danghu-fradhah.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Aspo-padho-makhshiti;
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Payangho-makhshiti.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Ushlazanta.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Asha-savah,
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Asho-urvalah.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Haomo-ihvarenah.

117. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frava.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Ushnaka.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hvanvant.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Daeno-vazah.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Arejaona.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Awu-ihvarenah.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Huyazata.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hare-dhaspa.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Pazninah.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hvakhshathra.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Asho-paoiriya.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy ASTVA-ERETA.

XXVII.

118. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hugau.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Anghuyu.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Gaur.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Yushta, the son of Gauri [or, the holy Gaorayana].
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Mazdra-vanghu.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Srira-vanghu.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Ayuta.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Suro-yazata.

119. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Kavi.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Ukhshan, the son of the great Vidi-sravah, known afar.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vanghu-dhata, the son of Hvidhata.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Uzya, the son of Vanghu-dhata.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frya.
120. We worship the Fravashi of the holy one whose name is Ashem-yenhe-raochau;
We worship the Fravashi of the holy one whose name is Ashem-yenhe-vereza;
We worship the Fravashi of the holy one whose name is Ashem-yahmai-ushta.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Osmanara, the son of Paeshatah Paitsirir, to withstand the evil done by one's kindred.
121. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Spliti, the son of Uspasnu;
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Ererezasp, the son of Uspasnu.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Usadhan, the son of Mazdayasna.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Fradat-vanghu, the son of Stivant.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Raochas-chaeshman;
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hvare-chaeshman
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Fradat-nara, the son of Gravaratu.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vovu-ushtira, the son of Akhngaha.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Barema. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vsrutara.
122. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hvaspa; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Chathwaraspa.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Dawa-maeshi.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Fraora-stra [Fraoraosa], the son of Kaosha.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frimaspia, the son of Kaeva.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Fradat-nara, the son of Gravaratu.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vohu-ushtira, the son of Akhngaha.
123. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frarazi, the son of Tura.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Stipi, the son of Ravant.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Parshanta, the son of Gandarewa.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Aeta [Aetava], the son of Mayu [Mayava].
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Ysetush-gau, the son of Vyatana.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Garshita, the son of Kavi.
124. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Pouru-bangha, the son of Zaosha.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vohu-data, the son of Kata.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Baungha, the son of Sauingha [Saunghangha].
We worship the Fravashis of the holy Vhareza and Ankasa.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Aravaosta, the son of Erezvat-danghu.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frachithra, the son of Berezvant.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vohu-perusa, the son of Anyu.
125. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Paro-adama, the son of Dashaghtni, a Miza [Muzha] man of the Miza [Muzha] land.
We worship the Fravashis of the holy Fratira [Fratura] and Baeshatastra [Baeshatastura].
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Avar-e-gau, the son of Aoighimatastra [Aoikhmatastura].
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Gaomant, the son of Zavan, a Raokdyya man of the Raokdyya land.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Thmt, the son of Avo-saredha-fyaeshta, a Tanya man of the Tanya land.
126. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Tiro-nakatha, of the Uspaeshta-Saena house.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Ulayu Vt-kavi, the son of Zigghi, of the Saena house;
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Frohakafria, the son of Merezhshyna, of the Saena house.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Varesmo-raochah, the son of Perethu-axtem.
127. We worship the Fravashis of the holy Asha-nemah and Vidat-gau, of this country.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Par-shat-gau and Dazgara-gau, of the Apakhsha country.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hufra-vakhsh, of the Kahrkana house.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Akayadha, of the Pitha house.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Jamaspa, the younger.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Maidhyo-maungha, the younger.
128. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Raochas-chaeshman;
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hvare-chaeshman;
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Fradat-hvarenah;
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Varedat-hvarenah [Vidhat-hvarenah];
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vouru-nemah;
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vouru-savah;
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Ukhshyat-ereta;
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Ukhshyat-nemah;
We worship the Fravashi of the holy ASTVAT-ERETA;

**XXVIII.**

129. Whose name will be the victorious SAOSHYANT and whose name will be Astvat-ereta. He will be SAOSHYANT (the Beneficent One), because he will benefit the whole bodily world; he will be ASTVAT-ERETA (he who makes the bodily creatures rise up), because as a bodily creature and as a living creature he will stand against the destruction of the bodily creatures, to withstand the Druj of the two-footed brood, to withstand the evil done by the faithful.

**XXIX.**

130. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Yima, the son of Vivanghant; the valiant Yima, who had flocks at his wish; to stand against the oppression caused by the Daevas, against the drought that destroys pastures, and against death that creeps unseen.

131. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Thraetaona, of the Athwya house; to stand against itch, hot fever, humours, cold fever, and incontinency, to stand against the evil done by the Serpent.

We worship the Fravashi of the holy Aoshnara, the son of Pouru-jira.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Uzava, the son of Tumaspa.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Aghraeratha, the demi-man.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Manushchithra, the son of Airyu.

132. We worship the Fravashi of the holy king Kavata;
We worship the Fravashi of the holy king Apivanghu;
We worship the Fravashi of the holy king Usadhan;
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Arshan;
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Pisana [Pisinah];
We worship the Fravashi of the holy king Byarshan;
We worship the Fravashi of the holy king Syavarshan;
We worship the Fravashi of the holy king Husravah [Haosravah];

133. For the well-shaped Strength, for the Victory made by Ahura, for the crushing Ascendant for the righteousness of the law, for the innocence of the law, for the unconquerable power of the law; for the extermination of the enemies at one stroke;

134. And for the vigour of health, for the Glory made by Mazda, for the health of the body, and for a good, virtuous offspring, wise, chief in assemblies, bright, and clear-eyed, that frees [their father] from the pangs [of hell], of good intellect; and for that part in the blessed world that falls to wisdom and to those who do not follow impiety;

135. For a dominion full of splendour, for a long, long life, and for all boons and remedies; to withstand the Yatus and Pairikas, the oppressors, the blind, and the deaf; to withstand the evil done by oppressors.

136. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Keresaspa, the Sama, the club-bearer with plaited hair; to withstand the dreadful arm and the hordes with the wide battle array, with the many spears, with the straight spears, with the spears uplifted, bearing the spears of havoc; to withstand the dreadful brigand who works destruction, the man-slayer who has no mercy; to withstand the evil done by the brigand.

137. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Akhrura, the son of Husravah; To withstand the wicked one that deceives his friend and the niggard that causes the destruction of the world. We worship the Fravashi of the holy and gallant Haoshyantha; To withstand the Mazainya Daevas and the Varenya fiends; to withstand the evil done by the Daevas.

138. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Fradhakhshti, the son of the jar, To withstand Aeshma, the fiend of the wounding spear, and the Daevas that grow through Aeshma; to withstand the evil done by Aeshma.

**XXX.**

139. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hvovi. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Freni; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Thtit; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Pouruchista. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Hutosca; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Huma [Humaya]. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Zairichi. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Vspa-taurvashi. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Ush電視. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Tushnamai. We worship the Fravashi of the holy huov.

140. We worship the Fravashi of the holy Freni, the wife of Usenemah; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Freni, the wife of the son of Frayazanta; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Freni, the wife of the son of Khshoiwraspa; We worship the Fravashi of the holy Freni, the wife of Gayadhisti.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Asabani [Asabana], the wife of Pourudakhsti.
We worship the Fravashi of the holy Ukhshyeinti, the wife of Staotar-Vahishtahe-Ashyehe.

141. We worship the Fravashi of the holy maid Vadhut. We worship the Fravashi of the holy maid Jaghrudh. We worship the Fravashi of the holy maid Vanghu-fedhri; We worship the Fravashi of the holy maid Eredat-fedhri, who is called Vispa-taurvairi. She is Vispa-taurvairi (the all-destroying) because she will bring him forth, who will destroy the malice of Daevas and men, to withstand the evil done by the Jahi.

142. We worship the Fravashis of the holy men in the Aryan countries; We worship the Fravashis of the holy women in the Aryan countries. We worship the Fravashis of the holy men in the Turanian countries; We worship the Fravashis of the holy women in the Turanian countries. We worship the Fravashis of the holy men in the Sairmyan countries; We worship the Fravashis of the holy women in the Sairmyan countries. We worship the Fravashis of the holy men in the Dahi countries; We worship the Fravashis of the holy women in the Dahi countries. We worship the Fravashis of the holy men in all countries; We worship the Fravashis of the holy women in all countries.

143. We worship all the good, awful, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful, from Gayomard down to the victorious Saoshyant. May the Fravashis of the faithful come quickly to us! May they come to our help! They protect us when in distress with manifest assistance, with the assistance of Ahura Mazda and of the holy, powerful Sraosha, and with the Mathra-Spenta, the all-knowing, who hates the Daevas with a mighty hate, a friend of Ahura Mazda, whom Zarathushtra worshipped so greatly in the material world.

144. May the good waters and the plants and the Fravashis of the faithful abide down here! May you be rejoiced and well received in this house! Here are the Athravans of the countries, thinking of good holiness. Our hands are lifted up for asking help, and for offering a sacrifice unto you, O most beneficent Fravashis!

145. We worship the Fravashis of all the holy men and holy women, whose souls are worthy of sacrifice, whose Fravashis are worthy of invocation. We worship the Fravashis of all the holy men and holy women, our sacrificing to whom makes us good in the eyes of Akura Mazda: of all those we have heard that Zarathushtra is the first and best, as a follower of Ahura and as a performer of the law.

146. We worship the spirit, conscience, perception, soul, and Fravashi of men of the primitive law, of the first who listened to the teaching (of Ahura), holy men and holy women, who struggled for holiness; we worship the spirit, conscience, perception, soul, and Fravashi of our next-of-kin, holy men and holy women, who struggled for holiness.

147. We worship the men of the primitive law who will be in these houses, boroughs, towns, and countries; We worship the men of the primitive law who have been in these houses, boroughs, towns, and countries; We worship the men of the primitive law who are in these houses, boroughs, towns, and countries.

148. We worship Zarathushtra, the lord and master of all the material world, the man of the primitive law; the wisest of all-beings, the best-ruling of all beings, the brightest of all beings, the most glorious of all beings, the most worthy of sacrifice amongst all beings, the most worthy of prayer amongst all beings, the most worthy of propitiation amongst all beings, the most worthy of glorification amongst all beings, whom we call well-desired and worthy of sacrifice and prayer as much as any being can be, in the perfection of his holiness.

149. We worship this earth; we worship those heavens; We worship those good things that stand between (the earth and the heavens) and that are worthy of sacrifice and prayer and are to be worshipped by the faithful man. We worship the souls of the wild beasts and of the tame.

150. We worship the souls of the holy men and women, born at any time, whose consciences struggle, or will struggle, or have struggled, for the good.

151. We worship the spirit, conscience, perception, soul, and Fravashi of the holy men and women who struggle, who will struggle, or who have struggled, and teach the Law and who have struggled for holiness.

152. We worship Zoroaster, the law of holiness; we worship the Law and all those who have struggled for holiness.

153. We worship this earth; we worship those heavens; We worship those good things that stand between (the earth and the heavens) and that are worthy of sacrifice and prayer and are to be worshipped by the faithful man.

154. We worship the Fravashis of the faithful, awful and overpowering, awful and victorious; the Fravashis of the men of the primitive law; the Fravashis of the next-of-kin; may these Fravashis come satisfied into this house, may they walk satisfied through this house!
157. May they, being satisfied, bless this house with the presence of the kind Ashi Vanguh! May they leave this house satisfied! May they carry back from here hymns and worship to the Maker, Ahura Mazda, and the Amesha-Spentas! May they not leave this house of us, the worshippers of Mazda, complaining!

158. Yatha ahu vairyo: The will of the Lord is the law of holiness....
I bless the sacrifice and prayer, and the strength and vigour of the awful, overpowering Fravashis of the faithful; of the Fravashis of the men of the primitive law; of the Fravashis of the next-of-kin.
Ashem Vohu: Holiness is the best of all good....
[Give] unto that man brightness and glory, .... give him the bright, all-happy, blissful abode of the holy Ones.
Avesta: Khorda Avesta

10. MIHR YASHT ("Hymn to Mithra")

This digital edition copyright © 1995 by Joseph H. Peterson. All rights reserved. Translated by James Darmesteter (From Sacred Books of the East, American Edition, 1898.) Spelling has been normalized to conform with other texts in this series.

This Yasht, one of the longest of the Avesta and one of the most interesting in a literary point of view, is not very instructive for mythology. It consists of long descriptive pieces, sometimes rather spirited, and of fervent prayers and invocations for mercy or protection. Originally Mithra was the god of the heavenly light (§§ 12, 50, 67, 104, 124 seq., 136 seq., etc.); and in that character he knows the truth, as he sees everything; he is therefore taken as a witness of truth, he is the preserver of oaths and good faith (§§ 2, 44 seq., 79 seq., 81 seq., etc.); he chastises those who break their promises and lie to Mithra, destroys their houses, and smites them in battle (§§ 17 seq., 28 seq., 35 seq., 47 seq., 99 seq., 105 seq., 112 seq., 128 seq., etc.).

Particularly interesting are §§ 115-118, as giving a sketch of moral hierarchy in Iran, and §§ 121-122, as being perhaps the source of the trials in the later Roman Mithraism. Cf. Vend. Intro. IV, 8 and Ormazd et Ahriman, §§ 59-61.

0. May Ahura Mazda be rejoiced!....
Ashem Vohu: Holiness is the best of all good:....
I confess myself a worshipper of Mazda, a follower of Zarathushtra, one who hates the Daevas, and obeys the laws of Ahura; For sacrifice, prayer, propitiation, and glorification unto [Havani], the holy and master of holiness:....
Unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, who has a thousand ears, ten thousand eyes, a Yazata invoked by his own name, and unto Rama Hvastra, Be propitiation, with sacrifice, prayer, propitiation, and glorification.
Yatha ahu vairyo: The will of the Lord is the law of holiness:....

I.

1. Ahura Mazda spake unto Spitama Zarathushtra, saying: 'Verily, when I created Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, O Spitama! I created him as worthy of sacrifice, as worthy of prayer as myself, Ahura Mazda.
2. 'The ruffian who lies unto Mithra brings death unto the whole country, injuring as much the faithful world as a hundred evil-doers could do. Break not the contract, O Spitama! neither the one that thou hadst entered into with one of the unfaithful, nor the one that thou hadst entered into with one of the faithful who is of thy own faith. For Mithra stands for both the faithful and the unfaithful.
3. 'Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, gives swiftness to the horses of those who lie not unto Mithra.
4. 'Fire, the son of Ahura Mazda, gives the straightest way to those who lie not unto Mithra.
5. 'For his brightness and glory, I will offer unto him a sacrifice worth being heard, namely, unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures.
6. 'I will offer up libations unto him, the lord of wide pastures, who gives a happy dwelling and a good dwelling to the Aryan nations.
7. 'We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, who is truth-speaking, a chief in assemblies, with a thousand ears, well-shapen, with ten thousand eyes, high, with full knowledge, strong, sleepless, and ever awake.

II.

8. 'We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, who is truth-speaking, a chief in assemblies, with a thousand ears, well-shapen, with ten thousand eyes, high, with full knowledge, strong, sleepless, and ever awake.

Notes:

1. Sirozah 1.16.
2. Cf. Yt8.50.
3. The Mithra-druj: one might also translate 'who breaks the contract,' as mithra, as a common noun, means 'a contract.'
4. Kayadhas; cf Yt1.19.
6. Cheerfulness at the head of the Chinwad bridge (Yasna 62.6 [61.17]; cf. Vend. 18.6).
7. The condition of the blessed in the next world.
8. Vanta, 'assistance, that is, making jâdangôi' (Yasna 62.1); jâdangôi is making a collection for the poor (Études Iraniennes, II, 155.)
9. As Yt1.22. [Yenghe Hatam prayer is imitated from Ys51.22.]
10. Perethu-vaêdhayana: sampûrnavittâram kâryanyâyânam Ny1.6
11. jaghñhûvañghem: this word, strangely enough, is generally translated 'who has most strong arms' (barishthabhujam); jaghûru is translated in the same way.
8. 'To whom the chiefs of nations offer up sacrifices, as they go to the field, against havocking hosts, against enemies coming in battle array, in the strife of conflicting nations.
9. 'On whichever side he has been worshipped first in the fulness of faith of a devoted heart, to that side turns Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, with the fiend-smiting wind, with the cursing thought of the wise. For his brightness and glory, I will offer him a sacrifice worth being heard....

III.
10. 'We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake.
11. 'Whom the horsemen worship on the back of their horses, begging swiftness for their teams, health for their own bodies, and that they may watch with full success those who hate them, smite down their foes, and destroy at one stroke their adversaries, their enemies, and those who hate them. For his brightness and glory, I will offer him a sacrifice worth being heard....

IV.
12. 'We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake;
13. 'Who first of the heavenly gods reaches over the Hara, before the undying, swift-horsed sun, who, foremost in a golden array, takes hold of the beautiful summits, and from thence looks over the abode of the Aryans with a beneficent eye.
14. 'Where the valiant chiefs draw up their many troops in array; where the high mountains, rich in pastures and waters, yield plenty to the cattle; where the deep lakes, with salt waters, stand; where wide-flowing rivers swell and hurry towards Ishkata and Pouruta, Mouru and Haroyu, the Gava-Sughdha and Hvairizem; for his brightness and glory, I will offer him a sacrifice worth being heard....

V.
17. 'We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake.
18. 'If the master of a house lies unto him, or the lord of a borough, or the lord of a town, or the lord of a province, then comes Mithra, angry and offended, and he breaks asunder the house, the borough, the town, the province; and the masters of the houses, the lords of the boroughs, the lords of the towns, the lords of the provinces, and the foremost men of the provinces. For his brightness and glory, I will offer him a sacrifice worth being heard....
20. 'Those who lie unto Mithra, however swift they may be running, cannot overtake; riding, cannot .... driving, cannot .... The spear that the foe of Mithra flings, darts backwards, for the number of the evil spells that the foe of Mithra works out.
21. 'And even though the spear be flung well, even though it reach the body, it makes no wound, for the number of the evil spells that the foe of Mithra works out. The wind drives away the spear that the foe of Mithra flings, for the number of the evil spells that the foe of Mithra works out. For his brightness and glory, I will offer him a sacrifice worth being heard....
VI.

22. "We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake;  
Who takes out of distress the man who has not lied unto him, who takes him out of death.

23. "Take us out of distress, take us out of distresses, O Mithra! as we have not lied unto thee. Thou bringest down terror upon the bodies of the men who lie unto Mithra; thou takest away the strength from their arms, being angry and all-powerful; thou tookest the swiftness from their feet, the eye-sight from their eyes, the hearing from their ears.

24. "Not the wound27 of the well-sharpened spear or of the flying arrow reaches that man to whom Mithra comes for help with all the strength of his soul, he, of the ten thousand spies, the powerful, all-seeing, undeceivable Mithra.

25. For his brightness and glory, I will offer him a sacrifice worth being heard....

VII.

25. "We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake;  
Who is lordly, deep, strong, and weal-giving; a chief in assemblies, pleased with prayers,28 high, holly clever, the incarnate Word, a warrior with strong arms;

26. "Who breaks the skulls of the Daevas, and is most cruel in exacting pains; the punisher of the men who lie unto Mithra, the withstander of the Pairikas; who, when not deceived, establisheth nations in supreme strength; who, when not deceived, establisheth nations in supreme victory;

27. "Who confounds the ways of the nation that delights in havoc, who turns away their Glory,29 takes away their strength for victory, blows them away helpless,30 and delivers them unto ten thousand strokes; he, of the ten thousand spies, the powerful, all-seeing, undeceivable Mithra.

28. For his brightness and glory, I will offer him a sacrifice worth being heard....

VIII.

28. "We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake;  
Who upholds the columns of the lofty house and makes its pillars31 solid; who gives herds of oxen and male children to that house in which he has been satisfied; he breaks to pieces those in which he has been offended.

29. "Thou, O Mithra! art both bad and good to nations; thou, O Mithra! art both bad and good to men; thou, O Mithra! keepest in thy hands both peace and trouble for nations.

30. "Thou makest houses large, beautiful with women, beautiful with chariots, with well-laid foundations, and high above their groundwork; thou maketh that house lofty, beautiful with women, beautiful with chariots, with well-laid foundations, and high above its groundwork, of which the master, pious and holding libations in his hand, offers thee a sacrifice, in which thou art invoked by thy own name and with the proper words.

31. "With a sacrifice, in which thou art invoked by thy own name, with the proper words will I offer thee libations, O powerful Mithra!  
With a sacrifice, in which thou art invoked by thy own name, with the proper words will I offer thee libations, O most beneficent Mithra!  
With a sacrifice, in which thou art invoked by thy own name, with the proper words will I offer thee libations, O thou undeceivable Mithra!

32. "Listen unto our sacrifice,34 O Mithra! Be thou pleased with our sacrifice, O Mithra! Come and sit at our sacrifice! Accept our libations! Accept them as they have been consecrated!35 Gather them together with love and lay them in the Garo-nmana!36

33. "Grant us these boons which we beg of thee, O powerful god! in accordance37 with the words of revelation, namely, riches, strength, and victory, good conscience and bliss,38 good fame and a good soul; wisdom and the knowledge that gives happiness,39 the victorious strength given by Ahura, the crushing Ascendant of Asha Vahishta, and conversation (with God) on the Holy Word.40

34. "Grant that we, in a good spirit and high spirit, exalted in joy and a good spirit, may smite all our foes; that we, in a good spirit and high spirit, exalted in joy and a good spirit, may smite all our enemies; that we, in a good spirit and high spirit, exalted in joy and a good spirit, may smite all the malice of Daevas and Men, of the Yatus and Pairikas, of the oppressors, the blind, and the deaf.41  
For his brightness and glory, I will offer him a sacrifice worth being heard....

IX.

35. "We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake:
"Victory-making, army-governing, endowed with a thousand senses; power-wielding, power-possessing, and all-knowing.

36. 'Who sets the battle a going, who stands against (armies) in battle, who, standing against (armies) in battle, breaks asunder the lines arrayed. The wings of the columns gone to battle shake, and he throws terror upon the centre of the havocking host.

37. 'He can bring and does bring down upon them distress and fear; he throws down the heads of those who lie unto Mithra, he takes off the heads of those who lie unto Mithra.

38. 'Sad is the abode, unpeopled with children, where abide men who lie unto Mithra, and, verily, the fiendish killer of faithful men. The grazing cow goes a sad straying way, driven along the vales of the Mithradrujes: they stand on the road, letting tears run over their chins.

39. 'Their falcon-feathered arrows, shot from the string of the well-bent bow, fly towards the mark, and hit it not, as Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, angry, offended, and unsatisfied, comes and meets them. Their spears, well whetted and sharp, their long spears fly from their hands towards the mark, and hit it not, as Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, angry, offended, and unsatisfied, comes and meets them. Their clubs, well falling and striking at the heads of men, hit not the mark, as Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, angry, offended, and unsatisfied, comes and meets them. Mithra strikes fear into them; Rashnu strikes a counter-fear into them; the holy Sraosha blows them away from every side toward the two Yazatas, the maintainers of the world.

40. 'Their swords, well thrust and striking at the heads of men, hit not the mark, as Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, angry, offended, and unsatisfied, comes and meets them. Their clubs, well falling and striking at the heads of men, hit not the mark, as Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, angry, offended, and unsatisfied, comes and meets them. Mithra strikes fear into them; Rashnu strikes a counter-fear into them; the holy Sraosha blows them away from every side toward the two Yazatas, the maintainers of the world. They make the ranks of the army melt away, as Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, angry, offended, and unsatisfied, comes and meets them.

41. 'Mithra strikes fear into them; Rashnu strikes a counter-fear into them; the holy Sraosha blows them away from every side toward the two Yazatas, the maintainers of the world. For his brightness and glory, I will offer him a sacrifice worth being heard....

X.

44. 'We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake; 'Whose dwelling, wide as the earth, extends over the material world, large, unconfined, and bright, a far-and-wide-extending abode.

45. 'Whose eight friends sit as spies for Mithra, on all the heights, at all the watching-places, observing the man who lies unto Mithra, looking at those, remembering those who have lied unto Mithra, but guarding the ways of those whose life is sought by men who lie unto Mithra, and, verily, by the fiendish killers of faithful men.

46. 'Helping and guarding, guarding behind and guarding in front, Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, proves an undeceivable spy and watcher for the man to whom he comes to help with all the strength of his soul, he of the ten thousand spies, the powerful, all-knowing, undeceivable god.

XI.

47. 'We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake; 'A god of high renown and old age, whom wide-hoofed horses carry against havocking hosts, against enemies coming in battle array, in the strife of conflicting nations.

48. 'And when Mithra drives along towards the havocking hosts, towards the enemies coming in battle array, in the strife of the conflicting nations, then he binds the hands of those who have lied unto Mithra, he confounds their eye-sight, he takes the hearing from their ears; they can no longer move their feet; they can no longer withstand those people, those foes, when Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, bears them ill-will.

XII.

49. 'We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake;
50. 'For whom the Maker, Ahura Mazda, has built up a dwelling on the Hara Berezaiti, the bright mountain around which the many (stars) revolve, where come neither night nor darkness, no cold wind and no hot wind, no deathful sickness, no uncleanness made by the Daevas, and the clouds cannot reach up unto the Haraiti Bareza.

51. 'A dwelling that all the Amesha-Spentas, in one accord with the sun, made for him in the fulness of faith of a devoted heart, and he surveys the whole of the material world from the Haraiti Bareza.

52. 'And when there rushes a wicked worker of evil, swiftly, with a swift step, Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, goes and yokes his horses to his chariot, along with the holy, powerful Sraosha and Nairyo-sangha, who strikes a blow that smites the army, that smites the strength of the malicious. For his brightness and glory, I will offer him a sacrifice worth being heard....

XIII.

53. 'We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake;

54. 'Who, with hands lifted up, ever cries unto Ahura Mazda, saying: "I am the kind keeper of all creatures, I am the kind maintainer of all creatures; yet men worship me not with a sacrifice in which I am invoked by my own name, as they worship the other Yazatas with sacrifices in which they are invoked by their own names."

55. "If men would worship me with a sacrifice in which I were invoked by my own name, as they worship the other Yazatas with sacrifices in which they are invoked by their own names, then I would come to the faithful at the appointed time; I would come in the appointed time of my beautiful, immortal life."

56. 'But the pious man, holding libations in his hands, does worship thee with a sacrifice, in which thou art invoked by thy own name, and with the proper words.

57. 'A sacrifice, in which thou art invoked by thy own name, with the proper words will I offer thee libations, O powerful Mithra!

58. 'With a sacrifice, in which thou art invoked by thy own name, with the proper words will I offer thee libations, O most beneficent Mithra!

59. 'With a sacrifice, in which thou art invoked by thy own name, with the proper words will I offer thee libations, O thou undeceivable Mithra!

60. 'Listen unto our sacrifice, 'O Mithra! Be thou pleased with our sacrifice, O Mithra! Come and sit at our sacrifice! Accept our libations! Accept them as they have been consecrated! Gather them together with love and lay them in the Garo-nmana (Heaven)!

61. 'Grant us these boons which we beg of thee, O powerful god! in accordance with the words of revelation, namely, riches, strength, and victory, good conscience and bliss, good fame and a good soul; wisdom and the knowledge that gives happiness, the victorious strength given by Ahura, the crushing Ascendant of Asha-Vahishta, and conversation (with God) on the Holy Word.

62. 'Grant that we, in a good spirit and high spirit, exalted in joy and a good spirit, may smite all our foes; that we, in a good spirit and high spirit, exalted in joy and a good spirit, may smite all the malice of Daevas and Men, of the Yatus and Pairikas, of the oppressors, the blind, and the deaf.

XIV.

63. 'We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake;

64. 'Who renoun is good, whose shape is good, whose glory is good; who has boons to give at his will, who has pasture-fields to give at his will; harmless to the tiller of the ground, .... beneficent; he, of the ten thousand spies, the powerful, all-knowing, undeceivable god.

65. For his brightness and glory, I will offer him a sacrifice worth being heard....

XV.

66. 'We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake;

67. 'Firm-legged, a watcher fully awake; valiant, a chief in assemblies; making the waters flow forward; listening to appeals; making the waters run and the plants grow up; ruling over the karshwars; delivering; happy; undeceivable; endowed with many senses; a creature of wisdom; Yt62.5).

68. 'Who gives neither strength nor vigour to him who has lied unto Mithra; who gives neither glory nor any boon to him who has lied unto Mithra.

69. 'Thou takest away the strength from their arms, being angry and all-powerful; thou takest the swiftness from their feet, the eye-sight from their eyes, the hearing from their ears.

70. 'Not the wound of the well-sharpened spear or of the flying arrow reaches that man to whom Mithra comes for help with all the strength of his soul, he, of the ten-thousand spies, the powerful all-knowing, undeceivable god.
"For his brightness and glory, I will offer him a sacrifice worth being heard...."

XVI.

64. "We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake;
Who takes possession of the beautiful, wide-expanding law, greatly and powerfully, and whose face looks over all the seven karshwars of the earth;
65. Who is swift amongst the swift, liberal amongst the liberal, strong amongst the strong, a chief of assembly amongst the chiefs of assemblies; increase-giving, fatness-giving, cattle-giving, sovereignty-giving, son-giving, cheerfulness-giving, and bliss-giving.
66. "With whom proceed Ashi Vanguh, and Parendi on her light chariot, the awful Manly Courage, the awful kingly Glory, the awful Sovereign Sky, the awful cursing thought of the wise, the awful Fravashis of the faithful, and he who keeps united together the many faithful worshippers of Mazda." For his brightness and glory, I will offer him a sacrifice worth being heard....

XVII.

67. "We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake;
Who drives along on his high-wheeled chariot, made of a heavenly substance, from the Karshvare [keshwar] of Arezahi to the Karshvare of Xwaniratha, the bright one; accompanied by the wheel of sovereignty, the Glory made by Mazda, and the Victory made by Ahura;
68. "Whose chariot is embraced by the great Ashi Vanguh; to whom the Law of Mazda opens a way, that he may go easily; whom four heavenly steeds, white, shining, seen afar, beneficent, endowed with knowledge, swiftly carry along the heavenly space, while the cursing thought of the wise pushes it forward;
69. "From whom all the Daevas unseen and the Varenya fiends flee away in fear. Oh! may we never fall across the rush of the angry lord, who goes and rushes from a thousand sides against his foe, he, of the ten thousand spies, the powerful, all-knowing, undeceivable god.
For his brightness and glory, I will offer him a sacrifice worth being heard....

XVIII.

70. "We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake;
Before whom Verethraghna, made by Ahura, runs opposing the foes in the shape of a boar, a sharp-toothed he-boar, a sharp-jawed boar, that kills at one stroke, pursuing, wrathful, with a dripping face; strong, with iron feet, iron fore-paws, iron weapons, an iron tail, and iron jaws;
71. "Who, eagerly clinging to the fleeing foe, along with Manly Courage, smites the foe in battle, and does not think he has smitten him, nor does he consider it a blow till he has smitten away the marrow and the column of life, the marrow and the spring of existence.
72. "He cuts all the limbs to pieces, and mingles, together with the earth, the bones, hair, brains, and blood of the men who have lied unto Mithra.
For his brightness and glory, we offer him a sacrifice worth being heard....

XIX.

73. "We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake;
Who, with hands lifted up, rejoicing, cries out, speaking thus:
74. "O Ahura Mazda, most beneficent spirit! Maker of the material world, thou Holy One!
"If men would worship me with a sacrifice in which I were invoked by my own name, as they worship the other gods with sacrifices in which they are invoked by their own names, then I should come to the faithful at the appointed time; I should come in the appointed time of my beautiful, immortal life."
75. "May we keep our field; may we never be exiles from our field, exiles from our house, exiles from our borough, exiles from our town, exiles from our country.
81. See above, § 13, note 20.
82. See Yt13.89, note.
83. Or 'invisible."
85. Anupôithwa; cf. pôithwa (Vd14) = râînînishn.
86. Literally, hands.
87. Doubtful.
88. See Yt10.6, note 1.
89. See Vend. Introd. IV, 23.
90. Cf. § 96.
91. Cf. § 98.
76. "Thou dashest in pieces the malice of the malicious, the malice of the men of malice: dash thou in pieces the killers of faithful men!

77. I will pray unto thee for help, with many consecrations, with good consecrations of libations; with many offerings, with good offerings of libations, that we, abiding in thee, may long inhabit a good abode, full of all the riches that can be wished for.

78. Thou keepest those nations that tender a good worship to Mithra, the lord of wide pastures; thou dashest in pieces those that delight in havoc. Unto thee will I pray for help: may he come to us for help, the awful, most powerful Mithra, the worshipful and praiseworthy, the glorious lord of nations.

79. 'We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake;

80. 'Who made a dwelling for Rashnu, and to whom Rashnu gave all his soul for long friendship;

81. 'To whom Ahura Mazda gave a thousand senses and ten thousand eyes to see. With those eyes and those senses, he watches the man who injures Mithra, the man who lies unto Mithra. Through those eyes and those senses, he is undeceivable, he, of the ten thousand spies, the powerful, all-knowing, undeceivable god.

82. 'The voice of his wailing reaches up to the sky, it goes over the earth all around, it goes over the seven karshwars, whether he utters his prayer in a low tone of voice or aloud.

83. 'And to him with whom Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, has been satisfied, he comes with help; and of him with whom Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, has been offended, he crushes down the house, the borough, the town, the province, the country.

84. 'For his brightness and glory, I will offer him a sacrifice worth being heard....

XX.

85. 'We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake;

86. 'To whom the enlivening, healing, fair, lordly, golden-eyed Haoma offered up a sacrifice on the highest of the heights, on the Haraiti Bareza, he the undefiled to one

87. 'The cow driven astray invokes him for help, longing for the stables:

88. 'And to him with whom Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, has been satisfied, he comes with help; and of him with whom Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, has been offended, he crushes down the house, the borough, the town, the province, the country.

XXI.

89. 'We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake;

90. 'To whom the enlivening, healing, fair, lordly, golden-eyed Haoma offered up a sacrifice on the highest of the heights, on the Haraiti Bareza, he the undefiled to one

91. 'The voice of his wailing reaches up to the sky, it goes over the earth all around, it goes over the seven karshwars, whether he utters his prayer in a low tone of voice or aloud.

92. 'And to him with whom Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, has been satisfied, he comes with help; and of him with whom Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, has been offended, he crushes down the house, the borough, the town, the province, the country.

XXII.

93. 'We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake;

94. 'To whom the enlivening, healing, fair, lordly, golden-eyed Haoma offered up a sacrifice on the highest of the heights, on the Haraiti Bareza, he the undefiled to one

95. 'The voice of his wailing reaches up to the sky, it goes over the earth all around, it goes over the seven karshwars, whether he utters his prayer in a low tone of voice or aloud.

96. 'And to him with whom Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, has been satisfied, he comes with help; and of him with whom Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, has been offended, he crushes down the house, the borough, the town, the province, the country.

XXIII.
undefiled, with undefiled baresma, undefiled libations, and undefiled words;

89. "Whom the holy Ahura Mazda has established as a priest, quick in performing the sacrifice and loud in song. He performed the sacrifice with a loud voice, as a priest quick in sacrifice and loud in song, a priest to Ahura Mazda, a priest to the Amesha-Spentas. His voice reached up to the sky, went over the earth all around, went over the seven keshwans.

90. "Who first lifted up Haoma, in a mortar inlaid with stars and made of a heavenly substance. Ahura Mazda longed for him, the Amesha-Spentas longed for him, for the well-slapen body of him whom the swift-horsed sun awakes for prayer from afar.  

91. "Hail to Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, who has a thousand ears and ten thousand eyes! Thou art worthy of sacrifice and prayer; mayest thou have sacrifice and prayer in the houses of men! Hail to the man who shall offer thee a sacrifice, with the holy wood in his hand, the baresma in his hand, the holy meat in his hand, the holy mortar in his hand, with his hands well-washed, with the mortar well-washed, with the bundles of baresma tied up, the Haoma uplifted, and the Ahuna Vairya sung through.

92. "The holy Ahura Mazda confessed that religion and so did Vohu-Mano, so did Asha-Vahishta, so did Khshathra-Vairya, so did Spenta-Armaiti, so did Haurvatat and Ameratet; and all the Amesha-Spentas longed for and confessed his religion. The kind Mazda conferred upon him the mastership of the world; and [so did they] who saw thee amongst all creatures the right lord and master of the world, the best cleanser of these creatures.

93. "So mayest thou in both worlds, mayest thou keep us in both worlds, O Mithra, lord of wide pastures! both in this material world and in the world of the spirit, from the fiend of Death, from the fiend Aeshma, from the fiendish hordes, that lift up the spear of havoc, and from the onsets of Aeshma, wherein the evil-doing Aeshma rushes along with Vidotu, made by the Daevas.

94. "So mayest thou, O Mithra, lord of wide pastures! give swiftness to our teams, strength to our own bodies, and that we may watch with full success those who hate us, smite down our foes, and destroy at one stroke our adversaries, our enemies and those who hate us.  

'For his brightness and glory, I will offer him a sacrifice worth being heard....

XXIV.

95. "We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake;  

'Who goes over the earth, all her breadth over, after the setting of the sun, touches both ends of this wide, round earth, whose ends lie afar, and surveys everything that is between the earth and the heavens.

96. "Swinging in his hands a club with a hundred knots, a hundred edges, that rushes forwards and falls men down; a club cast out of red brass, of strong, golden brass; the strongest of all weapons, the most victorious of all weapons.

97. "From whom Angra Mainyu, who is all death, flees away in fear; from whom Aeshma, the evil-doing Peshotanu, flees away in fear; from whom the long-handed Bushyasta flees away in fear; from whom all the Daevas unseen and the Varenya fiends flee away in fear.

98. "Oh! may we never fall across the rush of Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, when in anger! May Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, never smite us in his anger; he who stands up upon this earth as the strongest of all gods, the most valiant of all gods, the most energetic of all gods, the swiftest of all gods, the most fiend-smiting of all gods, he, Mithra, the lord of wide pastures.  

'For his brightness and glory, I will offer him a sacrifice worth being heard....

XXV.

99. "We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake;  

'From whom all the Daevas unseen and the Varenya fiends flee away in fear.  

The lord of nations, Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, drives forward at the right-hand side of this wide, round earth, whose ends lie afar.

100. "At his right hand drives the good, holy Sraosha; at his left hand drives the tall and strong Rashnu; on all sides around him drive the waters, the plants, and the Fravashis of the faithful.

101. "In his might, he ever brings to them falcon-feathered arrows, and, when diving, he himself comes there, where are nations, enemy to Mithra, he, first and foremost, strikes blows with his club on the horse and his rider; he throws fear and fright upon the horse and his rider.  

'For his brightness and glory, I will offer him a sacrifice worth being heard....

XXVI.

102. "We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake;  

'The warrior of the white horse, of the sharp spear, the long spear, the quick arrows; foreseeing and clever.

103. "Whom Ahura Mazda has established to maintain and look over all this moving world, and who maintains and looks over all this moving world; who, never sleeping, wakefully guards the creation of Mazda; who, never sleeping, wakefully maintains the creation of Mazda;
For his brightness and glory, I will offer him a sacrifice worth being heard....

XXVII.

104. 'We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake;
Whose long arms, strong with Mithra-strength, encompass what he seizes in the easternmost river and what he beats with the westernmost river, what is by the Sanaka of the Rangha and what is by the boundary of the earth.
105. 'And thou, O Mithra, encompassing all this around, do thou reach it, all over, with thy arms.
The man without glory, led astray from the right way, grieves in his heart; the man without glory thinks thus in himself: "That careless Mithra does not see all the evil that is done, nor all the lies that are told."
106. 'But I think thus in my heart:
"Should the evil thoughts of the earthly man be a hundred times worse, they would not rise so high as the good thoughts of the heavenly Mithra;
"Should the evil words of the earthly man be a hundred times worse, they would not rise so high as the good words of the heavenly Mithra;
"Should the evil deeds of the earthly man be a hundred times worse, they would not rise so high as the good deeds of the heavenly Mithra;
"Should the evil wisdom of the earthly man be a hundred times greater, it would not rise so high as the heavenly wisdom in the heavenly Mithra;
"And thus, should the ears of the earthly man hear a hundred time better, he would not hear so well as the heavenly Mithra, whose ear hears well who has a thousand senses, and sees every man that tells a lie."
Mithra stands up in his strength; he drives in the awfulness of royalty, and sends from his eyes beautiful looks that shine from afar, (saying):
108. "Who will offer me a sacrifice? Who will lie unto me? Who thinks me a god worthy of a good sacrifice? Who thinks me worthy only of a bad sacrifice? To whom shall I, in my might, impart brightness and glory? To whom bodily health? To whom shall I, in my might, impart riches and full weal? Whom shall I bless by raising him a virtuous offspring?
109. "To whom shall I give in return, without his thinking of it, the awful sovereignty, beautifully arrayed, with many armies, and most perfect; the sovereignty of an all-powerful tyrant, who falls down heads, valiant, smiting, and unsmiten; who orders chastisement to be done and his order is done at once, which he has ordered in his anger?"
O Mithra! when thou art offended and not satisfied, he soothes thy mind, and makes Mithra satisfied.
110. "To whom shall I, in my might, impart sickness and death? To whom shall I impart poverty and sterility? Of whom shall I at one stroke cut off the offspring?
111. "From whom shall I take away, without his thinking of it, the awful sovereignty, beautifully arrayed, with many armies, and most perfect; the sovereignty of an all-powerful tyrant, who falls down heads, valiant, smiting, and unsmiten; who orders chastisement to be done and his order is done at once, which he has ordered in his anger?"
O Mithra! while thou art satisfied and not angry, he moves thy heart to anger, and makes Mithra unsatisfied.
For his brightness and glory, I will offer him a sacrifice worth being heard....

XXVIII.

112. 'We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake;
A warrior with a silver helm, a golden cuirass, who kills with the poniard, strong, valiant, lord of the borough. Bright are the ways of Mithra, by which he goes towards the country, when, wishing well, he turns its plains and vales to pasture grounds,
113. 'And then cattle and males come to graze, as many as he wants.
May Mithra and Ahura, the high gods, come to us for help, when the poniard lifts up its voice aloud, when the nostrils of the horses quiver, when the poniards ..... when the strings of the bows whistle and shoot sharp arrows; then the brood of those whose libations are hated fall smitten to the ground, with their hair torn off.
114. 'So mayest thou, O Mithra, lord of wide pastures! give swiftness to our teams, strength to our own bodies, and that we may watch with full success those who hate us, smite down our foes, and destroy at one stroke our adversaries, our enemies, and those who hate us.
For his brightness and glory, I will offer him a sacrifice worth being heard....

XXIX.

115. 'We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake;
O Mithra, lord of wide pastures! thou master of the house, of the borough, of the town, of the country, thou Zarathushtrotema!
116. 'Mithra is twentyfold between two friends or two relations;
Mithra is thirtyfold between two men of the same group;
Mithra is fortyfold between two partners;
Mithra is fiftyfold between wife and husband;
Mithra is sixtyfold between two pupils (of the same master);
Mithra is seventyfold between the pupil and his master;
Mithra is eightyfold between the son-in-law and his father-in-law;
Mithra is ninetyfold between two brothers;
117. 'Mithra is a hundredfold between the father and the son; 
'Mithra is a thousandfold between two nations; 'Mithra is ten thousandfold when connected with the Law of Mazda, and then he will be every day of victorious strength.

118. 'May I come unto thee with a prayer that goes lowly or goes highly! As this sun rises up above the Hara Berezaiti and then fulfills its career, so may I, O Spitamai! with a prayer that goes lowly or goes highly, rise up above the will of the fiend Angra Mainyu! 
'For his brightness and glory, I will offer him a sacrifice worth being heard....

XXX.

119. 'We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake, 
'Offer up a sacrifice unto Mithra, O Spitamai! and order thy pupils to do the same. 
'Let the worshipper of Mazda sacrifice unto thee with small cattle, with black cattle, with flying birds, gliding forward on wings.

120. 'To Mithra all the faithful worshippers of Mazda must give strength and energy with offered and profiered Haomas, which the Zaatar proffers unto him and gives in sacrifice. Let the faithful man drink of the libations cleanly prepared, which if he does, if he offers them unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, Mithra will be pleased with him and without anger.'

121. Zarathushtra asked him: 'O Ahura Mazda! how shall the faithful man drink the libations cleanly prepared, which if he does and he offers them unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, Mithra will be pleased with him and without anger?'

122. Ahura Mazda answered: 'Let them wash their bodies three days and three nights; let them undergo thirty strokes for the sacrifice and prayer unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures. Let them wash their bodies two days and two nights; let them undergo twenty strokes for the sacrifice and prayer unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures. Let no man drink of these libations who does not know the staota yesnya: Vispe ratavo. 
'For his brightness and glory, I will offer him a sacrifice worth being heard....

XXXI.

123. 'We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, .... sleepless, and ever awake; 
'To whom Ahura Mazda offered up a sacrifice in the shining Garo-nmana.

124. 'With his arms lifted up towards Immortality, Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, drives forward from the shining Garo-nmana, in a beautiful chariot that drives on, ever-swift, adorned with all sorts of ornaments, and made of gold.

125. 'Four stallions draw that chariot, all of the same white colour, living on heavenly food and undying. The hoofs of their fore-feet are shod with gold, the hoofs of their hind-feet are shod with silver; all are yoked to the same pole, and wear the yoke and the cross-beams of the yoke, fastened with hooks of Khshathra vairya to a beautiful....

126. 'At his right hand drives Rashnu-Razishta, the most beneficent and most well-shapen. 
'At his left hand drives the most upright Chista, the holy one, bearing libations in her hands, clothed with white clothes, and white herself; and the cursing thought of the Law of Mazda. 127. 'Close by him drives the strong cursing thought of the wise man, opposing foes in the shape of a boar, a sharp-toothed he-boar, a sharp-jawed boar, that kills at one stroke, pursuing, wrathful, with a dripping face, strong and swift to run, and rushing all around. 
'Behind him drives Atar, all in a blaze, and the awful kingly Glory.

128. 'On a side of the chariot of Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, stand a thousand vulture-feathered arrows, with a golden mouth, with a horn shaft, with a brass tail, and well-made. They go through the heavenly space, they fall through the heavenly space upon the skulls of the Daevas.

129. 'On a side of the chariot of Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, stand a thousand spears well-made and sharp-piercing. They go through the heavenly space, they fall through the heavenly space upon the skulls of the Daevas.

130. 'On a side of the chariot of Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, stand a thousand steel-hammers, two-edged, well-made. They go through the heavenly space, they fall through the heavenly space upon the skulls of the Daevas.

131. 'On a side of the chariot of Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, stand a thousand swords, two-edged and well-made. They go through the heavenly space, they fall through the heavenly space upon the skulls of the Daevas.

132. 'On a side of the chariot of Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, stand a thousand maces of iron, well-made. They go through the heavenly space, they fall through the heavenly space upon the skulls of the Daevas.

133. 'Angra Mainyu, who is all death, flees away in fear; Aeshma, the evil-doing Peshotanu, flees away in fear; the long-handed Bushyasta flees away in fear; all the Daeva unseen and the Varenya fiends flee away in fear. 134. 'Oh! may we never fall across the rush of Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, when in anger! May Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, never smite us in his anger; he who stands up upon this earth as the strongest of all gods, the most valiant of all gods, the most energetic of all gods, the swiftest of all gods, the most fiend-smitting of all gods,
he, Mithra, the lord of wide pastures.  
"For his brightness and glory, I will offer him a sacrifice worth being heard....

XXXII.

136. 'We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, ... sleepless, and ever awake; 
"For whom white stallions, yoked to his chariot, draw it, on one golden wheel, with a full shining axle.
137. 'If Mithra takes his libations to his own dwelling, "Happy that man, I think," -- said Ahura Mazda, "O holy Zarathushtra! for whom a holy priest, as pious as any in the world, who is the Word incarnate, offers up a sacrifice unto Mithra with bundles of baresma and with the [proper] words. 
"Straight to that man, I think, will Mithra come, to visit his dwelling,
138. "When Mithra's boons will come to him, as he follows God's teaching, and thinks according to God's teaching. 
"Woe to that man, I think," - said Ahura Mazda, - "O holy Zarathushtra! for whom an unholy priest, not pious, who is not the Word incarnate, stands behind the baresma, however full may be the bundles of baresma he ties, however long may be the sacrifice he performs."
139. 'He does not delight Ahura Mazda, nor the other Amesha-Spentas, nor Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, he who thus scorns Mazda, and the other Amesha-Spentas, and Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, and the Law, and Rashnu, and Arsat, who makes the world grow, who makes the world increase.
"For his brightness and glory, I will offer him a sacrifice worth being heard....

XXXIII.

140. 'We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, ... sleepless, and ever awake. 
'I will offer up a sacrifice unto the good Mithra, O Spitama! unto the strong, heavenly god, who is foremost, highly merciful, and peerless; whose house is above, a stout and strong warrior;
141. 'Victorious and armed with a well-fashioned weapon, watchful in darkness and undeceivable. He is the stoutest of the stoutest, he is the strongest of the strongest, he is the most intelligent of the gods, he is victorious and endowed with Glory: he, of the ten thousand eyes, of the ten thousand spies, the powerful, all-knowing, undeceivable god.
"For his brightness and glory, I will offer him a sacrifice worth being heard....

XXXIV.

142. 'We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, ... sleepless, and ever awake; 
'Who, with his manifold knowledge, powerfully increases the creation of Spenta Mainyu, and is a well-created and most great Yazata, self-shining like the moon, when he makes his own body shine;
143. 'Whose face is flashing with light like the face of the star Tistrya; whose chariot is embraced by that goddess who is foremost amongst those who have no deceit in them, O Spitama! who is fairer than any creature in the world, and full of light to shine. I will worship that chariot, wrought by the Maker, Ahura Mazda, inlaid with stars and made of a heavenly substance; (the chariot) of Mithra, who has ten thousand spies, the powerful, all-knowing, undeceivable god. 
"For his brightness and glory, I will offer him a sacrifice worth being heard....

XXXV.

144. 'We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, who is truth-speaking, a chief in assemblies, with a thousand ears, well-shapen, with a thousand eyes, high, with full knowledge, strong, sleepless, and ever awake. 
'We sacrifice unto the Mithra around countries; 
'We sacrifice unto the Mithra within countries;
'We sacrifice unto the Mithra in this country; 
'We sacrifice unto the Mithra above countries; 
'We sacrifice unto the Mithra under countries; 
'We sacrifice unto the Mithra before countries; 
'We sacrifice unto the Mithra behind countries.
145. 'We sacrifice unto Mithra and Ahura, the two great, imperishable, holy gods; and unto the stars, and the moon, and the sun, with the trees that yield up baresma. We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of all countries.
"For his brightness and glory, I will offer unto him a sacrifice worth being heard, namely, unto Mithra, the lord of wide pastures.
"Yatha ahu vairyo: The will of the Lord is the law of holiness...
'I bless the sacrifice and prayer, and the strength and vigour of Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, who has a thousand ears, ten thousand eyes, a Yazata invoked by his own name; and that of Rama Hvastra. 
"Ashem Vohu: Holiness is the best of all good...
'[Give] unto that man brightness and glory,... give him the bright, all-happy, blissful abode of the holy Ones!"
Concerning this Pahlavi text, Mary Boyce has written,

"A much more important and fundamental work of compilation is the Bundahishn ("Creation"), also called Zand-agahi ("Knowledge from the Zand"), which survives in two recensions, the Great (or Iranian) Bundahishn and a shortened version, the Indian Bundahishn (deriving from a different MS. tradition). One of the two great Zoroastrian compilations, this work probably grew through different redactions, from some time after the Arab conquest down to 1178 A.C. (when a few additions were made in imperfect Middle Persian). The last important redaction belongs to about the end of the 9th century. The Bundahishn has three main themes: creation, the nature of earthly creatures, and the Kayanians (their lineage and abodes, and the vicissitudes befalling their realm of Eranshahr). The compiler does not name individual sources; but shows an encyclopaedic knowledge of the Zand, and exemplifies excellently the process whereby treatises on chosen themes were created out of the scriptures. Many passages evidently derive fairly closely from the Middle Persian translation, for an Avestan syntax underlies them and one section consists simply of the translation of the 1st chapter of the Vendidad coinciding (except in small details) with the canonical Zand. Glosses and commentaries provide part of the continuous text, and in these, foreign learning is adduced. There are also a few isolated attempts to bring the work up to date, by the identification of traditional (and even mythical) geographical names with Arabic ones. In the main, however, the absorbing interest of the Bd. lies in the antiquity of its material. Here is preserved an ancient, in part pre-Zoroastrian picture of the world, conceived as saucer-shaped, with its rim one great mountain-range, a central peak thrusting up, star-encircled, to cut off the light of the sun by night; a world girdled by two great rivers, from which all other waters flow; in which yearly the gods fight against demons to end drought and famine, and to bring protection to man. Natural phenomena are speculatively explained; the sprouting of the plants, for example, is ascribed to the mythical Tree of All Seeds growing in the ocean, whose seeds are mingled with water and so scattered annually over all the earth when the god Tishtar brings the rains. Not only is the matter ancient and often poetic, but the manner of presentation, although arid, is of great antiquarian interest; for after the distinctively Zoroastrian account of creation, the speculative learning and legendary history is set out in traditional oral fashion, that is to say, in schematised mnemonic lists: so many types of animals, so many kinds of liquid, so many names of mountains, so many great battles. This is the learning of ancient Iran, as it must have been evolved and transmitted by generations in the priestly schools." (quoted from Mary Boyce, 'Middle Persian Literature', Handbuch der Orientalistik, 1. Abt., IV. Band, 2. Abschn., LFG.1, pg 40-1.)

CONTENTS:

Chapter 1. Ohrmazd's original creation; the antagonism of the evil spirit; nature of the creatures of the world
Chapter 2. On the formation of the luminaries
Chapter 3. The rush of the destroyer at the creatures
Chapter 4. Goshorun, the primal ox
Chapter 5. The planets and cosmology
Chapter 6. The battle with the sky
Chapter 7. The battle with water
Chapter 8. The battle with the earth
Chapter 9. The battle with the plants
Chapter 10. The battle with the primeval ox
Chapter 11. The nature of the earth
Chapter 12. The nature of mountains
Chapter 13. The nature of the oceans
Chapter 14. The nature of the animals
Chapter 15. The nature of people
Chapter 16. The nature of procreation
Chapter 17. The nature of fire
Chapter 18. The nature of trees
Chapter 19. Regarding fabulous creatures
Chapter 20. The nature of rivers
Chapter 21. Regarding liquids
Chapter 22. The nature of lakes
Chapter 23. The nature of the ape and bear
Chapter 24. The chieftainship of people and animals
Chapter 25. The religious calendar
Chapter 26. Measuring distances
Chapter 27. The nature of plants
Chapter 28. On the evil-doing of Ahriman and the demons
Chapter 29. On the spiritual chieftainship of the regions of the earth
Chapter 30. On the resurrection and future existence
Chapter 31. On the race and offsping of the Kayans
Chapter 32. Pourushasp and Zartosht
Chapter 33. The family of the Mobads
Chapter 34. On the reckoning of years
CHAPTER 1.

0. In the name of the creator Ohrmazd.

1. The Zand-akas ('Zand-knowing or tradition-informed'), which is first about Ohrmazd's original creation and the antagonism of the evil spirit, and afterwards about the nature of the creatures from the original creation till the end, which is the future existence (sans-i pasino). 2. As revealed by the religion of the Mazdayasnians, so it is declared that Ohrmazd is supreme in omniscience and goodness, and unrivaled in splendor; the region of light is the place of Ohrmazd, which they call 'endless light,' and the omniscience and goodness of the unrivaled Ohrmazd is what they call 'revelation.' 3. Revelation is the explanation of both spirits together; one is he who is independent of unlimited time, because Ohrmazd and the region, religion, and time of Ohrmazd were and are and ever will be; while Ahriman in darkness, with backward understanding and desire for destruction, was in the abyss, and it is he who will not be; and the place of that destruction, and also of that darkness, is what they call the 'endlessly dark.' 4. And between them was empty space, that is, what they call 'afr,' in which is now their meeting.

5. Both are limited and unlimited spirits, for the supreme is that which they call endless light, and the abyss that which is endlessly dark, so that between them is a void, and one is not connected with the other; and, again, both spirits are limited as to their own selves. 6. And, secondly, on account of the omniscience of Ohrmazd, both things are in the creation of Ohrmazd, the finite and the infinite; for this they know is that which is in the covenant of both spirits. 7. And, again, the complete sovereignty of the creatures of Ohrmazd is in the future existence, and that also is unlimited for ever and everlasting, and the creatures of Ahriman will perish at the time when the future existence occurs, and that also is eternity.

8. Ohrmazd, through omniscience, knew that Ahriman exists, and whatever he schemes he infuses with malice and greediness till the end; and because He accomplishes the end by many means, He also produced spiritually the creatures which were necessary for those means, and they remained three thousand years in a spiritual state, so that they were unthinking and unmoving, with intangible bodies.

9. The evil spirit, on account of backward knowledge, was not aware of the existence of Ohrmazd; and, afterwards, he arose from the abyss, and came in unto the light which he saw. 10. Desirous of destroying, and because of his malicious nature, he rushed in to destroy that light of Ohrmazd unassailed by fiends, and he saw its bravery and glory were greater than his own; so he fled back to the gloomy darkness, and formed many demons and fiends; and the creatures of the destroyer arose for violence.

11. Ohrmazd, by whom the creatures of the evil spirit were seen, creatures terrible, corrupt, and bad, also considered them not commendable (burzishnik). 12. Afterwards, the evil spirit saw the creatures of Ohrmazd; there appeared many creatures of delight (vayah), inquiring creatures, and they seemed to him commendable, and he commended the creatures and creation of Ohrmazd.

13. Then Ohrmazd, with a knowledge of which way the end of the matter would be, went to meet the evil spirit, and proposed peace to him, and spoke thus: 'Evil spirit! bring assistance unto my creatures.' 14. And the evil spirit shouted thus: 'I will not depart, I will not provide assistance for thy creatures, I will not offer praise among thy creatures, and I am not of the same opinion with thee as to good things. I will destroy thy creatures for ever and everlasting; moreover, I will force all thy creatures into disaffection to thee and affection for myself.' 15. And the explanation thereof is this, that the evil spirit reflected in this manner, that Ohrmazd was helpless as regarded him, therefore He proffers peace; and he did not agree, but bore on even into conflict with Him.

16. And Ohrmazd spoke thus: 'You are not omniscient and almighty, O evil spirit! so that it is not possible for thee to destroy me, and it is not possible for thee to force my creatures so that they will not return to my possession.'

17. Then Ohrmazd, through omniscience, knew that: If I do not grant a period of contest, then it will be possible for him to act so that he may be able to cause the seduction of my creatures to himself. 18. As even now there are many of the intermixture of mankind who practice wrong more than right. 19. And Ohrmazd spoke to the evil spirit thus: 'Appoint a period! so that the intermingling of the conflict may be for nine thousand years. For he knew that by appointing this period the evil spirit would be undone.

19. Then the evil spirit, unobservant and through ignorance, was content with that agreement; just like two men quarreling together, who propose a time thus: Let us appoint such-and-such a day for a fight.

20. Ohrmazd also knew this, through omniscience, that within these nine thousand years, for three thousand years everything proceeds by the will of Ohrmazd, three thousand years there is an intermingling of the wills of Ohrmazd and Ahriman, and the last three thousand years the evil spirit is disabled, and they keep the adversary away from the creatures.

21. Afterwards, Ohrmazd recited the Ahunwar thus: Yatha ahu vairyo ('as a heavenly lord is to be chosen'), &c. once, and uttered the twenty-one words; He also exhibited to the evil spirit His own triumph in the end, and the impotence of the evil spirit, the annihilation of the demons, and the resurrection and undisturbed future existence of the creatures for ever and everlasting. 22. And the evil spirit, who perceived his own impotence and the annihilation of the demons, became confounded, and fell back to the gloomy darkness; even so as is declared in revelation, that, when one of its (the Ahunwar's) three parts was uttered, the evil spirit contracted his body through fear, and when two parts of it were uttered he fell upon his knees, and when all of it was uttered he became confounded and impotent as to the harm he caused the creatures of Ohrmazd, and he remained three thousand years in confusion.

23. Ohrmazd created his creatures in the confusion of Ahriman; first he produced Vohuman ('good thought'), by whom the progress of the creatures of Ohrmazd was advanced.

24. The evil spirit first created Mitokht ('falsehood'), and then Akoman ('evil thought').

25. The first of Ohrmazd's creatures of the world was the sky, and his good thought (Vohuman), by good procedure, produced the light of the world, along with which was the good religion of the Mazdayasnians; this was because the renovation (Frashegird) which happens to the creatures was known to him! 26. Afterwards arose Ardwahisht, and then Shahrewar, and then Spandarmad, and then
Hordad, and then Amurdad.

27. From the dark world of Ahriman were Akoman and Andar, and then Suvan, and then Nakahed, and then Tairev and Zairik.

28. Of Ohrmazd's creatures of the world, the first was the sky; the second, water; the third, earth; the fourth, plants; the fifth, animals; the sixth, mankind.

CHAPTER 2.

0. On the formation of the luminaries.

1. Ohrmazd produced illumination between the sky and the earth, the constellation stars and those also not of the constellations, then the moon, and afterwards the sun, as I shall relate.

2. First he produced the celestial sphere, and the constellation stars are assigned to it by him; especially these twelve whose names are Varak (the Lamb), Tora (the Bull), Do-patkar (the Two-Figures or Gemini), Kalachang (the Crab), Sher (the Lion), Khushak (Virgo), Tarahk (the Balance), Nimaast (the Scorpion), Nimasp (the Centaur or Sagittarius), Vahik (Capricorn), Dal (the Water-pot), and Mahi (the Fish); 3. which, from their original creation, were divided into the twenty-eight subdivisions of the astronomers, of which the names are Padevar, Pesh-Parviz, Parviz, Paha, Avesar, Beshn, Rakshas, Taraha, Avna, Naht, Miyan, Avedar, Mashtaha, Spur, Huru, Sro, Nur, Gel, Garafsha Vyran, Gau, Goi, Muru, Bunda, Kahtner, Vahit, Miyan, Kaht. 4. And all his original creations, residing in the world, are committed to them; so that when the destroyer arrives they overcome the adversary and their own persecution, and the creatures are saved from destruction.

5. As a specimen of a warlike army, which is destined for battle, they have ordained every single constellation of those 6480 thousand small stars as assistance; and among those constellations four chieftains, appointed on the four sides, are leaders. 6. On the recommendation of those chieftains the many unnumbered stars are specially assigned to the various quarters and various places, as the united strength and appointed power of those constellations. 7. As it is said that Tishhtar is the chieftain of the east, Sataves the chieftain of the west, Vanand the chieftain of the south, and Haptring the chieftain of the north. 8. The great one which they call a Gah (period of the day), which they say is the great one of the middle of the sky, till just before the destroyer came was the midday (or south) one of the five, that is, the Rapithwin.

9. Ohrmazd performed the spiritual Yazdik ceremony with the archangels in the Rapithwin, during which he supplied every means necessary for overcoming the adversary. 10. He deliberated with the consciousness (bod) and guardian spirits (farohar) of men, and the omniscient wisdom, brought forward among men, spoke thus: 'Which seems to you the more advantageous, when I shall present you to the world? that you shall contend in a bodily form with the fiend (druj), and the fiend shall perish, and in the end I shall have you prepared again perfect and immortal, and in the end give you back to the world, and you will be wholly immortal, undecaying, and undisturbed; or that it be always necessary to provide you protection from the destroyer?'

11. Thereupon, the guardian spirits of men became of the same opinion with the omniscient wisdom about going to the world, on account of the evil that comes upon them, in the world, from the fiend (druj) Ahriman, and their becoming, at last, again unpersecuted by the adversary, perfect, and immortal, in the future existence, for ever and everlasting.

CHAPTER 3.

1. On the rush of the destroyer at the creatures it is said, in revelation, that the evil spirit, when he saw the impotence of himself and the confederate (ham-dast) demons, owing to the righteous man, became confounded, and seemed in confusion three thousand years. 2. During that confusion the arch-fiends of the demons severally shouted thus: 'Rise up, thou father of us! for we will cause a conflict in the world, the distress and injury from which will become those of Ohrmazd and the archangels.'

3. Severally they twice recounted their own evil deeds, and it pleased him not; and that wicked evil spirit, through fear of the righteous man, was not able to lift up his head until the wicked Jeh came, at the completion of the three thousand years. 4. And she shouted to the evil spirit thus: 'Rise up, thou father of us! for I will cause that conflict in the world wherefrom the distress and injury of Ohrmazd and the archangels will arise;' 5. And she twice recounted severally her own evil deeds, and it pleased him not; and that wicked evil spirit rose not from that confusion, through fear of the righteous man.

6. And, again, the wicked Jeh shouted thus: 'Rise up, thou father of us! for in that conflict I will shed thus much vexation on the righteous man and the laboring ox that, through my deeds, life will not be wanted, and I will destroy their living souls (nismo); I will vex the water, I will vex the plants, I will vex the fire of Ohrmazd, I will make the whole creation of Ohrmazd vexed.' 7. And she so recounted those evil deeds a second time, that the evil spirit was delighted and started up from that confusion; and he kissed Jeh upon the head, and the pollution which they call menstruation became apparent in Jeh.

8. He shouted to Jeh thus: 'What is thy wish? so that I may give it thee.' And Jeh shouted to the evil spirit thus: 'A man is the wish, so give it to me.'

9. The form of the evil spirit was a log-like lizard's (vazak) body, and he appeared a young man of fifteen years to Jeh, and that brought the thoughts of Jeh to him.

10. Afterwards, the evil spirit, with the confederate demons, went towards the luminaries, and he saw the sky; and he led them up, fraught with malicious intentions. 11. He stood upon one-third of the inside of the sky, and he sprang, like a snake, out of the sky down to the earth.

12. In the month Frawardin and the day Ohrmazd he rushed in at noon, and thereby the sky was as shattered and frighted by him, as a sheep by a wolf. 13. He came on to the water which was arranged below the earth, and then the middle of this earth was pierced and entered by him. 14. Afterwards, he came to the vegetation, then to the ox, then to Gayomard, and then he came to fire; so, just like a fly, he rushed out upon the whole creation; and he made the world quite as injured and dark at midday as though it were in dark night. 15. And noxious creatures were diffused by him over the earth, biting and venomous, such as the snake, scorpion, frog (kalvak), and lizard (vazak), so that not so much as the point of a needle remained free from noxious creatures. 16. And blight was diffused by him over the vegetation, and it withered away immediately. 17. And avarice, want, pain, hunger, disease, lust, and lethargy were diffused by him abroad upon the ox and Gayomard.

18. Before his coming to the ox, Ohrmazd ground up the healing fruit, which some call 'binak,' small in water openly before its eyes, so that its damage and discomfort from the calamity (zanishn) might be less; and when it became at the same time lean and ill, as its breath went forth and it passed away, the ox also spoke thus: 'The cattle are to be created, and their work, labor, and care are to be
appointed.'

19. And before his coming to Gayomard, Ohrmazd brought forth a sweat upon Gayomard, so long as he might recite a prayer (vaj) of one stanza (vichast); moreover, Ohrmazd formed that sweat into the youthful body of a man of fifteen years, radiant and tall. 20. When Gayomard issued from the sweat he saw the world dark as night, and the earth as though not a needle's point remained free from noxious creatures; the celestial sphere was in revolution, and the sun and moon remained in motion: and the world's struggle, owing to the clamar of the Mazendaran demons, was with the constellations.

21. And the evil spirit thought that the creatures of Ohrmazd were all rendered useless except Gayomard; and Aswihad with a thousand demons, causers of death, were let forth by him on Gayomard. 22. But his appointed time had not come, and he (Aswihad) obtained no means of noosing (avizidano) him; as it is said that, when the opposition of the evil spirit came, the period of the life and rule of Gayomard was appointed for thirty years. 23. After the coming of the adversary he lived thirty years, and Gayomard spoke thus: 'Although the destroyer has come, mankind will be all of my race; and this one thing is good, when they perform duty and good works.'

24. And, afterwards, he (the evil spirit) came to fire, and he mingled smoke and darkness with it. 25. The planets, with many demons, dashed against the celestial sphere, and they mixed the constellations; and the whole creation was as disfigured as though fire disfigured every place and smoke arose over it. 26. And ninety days and nights the heavenly angels were contending in the world with the confederate demons of the evil spirit, and hurled them confounded to hell; and the rampart of the sky was formed so that the adversary should not be able to mingle with it.

27. Hell is in the middle of the earth; there where the evil spirit pierced the earth and rushed in upon it, as all the possessions of the world were changing into duality; and persecution, contention, and mingling of high and low became manifest.

CHAPTER 4.

1. This also is said, that when the primeval ox passed away it fell to the right hand, and Gayomard afterwards, when he passed away, to the left hand. 2. Goshorun, as the soul of the primeval ox came out from the body of the ox, stood up before the ox and cried to Ohrmazd, as much as a thousand men when they sustain a cry at one time, thus: 'With whom is the guardianship of the creatures left by thee, when ruin has broken into the earth and vegetation is withered, and water is troubled? Where is the man of whom it was said by thee thus: I will produce him, so that he may preach carefulness?'

3. And Ohrmazd spoke thus: 'You are made ill, O Goshorun! you have the illness which the evil spirit brought on; if it were proper to produce that man in this earth at this time, the evil spirit would not have been oppressive in it.'

4. Forth Goshorun walked to the star station (payak) and cried in the same manner, and forth to the moon station and cried in the same manner, and forth to the sun station, and then the guardian spirit of Zarotsd was exhibited to her, and Ohrmazd said thus: 'I will produce for the world him who will preach carefulness.' 5. Contented became the spirit Goshorun, and assented thus: 'I will nourish the creatures;' that is, she became again consenting to a worldly creation in the world.

CHAPTER 5.

1. Seven chieftains of the planets have come unto the seven chieftains of the constellations, as the planet Mercury (Tir) unto Tishtar, the planet Mars (Warharan) unto Haptoring, the planet Jupiter (Ohrmazd) unto Vinan, the planet Venus (Anahid) unto Sataves, the planet Saturn (Kevan) unto the great one of the middle of the sky, Gochur and the thievish (dujgun) Mushpar, provided with tails, unto the sun and moon and stars. 2. The sun has attached Mushpar to its own radiance by mutual agreement, so that he may be less able to do harm (vinas).

3. Of Mount Alburz it is declared, that around the world and Mount Terak, which is the middle of the world, the revolution of the sun is like a moat around the world; it turns back in a circuit owing to the enclosure (var) of Mount Alburz from behind which my sun and moon and stars return again. 5. For there are a hundred and eighty apertures (rojin) in the east, and a hundred and eighty in the west, through Alburz; and the sun, every day, comes in through an aperture, and goes out through an aperture; and the whole connection and motion of the moon and constellations and planets is with it: every day it always illuminates (or warms) three regions (karsdwar) and a half, as is evident to the eyesight. 6. And twice in every year the day and night are equal, for on the original attack, when it (the sun) went forth from its first degree (khurdak), the day and night were equal, it was the season of spring; when it arrives at the first degree of Kalschang (Cancer) the time of day is greatest, it is the beginning of summer; when it arrives at the sign (khurdak) Tarachuk (Libra) the day and night are equal, it is the beginning of autumn; when it arrives at the sign Valak (Capricorn) the night is a maximum, it is the beginning of winter; and when it arrives at Varak (Aries) the night and day have again become equal, as when it went forth from Varak. 7. So that when it comes back to Varak, in three hundred and sixty days and the five Gatha days, it goes in and comes out through one and the same aperture; the aperture is not mentioned, for if it had been mentioned the demons would have known the secret, and been able to introduce disaster.

8. From there where the sun comes on on the longest day to where it comes on on the shortest day is the east region Sawahi; from there where it comes on on the shortest day to where it goes off on the shortest day is the direction of the south regions Fradadhafshu and Widadhafshu; from there where it goes in on the shortest day to where it goes in on the longest day is the west region Arezahi; from there where it comes in on the longest day to there where it goes in on the longest day are the north regions Wourubareshti and Wourujareshti. 9. When the sun comes on, it illuminates (or warms) the regions of Sawahi, Fradadhafshu, Widadhafshu, and half of Xwaniratha; when it goes in on the dark side, it illuminates the regions of Arezahi, Wourubareshti, Wourujareshti, and one half of Xwaniratha; when it is day here it is night there.

CHAPTER 6.

1. On the conflict of the creations of the world with the antagonism of the evil spirit it is said in revelation, that the evil spirit, even as he rushed in and looked upon the pure bravery of the angels and his own violence, wished to rush back. 2. The spirit of the sky is himself like one of the warriors who has put on armor; he arrayed the sky against the evil spirit, and led on in the contest, until Ohrmazd had completed a rampart around, stronger than the sky and in front of the sky. 3. And his guardian spirits (farohar) of warriors and the righteous, on war horses and spear in hand, were around the sky; such-like as the hair on the head is the similitude (anguni-aitak) of those who hold the watch of the rampart. 4. And no passage was found by the evil spirit, who rushed back; and he beheld the annihilation of the
demons and his own impotence, as Ohrmazd did his own final triumph, producing the renovation of universe for ever and everlasting.

CHAPTER 7.

1. The second conflict was waged with the water, because, as the star Tishtar was in Cancer, the water which is in the subdivision they call Avrak was pouring, on the same day when the destroyer rushed in, and came again into notice for mischief (avarak) in the direction of the west. 2. For every single month is the owner of one constellation; the month Tir is the fourth month of the year, and Cancer the fourth constellation from Aries, so it is the owner of Cancer, into which Tishtar sprang, and displayed the characteristics of a producer of rain; and he brought on the water aloft by the strength of the wind. 3. Co-operators with Tishtar were Vohuman and the angel Horm, with the assistance of the angel Buj and the righteous guardian spirits in orderly arrangement.

4. Tishtar was converted into three forms, the form of a man and the form of a horse and the form of a bull; thirty days and nights he was distinguished in brilliance, and in each form he produced rain ten days and nights; as the astrologers say that every constellation has three forms. 5. Every single drop of that rain became as big as a bowl, and the water stood the height of a man over the whole of this earth; and the noxious creatures on the earth being all killed by the rain, went into the holes of the earth.

6. And, afterwards, the wind spirit, so that it may not be contaminated (gumkhit), stirs up the wind and atmosphere as the life stirs in the body; and the water was all swept away by it, and was brought out to the borders of the earth, and the wide-formed ocean arose therefrom. 7. The noxious creatures remained dead within the earth, and their venom and stench were mingled with the earth, and in order to carry that poison away from the earth Tishtar went down into the ocean in the form of a white horse with long hoofs.

8. And Apaosh, the demon, came meeting him in the likeness of a black horse with clumsy (kund) hoofs; a mile (parasang) away from him fled Tishtar, through the fright which drove him away. 9. And Tishtar begged for success from Ohrmazd, and Ohrmazd gave him strength and power, as it is said, that unto Tishtar was brought at once the strength of ten vigorous horses, ten vigorous camels, ten vigorous bulls, ten mountains, and ten rivers. 10. A mile away from him fled Apaosh, the demon, through fright at his strength; on account of this they speak of an arrow-shot with Tishtar's strength in the sense of a mile.

11. Afterwards, with a cloud for a jar (khumb) -- thus they call the measure which was a means of the work -- he seized upon the water and made it rain most prodigiously, in drops like bull's heads club over; and owing to the blow of the club Aspenjargak made a very grievous noise, as even now, in a conflict with the producer of rain, a groaning and raging are manifest. 13. And ten nights and days rain was produced by him in that manner, and the poison and venom of the noxious creatures which were in the earth were all mixed up in the water, and the water became quite salt, because there remained in the earth some of those germs which noxious creatures ever collect.

14. Afterwards, the wind, in the same manner as before, restrained the water, at the end of three days, on various sides of the earth; and the three great seas and twenty-three small seas arose therefrom, and two fountains (chashmak) of the sea thereby became manifest, one the Chechast lake, and one the Sovbar, whose sources are connected with the fountain of the sea. 15. And at its north side two rivers flowed out, and went one to the east and one to the west; they are the Arag river and the Veh river; as it is said thus: 'through those finger-breath thicklings do thou pour and draw forth two such waters, O Ohrmazd!' 16. Both those rivers wind about through all the extremities of the earth, and intermingle again with the water of the wide-formed ocean. 17. As those two rivers flowed out, and from the same place of origin as theirs, eighteen navigable rivers flowed out, and after the other waters have flowed out from those navigable streams they all flow back to the Arag river and Veh river, whose fertilization (khvapardarih) of the world arises therefrom.

CHAPTER 8.

0. On the conflict which the evil spirit waged with the earth.

1. As the evil spirit rushed in, the earth shook, and the substance of mountains was created in the earth. 2. First, Mount Alburz arose; afterwards, the other ranges of mountains (kofaniha) of the middle of the earth; for as Alburz grew forth all the mountains remained in motion, for they have all grown forth from the root of Alburz. 3. At that time they came up from the earth, like a tree which has grown up to the clouds and its root to the bottom; and their root passed on that way from one to the other, and they are arranged in mutual connection. 4. Afterwards, about that wonderful shaking out from the earth, they say that a great mountain is the knot of lands; and the passage for the waters within the mountains is the root which is below the mountains; they forsake the upper parts so that they may flow into it, just as the roots of trees pass into the earth; a counterpart (anguni-aitak) of the blood in the arteries of men, which gives strength to the whole body. 5. In numbers, apart from Alburz, all the mountains grew up out of the earth in eighteen years, from which arises the perfection of men's advantage.

CHAPTER 9.

1. The conflict waged with plants was that when they became quite dry. 2. Amerodat the archangel, as the vegetation was his own, pounded the plants small, and mixed them up with the water which Tishtar seized, and Tishtar made that water rain down upon the whole earth. 3. On the whole earth plants grew up like hair upon the heads of men. 4. Ten thousand of them grew forth of one special description, for keeping away the ten thousand species of disease which the evil spirit produced for the creatures; and from those ten thousand, the 100,000 species of plants have grown forth.

5. From that same germ of plants the tree of all germs was given forth, and grew up in the wide-formed ocean, from which the germs of all species of plants ever increased. 6. And near to that tree of all germs the Gokard tree was produced, for keeping away deformed (dushpad) decrepitude; and the full perfection of the world arose therefrom.

CHAPTER 10.

0. On the conflict waged with the primeval ox.
1. As it passed away, owing to the vegetable principle (chiharak) proceeding from every limb of the ox, fifty and five species of grain and twelve species of medicinal plants grew forth from the earth, and their splendour and strength were the seminal energy (tokhmih) of the ox. 2. Delivered to the moon station, that seed was thoroughly purified by the light of the moon, fully prepared in every way, and produced life in a body. 3. Thence arose two oxen, one male and one female; and, afterwards, two hundred and eighty-two species of each kind became manifest upon the earth. 4. The dwelling (manist) of the birds is in the air, and the fish are in the midst of the water.

CHAPTER 11.

1. On the nature of the earth it says in revelation, that there are thirty and three kinds of land. 2. On the day when Tishtar produced the rain, when its seas arose therefrom, the whole place, half taken up by water, was converted into seven portions; this portion, as much as one-half, is the middle, and six portions are around; those six portions are together as much as Khvaniras. 3. Name keshvar (‘zone or region’) is also applied to them, and they existed side by side (kash kash); as on the east side of this portion (Khvaniras) is the Savah region, on the west is the Arzah region; the two portions on the south side are the Fandafsh and Vidalafsh regions, the two portions on the north side are the Vorubarsht and Vorujarsht regions, and that in the middle is Khvaniras. 4. And Khvaniras has the sea, for one part of the wide-formed ocean wound about around it; and from Vorubarsht and Vorujarsht a lofty mountain grew up; so that it is not possible for any one to go from region to region. 5. And of these seven regions every benefit was created most in Khvaniras, and the evil spirit also produced most for Khvaniras, on account of the superiority (sarih) which he saw in it. 6. For the Kayaniants and heroes were created in Khvaniras; and the good religion of the Mazdayasnians was created in Khvaniras, and afterwards conveyed to the other regions; Soshyans is born in Khvaniras, who makes the evil spirit impotent, and causes the resurrection and future existence.

CHAPTER 12.

1. On the nature of mountains it says in revelation, that, at first, the mountains have grown forth in eighteen years; and Alburz ever grew till the completion of eight hundred years; two hundred years up to the star station (payak), two hundred years to the moon station, two hundred years to the sun station, and two hundred years to the endless light. 2. While the other mountains have grown out of Alburz, in number 2244 mountains, and are Hugar the lofty, Terak of Alburz, Chakad-i-Daitik, and the Arezur ridge, the Assindom mountain, Mount Aparisan which they say is the mountain of Pars, Mount Zarid also which is Mount Manush, Mount Airach, Mount Kaf, Mount Vidges, Mount Aparzur-bum, Mount Royishn-homard, Mount Padashkhvargar which is the greatest in Khvarish, the mountain which they call Chino, Mount Revand, Mount Darspet the Bakir mountain, Mount Kafed-shikaft, Mount Siyak-muinand, Mount Vafir-homard, Mount Sindyad and Kondras, Mount Asnavand and Kondras, Mount Sichudav, a mountain among those which are in Kangtec, of which they say that they are a comfort and delight of the good creator, the smaller hills.

3. I will mention them also a second time; Alburz is around this earth and is connected with the sky. 4. The Terak of Alburz is that through which the stars, moon, and sun pass in, and through it they come back. 5. Hugar the lofty is that from which the water of Aredivivur leaps down the height of a thousand men. 6. The Assindom mountain is, being of ruby (khan-alino), of the substance of the sky, is in the midst of the wide-formed ocean so that its water, which is from Hugar, pours down into it (the ocean). 7. Chakad-i-Daitik [the judicial peak] is that of the middle of the world, the height of a hundred men, on which the Cinwad bridge stands; and they take account of the soul at that place. 8. The Arezur ridge [of the Alburz mountain] is a summit at the gate of hell, where they always hold the concourse of the demons. 9. This also is said, that, excepting Alburz, the Aparsan mountain is the greatest; the Aparsan mountain they call the mountain of Pars, and its beginning is in Sagastan and its end in Khujastan. 10. Mount Manush is great; the mountain on which Manuschahar was born.

11. The remaining mountains have chiefly grown from those; as it is said that the elevation (afsarih) of the districts had arisen most around those three mountains. 12. Mount Airach is in the middle from Hamadon to Khvarizeem, and has grown from Mount Aparsan. 13. Mount [Chino], which is on its east, on the frontier of Turkistan, is connected also with Aparsan. 14. Mount Kaf has grown from the same Mount Aparsan. 15. Mount Aparzah is in Sagastan. 16. Mount Arezur is that which is in the direction of Arum. 17. The Padashkhvargar mountain is that which is in Taparistan and the side of Gilan. 18. The Revand mountain is in Khurasan, on which the Burzin fire was established; and its name Revand means this is that, it is glorious. 19. The Vidges mountains is that which is in the front of the Vidgesians; that quarter is full of timber and full of trees. 20. The Bakir mountain is that which Frasayav of Tur used as a stronghold, and he made his residence within it; and in the days of Yim a myriad towns and cities were erected on its pleasant and prosperous territory. 21. Mount Kafed-shikaft (‘very rugged’) is that in Pars, out of the same Mount Aparsan. 22. Mount Siyak-homard (‘being black’) and Mount Vafir-homard (‘having snow’), as far as their Kavul borders, have grown out of it (Aparsan) towards the direction of Chino. 23. The Spreadyad mountain is in the circuit (var) of Revand. 24. The Kondras mountain, on the summit of which is Lake Sovbar, is in the district (or by the town) of Tus. 25. The Kondras mountain is in Airan-vej. 26. The Asnavand 7 mountain is in Ataro-patakan. 27. The Royishn-homard (‘having growth’) mountain is that on which vegetation has grown.

28. Whatever mountains are, that are in every place of the various districts and various countries, and cause the tillage and prosperity therein, are many in name and many in number, and have grown from these same mountains. 29. As Mount Ganavad, Mount Asparog, Mount Pahargar, Mount Dimnvand, Mount Ravak, Mount Zarin, Mount Gheshbakt, Mount Davad, Mount Mijin, and Mount Marak, which have all grown from Mount Aparsan, of which the other mountains are enumerated. 30. For the Davad mountain has grown into Khujastan likewise from the Aparsan mountain. 31. The Dinivand mountain is that in which Bevarasp is bound. 32. From the same Padash-khargar mountain unto Mount Kumish, which they call Mount Madofravad (‘Come-to-help’) -- that in which Vintasp routed Arjap -- is Mount Miyan-i-dast (‘mid-plain’), and was broken off from that mountain there. 33. They say, in the war of the religion, when there was confusion among the Iranians it broke off from that mountain, and slid down into the middle of the plain; the Iranians were saved by it, and it was called ‘Come-to-help’ by them. 34. The Ganavad mountain is likewise there, on the Ridge of Vishtasp (pshat-i Vishtasp) at the abode of the Burzin-Mtio. 35. Ravak Bishan is in Zravad; this place, some say, is Zravad, some call it Bishan, again from this the road of two sides of the mountain is down the middle of a fortress; for this reason, that is, because it is there formed, they call Kalak a fortress; this place also they call within the land of Sorkam. 36. Mount Asparog is established from the country of Lake Chechast unto Pars. 37. Paharg (the Pahar range) is in Khurasan. 38. Mount Marak is in Laran. 39. Mount Zarin is in Turkistan. 40. Mount Bakht-tan is in Spahan.

41. The rest, apart from this enumeration, which they reckon as fostering hills of the country in the religion of the Mazdayasnians, are the small hills, those which have grown piecemeal in places.
1. On the nature of seas it says in revelation, that the wide-formed ocean keeps one-third of this earth on the south side of the border of Alburz, and so wide-formed is the ocean that the water of a thousand lakes is held by it, such as the source Aredevivsur, which some say is the fountain lake. 2. Every particular lake is of a particular kind, some are great, and some are small; some are so large that a man with a horse might compass them around in forty days, which is 1700 leagues (parasangs) in extent.

3. Through the warmth and clearness of the water, purifying more than other waters, everything continually flows from the source Aredevivsur. 4. At the south of Mount Alburz a hundred thousand golden channels are there formed, and that water goes with warmth and clearness, through the channels, on to Hugar the lofty; on the summit of that mountain is a lake; into that lake it flows, becomes quite purified, and comes back through a golden channel; at the height of a thousand men an open golden branch from that channel is connected with Mount Ausindom amid the wide-formed ocean, from there one portion flows forth to the ocean for the purification of the sea, and one portion drifts in moisture upon the whole of this earth, and all the creations of Ohrmazd acquire health from it, and it dispels the dryness of the atmosphere.

6. Of the salt seas three are principal, and twenty-three are small. 7. Of the three which are principal, one is the Putik, one the Kamrud, and one the Shahi-bun. 8. Of all three the Putik is the largest, in which is a flow and ebb, on the Putik side, and it is joined to the wide-formed ocean. 9. Amid this wide-formed ocean, on the Putik side, it has a sea which they call the Gulf (var) of Sataves. 10. Thick and salt the stench wishes to go from the sea Putik to the wide-formed ocean with a mighty high wind therefrom, the Gulf of Sataves drives away whatever is stench, and whatever is pure and clean goes into the wide-formed ocean and the source Aredevivsur; and another second part of the Putik is connected with the moon and wind; it comes again and goes down, in increase and decrease, because of her revolving. 12. The control also of the Gulf of Sataves is attached to the constellation Sataves; in whose protection are the seas of the southern quarter, just as those on the northern side are in the protection of Haptoring. 13. Concerning the flow and ebb it is said, that everywhere from the presence of the moon two winds continually blow, whose abode is in the Gulf of Sataves, one they call the down-draught, and one the up-draught; when the up-draught blows it is the flow, and when the down-draught blows it is the ebb. 14. In the other seas there is nothing of the nature of a revolution of the moon therein, and there are no flow and ebb. 15. The sea of Kamrud is that which they pass by, in the north, in Laparistan; that of Shahi-bun is in Arun.

16. Of the small seas that which was most wholesome was the sea Kyanish, such as is in Sagastan; at first, noxious creatures, snakes, and lizards (vazagh) were not in it, and the water was sweeter than in any of the other seas; later (dadigar) it became salt; at the closest, on account of the stench, it is not possible to go so near as one league, so very great are the stench and saltness through the violence of the hot wind. 17. When the renovation of the universe occurs it will again become sweet.

CHAPTER 14.

1. On the nature of the five classes of animals (gospend) it says in revelation, that, when the primeval ox passed away, there where the marrow came out grain grew up of fifty and five species, and twelve species of medicinal plants grew; as it says, that out of the marrow is every separate creature, every single thing whose lodging is in the marrow. 2. From the horns arose peas (miujak), from the nose the keck, from the blood the grapevine from which they make wine -- on this account wine abounds with blood -- from the lungs the rue-like herbs, from the middle of the heart thyme for keeping away stench, and every one of the others as revealed in the Avesta. 5. A thousand days and nights they were without eating, and first water and afterwards herbage (aurvar) were devoured by them. 6. And, afterwards, the three classes (kardak) of animals were produced therefrom, as it says that first were the goat and sheep, and then the camel and swine, and then the horse and ass. 7. For, first, those suitable for grazing were created therefrom, those are now kept in the valley (lai); the second created were those of the hill summits (sar-i dez), which are wide-travelers, and habits (nihadak) are not taught to them by hand; the third created were those dwelling in the water. 8. As for the genera (khadunak), the first genus is that which has the foot cloven in two, and is suitable for grazing; of which a camel larger than a horse is small and new-born. 9. The second genus is ass-footed, of which the swift horse is the largest, and the ass the least. 10. The third genus is that of the five-dividing paw, of which a camel larger than a horse is small and new-born. 11. The fourth genus is the flying, of which the griffin of three natures is the largest, and the chauffinch the least. 12. The fifth genus is that of the water, of which the Kar fish is the largest, and the Nemadu the least. 13. These five genera are apportioned out into two hundred and eighty-two species (sardak). 14. First are five species of goat, five species of sheep, five species of cattle, five species of ox, five species of horse, five species of ass, five species of camel, five species of swine, five species of dog, five species of hare, five species of fox, five species of ichneumon (rasu), five species of Porcupine, five species of weasel, five species of musk animals, five species of eagle, five species of Vulture, five species of crow, five species of Kahrkas which they call the vulture, five species of Arda, five species of crane, and five species of bat. 15. Second are seven species of birds; and two species of birds that have the foot cloven in two, and are suitable for grazing; nine species of birds, nine species of fish, nine species of beasts, nine species of insects, and ten species of plants. 16. These seven species of birds are distributed into eight groups (khadunak), rarely as scattering; and grass grows in the field and trees sink in the ground, large, middling, and small. 26. Eleventh, fish were created of ten species; first, the fish Arizh, the Arzuva, the Arzuka, the Marzuka, and other Avesta names. 22. Ninth, eight species of weasel; one is that which has milk in the teat and suckle their young, the griffin bird and the bat which flies in the night; as they say that the bat is created of three races (sardak), the race (ayima) of the dog, the bird, and the mammal animal; for it flies like a bird, has many teeth like a dog, and is dwelling in holes like a mammal rat. 25. These hundred and ten species of birds are distributed into eight groups (khadunak), rarely as scattering; and grass grows in the field and trees sink in the ground, large, middling, and small.
of sheep, and as associating with sheep and men; for this the dog is purposely adapted, as three more kinds of advantage are given to him than to man, he has his own boots, his own clothing, and may wander about without self-exertion. 29. The twelfth is the sharp-toothed beast of which the leader of the flock is in such great fear, for that flock of sheep is very badly maintained which has no dog.

30. Ohrmazd said when the bird Varesha was created by him, which is a bird of prey, thus: 'Thou art created by me, O bird Varesha! so that my vexation may be greater than my satisfaction with thee, for thou dost the will of the evil spirit more than that of me; like the wicked man who did not become satiated with wealth, thou also dost not become satiated with the slaughter of birds; but if thou be not created by me, O bird Varesha! thou wouldst be created by him, the evil spirit, as a kite with the body of a Varpa, by which no creature would be left alive.'

31. Many animals are created in all these species for this reason, that when one shall be perishing through the evil spirit, one shall remain.

CHAPTER 15.

1. On the nature of men it says in revelation, that Gayomard, in passing away, gave forth seed; that seed was thoroughly purified by the motion of the light of the sun, and Neryosang kept charge of two portions, and Spandarmad received one portion. 2. And in forty years, with the shape of a one-stemmed Rivas-plant, and the fifteen years of its fifteen leaves, Mastro [Mashyane] and Matroyar [Mashyane] grew up from the earth in such a manner that their arms rested, behind on their shoulders (dosh), and one joined to the other they were connected together and both alike. 3. And the waists of both of them were brought close and so connected together that it was not clear which is the male and which the female, and which is the one whose living soul (nismo) of Ohrmazd is not away. 4. As it is said thus: Which is created before, the soul (nismo) or the body? And Ohrmazd said that the soul is created before, and the body after, for him who was created; it is given into the body that it may produce activity, and the body is created only for activity; hence the conclusion is this, that the soul (ruban) is created before and the body after. 5. And both of them changed from the shape of a plant into the shape of man, and the breath (nismo) went spiritually into them, which is the soul (ruban); and now, moreover, in that similitude a tree had grown up whose fruit was the ten varieties of man.

6. Ohrmazd spoke to Mashye and Mashyane thus: "You are man, you are the ancestry of the world, and you are created perfect in devotion by me; perform devotedly the duty of the law, think good thoughts, speak good words, do good deeds, and worship no demons!" 7. Both of them first thought this, that one of them should please the other, as he is a man for him; and the first deed done by them was this, when they went out they washed themselves thoroughly; and the first words spoken by them were these, that Ohrmazd created the water and earth, plants and animals, and the stars, moon, and sun, and all prosperity whose origin and effect are from the manifestation of righteousness. 8. And, afterwards, antagonism rushed into their minds, and their minds were thoroughly corrupted, and they exclaimed that the evil spirit created the water and earth, plants and animals, and the other things as aforesaid. 9. That false speech was spoken through the will of the demons, and the evil spirit possessed himself of this first enjoyment from them; through that false speech they both became wicked, and their souls are in hell until the future existence.

10. And they had gone thirty days without food, covered with clothing of herbage (giyah); and after the thirty days they went forth into the wilderness, came to a white-haired goat, and milked the milk from the udder with their mouths. 11. When they had devoured the milk Siyamak said to Mashyane thus: "My delight was owing to it when I had not devoured the milk, and my delight is more delightful now when it is devoured by my vile body." 12. That second false speech enhanced the power of the demons, and the taste of the food was taken away by them, so that out of a hundred parts one part remained.

13. Afterwards, in another thirty days and nights they came to a sheep, fat and white-jawed, and they slaughtered it; and fire was extracted by them out of the wood of the lote-plum and box-tree, through the guidance of the heavenly angels, since both woods were more productive of fire for them; and the fire was stimulated by their mouths; and the first fuel kindled by them was dry grass, kendar, lotes, date palm leaves, and myrtle; and they made a roast of the sheep. 14. And they dropped three handfuls of the meat into the fire, and said: 'This is the share of the fire.' One piece of the rest they tossed to the sky, and said: 'This is the share of the angels.' A bird, the vulture, advanced and carried some of it away from before them, as a dog ate the first meat. 15. And, first, a clothing of skins covered them; afterwards, it is said, woven garments were prepared from a cloth woven in the wilderness. 16. And they dug out a pit in the earth, and iron was obtained by them and beaten out with a stone, and without a forge they beat out a cutting edge from it; and they cut wood with it, and prepared a wooden shelter from the sun (pesh-khur).

17. Owing to the gracelessness which they practiced, the demons became more oppressive, and they themselves carried on unnatural malice between themselves; they advanced one against the other, and smote and tore their hair and cheeks. 18. Then the demons shouted out of the darkness thus: 'You are man; worship the demon! so that your demon of malice may repossess.' 19. And, afterwards, antagonism rushed into their minds, and their minds were thoroughly corrupted, and they exclaimed that the evil spirit created the water and earth, plants and animals, and the other things as aforesaid. 20. That false speech was spoken through the will of the demons, and the evil spirit possessed himself of this first enjoyment from them; through that false speech they both became wicked, and their souls are in hell until the future existence.

21. Afterwards, in another thirty days and nights they came to a sheep, fat and white-jawed, and they slaughtered it; and fire was extracted by them out of the wood of the lote-plum and box-tree, through the guidance of the heavenly angels, since both woods were more productive of fire for them; and the fire was stimulated by their mouths; and the first fuel kindled by them was dry grass, kendar, lotes, date palm leaves, and myrtle; and they made a roast of the sheep. 14. And they dropped three handfuls of the meat into the fire, and said: 'This is the share of the fire.' One piece of the rest they tossed to the sky, and said: 'This is the share of the angels.' A bird, the vulture, advanced and carried some of it away from before them, as a dog ate the first meat. 15. And, first, a clothing of skins covered them; afterwards, it is said, woven garments were prepared from a cloth woven in the wilderness. 16. And they dug out a pit in the earth, and iron was obtained by them and beaten out with a stone, and without a forge they beat out a cutting edge from it; and they cut wood with it, and prepared a wooden shelter from the sun (pesh-khur).

17. Owing to the gracelessness which they practiced, the demons became more oppressive, and they themselves carried on unnatural malice between themselves; they advanced one against the other, and smote and tore their hair and cheeks. 18. Then the demons shouted out of the darkness thus: 'You are man; worship the demon! so that your demon of malice may reposses.' 19. And, afterwards, antagonism rushed into their minds, and their minds were thoroughly corrupted, and they exclaimed that the evil spirit created the water and earth, plants and animals, and the other things as aforesaid. 20. That false speech was spoken through the will of the demons, and the evil spirit possessed himself of this first enjoyment from them; through that false speech they both became wicked, and their souls are in hell until the future existence.

22. From them was born in nine months a pair, male and female; and owing to tenderness for offspring the mother devoured one, and the father one. 23. And, afterwards, Ohrmazd took tenderness for offspring away from them, so that one may nourish a child, and the child may remain.

24. And from them arose seven pairs, male and female, and each was a brother and sister-wife; and from every one of them, in fifty years, children were born, and they themselves died in a hundred years. 25. Of those seven pairs one was Siyamak, the name of the man, and Nasak of the woman; and from them a pair was born, whose names were Fravak of the man and Fravakain of the woman. 26. From them fifteen pairs were born, every single pair of whom became a race (sardak); and from them the constant continuance of the generations of the world arose.

27. Owing to the increase (zayishn) of the whole fifteen races, nine races proceeded on the back of the ox Sarsoak, through the wide-formed ocean, to the other six regions (karshwar), and stayed there; and six races of men remained in Xwaniratha. 28. Of those six races the name of the man of one pair was Tazh and of the woman Tazhad, and they went to the plain of the Tazhkan (Arabs); and of one pair Hooshang was the name of the man and Guzhak of the woman, and from them arose the Armanakans (Iranians); and from one pair the Mazendarans have arisen. 29. Among the number (pavan ae var) those were in the countries of Surak, those who are in the country of Anor, those who are in the countries of Tur, those who are in the country of Salim which is Aram, those who are in the country of Seni, that which is Chinistan, those who are in the country of Dai, and those who are in the country of Sind. 30. Those, indeed, throughout the seven regions are all from the lineage of Fravak, son of Siyamak, son of Mashye.

31. As there were ten varieties of man, and fifteen races from Fravak, there were twenty-five races all from the seed of Gayomard; the varieties are such as those of the earth, of the water, the breast-eared, the breast-eyed, the one-legged, those also who have wings like a bat, those of the forest, with tails, and who have hair on the body.
CHAPTER 16.

1. On the nature of generation it says in revelation, that a woman when she comes out from menstruation, during ten days and nights, when they go near unto her, soon becomes pregnant. 2. When she is cleansed from her menstruation, and when the time for pregnancy has come, always when the seed of the man is the more powerful a son arises from it; when that of the woman is the more powerful, a daughter; when both seeds are equal, twins and triplets. 3. If the male seed comes the sooner, it adds to the female, and she becomes robust; if the female seed comes the sooner, it becomes blood, and the leanness of the female arises therefrom.

4. The female seed is cold and moist, and its flow is from the loins, and the color is white, red, and yellow; and the male seed is hot and dry, its flow is from the brain of the head, and the color is white and mud-colored (hashgun). 5. All the seed of the females which issues beforehand, takes a place within the womb, and the seed of the males will remain above it, and will fill the space of the womb; whatever refrains therefrom becomes blood again, enters into the veins of the females, and at the time any one is born it becomes milk and nourishes him, as all milk arises from the seed of the males, and the blood is that of the females.

6. These four things, they say, are male, and these female: the sky, metal, wind, and fire are male, and are never otherwise; the water, earth, plants, and fish are female, and are never otherwise; the remaining creation consists of male and female.

7. As regards the fish it says that, at the time of excitement, they go forwards and come back in the water, two and two, the length of a mile (hasar), which is one-fourth of a league (parasang), in the running water; in that coming and going they then rub their bodies together, and a kind of sweat drops out betwixt them, and both become pregnant.

CHAPTER 17.

1. On the nature of fire it says in revelation, that fire is produced of five kinds, namely, the fire Berezi-savang, the fire which shoots up before Ohrmazd the lord; the fire Vohu-fryan, the fire which is in the bodies of men and animals; the fire Vazisht, the fire which is in plants; the fire Vazisht, the fire which is in a cloud which stands opposed to Spenjargak in conflict; the fire Spenisht, the fire which they keep in use in the world, likewise the fire of Warharan. 2. Of those five fires one consumes both water and food, as that which is in the bodies of men; one consumes water and consumes no food, as that which is in plants, which live and grow through water; one consumes food and consumes no water, as that which they keep in use in the world, and likewise the fire of Warharan; one consumes no water and no food, as the fire Vazisht. 3. The Berezi-savang is that in the earth and mountains and other things, which Ohrmazd created, in the original creation, like three breathing souls (nisodes); through the watchfulness and protection due to them the world ever develops (vakhshed).

4. And in the reign of Tahmuras, when men continually passed, on the back of the ox Sersax, from Xwaranatha to the other regions, one night amid the sea the wind rushed upon the fireplace – the fireplace in which the fire was, such as was provided in three places on the back of the ox – the fire wind dashed up into the sea; and all those three fires, like three breathing souls, continually shut up in the place and position of the fire on the back of the ox, so that it becomes quite light, and the men pass again through the sea. 5. And in the reign of Yim [Jamshed] every duty was performed more fully through the assistance of all those three fires; and the fire Adar Farnbag was established by him at the appointed place (Dadgah) on the Gadman-homand ('glorious') mountain in Khvarizm, which Yim [Jamshed] constructed for them; and the glory of Yim [Jamshed] savers the fire Adar Farnbag from the hand of Dahak (Zohak). 6. In the reign of King Vistasp, upon revelation from the religion, it was established, out of Khvarizm, at the Roofan ('shining') mountain in Kavulistan, the country of Kabal (Kaba), just as it remains there even now.

7. The fire Adar Gushnasp, until the reign of Kay Khosraw, continually afforded the world protection in the manner aforesaid; and when Kay Khosraw was extirpating the idol-temples of Lake Chechast it settled upon the mane of his horse, and drove away the darkness and gloom, and made it quite light, so that they might extirpate the idol-temples; in the same locality the fire Adar Gushnasp was established at the appointed place on the Annavand mountain.

8. The fire Adar Burzin Mih, until the reign of King Vistasp, ever assisted, in like manner, in the world, and continually afforded protection; and when the glorified Zartosht was introduced to produce confidence in the progress of the religion, King Vistasp and his offspring were steadfast in the religion of God, and Vistasp established this fire at the appointed place on Mount Revand, where they say the Ridge of Vistasp (puch-i Vistaspan) is.

9. All those three fires are the whole body of the fire of Warharan, together with the fire of the world, and those breathing souls are lodged in them; a counterpart of the body of man when it forms in the womb of the mother, and a soul from the spirit-world settles within it, which controls the body while living; when that body dies, the body mingles with the earth, and the soul goes back to the spirit.

CHAPTER 18.

1. On the nature of the tree they call Gsokerena it says in revelation, that it was the first day when the tree they call Gsokerena grew in the deep mud within the wide-formed ocean; and it is necessary as a producer of the renovation of the universe, for they prepare its immortality therefrom. 2. The evil spirit has formed therein, among those which enter as opponents, a lizard as an opponent in that deep water, so that it may injure the Haoma. 3. And for keeping away that lizard, Ohrmazd has created there ten Kar fish which, at all times, continually circle around the Haoma, so that the head of one of those fish is continually towards the lizard. 4. And together with the lizard those fish are spiritually fed, that is, no food is necessary for them; and till the renovation of the universe they remain in contention. 5. There are places where that fish is written of as 'the Ariz of the water;' as it says that the greatest of the creatures of Ohrmazd is that fish, and the greatest of those proceeding from the evil spirit is that lizard; with the jaws of their bodies, moreover, they snap in two whatever of the creatures of both spirits has entered between them, except that one fish which is the Vaz of Panchasadvaran. 6. This, too, is said, that those fish are so serpent-like in that deer water, they know the scratch (mashin) of a needle's point by which the water shall increase, or by which it is diminishing.

7. Regarding the Vaz of Panchasadvaran it is declared that it moves within the wide-formed ocean, and its length is as much as what a man, while in a swift race, will walk from dawn till when the sun goes down; so much that it does not itself move the length of the whole of its great body. 8. This, too, is said, that the creatures of the waters live also specially under its guardianship.

9. The tree of many seeds has grown amid the wide-formed ocean, and in its seed are all plants; some say it is the proper-curing, some the energetic-curing, some the all-curing.
10. Between these trees of such kinds is formed the mountain with cavities, 9999 thousand myriads in number, each myriad being ten thousand. 11. Unto that mountain is given the protection of the waters, so that water streams forth from there, in the rivulet channels, to the land of the seven regions, as the source of all the sea-water in the land of the seven regions is from there.

CHAPTER 19.

1. Regarding the three-legged ass they say, that it stands amid the wide-formed ocean, and its feet are three, eyes six, mouths nine, ears two, and horn one, body white, food spiritual, and it is mouths three are in the head, three in the hump, and three in the inner part of the flanks; and each mouth is about the size of a cottage, and if is itself as large as Mount Alvand. 2. And two of its six eyes are in the position of eyes, two on the top of the head, and two in the position of the hump; with the sharpness of those six eyes it overcomes and destroys. 3. Of the nine

When that ass shall hold its neck in the ocean, its ears will terrify (asahmed), and all the water of the wide-formed ocean will shake with agitation, and the side of Ganavad will tremble (shivaned). 9. When it utters a cry all female water-creatures, of the creatures of Ohmrazd, will become pregnant; and all pregnant noxious water-creatures, when they hear that cry, will cast their young. 10. When it states in the ocean all the sea-water will become purified, which is in the seven regions of the earth -- it is even on that account when all asses which come into water stale in the water -- as it says thus: 'If, O three-legged ass! you were not created for the water, all the water in the sea would have perished. from the contamination which the poison of the evil spirit has brought into its water, through the death of the creatures of Ohmrazd.' 11. Tishtar seizes the water more completely from the ocean with the assistance of the three-legged ass. 12. Of ambergris also (ambar-ich) it is declared, that it is the dung of the three-legged ass; for if it has much spirit food, then also the moisture of the liquid nourishment goes through the veins pertaining to the body into the urine, and the dung is cast away. 13. Of the ox Hadhayosh, which they call Saraaok, it says, that in the original creation men passed from region to region upon it, and in the renovation of the universe they prepare Hush (the beverage producing immortality) from it. 14. It is said, that life is in the hand of that foremost man, at the end of his years, who has constructed the most defenses around this earth, until the renovation of the universe is requisite. 15. Regarding the bird Chamrosh it says, that it is on the summit of Mount Albur; and every three years many come from the non-Iranian districts for booty (gird), by going to bring damage (ziyan) on the Iranian districts, and to effect the devastation of the world; then the angel Bujr, having come up from the low country of Lake Arag, arouses that very bird Chamrosh, and it flies upon the loftiest of all the lofty mountains, and picks up all those non-Iranian districts as a bird does corn. 16. Regarding Karshipt they say, that it knew how to speak words, and brought the religion to the enclosure which Yim [Jamsheed] made, and circulated it; there they utter the Avesta in the language of birds. 17. Regarding the ox-fish they say, that it exists in all seas; when it utters a cry all fish become pregnant, and all noxious-water-creatures cast their young. 18. The griffin bird, which is a bat, is noticed (kard) twice in another chapter (baba). 19. Regarding the bird Ashozuhaft, which is the bird Zohara-vahman and also the bird Shok, they say that it has given an Avesta with its tongue; when it speaks the demons tremble at it and take nothing away there; a nail-paring, when it is not prayed over (afrud), the demons and wizards seize, and like an arrow it shoots at and kills that bird. 20. On this account the bird seizes and devours a nail-paring when it is prayed over, so that the demons may not control its use; when it is not prayed over it does not devour it, and the demons are able to commit an offense with it. 21. Also other beasts and birds are created all in opposition to noxious creatures, as it says, that when the birds and beasts are all in opposition to noxious creatures and wizards, &c. 22. This, too, it says, that of all precious birds the crow (valagh) is the most precious. 23. Regarding the white falcon it says, that it kills the serpent with wings. 24. The magpie (kaskinak) bird kills the locust, and is created in opposition to it. 25. The Kahrkas, dwelling in decay, which is the vulture, is created for devouring dead matter (nasa); so also are the crow (valak) and the mountain kite. 26. The mountain ox, the mountain goat, the deer, the wild ass, and other beasts devour all snakes. 27. So also, of other animals, dogs are created in opposition to the wolf species, and for securing the protection of sheep; the fox is created in opposition to the demon Khava; the ichneumon is created in opposition to the venomous snake (garzhak) and other noxious creatures in burrows; so also the great musk-animal is created in opposition to venomous intestinal worms (kaduk-danak garzhak). 28. The hedgehog is created in opposition to the ant which carries off grain, as it says, that the hedgehog, every time that it voids urine into an ant's nest, will destroy a thousand ants; when the grain-carrier travels over the earth it produces a hollow track; when the hedgehog travels over it the track goes away from it, and it becomes level. 29. The water-beaver is created in opposition to the demon which is in the water. 30. The conclusion is this, that, of all beasts and birds and fishes, every one is created in opposition to some noxious creature.

31. Regarding the vulture (karkas) it says, that, even from his highest flight, he sees when flesh the size of a fist is on the ground; and the scent of musk is created under his wing, so that if, in devouring dead matter, the stench of the dead matter comes out from it, he puts his head back under the wing and is comfortable again. 32. Regarding the Arab horse they say, that if, in a dark night, a single hair occurs on the ground, he sees it. 33. The cock is created in opposition to demons and wizards, cooperating with the dog; as it says in revelation, that, of the creatures of the world, those which are cooperating with Sosh, in destroying the fiends, are the cock and the dog. 34. This, too, it says, that it would not have been managed if I had not created the shepherd's dog, which is the Pasush-haurna, and the house watch-dog, the Vesh-haurna; for it says in revelation, that the dog is a destroyer of such a fiend as covetousness among those which are in the nature (aitih) of man and of animals. 35. Moreover it says, that, inasmuch as it will destroy all the disobedient, when it barks it will destroy pain; and its flesh and fat are remedies for driving away decay and pain from men. 36. Ohmrazd created nothing useless whatever, for all these (kola ae) are created for advantage; when one does not understand the reason of them, it is necessary to ask the Dastur (high-priest), for his five dispositions (khuk) are created in this way that he may continually destroy the fiend (or deceit).
CHAPTER 20.

1. On the nature of rivers it says in revelation that these two rivers flow forth from the north, part from Alburz and part from the Alburz of Ohrmazd; one towards the west, that is the Arag, and one towards the east, that is the Veh river. 2. After them eighteen rivers flowed forth from the same source, just as the remaining waters have flowed forth from them in great multitude; as they say that they flowed out so very fast, one from the other, as when a man recites one Ashem-vohu of a series (padisar). 3. All of those, with the same water, are again mingled with these rivers, that is, the Arag river and Veh river. 4. Both of them continually circulate through the two extremities of the earth, and pass into the sea; and all the regions feast owing to the discharge (zahuk) of both, which, after both arrive together at the wide-formed ocean, returns to the sources whence they flowed out; as it says in revelation, that just as the light comes in through Alburz and goes out through Alburz, the water also comes out through Alburz and goes away through Alburz. 5. This, too, it says, that the spirit of the Arag begged of Ohrmazd thus: 'O first omniscient creative power! from whom the Veh river begged for the welfare that thou mightest grant, do thou then grant it in my quantity:!' 6. The spirit of the Veh river similarly begged of Ohrmazd for the Arag river; and on account of loving assistance, one towards the other, they flowed forth with equal strength, as before the coming of the destroyer they proceeded without rapids, and when the fiend shall be destroyed they will again be without rapids.

7. Of those eighteen principal rivers, distinct from the Arag river and Veh river, and the other rivers which flow out from them, I will mention the more famous: the Arag river, the Veh river, the Diglat river they call also again the Veh river, the Frat river, the Daitya river, the Dargam river, the Zondak river, the Haroi river, the Mars river, the Hetumand river, the Ahkoshir river, the Navada river, the Zishmand river, the Khvejand river, the Balkh river, the Mehrwa river they call the Hendva river, the Sped river, the Rad river which they call also the Koirt, the Khvare river which they call also the Mesr, the Harhaz river, the Teremt river, the Khvaneedis river, the Daraja river, the Kasik river, the Shed ('shining') river Peda-meyan or Chaturu-meyan river of Mokarstan.

8. I will mention them also a second time: the Arag river is that of which it is said that it comes out from Alburz in the land of Surak, in which they call it also the Ann; it passes on through the land of Sopot, which they also call Mest, and they call it there the river Niv. 9. The Veh river passes on in the east, goes through the land of Hindistan, and flows to the sea in Hindustan, and they call it there the Mehra river. 10. The sources of the Frat river are from the frontier of Arum, they feed upon it in Suristan, and it flows to the Diglat river; and of this Frat it is that that they produce irrigation over the land. 11. It is declared that Manuschihar excavated the sources, and cast back the water all to one place, as it says thus: 'I reverence the Frat, full of fish, which Manuschihar excavated for the benefit of his own soul, and he seized the water and gave to drink.' 12. The Diglat river comes out from Salman, and flows to the sea in Khujistan. 13. The Daita river is the river which comes out from Eranvej, and goes out through the hill-country; of all rivers the noxious creatures in it are most, as it says, that the Daita river is full of noxious creatures. 14. The Durgam river is in Sude. 15. The Zend river passes through the mountains of Panjistan, and flows away to the Haro river. 16. The Haro river flows out from the Aparsan range. 17. The Hetumand river is in Sagastan, and its sources are from the Aparsan range; this is distinct from that which Frasiyev conducted away. 18. The river Akhoshir is in Kunish. 19. The Zishmand river, in the direction of Sogd, flows away towards the Khvejand river. 20. The Khvejand river goes on through the midst of Samarmand and Pargana, and they call it also the river Ashard. 21. The Marv river, a glorious river in the east, flows out from the Aparsan range. 22. The Balkh river comes out from the Aparsan mountain of Bamikhan, and flows on to the Veh river. 23. The Sped river is in Ataro-patakan; they say that Dhalak (Zohek) bega a favor here from Ahriman and the demons. 24. The Tert river, which they also call the Koor, comes out from the sea of Giklan, and flows to the sea of Vaghan. 25. The Zahavayi is the river which comes out from Ataro-patakan, and flows to the sea in Pars. 26. The sources of the Khvare river are from Spahan; it passes through Khujistan, flows forth to the Diglat river, and in Spahan they call it the Mesrakan river. 27. The Harhaz river is in Taparistan, and its sources are from Mount Damawand. 28. The Teremt river flows away to the Veh river. 29. The Venodesh river is in that part of Pars which they call Sagastan. 30. The Kasak river comes out through a ravine (kaft) in the province of Tus, and they call it there the Kasp river; more over, the river, which is there the Veh, they call the Kasak; even in Sind they call it the Kasak. 31. The Pedak-mian, which is the river Chaturu-mian, is that which is in Kangdez. 32. The Daraja river is in Eranvej, on the bank (bar) of which was the dwelling of Pourusha, the father of Zarosht. 33. The other innumerable waters and rivers, springs and channels are one in origin with those; so in various districts and various places they call them by various names.

34. Regarding Frasiyev they say, that a thousand springs were conducted away by him into the sea Kyansih, suitable for horses, suitable for camels, suitable for oxen, suitable for asses, both great and small; and he conducted the spring Zarimund (or golden source), which is the Hetumand river they say, into the same sea; and he conducted the seven navigable waters of the source of the Vehaeni river into the same sea, and men made settle there.

CHAPTER 21.

1. In revelation they mention seventeen species of liquid (maya), as one liquid resides in plants; second, that which is flowing from the mountains that is, the rivers; third, that which is rain-water; fourth, that of tanks and other special constructions; fifth, the semen of animals and men, sixth, the urine of animals and men; seventh, the sweat of animals and men; eighth the liquid that is in the skin of animals and men; ninth, the tears of animals and men; tenth, the blood of animals and men; eleventh, the oil in animals and men, a necessary in both worlds; twelfth, the saliva of animals and men, with which they nourish the embryo; the thirteenth is that which is under the bark of plants, as it is said that every bark has a liquid, through which a drop appears on a twig (tekh) when placed four finger-breaths before a fire; fourteenth, the milk of animals and men. 2. All these, through growth, or the body which is formed, mingle again with the rivers, for the body which is formed and the growth are both one.

3. This, too, they say, that of these three rivers, that is, the Arag river, the Marv river, and the Veh river, the spirits were dissatisfied, so that they would not flow into the world, owing to the defilement of stagnant water (armesht) which they beheld, so that they were in tribulation through it until Zarosht was exhibited to them, whom I (Ohrmazd) will create, who will pour six-fold holy-water (zor) into it and make it again wholesome; he will come in exaltation. 4. This, too, it says, that of waters whose holy-water is more and pollution less, the holy-water has come in excess, and in three years it goes back to the sources; of which the pollution and holy-water have both become equal, arrives back in six years; that of which the pollution is more and holy-water less, arrives back in nine years. 5. So, also, the growth of plants is connected, in this manner, strongly with the root; so, likewise, the blessings (afnin) which the righteous utter, come back, in this proportion, to themselves.

6. Regarding the river Nahvtak it says, that Frasiyev of Tur conducted it away; and when Ushedar comes it will flow again suitable for horses; so, also, will the fountains: of the sea Kyansih. 7. Kyansih is the one where the home (jinak) of the Kayanian race is.
1. On the nature of lakes it says in revelation, that thus many fountains of waters have come into notice, which they call lakes (var); counterparts of the eyes (chashm) of men are those fountains (chashmak) of waters; such as Lake Chechast, Lake Sovfar, Lake Khvartizhem, Lake Frazdan, Lake Zarimand, Lake Alvast, Lake Husru, Lake Sataves, Lake Urvis.

2. I will mention them also a second time: Lake Chechast is in Ataro-patakan, warm is the water and opposed to harm, so that nothing whatever is living in it, and its source is connected with the wide-formed ocean. 3. Lake Sovfar is in the upper district and country on the summit of the mountain of Tus; as it says, that the Sud-bahar (share of benefit) is propitious and good from which abounding liberality is produced. 4. Regarding Lake Khvartizhem it says that excellent benefit is produced from it, that is, Ardshingh the rich in wealth, the well-portioned with abounding pleasure. 5. Lake Frazdan is in Sagastan; they say, where a generous man, who is righteous, throws anything into it, it receives it; when not righteous, it throws it out again; its source also is connected with the wide-formed ocean. 6. Lake Zarimand is in Hamadan. 7. Regarding Lake Alvast it is declared that the undeveloped water which it contains is always constantly flowing into the sea, so bright and copious that one might say that the sun had come into it and looked at Lake Alvast, into that water which is requisite for restoring the dead in the renovation of the universe. 8. Lake Husru is within fifty leagues (parasang) of Lake Chechast. 9. Lake (or, rather, Gulf) Sataves is that already written about, between the wide-formed ocean and the Putik. 10. It is said that in Kaminmad an abyss (zafar), from which everything they throw in always comes back, and it will not receive it unless alive (jarnan); when they throw a living creature into it, it carries it down; men say that a fountain from hell is in it. 11. Lake Urvis is on Huger the lofty.

CHAPTER 23.

1. On the nature of the ape and the bear they say, that Yim [Jamshed], when reason (nismo) departed from him, for fear of the demons took a demeness as wife, and gave Yimak, who was his sister, to a demon as wife; and from them have originated the tailed ape and bear and other species of degeneracy.

2. This, too, they say, that in the reign of Azi Dahak [Zohak] a young woman was admitted to a demon, and a young man was admitted to a witch (pairika), and on seeing them they had intercourse; owing to that one intercourse the ... arose from them. 3. When Faridoon came to them they fled from the country of Iran, and settled upon the sea-coast; now, through the invasion of the Arabs, they are again diffused through the country of Iran.

CHAPTER 24. The chieftainship of people and animals

1. On the chieftainship of men and animals and every single thing it says in revelation, that first of the human species Gayomard was produced, brilliant and white, with eyes which looked out for the great one, him who was here the Zarathushtrotema (chief high-priest); the chieftainship of all things was from Zartosht. 2. The white ass-goat, which holds its head down, is the chief of goats, the first of those species created. 3. The black sheep which is fat and white-jawed is the chief of sheep, it was the first of those species created. 4. The camel with white-haired knees and two humps is the chief of camels. 5. First the black-haired ox with yellow knees was created; he is the chief of oxen. 6. First the dazzling white (arus) horse, with yellow ears, glossy hair, and white eyes, was produced; he is the chief of horses. 7. The white, cat-footed ass is the chief of asses. 8. First of dogs the fair (arus) dog with yellow hair was produced; he is the chief of dogs. 9. The hare was produced brown (bur); he is the chief of small-seeded grains. 22. The kusti (sacred thread-girdle) is the chief of clothes. 23. The Bazavynia is the chief of seas. 24. Of men, when they come forward together, the wiser and more truthful is chief.

2. This, too it says in revelation, that Ohrmazd created the whole material world one abode, so that all may be one; for there is much splendor and glory of industry in the world. 25. Whosoever he performs, who practices that which is good, is the value of the water of life; since water is not created alike in value, for the undeveloped water of Aredvisur is worth the whole water of the sky and earth of Xwaniratha, except the Arag river, created by; Ohrmazd. 27. Of trees the myrtle and date, on which model, it is said, trees were formed, are worth all the trees of Xwaniratha, except the Gaokerena tree with which they restore the dead.

28. Of mountains Mount Aparsen's beginning is in Sagastan and end in Khujistan, some say it is all the mountains of Pars, and is chief of all mountains except Alburz. 29. Of birds Chamros is chief, who is worth all the birds in Xwaniratha, except the griffin of three natures. 30. Of birds Channros is chief, who is worth all the birds in Xwaniratha, except the griffin of three natures. 36. The conclusion is this, that every one who performs a great duty has then much value.

CHAPTER 25. The religious calendar

1. On matters of religion it says in revelation thus: 'The creatures of the world were created by me complete in three hundred and sixty-five days,' that is, the six periods of the Gahambars which are completed in a year. 2. It is always necessary first to count the day and afterwards the night, for first the day goes off, and then the night comes on. 3. And from the season (gas) of Maidyarem, which is the auspicious day Khwarshed of the month Tishtar, to the season of Maidyarem, which is the auspicious day Warharan of the month Din [Dau]-- the shortest day -- the night increases; and from the season of Maidyarem to the season of Maidyshehram the night decreases and the day increases. 4. The shortest day is as much as two of the shortest winter days, and the winter night is as much as two of the shortest summer nights. 5. The summer day is twelve Hasars, the night six Hasars; the winter night is twelve Hasars, the day six; a Hasar being a measure of time and, in like manner, of land. 6. In the season of Hansapathamdyem, that is, the five supplementary days at the end of the month Spandarmad, the day and night are again equal.

7. As from the auspicious day Ohrmazd of the month Fawradin to the auspicious day Anagaran of the month Miere is the summer of seven months, so from the auspicious day Ohrmazd of the month Aban to the auspicious month Spandarmad, on to the end of the five supplementary days, is the winter of five months. 8. The priest fulfills the regulation (vachar) about a corpse and other things, by this
calculation as to summer and winter. 9. In those seven months of summer the periods (gas) of the days and nights are five since one celebrates the Rapithwin namely, the period of day-break is Hawan, the period of midday is Rapithwin, the period of afternoon is Uzerin, when the appearance of the stars has come into the sky until midnight is the period of Aiwisruthrem, from midnight until the stars become imperceptible is the period of Ushahin. 10. In winter are four periods, for from daybreak till Uzerin is all Hawan, and the rest as I have said; and the reason of it is this, that the appearance of winter is in the month Din (dusk) of the month Spandarmad, winter advances through the whole earth, on this account they kindle a fire everywhere on the day Din of the month Din, and it forms an indication that winter has come. 12. In those five months the water of springs and conduits is all warm, for Rapithwin keeps warmth and moisture there, and one does not celebrate the period of Rapithwin. 13. As the day Ohrmazd of the month Frawardin advances it diminishes the strength which winter possesses, and summer comes in from its own original dwelling, and receives strength and dominion. 14. Rapithwin comes up from below-ground, and ripens the fruit of the trees; on this account the water of springs is cold in summer, for Rapithwin is not there; and those seven months one celebrates the Rapithwin, and summer advances through the whole earth. 15. And yet in the direction of Hindustan, there where the original dwelling of summer is nearer, it is always neither cold nor hot; for in the season which is the dominion of summer, the rain always dispels most of the heat, and it does not become perceptible; in the winter rain does not fall, and the cold does not become very perceptible. 16. In the northern direction, where the preparation of winter is, it is always cold; for in the summer mostly, on account of the more oppressive winter there, it is not possible so to dispel the cold that one might make it quite warm. 17. In the middle localities the cold of winter and heat of summer both come on vehemently.

18. Again, the year dependent on the revolving moon is not equal to the computed year on this account, for the moon returns one time in twenty-nine, and one time in thirty days, and there are four hours (zaman) more than such a one of its years; as it says, that one every seven days, or which they speak about the moon (or month), except when they say that it comes twice in sixty days. 19. Whoever keeps the year by the revolution of the moon mingles summer with winter and winter with summer.

20. This, too, it says, that the auspicious month Frawardin, the month Ardwarshi, and the month Hordad are spring; the month Tishtar, the month Amurdad, and the month Shahrewar are summer; the month Mihir, the month Aban, and the month Adar are autumn; the month Din, the month Vohuman, and the month Spandarmad are winter. 21. And the sun comes from the sign (khurdak) of Aries, into which it proceeded in the beginning, back to that same place in three hundred and sixty-five days and six short times (hours), which are one year. 22. As every three months it (the sun) advances through three constellations, more or less, the moon comes, in a hundred and eighty days, back to the place out of which it traveled in the beginning.

CHAPTER 26. Measuring distances

1. A Hasar\(^1\) on the ground is a Parasang of one thousand steps of the two feet. (2) A Parasang\(^2\) is a measure as much as a far-seeing man may look out, see a beast of burden, and make known that it is black or white. (3) And the measure of a man is eight medium spans\(^3\).

CHAPTER 27. The nature of plants

1. On the nature of plants it says in revelation, that, before the coming of the destroyer, vegetation had no thorn and bark about it; and, afterwards, when the destroyer came, it became coated with bark and thorny, for antagonism mingled with every single thing; owing to that cause vegetation is also much mixed with poison, like Bish the height of hemp (kand), that is poisonous, for men when they eat it die. 2. In like manner even as the animals, with grain of fifty and five species and twelve species of medicinal plants, have arisen from the primeval ox, ten thousand species among the species of principal plants, and a hundred thousand species among ordinary plants have grown from all these seeds of the tree opposed to harm, the many-seeded, which has grown in the wide-formed ocean. 3. When the seeds of all these plants, with those from the primeval ox, have arisen upon it, every year the bird strips that tree and mingle all the seeds in the water; Tishtar seizes them with the rain-water and rains them on to all regions. 4. Near to that tree the white Haoma, the healing and undefiled, has grown at the source of the water of Aredvivsr; every one who eats it becomes immortal, and they call it the Guokerena tree, as it is said that Haoma is expelling death; also as the renovation of the universe they prepare its immortality therefrom; and it is the chief of plants.
5. These are as many genera of plants as exist: trees and shrubs, fruit-trees, corn, flowers, aromatic herbs, salads, spices, grass, wild plants, medicinal plants, gum plants, and all producing oil, dyestuffs, and clothing. 6. I will mention them also a second time: all whose fruit is not welcome as food of men, and are perennial (salvar), as the apple, the grape, the citron, the pomegranate, the peach, the fig, the walnut, the almond, and others in this genus, they call fruit (mivak). 7. Whatever requires labor with the spade, and is perennial, they call a shrub (dirakht). 9. Whatever requires that they take its crop through labor, and its root withers away, such as wheat, barley, grain, various kinds of pulse, vetches, and others of this genus, they call corn (jurdak). 10. Every plant with fragrant leaves, which is cultivated by the hand-labor of men, and is perennial (hamvar), they call an aromatic herb (siparam). 11. Whatever sweet-scented blossom arises at various seasons through the hand-labor of men, or has a perennial root and blossoms in its season with new shoots and sweet-scented blossoms, as the rose, the narcissus, the jasmine, the dog-rose (nestarun), the tulip, the colocynth (kavast), the pandanus (kedi), the karna, the rose (yei, the crocus), the yellow chrysanthemum (kher), the violet, the karda, and others of this genus, they call a flower (gul). 12. Everything whose sweet-scented fruit, or sweet-scented blossom, arises in its season, without the hand-labor of men, they call a wild plant (vahar or nihan). 13. Whatever is welcome as food of cattle and burden of men they call grass (giyah). 14. Whatever enters into cakes (pesh-parakiha) they call spices (avzarika). 15. Whatever is welcome in eating of bread, as torn shoots of the coriander, water-cress (kakij), the leek, and others of this genus, they call salad (teak). 16. Whatever is like spinning cotton and others of this genus, they call clothing plants (janak). 17. Whatever lentil is greedy, as sesame, dushang, hemp, zandak, and others of this genus, they call an oil-seed (rokano). 18. Whatever one can dye cloth with, as saffron, sapan-wood, zachava, vaha, and others of this genus, they call a dye-plant (rag). 19. Whatever root, or gum, or wood is scented, as frankincense, varash, kust, sandalwood, cardamom, camphor, orange-scented mint, and others of this genus, they call a scent (bod). 20. Whatever stickiness comes out from plants they call mucus (zadak). 21. The timber which proceeds from the trees, it when it is either dry or wet, they call wood (chiba). 22. Every one of all these plants which is so, they call medicinal (darak). 23. The principal fruits of are thirty kinds (khudainak), and ten species (sardak) of them are fit to eat outside and inside, as the fig, the apple, the quince, the citron, the grape, the mulberry, the pear, and others of this kind; ten are fit to eat outside, but not fit to eat inside, as the peach, the apricot, and others of this kind; ten are fit to eat inside, but not fit to eat outside, are the walnut, the almond, the pomegranate, the coconut, the filbert, the chestnut, the pistachio nut, the varsha, and whatever else of this description are very remarkable.

CHAPTER 28. On the evil-doing of Ahriman and the demons

1. On the evildoing of Ahriman and the demons it says in revelation, that the evil which the evil spirit has produced for the creation of Ohrmazd it is possible to tell by this winter; and his body is that of a lizard (vazagh) whose place is filth (kalch). 2. He does not think, nor speak, nor act for the welfare (nadukih) of the creatures of Ohrmazd; and his business is unmercifulness and the destruction of this world. 3. And by their devotion to witchcraft (yatuk-dinoih) he seduces mankind into affection for himself and disaffection to Ohrmazd, so that they forsake the religion of Ohrmazd, and practice that of Ahriman. 4. And by their devotion to witchcraft he seduces mankind into affection for himself and disaffection to Ohrmazd, so that they forsake the religion of Ohrmazd, and practice that of Ahriman. 5. He does this into the thoughts of men, that this religion of Ohrmazd is naught, and it is not necessary to be steadfast in it. 6. Whoever gives that man anything, in whose law (dad) this saying is established, then the evil spirit is propitiated by him, that is, he has acted by his pleasure.

7. The business of Akoman is this, that he gave vile thoughts and discord to the creatures. 8. The business of the demon Andar is this, that he constrains the thoughts of the creatures from deeds of virtue, just like a leader who has well-constrained (sardar-i khup afsardo); and he casts this into the thoughts of men, that it is not necessary to have the sacred shirt [sudre] and thread-girdle [kusti]. 9. The business of the demon Savar, that is a leader of the demons, is this, that is, misgovernment, oppressive anarchy, and drunkenness. 10. The business of the demon Naikyas is this, that he gives discontent to the creatures; as it says, that should this one give anything to those men whose opinion (dad) it is, that it is not necessary to have the sacred shirt and thread-girdle, then Andar, Savar, and Naikyas are propitiated by him. 11. The demon Taprev is he who mingles poison with plants and creatures, as it says thus: 'Taprev the frustrater, and Zairich the maker of poison.' 12. All those six, it is said, are arch-fiends of the demons; the rest are cooperating and confederate with them. 13. This, too, it says, that should one give anything to a man who says [that it is proper to have one boot]. 14. The demon Tappeh is said to be one who sees a noxious creature, does not kill it, and chattering he may evacuate (ried), and chattering he may make water (mezed), so that he may not attain [unto the best existence]. 15. The demon Akatash is the fiend of perversion (nikirayih), who makes the creatures averse (nikirai) from proper things; as it says, that whoever has given anything to that person (tamu) whose opinion (dad) this is, that it is not necessary to have a high-priest (dastur), then the demon Eshm is propitiated by him. 16. Whoever has given anything to that person whose opinion is this, and that is not necessary to have a snake-killer (mar-van), then Ahriman, with the foregoing demons, is propitiated by him; this is said of him who, when he sees a noxious creature, does not kill it. 17. A snake-killer (maro-gno) is a man who excels in a leather thong is provided; and it is declared that every one of the good religion must possess one, that they may strike and kill noxious creatures and sinners more mercifully with it.
23. Zarman is the demon who makes decrepit (dushpad), whom they call old age (pirih). 24. Chishmak is he who makes disastrous (vazandak), and also causes the whirlwind which passes over for
27. The demon Az ('greediness') is he who swallows everything, and when, through destitution, nothing has come to him eats; he is that fiendishness which, although the whole wealth of the world be given up to it, does not fill up and is not satisfied; as it says, that the eye of the covetous is a noose (gamand), and in it the world is naught. 28. Push is the demon who makes a hoard, and does not consume it, and does not give to any one; as it says, that the power of the demon Az is owing to that person who, not content with his own wife, snatches away even those of others.
29. The demon Nas is he who causes the pollution and contamination (nisrushtih), which they call nasai ('dead matter'). 30. The demon Spazg ('slander') is he who brings and conveys discourse (milaya), and it is nothing in appearance such as he says; and he shows that mankind fights and apologizes (avakhshined), individual with individual.
32. The demon Arast ('untrue') is he who speaks falsehood. 33. The demon Aighash is the malignant-eyed fiend who smites mankind with his eye. 34. The demon But is he whom they worship among the Hindus, and his growth is lodged in idols, as one worships the horse as an idol. 35. Astwihad is the evil flyer (vae-i saritar) who seizes the life; as it says that, when his hand strokes a man it is lethargy, when he casts it on the sick one it is fever, when he looks in his eyes he drives away the life, and they call it death. 36. The demon of the malignant eye (sur-chashmih) is he who will spoil anything which men see, when they do not say 'in the name of God' (yazdan).

37. With every one of them are many demons and fiends cooperating, to specify whom a second time would be tedious; demons, too, who are furies (khoshman), are in great multitude it is said. 38. They are demons of ruin, pain, and growing old (zarvan), producers of vexation and bile, revivers of grief (nivagih), the progeny of gloom, and brings of stench, decay, and wretchedness, which are many, very numerous, and very notorious; and a portion of all of them is mingled in the bodies of men, and their characteristics are glaring in mankind.
39. The demon Apaosh and the demon Aspenjargak are those who remain in contest with the rain. 40. Of the evil spirit are the law of wileness, the religion of sorcery, the weapons of fiendishness, and they stand very numerously in the conflict. 44. Their ringleaders (kamarikan) are those seven planets, the head and tail of Gochihr, and Mushpar provided with a tail, which are ten. 45. And by them these ten worldly creations, that is, the sky, water, earth, vegetation, animals, metals, wind, light, fire, and mankind, are corrupted with all this wileness; and from them calamity, captivity, disease, death, and other evils and corruptions ever come to water, vegetation, and the other creations which exist in the world, owing to the fiendishness of those ten. 46. They whom I have enumerated are furnished with the assistance and crafty (afzar-homand) nature of Ahirman.

47. Regarding the cold, dry, stony, and dark interior of mysterious (tarik den afraj-pedak) hell it says, that the darkness is fit to grasp with the hand, and the stench is fit to cut with a knife; and if they inflict the punishment of a thousand men within a single span, they (the men) think in this way, that they are alone; and the loneliness is worse than its punishment. 48. And its connection (band) is with the seven planets, be it through much cold like Saturn (Kevan), be it through much heat like Ahriman; and their food is brimstone (gandak), and of succulents the lizard (vazagh), and other evil and wretchedness (patyan).

CHAPTER 29. On the spiritual chieftainship of the regions of the earth

1. On [the spiritual chieftainship of the regions of the earth] it says in revelation, that every one of those six chieftainships has one spiritual chief; as the chief of Arevazhi is Ashhadahad-e Hvandchan, the chief of Sawahi is Hoazoradithri-hana Parehtrya, the chief of Fradadhafshu is Spitoid-i Ausposinan, [the chief of Vidadhafshu is Airizh-rasp Ausposinan,] the chief of Wourubareshti is Huvasp, the chief of Wourjaresheti is Cakhravak. 2. Zartosht is spiritual chief of the region of Xwaranatha, and also of all the regions; he is chief of the world of the righteous, and it is said that the whole religion was received by them from Zartosht.

3. In the region of Xwaranatha are many places, from which, in this evil time of violent struggling with the adversary, a passage (vidarg) is constructed by the power of the spiritual world (mainokih), and one calls them the beaten tracks of Xwaranatha.

4. Counterparts of those other regions are such places as Kandergz, the land of Saukavastan, the plain of the Arabs (Tazhikan), the plain of Peshyansai, the river Naivtak, Eranvej, the enclosure (var) formed by Yim, and Cashmera in India. 5. And one immortal chief acts in the government of each of them; as it says, that Peshtan son of Vistasp, whom they call Chito-maino, is in the country of Kandergz; Agherad son of Pashang is in the land of Saukavastan, and they call him Gopatsah; Parshadha Hvembaya is in the plain of Peshyansai, and he Hvembaya for this reason, because they brought him up in a hvemb ('jar') for fear of Khashm ('Wrath'); [Asam-i Yamahusht is in the place which they call the River Naivtak]; the tree opposed to harm is in Eranvej; Utvadna sar son of Zartosht is in the enclosure formed by Yim [Jamshed]. 6. Regarding them it says, they are those who are immortal, as are Naresh son of Vivangha, Tus son of Nodar, Giw son of Guzarz, Ibaraz the causer of strife, and Ashavazd son of Pourudakhint; and they will all come forth, to the assistance of Soshyant, on the production of the renovation of the universe.

7. Regarding Sam it says, that he became immortal, but owing to his disregard of the Mazdaian religion, a Turk whom they call Nihaj wounded him with an arrow, when he was asleep there, in the plain of Peshyansai; and it had brought upon him the unnatural lethargy (Bushasp) which overcame him in the midst of the heat. 8. And the glory (far) of heaven stands over him for the purpose that, when Azi Dahak [Zohak] becomes unfettered (irazhat), he may arise and slay him; and a myriad guardian spirits of the righteous are as a protection to him. 9. Of Dahak [Zohak], whom they call Bevarasp, this, too, it says, that Farrooz when he captured Dahak [Zohak] was not able to kill him, and afterwards confined him in Mount Damawand; when he becomes unfettered, Sam arises, and slays him.

10. As to Kandergz, it is in the direction of the east, at many leagues from the bed (var) of the wide-formed ocean towards that side. 11. The plain of Peshyansai is in Kavulistan, as it says, that the most remarkable upland (balist) in Kavulistan is where Peshyansai is; there it is hotter, on the more lofty elevations there is no heat. 12. Eranvej is in the direction of Ataro-patakan [Azerbaijan]. 13. The land of Saukavastan is on the way from Turkistan to Chinistan, in the direction of the north. 14. [The enclosure] formed by Yim [Jamshed] is in the middle of Pars, in Sruva; thus, they say, that what Yim [Jamshed] formed (Yim-kard) is below Mount Yimakan. 15. Cashmera is in Hindustan.
CHAPTER 30. On the resurrection and future existence  

1. On the nature of the resurrection and future existence it says in revelation, that, whereas Mashye and Mashyane, who grew up from the earth, first fed upon water, then plants, then milk, and then meat, men also, when their time of death has come, first desist from eating meat, then from bread, and then from milk; and when they shall have thus done, the strength of appetite (az) will thus diminish, when through the earth areerose, which bore the material life, and there is no maintainer of the worldly creation but it; when by me the sun and moon and stars are conducted in the firmament (andarvai) of created in plants and other things without combustion; when by me a son was created and fashioned in the womb of a mother, and the structure (pishak) severally of the skin, nails, blood, feet, eyes, ears, and other things was produced; when by me legs were created for the water, so that it flows away, and the cloud was created which carries the water of the world and rains there where it has a purpose; that the soul and body will know that this is my father, and this is my mother, and this is my brother, and this is my wife, and these are some other of my nearest relations.

10. Then is the assembly of the Sadvastaran, where all mankind will stand at this time; in that assembly every one sees his own good deeds and his own evil deeds; and then, in that assembly, a wicked man becomes as conspicuous as a white sheep among those which are black. 11. In that assembly whatever relatives he may have, the friend of a wicked one in the world, and the wicked man complains of him who is righteous, thus: 'Why did he not make me acquainted, when in the world, with the good deeds which he practiced himself? if he who is righteous did not inform him, then it is necessary for him to suffer shame accordingly in that assembly. 12. Afterwards, they set the righteous man apart from the wicked; and then the righteous is for heaven (garothman), and they cast the wicked back to hell. 13. Three days and nights they inflict punishment bodily in hell, and then he beholds bodily those three days' happiness in heaven. 14. As it says that, on the day when the righteous man is parted from the wicked, the tears of every one, thereupon, run down unto his legs. 15. When, after they set apart a father from his consort (hamzbaz), a brother from his brother, and a friend from his friend, they suffer, every one for his own deeds, and weep, the righteous for the wicked, and the wicked about himself; for there may be a father who is righteous and a son wicked, and there may be one brother who is righteous and one wicked. 16. Those for whose peculiar deeds it is appointed, such as Dahak [Zohak] and Frasiyav of Tur, and others of this sort, as those deserving death (marg-arjanan), undergo a punishment no other men undergo; they call it 'the punishment of the three nights.' 17. Among his producers of the renovation of the universe, those righteous men of whom it is written that they are living, fifteen men and fifteen damsels, will come to the assistance of Soshyant. 18. As Gochirr falls in the celestial sphere from a moon-beam on to the earth, the distress of the earth becomes such-like as that of a sheep when a wolf falls upon it. 19. Afterwards, they set the metal of Shahrewar, in the hills and mountains, and it remains on this earth like a river. 20. Then all men will pass into that melted metal and will become pure; when one is righteous, then it seems to him just as though he walks continually in warm milk; but when wicked, then it seems to him in such manner as though, in the world, he walks continually in melted metal. 21. Afterwards, with the greatest affection, all men come together, father and son and brother and friend ask one another thus: 'Where has it been these many years, and what was the judgment upon thy soul? hast thou been righteous or wicked?' 22. The first soul the body sees, it inquires of it with those words (guf): '23. All men become of one voice and administer loud praise to Ohrmazd and the archangels.' 24. Ohrmazd completes his work at that time, and the creatures become so that it is not necessary to make any effort about them; and among those by whom the dead are prepared, it is not necessary that any effort be made. 25. Soshyant, with his assistants, perform a Yazishn ceremony in preparing the dead, and they slaughter the ox Hadhayosh in that Yazishn; from the fat of that ox and the white Haoma they prepare Hush, and give it to all men, and all men become immortal for ever and everlasting. 26. This, too, it says, that whoever has performed no worship (yasht), and has ordered no getig-kharid, and has bestowed no clothes as a righteous gift, is naked there; and he performs the worship (yasht) of Ohrmazd, and the heavenly angels provide him the use of his clothing. 27. Afterwards, Soshyant and his assistants, by order of the creator Ohrmazd, give every man the reward and compensate suitable to his deeds; this is even the righteous existence (aat) where it is said that they convey him to paradise (Wahisht), and the heaven (garothman) of Ohrmazd takes up the body (kerp) as itself requires; with that assistance he continually advances for ever and everlasting. 28. This, too, it says, that whoever has performed no worship (yasht), and has ordered no getig-kharid, and has bestowed no clothes as a righteous gift, is naked there; and he performs the worship (yasht) of Ohrmazd, and the heavenly angels provide him the use of his clothing. 29. Afterwards, Ohrmazd seizes on the evil spirit! Vohuman on Akoman, Ardwhashir on Andar, Shahrewar on Savar, Spandarmaz on Tarev and Zairich, true-speaking on what is evil-speaking, Srosh on Eshm. 30. Then two fiends remain at large, Ahirman and Az; Ohrmazd comes to the world, himself the Zota and Srosh the Raspi, and holds the Kusti in his hand; defeated by the Kusti formula the resources of the evil spirit and Az act most impotently, and by the passage through which he runs back to gloom and darkness. 31. Gochirr burns the serpent (mar) in the melted metal, and the stench and pollution which were in hell are burned in that metal, and it (hell) becomes quite pure. 32. He (Ohrmazd) sets the vault into which the evil spirit fled, in that metal; he brings the land of hell back for the enlargement of the world; the renovation arises in the universe by his will, and the world is immortal for ever and everlasting. 33. This, too, it says, that this earth becomes an iceless, slopeless plain; even the mountain, whose summit is the support of the Chirawd bridge, they keep down, and it will not exist.
CHAPTER 31. On the race and offspring of the Kayans

0. On the race and genealogy of the Kayanians. 1. Hooshang was son of Fravak, son of Siyamak, son of Gayomard. 2. Tahmurasp was son of Vivangha, son of Yanghad, son of Hooshang. 3. Yim [Jamshed]; Tahmurasp, Spitur, and Narsih, whom they also call 'the Rashnu of China,' were all brothers. 4. From Yim [Jamshed] and Yimak, who was his sister, was born a pair, man and woman, and they became husband and wife together; Mirak the Aspyian and Zyanak Zardash were their names and the lineage went on. 5. Spitur was he who, with Dahak [Zohak], cut up Yim [Jamshed]; Narsih lived then also, whom they call Nser-gyavan; they say that such destiny (gadman) is allotted to him, that he shall pass every day in trouble, and shall make all food purified and pure.

6. Dahak [Zohak] was son of Khutasp, son of Zainigav, son of Virasang, son of Tazh, son of Fravak son of Siyamak; by his mother Dahak [Zohak] was of Udai, son of Bayak, son of Tambayak, son of Owokhm, son of Pairi-urvaem, son of Gadhwithw, son of Drujaskan, son of the evil spirit.

7. Faridoon the Aspyian was son of Pur-tora the Aspyian, son of Sok-tora the Aspyian, son of Borteria the Aspyian, son of Systak-tora the Aspyian, son of Sped-tora the Aspyian, son of Gesar-tora the Aspyian, son of Ramaks-tora the Aspyian, son of Vansfragheshm the Aspyian, son of Yim [Jamshed]; son of Vivangha; these, as apart from the Aspyian Pur-tora, were ten generations, which if ever lived a hundred years, which becomes one thousand years; those thousand years were the evil reign of Dahak [Zohak]. 8. By the Aspyian Pur-tora was begotten Faridoon, who exacted vengeance for Yim [Jamshed]; together with him also were the sons Barmayun and Katayun, but Faridoon was fuller of glory than they.

9. By Faridoon three sons were begotten, Salm and Tuj and Arik; and by Arik one son and one pair were begotten; the names of the couple of sons were Vanidar and Anastokhs, and the name of the daughter was Guzakh. 10. Salm and Tuj slew them all, Arik and his happy sons, but Faridoon kept the daughter in concealment, and from that daughter a father was born; they became aware of it, and the mother was slain by them. 11. Faridoon provided for the daughter, also in concealment, for ten generations, when Manush-i Khurshed-vinik was born from his mother, [so called because, as he was born, some of] the light of the sun (khwarshed) fell upon his nose (vinik). 12. From Manush-i Khurshed-vinik and his sister was Manush-khurman, and from Manush-khurman [and his sister] was Manushchaar born, by whom Salm and Tuj were slain in revenge for Arik. 13. By Manushchaar were Frash, Nozad, and Durasrobo begotten.

14. Just as Manushchaar was of Manush-khurman, of Manush-khurman, who was Man-sozak, of Airik, of Thritak, of Bitak, of Frazushak, of Zushak, of Airik, of Faridoon, so Frasiyav was of Pashang, of Zaesh, of Turak, of Spesnyas, of Duroshap, of Tuj, of Faridoon. 15. He (Frasiyav) as well as Karsevaz, whom they call Kadan, and Aghrerad were all three brothers.

16. Panshak and Visan were both brothers. 17. By Visak were Piran, Human, Shan, and other brothers begotten. 18. By Frasiyav were Frasp-i Chur, Shan, Sarad, Frasp, and other sons begotten; and Visan-friya, from whom Kay Khosraw was born, was daughter of Frasiyav, and was of the same mother with Frasp-i Chur. 19. From Frasp-i Chur were Surak, Ausrak, and other children; and by them were Khvast-airikh, Yazdani-airikh, Yazdan-sarad, Freh-khurd, La-vahak, and others, a recital of whom would be tedious.

20. By Aghrerad was Gopatshah begotten. 21. When Frasiyav made Manushchaar, with the Iranians, captive in the mountain-range (gar) of Padashkh-var, and scattered ruin and want among them, Aghrerad begged a favor of God (yazdan), and he obtained the benefit that the army and champions of the Iranians were saved by him from that distress. 22. Frasiyav slew Aghrerad for that fault; and Aghrerad, as his recompense, begat such a son as Gopatshah.

23. Auzobo the Tuhmaspian, Kanak-i Barzisht, Arawishanasp, and Vaeand-i Raghinoid were the three sons and the daughter of Agaimasvak, the son of Nodar, son of Manushchaar, who begat Auzobo. 24. Kavad was a child in a waist-clotl (kuspud); they abandoned him on a river, and he froze upon the door-sills (kavadakan); Auzobo perceived and took him, brought him up, and settled the name of the trembling child.

25. By Kavad was Kay Apiveh begotten; by Kay Apiveh were Kay Arsh, Kay Virash, Kay Pisan, and Kay Kaus begotten; by Kay Kaus was Siyasvakhsh begotten; by Siyasvakhsh was Kay Khosraw begotten. 26. Kersap and Avarakhsh were both brothers. 27. Athrat was son of Salhm, son of Turak, son of Spesnyas, son of Duroshap, son of Tuj, son of Faridoon. 28. Lohrap was son of Auzv, son of Manush, son of Kay Pisin, son of Kay Apiveh, son of Kay Koval. 29. By Kay Lohrap was Vistashp, Zarid, and other brothers begotten; by Vistashp were Spen-khad and Peshtan begotten; and by Spen-dad were Vohuman, Aatar-tarsah, Mitro-tarsah, and others begotten.

30. Artakhshat descendant of Papak -- of whom his mother was daughter of Avarak, son of Sasan, son of Veh-afird and Zarid, son of Sasan, son of Artakhshat who was the said Vohuman son of Spen-dad.

31. The mother of Kay Apiveh was Farhank, daughter of him who is exalted on the heavenly path, Uvdgai-frashit, son of Rak, son of Durasrobo, son of Manushchaar. 32. This, too, it says, that the glory of Faridoon settled on the root of a reed (kanya) in the wide-formed ocean; and Noktarga, through sorcery, formed a cow for tillage, and begat children there; three years he carried the reeds there, and gave them to the cow, until the glory went on to the cow; he brought the cow, milked her milk, and gave it to his three sons; as their walking was on the hoofs, the glory did not go to the sons, but to Farhank. 33. Noktarga wished to injure Farhank, but Farhank went with the glory away from the fierce (tib) father, and made a vow (patyastak) thus: I will give my first son to Aushbam. 34. Then Aushbam saved her from the father; and the first son, Kay Apiveh, she bore and gave to Aushbam, was a hero associating with Aushbam, and traveled in Aushbam's company.

35. The mother of Auzobo was the daughter of Namun the wizard, when Namak was of Frasiyav.

36. And, moreover, together with those begotten by Namak were six children in pairs, male and female the name of one was Dammak, of one Khosraw, and of one Margandak, and the name of each man and woman together was one. 37. And the name of one besides them was Dastan; he was considered more eminent than they, and Sagansih and the southern quarter were given to him; and Avar-shatro and the governorship were given by him to Avarak. 38. Of Avar-shatro this is said, that it is the district of Avarak, and they offered blessings to Noah and Ardwashit in succession; on this account is their possession of horses and possession of arms; and on account of firm religion, purity, and manifest joy, good estimation and extensive fame are greatly among them. 39. To Dammak the governorship of Asuristan was given; sovereignty and arranging the law of sovereignty, willfulness and the stubborn defects they would bring, were among them. 40. To Sarrak the governorship of Spahan was given to Khosraw the governorship of Rai was given; to Margandak the kingdom, forest settlements, and mountain settlements of Padashkhvarag were given; where they travel nomadically, and there are the forming of sheep-folds, prolificness, easy procreation, and continual triumph over enemies. 41. From Dastan proceeded Rudastam and Hurazvarkar.]
CHAPTER 32. Pourushasp and Zartosht

1. On the kindred of Pourushasp, son of Paitirasp, son of Aurvadasp, son of Haechadasp, son of Chakhshnush, son of Paitirasp, son of Hardarshn, son of Hardar, son of Spitaman, son of Vidasht, son of Ayazem, son of Rajan, son of Durasrobo, son of Manuschihar. 2. As Paitirasp had two sons, one Pourushasp and one Arasti, by Pourushasp was Zartosht begotten for a sanctuary of good religion, and by Arasti was Maidyok-mah begotten. 3. Zartosht, when he brought the religion, first celebrated worship and expounded in Eranvej, and Maidyok-mah received the religion from him. 4. The Mobads of Pars are all traced back to this race of Manuschihar.

5. Again, I say, by Zartosht were begotten three sons and three daughters; one son was Isadvastar, one Aurvatad-nar, and one Khurshed-chihar; as Isadvastar was chief of the priests he became the Mobed of Mobads, and passed away in the hundredth year of the religion; Aurvatad-nar was an agriculturist, and the chief of the enclosure formed by Yim [Jamshed], which is below the earth; Khurshed-chihar was a warrior, commander of the army of Peshotan, son of Vidasht, and dwells in Kangdez, and of the three daughters the name of one was Fren, of one Srit, and of one Poruchist. 6. Aurvatad-nar and Khurshed-chihar were from a serving (chakar) wife, the rest were from a privileged (padakhshah) wife. 7. By Isadvastar was begotten a son whose name was Ururvija, and they call him Aranj-i Biradan ('fore-arm of brothers') for this reason, that, as they were from a serving wife, she then delivered them over to Isadvastar through adoption. 8. This, too, one knows, that three sons of Zartosht, namely, Usedar, Ushedarmah, and Sostryant, were from Hvo; as it says, that Zartosht went near unto Hvo three times, and each time the seed went to the ground; the angel Neryosang received the brilliance and strength of that seed, delivered it with care to the angel Anahid, and in time will blend it with a mother. 9. Nine thousand, nine hundred, and ninety-nine, and nine myriads of the guardian spirits of the righteous are entrusted with its protection, so that the demons may not injure it.

10. The name of the mother of Zartosht was Dukdaub, and the name of the father of Zartosht was Frahimrava.

CHAPTER 33.

0. The family of the Mobads ('priests').

1. Bahak was son of Huhukht, son of Ataro-bondak, son of Mahdad, son of Maidok-mah, son of Frah-vakhsh-vindad, son of Maidok-mah, son of Kad, son of Maidok-mah, son of Arastith, son of Paitirasp. 2. As Bahak was Mobed of Mobads (high-priest) unto Shahpuhr, son of Ohrmazd, so Kad was the great preceptor (farmadar) unto Durai.

3. Adarbad [Mahraspandan] was son of Mahraspand, son of Dudardz, son of Dudirad, son of Hudino, son of Adarbad, son of Manuschihar, son of Vohuman-chihar, son of Fryano, son of Bahak, son of Faridoon, son of Frashnabar, son of Pourushasp, son of Vinas, son of Nivar, son of Vekhsh, son of Vahihbro, son of Frasht, son of Gak, son of Vekhsh, son of Fryan, son of Rajan, son of Durasrobo, son of Manuschihar.

4. Mitro-varazh was son of Nigas-afzud-dak, son of Shirtushop, son of Parshtva, son of Urvad-ga, son of Taham, son of Zariz, son of Durasebo, son of Manush 5. Dumamik was son of Zag, son of Mashvakh, son of Nodar, son of Manuschihar.

5. Mitro-akavid is son of Mardan-veh, son of Afrobag-vindad, son of Vindad-i-pedak, son of Vachukht, son of Bahak, son of Vachukht. 7. The mother from whom I was born is Humai, daughter of Freh-mah, who also was the righteous daughter of Mah-ayar son of Mah-bondak, son of Mah-bukht. 8. Payshn-shad is son of Mardan-veh, son of Afrobag-vindad, son of Vindad-i-pedak, son of Vachukht, son of Bahak, son of Vachukht.

9. All the other Mobads who have been renowned in the empire (khudayih) were from the same family it is said, and were of this race of Manuschihar. 10. Those Mobads, likewise, who now exist are all from the same family they assert, and I, too, they boast, whom they call 'the administration of perfect rectitude' (Dadakih-i Ashovahishto). 11. Yudan-Yim son of Vaharam-shad, son of Zartosht, Adarbad son of Mannir, was a hundred years in concealment. 12. This, too, it says, that 'in one winter I will locate (jakinam) the religion of the Mazdayasnians, which came out into the other six regions.'

CHAPTER 34.

0. On the reckoning of the years.

1. Time was for twelve thousand years; and it says in revelation, that three thousand years was the duration of the spiritual state, where the creatures were unhinking, unmoving, and intangible; and three thousand years was the duration of Gayomard, with the ox, in the world. 2. As this was six thousand years the series of millennium reigns of Cancer, Leo, and Virgo had elapsed, because it was six thousand years when the millennium reign came to Libra, the adversary rushed in, and Gayomard lived thirty years in tribulation. 3. After the thirty years Mashtye and Mashtye lived; and they were ninety-three years together as wife and husband, while they were not wife and husband, and they were ninety-three years together as wife and husband till the time when Hooshang came.

4. Hooshang was forty years, Tahmurasp thirty years, Yim [Jamshed] till his glory departed six hundred and sixteen years and six months, and after that he was a hundred years in concealment. 5. Then the millennium reign came to Scorpio, and Dahak [Zohak] ruled a thousand years. 6. After the millennium reign came to Sagittarius, Faridoon reigned five hundred years; in the same five hundred years of Faridoon were the twelve years of Airk, Manuschihar was a hundred and twenty years, and in the same reign of Manuschihar, when he was in the mountain fastness (dushkhvar-gar), were the twelve years of Frasiav; Zob the Tuhmaspian was five years.

7. Kay Kobad was fifteen years; Kay Kaus, till he went to the sky, seventy-five years, and seventy-five years after that, altogether a hundred and fifty years; Kay Khosraw sixty years; Kay Lohrasp a hundred and twenty years; Kay Vastasp, till the coming of the religion, thirty years, altogether a hundred and twenty years.
8. Vohuman son of Spend-dad a hundred and twelve years; Humai, who was daughter of Vohuman, thirty years; Darai son of Chihar-azhad, that is, of the daughter of Vohuman, twelve years; Darai son of Darai fourteen years; Alexander the Ruman fourteen years.

9. The Ashkanians bore the title in an uninterrupted (a-arubak) sovereignty two hundred and eighty-four years, Ardashir son of Papak and the number of the Sasanians four hundred and sixty years, and then it went to the Arabs.
Alborz, also spelled as Alburz, Elburz or Elborz, is a mountain range in northern Iran that stretches from the border of Azerbaijan along the western and entire southern coast of the Caspian Sea and finally runs northeast and merges into the Aladagh Mountains in the northern parts of Khorasan. This mountain range is divided into Western, Central, and Eastern Alborz Mountains. The Western Alborz Range (usually called the Talish Mountains) runs south-southeastward almost along the western coast of the Caspian Sea. The Central Alborz (the Alborz Mountains in the strictest sense) runs from west to east along the entire southern coast of the Caspian Sea, while the Eastern Alborz runs in a northeasterly direction towards the northern parts of the Khorasan region southeast of the Caspian Sea. Mount Damavand, the highest mountain in Iran and the Middle East, is located in the Central Alborz Mountains.

Contents

1 Etymology
2 Mythology
3 Geology
4 Ecoregions, flora and fauna
5 Ski resorts
6 Mounts, summits, alpine lakes and attractions
7 Sources
8 References
9 Cultural references
10 External links

Etymology

The name Alborz is derived from that of Harā Barazaitī, a legendary mountain in the Avesta. Harā Barazaitī reflects Proto-Iranian *Harā Bṛəzətī, the feminine form of the adjective *bṛəzan “high”, the ancestor of modern Persian boland (“high”) and BarzBerazande, cognate with Sanskrit Brihat (“big”). Harā may be interpreted as “watch” or “guard”, from an Indo-European root *ser- “protect”. In Middle Persian, Harā Barazaitī became Harborz, Modern Persian Alborz, which is a cognate with Elbrus, the highest peak of the Caucasus.

Mythology

Zoroastrians may identify the range with the dwelling place of the Peshyotan, and the Zoroastrian Ilm-e-Kshnoom sect identify Mount Davamand as the home of the Saheb-e-Dilan (“Masters of the Heart”). In his epic Shahnameh, the poet Ferdowsi speaks of the mountains “as though they lay in India.” This could reflect older usage, for numerous high peaks were given the name and some even reflect it to this day, for example, Mount Elbrus in the Caucasus Mountains, and Mount Elbariz (Albariz, Jebal Barez) in the Kerman area above the Strait of Hormuz. All these names reflect the same Iranian language compound, and share an identification as the legendary mountain Harā Barazaitī of the Avesta.

Geology

The Alborz mountain range forms a barrier between the south Caspian and the Iranian plateau. It is only 60–130 km wide and consists of sedimentary series dating from Upper Devonian to Oligocene, prevalently Jurassic limestone over a granite core. Continental conditions regarding sedimentation are reflected by thick Devonian sandstones and by Jurassic shales containing coal seams. Marine conditions are reflected by Carboniferous and Permian rocks. The Precambrian rocks can be found chiefly south of the city of Gorgan situated in the southeast of the Caspian Sea; and in much smaller portions in the central and western parts of the Central Alborz Range. The central part of the Central Alborz Range is formed mainly of the Triassic and Jurassic rocks, while the northwestern section of the range is mainly of the Jurassic rocks. Very thick beds of the Tertiary (mostly of the Eocene) green volcanic tuffs and lavas are found mainly in the southwestern and south-central parts of the range. The far northwestern part of the Alborz that constitutes what is called the Western Alborz Range or the Talish Mountains is made mainly of the Upper Cretaceous volcano-sedimentary deposits with a strip of Paleozoic rocks and a band of Triassic and Jurassic rocks in the southern parts, both in a northwest-southeast direction. As the Tethys Sea was closed and the Arabian Plate collided with the Iranian Plate and was pushed against it, and with the clockwise movement of the Eurasian Plate towards the Iranian Plate and their final collision, the Iranian Plate was pressed from both sides. The collisions finally caused the folding of the Upper Paleozoic, Mesozoic, and Paleogene rocks, and the Cenozoic (chiefly the Eocene) volcanism to form the Alborz Mountains mainly in the Miocene. The Alpine orogeny began, therefore, with Eocene volcanism in southwestern and south-central parts of the Alborz and continued with the uplift and folding of the older sedimentary rocks in the northwestern, central and eastern parts of the range during the orogenic phases of importance that date from the Miocene and the Pliocene epochs.

Ecoregions, flora and fauna

While the southern slopes of the Alborz Mountains are usually semiarid or arid with irregular and low precipitation, the northern slopes of the range are usually humid especially in the western parts of the Central Alborz. In the southern slopes or the Elburz Range forest steppe ecoregion, the higher elevations are arid with few trees. Juniper is the most common tree in the inaccessible areas and high elevations, while shrubs are pistachio, maple, and almond. But in the northern slopes, the Caspian Hycanian mixed forests ecoregion is lush and forested. The natural vegetation of this region grows in distinct zones: the Hycanian forests on the lowest levels, beech forests in the middle zone, and oak forests in higher regions. The wild cypress is the
dominant form of vegetation in some valleys, while olive trees grow in the western valleys of the Central Alborz near the Sefidrud. The bezoar ibex, Blanford's fox, Rüpell's fox, red fox, Persian fallow deer, wild boar, Syrian brown bear, Persian leopard, Indian wolf, buzzard, goose, woodpecker, griffon vulture, and eagle are among important animals and birds found in the Alborz Mountains. The extinct Caspian tiger also lived in the Alborz Mountains.

Ski resorts

Due to the great snowy winters of the Alborz Mountains, there are several ski resorts in different places of the range. Some consider that a few of these are among the best in the world.[3] Some of most important ones are Dizin, Shemshak, Tochal, and Darband.

Mounts, summits, alpine lakes and attractions

- Mount Damavand Amol Mazandaran
- Tochal mount and summit
- Tangeh Savashi, A popular attraction
- Alam Kuh
- Alamut
- Dizin
- Ovan lake
- List of mountains in Iran
- List of Iranian four-thousanders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peaks:</th>
<th>1  Alam Kūh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Āzād Kūh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Damāvand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Do Berar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Do Khaharan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ghal'eh Gardan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Gorg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Kholehono</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mehr Chal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mišīneh Marg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Naz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Shah Alborz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Sīālān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Tochal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Varavašt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rivers:</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  Alamūt</td>
<td>2  Chālūs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Do Hezār</td>
<td>4  Harāz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Jājrūd</td>
<td>6  Karaj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7  Kojūr</td>
<td>8  Lār</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9  Nūr</td>
<td>10 Sardāb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Seh Hazār</td>
<td>12 Shāh Rūd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cities:</th>
<th>1  Āmol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2  Chālūs</td>
<td>3  Karaj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>D Dīzīn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Emāmzādeh Hāšem</td>
<td>K Kandovān Tunnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Latīān Dam</td>
<td>** Lār Dam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources


References

Cultural references

Mount Damavand is featured twice as an online multiplayer map in the game Battlefield 3. In the game it is featured in Damavand Peak and Alborz Mountains.

External links

- Alborz Mountains, Photos from Iran, Livius (http://www.livius.org/er/elborz/elborz.html)
- Maps, Photos and a List of peaks (http://www.summitpost.org/show/mountain_link.pl/mountain_id/5145)


Categories: Mountain ranges of Iran Physiographic provinces

This page was last modified on 17 February 2016, at 14:36.

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.
The Shahnameh, Book of Kings, is an epic composed by the Iranian poet Hakim Abul-Qasim Mansur (later known as Ferdowsi Tusi), and completed around 1010 CE. [Ferdowsi means ‘from paradise’, and is derived from the name Ferdous (cf. Avestan pairi-daeza, later para-diz then par-des or par-dos, arabized to fer-dos). Tusi means ‘from Tus’. In the poet’s case, the name Ferdowsi Tusi became a name and a title: The Tusi Poet from Paradise.]

The epic chronicles the legends and histories of Iranian (Aryan) kings from primordial times to the Arab conquest of Iran in the 7th century CE, in three successive stages: the mythical, the heroic or legendary, and the historic.

Ferdowsi began the composition of the Shahnameh’s approximately 100,000 lines as 50,000* couplets /distiches (bayts) each consisting of two hemistichs (misra), 62 stories and 990 chapters, a work several times the length of Homer’s Iliad, in 977 CE, when eastern Iran was under Samanid rule. The Samanids had Tajik-Aryan affiliation and were sympathetic to preserving Aryan heritage.

[*Note: the number of couplets composed by Ferdowsi for the Shahnameh is stated as 60,000 in a number of sources. This is incorrect as some manuscripts have added verses.]

It took Ferdowsi thirty three years to complete his epic, by which time the rule of eastern Iran had passed to the Turkoman Ghaznavids (who based themselves in the north-eastern province of Khorasan with Ghazni as their capital).

The Shahnameh was written in classical Persian when the language was emerging from its Middle Persian Pahlavi roots, and at a time when Arabic was the favoured language of literature. As such, Ferdowsi is seen as a national Iranian hero who re-ignited pride in Iranian culture and literature, and who established the Persian language as a language of beauty and sophistication. Ferdowsi wrote: “the Persian language is revived by this work.”
The earliest and perhaps most reliable account of Ferdowsi’s life comes from Nezamī-ye Aruzi, a 12th-century poet who visited Tus in 1116 or 1117 to collect information about Ferdowsi’s life. According to Nezami-ye Aruzi, Ferdowsi Tusi was born into a family of landowners near the village of Tus in the Khorasan province of north-eastern Iran. Ferdowsi and his family were called Dehqan, also spelt Dehgan or Dehgān. Dehqan /Dehgan is now thought to mean landed, village settlers, urban and even farmer. However, Dehgan is also a name for the Parsiban, a group of Khorasani with Tajik roots (for further information see the section of Parsiban / Farsiwan in our page on Haroyu, Aria and Herat).

Ferdowsi married at the age of 28 and eight years after his marriage - in order to provide a dowry for his daughter - Ferdowsi started writing the Shahnameh, a project on which he spent some thirty three years of his life.

While Ferdowsi was composing the Shahnameh, Khorasan came under the rule of Sultan Mahmud, a Turkoman Sunni Muslim and consolidator of the Ghaznavid dynasty. Ferdowsi sought the patronage of the sultan and wrote verses in his praise. The sultan, on the advice from his ministers, gave Ferdowsi an amount far smaller than Ferdowsi had requested and one that Ferdowsi considered insulting. He had a falling out with the sultan and fled to Mazandaran seeking the protection and patronage of the court of the Sepahbad Shahreyar, who, it is said, had lineage from rulers during the Zoroastrian-Sassanian era. In Maz andaran, Ferdowsi wrote a hundred satirical verses about Sultan Mahmoud, verses purchased by his new patron and then expunged from the Shahnameh’s manuscript (to keep the peace perhaps). Nevertheless, the verses survived. An example:

Long years this Shahnameh I toiled to complete, That the King might award me some recompense meet, But naught save a heart wrung with grief and despair Did I get from those promises empty as air! Had the sire of the King been some Prince of renown, My forehead would surely have been graced by a crown! Were his mother a lady of high pedigree, In silver and gold I’d have stood to the knee! But, being by birth not a prince but a boor,
The praise of the noble he could not endure!

Ferdowsi returned to Tus to spend the closing years of his life forlorn. Notwithstanding the lack of royal patronage, he died proud and confident his work would make him immortal.

LANGUAGE

Ferdowsi wrote the Shahnameh in Persian at a time when modern Persian was emerging from middle Persian Pahlavi admixed with a number of Arabic words. In his writing, Ferdowsi used authentic Persian while minimizing the use of Arabic words. In doing so, he established classical Persian as the language of great beauty and sophistication, a language that would supplant Arabic as the language of court literature in all Islamic regimes in the Indo-Iranian region.

If the Shahnameh transliterations this author possesses are correct, Ferdowsi even used the term Parsi and not Farsi to name the Persian language, Farsi being the Arabic version of Parsi.

WRITING & BOOKS

A thousand years ago during Ferdowsi’s lifetime, books were written and reproduced by hand, making book production labour-intensive and expensive. Adding illustrations increased the expense. A simple basic manuscript copy could cost as much as a horse – often an entire stable and sometimes the farm. Books therefore were not written for public consumption. Ferdowsi sought the patronage of the then rulers of Iran. The famed amount that Ferdowsi expected to receive for his Shahnameh – as both author and scribe – was a gold piece for every verse.

ORAL TRADITION

The public for their part got to hear verses and legends in chaikhanas or teahouses and at other gatherings frequented by travelling bards and storytellers – the famed naqqal. A few erudite individuals would also recite the verses in private gatherings eliciting the approving bah-bah. The Shahnameh was and is also read aloud in the gymnasiums of the Mithraum-like zurkhanes – where pahlavans, the strong-men of Iran, train with their maces and clubs. During their meditative exercises that have spiritual overtones, a musician plays a drum while reciting Shahnameh verses that recount the heroic deeds of Rustam and other champions of Iran. The epic itself sits in a place of special reverence within the zurkhan.

[*Note: The name pahlavan is linked to Pahlavi, the Middle Persian writing system used in many Zoroastrian texts and said be native to Parthava (Parthia), the region that once included Ferdowsi’s birthplace of Khorasan. Pahlavi came to be known as Parsik, the language of Pars (later Parsi, then Farsi – Persian written with an Arabic script).*]

FERDOWSI’S SOURCES

Khvatay-Namak / Khodai-Nama

In the Shahnameh, Ferdowsi credits a paladin (see page 1 of the translations), who ‘ransacked the earth’ to keep alive the information gleaned from Zoroastrian priests (arch-magi or mobeds) and the ‘epic cycle (they) spread broadcast’ by memorizing and telling ‘their legendary store’.

Ferdowsi’s biographer Nezami-ye Aruzi tells us that Ferdowsi based his work on the Middle Persian Pahlavi work, the Khvatay-Namak (also written Xwaday Namaq or Khodai-Nama), a history of the kings of Persia compiled under orders of Sassanian king Khusrow (Khusrau) I (531-579 CE). Work on the Khvatay-Namak is said to have continued into the reign of the last Sassanian-Sassanian monarch of Iran, Yazdegerd III (633-649 CE), when former editions were added to by the Dihkan Daneshvar assisted by several learned mobeds.

The Khvatay-namak was based on information gathered from Zoroastrian priests and the legendary accounts in the Avesta memorized by the priests. The Khvatay-namak could be the work to which Ferdowsi refers when he talks about the paladin who gathered the epic cycles memorized by Zoroastrian priests (archimag, mobeds). While the Khvatay-namak was started during the reign of Khusrow (Khusrau) I, it is reputed to have been updated to include the stories of kings up to the fall of the Sassanian dynasty. There are no known copies of the Khvatay-namak in existence. In his prologue, Ferdowsi stated he needed to move quickly so that he could implement his mission to keep past legends and histories alive – before their imminent destruction.

A possible predecessor to the Khvatay-Namak could be the Chihtrad, one of the destroyed books of the Avesta (known to us because of its listing and description in the Middle Persian Zoroastrian text, the Dinkard 8.13). The text was said to have been a history of humankind from the beginning down to the revelation of Zarathustra.

Achaemenian Era Book of Kings - Basilikai Diphterai

According to Diodorus (Library of History, Book II. 32, 4), Greek author Ctesias (5th century BCE) who wrote a history of Persia called Persica, consulted a Persian book he called Basilikai Diphterai (spelt by a few as Difterai) meaning ‘Royal Records / Parchments’ which can be taken to mean a book of kings since its contents were stated to have been royal stories from the past. Ctesias was a Greek physician in the service of Artaxerxes II (404-359 BCE). Ctesias’ books are now lost and are known to us through other Classical Greek authors: Photius, Athenaeus, Plutarch and Diodorus Siculus - whose second book is mainly from Ctesias. Diodorus writes, “Now Ctesias says that from the Basilikai Diphterai, in which the Persians in accordance with a certain law of theirs kept an account of their ancient affairs, he carefully investigated the facts about each king, and when he had composed his history he published it to
the Greeks."

If this account of Diodorus is correct, then it appears that there was a written tradition of a Persian/Iranian book of Kings from at least the 5th century BCE and probably much earlier - especially since it was part of an ongoing and ancient tradition.

**Daqiqi**

Abu Mansur Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Daqiqi Balkhi (935 or 942 - 980 CE) was a poet at the Tajik Samanid court in Eastern Iranian lands. The name Balkhi means from Balkh, a central Asian nation that spanned today's Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

Daqiqi (also Dakiki) wrote about a thousand verses on Zoroastrian history and beliefs before he was murdered by his servant. While outwardly a Muslim, Daqiqi was considered a Zoroastrian sympathizer if not a closet Zoroastrian, a dangerous affiliation in those fanatical times. A verse of Daqiqi reads:

Daqiqi chaar kheslat bar-gozida ast
Ba giti dar, ze khoobi-ha wo zeshi
Lab-e bijada rang o nala-e chang
May-e chun zang o kesh-e Zardusthi

Translation:
Of all that's good or evil in the world,
Four things suffice to meet Daqiqi's needs.
Ruby-coloured lips, the harp's lament,
Blood-red wine and Zoroaster's creed.

(translation: Iraj Bashiri)

Daqiqi put the ancient Airanian legends to verse and wrote a thousand and eight verses before he was tragically murdered. These thousand lines are similar in scope and subject matter to the Middle Persian Ayadgar i Zareran, though Daqiqi's source is thought to be the Khvatay Namak (Xwadāy-nāmag).

Significantly, Daqiqi had started his Shahnameh, not with the dawn of history, but with the Kayanian King Gushtasp's (Vishtasp's) patronage of Zarathushtra's religion. Ferdowsi sought out and inserted Daqiqi-e Balkhi's one thousand and eight verses, beginning with the rule of King Gushtasp (Vishtasp), Gushtasp's acceptance of Zarathushtra's message, and ending with Arjasp's attack on Airan after Gushtasp imprisons his son Esfandiar. In a preface to the borrowed verses, Ferdowsi writes that in a dream, Daqiqi exhorted Ferdowsi to use these verses and in addition, to complete the tragic poet's unfinished mission to chronicle Zoroastrian and Aryan heritage.

Ferdowsi undertook his venture at a time when every effort was being made by some zealots to extinguish all memory of Zoroastrian and Aryan tradition. However, Ferdowsi was more circumspect in his approach and not as blatantly pro-Zoroastrian as Daqiqi. Some authors state that Daqiqi's most controversial verses were not included in Ferdowsi's Shahnameh and have been lost.

**OTHER LEGENDS**

Experts tell us that while Ferdowsi pursued the exploits of some of the leading characters of Sistan in detail, he also excluded other well known epics. Subsequent poets put these epics to verse in a fashion similar to the Shahnameh's verses - epics which some scribes inserted into their version of the Shahnameh. The substantial epics include legends of heroes related to Rustam and Sohrab* - legends such as the Barzunama (or Susannama) and the Garshaspnama**. They are not short. Versions of the Barzunama can vary between 30,000 and 60,000 couplets, and that's about as long as the Shahnameh itself. The Garshaspnama is about 9,000 couplets long. The latter composition is credited to a Khurasani compatriot of Ferdowsi’s – Asadi Tusi, who wrote the Garshaspnama about half a century after the Shahnameh.

[Note: *The lineage of the Siestan heroes was: Garshasp, Nariman, Sam, Zei, Rustam, Sohrab and Barzu. **Garshaspnama is also spelt Garshaspmamah / Garshasp Nama / Garshasp Namah / Garshaspnamah / Garshasp Nameh.]

**FERDOWSI'S ORIGINAL WORK LOST**

A manuscript of Ferdowsi's epic, the Shahnameh, written in the poet's own hand is not known to exist. We must, however, remain ever hopeful that this priceless treasure may have survived destruction - waiting to be discovered as have several old Shahnameh manuscript copies during the past hundred years. The earliest surviving copies of his work that have survived were written some two hundred years after the death of the poet around 1020 CE.

**DIFFERENCES IN SHAHNAMEH COPIES**

Scribes who made copies of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh did not make entirely faithful copies of the poet's original work. They resorted to editing the content and replaced the older words with those that were current. In addition, they were prone to errors and we find frequent notes in the margins by the scribes themselves and by others, correcting those errors.
The ad hoc editing by subsequent scribes as well as errors has resulted in every existing manuscript copy being different in content and length – lengths from less than 50,000 to around 60,000 verses. There has consequently been considerable debate among ‘experts’ as to which version is authentic or authoritative.

**RECONSTRUCTION OF AN AUTHORITYITIVE SHAHNAMEH**

Since the many manuscripts of the Shahnameh vary and since scribes were prone to error and editing while copying, there has been a desire to reconstruct what Ferdowsi’s original manuscript would have looked like and reconstruction projects have been undertaken.

One of the first attempts was Mohl’s edition in 7 volumes (Paris, 1838–78) based on 35 manuscripts. Mohl’s edition and French translation were used to author the only complete Shahnameh’s English translation in verse – that by A.G. and E. Warner, (6-10 vols. London, 1905-25).

A ten-volume reconstructed edition was later published in Tehran (1934-35).

Next, a nine-volume edition was published in Moscow by Y. E. Bertel and others (1966-71). The Moscow edition was based, among others, on the British Museum manuscript dated 1276 and a manuscript in Leningrad dated 1333 – both of which were among those considered authoritative by the experts at that time.

In 1987, Dr. Djial Khaleghi-Motlagh published the first volume of his reconstructed text. Volumes 2 to 5 have subsequently been published (1988-97). Dr. Khaleghi-Motlagh selected fifteen manuscripts on which to base his edition and these manuscripts included the British Museum and Leningrad MSS. According to a review by Dick Davis, Khaleghi-Motlagh now considers the Leningrad manuscript copy to be ghayr-e asli meaning secondary and inauthentic.

**ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS**

- Zimmern, Helen (1846-1934), *The Epic of Kings - Hero Tales of Ancient Persia* (1883). Secondary translation used on this web-site.
- Davis, Dick, *Stories from the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi*
  - Written in verse and prose, Davis’ work excludes the section on Vishtasp and Zarathushtra and is generally of little interest or value from a Zoroastrian heritage perspective.

**SPELLING OF THE NAMES**

There are various spellings for the name of the poet, his epic and the names of its characters. These spelling differences arise from the transliteration of the Persian alphabet to English and other European languages or phonetic variations. The names of the characters differ considerably depending on whether ancient or modern forms of the names are used. The number of Google search frequency results on the date of writing are as follows:

Ferdowsi - 221,000 (used here), Firdawsi - 130,000, Firdausi - 106,000, Firdousi - 41,200, Firdusi - 38,700, Firdowsi - 6,230, Ferdausi - 5,420, Ferdawsi - 2,020.

Shahnameh - 221,000 (used here), Shahnama - 103,000, "shah nameh" - 28,800, shahname - 25,600, "shah nama" - 9,650, shahnama - 7,860, "shah name" - 5,500, shanameh - 1,980, shaname - 1,860.

**RESOURCES**

- Shahnameh text in Persian
- Top

© Author: K. E. Eduljee, Zoroastrian Heritage, 2005-14 (researched from 1979 onwards) • Contact • Page validated by W3C.org
Contents
Turkmenistan Region & Zoroastrianism
Overview
Turkmenistan and Zoroastrianism
Silk Roads
Kopet Dag Mountains
Kara Kum Desert
Nisaya, Anau, Kopet Dag Foothills

Nisaya, Nisa
Raphael Pumpelly - Champion of a Central Asian Cradle of Civilization
Anau
Fredrik Hiebert
Why Pumpelly Remains Unknown
Resumption of Anau Excavations
Ancient Kopet Dag Foothill Townships

Mouru - Gonur 1
Mouru & Murgab River Delta
Region & Zoroastrianism

Mouru - Gonur, Page 1
Turkmenistan Region

Turkmenistan Region Pages:
» Turkmenistan Region Introduction
» Nisaya - Anau & Ancient Kopet Dag Foothill Townships
» Mouru - Merv

Site Contents
Search Our Site:

Google Search
The Ancient Civilization of Mouru & the Murgab River Delta

The environs of Mouru, the third nation listed in the Zoroastrian scriptures, the Avesta’s book of Vendidad, are generally thought to have included the Murgab river delta, that is, the region around Merv which today is a city in southern Turkmenistan. Ruins of over 150 ancient settlements dating back to the early Bronze Age (2500-1700 BCE) have been found in the Murgab delta region which covers an area of more than 3000 sq. km. and contains about 78 oases.

Archaeological reports indicate that the earliest agricultural settlements in the Murgab delta could date as far back as the 7th millennium BCE making it a seat of one of the oldest human civilizations - a civilization that Raphael Pumpelly (1837-1923) had sought to bring to the attention of a world more focused on the old civilizations of the Tigris-Euphrates and Nile River valleys, saying, “the fundamentals of European civilization—organized village life, agriculture, domestication of animals, weaving, etc. - were originated on the oases of Central Asia long before the time of Babylon.” [Discover Magazine notes: “Volunteer Lisa Pumpelli is working there in a trench at the top of a large mound with a spectacular view of the Kopet-Dag mountains. She is helping Hiebert, who is now an archaeologist with the National Geographic Society in Washington, D.C., track down the precursors to the Oxus culture. Both are following in the footsteps of Lisa Pumpelli’s grandfather, Raphael Pumpelly, and great-grandfather, also named Raphael Pumpelly (Pumpelly is an alternate spelling of the family name). “I’m digging in my great-grandfather’s back dirt,” Pumpelli quips.”]

The River Murgab (also spelt Murgab, Murghab - or Murgap in the Turkmen language) originates on the western slopes of the Kuh-e Hisar mountains of northern Afghanistan. After flowing 850 kilometres - first to the west in the valley between Safed Kuh and Siah Kuh mountains, and then to the north as it leaves Afghanistan to enter Turkmenistan - the once mighty river disperses itself as the fingers of a delta that disappears in the sands of Turkmenistan’s Karakum (Garagum) Desert.
Verse 10.14 of the Avesta's Mehr Yasht, states that the rivers which originate in Airyo shayanem, the Aryan abode, flow swiftly into the countries of Mourum [later Margu(sh) (English-Greek Margiana) and eventually Marv located in today's Turkmenistan], Haroyum (Aria in modern Afghanistan), Sughdhem (Sugd in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) and Khairizem [Khwarizem beside the Amu Darya (Oxus) River in Uzbekistan]. The principal river that flows into Mourum is the Murgab.

Ruins of the earliest of the Murgab delta settlements - those dating from the 3rd and 2nd millennium BCE - have been found in substantial numbers in the northeast of the delta region (see the image to the right) - a region that was once green and fertile but which today has been claimed by the relentlessly spread of the Karakum desert. The northern delta settlements include those now known as the ruins at Kelleli, Adj Kui, Taip, Gonur, and Togolok (Togoluk). The development of relatively advanced irrigation techniques in the early Iron Age enabled the growth of additional settlements. It is presumed that as the northern delta area became more dry, large metropolises like Gonur were abandoned. Further to the south, the ancient city of Merv became an Achaemenid era (519-331 BCE) administrative centre and perhaps even the capital of the satrapy that included Mouru. Mouru was then known to the Achaemenians as Margu(sh) and to the Greeks as Μαργιανή. Margiana is the derived English-Latin name of Margu. The Sassanian name for the region was Marv.

The ruins of Gonur are surrounded by other uncovered ancient settlements identified as dots in the images above and below.

**The Region & Zoroastrianism**

In the list of sixteen nations mentioned in the Zoroastrian scriptures, the Avesta's, book of Vendidad, Mouru or Mourum, is the third. Zarathushtra (Zoroaster) was native to Aryanam Vaeja (Ancient Aryana), the first in the list of the Vendidad-Avesta nations. Even though Zarathushtra was not native to Mouru, it is in the realm of possibilities that he might have preached in Mouru. However, this activity - if it took place - is not mentioned in the scriptures.

In listing the nations listed after Airyana Vaeja, the Vendidad cites non-Zoroastrian traits in many of the nations, suggesting that that the Aryan Zoroastrians possibly lived in multi-cultural multi-faith communities. Because ancient Zoroastrians did not worship in temples, because they did not bury their dead, and because they were careful not to defile the environment with garbage, they would have left scant evidence of their religious activities.

What we learn from the archaeological findings under the tepe or depes in the Murgab region supports the history contained in the Avesta, a history we have outlined in our pages on the Aryans.
TEPE OR DEPE

‘Tepe’ or ‘depe’ is a Turkoman word for a mound and is synonymous with the word ‘tell’, used in the Middle East to denote mounds or small hills. In treeless areas, such geographic features often indicate the presence of buried ancient settlements formed from mud-brick structures compressed over time by later human occupation and later still by soil into artificial hills. If the tepes contain ruins of settlements built one on top of the other, excavations reveal layers of settlements that can be dated using modern laboratory techniques. The lower layers are therefore normally the older layers.

The largest of the settlements uncovered in the north-eastern Murgab delta are the ruins called Gonur-Tepe. We have not read any layers in this excavation as of this writing though it is quite possible that lower, older, layers await discovery.

GONUR / GONOR / GUNAR

The Archaeological Site

The largest of all the ancient settlements uncovered in the Murgab delta is Gonur-Depe (or Gonur-Tepe. Gonur is also spelt Gonor or Gunar). Gonur is located some seventy kilometres north of the ruins of Merv and a three-hour drive from Mary. The area around Gonur is now sparsely populated.

The Gonur site occupies an area of about 55 hectares and consists of the main complex in the northern section of the site and a smaller (130 x 120 m = 1.56 hectare) complex to the south.

The southern complex is also said to be 3 hectares in size and that might include surrounding structures.

A large necropolis lies to the west of the site. In the centre of the northern complex is a fortified citadel-like structure. Both complexes have fortification walls. The fortification walls of the southern complex are wide, 8 to 10 metres tall and interspaced with round towers along its sides and corners. There are residential quarters walls within the fortifications.
Aerial photo of Gonur showing both complexes (looking almost directly north). Photo credit: Kenneth Garrett

Gonur south complex
Description of Ancient Gonur

Gonur was a large town for the times and home to thousands of residents. It was for all practical purposes, a city, a metropolis. The city had carefully designed streets, drains, temples and homes. The people farmed the surrounding fields growing a wide variety of crops and produce that included wheat, barley, lentils, grapes and other fruit.

The people of Gonur were also traders and were likely among those who developed the first trade links between the East and the West along what came to be known as the Silk Roads. The goods the traders carried to distant cities included those made from for ivory, gold, and silver. They buried their dead in elaborate graves filled with fine jewellery and wheeled carts.
The north Gonur complex had a central citadel-like structure about 100m by 180m (nearly 350 by 600 feet) in size and surrounded by a high fortification wall and towers. The citadel was set within another vast walled area. This wall had square bastions and was in turn placed within a large oval enclosed walled area that included a large water basins and many dwellings and other buildings.

The archaeologist Viktor Sarianidi (see Sarianidi, page 3) who excavated the ruins, began a trend to call Gonur, Margush (or the capital of Margush), a name used by the Achaemenians for Mouru or Merv a thousand or so years after Gonur had been abandoned. We would prefer to say that Gonur was a major administrative centre and metropolis of Mouru, the older Avestan name for the nation.

Sarianidi also identifies the southern structure as a cathedral-like temple. We strongly doubt this conclusion for Sarianidi’s analysis has numerous factual errors and he displays no real knowledge of Zoroastrianism, its doctrine and practice on which he bases many of his conclusions. These errors and lack of understanding (or even an attempt at objective research) brings into question the credibility and veracity of his sensationalistic and outlandish pronouncements about the function of the various structures within the Gonur complexes.

The evidence from the excavations points to the city of Gonur functioning for the relatively short time of a few hundred years after which it was abandoned by its residents.

**Water Management**

There appears to have been a natural or artificial reservoir beside the city and within its outer walls. The surrounding fields and orchards were watered using lengthy canals that the residents had dug from the glacier-fed arms of the Murgab River delta. Since the rivers were fed by glaciers and since the framers did not have to rely on rain for irrigation, their crops were not threatened by drought.

In addition to the water canals the residents of Gonur had dug from the river to water their fields, the city also had a sophisticated water supply and sewage system. It appears water was brought in to the city. The city also appears that two separate sewage systems, one for ordinary waste water and the other - it is suggested - for water that had been used for the ritual washing of bodies during funerals. Given Sarianidi’s other fantastic and ill-informed conclusions about Zoroastrian rites, we must wonder about the veracity of this construct.
Haroyu is the sixth nation mentioned in the Avestan book of Vendidad's list of sixteen nations. Together with Bakhdi / Balkh, Haroyu is a candidate for the middle Aryan nation of Airan, the kingdom that features in the poet Ferdowsi's epic, the Shahnameh.

Haroyu is commonly identified with the lands surrounding the Hari Rud River in north-western Afghanistan, bordered in the east by Bakhdi (Balkh), to the north by Merv (Murus) and Nisaya (Niša) in today's Turkmenistan, to the west by Uru (Khurasan) and to the south by Haetumant (Helmand and Siestan / Sistan) as well as Harahvaiti (Kandahar). To locate these nations, please see our map on the Nations of the Vendidad.

This list of nations does not mention Persia and Media and was possibly compiled before 800 BCE.


Suggested prior reading: Aria / Airan in Location of the Aryan Homeland
Where the Haroyu and its neighbours were mentioned in the Avesta, we find nations listed by Herodotus in his *Histories* (3.93), as satrapies (provinces) of the Persian Empire of Darius the Great. The names of these satrapies in Herodotus’ *Histories* were related to but different from the names in the Avesta. The sixteenth satrapy consisted of Parthia (Urva), Chorasmia (Khvarizem - possibly including Mourn and Nisaya), Sogdiana (Sughdha), and Aria identified as the Avestan Haroyu. Similarly, the Avestan Bakhtih had become the twelfth satrapy of Bactria and included lands “as far as the Aegli (?)” (Herodotus 3.92).

The past legacy and greatest of Aria and its prominence amongst the nations of the Persian Empire are evident when viewing Ptolemy’s map of the world. In Ptolemy’s map of the world, Aria’s name in larger letters stands out in relation to those of its neighbours.

Arrian (c.87-145 CE) in *Anabasis* 4.6.6 states that in antiquity, Aria was considered as particularly fertile and rich in wine. Thus reference by Arrian to Aria having been particularly fertile in antiquity may refer to the memory of Aria’s predecessor nation, Airyana Vaeja (see above), being very fertile and a paradise on earth. Herodotus described Aria as the bread-basket of Central Asia.

The classical writers called Aria’s capital, Artacoana (also spelt Artacana, Articaudna, Chortacana, and Artacaena), a city destroyed by Alexander. Close to the destroyed capital of Artacoana, Alexander built another city, Alexandria Ariana, which he named after himself. Alexandria Ariana is identified as modern-day Herat in north-western Afghanistan.
Map of the world based on the descriptions of Dionysus c. 405 BCE. Note Aria adjacent to the northern Indus River and the ‘Taures’ mountain range extending from Cappadocia to northern India.

Hellenic authors imagined that the present day mountains of Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and Northern India were all part of a mountain range they called the ‘Taures’.

1823 Lucas map showing nations c. 200 BCE and one version of the extent of Lesser Aria. Click for a larger map.
ACHAEMENIAN HARAIKA

At the same time that Herodotus was writing about Aria, the Persian Achaemenian inscriptions of King Darius the Great mentioned the land of Haraiwa - a land whose name that could have been derived from Arai-va.

After the Achaemenian dynasty was overthrown by Alexander of Macedonia in 330 BCE, he advanced east toward the heartland of the Aryan lands. The route he choose was to march upon Haraiwa / Aria, destroying its historic capital Artacoana (also spelt Artacana, Articaudna, Chortacana, and Artacaena) and selling its inhabitants as slaves. After Alexander had advanced into Sugd, Aria rose up in revolt which Alexander managed to suppress. Nevertheless, the unrest in Aria continued for a couple of years causing Alexander to divert troops and resources.

SASSANIAN KHURASAN

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

HERAT

Ptolemy, Strabo and other classical authors located Aria in the area where we find Herat province in the northwest of modern-day Afghanistan today - lands around the Harirud River (Old Ir. Harayu, Gk. Arios). This location of Aria is not too distant from the lands we have identified as possible locations for Aryan Vaeja, the Aryan homeland - lands further east towards Tajikistan. It is significant that the majority of inhabitants in Herat city, Herat Province's capital, are a group of ethnic Tajiks called Parsiban (see below).

Herat province is formed around the valley of Hari Rud River which flows to the Kara Kum Desert in Turkmenistan. Since this river starts in the province of Ghowr, Haroyu may have been included Ghowr.
Today, Herat while naturally beautiful in many ways, may not fit the descriptions of war have resulted in poverty and a destruction of the environment. There are natural pistachio forests in the Kosh-k-e Kohna district, which during past twenty years have been indiscriminately cut for fuel. An example of some of Herat’s natural assets are the lands surrounding Herat city.

**Parsiban / Farsiwan**

The residents of Herat City are mainly the Parsiban (or Farsiwan), a group otherwise simply called Parsi (or Farsi), two versions of an ethnic term sometimes translated as meaning ‘Persian speaker’. However, all Afghani Persian speakers are not called Parsiban. For the main part, Parsiban refers to a sub-group of ethnic Tajiks who speak Khorasani Dari, a Persian language dialect. This is especially true of the rural Parsiban who have maintained the tradition of speaking Khorasani Dari. Members of the same ethno-linguistic group are also found in the Eastern Iranian provinces of Khorasan and Siestan / Sistan. Khorasani Dari is native to Khorasan, Herat and Farah provinces - provinces that were once part of Greater Khorasan. The eastern-most district in Herat Province is called Farsi /arsi. There are about 600,000 Parsiban in Afghanistan out of a present population of just under thirty three million.

The Parsiban are also often called Dehghan, Dehgan or Dehgan, variations of a word that has now come to mean landed, village settlers, urban and even farmer. It probably means someone who is not nomadic but settled - someone who is attached to the land, whether urban or rural. Ferdowsi, author of the epic Shahnameh, was a Dehgan and therefore a Parsi or Parsiban.

This terminology may have significance for the Parsi of India as there are indications that some of the Parsi Zoroastrian immigrants to India originated from Khorasan or travelled via Khorasan. In those days - a thousand years ago - Khorasan included a large part of Eastern Iran and Western Afghanistan.

Since Parsi fundamentally means ‘of Pars’ or ‘from Pars’, and since Pars is now a south-western province of Iran, we may conclude that the name Parsi indicates an origin in Pars. In other words, we may be led to conclude that the Khorasani Parsi originally came from Pars. However, since the Khorasani Parsi are ethnic Tajiks, there is no reason why the opposite cannot be true. In this scenario, the Parsi would have originated in the eastern Aryan lands from where they would have migrated west through Haroyu and Khorasan, eventually settling in the Elamite lands they would call Parsa or Pars (also see Persians as Migrants in our page on Early Persian History).

**Parsi**

Ptolemy also speaks of the Parsii and of their towns Parsia and Parisonia.

William Woodthorpe Tarn in The Greeks in Bactria and India states, "No one has really considered Apollodorus’ fourth people, the Pasian, who happen to be important, for it was they who a century later put an end to Greek rule in India. As Asiani is the Iranian adjectival form of Asii, so Pasian would be the adjectival form of the name Pasi or Pasi; and there can be no doubt that this name is the Parsii (Parsiai) of Greek geographers. For the same stem occurs again in southern Iran, and the known Greek variants on the word Pasargadae (the usual form in Greek writers), namely Pasagadae and Parsagadae, make the equivalence Pas-Parsii certain; they may also suggest that the word Parsii was really not Sac or Persian. The adjectival form of Parsii occurs again, alongside of the substantial form, in the names of the villages Parsia and Parisonia in Ptolemy (p. 331), Parsiana being identical with Pasian.

[Note: The Chinese Po-sse for Persia (Parsa) would imply a form Pasi, were it not fifth-century A.D. and too late to use. But the Greek form Pasargadae, used by an Alexander-historian of the fourth century B.C., removes any objection; and indeed it is possible that Po-sse in the Wei-shu may mean not Persia but the Parsii. The certain equivalent Pasi-Parsi therefore guarantees Asii-Arsi, which in view of Pliny (p.285) may still be required.]

"As a place has to be found for the Parsii in the Bactrian kingdom, and as the Yueh-chi and the Sacaraucae between them account for Bactria proper, southern Sogdiana, and Merv, the only possible locality for the Parsii is farther to the west; their first conquest must have been the one-time Bactrian satrapies west of the Arius, Tapuria and Traxiane, that is, a large part of what had once been the kingdom of Antimachus, assuming that Merv, from its geographical position, must have fallen to the Sacaraucae from Bokhara. This would explain why Apollodorus named the Parsii among the conquerors of the Bactrian kingdom while ‘Frogus’ source seemingly did not; Tapuria and Traxiane had long been Bactrian but were no longer so at the date of the Yueh-chi conquest, having been taken from Eucratides by Mithridates I (p. 2.19), and so it was possible for two well-informed writers to take different views about them; ‘Frogus’ source’ must have reckoned the Parsii among the invaders of Parthia.

"Who were these Parsii? The word seems to be the Old Persian Parsa which means Persians. The Persians of Persis called themselves Parsa; but the form Parsa is old-it has been suggested that it was the Median form of Parasa - and had already played a part in the history of the Iranian invasions as the name of a people who had reached north east India and south Armenia and appear in Assyrian records; of the known original Iranian tribes they belonged to the Parsa-Parsua Persian tribe. The Parsi of Apollodorus and Ptolemy, then, were a branch of the Persian people who had remained behind when their kinsfolk went south. But if they remained behind, where did they live? In Persian tradition the original Iranian ‘home’, that is, the centre from which the Iranian
peoples set out on their conquests to the southward, was called Eranvej, and Eranvej has recently been identified with Chorasmia (Kwarizm). Now Kwarizm, sandwiched between the Sacaraucae and the Massagetae, is too important a country not to have played some part in the second-century invasions.

The Hari Rud, its valley and a village in Herat province, Afghanistan. Photo credit: funnybear at Flickr

CHAR AIMAQ & JAMSHIDI

In Herat province - modern-day Aria - as well as in neighbouring provinces in Afghanistan and Iran, are a group of people called Char Aimaq or Chahar Eimaka meaning four tribes, Char / Chahar being a Persian word while Aimaq / Eimaka is a Mongolian word. The four tribes are the Taimani, Firozkohi, Timuri and Jamshidi. The Jamshidi get their name from the legendary Aryan King Jamshid. Firozkohi name derives from firoz-kuh, meaning “mountain of turquoise.” The Aimaq language dialects resemble Dari (Afghan eastern Farsi) mixed with words of Mongolian and Turkic origin.

The four tribes are in turn made up of 250 sub-tribes. Known for their formidable warrior skills, while the Char Aimaq have not united politically, they have formed alliances for mutual protection against invaders. Amazingly, the Jamshidi Aimaq who represent the cultural integration of Aryan, Turkic and Mongolian features - a product of centuries of mixing at the cross-roads of history - continue to claim a link to legendary King Jamshid.

The Aimaq are mainly employed in agriculture (cultivating rice, cotton, grapes, wheat and melons) as well as in animal husbandry and live principally in Badghis, Ghor and Herat Provinces. Aimaq food is mainly whole wheat nan bread baked in mud ovens, rice, chickpeas, potatoes, summer garden vegetables, chicken, and eggs. Lamb is served special occasions and to guests. Dugh made with yogurt, salt, pepper and water is the beverage of choice.

Their principal (capital) city is Chaghcharan close to the ancient city of Herat. The largest number of the Jamshidi and Timuri live in the fertile Kush River valley northeast of Herat city in Herat and Badghis Provinces. Another significant group of Jamshidi live in the northeast of Iran’s Khorasan province, south of Mashhad. The main Aimaq city. Mashhad The Taimani and Firozkohi tribes for the main part live in the mountainous and largely barren Ghor Province’s, living respectively in the Hari Rud and Murghab River valleys. There they endure severe winters and poor rainfall. During periods of drought (which are fairly regular in the region) virgins are reputedly called upon to perform pre-Islamic rain dances. The semi-nomadic and poorer Taimani and Firozkohi tribes living in less fertile areas of Badghis Province, cultivate wheat, melons and fodder to feed animals that must be stabled in winter. When moving their flocks in summer, the Firozkohi dwell in traditional yurts. The borders between Iran, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan have little meaning to the nomadic groups.

Group affiliations amongst the Aimaq are based on the clan and extended family. Group leadership is male and the Aimaq trace their ancestry through male lines. Amongst the Timuri and Jamshidi, marriages often take place between blood relatives, where the female is between 13 and 14 years of age and the male between 16-20 years of age. However, among the Taimani and Firozkohi, females marry around 18 years of age and have the option of rejecting their parent’s choice of husband.
Page 1 - Zoroastrianism in the Karakalpakstan Region

Introduction

Location of Khvarizem / Khairizem / Khorezm

Location of Khvarizem

Landscape of Khvarizem / Khairizem / Khorezm

Disappearing Amu Darya and Aral Seas - Ecological Disaster

Geopolitics of Khairizem / Khvarizem

Khvarizem and Zoroastrianism

Khvarizem in Zoroastrian Texts

People of the Region

Saka: Settled and Nomadic

Khvarizem: Settled Agriculturalists

Arrival of the Turkic Peoples

Tamerlane

Arrival of the Turkic Uzbeks

Page 2

Shilpiq / Chilpik Dakhma

Mizdakan & Gyar Kala

Tragic Destruction of Mizdakan

Site, Layout & Location

Gyaur Kala

Necropolis
The region around the lower half or northern reaches and the delta of the Amu Darya region - where the Amu Darya flows into the Aral Sea was called Khairizem in the Avesta's Meher Yasht and Khvarizem in the Middle Persian Pahlavi text, the Bundahishn. Khairizem / Khvarizem (also spelt Khwarezm) are associated with Chorasmia mentioned by Greek authors and the Old Persian name, Uvarazmiya or Uvarazmish found in the Achaemenian inscriptions of Darius I the Great (522-486 BCE) and Xerxes. The major cities of Khvarizem are today called **Old Urgench** (Persian: Kuhna Gurganj), **Toprak-Kala** and **Dzanbas-Kala**.

Today, the Khvarizem consists of the provinces of:
- **Karakalpakstan** province (Uzbekistan) with its capital as Nukus (also spelt No'kis),
- **Khorezm** province (Uzbekistan) with its capital of Urgarich, and the adjacent province of
- **Dashowuz / Dashoguz** province (Turkmenistan).

Khorezm Province, which contains the ancient city of Khiva, while bearing the name of the relatively large country of ancient Khairizem, has been reduced to a fairly small province tucked between the west bank of the Amu Darya and Turkmenistan.

To the north of Khairizem / Khvarizem stretched the steppes of what is now Kazakhstan, the Aral sea, and the delta of the Syr Darya or Jaxartes (Greek). To the west lay the cliffs of the inhospitable Ustiurt Plateau beyond which was the Caspian Sea. To the east and southeast was the Qyzylqum of Kyzyl Kum desert and **Sughdha / Sugd** (Gk. Sogdiana) respectively. To the south lay **Bakhdivi / Balkh** (Gk. Bactria), and to the west, the Garagum or Kara Kum desert separated Khairizem / Khvarizem from **Mouru** (Gk. Margiana).

**LANDSCAPE OF KHARIZEM / KHVARIZEM / KHOREZM**

We need to exercise caution in picturing the landscape of ancient Khairizem based on what it looks like today. While the main features, such as the principle rivers, topography and presence of deserts approximate what we see today, the local geography of the area was quite different. For instance, the
green areas that supported agriculture were much larger since the rivers carried far more water down from the hills and were wide enough to be called a darya - a sea.

**The Disappearing Amu Darya and Aral Seas**

**An Ecological Disaster**

Nowadays, a great quantity of the upstream waters of the Amu Darya river and its tributaries have been diverted to support industrial crops such as cotton and as a consequence the once mighty seas of water are barely streams. Some of the Amu Darya river tributaries simply disappear into an expanding desert.

Since rainfall is scarce in Uzbekistan’s northern plains, its fields had relied on waters of the Amu and Syr Darya rivers in order to sustain plant life. When Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan were part of the Soviet Union, the Soviets embarked on a scheme to grow industrial and cash crops such as cotton in the upper valleys of the two ancient rivers. This short-sighted policy produced a demand for water to raise these crops, water the ecology of the lower regions of the river needed in to survive and hold back the desert. Nowadays, the water in the rivers down-stream has been reduced to a trickle, fast turning the northern steppes into a desert and the Aral Sea into marshland.

The once mighty Aral Sea, which together with the Caspian Sea was one of the largest inland seas in the world, is now but a few ponds of water, marshes and a graveyard for stranded and rusting ships and dead fish. Its dried bed of salt is carried by the wind contributing to the further desertification of the surrounding steppes. The region’s climate too has changed with average temperatures increasing by 10°C since Khvarizem’s days of glory.

**Geopolitics of Khvarizem / Khvarizem**

In ancient times, the lower reaches of the Amu Darya river had numerous branches, some that ended in lakes. One branch of the Amu Darya was known to have flowed into the Caspian Sea. The numerous branches of the Amu Darya and the resulting connection between the Aral and Caspian seas would have enabled transportation and trade by boat up and down the Amu Darya river, its branches, between the two seas, and then up the rivers that drained into these seas.

The network of rivers and canals that straddled the Silk Roads positioned Khvarizem to trade extensively with its neighbours and the known world, trade that extended from India in the east, to the Black Sea in the west, and to Persia and Mesopotamia in the south west.

The main Amu Darya rivers and its branches did change course frequently. As a result, settlements on its banks had to be abandoned and new ones constructed. These changes in the geographical landscape probably resulted in changes to the political landscape.
The settlements, cities and fortresses (kalas) that had been built on high ground, have today yielded an abundance of archaeological sites associated with Zoroastrianism and the Zoroastrian era.

**KHAIRIZEM / KHVARYEM AND THE ORIGINS OF ZOROASTRIANISM**

Some of the people in the region as well as some authors claim that Zoroastrianism originated in Khvarizem. If we keep in mind that through history, the size of Khvarizem changed considerably, and that at one time Greater Khvarizem or Chorasmia had grown to include the lands surrounding the Amu Darya river along its entire length from south to north - then that assertion is plausible. Greater Khvarizem or Chorasmia could have been a large country, a kingdom of kingdoms that included Sugd and possibly ancient Aryan Vaeja, Zarathushtra's native land. The common error made in making the statement that Zoroastrianism originated in Khvarizem, is to assume that the region meant by the claim is the lower northern reaches of the Amu Darya rather than the upper southern reaches of the river.

The present-day Uzbek province that is heir to the modern derivative of Khairizem's name, Khorezm, is a small bulge of land sandwiched between the Amu Darya river and Turkmenistan.

**KHAIRIZEM / KHVARYEM IN ZOROASTRIAN TEXTS**

**URVAM / URVA. EIGHT VENDIDAD NATION**

Khvarizem / Chorasmia is not mentioned directly in the Vendidad's list of sixteen nations. It shares this characteristic with Parsa (Persia) and Mada (Mada). Both Khvarizem (Chorasmia), Parsa (Persia) and Mada (Media) likely came into existence after the related chapter in the Vendidad was written.

However, unlike Parsa (Persia) and Mada (Media), Khvarizem / Chorasmia is mentioned elsewhere in the Avesta. Verse 10.14 of the Avesta's Mehr Yasht, states that the rivers which originate in Aryan shayanem, the Aryan abode, flow swiftly into the countries of Mourum, Haroyum, Sughdhem and Khairizem i.e. Margush (in modern day Turkmenistan), Ania (in modern Afghanistan), Sugd (in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) and Khvarizem (in Uzbekistan).

Some of the Vendidad lands could very well have evolved into Khvarizem. The eighth Vendidad nation Urvam is the primary candidate. The name Urvam is close to Uvarazmiya or Uvarazmish, the name given to Khvarizem / Chorasmia region during Achaemenian Persian times (c. 500 BCE).

Khvarizem (also spelt Khwarezm) is mentioned in the Middle Persian Pahlavi text, the Bundahishn as follows:

Lesser Bund. 17.5 - "In the reign of Yim [Jamsheed]... the fire Adar Farnbag was established by him... on the Gardman-homand ('glorious') mountain in Khvarizem." Since there are no significant mountains in present-day Khvarizem, mountains here could mean the hills along the lower northern Amu Darya or the mountains of the upper southern Amu Darya.

Lesser Bund. 22.1 & 4 - "Regarding Lake Khvarizem it says that excellent benefit of Arshishang (Ashishwangh) is produced from it, that is, wealth, riches, good fortune, becomingness, and delightfulness." [Perhaps, Lake Khvarizem is the Aral sea. However, in the past when the Amu Darya carried greater quantities of water, there were other lakes in Khvarizem.]

Lesser Bund. 12.12 - "The Airach mountains are in the middle (of the earth or the Persian empire?) and extend from Hamadan to Khvarizem (the Airach appears to be the modern-day Alborz mountains)." 9 - "The Airach are connected to the Aparsen mountains (that extend from Sagastan i.e. Sistan to Khujistan i.e. Khuzestan) which are also the mountains of Pars (the Aparsen appear to be the Zagros mountains)." 13 - "The (Chino) mountains, which are to the east of the Airach, on the frontier of Turkistan, are also connected with Aparsen."

It is interesting to note that by the time of the Bundahishn's writing, Turkid had replaced the lands of the Saka as the lands to the east of the Aryan or Iranian lands - lands beyond the Syr Darya (Jaxartes) River - regions that are part of today's southern Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

By these accounts, at the time the Bundahishn was written, Khvarizem could have encompassed all of present-day Uzbekistan and parts of Turkmenistan. It should be kept in mind that Zoroastrian history spanned a few thousand years. During this time, old nations disappeared and new nations appeared. Those that survived grew or shrunk in size and dominance. In addition, the people in the region appeared to have been constantly on the move, displacing the previous inhabitants of a land in the process.

**PEOPLE OF THE REGION**

**The Saka**

The Persian Achaemenian inscriptions from around 500 BCE, identify the people living in this region as the Saka Tigrakhauda, while Greek authors (Greek name for Saka was Saca) from Herodotus onwards use the name Massagetae. It would appear that Saka was a group name applied to all the people that occupied lands on the eastern and north-eastern borders of the Persian empire. The Saka Tigrakhauda (Greek name: Massagetae) were a sub-group within the Saka who occupied the north-eastern frontiers lands around the Aral sea. The people of Khvarizem were a further sub-group of the Saka Tigrakhauda (Massagetae) - the people who lived around the northern half of the Amu Darya river. [Please see our page on the Saka for more detailed discussion.]

The Saka could very well have originated from the Indo-Iranian or Aryan peoples in general and the Avestan people in particular. They do not appear to have been a Turkic group as is sometimes stated in the literature. Rather, the Saka were displaced by Turkic peoples who started to move into the region
about two thousand years ago at the turn of the millennium.

The Saka: Settled Agriculturalists and Nomadic Herders
The land immediately surrounding the lower Oxus was fertile and supported agriculture and fruit trees. The people who tilled the soil had to live close by in order to work the land. For protection, they often lived together in settlements that became villages, towns and even cities. For protection from raids, the settlements had surrounding walls.

In the encompassing grasslands and arid regions that did not support agriculture, there is little evidence of settlements such as cities. In contrast to the settled peoples who lived in the fertile lower Oxus region, the people who lived in the grassland and arid regions, be they in the plains or in the hills, were a nomadic people who frequently launched raids on their more settled neighbours. It is commonly assumed that all Saka were nomadic. The evidence points to the contrary. There were both, a settled and a nomadic Saka. The two groups gradually developed different value system and ways of livings, differences that frequently resulted in clashes.

Khvarizem: Settled Agriculturalists
The people of Khvarizem were the settled Saka who farmed the land and lived in cities. In order to increase the land that could be cultivated, the brought the water from the Amu Darya to a network of fields by digging numerous canals. The older canals were up to ten to fifteen kilometres in length. By 200 BCE, the larger trunk canals to the east of the Amu Darya were some 300 km in length.

The settled Saka of Khvarizem also developed the technology to make mud bricks, as well as the engineering and construction skills needed to build immense structures. They built numerous large forts on hills where local agricultural communities could take shelter and along their borders with the grasslands and deserts. The settled Saka needed to build these fortifications to protect themselves from raids by the nomadic Saka.

So far, over 400 settlements dating before 200 BCE have been uncovered in the region, but only one of them, Kyuzeli Gyr, at the north-western edge of the Khvarizem, was fortified. This might indicate that Kyuzeli Gyr was a frontier town on Khvarizem's border.

Arrival of the Turkic Peoples
After 200 BCE and particularly after the turn of the millennium, there is evidence that large groups of people from the north had started to move into the lower Oxus (Khvarizem) region and as well the eastern banks of the Syr Darya River.

By 1000 CE, Turkic groups originally from the Altai region of Siberia, had established themselves in the old Saka lands east of the Syr Darya or Jaxartes, and by the time it was written (8th and 9th centuries CE), the Bundahishn began to call the region Turkistan. Indeed, at this point in history, the Turkic groups had settled in the lands between the Syr and Amu Darya rivers. Since they came to occupy land that was once called Turan by the Persians, the Turk of the region were incorrectly called Turanians by medieval Persians including Ferdowsi. The Turk freely intermingled with the original inhabitants and adopted some of the regions cultural traits. The migration of the Turk was facilitated by their Mongol cousins. In the Mongol-Turkic armies that invaded Central Asia, the Mongols were the generals while the more numerous Turks were the soldiers who made up the bulk of the army. After the Mongol invasions led by Genghis Khan (c. 1162-1227 BCE), the Turkic peoples quickly poured in to the lands conquered by the Mongols. When the Mongols left Central Asia and returned to Mongolia, leaders emerged from among the Turks, leaders who became kings of the region. One such king was Tamerlane.

Arrival of the Turkic Uzbeks
The change of the ethnic identity Uzbekistan region of Central Asian to a mainly Turkic identity was completed when the Uzbeks, a confederation of Turkic tribes, moved into Central Asia at the beginning of the 16th century CE. The Uzbeks seized Samarkand in 1512 CE and displaced Timur's successors as rulers. After the Uzbeks had consolidated their control, they divided the area that is now Uzbekistan into three states with Bukhara in the centre, Kokand (Fergana or old Sugd) to the east, and Khiva (old Khvarizem) to the north.

Today, only a narrow strip of land on the west bank of the Amu Darya bears the name Khorezm - a derivative of Khvarizem. The rest of Uzbeki Khvarizem is the province of Karakalpakstan - an autonomous republic within Uzbekistan. Ethnically, the Karakalpak are more closely associated with the northern Turkic Kazakh than they are with the Turkic Uzbek. The ethnic make up of the area of Khvarizem is now firmly Turkic.

Survival of Khvarizem's Indo-Iranian Culture
While the Turks displaced the Indo-Iranians, they adopted much of the region's cultural heritage, celebrating for instance Nowruz as New Year's Day.

Some authors have also pointed to the Khvarizem / Khorezm dance Lyazgi adopted by the Karakalpak as an example of the embracing of the old Indo-Iranian Khvarizem culture by the Karakalpak. Some descriptions of the dance call it a ritual dance that had fire at its centre. The dance is
Lyagzi dance

characterized by fluttering hand gestures and moves that mimic animal and bird movements.

**Information sources and suggested reading:**
- Archaeology in Soviet Central Asia by Grégoire Frumkin
- Chorasmia, Archaeology & Pre-Islamic History by Yuri Rapoport
- Chorasmian Expedition of S. P. Tolstov
- David and Sue Richardson's page: www.karakalpak.com
- Explo Guide
- Karakalpak-Australian Expedition
- Orexca (site may currently have a virus)
- Sairam
- Wikipedia
- Top

» Page 2 » Page 3 » Page 4
CHAPTER 18.

1. On the nature of the tree they call Gaokerena it says in revelation, that it was the first day when the tree they call Gaokerena grew in the deep mud within the wide-formed ocean; and it is necessary as a producer of the renovation of the universe, for they prepare its immortality therewith. 2. The evil spirit has formed therein, among those which enter as opponents, a lizard as an opponent in that deep water, so that it may injure the Haoma. 3. And for keeping away that lizard, Ohrmazd has created there ten Kar fish which, at all times, continually circle around the Haoma, so that the head of one of those fish is continually towards the lizard. 4. And together with the lizard those fish are spiritually fed, that is, no food is necessary for them; and till the renovation of the universe they remain in contention. 5. There are places where that fish is written of as "the Ariz of the water;" as it says that the greatest of the creatures of Ohrmazd is that fish, and the greatest of those proceeding from the evil spirit is that lizard; with the jaws of their bodies, moreover, they snap in two whatever of the creatures of both spirits has entered between them, except that one fish which is the Vas of Panchasadvaran. 6. This, too, is said, that those fish are so serpent-like in that deer water, they know the scratch (malishn) of a needle's point by which the water shall increase, or by which it is diminishing.

7. Regarding the Vas of Panchasadvaran it is declared that it moves within the wide-formed ocean, and its length is as much as what a man, while in a swift race, will walk from dawn till when the sun goes down; so much that it does not itself move the length of the whole of its great body. 8. This, too, is said, that the creatures of the waters live also specially under its guardianship.

9. The tree of many seeds has grown amid the wide-formed ocean, and in its seed are all plants; some say it is the proper-curing, some the energetic-curing, some the all-curing.

10. Between these trees of such kinds is formed the mountain with cavities, 9999 thousand myriads in number, each myriad being ten thousand. 11. Unto that mountain is given the protection of the waters, so that water streams forth from there, in the rivulet channels, to the land of the seven regions, as the source of all the sea-water in the land of the seven regions is from there.

CHAPTER 19.

1. Regarding the three-legged ass they say, that it stands amid the wide-formed ocean, and its feet are three, eyes six, mouths nine, ears two, and horn one, body white, food spiritual, and it is righteous. 2. And two of its six eyes are in the position of eyes, two on the top of the head, and two in the position of the hump; with the sharpness of those six eyes it overcomes and destroys. 3. Of the nine mouths three are in the head, three in the hump, and three in the inner part of the flanks; and each mouth is about the size of a cottage, and if is itself as large as Mount Alvand. 4. Each one of the three feet, when it is placed on the ground, is as much as a flock (gird) of a thousand sheep comes under when they repose together; and each pastern is so great in its circuit that a thousand men with a thousand horses may pass inside. 5. As for the two ears it is Mazendaran which they will encompass. 6. The one horn is as it were of gold and hollow, and a thousand branch horns have grown upon it, some befitting a camel, some befitting a horse, some befitting an ox, some befitting an ass, both great and small. 7. With that horn it will vanquish and dissipate all the vile corruption due to the efforts of noxious creatures.

8. When that ass shall hold its neck in the ocean. its ears will terrify (asahmed), and all the water of the wide-formed ocean will shake with agitation, and the side of Ganavad will tremble (shivaned). 9. When it utters a cry all female water-creatures, of the creatures of Ohrmazd, will become pregnant; and all pregnant noxious water-creatures, when they hear that cry, will cast their young. 10. When it stalles in the ocean all the sea-water will become purified, which is in the seven regions of the earth -- it is even on that account when all asses which come into water stale in the water -- as it says thus: 'If, O three-legged ass! you were not created for the water, all the water in the sea would have perished. from the contamination which the poison of the evil spirit has brought into its water, through the death of the creatures of Ohrmazd.'

11. Tishtar seizes the water more completely from the ocean with the assistance of the three-legged ass. 12. Of ambergris also (ambar-ich) it is declared, that it is the dung of the three-legged ass; for if it has much spirit food, then also the moisture of the liquid nourishment goes through the veins pertaining to the body into the urine, and the dung is cast away.

13. Of the ox Hadhayosh, which they call Sarsaok, it says, that in the original creation men passed from region to region upon it, and in the renovation of the universe they prepare Hush (the beverage producing immortality) from it. 14. It is said, that life is in the hand of that foremost man, at the end of his years, who has constructed the most defenses around this earth, until the renovation of the universe is requisite.

15. Regarding the bird Chamroosh it says, that it is on the summit of Mount Alburz; and every three years many come from the non-Iranian districts for booty (gird), by going to bring damage (ziyan) on the Iranian districts, and to effect the devastation of the world; then the angel Buj, having come up from the low country of Lake Arag, arouses that very bird Chamroosh, and it flies upon the loftiest of all the lofty mountains, and picks up all those non-Iranian districts as a bird does corn.

16. Regarding Karshipt they say, that it knew how to speak words, and brought the religion to the enclosure which Ym [Jamshed] made, and circulated it; there they utter the Avesta in the language of birds.

17. Regarding the ox-fish they say, that it exists in all seas; when it utters a cry all fish become pregnant, and all noxious water-creatures cast their young.

18. The griffin bird, which is a bat, is noticed (kard) twice in another chapter (baba).

19. Regarding the bird Ashozusht, which is the bird Zobara-vahman and also the bird Shok, they say that it has given an Avesta with its tongue; when it speaks the demons tremble at it and take nothing away there; a nail-paring, when it is not prayed over (afsud), the demons and wizards seize, and like an arrow it shoots at and kills that bird. 20. On this account the bird seizes and devours a nail-paring when it is prayed over, so that the demons may not control its use; when it is not prayed over it does not devour it, and the demons are able to commit an offense with it.

21. Also other beasts and birds are created all in opposition to noxious creatures, as it says, that when the birds and beasts are all in opposition to noxious creatures and wizards, &c. 22. This, too, it says, that all precious birds the crow (valak) is the most precious. 23. Regarding the white falcon it says, that it kills the serpent with wings. 24. The magpie (kaskinak) bird kills the locust, and is created in opposition to it. 25. The Kahkars, dwelling in decay, which is the vulture, is created for devouring dead matter (nasai); so also are the crow (valak) and the mountain kite.
26. The mountain ox, the mountain goat, the deer, the wild ass, and other beasts devour all snakes. 27. So also, of other animals, dogs are created in opposition to the wolf species, the thievish snake (garzhak) and other noxious creatures in burrows; so also the great musk-animal is created in opposition to ravenous intestinal worms (kad-unak-garzhak). 28. The hedgehog is created in opposition to the ant which carries off grain, as it says, that the hedgehog, when it voids urine into an ant's nest, will destroy a thousand ants; when the grain-carrier travels over the earth it produces a hollow track; when the hedgehog travels over it the track goes away from it, and it becomes level. 29. The wolf-beaver is created in opposition to the demon which is in the water. 30. The conclusion is this, that, of all beasts and birds and fishes, every one is created in opposition to some noxious creature.

31. Regarding the vulture (karkas) it says, that, even from his highest flight, he sees when flesh the size of a fist is on the ground; and the scent of musk is created under his wing, so that if, in devouring dead matter, the stench of the dead matter comes out from it, he puts his head back under the wing and is comfortable again. 32. Regarding the Arab horse they say, that if, in a dark night, a single hair occurs on the ground, he sees it.

33. The cock is created in opposition to demons and wizards, cooperating with the dog; as it says in revelation, that, of the creatures of the world, those which are cooperating with Srosh, in destroying the fiends, are the cock and the dog. 34. This, too, it says, that it would not have been managed if I had not created the shepherd's dog, which is the Pasush-haurva, and the house watch-dog, the Vish-haurva; for it says in revelation, that the dog is a destroyer of such a fiend as covetousness among those which are in the nature (aith) of man and of animals. 35. Moreover it says, that, inasmuch as it will destroy the disobedient, when it barks it will destroy pain; and its flesh and fat are remedies for driving away decay and pain from men.

36. Ohmazd created nothing useless whatever, for all these (kola ae) are created for advantage; when one does not understand the reason of them, it is necessary to ask the Dastur ('high-priest'), for his five dispositions (khuk) are created in this way that he may continually destroy the fiend (or deceit).

CHAPTER 20.

1. On the nature of rivers it says in revelation that these two rivers flow forth from the north, part from Alburz and part from the Alburz of Ohmazd; one towards the west, that is the Arag; and one towards the east, that is the Veh river. 2. After them eighteen rivers flowed forth from the same source, just as the remaining waters have flowed forth from them in great multitude; as they say that they flowed out so very fast, one from the other, as when a man recites one Ashem-vohu of a series (padisar). 3. All of those, with the same water, are again mingled with these rivers, that is, the Arag river and Veh river. 4. Both of them continually circulate through the two extremities of the earth, and pass into the sea; and all the regions feast owing to the discharge (zahak) of both, which, after both arrive together at the wide-formed ocean, returns to the sources whence they flowed out; as it says in revelation, that just as the light comes in through Alburz and goes out through Alburz, the water also comes out through Alburz and goes away through Alburz. 5. This, too, it says, that the spirit of the Arag begged of Ohmazd thus: 'O first omniscient creative power! from whom the Veh river begged for the welfare that thou mightest grant, do thou then grant it in my quantity!'

6. The spirit of the Veh river similarly begged of Ohmazd for the Arag river; and on account of loving assistance, one towards the other, they flowed forth with equal strength, as before the coming of the destroyer they proceeded without rapids, and when the fiend shall be destroyed they will again be without rapids. 7. Of those nineteen principal rivers, distinct from the Arag river and Veh river, and the other rivers which flow out from them, I will mention the more famous: the Arag river, the Veh river, the Diglat river they call also again the Veh river, the Frat river, the Dalta river, the Dargam river, the Zondak river, the Hanu river, the Marv river, the Hetumand river, the Akhoshir river, the Navada river, the Zishmand river, the Khvejand river, the Bahlq river, the Mehva river they call the Hendva river, the Sped river, the Rad river which they call also the Koir, the Khvareh river which they call also the Mesrkan, the Harhaz river, the Teremet river, the Khvaneids river, the Daraja river, the Kasik river, the Sheld ("shining") river Peda-meyan or Chatur-meyan river of Mokarstan.

8. I will mention them also a second time: the Arag river is that of which it is said that it comes out from Alburz in the land of Surak, in which it call it also the Ami; it passes on through the land of Spetos, which they also call Mesar, and they call it there the river Niv 9. The Veh river passes on in the east, goes through the land of Sind, and flows to the sea in Hindustan, and they call it there the Mehr river 10. The sources of the Frat river are from the frontier of Arum, they feed upon it in Suristan, and it flows to the Diglat river; and of this Frat it is said that they produce irrigation over the land. 11. It is declared that Mansushakh excavated the sources, and cast back the water all to one place, as it says thus: 'I reverence the Frat, full of fish, which Mansushakh excavated for the benefit of his own soul, and he seized the water and gave to drink.' 12. The Diglat river comes out from Salmon, and flows to the sea in Khujistan. 13. The Dalta river is the river which comes out from Eranvej, and goes out through the hill-country; of all rivers the noxious creatures in it are most, as it says, that the Dalta river is full of noxious creatures. 14. The Dargam river is in Sude. 15. The Zondak river passes through the mountains of Panjistan, and flows away to the Haro river. 16. The Haro river flows out from the Aparan range. 17. The Hetumand river is in Sagastan, and its sources are from the Aparan range; this is distinct from that which Frasiyav conducted away. 18. The river Akhoshir is in Kumish. 19. The Zishmand river, in the direction of Soqgh, flows away towards the Khvejand river. 20. The Khvejand river goes on through the midst of Samarkand and Pargana, and they call it also the river Ashard. 21. The Marv river, a glorious river in the east, flows out from the Aparan range. 22. The Bahlq river comes out from the Aparan range of Bakman, and flows on to the Veh river. 23. The Sped river is in Ataro-patakan; they say that Dahak [Zohak] begged a favor here from Ahriman and the demons. 24. The Tort river, which they call also the Koir, comes out from the sea of Giklan, and flows to the sea of Vergan. 25. The Zahavayi is the river which comes out from Ataro-patakan, and flows to the sea in Pars. 26. The sources of the Khvareh river are from Spahan; it passes on through Khujistan, and flows forth into the Diglat river, and in Spahan they call it the Mesrkan river. 27. The Harhaz river is in Taparistan, and its sources are from Mount Damawand. 28. The Teremet river flows away to the Veh river. 29. The Vendeseh river is in that part of Pars which they call Sagastan. 30. The Kasik river comes out through a ravine (kaf) in the province of Tus, and they call it there the Kasik river, more-over, the river, which is there the Veh, they call the Kasak; even in Sind they call it the Kasak. 31. The Pedak-myan, is that the river Chatur-myan, is that which is in Kangdez. 32. The Daraja river is in Eranvej, on the bank (bar) of which was the dwelling of Pourushasp, the father of Zoroast. 33. Other the innumerable waters and rivers, springs and channels are one in origin with those; so in various districts and various places they call them by various names.

34. Regarding Frasiyav they say, that a thousand springs were conducted away by him into the sea Kyansish, suitable for horses, suitable for camels, suitable for oxen, suitable for asses, both great and small; and he conducted the spring Zarimand (or golden source), which is the Hetumand river they say, into the same sea; and he conducted the seven navigable waters of the source of the Vachaeni river into the same sea, and made men settle there.

CHAPTER 21.

1. In revelation they mention seventeen species of liquid (maya), as one liquid resides in plants; second, that which flows from the mountains is the river; third, that which is rain-water; fourth, that of tanks and other special constructions; fifth, the semen of animals and men, sixth, the urine of animals and men; seventh, the sweat of animals and men; the eighth liquid is that in the skin of animals and men; ninth, the tears of animals and men; tenth, the blood of animals and men; eleven, the saliva of animals and men, with which they nourish the embryo; the thirteenth is that which is under the bark of plants, as it is said that every bark has a liquid, through which a drop appears on a twig (tekh) when placed four finger-breadths before a fire; fourteenth, the milk of animals and men. 2. All these, through growth, or the body which is formed, mingle again with the rivers, for the body which is formed through to the discharge (zahak) of both, which, after both arrive together at the wide-formed ocean, returns to the sources whence they flowed out; as it says in revelation, that just as the light comes in through Alburz and goes out through Alburz, the water also comes out through Alburz and goes away through Alburz.

3. This, too, they say, that of these three rivers, that is, the Arag river, the Marv river, and the Veh river, the spirits were dissatisfied, so that they would not flow into the world, owing to the defilement of stagnant water (ameshit) which they beheld, so
that they were in tribulation through it until Zartosht was exhibited to them, whom I (Ohrmazd) will create, who will pour six-fold holy-water (zor) into it and make it again wholesome; he will preach carefulness. 4. This, too, it says, that, of water whose holy-water is more and pollution less, the holy-water has come in excess, and in three years it goes back to the sources; that of which the pollution and holy-water have both become equal, arrives back in six years; that of which the pollution is more and holy-water less, arrives back in nine years. 5. So, also, the growth of plants is connected, in this manner, strongly with the root; so, likewise, the blessings (afrin) which the righteous utter, come back, in this proportion, to themselves.

6. Regarding the river Nahvtak it says, that Frasiyav of Tur conducted it away; and when Hoshedar comes it will flow again suitable for horses; so, also, will the fountains of the sea Kyansih. 7. Kyansih is the one where the home (jinak) of the Kayanian race is.

CHAPTER 22.

1. On the nature of lakes it says in revelation, that thus many fountains of waters have come into notice, which they call lakes (var); counterparts of the eyes (chashm) of men are those fountains (chashmak) of waters; such as Lake Chechast, Lake Sovar, Lake Khvairizhem, Lake Frazdan, Lake Zarimmand, Lake Asvast, Lake Husru, Lake Sataves, Lake Urvis.

2. I will mention them also a second time: Lake Chechast is in Ataro-patakan, warm is the water and opposed to harm, so that nothing whatever is living in it, and its source is connected with the wide-formed ocean. 3. Lake Sovar is in the upper district and country on the summit of the mountain of Tus; as it says, that the Sud-bahar ("share of benefit") is propitious and good from which abounding liberality is produced. 4. Regarding Lake Khvairizhem it says that excellent benefit is produced from it, that is, Arshishang the rich in wealth, the well-portioned with abounding pleasure. 5. Lake Frazdan is in Sagastan; they say, where a generous man, who is righteous, throws anything into it, it receives it; when not righteous, it throws it out again, its source also is connected with the wide-formed ocean. 6. Lake Zarimmand is in Hamadan. 7. Regarding Lake Asvast it is declared that the undefiled water which it contains is always constantly flowing into the sea, so bright and copious that one might say that the sun had come into it and looked at Lake Asvast, into that water which is requisite for restoring the dead in the renovation of the universe. 8. Lake Husru is within fifty leagues (para sang) of Lake Chechast. 9. Lake (or, rather, Gulf) Sataves is that already written about, between the wide-formed ocean and the Putik. 10. It is said that in Kamindan is an abyss (zaifar), from which everything they throw in always comes back, and it will not receive it unless alive (janvar); when they throw a living creature into it, it carries it down; men say that a fountain from hell is in it. 11. Lake Urvis is on Hugar the lofty.

CHAPTER 23.

1. On the nature of the ape and the bear they say, that Yim [Jamshed], when reason (nismo) departed from him, for fear of the demons took a demoness as wife, and gave Yimak, who was his sister, to a demon as wife; and from them have originated the tailed ape and bear and other species of degeneracy.

2. This, too, they say, that in the reign of Azi Dahak [Zohak] a young woman was admitted to a demon, and a young man was admitted to a witch (pairika), and on seeing them they had intercourse; owing to that one intercourse the ... arose from them. 3. When Faridoon came to them they fled from the country of Iran, and settled upon the sea-coast; now, through the invasion of the Arabs, they are again diffused through the country of Iran.
Greater Bundahishn [text]

Translation by Behramgore Tehmur A. Anklesaria

This digital edition copyright © 2002 by Joseph H. Peterson. Comments in {} added by JHP, mainly to facilitate searches. Punctuation and spelling has also been normalized to conform with other texts in this series.

[1]

ZAND-AKASHIH

OR

TRADITIONAL INFORMATION

[2]

TRADITIONAL INFORMATION

[GENESIS]

PREFACE

[3]

6. Rejoicing unto the Creator Ohrmazd, Who is Radiant, Glorious and All-knowing, Wise, Capable and the Greatest, -- with good-thought, good-word, and good-deed in meditation, utterance and action, -- and unto all the spiritual Yazads and earthly Yazads.

1. With lucky dispensation and good-omen, I will write, in the second fortunate constellation, during, the primacy of Ano-sha-ruban Ssend-yat Mah-vindat Rustom Shatriyar, the friend of God, of entire wisdom, practicer of piety, friend of righteousness, recogniser of God, spiritual seer, loved by the good, the primate of the good Mazdayasnian Religion, and writer of the Bundahishn.

2. Owing to the coming of the Arabs to Iran-shahr, and their promulgation of heterodoxy and ill-will, orthodoxy has vanished and fled from the magnates, and respectability from the upholders of religion; deep wonderful utterances, and the proper reasoning of things, meditation for action, and word of true reason, have faded from the memory and knowledge of the populace.

3. On account of evil times, even he of the family of nobles, and the magnates upholding the religion, have joined the faith and path of those heretics; and for the sake of prestige, they have defiled, with blemishes, the word, dress, worship and usages of the faithful. 4. He too, who had the desire to learn this science and secret, could not possibly appropriate them, from place to place, even with pain, trouble and difficulty.]

[4]

CHAPTER I

1. It is thus manifest, [in the good Religion]: Ohrmazd was, forever, at the highest, in the Light, [for infinite time.] owing to omniscience and goodness.
2. The Light is the place and location of Ohrmazd; there is some one who calls it 'Endless Light'; and the omniscience and goodness are, forever, of Ohrmazd; there is someone who calls them 'Revelation'; Revelation has the interpretation of both these; one, that of the eternal, of Infinite Time; just as were Ohrmazd, Space, Revelation, and Time of Ohrmazd: ............... --.

3. Ahriman was, at the abysmal station, in darkness, owing to after wit and destructive desire.

4. His destructive desire is raw; and that darkness is his location; there is someone who calls it 'Endless Darkness'.

5. Betwixt them was Void; there are some who call it 'Ether'; wherein was their joining.

6. They both have finiteness and infinity. 7. For, the utmost height is that which one calls 'Endless Light'; [that is, it is 'not limited'] and the abysmal station is the 'Endless Darkness', [and that is infinity. 8. And owing to boundary, both are finite.] -- that is, betwixt them is a Void, and they are not connected with each other.

7. And again, both the Spirits are finite in themselves. 10. And again, on account of the omniscience of Ohrmazd, everything in the creation of Ohrmazd is finite; for, they know the covenant of both the Spirits. 11. And again, there will be the complete predominance of the creatures of Ohrmazd, at the final material life, unto eternity and eternal progress; [and that is] infinity. 12. And the may the creatures of Ahriman perish at the time when the final material life shall take place; that, too, is finiteness.

13. Ohrmazd knew, through omniscience: "The Evil Spirit exists, who will defeat and seize, and even intermingle, with envious desire, the eminent supporters, with several eminent agents, to the end;" He created, spiritually, those creatures which were requisite as those agents.

14. For three thousand years, the creatures remained in the spiritual state, that is, they were unthinking, unmoving, and intangible.

15. The Evil Spirit, on account of after-wit, was unaware of the existence of Ohrmazd; then, arising from that abyss, he came to [the precinct of the] luminous [stars]. 16. When he saw Ohrmazd, that Light, and the unseizable Lustre, he made an attack, for destruction, on account of his destructive desire and malicious nature. 17. He, [then,] saw valour and fortitude, which were greater than his own, returned to darkness, and miscreated many Devis, destroyers of the creatures, and rose for battle.

18. When Ohrmazd saw the creatures of the Evil Spirit, they appeared to Him formidable, defiled and bad creatures, [full of wickedness;] they did not delight Him.

19. Then, the Evil Spirit saw the creatures of Ohrmazd; they appeared to him very [acute] creatures, [ever] worthy of inquiry; the creatures and creation of Ohrmazd delighted him.

20. Then, in whatever manner, Ohrmazd knew the end of the affair, He proffered peace unto the Evil Spirit, and said: "Evil Spirit! bring thou help, and offer praise, unto My creatures, so that, at that dispensation, thou mayest [9] become deathless, without decrepitude, hungerless, and thirstless."

21. Its meaning is this: "if thou wilt not heed the contest, thou wilt not render thyself useless, and it will be profitable to us both."

22. Thereupon, the Evil Spirit spoke: "I shall not bring help unto Thy creatures, nor shall I offer praise; I will, [rather,] destroy [Thee] and Thy creatures too, up to eternity and eternal progress; [I will convert] all Thy creatures to unfriendliness unto Thee and friendship unto me."

23. Its explanation is this: he imagined: "Ohrmazd is helpless owing to him, and therefore He proffers peace;" he does not accept it, and even leads an attack.

24. Thereupon, Ohrmazd spoke: "Thou art not omnipol. O Evil Spirit" that is, "thou canst not destroy Me, "thou canst not so do unto My creatures too, that they may not return to My relationship."

25. Then, Ohrmazd knew, by means of omniscience: "If I do not fix a period for [his] contest too, he can do so unto My creatures, [as he will lead the onset and everlasting dispute and confusion; and during the confusion, he] can seduce [the creatures], and make them over to himself;" just as, even now, there are many men in the mingled state, who practise impiety more than piety, [that is, they are mostly performing the will of the Evil Spirit].

26. Thereupon, Ohrmazd spoke to the Evil Spirit: "[I project] the time fixed for the contest in the mingled state, to nine thousand years;" for, He knew that He would render the Evil Spirit useless, by this fixation of time.

27. Then, the Evil Spirit agreed to that covenant, on account of inability to foresee the end; just as, two men, fighting together, fix up a period, saying: "Let [us] fight such and such a day up till [night]."

28. Ohrmazd knew this too, by means of omniscience: Within these nine thousand years, three thousand years will pass all according to the will of Ohrmazd; three thousand years [will pass] in the mingled state, according to the [11] will of [both] Ohrmazd and Ahriman: and, in the final contest [He ought to render] the Evil Spirit useless, and He will withhold aversity from the creatures.

29. Then, Ohrmazd chanted forth the 'Ahuwar', that is, He uttered a 'Yatha ahu-vairyo' of twenty-one words; He showed His own final victory, the inability of the Evil Spirit, the perishing of the Devis, the rising of the dead, the final material life, and the unopposed condition of the creatures, up to eternity and eternal progress.

30. When the Evil Spirit saw his own inability, and the perishing of all the Devis, he fell back into darkness, having become stupefied [and unconscious].

31. First, as one says in the Scripture: "When a one-third of it was uttered, the Evil Spirit died within his body, through fear; when two parts of it were uttered, the Evil Spirit fell on his knees; and when it was uttered complete, [the Evil Spirit] became stupefied and disabled [from] rendering the creatures of Ohrmazd [unfit for work]."

32. [He remained] for three thousand years in stupefaction.

33. First, I will mention the spiritual creation of the creatures, and then the material.

34. Ohrmazd was the Lord, before the creatures, owing to creativity, and after the creation of the creatures, He was the Lord, Wiser of benefit, Prescient, Opposed to pain, Publicly governing everything, Beneficent, and All-observant.

35. He, first, created the essence of the Yazads. Good-progress, that Spirit whereby He can make good His own material body when He may contemplate the creation of the creatures; for, He had Lordship through the creation of the creatures.
36. He, Ohrmazd, saw, with clear vision: "The Evil Spirit will never turn away from opposition; that opposition will not be rendered ineffective, except by the creation of the creatures; there will be no progress of the creatures, except by Time; and that when He will create Time, even the creatures of Ahriman will progress."

37. Being helpless, He created forth Time, in order to disable the Antagonist.

38. Its meaning is this: "The Evil Spirit cannot be expelled, except by 'kâr-i-châr'; the explanation of 'kâr-i-châr' is this: "One ought to perform an 'action' by 'stratagem' and 'with efficacy.'"

39. Then, out of Infinite Time, He produced forth Time which is the Lord of duration -- there is someone who calls it Finite Time -- out of Time which is the Lord of duration, Impassability arose, that is, the substance of Ohrmazd will not pass away; out of Impassability, the Progress of prosperity became manifest, -- that is, the unhappiness owing to the Devas may not come; out of the Progress of prosperity, spiritual Intransformability became manifest, the Spirit owing to whom the substance of Ohrmazd will not alter from that which was produced, at the original creation; out of spiritual Intransformability, the complete Will of the creatures of material existence became manifest, the righteous creation of the creatures and conformability.

40. Ahriman's was unconformability, owing to the unrighteous creation of the creatures and ignorance.

41. Its meaning and explanation are these that Ahriman will fight with Ohrmazd the Lord; and the sagacity, eternity, excellence, and impassability of Ohrmazd, and the inefficiency, perverseness, lack of excellence and after wit of the Evil Spirit, came into manifestation, when He created the creatures.

42. For, verily, Time, which is the Lord of duration, is the first creature that He created forth; for, before the mingling, it was infinite, the Eternity, which Ohrmazd created as finite; on account of that is it infinite that, from the original creation, when He created the creatures, up to the end, when the Evil Spirit will be inactive, is a cycle of twelve thousand years, that is finite, which will finally mingle with and be transformed to eternity, so that even the creatures of Ohrmazd will be everlasting, with Ohrmazd, owing to purity.

43. As one says, in the Scripture: "Time is more powerful than both the creations, the creation of Ohrmazd and even that of the Evil Spirit; Time is accessible for work and regulation; of accessible beings, Time is the most accessible; of beings worth inquiry, Time is the most worthy of inquiry;" -- that is, determination can be made by Time--; "It is by Time that a temporal dwelling is erected; by Time, the ornamented is dilapidated; and of mortal men, none can escape from it, neither when he flies above, nor when he digs a well in the depth below and sits within it, nor when he goes down underneath the spring of cold waters."

44. Out of His own Self, out of the Essence of Light, Ohrmazd created forth the astral body of His own creatures, in the astral form of luminous and white Fire, whose circumference is conspicuous; and out of the Essence of those Spirits, which remove the opponent that is in both the creations: that is Power and that which is Time.

45. He created forth the astral body of the good Wind, as the Wind was necessary; -- there is someone who calls it the Wind which is the Lord of duration.

46. He created forth the creatures, with the help of the Wind which is the Lord of duration; for, when He created even the creatures, the Wind, verily, was an agent which was necessary in His work.

47. The Evil Spirit misconceived his creatures; out of his own Essence of Darkness, in the astral form of the blackness of charcoal, of the wicked worthy of darkness, like noxious creatures of very sinful blemish.

48. Out of the Essence of Self-willedness, he misconceived the vîl 'Vârûn' having no astral form, as 'Vârûn' was necessary.

49. He, first, produced the Essence of the 'Devs', Evil progress, that Spirit wherefrom the harmfulness of the creatures of Ohrmazd arose; for, out of the Essence of Darkness, he produced the Infinite Darkness; and out of Infinite Darkness, there forthwith arose Untruthful Utterance, which became manifest, owing to the wileness of him the Evil Spirit; -- for, he created such creatures, whereby he would make himself worse, that is, he might become ineffective; for, he misconceived that astral form, out of Infinite Darkness, he produced his own creatures in that astral form, and became useless owing to his own creation of the creatures.

50. Out of the Essence of Light, Ohrmazd produced Truthful Utterance; and the Beneficence of the Creator, -- the creation of the creatures, -- became manifest out of Truthful Utterance; for, He created forth the 'Athro' astral form, out of 'Infinite Light'; He produced all the creatures, too, in the 'Athro' astral form; the 'Athro' astral form and temporal Time became separated; out of the 'Athro' astral form, arose 'Ahunvar', the Spirit of the 'Yatha auh vairyo', through whom, the original creation and the end of the creatures became manifest, that is 'Din': as 'Din' was produced along with the creation of the creatures; from the 'Ahunvar' arose the spiritual Year, which, in the mingled state, is now half shining and half dark, of three hundred and sixty-five days, which is a part of Time which is the Lord of duration.

51. Owing to it, both the creations progressed, in the contest.

52. As is said: "The creation of Ohrmazd remained in comfort, on account of His sovereignty, leadership, organisation, and supreme position; the creation of the Evil Spirit remained in discomfort, on account of his preponderance, violence, sinfulness and the abnormal state."

53. Ohrmazd came to the temporal Beneficent Immortals, when they were produced by Him; -- note that He had to reproduce them here, in material life; He has to remove injury from it, once again, at the final material existence--; He preserves the spiritual creation, spiritually; having produced the material creation spiritually, He produced it again in material life; He, first, produced the seven fundamental Beneficent Immortals, then the others; the seventh, Ohrmazd Himself; of the material creations, created in the spirit, the first are six; He Himself was the seventh; for, both, spirit first, and then matter, are of Ohrmazd; after the Wind which is the Lord of duration, of the Beneficent [19] Immortals, He, first, created forth Vohuman, through whom arose the progress of the creatures of Ohrmazd; He, first, created forth Vohuman, out of Good-Progress, the Essence of Light, with whom there was the good Mazdayasian Religion; He knew this that it will reach the creatures, [up to] the renovation; and then, [He created] Ardwhahisht, then Sāhrewh, then Sāndrāmā, then Hordad and Amurdad; [the seventh, Ohrmazd himself; eighth, Truthful-Utterance; ninth, Srosh pertaining to holiness; tenth, Mantra Spenta; eleventh, Neryosang; twelfth, the eminent Rad 'Rathwo Berezato'; thirteenth, the just Rashnu; fourteenth, Mhār of wide pasture lands; fifteenth, the good Aseshwaŋ; sixteenth, Paren; seventeenth, Sleep; eighteenth, Vat; nineteenth, Lawfulness; twentieth, Benevolence of Peacefulness in dispute, accusation, and defence.]

54. Of the material creations: first, the Sky, second, the Water, third, the Earth, fourth, the Tree, fifth, Beneficent Animal, sixth, the Man, [and seventh, Ohrmazd Himself; were His creations, which He created forth, with the help of the Wind which is the Lord of duration; for, when He had created forth the Wind which is the Lord of duration, it, too, became an agent that was requisite, for the creation of the creatures.]  55. [For opposition to these, the Evil Spirit misconceived] Akman, [first of the arch Devas, then] Indra, then Saur, then Naon-haithya, then Tārōmat, then Tārich and Zārich, [and then the other Divs; seventh, the Evil Spirit himself.

56. The Evil Spirit never contemplates, never utters, and never does any righteous thing; the happiness of the creatures of Ohrmazd was not requisite for him; the creatures of Ohrmazd did not need the happiness of the creatures of Ahriman.

57. Ohrmazd does not contemplate that thing which He cannot execute; and the Evil Spirit contemplates what he cannot perform, and also leads for quarrel.
58. The creation of Ohrmazd was so nourished, in the [21] spiritual state, that it was moisture, unthinking, unseizable, and immovent, resembling the sperm; then, out of moisture; there was intermixture, resembling sperm and blood; then, out of intermixture there was collision, resembling a knot; then, out of collision there was the breakage, into life, hands, and feet; then, out of breakage there was recession of the eyes, ears, and mouth; then, out of recession there was propulsion, when the creation was in motion; even now, in material life, the parts are collected in the womb of the mothers, in that manner, and they beget and nourish the newborn.

59. By means of the creation of the creatures, Ohrmazd has the motherhood and fatherhood of the creation; for, when He nourished the creatures, in the spiritual state, that was His motherhood; when He produced them in material life, that was His fatherhood.

CHAPTER I, a

0. As regards the material creation of the creatures.

1. When the Evil Spirit was inactive owing to stupor, as I have written above, he lay in stupor, for three thousand years.

2. During that inactivity of the Evil Spirit, Ohrmazd created the creation in material life; for, He created forth Fire out of Endless Light, Ether out of Fire, Water out of Ether, and Earth and all corporeality of Matter out of Water.

3. As one says, in the Scripture: "First, the entire creation was a drop of Water," that is, everything was from Water, except the seeds of men and animals; for, those seeds are of the essence of Fire.

4. He, first, produced the Sky, in order to withhold the Evil Spirit; there is some one who says: "the foremost"; secondly, He produced the Water, in order to smite the 'druj'; thirdly He produced the Holy Man, for the destruction and inactivity of the Evil Spirit and all the Devs; then He produced the Fire, the Khvarag; He attached to it the ray from Endless Light, so good is its astral body as is the Fire's desire; then He created the Ether, in the astral form of a young man of fifteen years, which bears and preserves everything: this Water, Tree, Beneficent Animal, and Holy Man.

5. I will mention their whereabouts.

6. First, He produced the shining and visible Sky, which is very distant, and of steel, of shining steel, whose substance is the male diamond; its top is connected with the Endless Light; He produced all the creations, within the Sky, the fortification, resembling a bag which is laid every implement which was requisite for the contest, or resembling a dwelling wherein everything remains; the prop of the base of the Sky, whose width is as much as its length, its length as much as its height, and its height as much as its capacity, is entirely like the desert, the chasm, and the forest; the Spirit of the Sky is meditative, speaking, active, knowing, beneficent, and discriminating; he accepted the work of lasting fortification against the Evil Spirit, that is, he did not let him go back, like the valiant warrior, who has put on armour, so that he may be saved fearlessly from the battle, the Spirit of the Sky so preserves the sky; He produced Delight, for the help of: the Sky; for, with Delight, he created the Water out of the substance of the Sky: so much as a man, who lays his two hands on earth, and walks with hands and feet, and the water stands up to his stomach; up to that height, did the water flow; He produced, for its help, the Wind and the Rain, that is: the cloud, snow, and lightning.

7. Secondly, He created the Water out of the substance of the Earth, which, thereafter, increased and grew out of the Earth; for the help of the Earth, He produced iron, brass, brimstone, borax, limestone, and also all the principles of the hard earth, distinct from those of Iastakhr, for, they are of a separate origin; so hard did He create the Earth, in the semblance of a man, when he had donned dress over dress, on all the sides, close over the body; and Water remained, everywhere, underneath this Earth.

8. Thirdly, out of Water, He produced the round Earth, having distant roads, without descent and without ascent, whose entire length is equal to the width, and the width to the magnitude, arranged in the middle of this Sky.

9. As one says: "He, first, created forth a one-third of this Earth, as hard as the eagle's crest; secondly He created forth a one-third of this earth, stuffed with dust; thirdly, He created forth a one-third of this Earth, felt topped."

10. He produced, within the earth, the substance of the Mountains, which, thereafter, increased and grew out of the Earth; for the help of the Earth, He produced iron, brass, brimstone, borax, limestone, and also all the principles of the hard earth, distinct from those of Iastakhr, for, they are of a separate origin; so hard did He create the Earth, in the semblance of a man, when he had donned dress over dress, on all the sides, close over the body; and Water remained, everywhere, underneath this Earth.

11. Fourthly, He produced the Tree; first, it grew up in the middle of this Earth, several feet high, without branches, without bark, without thorn, fresh and sweet; it had, in its germ, all kind of force of the trees; He produced the Water and the Fire, for the help of the Tree; for every bark of the trees has a drop of Water at the top, and Fire before it at a distance of four fingers; it grew forever with their strength.

12. Fifthly He created the sole-created Gav in Eranvej, in the middle of the earth, on the shore of the river Veh-Daltya. that is, the middle of the earth; she was white and shining like the Moon, and her height was three reeds of average length; He produced the Water and the Tree, for her help; for she had strength and growth, from these, in the mingled state.

13. Sixthly, He created Gayomard shining as the Sun; his height was four reeds of average length; his width was symmetrical as the height; he was on the shore of the river Daltya, that is, the middle of the earth; Gayomard was on the left side of the Gav on the right side; their distance from each other, their distance, too, from the water Daltya, was as much as their own height; he was possessed of eyes, ears, tongue and mark; Gayomard's possession of the mark was this that mankind were born of his seed, in his semblance; He produced, for his help, repose giving Sleep; for Ohrmazd created forth the Sleep, in the astral form of a tall man, fifteen years of age and radiant; He created Gayomard, with the 'Gav' out of the Earth; He created forth the sperm of men and animals, out of the Light and verdure of the Sky; as these two sperms are of the principle of Fire, not of the principle of Water; He produced them in the material body of the 'Gav' and Gayomard, so that the complete propagation of men and animals arose there from.

14. He produced these six creations, in the six periods of the Gahambars, computed in a year, of three hundred and sixty-five days, of twelve months, each month being of thirty days, and one month of thirty five days; He named each day after a Beneficent Immortal.

15. I will mention their whereabouts.

16. First, He created the Sky, in forty days: as, from the day of Ohrmazd of the month Frwardin up to the day of Aban of the month Ardwahiist; He rested for five days: up to the day of Day-pa-Mihr; they are the five days of the 'Gahambar': its name is Maidyozarem; its explanation is this: the abode of the Sun and the Moon, and verdure, came into manifestation.

17. Secondly, He produced the Water, in fifty-five days: as, from the day of Mihr of the month Ardwahiist up to the day of Aban of the month of Tir; He rested for five days: up to the day of Day-pa-Mihr; they are the five days of the 'Gahambar': its name is Maidyoshahem, the explanation of which is this: He made the Water shining, for, at first it was dark.
18. Thirdly, He produced the Earth, in seventy days: as from the day of Mihr of the month of Tir, up to the day of Ard of the month of Shahrewar; He rested for the five days: up to the day of Anagran; they are the five days of the 'Gahambar': its name is Patishahem; its explanation is this: He made the basis and the progress of the creations manifest on Earth. [p19] Fourthly, He produced the Tree, in twenty-five days: as from the day of Ohrmazd of the month of Mihr, up to the day of Ard; He rested for five days: up to the day of Anagran; they are the five days of the 'Gahambar': its name is Ayathrem, the explanation of which is this: He made the basis and the progress of the creations manifest on Earth.

20. Fifthly, He produced the Beneficent Animal, in seventy-five days: as from the day of Ohrmazd of the month of Aban, up to the day of Day-pa-Mihr of the month of Day; He rested for five days: up to the day of Warharan; they are the five days of the 'Gahambar': its name is Hamaspathmaidyem, the explanation of which is this: the军事 congress became manifest on Earth; because, the Farohars of men advanced together in battle array.

22. The names of the five pillared days, there is someone who calls them the five good pentad, are these in the Scripture: Ahunawad Gah, Ushtawad Gah, Spentomad Gah, Wohukshathra Gah, and Wahistoaish Gah.

23. The names of the thirty days, which are placed in a month, are: the day of Ohrmazd, Vohuman, Ardwahisht, Shahrewar, Spandarmad, Hordad, Amurdad, Day, Adar, Aban, Khwarshed, Mir, Tir, Ghosorun, Day, Mihr, Srosh, Rasnu, Frawardin, Warharan, Ram, Wad, Day, Den, Ard, Ashlad, Asman; Zani, Mahraspand, and Anagran.

24. The names of the twelve months, from the same Beneficent Immortals, are: the month of Frawardin, the month of Ardwahisht, the month of Hordad, the month of Amurdad, the month of Day, the month of Adar, the month of Aban, the month of Spandarmad, the month of Wad, the month of Day, the month of Vohuman, the month of Spandarmad.

25. I will mention further the whereabouts of each one of them.

CHAPTER II

0. As regards the procreation of the Luminaries.

1. Ohrmaz created [forth] the Luminaries, between the Sky and the Earth; the stars of the constellations and also those which were not of the constellations [were stationed], then the Moon, and then the Sun.

2. As, He first created the firmament; the stars of the constellations were fixed thereon, especially these twelve, whose names are: the Ram, the Cow, the Twins, the Crab, the Lion, the Husk of Corn, the Balance, the Scorpion, the Centaur, the Goat, the Pot, and the Fishes, which are subdivided into twenty-eight asterisms of reckoning, the names of which are these: Padivar, Peh-parviz, Parviz, Paha, Az-sar, Ben, Rakhtv, Tareha, Azara, Nahn, Maian, Avdem, Mashaha, Spor, Hursu, Sroi, Nur, Gelu, Grafsha, Varrant, Gao, Goi, Muru, Bunda, Kaht-sar, Vah, Mayan, Kaht; all the original material creations made their residence thereon, so that when the Adversary would arrive, they might fight against their own enemy and the creatures might be saved from their antagonist; each of these constellations is a specimen of a soldier and veteran, who is posted for battle; six thousand four hundred eighty (thousand) small stars are created forth, for help, [those which the astronomers now number, besides those innumerable, as, they are for their mutual-help.]

3. Over these constellations, He appointed four chieftains, in four directions; He appointed a chieftain over these chieftains; He appointed many innumerable stars that are recognised by name, in various directions and various places, as givers of vigour, by cooperation, to these Constellations.

4. As one says: "Sirius [Tishtar] is the chieftain of the East. Sataves the chieftain of the South, Antares [Yanand] the chieftain of the West, the Seven Bears [Haptoring] the chieftain of the North; the Lord of the throne, Capicornus, whom they call the Lord of Mid-Heaven, is the chieftain of chieftains; Parand, Mazd-tat, and others of this list are also chiefs of the directions.

5. And astronomers call these stars of the directions and sides as leaders; and they mention the first magnitude, the third magnitude, ... as to the big, small, and middling stars.

6. He ordained this firmament in the semblance of a year: the twelve constellations like twelve month every constellation having thirty degrees, just as every month has thirty days.

7. He ordained the sphere, nature and class of these constellations, so that they might remain in motion, in the mingled state.

8. He ordained the sphere, nature and class of these constellations, so that they might remain in motion, in the mingled state.

9. Again, He arrayed, above them, the unmixable stars, so that, when the Adversary would arrive, they might repel him in the combat, and would not let him mingle with the higher sphere; He appointed the Glory of the good Mazdayaenian Religion, as chieftain over them; the place is called the brunt of the battle, the manifestation of purity in the mingled state; for this reason, they are called unmixable stars, because, when the Adversary came, they did not mingle with him; astronomers name a firmament which is above the firmament, where through there is no ebb and descent, for they cannot judge the mixable stars, and the substance of the pure-bodies.

10. Above that, He created the Moon having the seed of the Beneficent Animal. 11. Above that, He created the shining swift-horsed Sun. 12. He appointed the Moon and the Sun, as chieftains of those mixable stars; that is, they are all bound to the Sun and the Moon.

13. Above the Sun. He created the Throne of the Beneficent Immortals, which is attached to the Endless Light, the Throne of Ohrmazd. 14. These, too, are the six stations of the six creations, just as the creations of material life are six.

15. And in the midst of the half of the firmament, He appointed the Wind, the Cloud and the Fire Vazisht, so that, when the Adversary would arrive, they might seize the water of Sirius and produce rain; with the Spirit of the Water; He formed their connection, too, also with the Sun; the Moon, and the Stars; His valiant Sirius, who is the Chieftain of the East, is co-worker and associate of the Fire Vazisht, the Wind and the Cloud.

16. Of these stars, the big ones are as large as an eagle which is of the magnitude of a house, the middling are as large as a four-sided granary, and the small ones are as large as the head of a domestic ox; the Moon is as large as a race-course of two hathras; as, each hathra on earth is like an average frasang; the Sun is as large as Eranvej.
17. Until the coming of the Adversary, the Moon, the Sun and the stars were standing still, they did not move, and were passing their time with purity, and it was always mid-day; after the coming of the Adversary, they were in motion and would not desist from that motion, until the end.

18. The motion of the Sun is like that of a very large three-feathered arrow, when a very big man darts it from a very low bow; the motion of the Moon is just like that of an average three-feathered arrow, when an average man darts it, from an average bow; the motion of the stars is like that of a small three-feathered arrow, when a short man darts it from a small bow.

19. Of these constellations; Tishatar, Besin, Tarahin, Azer, Pateywar, and Pesh-pavzir are of very swift motion.

20. The mean duration of the Sun, from the time when it leaves a constellation, until it attains to the next, is as much as is requisite for a man who takes up a stone and throws it.

CHAPTER III

0. As regards the reason of creation of the creatures, for contest.

1. Ohrmazd fixed the names of the thirty Beneficent Immortals on the thirty days in this manner: first Ohrmazd, then the six Beneficent Immortals, which become seven; and the eighth Day -- that is, 'the Creator' --, and then the six Beneficent Immortals, which becomes seven, and the eighth Day -- that is, 'the Creator' --, and then the seven Beneficent Immortals, which become eight; as, He has provided His own name, in four places in the month; Ohrmazd and the three Days, as: one is His Name, one is His Space, one is His Revelation, and one is His Time, which were forever.

2. When the Evil Spirit came for opposition, Ohrmazd created forth Time which is the Lord of duration, in the astral body of a shining, white-eyed, tall and courageous man of fifteen years, whose courageousness is due to skillfulness, and not owing to theft and violence.

3. He Himself had put on white raiment and had the lustre of the priesthood; for all knowledge is with the priests, who are the demonstrators to persons, and teachers therefrom to every person; the proper work of Ohrmazd, too, was the creation of the creatures; He must produce the creatures with knowledge; therefore, He had put on the raiment of the same, that is the priesthood.

4. The good Wind had put on golden and silvery garment, studded with gems and much coloured with every colour, the raiment of warfare; as, he is the pursuer of the enemies, in order to strike the antagonist and to protect the creation.

5. As one says: "The proper work of the Wind is to remove the antagonism between both the creations; for, the Beneficent Spirit and even he who is the Evil Spirit produced him, for this that he might end the contest, he might ever increase the creation of Ohrmazd and destroy the work of that Evil Spirit." (Out of Time, He created the Firmament which is the material-body of Time the Lord of duration, Divine Destiny; it had put on clay-coloured clothes, and had the raiment of husbandry; as its proper work was the happy destiny of the world, He produced it in readiness, just like the husbandmen to till the world.

6. As Ohrmazd prepared His own creation amongst all the six Beneficent Immortals, He produced the spiritual and material creations, too, in the same manner; just like the spiritual Ohrmazd and the six Beneficent-Immortals: Vohuman, Ardwhahisht, Shahrewar, Spandarmad, Hordad, and Amurdad, so, too, are the sky and the six stations: of which the first is the Cloud station, the second the Sphere of the constellations, the third the unmixable Stars, the fourth the 'Best- Existence,' the Moon is on that station, the fifth the Garothman, which is called Endless Light -- the Sun is on that station --, the sixth the Throne of the Beneficent-Immortals; the seventh the Endless Light, the Throne of Ohrmazd; thus, too, the material creations created He six: first the Sky, second the Water, third the Earth, fourth the Tree, fifth the Beneficent Animal, sixth the man, and seventh, the Fire, whose radiancy is from the Endless Light, the Throne of Ohrmazd.

8. He created forth the Fire, so permeated, in the entire creation, like a master of the house, who when he entered the house, carefully laid by the garments which were in the house. He ordered the Fire to perform the service of man, to prepare food and to smite disease, during the antagonism of Ahriman; and when they blow it out of anything, it should come out, and when they put fuel over it, it should hold it forth.

9. He so appointed and stationed all the Beneficent Immortals, for cooperation in the contest of the creations that, when the Adversary came each one took hold of his own opponent for fight, so that a fresh mandate was not necessary.

10. I will mention their whereabouts further. The first of the Spirits Ohrmazd; He took to Himself Man, the basis of material beings; His cooperators are the three 'Days': one Space, one Revelation, and one Time, 'the Lords of all' that are the spirits of the entire creation.

11. He produced forth Man in five parts: body, life, soul, prototype, and farohar; as, body is that of matter; life is that which is connected with the wind and has the production and bringing of the complexion; the soul is that which listens, sees, speaks, and knows, with the consciousness, within the body; the prototype is that which stays on the Sun station; the farohar is that which is before Ohrmazd the Lord; for that reason, He so created that when men die, during the antagonism of Ahriman, the body may unite with the earth, the life with the wind, the prototype with the Sun; and the soul with the farohar, so that they cannot destroy the soul.

12. The second of the Spirits is Vohuman; of material creations, he accepted the varieties of the Beneficent-Animal for himself; for his help and cooperation, He produced the Moon, the good-created Animal, Ram, the lordly Firmament, Infinite Time, and Time the Lord of duration; He created forth the Beneficent Animal in five parts: body, life, soul, prototype, and spirit; so that, during the antagonism of Ahriman, the Animal soul may accept the seeds of the beneficent animals from the Moon station, may-propagate them, in the world, with the help of the good Ram, and when they die, the body may unite with the earth, the life with the Animal soul, the soul with Ram, the prototype with the Moon, and the spirit with Vohuman, so that they cannot destroy it.

13. The third of the Spirits is Shahrewar; of material creations, he accepted the Fire for himself; for his help and cooperation, He produced Adar, Srosh, Warharan, and Neryosang; for this reason that, during the antagonism of Ahriman, the Warharan Fire, established and organised in the abode, may give support, and Srosh may yield protection; when it extinguishes, it may unite, through Warharan with Srosh, through Srosh with Adar, and through Adar with Ardwhahisht again, so that the devs cannot destroy it.

14. The fourth of the Spirits is Spandarmad; of material creations, he accepted the Fire for himself; for his help and cooperation, He produced Aban, Den, Mahraspand, Ashishwargh, Ardvi-sur, and Anahit, who, as is known, is the Spirit who is...
the purifier of the Earth possessing the seed of the waters; before her are arrayed Mahraspand the Beneficent Manthra, the Word of Ohrmazd, Wisdom, Revelation, the preponderant Glory of the abode -- there is someone who calls her Ashishwang, the Glory of the heavenly Ashish, -- Ardíst-sur and Anahít, father and mother of the Waters, for this cooperation, during the antagonism of Ahriman; and these cooperating Spirits keep watch over the Glory.

18. The sixth of the Spirits is Hordad; of material creations, she accepted the Water for herself; for her help and cooperation, He produced Tir, Wad, and Frawardin; as Tir is Sirius who, during the antagonism of Ahriman seizes the Water, with the help of Frawardin, that is, the Farohars of the holy, and consigns it spiritually to the Wind, the Wind conducts and passes the Water swiftly to the regions, and with the cooperators they rain it by means of the Cloud.

19. The seventh of the Spirits is Amurdad; of material creations, she accepted the Tree for herself; for her help and cooperation, He produced Rashnu, Ashtad, Zamyad, and the three Glories, which adjudge the souls of men, for good and evil deeds, there at the Chinwad bridge, during the antagonism of Ahriman.

20. Other innumerable Spirits of the creations are arrayed, for cooperation with them, as is written about those that are in the Firmament of the Constellations.

21. He divided each one of the days, too, within the month, in five periods, and appointed a Spirit over each period: just as, morning is the period of the day to which the Spirit Hawan is related, midday is the period to which the Spirit Rapithwin, evening is the period to which the Spirit Uzerin, ablation time is the period to which the Spirit Aiwisruthrem, and dawn is the period to which the Spirit Ushahin is related; 22. They, too, were destined by Him for cooperation; for, He arrayed Hawan for cooperation with Mithra, Rapithwin with Ardwhisht, Uzerin with Burz Yazad, Aiwisruthrem with the Farohars of the holy and Warharan, and Ushahin with Srosh and Rashnu; for He knew that when the Adversary would arrive the day would be divided into these five periods,) whilst before the advent of the Adversary, there was eternal midday, that is, the Rapithwin.

23. Ohrmazd performed the spiritual Yazishn ceremony with the Beneficent Immortals in the Rapithwin Gah. He produced ... during [the performance of] the Yazishn, deliberated with the Consciousness and Farohars of men, and having brought t-- Wisdom of all knowledge onto men He asked: "What appears more advantageous to you when I may create you into material life: will you contend with the Druj in the embodied. existence, and destroy the Druj, shall I restore you perfect and deathless in the end, and reproduce you in material life, so that you become deathless, undecaying and without enemy forever; or, is it necessary to protect you forever from the Adversary?"

24. [They] the Farohars of men saw, by means of the Wisdom of all knowledge, the evil that would arrive in the material world on account of the wicked Ahriman, and the final inoffensiveness of the Adversary; and they agreed to go to the material world, in order to become perfect and deathless again, in the final material life, up to eternity and eternal progress.

CHAPTER IV

0. As regards the Adversary's approach to the Creation.

1. One says in the Scripture: "When the Evil Spirit saw the inefficiency of himself, and all the devs, owing to the holy Man, he was stupefied, and remained in stupefaction for three thousand years."

2. During that stupefaction, the heads of the devs severally exclaimed: "Arise, Oh our father! for we shall wage that war in the material world, whereby Ohrmazd and the Beneficent Immortals will have anguish and unhappiness." 3. [They] severally recounted their own misdeeds.

4. The wicked Evil Spirit was not cheered therewith, [and did not rise from that stupor,] owing to fear. of the holy Man, until the wicked Jahi came, on the completion of three thousand years; she exclaimed: "Arise, Oh our father! for, in the war, I will let loose so much affliction on the holy Man and the labouring Animal that, life will not be beseeming owing to my deed; I will ravage their glory; I will afflict the Water, [I will afflict the Earth,] I will afflict the Tree, I will afflict the Fire, I will afflict all the creations produced by Ohrmazd."

5. She so recounted those misdeeds that the Evil Spirit was cheered, sprang from that stupor, and kissed the head of the Jahi; this impurity which they call menstruation became manifest through Jahi.

6. The Evil Spirit exclaimed to Jahi : "[Ask] whatever [may be] thy wish, so that I may give it thee."

7. [Then, Ohrmazd knew by the Wisdom of all knowledge: the Evil Spirit has power to give at the time, whatever Jahi desires; for the great advantage, He] saw [the] astral body and position of the Evil Spirit; and He showed to Jahi that astral body, resembling a young man of fifteen years, and affixed the thought of Jahi on to him.

8. Thereupon, Jahi exclaimed to the Evil Spirit : "Give to me the desire for man " , [that is, "I may sit in the abode under his chieftainship."

9. Thereupon, the Evil Spirit exclaimed: "I do not tell thee what thing to ask; is it fit to ask what thou knowest to be without benefit and vile at the time?" for, when she had asked, he had no power to give.]

10. Then, the Evil Spirit, with all the dev [agents, rose] against the Luminaries; he saw [the] Sky, [which he showed to them spiritually, as it was not produced material] with malicious intent he made an on rush, [drew the Sky, which was at the Star station, down towards the void which, as I have written at the commencement, was under the base of the Luminaries and the Planets, so that] he stood [above the Star station,] from within the Sky, [up to] a one third; like a serpent, , he [forthwith wished] to drag, the Sky underneath the Earth [and to break it] ; he entered, in the month of Frawardin, and the day of Ohrmazd, at noon; the Sky was as afraid of him as a sheep of a wolf; he, then, came to the Water, [which I have said,] was arranged underneath this Earth; he, then, pierced and entered the middle of this Earth; then, he came to the Tree; then, [to] the Gav and Gayomand; then, he came [up to] the Fire; so that, like a fly, he went to all the creations.

11. He made the world so much invisible, at noon, that [the Sky held the darkness, below and above the Earth,] just like a dark night.

12. Thereupon, the Spirit of the Sky spoke to the Evil Spirit: "I shall have to offer protection up to the farthest time," -- that is, "I will not let thee go out."

13. He brought change of taste over the Water.

14. Thereupon the Spirit of the Water spoke: "Whither shall Vohuman, Ardwhisht, and Shahrewar give?" -- "where shall they so convey to me?" that is, "now that the Adversary has come, where is that reward?"
15. He let loose noxious creatures over the Earth; biting and venomous [noxious creatures, such as [the dragon, serpent, scorpion, venomous lizard, tortoise, and frog, [so crawled and thereby polluted the Earth] that he did not leave [any part of the Earth] even as much as the point of a needle free from noxious creatures. [51]

16. Thereupon, the Earth spoke: "May revenge come to these revengers, in this dispensation in which they are produced."

17. He [so] brought poison over the Tree that it withered immediately.

18. Thereupon, the Evil Spirit imagined: "The creations of Ohrmazd all, except Gayomard, [are] made inactive [by me]; they did not find any means to kill him, [as] the destined time had not come.

21. Thereupon, the 'Gav' spoke: "Thou shalt enjoin the nurture of the beneficent animals, their best deed and work."

22. Before his coming to Gayomard, Ohrmazd brought on Sleep over Gayomard, for as much duration as one might utter words of a stanza; for, Ohrmazd created the Sleep in the astral form of a radiant and tall young man of fifteen years.

23. And when Gayomard awoke from Sleep, he saw the world dark as night, the Earth [was] not [left] free even as much as the point of a needle, [owing to the intrusion of the noxious creatures,] the Firmament was in revolution, the Sun and the Moon were in motion [towards] the world having [a bottom], owing to the roaring. of the Mazendaran Devis and their fight with the Constellations.

24. Thereupon, the Evil Spirit imagined: "The creations of Ohrmazd all, except Gayomard, [are] made inactive [by me]; he let loose Astwihad, with a thousand death producing devas, on Gayomard ; they did not find any means to kill him, [as] the destined time had not come.

25. As one says: "[At the original creation,] when the Evil Spirit came up [for] opposition, the period of Gayomard's life and rule was destined for thirty years"; he lived thirty years, after the coming of the Adversary.

26. Thereupon, Gayomard spoke: "[Now] that the Adversary has come, all mankind will be of my seed, and this one thing is good, as they will perform works and meritorious deeds."

27. Then, he came to the Fire; he mingled smoke and darkness within it; the [seven] Planets, with many [associate] devas, mingled in the Firmament, for contest with the Constellations; [he] so disfigured the whole creation as when smoke arises [out of] fire over the entire space: [they fought, for intermingling, also with the Space of the Sublime workers:] for ninety days, the Spiritual Yazads were combating, in the material world, with the Evil Spirit and all the devas, [till they] were thrown into Dozakh [=hell -JHP] defeated, in order to prepare the rampart of the Sky, so that the Adversary cannot mingle with it.

28. Dozakh is in the middle of the Earth, there where through the Evil Spirit entered, having pierced the Earth; as, over all the elements of the material world, a transformation to duality, opposition, combat, and mingling of high and low became manifest.

CHAPTER IV, A

1. This, too, one says: When the sole created 'Gav' passed away, she fell to the right hand, and when Gayomard passed away after, he fell to the left hand.

2. 'Goshorun', as is the soul of the sole-created 'Gav', came out of the body of the 'Gav', stood before the 'Gav', and cried to Ohrmazd, as much as a thousand men, when they vociferate at a time: "To whom hast Thou left the chieftaincy of the creatures, when the Earth has lain in ruin, the Tree is dried, and the Water afflicted? Where is the man of whom Thou saidst: 'I will produce', so that he may proclaim preservation?"

3. Thereupon Ohrmazd spoke: "Thou art ill, Oh Goshorun! thou hast borne the illness from the Evil Spirit and the... this oppression of the Evil Spirit would not have been, if it was proper to produce that man in this Earth at this time."

4. Forth went Goshorun up to the Star station, and cried in the same manner, forth up to the Moon station, and cried in the same manner, and forth up to the Sun station, and cried in the same manner.

5. He, then, showed her the Farohar of Zartosht, saying: "Him I will produce for the world, so that he may proclaim preservation."

6. Goshorun became satisfied and assented, saying: "I will nourish the creatures," that is, she agreed to be recreated in material life as the beneficent animal.

CHAPTER V

[As regards the antagonism of the two Spirits, that is, in what manner, the heads of the Devs came spiritually, for antagonism, against the Spiritual Yazads.]

1. Just as: Ahriman against Ohrmazd, Akoman against Vohuman, Indra against Ardwahtsh, Sauru against Shahrewar, Naonhaithya, they whom they call Taromat also, against Spandarmad, Tauvi-ch against Hordad, and Zairi-ch against Amurdad, Eshm [Asima] against Sresh, Falsehood and Untruth against Truthfulness, the Spell of sorcery against the holy Mantra,. Excess and Defectiveness against Temperance which is the good Religion, Wicked Thought, Wicked Utterance, and Wicked Deed against Good Thought, Good Word, and Good Deed, Astwihad which is called 'the Wicked Wind' against Ram which is 'the Good Wind', the pathless Varun against Innate Wisdom, Carving the evil eye which is Malignant Glance against Spiritual Sight, Idleness against Diligence, Lethargy against Sleep, Revenge against [51] Peacefulness, Pain against Delight, Stink against Fragrance, Darkness against Light, Poison against Antidote, Bitterness against Sweetness, Parsimony against Charity, Avarice against Discriminate giving, Winter against Summer, Cold against Warmth, Dryness against Humidity, Hellishness against Heavenliness, Wickedness against Holiness, Apostasy against Piety, Decrepitude against Youth, Night against Day, Unforgiveness against Mercifulness, 'Ganayih', that is, Smiting against Beneficence, Defilement against Purity, Contamination against Religious purification, Discontent against Contentment; 2. Other Div-ik growths against Yazad-ik growths, such as the Mazendaran Devis and Drus against the Yazads, the Allotlers of Destiny, the Beneficent. Immortals.

3. Even in the material existence: Darkness came against the Sky, Thirst against Water, Dry impurity, Noxious creatures and Lizard against the Earth, Hunger against the Tree, Hunger and Thirst against Beneficial Animals, Death and. Pestilence
against Healing, Diseases of various kinds against Mankind, the Extinction and Blowing against Fires, that is, when one makes them burn man and animal for dryness of the corporeal state, Lion and Thieves of the wolf species against Dogs and Animals, Lizard against Fishes, ‘Bo’ with other winged Noxious creatures against Birds, Wicked Apostates against Holy Men, ‘Jahi’ against Women, Unrighteous Armament against Righteous Armament, the Destroying Druj against Life promoting Lineage, and other material Drujs against the terrestrial Yazads.

4. Even in the Firmament: the dark Mhr came against the Sun, and the dark Moon against the Moon having the seed of the Beneficent Animal; they have bound the dark ones to their own ray by covenant; other winged Sorcerers with thirty fold destructive Planets came against the Constellations: the seven Planet Chieftains against the seven Chieftains of the Constellations, such as the Planet Mercury [Tir] against Sirius [Tishtar], the Planetary Jupiter against the ‘Seven Bears’ [Haptoring], the Planetary Mars against Antares [Vanand], the Planetary Venus against Sataves, Saturn [who is the Chieftain of the Planetary Chieftains] against the Lord of Mid-Heaven, even the tailed Dragon and Mush Park against the Sun, Moon, and Stars.

5. The Sun has bound Mush Park to his own ray by covenant, so that she could commit little harm; when she will get loose, she will allot much injury until recapture.

6. Also in the Cloud station, Spenjagra came against the Fire Vazisht, Apan Dev against Sirius and the associates of Sirius.

7. Other Devs also of innumerable names came against the Wind and the Yazads producing rain. They are long; their motion and contest in retrogression and slowness are manifest in astrology also.

CHAPTER V, A

0. As regards the horoscope of the World, that is, how it was disposed.

1. One says in the Scripture: ‘The Adversary entered the earth, in the month of Frawardin, day of Ohrmazd, at noon, when day and night were equal.

2. The house of Life was at the nineteenth degree of Cancer, the asterism Azara too was disposed in the star Sirius; of the Planets, Jupiter was in it; Leo was the house of the Purse; Virgo was the house of the Brothers; Libra was the house of the Foundation, Saturn was disposed in it; Scorpio was the house of Progeny; Sagittarius was the house of Servants, the chief Dragon’s Tail was disposed in it; Capricornus was the house of Partnership, Mars was disposed in it; Aquarius was the house of Death; Pisces was the house of Activity, Venus and Mercury were disposed in it; Aries was the Mid-Heaven, the Sun was disposed in it, in the asterism Patiywar; Taurus was the house of Auspiciousness, the Moon was disposed in it; Gemini was the house of Misfortune, the Dragon’s Head was disposed in it.
3. As these Planets entered the Firmament in this manner, they were engaged in contest with the Constellations: the dark Mhr and Moon with the Sun and Moon, Kings of the Luminaries, Jupiter with the Seven Bears, Chieftain of the North, Venus with Sataves, Chieftain of the South, Mars with Antares, Chieftain of the West, Mercury with Sirius, Chieftain of the East, and Saturn with the Lord of Mid-Heaven, the Chieftain of Chieftains.

4. In the same manner, of the Planets: Mercury Chieftain of the East, Mars Chieftain of the West, Venus Chieftain of the South, Jupiter Chieftain of the North, Saturn Chieftain of Chieftains, and the dark Mhr and Moon, Kings of the dark bodies, were disposed in the terrestrial Sky.

5. Gochhr stood in the middle of the sky, like a dragon, its Head in Gemini and Tail in Sagittarius, as there are always six constellations betwixt its Head and Tail; its motion is backward; every ten years, its tail returns there where is its head and its head returns there where is its tail.

6. The tailed Mush Parik was arrayed with wings; the Sun fettered her to his own ray, so that she could not perpetrate harm; when she will become free, she will do much injury to the world. till she is recaptured, having come eye to eye with the Sun.

7. And of these Planets, the dark Mhr and Mush Parik are bound by covenant, in the intermingled state, to the ray of the Sun, underneath the Sun, and the dark Moon to the ray of the Moon.

8. The remaining others are bound also to the ray of the Sun owing to slowness, and decrease of motion; they cannot keep more than that distance; for, Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars, each one is bound, at a distance of one hundred and eighty degrees from the Sun, Mercury at a distance of one thousand, eight hundred, and sixty minutes, and Venus at a distance of two thousand, eight hundred, and thirty-one minutes from the Sun.

9. Each one of these Planets has found in the Firmament, in the twelve abodes of the Constellations, its enemy's abode, its exaltation and fall, a conjunction giving profit, joy, and affliction. And many other kinds of habitation of its own; as all the operations of Time have connection with the Constellations, as is visible to the eyesight, they destroy, lower the high and increase what is diminished; their motion too is not like that of the constellations; for there is a time when they are swift, there is another when they are slow, there is a time when they are retrograde, there is another when they are stationary; their being named 'apa-akhtar' is owing to this that they are 'not akhtar'; this light of theirs, visible from them, is also the Ormazdian Light, similar to the wicked who put on the dress of the soldier. There are benefits therefrom just as from the light in the eyes of the noxious creatures: one is this that they can do little harm, on account of putting on the light; and one is, this that men may see them and not be afraid of them; the illustration of these Planets is like darkness; for they are devils, producing decrepitude and injury. When they run in the Firmament, the Light becomes visible, twinkling in the Firmament. [60] 10. One says in the Scripture: "if a person were to see that deception his eyesight would vanish."]

CHAPTER V, B

1. Mount Alburz is around the world; Mount Tera is in the middle of the Earth; the Sun, revolving like a crown around the world, reverts, in purity, above Mount Alburz, around Tera.

2. As one says: "The Tera of Alburz, from behind which revert my Sun, Moon, and Stars."  

3. For, in Alburz, there are a hundred and eighty lights in the East, and a hundred and eighty in the West; the Sun enters through a light and departs from a light, every day; the Moon, the Constellations also, and the Planets, all have connection with, and motion towards, it. It is warming three regions and a half, every day.

4. As is visible to the eyesight, day and night are equal twice every year. 5. For, at the commencement of the conflict, when the Sun went forth from the first degree of Aries, day and night were equal, it was the season of spring; when it arrives at the first degree of Cancer, the days are the longest, it is the beginning of summer; when it arrives at the first degree of Capricorn, the nights are the longest, it is the beginning of winter; again, when it arrives at Aries, night and day again become equal. 6. As it is in three hundred and sixty days that it goes forth from Aries and returns to Aries, and in those five Gatha days it comes and departs from the same light; the light is not mentioned; for, if it had been mentioned, the devs would have known the secret and would have inflicted calamity.

7. From there where the Sun had risen on the longest day up to where it rises on the shortest day is the East, the Arzahi region. 8. From there where it had risen on the shortest day up to where it sets on the shortest day is the direction of the South, the Fradadhafshu and Widadhafshu regions. 9. From there where it sets on the shortest day up to where it sets on the longest day is the direction of the West, the Sawahi region. 10. From there where it had risen on the longest day up to where it sets on the longest day is [the direction of] the North, the Wouru-baresht히 and Wourujareshti regions.

11. When the Sun rises, it warms the Arzahi, the Fradadhafshu, and Widadhafshu regions and a half of Xwaniratha. When it sets on the other side of Tera, it warms the Sawahi, the Wouru-bareshti, and Wourujareshti regions and a half of Xwaniratha. When it is day here, it is night there; for, the night is manifested on account of Mount Tera.

12. In the beginning, when the Adversary entered, it so happened that the dark Sun and Moon could not perpetrate any harm, on account of the contact with the radiance of the Sun and the Moon; and the Seven Bears [Haptingor] and Sataves happened to be of greater vigour than Jupiter and Venus; they disabled Jupiter and Venus from doing harm. For this reason the astrologers call them beneficent. Mars happened to be more vigorous than Antares, and Saturn than the Lord of the Throne; their harmfulness is evident. Therefore, astrologers reckon them as maleficent; and Mercury, who is Apaosch dev, came against Sirius [Tsihtar]; both happened to be of equal strength and of equal vigour. Therefore, astrologers say "Mercury is beneficent with the beneficent ones, and maleficent with the maleficent ones. There are some who say so: "Apaosch is not Mercury."

13. For this reason, they say: "Jupiter is the star of life, and Saturn the star of death;" for, Jupiter, on account of inability during opposition, allots that which is the opponent's wish and gives life, eminence, and wealth. Saturn, on account of superiority which is due to the opponent, does that which is death, evil, and poverty to this adversary. For this reason is he the adversary. One says that Venus is of watery nature, as her opponent, Sataves, is of watery nature; and one calls Mercury airy, as his opponents are Sirius and the Wind, producers of rain.

14. Again, there is this that till the advent of the Adversary, six thousand years of time had elapsed: three thousand years in spirituality, and three thousand of materiality in purity; and those six thousand years were from Aries up to Virgo, and each constellation ruled a thousand years.

15. Again, this is that till the advent of the Adversary, six thousand years of time had elapsed: three thousand years in spirituality, and three thousand of materiality in purity; and those six thousand years were from Aries up to Virgo, and each constellation ruled a thousand years.

16. As the rule of the millennium came to Libra, which is the house of fall, the fall of the Sun, the Adversary entered from underneath.

17. Saturn was disposed in Libra; on account of having been in his own exaltation, which is in Libra, Saturn accepted the rule of the millennium; as Aries is above Libra, Saturn the ruler of darkness, the Sun the ruler of light, adverse to darkness: so, too, is Libra the exaltation of Saturn and the fall of the Sun, and Aries the exaltation of the Sun and the fall of Saturn.
18. On account of the preponderance, too, of Saturn and even of Libra, men became taller and bigger in that millennium.

19. The Sun, too, was the ruler of light and above all the constellations, and Saturn was the ruler of darkness and above all the planets.

20. Then, the point from where the Sun had advanced up to the same point where it returned is reckoned as a year of three hundred and sixty-five days, five hours and a fraction, each day of which is of twenty-four hours, one half dark and one half light; that is, night and day; and five periods of the night and day became manifested.

21. Just as the contest of each creation is with its own opponent, so too is that of day with night; for the six months when there is an increase from night to day are against the six months when there is an increase from day to night.

22. And other rules of astronomy are manifest; but the more lucid are those which are manifest from the good Mazdyasnian Religion: this target over the sky, which they call the 'Path of Kayus' (= Milky Way), and the Path of the Dragon Gochihr as in the firmament, and mentioned in detail above.

CHAPTER VI, A

0. As regards the creations of matter [waging] war against the Evil Spirit.

1. One says in the Scripture: "The Evil Spirit wished to go back as he entered and saw the creation with design of the creatures, the preponderance of God, and his own feebleness."

2. The Spirit of the Sky, having arrayed himself against the Evil Spirit, leads the attack like the [agile] warrior who [wears a metallic] armour, that is the sky itself, till Ohrmazd had prepared around the sky, a fortification stronger than the sky.

3. He [stationed,] around the fortification, the Farohars of the holy, that are the warriors, valiant cavaliers with spears in hand, just [like] the semblance of the hair on the head, analogous to those who guard the fortification; [and they name khaena ayanha (= "shining steel") the fortification whereon those holy beings are.]

4. The Evil Spirit did not find the way of retreat therefrom; he [saw] the destruction of the devs and his own inability [as clearly] as Ohrmazd saw His own final victory and the preparation for the renovation of [the creation] up to eternity and eternal progress.

5. This was the first conflict which the Spirit of the Sky waged with the Evil Spirit.

CHAPTER VI, B

0. The second conflict which the Water waged.

1. Since the star Sirius was in the Ascendant in the watery Cancer, in the asterism which they call 'Azara', it reap peared at the evening in the direction of the West, on the same day when the Adversary had entered.

2. For, each month belongs to a constellation, the month of Tir is the fourth month from the new year, and Cancer is the fourth constellation from Aries: as the relative of Cancer, which is its Sirius, posited in it, showed prognostications for the production of rain, it caused the water to move [towards] the cloud on high, with the strength of the Wind.

3. The Associates with Sirius were: Vohuman and Hom Yazad for guidance, Burz Yazad [for cooperation], and the contending Farohars in orderly array.

4. Sirius was transformed into three astral bodies: the astral body of man, the astral body of horse, and the astral body of bull; it flew in the light for thirty days and nights, and it produced rain in each astral body for ten nights and days; as astrologers, too, say: "Each constellation has three astral bodies." 5. Every drop of that rain became as big as a large basin [of water of the Awaniyan festival], there was water up to a man's height over the whole earth. 6. The noxious creatures, that were on earth, were all killed by that rain, [save those outside of the path who were winged, who] went into the burrows of the earth.

7. Then as life stirs within the body, the atmospheric Wind was stirred up by the Spirit of the Wind, as [it, too, blows] and is not mixed; it swept the entire water, brought it towards the ends of the earth, and the ocean Frakhvkart became therefrom.

8. The dead noxious creatures remained within the earth; their venom and stench mingled over the earth; and in order to remove the venom from the earth, Sirius descended into the ocean in the astral body of a white horse with a long tail; the div Apaosh hastened to encounter him in the likeness of a black horse with a spotted tail; he drove away Sirius up to a 'frasang' with defeat.


10. As one says: "Immediately, the strength of ten stallion horses, ten stallion camels, ten stallion bulls, ten mountains and ten rivers came to Sirius."

11. He caused the dev Apaosh to run up to a 'frasang' with defeat.

12. Therefore, for that reason, they speak of " the arrow with the vigour [like that of] Sirius."

13. Then, having seized the water with the cloud for a pot, they mention thus a measuring implement of the work, he caused it to rain very severely, in drops like bull's heads and man's heads, in [spanfuls and] handfuls, big and small.

14. During that production of rain, Spenjagra, and Apaosh fought, and the Fire Vazisht turned up its mace [and caused the water to run in the clouds]: owing to the blow of that mace, Spenjagra. roared and shouted, as even now, roaring and lightning are manifest in that conflict during the production of rain.
15. He produced rain in that manner for ten nights and days; the venom of the noxious creatures, which was within the earth, mingled entirely in the water and made the water salt; for some of the germs which the noxious creatures were disseminating, remained within the earth.

16. Then the Wind resettled the Water in the same manner, on the completion of three days, in the various directions of the Earth, and three great seas and twenty small seas arose therefrom; two fountains of the sea came into manifestation therefrom: one the Chechast, and one the Sobar, Whose original sources are connected with the fountain of the sea.

17. He caused two rivers to flow from the direction of the North, which went, one to the East and one to the West, which are the Arang river and the Veh river. As one says: “By those fingerfuls of Ohrmazd two water flows drew their source.”

18. Both the rivers turn over both the ends of the Earth and mingle again with the ocean Frakhvkart.

19. And when those two rivers [had] flown, eighteen navigable rivers [then] flowed from the same original source as theirs, and other waters, then, flowed out from those navigable rivers; they all, too, pour back to the Arang and the Veh, wherefrom arose the munificence of the world [and long life of the creatures].

21. This was the first conflict which the Water waged with the Evil Spirit.

CHAPTER VI, C

0. The third conflict which the Earth waged.

1. As the Evil Spirit entered and the Earth trembled, the substance of the mountains was produced in the Earth; [on account of the shaking of the Earth, the mountains were immediately in motion:] first, Alburz of Divine destiny, then the other mountains within the Earth; for as Alburz grew up, all the mountains were in motion; for, they have all grown up from the roots of Alburz; at that time, they proceeded from the Earth, like trees, which cause the tendrils to run above and the roots underneath. Their roots were so arranged by connection, passing into one another. 2. And thereafter, [it was not possible] for the earth to shake from its place. 3. [As] one, says [in the Scripture]: "The mountain is a great joint of lands.”

4. And the passage of the waters is made within the mountains below and above the roots of the mountains wherethrough they flow in: just as the roots of trees pass into the earth, resembling the blood in the veins of men, which gives strength to the whole body.

5. In this manner, all the mountains except Alburz, came up from the Earth in eighteen years, owing to whom are the exaltation and benefit of men.

6. [As one says: “They are produced forth for entertainment, for the priests, warriors, and husbandmen.”

7. This was the first conflict which the Earth waged with the Evil Spirit.

CHAPTER VI, D

0. The fourth conflict which the Plant waged was that when it had become dry.

1. As the Plant is her own, the Beneficent Immortal Amurdad, pounding it small, mixed the Plant with the Water which Sirius had seized; and Sirius rained the Water over the whole Earth. 2. Plants grew over the whole Earth [just] like hair upon the beads of men. 3. Ten thousand [of them] grew up from that one principal species, in order to withstand the ten thousand diseases which the Evil Spirit designed forthwith for the creatures. 4. Out of these ten thousand, one hundred and thirty thousand species [within species] of plants grew up.

5. The Tree of many seeds, having been produced from all those seeds of plants, grew up in the ocean Frakhvkart, wherefrom the seeds of all the species of plants are growing [on that tree].

6. Near to that tree, the Gokaren tree was produced, in order to keep away ill-shaped decrepitude; and the complete exaltation of the world arose therefrom.

7. This was the first conflict which the Plant waged with the Evil Spirit.

CHAPTER VI, E

0. The fifth conflict which the sole created ‘Gav’ waged.

1. As she passed away, on account of her vegetable nature, fifty five species of corn and twelve species of medicinal herbs grew from the limbs of the ‘Gav’, out of the earth. 2. They entrusted to the Moon the light and the vis which were in the seed of the ‘Gav’. 3. They adorned the seed, filtered by the light of the Moon, with all colours and instilled life within it.

4. Thence, a pair of animals, one male and one female, and then, [two] of each species, [as] two hundred and eighty two species, forthwith appeared on earth [resembling two ‘fragangs’ which one says eighteen ‘hasars’ in the Scripture.]

5. [The abode of the beneficent animals is on land.] the birds [swam] in the atmosphere and the fish in the water [wherefrom was the abundant nourishment of the creatures.

6. This was the first conflict which the ‘Gav’ waged with the Evil Spirit.
CHAPTER VI, F

0. The sixth conflict which Gayomard waged.

1. Since it was manifest on the Firmament about Gayomard that he lived for thirty years during the antagonism of Ahriman, by the contest of the constellations and the planets.

2. As is said: "It was Time that, before the Adversary, destined the life and rule of the valiant Gayomard for thirty winters."

3. On the advent of the Adversary, the planet Jupiter was posited in the watery Cancer in the house of life, in its own exaltation, who, owing to his predominance over the enemy, allotted to Gayomard the existence of life.

4. And the planet Saturn was posited in Libra in his own exaltation, even in a backward position, wherefrom was the Cardinal house, the Underworld, who, on account of his superiority over the opponent, allotted death.

5. On account of Jupiter being in his own exaltation, in the Cardinal house of Life, and his preponderance over Saturn, he averted the death from Gayomard up to thirty years.

6. When Saturn again returned to Libra where is his own exaltation, Jupiter was posited at that time in Capricorn where is his own fall; and on account of the preponderance of Saturn over Jupiter, death came up to Gayomard and he fell on the left hand side.

7. On his passing away, his seed went into the Earth, just as even now all men emit the seed on passing away.

8. As the body of Gayomard was made of metal, seven kinds of metal appeared out of the body of Gayomard.

9. Out of the seed which went into the Earth, Mashyane and Mashyane grew up in forty years, through whom arose the perfect progress of the world, the destruction of the devs and the inability of the Evil Spirit.

10. This was the first conflict which Gayomard waged with the Evil Spirit.

CHAPTER VI, G

0. The seventh conflict which the Fires waged.

1. The Fire Vazist too opposed Spenjagra for the production of rain, the Fires Farnbag, Gushnasp, and Burzin Mihr for the protection of the world and the preservation of the creatures, and the other Fires, such as those within the plants, men, and beneficent animals for the upkeep and growth of life; the organisation of the creatures of the world arose therefrom.

2. This also was the first conflict which the Fires waged with the Evil Spirit.

CHAPTER VI, H

0. The eighth conflict which the Fixed stars waged against the deceitful Planets.

1. Each one engaged in contest with his own opponent, they are arrayed against their rivals till the renovation, just as I have written the horoscope of the world.

2. This was the first conflict which the Fixed stars waged with the Evil Spirit.

CHAPTER VI, I

0. The ninth conflict which the spiritual Yazads waged with the Evil Spirit, when they cast him, smitten and defeated, to Duzakhv.

1. As one says, "The spiritual Yazads were sleepless and thirstless for ninety days and nights, during the waging of the conflict."

CHAPTER VI, J

0. The tenth conflict which the unmingling stars waged, when they did not allow darkness and sinfulness to mingle with the Supreme worker.

1. As one says, "The Light of the good Mazdayasnian Revelation is kept over that station round the sky, like the 'aiwyaohan', that is, like the sacred thread girdle [kusti], that is bedecked with stars and shaped by the spirits, of three rounds and with four knots."

2. This was the first conflict which the unmingling stars waged with the Evil Spirit.
2. These stars are engaged in fighting with the Evil Spirit up to the end, as is written.

3. Thither is the momentous issue of the final battle which is called "purity in the mingled state."

CHAPTER VII

0. As regards the archetypes of these creations.

1. One says in the Scripture, "When the Evil Spirit entered, he came not in the year, month, and day, for he came swiftly in a moment. First he came to one third of this Earth, secondly to two-thirds of this Earth, and thirdly to this Earth entire, then to the Plants that are of Ohrmazd; having seized their astral bodies, Ohrmazd carried them up to the Star station and entrusted them to the stars. It is their light which the stars now reflect towards the material world."

2. As one says: "Fixed stars are of watery nature, of earthly nature, and of herbal nature."

3. Those of watery nature are Tishtar, Taraha, Azara, Pateywar, Pesh-parviz, and the five stars which they call Parviz; they are of the species of the water.

Those of earthly nature are the Seven Bears [Haptoring] and the Cardinal sign of the Mid-heaven; they are of the species of the earth.

And others besides these are of herbal nature.

4. Then the Evil spirit came to the 'Gav.' The 'Gav' fell towards the Southern side, on the right hand: she first folded her right leg.

5. Having seized the astral body of the 'Gav' and the archetype of the 'Gav', Ohrmazd entrusted them to the Moon; as this is the illuminer which the Moon reflects towards the material world.

6. As one says, "The Moon having the seed of the beneficent animal," that is, the archetype of the 'gavs' and the beneficent animals is on the Moon station.

7. Then, when the Evil Spirit came to Gayomard, Gayomard fell towards the Southern direction, on the left side; he too first folded his left leg.

8. Taking hold of his astral body, Ohrmazd entrusted it to the Sun station; as this is the light wherewith the Sun shines over the material world.

9. For the 'Gav' was just like the Moon, and Gayomard was just like the sun. Ohrmazd destined them for material life and carried them high above when the Adversary came, so that they might reflect light towards their own basic origin and the Light might not come into the possession of the devs, whereby they might become powerful. If it had not been ordained thus, that light would not have reflected towards the material world, in the manner of Fire, to which a blaze from the "Endless Light" is attached. When they kindle it, it reflects the light, giving it above, to its own basic origin from where it has come.

10. One says this too, "When death came up to Gayomard, the Evil Spirit first came up to the right leg, to the little finger, then he let loose hunger over the heart. Ohrmazd and the Evil Spirit were there, Ohrmazd, so that He might feed Gayomard with flesh and butter, so that the devs may not tear him asunder by his abstaining from food;" -- for that reason, life was very obdurate in the bosom, within the body of Gayomard; -- "then he came over the shoulder, and then he went up to the top of the head." 11. And light so faded from the body of Gayomard as when they beat red hot iron over the anvil and it turns black.

12. Even now, men die in the material world in this manner; so that first the legs stiffen and then the other limbs up to the bosom, and then life remains very obdurate in the bosom and the dying one eats food so much so that men are misled thereby thinking that the person is getting well, and then he soon dies, and when he dies his complexion changes.

CHAPTER VIII

0. As regards the whereabouts of the lands.

1. One says in the Scripture, "[There are] thirty-three kinds of land." 2. [As that which I have written above in the matter of the land, when Sirius produced [the] rain wherefrom the seas arose, [the land], having seized the damp everywhere, [broke] into seven pieces, -- [the lower premises] became [the upper premises, the crown became the bottom,] -- one piece, as much as one half, is in the middle, and six pieces are around it; and these six pieces are as much as Xhwanirata; the name' keshwar' was applied to them, that is, they had circumference.

3. As [they call] one piece towards the eastern direction the Arezahi region, [one piece towards] the western [direction] the Sawahi region, two pieces towards the southern direction the Fradadhafshu and Widadhafshu regions, and two pieces towards the northern direction the Wourubareshti and Wourujareshi regions, [and they call] Xwaniratha [that which] is in the middle [of those and as big as those.

4. It is not possible to go from region to region, save by the guidance and radiance of the Yazads.

5. As they say, "Betwixt Arezahi and Sawahi and Xwaniratha they have a sea," for a portion of the ocean Frakhvkart is held around it; [and Fradadhafshu has a forest in the middle; betwixt] Wourubareshti and Wourujareshi a lofty mountain has grown up; so that [there may be a connection] of region with region, [so that] it may not be possible to go [from one to the other].

6. And all the happiness of these six regions was produced the most in Xwaniratha, and the Evil Spirit [fought] the most even with Xwaniratha [and] produced [the utmost unhappiness for Xwaniratha], on account of the smiling which he saw therefrom; for the magnates and heroes are produced in Xwaniratha; and the good Mazdayasnian religion also is produced in Xwaniratha, and then they carry it to the other regions; Soshyant too will be born in Xwaniratha, who will destroy the Evil Spirit and will perform the resurrection and final material life.

7. As they say, "Most men will be in Xwaniratha, and Xwaniratha will be the most powerful, and the druj also will be the worst in the Xwaniratha region, and even those other regions are finally to carry the druj from it."
CHAPTER IX

0. As regards the whereabouts of mountains.

1. One says in the Scripture, "The first mountain that grew up was [Alburz of divine destiny and thereafter all the mountains grew up] in eighteen years."

2. Alburz grew ever till the completion of eight hundred years: for two hundred years up to the Star station; two hundred years up to the Moon station; two hundred years up to the Sun station; and two hundred years up to the utmost height of the Sky.

3. As the other mountains have grown [up] out of Alburz, in number two thousand, two hundred and forty-four mountains, that are the lofty Hugar, the Tera of Alburz, the Daith peak, the neck of Arezur, the Usindom mountain, Mount Haporsen which [is] what one calls Aparan, Mount Zeredhaz which is Mount Manus, Mount Aich, Mount Kaf [which is] the mountain Ushihdatar, Mount Arezur-burn, Mount Royishnomand, Mount Patashkvar, the mountain which they also call the mountain 'Greatest in glory,' Mount Revand, Mount Dar-spet, the Baker mountain, Mount Vas-shigopt, Mount Giha-omand, Mount Vapromand, Mount Spend-dat, the Kadvasp mountain, the Asnavand [mountain], the Koiras mountain, the thirteen mountains which are in Kangdez, of which they say, "These small mountains of good [light] are full of comfort."

4. I will mention their details.

5. Alburz is around this earth, attached to the sky.

6. The Tera of Alburz is that through which the Stars,. Moon and Sun revolve and through which they come back.

7. The lofty Hugar is that from which the water of Aredvisur descends from the height of a thousand men.

8. The Usindom mountain, which is of shining steel that is the substance of the sky, is in the middle of the ocean Frakhvkart, through which the water pours down from Hugar.

9. The Daith peak is that which is in the middle of the world, of the height of a hundred men, whereon is the Chinwad bridge; they judge the soul at that place.

10. The neck of Arezur is a summit at the gate of 'Duzakhv, [hell] where [to] is the continual congress of the devs, [that is,] they practise [all deceitfulness] thither.

11. As one asks, "Which place on Earth is very distressful?" One would reply, "The neck of Arezur at the gate of Duzakhv, whereon the congress of the devs takes place.

12. They say this too, "Besides Alburz, the Haporsen mountain is great," that is, they call Haporsen the mountain of the entire Pars; its base is in Sigistan and its end in Khuzistan, [even in Khvarasan is its bottom.]

13. Next Mount Manush is great, the mountain on which Manuschihar was born.

14. [A computation of] other mountains most [of which] have grown [up] from these: as they say, "Districts [of low water and] districts with water at the top have arisen mostly around these three mountains."

15. Mount Airich has grown from Mount Haporsen in May and Hamatan up to Khvarazm.

16. Mount Ushihdatar is in Sigistan.

17. The Arezur mountain is that which is in the direction of Arum.

18. Mount Usindom is in Sigistan.

19. The Aparan mountain is that which is in the direction of Arum.

20. The Patashkvar mountain is that which is in Tabristan and Gilan and that direction.

21. The Revand mountain is in the east, whereon sits the Adar Burzin [Mihr]; its being 'revand' is this that it is "full of radiance."

22. The Vatges mountain is that which is full of timber and full of trees on the Vatgesian frontiers and that direction.

23. The Baker mountain is that which the Turanian Frasyaw had used as a stronghold; he had built [that] abode within it; His Majesty the happy Piroz [has ] to day founded thereon a myriad citadels.

24. Mount Vas-shigopt, that which is in Pars, is from the same Mount Haporsen.

25. Mount Giha-omand and Mount Vapromand are those out of which Kabul and its borderlands have grown up [to] the direction of Chin.

26. The Spend-dat mountain is on the circuit of the Revand [mountain].

27. The Kadvasp mountain, on the summit of which is Lake Sobar, is in the district of Tus.

28. The Koiras mountain is in Eranvej.
29. The Asnavand mountain is in Atarpatakan.
30. The Royishnomand mountain is that whereon plants have grown.
31. The table mountains those which are everywhere in various lands and various districts, whereon they perform cultivation and fertility, have grown, many in name and many in number, from these same mountains that are enumerated; as those whose names are manifest in books and districts: Mount Vanavt, Mount Asproch, Mount Pahargar, Mount Damavand, Mount Rawa, Mount Zargun, Mount Gesbakht, Mount Davat, Mount Michan, Mount Mara, which have all grown from Haporsen, Manush, and other mountains that are enumerated.
32. For the Davat mountain, which is connected with Khuzistan, is also from the Haporsen mountain.
33. The Damavand mountain, that on which Bevarasp is fettered, is from the same Patashkhvargar.
34. Even Mount Komesh was connected with Georgia; as they call Mount Komesh the mountain which "Had come to Help," that by which Vushtasp had defeated Arjasp, the mountain which was broken there from that mountain in the midst of the battlefield.
35. They say, "In the war of Religion, when defeat was with the Iranians, it fell down in the midst of the battlefield out of these mountains from which it broke, and the Iranians were saved thereby. They named it "Come to help."
36. The Vanavt mountain is on the same "Ridge of Vushtasp," towards Revand, whither is the abode of the Adar Burzin Mihr, nine 'frasangs' to the west.
37. Mount Asproch is above Chinistan.
38. Ges-bakht is in Pars.
39. Pahargar is in Khvarasan.
40. Mount Mara is in Laran.
41. Mount Zar-gun is in Turkestan.
42. Mount Bagastun is in Sapan [and Kermansaan].
43. Others besides this enumeration, which are in motion, are considered table mountains in the Mazdayasnian Religion, small hills, those which have grown as diverse fragments in diverse places.

CHAPTER X

0. As regards the whereabouts of the seas.
1. One says in the Scripture, "The Frakhvkart Ocean occupies one third of this earth, in the direction of the south, on the border of Alburz."
2. It is so wide formed that a thousand lakes are located in it; there is someone who calls them the springs of Aredvisur, and there is some one who calls them the fountains of the lakes. Every lake has a fountain of water which water comes out and pours into the lake. Every single water fountain of each lake has so much width and length that when a man gallops the horse, he may turn round it in forty days, a thousand eight hundred large frasangs.
3. Since, the purity of that water, through heat and moisture is more than that of other waters, which are flowing, every day, from the springs of Aredvisur towards the south and the Mount Alburz, a hundred thousand golden charmels are formed there; that water goes on to the lofty Hugar through those channels, through heat and transparency; and there is a lake on the top of that mountain; it pours into that lake, becomes pure, and returns through a separate golden channel; a wide golden branch springs forth from that channel over Mount Usindo at the height of a thousand men amid the Frakhvkart ocean; from thence one portion pours forth into the ocean for the purification of the ocean, and one portion reaches over the whole of this earth through moisture and drizzle, and all the creations obtain freshness and health there from, and it dispels the dryness of the atmosphere.
4. As they say, "The lofty Hugar, all the holes of which are golden, through which the undefiled Aredvisur springs forth from the height of a thousand men."
5. Of the salt seas three are principal, and twenty-three are small. Of the three which are principal, one is the Putik, one the Kamrut, and one the Siyav-bun.
6. Of all the three Putik is the largest, owing to which the tide and the ebb take place, and being in the same direction as the ocean Frakhvkart, it is attached to the Frakhvkart.
7. Between this ocean Frakhvkart and a side of the Putik, there is a sea which they call the Lake Sataves. All hardness, brackishness, and impurity, that are inclined to go from the Sea Putik to the Ocean Frakhvkart, are repelled by a mighty high wind blowing from that Lake Sataves, and whatever is pure and clean goes into the Frakhvkart and the spring of Aredvisur, and the rest pours back into the Putik.
8. The connection of this sea is attached to the Moon and the Wind; through waxing and waning, rising and setting, as her revolution is towards the south.
9. The connection too of the Lake Sataves is attached to the star Sataves, under whose shelter are the seas and the southern direction, just as the rivers and the northern direction are under the shelter of the Seven Bears [Haptoring].
10. As regards the tide and the ebb, they say, "At every period of day, from before the Moon, two winds are blowing, whose abode is in the Lake Sataves: they call one the down-draught, and one the up-draught. Tide takes place when the up-draught

[103]
blows, and ebb when the down-draught blows."

13. In the other seas there is no tide nor ebb, since the revolution of the Moon is not towards them.

14. The sea Kamrut is that which passes to the north, to Tabristan.

15. The Siyav-bun is in Arum.

16. Of the small seas the twentieth is the sea Kyansah, as is in Sigistan; at first, there were no noxious creatures, snakes, and frogs in it, and the water was sweet.

17. Even other [small seas have sweet water.]

18. It was not proper to go near [these] salt seas [too] up to a hathra, owing to the stench in the vicinity; so much rae of that stench and saltiness [are mitigated] by the beating of the hot wind that when the renovation of the universe takes place, they will become sweet again.

CHAPTER XI

0. As regards the whereabouts of the rivers.

1. One says in the Scripture, "Ohrmazd caused these two rivers to flow forth from the northern direction, from Alburz. One, which they call Arang, proceeded to the west, and one, which [they call] Veh, [proceeded] to the east."

2. Eighteen rivers flowed forth after them from the same source [and descended into the earth from the same Alburz and came into manifestation in Xwaniratha], just as other waters have flowed forth from them in large number.

3. As one says, "They flowed, each one [after the] other as swiftly as a man who recites an 'Ashem vohu' from beginning to end."

4. These [waters] all mingle again with these [two] rivers which are the river Arang and the river Veh.

5. Both of them are going round the ends of the earth and pass into the seas, and all the regions drink out of the living water, and then both meet in the ocean Frakhvkart and return to the source from which they had flowed.

6. As one says in the Scripture, "Just as light comes in from Alburz and goes out from Alburz, water too comes in, from Alburz and goes out from Alburz."

7. This too one says, "The spirit of the Arang begged of Ohrmazd: 'First, give all the joy wherefrom the river Veh may have happiness, and then give me immortality; the spirit of the river Veh, too, similarly begged of Ohrmazd for the river Arang; on account of love and friendship towards each other, they flowed forth with [pure] united strength; as before the coming of the Adversary they were without flow and when they will smite the Druj they will again be without flow."

8. I will mention the most important of the eighteen principal rivers besides the Arang and the Veh and the other rivers which flowed from them: the river Arang, the river Veh, the river Tigris which they call the Dajtar also, the river Euphrates, the river Dailya, the river Dargam, the river Zend, the river Hari, the river Marz, the river Helmand, the river Akhoshir, the river Vafaeni, the river Zeshmund, the river Khwajand, the river Baik, the river Mtrun [which] they also call the river Indus, the river Spet, the river Tort which they also call the Kor, the river Khvarey which they also call the Mesrakan, the river Araz, the river Termaz, the river Vand(qas)ish, the river Dareja, the river Kusa, the river Set, [the river] Peta-mehan that is the Chitro-mehan, water, the river of Mokrastan.

9. I will mention their details.

CHAPTER XI, A

[0. As regards the particular rivers]

1. The river Arang is said to be that which comes out of Alburz and passes on to the land of Syria, which they also call Sham, and to the land of Egypt which they also call Mesr; there they call it [the swift] river ['Spitois].

2. The river Veh passes on in the east, goes to the land of Sind and pours into the sea in India. There they call it the river Mtrun [and also call it the river Indus].

3. The source of the river Euphrates is from the frontier of Arum; it passes on to Assyria and pours into the Tigris. Its productivity is this that they make irrigation on land. 4. It is manifest that Manushchihar excavated the source and reserved the entire water in one place.

5. As one says, "I worship the Euphrates, full of fish, which Manushchihar excavated for the sake of his own soul, took the water and irrigated the land."

6. The river Tigris comes out of Delaman and pours into the sea in Khuzistan.

7. The river Daiya comes out of Eranvej and proceeds to Dutistan. Of all the rivers, the noxious creatures abound the most in it. 8. As one says, "The river Daiya full of noxious creatures."

9. The river Dargam is in Sogdiana.

10. The river Zend passes through the mountain of Panjistan and pours back into the Hari-rud.
11. The Hari-rud flows from the Hapursen range.
12. The river Helmand is in Sigistan. Its source rises from the Hapursen range. This is distinct from that which Frasiyav diverted.
13. The river Akhoshir is in Komish.
14. The river Zeshmund, on the side of Sogdiana, pours back into the river Khvajand.
15. The river Khvajand goes through the middle of Samarkand and Ferghana. They call it the river Jaxartes.
16. The Marv-rud, the river 'Full of glory,' in Khvarasan, flows from the Hapursen range.
17. The river Balkh enters the mountain Bamian [from] the Hapursen and pours into the river Veh.
18. The river Spet is in Atarpatakan {Azerbaijan}. They say, "Dahak {Zohak} thither begged a boon of Ahriman and the Devs."
19. The river Tort, which they also call the Kor, comes out of the sea of Siraw, and pours into the sea of Georgia.
20. The Ziyawayi is the river which comes out of Atarpatakan and pours into the sea in Pars.
21. The source of the river Khvarey is from Ispahan; it [passes] on to Khuzistan and pours forth into the river Tigris. In Ispahan they call it the river Mesrakan.
22. The river Araz is in Tabaristan. Its source is from Mount Damawand. The river Termes also pours back into the river Beh.
23. The river Vandasisis, which they also call Sakani, is that of Pars.
24. The river Vataeni, in Sigistan, had its source from Kyansah.
25. The river Peta-mehan is the Chitro-mehan water that is in Kangdez.
26. The river Kasa comes also to the country of Egypt; there they also call it the river Kasa; and this same is the river Veh, and there they call it the Kasa. Even in Sind they call it the Kasa.
27. The river Kataeni, in Sigistan, had its source from Kyansah.
28. The river Peta-mehan is the Chitro-mehan water that is in Kangdez.
29. The river Darejya is in Eranvej, on the bank of which was the residence of Porushasp, the father of Zartosht.
30. There are other innumerable waters and rivers of springs and channels, which [are fed] from those [living waters].
31. The source of [those rivers is one and they call them in various countries and various localities by various names.
32. As regards Frasiyav they say, "He diverted a thousand springs of [waters] in the sea Kyansah, which were as big as horse, as big as camel, as big as ox and as big as ass, large as well as small. He diverted, in this sea [a] golden spring which is called the river Helmand. Having diverted the source of the river Vataeni and six navigable waters in this sea, he made men settle there."

CHAPTER XI, B

1. They mention seventeen species of liquid in the Scripture: as, one is [the wetness which] settles on the plants; second, that which is flowing from the mountains, that is, of the rivers; third, the rain water; fourth, that of [the well, that which is] still, and others without particular names; fifth, the semen of beneficent animals and men; sixth, the urine of beneficent animals and men; seventh, the saliva of beneficent animals and men; eighth, the liquid which is in the skin of beneficent animals and men; ninth, the tears of beneficent animals and men; tenth, the blood of beneficent animals and men; eleventh, the oil in beneficent animals and men, [that] which is the wished-for object in both the worlds; twelfth, [the liquid which is in the gestation of beneficent female animals and women; thirteenth,] the perspiration of beneficent animals and men; [fourteenth, that which is within the wombs of beneficent female animals and women] with which they nourish the embryo; fifteenth, that which is underneath the bark of plants; as is said, "Every bark has a drop of water at the bottom, and fire before it at a distance of four fingers;" sixteenth, [that which is mingled in the plants, which they call the juice of the sumac plant; seventeenth,] the milk of beneficent female animals and women. 2. All these mingle again with these rivers, either by evanescence or in the embodied state. For liquid is both in the embodied state as well as in evanescence.

CHAPTER XI, C

1. This, too, one says, "The spirits of these three rivers, that are the river Arang, the river Marv, and the river Helmand were so dissatisfied that they would not flow into the world, owing to [the harm], defilement, and stagnancy which they saw that they had during the antagonism of Ahriman, until Ohrmazd showed Zartosht to them, saying, "I will produce him, who will pour 'horn' and holy water onto your water. Cleanse it again and proclaim preservation."
2. This, too, one says, "The water [onto] which less impure matter and more holy water have come, returns to its source within three years; that to which impure matter and holy water have both come in equal proportion, returns within six years. That to which more impure matter and less holy water have come returns within nine years. 3. Thus too the plants growing give vigour to the roots in this proportion. 4. So also do the benedictions which the holy men offer, revert to themselves in this proportion.
5. As regards the river Kataeni one says that the Turanian Frasyaw excavated it with the mace; it will flow again as big as a horse, when Ushitar will arrive. So also will the springs of the sea Kyansah; its being Kyansah is this that the seed of the Kays is deposited there.
ARYAN HOMELAND & NEIGHBOURING LANDS IN THE AVESTA

ARYAN VAEJA
NATIONS OF THE AVESTA

The homeland of the Aryans, or Aryan lands was called **Airyana Vaeja** or **Airyanam Dakhyunam** in the Avesta and **Arya Varta** in the Vedas.

The books of the Avesta as well as the Middle Persian Pahlavi texts such as the Lesser Bundahishn, tell us that Airyana Vaeja, the Aryan homeland, was where Zarathushtra's father lived (20.32) and where Zarathushtra first expounded his beliefs (32.3).

In addition to mentioning Airyana Vaeja, the Zoroastrian scriptures, the books of the Avesta, also mention neighbouring nations or lands. These references, along with references to the terrain and weather in Airyana Vaeja, give us clues about the location of the original Aryan homeland, as well as information about the Aryan people, their neighbours, and their relationships.

**EARLIEST MENTION OF THE LANDS - FARVARDIN YASHT**

Lands of Zarathushtra's Ministry

A chapter of the Avesta that has the most intimate knowledge of Zarathushtra and his first followers, is the Avesta's Farvardin Yasht - chapter 10 of the book of Yashts.

The Yasht (13.143 & 144) lists the names of individuals who were the first "hearers and teachers" of Zarathushtra's teachings. The Yasht memorizes and reveres the fravashis (spiritual souls) of these first "hearers and teachers" of Zarathushtra's teachings. In addition to specific names, it also memorizes all the righteous people in the five nations as well as those "all countries". The five nations mentioned are Airyana Vaeja (called Airyanam Dakhyunam in the Yasht) as well as four neighbouring lands. These four lands neighbouring Airyana Vaeja are **Tuiryana**, **Sairima**, **Saini** and **Dahi**. Since -nam is a usual ending for many Avestan nouns, the nations are also named as Airyanam, Tuiryana, Dahanam, Sairimanam and Saininam.

Since the surviving texts of Zarathushtra's teachings, the hymns of the Gathas, are in one language, we can say it is reasonable to assume that the nations in which Zarathushtra spread his message were neighbours and spoke the same language and dialect as well. For his message (which reference pre-Zoroastrian beliefs) to have relevance, these peoples also likely shared the same, or variations of the same, pre-Zoroastrian religion. We may conclude this assumption by saying the
five founding Zoroastrian nations likely shared the same culture and ethnicity. In terms of size, we are left with the impression that they can be compared to districts with a province today. The Gathas of Zarathushtra are placed in the Avestan book of Yasna. While their language is the same, the dialect of the other verses is different from that of the Gathas. They were either written by followers at a different point in time or in a neighbouring region that spoke a different dialect.

Other than Airyana Vaeja, none of the Farvardin Yasht's nations are mentioned in the Vendidad's list of Zoroastrian nations. The Vendidad is a book of the Zoroastrian scriptures. Even though the Vendidad list preceded the formation of Media and Persian making it over two thousand eight hundred years old, the nations are for the most part recognizable today and we may conclude that the Vendidad list is far more modern than the list of five nations of the Farvardin Yasht cited in the paragraph above. Those nations either changed their names or became parts of other nations.

Dahi, for instance find mention only once in King Xerxes' list of countries that were part of the Persian empire. But in other lists and by the accounts of Greek writers such as Strabo, it was a part of the Saka nations, two of which find regular mention as part of the Persian Empire.

Tuiryia is identified with Turan which later became known as Sugd. Dahi as a name continued to exist, Dahi being one of the Saka nations. We do not as yet known the present identity of the other lands.

Bakhdi / Balkh (Bactria), which is noted in Ferdowsi's Shahnameh (Shahnameh page 30) and other later tradition as a land where Zarathushtra spread his message, is not mentioned in the Farvardin Yasht. However, Kava Vishtasp, Kava being a title of the Kayanian kings of Bakhdi / Balkh, is mentioned in the Farvardin Yasht.

**King Vishtasp of Bakhdi / Balkh**

Among the Farvardin Yasht's list of Zarathushtra's first "hearers and teachers" is Kavaoish Vishtaspahe (Kava Vishtasp) (13.99). In the Yasht, Kava Vishtasp has a special place having a verse devoted to him. The common extrapolation is that Kava Vishtasp is the Kai Gushtasp (Gushtasp is a later form of Vishtasp) mentioned in later texts which also state that King Vishtasp's / Gushtasp's capital was Bakhdi or Bakhi, i.e. present day Balkh in Northern Afghanistan.

Bakhdi is listed as a nation in the Vendidad but not in the Farvardin Yasht. These later texts also tell us that Zarathushtra died in Bakhdi/Balkh, killed by a Turanian.

Balkh is directly south of Samarkand over an eastern spur of the Pamir mountains. The predecessors of present day Samarkand and Balkh are among the first nations listed in another (and later) book of the Avesta - the Vendidad.

**Nations Listed in the Avesta**

In addition to the Farvardin Yasht, two other sections of the Avesta provide us with names of nations associated with the Aryans, the Vendidad and the Meher Yasht.

The Avestan book of Vendidad starts with a list of sixteen nations (Chapter 1, 1-16), the first being Aryanem Vaejo or Airyana Vaeja.

Other than the Aryan homeland Airyanaem Vaeja (Airyanaem Dakhynum in the Farvardin Yasht), the Vendidad does not mention the four other lands mentioned in the Farvardin Yasht (see above). Nor does the Farvardin Yasht mention any of the fifteen other lands mentioned in the Vendidad. Three of the five Farvardin Yasht nations are not known to us. The nations of the Vendidad can be more readily identified. The only land common to both lists is the Aryan homeland. This, the other information contained, and the language used in the texts indicate to us that the Farvardin Yasht and the Vendidad were written at very different times, the Farvardin Yasht being the older. The Vendidad itself was probably composed well before 800 BCE since it does not list Persia or Media (also see below), making the Farvardin Yasht an ancient composition.

The Meher Yasht also provides names of nations in 10.13-14. The Aryan homeland is called Airyo Shayanem. Three of the nations mentioned in the Meher Yasht, Mourum, Haroyum and Sughdhem i.e. Margush, Aria and Suguda, are also part of the Vendidad list. Sughdhem is associated with the word Gava in the Meher Yasht.

Depending on whether some of the words in the Meher Yasht are names of countries, one or three additional lands are mentioned in the Meher Yasht which are not part of the Vendidad list: Kharizem (associated with Karazarim i.e. Khwarizem). Kharizem has been touted by a few authors as being the original home of Zoroastrianism. This is unlikely and Karazarim likely gained this reputation because at one time before the rise of Persia, Kharazem / Khварizem / Kharizem was the dominant nation amongst the Aryan nations - and its lands could have expanded to include ancient Airyana Vaeja. The other two possible nations in the Meher Yasht are Aishkatem and Pourutem (some authors believe these are names of nations while others believe they are words that are part of the text).

The list of nations in the Vendidad is the most complete and one that provides us with information we can use in narrowing down the location of Airyana Vaeja.

**Persia Not Part of the Original Listing of Vendidad Lands**

The Vendidad, and indeed the entire Avesta, does not mention Persia or Media. This was because Persia and Media became nations after the Avestan canon was closed. However, The Achaemenian Persian Kings (c. 700 - 330 BCE) repeatedly proclaimed their Aryan heritage.

**Sixteen Nations of the Vendidad**

The list of sixteen nations in the Vendidad is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vendidad Name</th>
<th>Alternative Spelling</th>
<th>Old Persian/ Pahlavi</th>
<th>Greek / Western</th>
<th>Present Name</th>
<th>Features: - Good &amp; - Bad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Airyanem Vaejo</td>
<td>Airyana Vaeja</td>
<td>Airan Vei (Phi.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>- Good &amp; lawful, River snakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>Climate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sukhdo (also Tuirya)</td>
<td>Sughdha Turan, Suguda (OP)</td>
<td>Sogdiana, Sugd, Northwest Tajikistan, Samarkand (SE Uzbekistan)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Good land</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Fly Skaitya which kills cattle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mourum</td>
<td>Mouru, Margu (OP)</td>
<td>Margiana, Marv / Merv, South Turkmenistan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Brave, holy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Plunder, bloodshed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Uplifted banner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Stinging ants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Nisaim</td>
<td>Nisaya, Parthava (OP)</td>
<td>Parthia, N. Khorasan (NE Iran) &amp; Nisa South Turkmenistan, Bordering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Good land</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Disbelief (could have refused to accept Zaraostranism)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Haroyum</td>
<td>Haroyu, Haravsha (OP)</td>
<td>Ana, Hari Rud (Herat), Northwest Afghanistan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Plentiful water</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Grief, poverty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Vaekeretem</td>
<td>Khentaa Vaekerata / Vaekereta</td>
<td>Kabul, Eastern Afghanistan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kalpul (Phil.)</td>
<td>- Good land</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sattagydia</td>
<td>- Followers of Keresaspa, fairies and witchcraft</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Urva</td>
<td>Urva, Uvarazmiy/Uvarazmish</td>
<td>Khorezm, Uzbekistan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Khvarizem/Chorasmia</td>
<td>- Rich pastures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Pride, tyranny</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Khntenem Vehirkana</td>
<td>Vehirkana, Varkana (OP)</td>
<td>Gorgan, Golestan, North-northeast Iran</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vycrana</td>
<td>- Good land</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Sodomy with children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Harahvaitim</td>
<td>Harahvaiyi, Harauvashish (OP)</td>
<td>Arachosia, Kandahar &amp; Oruzan South Central Afghanistan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Beautiful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Bury the dead</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Haetumantem</td>
<td>Haetumant, Zraka (OP)</td>
<td>Drangiana, Helmand &amp; SE Afghanistan &amp; Sistan - E. Iran</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Brilliant, glorious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Wizardry &amp; Sorcery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Three peoples</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Utter disbelief</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Chakhrem*</td>
<td>Kakhra</td>
<td>Uncertain: Either Ghazni, SE Afghanistan or just west of Rai, N. Iran</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Brave, righteous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Burn corpses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Varenem</td>
<td>Varena, Patashk-vargar or</td>
<td>Western Hycrania</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dailam (Phil.)</td>
<td>W. Mazendaran, Gilan &amp; Northern Alburz (land of Mt. Damavand) North</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Home of Thraetaona (Feridoon) who slew Az Dakhaka (Zahak)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Barbarian (foreign) rule</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Hapta Hendu**</td>
<td>Hapta Hindu, Hindaya (OP)</td>
<td>Indus, Northern valley of the seven Indus rivers** (Upper Indus Basin)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Wide expanses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Violence, rage and hot weather</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Ranghaya</td>
<td>Rangha, later part of Arvastani Rum (Phil.) i.e. Eastern Roman empire</td>
<td>Lake Urmiya, Upper Tigris, Kurdistan, Eastern &amp; Central Turkey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Good land</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- No chiefs i.e. no protector, open to raids, lawless, severe winters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Chakhrem is used in Yasht 13.89 and means wheel (or revolving; cf. Persian charkh meaning wheel) and is used there as chakhrem urvaesayata in the context of Zarathushtra being the first member of every professional guild opposed to the daevas. Avestan Chakhrem urvaeayata is similar to the Sanskrit chakram vartay and chakhravartin meaning ‘chariot over the land’ or ‘ruler’. The western Mitanni were known for their expertise in chariot-building and this may or may not have relevance.

** The seven Indus Rivers, Hapta Hindu (nation #15 above), are: 1. the Indus (Veda-Sindhu), the 2. Kabul and 3. Kurram rivers joining on the west and north banks of the Indus, and the 4. Jhelum (Veda-Vitasta), 5. Chenab (Veda-Asikni), 6. Ravi (Veda-Airovati), and 7. Sutlej/Beas (Veda-Vipasa) rivers joining the Indus’ east and south banks. There is some discussion that the Saraswati River mentioned in Hindu Vedic texts was also an Indus tributary - though this is not clear. The Hindu texts are mainly concerned with the eastern & southern tributaries while the Zaraostrian texts are concerned with the upper reaches of the Indus and all its tributaries whose valleys would have provided access to the plains - areas north and west of the Punjab (Panj-ab meaning five waters in Persian) - i.e. present-day North-West Frontier Province in Northern Pakistan, Northern Punjab and Kashmir in India and Pakistan.

*** Gandhara/Waihind. The land of the upper Indus basin was known as Gandhara or Waihind. Today, the region has Peshawar, Mardan, Mingora and Chitral as its main cities. It would have extended into all the habitable valleys of the south-eastern Hindu Kush. The Gandhara/Waihind region includes the Indus, Swat, Chitral and Kabul River valleys. It may have extended south to Takhashila (Taxila) (near present-day Islamabad) and present-day Jalalabad, Afghanistan, in the west, thus bordering Vaekerata (Kabul) to the east.
**Pattern in the Listing of Nations**

There is a pattern in the listing:

1. The first three nations listed after Airyana Vaeja are in the southern Uzbekistan, southern Turkmenistan, northern Afghanistan area. The balance of the list of nations fan out, moving west and south in steps. The last two nations are the most southeast and west of the initial group.

2. The nations border one another. The nation listed next to Airyana Vaeja is Sukhdho/Sughdha - modern day Sugd in northern Tajikistan and southern Uzbekistan.

3. The nations are all along the Aryan Trading routes - what are now called the Silk Roads (also see Tajikistan pages) - an ancient set of trading roads between the Orient, the Occident and the Indian sub-continent.

**Relationship Between Airyana Vaeja and the Other Nations of the Avesta**

The sixteen nations listed in the Vendidad were selected by the author or authors of the Vendidad from among the nations of the known world. The list is therefore not a list of the world’s nations, but a list of nations connected with Airyana Vaeja. The Vendidad nations listed after Airyana Vaeja, are those to which Aryans migrated from Airyana Vaeja, intermingling as they did, with the peoples of those lands. While Zoroastrian-Aryans inhabited these lands, they were not necessarily the majority people in these lands.

All of the Vendidad nations would at some point come together as part of the larger Aryan, Iranian, or Persian empires.

**Migration of the Aryans and Expansion of Aryan Lands**

Before the era of legendary King Jamshid, see (Aryan Prehistory and Location of Aryan Homeland), the original Aryan homeland in the Avesta, Airyana Vaeja, could not have been very large. However, starting in the Jamshidi era and continuing up to the establishment of the Achaemenian Persian empire under Darius the Great, the Aryan lands did grow considerably in size.

The Zoroastrian Avesta, the Hindu Vedas and other texts tell us that the Aryans migrated out of Airyana Vaeja and that the lands associated with the Aryans increased in size for the following reasons:

1. An increase in population during the Jamshidi era.
2. Climate change to severe winters and short summers.
3. Trading with neighbouring lands and settlement of significant populations in these lands.
4. Establishment of kingdoms through settlement or conquest. A federation of these kingdoms during the Feridoon Era / Pishdadian dynasty.
5. Inter-Aryan wars. The schism between the deva and Mazda worshippers cf. reign of King Vishtasp and life of Zarathushtra
6. Establishment of the Persian empire that included the original federation of kingdoms as well as additional lands.

These points are discussed further below.

As the Aryans migrated to the lands of their neighbours, they did not displace the original inhabitants. When the Persian Aryans eventually settled the southern Iran plateau, the area was populated by the Elamites with whom the Persians integrated. An examination of the present linguistic composition of Iran reveals that other, non Indo-Iranian linguistic groups are interspersed among Persian linguistic groups.


The Vendidad tells us that in the first part of his reign, legendary King Jamshid had doubled the extent of his lands to accommodate a population increase. (The ancient Avestan name for King Jamshid was Yima-Shra or Yima-Kshaeta, meaning Yima the radiant. He was similarly called Yama in the Hindu scriptures, the Vedas.) Depending on how one interprets the texts, the expansion could have been much larger - up to four and a half times in extent. The expansion of lands was "southwards, on the way of the sun," which could mean southward from the east to the west of Airyana Vaeja.

The Hindu Vedas state that the land procured by Yama (King Jamshid) became the homeland of the Hindus.

Gateway to the Aryan Hindu Lands

The Hindu Rig and Atharva Vedas state:
1. Worship with oblation Yama the King, son of Vivasvat, the assembler of people, who departed from the deep to the heights, and explored the road for many.
2. Yama was the first who found for us the route. This home is not to be taken from us. Those who are now born, (go) by their own routes to the place whereunto our ancient forefathers emigrated. (Atharva Veda xviii.1.49 & Rig Veda x.14.1)

...they cross by fords the mighty streams which the virtuous offerers of sacrifice pass
(Atharva Veda xviii.4.7)

The Hindu reverence for Yama, King Jamshid, grew at the same time when he lost favour with the Mazdayasni predecessors of the Zoroastrians, who record that King Yima lost his grace, grew too proud and thought himself a god. The Vedic verses appear to state that the lands Yima acquired became part of the permanent home of the Hindus - a land that would grow to include the entire Indian subcontinent, and would become separate from the original Aryan homeland. The comment above regarding a home that "cannot be taken from us," indicates a previous vulnerability of the predecessors of the Hindus in the original Aryan Homeland at the time the Vedas were written - a vulnerability either from foreign or internal foes.

It is unlikely that the expansion during the Jamshidi era included the river plains such as the lands that make up the Punjab today. Expansion into the Indus plains would take place later in history. Hapta-Hindu, the seven Indus lands that would include the plains, is the fifteenth, and last but one, nation in the Vendidad's list of nations. The part of upper Indus occupied during the Jamshidi era would include what are today's Eastern Afghanistan, the north of Pakistan and India - the areas on both sides i.e. just north and south of the Hindu Kush and Karakoram mountains. The limited size of the expansion is further indication that the original Aryan homeland was not very large.

During the Jamshidi era, the lands just north and south of the Hindu Kush and Karakoram were united. They would later separate politically and the two mountain ranges, especially the Hindu Kush formed the primary border between the two kingdoms.

There is yet another factor that links the upper Indus, the Hapta-Hindu with the area immediately to the north and north-west i.e. the Badakshan-Pamir region: the Rig Veda is commonly thought to have been written in the Upper Indus region, and the language of the Rig Veda and the Old Avesta are so close that they are commonly thought to be dialects such as that spoken in two neighbouring provinces and that further, they emerged from a common language philologists call Proto Indo-Iranian, another name for the language of united ancient Aryans. [Also see our page on Languages.]

2. Jamshidi Era Climate Change

The Vendidad and other texts also inform us that at the outset of the Jamshedi era, the weather in the Aryan homeland, Airyana Vaeja was fair and equitable, with the spring equinox heralding the start of spring and a renewal after the winter. However, a thousand two hundred years after the start of the Jamshedi era, there was a sudden climate chill (Vendidad 2.22-25) and a drastic cooling (also see Location of the Aryan homeland) and our page Aryan Prehistory - a mini Ice Age of sorts.

This sudden cooling could have encouraged further Aryan migration to the warmer portions of the expanded Jamshidi lands.

3. Aryan Trade
The Aryans started trading between themselves in the expanded Jamshedi lands as well as with their neighbours very early in their history - during the Stone Ages. Aryan trade is closely linked to Aryan migration and the sixteen Vendidad nations. A more detailed discussion can be found on our page on Aryan Trade.

**Aryan Trade Routes - the Silk Roads**
The Aryan trade routes would come to be known as the Silk Roads. Aryan trade extended from China in the east, to Asia Minor and Mesopotamia in the west, to the Iranian plateau and the Indus valley in the south.

Sogdian Aryan trading settlements have been found in China. Indeed, the earliest known manuscript of the Zoroastrian scriptures, the Avesta, written in Sogdian, has been found in China. (Also see our page on Tajikistan.)

The pattern of the Vendidad’s list of nations we noted above, moves from the Central Asian core, progressively west and south along the Aryan Trading (Silk) Roads into present-day Turkey and Pakistan.

(After the Zoroastrians migrated to India following the Arab invasion of Iran, they revived their tradition of trading between the east and west, becoming wealthy in the process.)

Trading allowed the Aryans to become familiar with, and later settle in, the lands along the Silk Road. As the Aryans established permanent trading posts in neighbouring lands, they also established settlements that became communities.

**4. Feridoon Era Federation of Kingdoms. First Aryan Empire. Transformation to Airan**

According to the Poet Ferdowsi's epic, the Shahnameh, during the reign of legendary King Feridoon, the lands he ruled came to include what we know as the sixteen lands mentioned in the Vendidad. Feridoon decided to divide his sprawling empire amongst his three sons. To his eldest son Tur, he gave the eastern lands with its capital in Turan - a nation that got its name from Tur. To his son Iraj, Feridoon gave Airan (the country that Airyana Vaeja had evolved into) and Hind (Hapta Hindu, the upper Indus lands). To his son Salm, Feridoon gave the western kingdoms. Tur, however, felt that as the eldest son he had been slighted, for the lands of Airan and Hind were the gems of the empire and the seat of its power. No sooner had Feridoon divided his kingdom between his sons, that the jealous and ambitious Tur persuaded Salm to join him in a plot to murder Iraj.

Within this legend is history. If we replace the Airan empire with the Airan people, this myth tells us that the Aryans had spread to present day Turkey in the west, the upper Indus valley in the south, to the borders of China in the east and the deserts of the north. Further, the wars between the different Aryan lands were internecine conflicts that punctuate Aryan history. By the time of Feridoon, the centre of the Aryan nation had moved to Bakhtihdi (Balkh or Bactria). (Also see our page on Turan.)

(Also see Legendary Kings. Pishdadian Dynasty Part II)

**5. Inter Aryan Wars**
The internecine wars mentioned above included wars between the Aryan religious groups, the Mazda-Asura worshippers and the deva worshippers. The religious groups, their beliefs and the wars are discussed in our page on Aryan Religions.

**6. Persian empire**
The Achaemenian king, Cyrus II, the Great (c. 600 to 576 - August 530 BCE), established the Persian empire and the expansion continued under the reign of Darius I, the Great (522- 486 BCE). The sixteen nations of the Vendidad made up the core of the nations that became part of the Persian empire. Indeed, it may be said that the Persians by creating the third Aryan empire, sought to unify all the Aryan lands (see Aryana below) by continuing the tradition of legendary King Feridoon who established the first Aryan empire, and the Medes who established the second Aryan empire.

The nations listed by Darius the Great, King of Persia on an inscription at Naqsh-e-Rustam as part of his Persian empire are: Pârsa (Persia), Mâda (Media), Ûvja (Elam), Parthava (Parthia), Haraiva (Aria), Bâkirish (Bactria), Suguda (Sogdiana), Uvârazmish (Chorasmia), Zraka (Drangiana), Haruvatsish (Arachosia), Thatagush (Sattagydia), Gdâra (Gandara), Hûbash (Sind), Sakâ haumavargâ (Amyrgian Scythians), Sakâ tigraxaudâ (Scythians with pointed caps), Bâbrush (Babylonia), Athurâ (Assyria), Arabâya (Arabia), Mudrâya (Egypt), Armina (Armenia), Katpatuka (Cappadocia), Sparda (Sardis), Yauna (Ionia / Greece), Sakâ tayy paradraya (Scythians who are across the sea), Skudra (Skudra), Yaunâ takabarâ (petasos-wearing Ionians), Putâyâ (Libyans), Kûshiyâ (Ethiopians), Madyâ (people of Maka), Karkâ (Carians). See map of the Persian Achaemenian Empire.
Classical Hellenic authors such as Strabo mention the lands of Ariana or Aryana and make a distinction between the collection of kingdoms that formed Aryana and the country or kingdom of Aria.

Strabo (2.1.31) implies that Ariana was a single national group whose members formed the different Aryan kingdoms: “Ariana is not so accurately described (as India being in the shape of a quadrilateral or rhomboid by Eratosthenes), on account of its western side being interwoven with the adjacent lands (of Persia and Media). Still it is pretty well distinguished by its three other sides, which are formed by three nearly straight lines (see following paragraph), and also by its name (Aryana, meaning land of the Aryan), which shows it to be only one nation.”

In the estimation of the Hellenic authors, Aryana included the larger group of Aryan kingdoms including Aria, and was bordered by the Indus river in the east (Pomponius Mela 1.12 states that “nearest to India is Ariana, then Aria”. Strabo 15.2.1 also states "Next to India is Ariana"), the sea in the south, a line from Carmania (Kerman) to the Caspian Gates in the west, and the Taurus Mountains (the chains for mountains that run west-east from Anatolia and which include the Himalayas) in the north.

The land of Aryana included Media, Persia, the deserts of Gedrosia and Carmania, that is, the provinces of Carmania, Gedrosia, Drangiana, Arachosia (Strabo 11.10.1.), Aria, the Paropamisadae, Bactria (called the ornament of Ariana), Apollodorus of Artemita (Strabo 11.11.1) and Sogdiana where Zarathushtra is said to have preached Ahura Mazda’s laws “among the Arianoi” (cf. Diodorus 1.94.2). These observations reconfirm the sixteen nations of the Vendidad as being part of the Greater Aryan nation and add to that list of nations the later more modern nations of Persia, Media, Carmania (Kerman) and Chorasmia. This Greater Ariana formed the core of the Persian Empire. Aelianus in De natura animalium 16.16, also mentions that there were "Indian Arianians" and there is some suggestion that control of Ariana fluctuated between Indian and Arian Arianians.
Strabo describes the extent of Greater Aryana, a land that stretched about 2,600 km in length from present-day Ray (near Tehran, Iran) in the west to Khotan (presently in Western China), and from the Persian Gulf to the mouth of the Indus River in the south, in his *Geography* as follows:

(Strabo 15.2.1. Translation by H. C. Hamilton & W. Falconer): Next to India (the Avestan Hapta-Hindu, the upper Indus and its tributaries) is Ariana, the first portion of the country subject to the Persians, lying beyond the Indus, and the first of the higher satrapies without the Taurus (Classical Hellenic writers appear to have believed that a single mountain chain, the Taurus, ran east-west through Asia). On the north it (Ariana) is bounded by the same mountains as India (extensions of the Himalayas and mountains radiating from the Pamir knot, i.e. the Taurus), on the south by the same sea, and by the same river Indus, which separates it from India. It stretches thence towards the west as far as the line drawn from the Caspian Gates to Carmania, whence its figure is quadrilateral. The southern side begins from the mouths of the Indus, and from Patalene, and terminates at Carmania and the mouth of the Persian Gulf, by a promontory projecting a considerable distance to the south. It then makes a bend towards the gulf in the direction of Persia.

(Strabo 15.2.1. Translation by Horace Leonard Jones): After India one comes to Ariana, the first portion of the country subject to the Persians after the Indus River and of the upper satrapies situated outside the Taurus. Ariana is bounded on the south and on the north by the same sea and the same mountains as India, as also by the same river, the Indus, which flows between itself and India, and from this river it extends towards the west as far as the line drawn from the Caspian Gates to Carmania, so that its shape is quadrilateral. Now the southern side begins at the outlets of the Indus and at Patalene, and ends at Carmania and the mouth of the Persian Gulf, where it has a promontory that projects considerably towards the south; and then it takes a bend into the gulf in the direction of Persis.

(Note continued: Primary Boundary Between Aryana and Hapta Hindu. It is either the river itself or the mountains, the Hindu Kush and Karakoram on the Indus' left bank, that formed the primary boundary between ancient northern India and Aryana. The name Hindi-Kush which is the Persian word for Hindu-Killer, is significant as it implies a natural barrier to the invading Hindu during any wars between the two groups. Today these mountains form the border between present day Pakistan & India on the right bank and Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Tibet on the left bank.

(Note continued: Just north of the Karakoram mountains (also called Kara Kunlun with the Baltoro Muztagh and Gujerab as sub-ranges) that lie the Hindu Kush, stems from the Pamirs mountains (today mainly in Tajikistan). The region south of the Karakoram, that is between the heights of the range and the Indus River is called Gilgit-Baltistan, a part of Kashmir. A narrow region north of the Karakoram and presently a part of China, is called Tash-Korgan/Tashkurgan, an autonomous Tajik populated region. The Pamiri region includes the Kunlun mountain range that forms the eastern Tajikistan border (with China), and cities east of the range and presently in China: Tashkurgan, Khotan/Hotan, and Kashgar/Kashi. The Tajik and Pamiri inhabited areas line the region north of the Karakoram and Hindu Kush and these areas were all part of Greater Aryana.)
The Takla Makan (Taklamakan) desert, nearly 1,000 km in width, would have formed the eastern border of Aryana. The Aryan Trade Roads (Silk Roads) skirted the desert to its north and south. The residents of Kashgar were known to have practiced Zoroastrianism and the ruins of a Zoroastrian temple can be found beside the ruins of an ancient fortress. Indeed, it is possible that residents of areas in western China that practice Islam today could have practiced Zoroastrianism in the past and that medieval Islamic control replaced areas of traditional Persian-Zoroastrian control. The original Indo-Iranian inhabitants of this area have to a large extent been displaced by Turkic peoples. The Shahnameh of Ferdowsi placed Chin (China) to the east of Airan and Turan (Sughd) beyond the desert.

Strabo's western boundary for Aryana runs north-south from the Caspian Gates (just east of present-day Tehran-Rey) to Carmania (Kerman-Hormuz). Strabo therefore considers the territory of Aryana to include all of present-day Eastern Iran, Afghanistan, Western Pakistan and Tajikistan. This is a Greater Aryana as neither the lesser Aria (present-day Herat Province, Afghanistan) nor a single satrapy of this enormous size continued to exist during Strabo's or Achaemenian times. The territory described by Strabo includes most of the core Aryan Vendidad nations.

Strabo's western boundary for Aryana runs north-south from the Caspian Gates (just east of present-day Tehran-Rey) to Carmania (Kerman-Hormuz). Strabo therefore considers the territory of Aryana to include all of present-day Eastern Iran, Afghanistan, Western Pakistan and Tajikistan. This is a Greater Aryana as neither the lesser Aria (present-day Herat Province, Afghanistan) nor a single satrapy of this enormous size continued to exist during Strabo's or Achaemenian times. The territory described by Strabo includes most of the core Aryan Vendidad nations.

Strabo 15.2.1. Translation by H. C. Hamilton & W. Falconer: The Arbies, who have the same name as the river Arbis (today's Porali River, Balochistan, Pakistan), are the first inhabitants we meet with in this country (about 100 km. northwest of Karachi and 200 km west of the Indus River). They are separated by the Arbis from the next tribe, the Oritæ, and according to Nearchus, occupy a tract of sea-coast of about 1000 (200 km) stadia in length; this country also is a part of India. Next are the Oritæ, a people governed by their own laws. The voyage along the coast belonging to this people extends 1800 stadia (360 km), that along the country of the Ichthyophagi (fish-eaters - a generic name but here a Greek rendering of the ancient Persian mahi-khoran, which evolved into the modern word Makran cf. Edward Balfour, Cyclopaedia of India), who follow next, extends 7400 stadia (1500 km); that along the country of the Carmani as far as Persia, 3700 stadia. The whole number of stadia is 13,900.

Strabo 15.2.3. Translation by H. C. Hamilton & W. Falconer: Above the Ichthyophagi is situated Gedrosia (Makran), a country less exposed to the heat of the sun than India, but more so than the rest of Asia.

Strabo 15.2.3. Translation by Horace Leonard Jones: Above the country of the Ichthyophagi is situated Gedrosia, a country less torrid than India, but more torrid than the rest of Asia.

Strabo 15.2.8. Translation by H. C. Hamilton & W. Falconer: The position of the southern side of Ariana is thus situated, with reference to the sea-coast, the country of the Gedrosi (today's Baluchistan) and the Orite lying near and below it (eastern Makran coast).

Strabo 15.2.8. Translation by Horace Leonard Jones: Such, then, on the southern side of Ariana, is about the geographical position of the seaboard and of the lands of the Gedrosi and Oreitæ, which lands are situated next above the seaboard.

Our note: While saying that the Arbis and Oreitæ were the first people encountered in Ariana while leaving India, Strabo also seems to say that they are part of India and then again the Oreitæ were autonomous. What we may derive is that at one point in time, Arbis and Oreitæ were part of ancient Aryana. The distances: 200 km from the Indus (the Arbie, 360 km from the Oreitæ coast. A further 1500 km takes us to the head of the Persian Gulf. At this point we cannot reconcile the figure of 12,900 or 13,900 stadia (2,600 km), unless the conversion to km is incorrect or the sailing between the several points undertakes various curved circuitous routes. We can think of the Arbis, Oreitæ and Ichthyophagi as coastal peoples living in coastal districts or principalities that were part of the Makran coastal region, in the provincial kingdom of Gedrosia/Balochistan, in the ancient federated kingdom or empire of Aryana.

Strabo 15.2.8. Translation by H. C. Hamilton & W. Falconer: Eratosthenes (276 - c. 195 BCE) speaks in the following manner and we cannot give a better description: "Ariana," he says, "is
bounded on the east by the Indus, on the south by the Great Sea (i.e. Arabian Sea, then considered part of the Indian Ocean), on the north by the Paropamisus and the succeeding chain of mountains (today’s Elburz in north-eastern Iran) as far as the Caspian Gates (approaching today’s Tehran i.e. north-central Iran and then a part of Media), on the west by the same limits by which the territory of the Parthians is separated from Media, and Carmania (today’s Kerman) from Parataceene (modern Isfahan?) and Persia. (Strabo 15.2.8. Translation by Horace Leonard Jones): It is a large country, and even large country, and even Gedrosia reaches up into the interior as far as the Drangae, the Arachoti, and the Paropamisade, concerning whom Eratosthenes has spoken as follows (for I am unable to give any better description). He says that Ariana is bounded on the east by the Indus River, on the south by the great sea, on the north by the Paropamisus and the mountains that follow it as far as the Caspian Gates, and that its parts on the west are marked by the same boundaries by which Parthia is separated from Media and Carmania from Parataceene and Persia. (Strabo 15.2.8 continued. Translation by H.C. Hamilton & W. Falconer): The breadth of the country is the length of the Indus, reckoned from the Paropamisus as far as the mouths of that river, and amounts to 12,000, or according to others to 13,000, stadia (2,400–2,600 km). This is a fairly correct estimate of the length of the Indus and indicates the length of greater Aryana). The length, beginning from the Caspian Gates, as it is laid down in Asiatic Stathmi (a listing of the caravan stations), is estimated in two different ways: from the Caspian Gates to Alexandria (some say Herat, but there are various cities given that name) among the Ari through Parthia is one and the same road. Then a road leads in a straight line through Bactriana, and over the pass of the mountain to Ortospana (some identify as Kabul, others as Kandahar), to the meeting of the three roads from Bactria, which is among the Paropamisade (today’s northern Afghanistan). The other branch (of the trade/caravan roads) turns off a little from Aria towards the south to Prophthasia (today’s Farah in east-central Afghanistan?) in Drangiana (Sistan); then the remainder leads as far as the confines of India and of the Indus (the Indus, i.e. Hapta-Hindu in the Avesta, later India, refers to the northern reaches of the seven Indus tributaries and the area accessed via today’s Khyber pass and the passes further north through the Hindu Kush and Pamirs); so that the (southern) road through the Drange (Drangiana - the watershed of the Helmand river, today’s west-central Afghanistan and in many old maps a part of south Aria) and the Arachoti (Arachosia, just east of Drangiana, central-eastern Afghanistan today) is longer, the whole amounting to 15,300 stadia (3,000 km). But if we deduct 1300 stadia (260 km), we shall have the remainder as the length of the country in a straight line, namely, 14,000 stadia (2,800 km.*); for the length of the coast is not much less, although some persons increase this sum by adding to the 10,000 stadia Carmania (Kerman), which is reckoned at 6000 stadia (1,200 km. in length). For they seem to reckon it either together with the guls, or together with the Carmanian coast within the Persian Gulf. (This appears to mean that Aryana had a long coastline, the length of which was “not much less” than the length of the greater nation, and that some include Carmania (Kerman) as part of greater Aryana. (Strabo 15.2.8 continued. Translation by Horace Leonard Jones): He says that the breadth of the country is the length of the Indus from the Paropamisus mountain to the outlets, a distance of twelve thousand stadia (though some say thirteen thousand); and that its length from the Caspian Gates, as recorded in the work entitled Asiatic Stathmi, is stated in two ways: that is, as far as Alexandria in the country of the Arii, from the Caspian Gates through the country of the Parthians, there is one and the same road; and then, from there, one road leads in a straight line through Bactriana and over the mountain pass into Ortospana to the meeting of the three roads from Bactra, which city is in the country of the Paropamisade; whereas the other turns off slightly from Aria towards the south to Prophthasia in Drangiana, and the remainder of it leads back to the boundaries of India and to the p143Indus; so that this road which leads through the country of the Drangae and Arachoti is longer, its entire length being fifteen thousand three hundred stadia. But if one should subtract one thousand three hundred, one would have as the remainder the length of the country in a straight line, fourteen thousand stadia; for the length of the seacoast is not much less,125 although some writers increase the total, putting down, in addition to the ten thousand stadia, Carmania with six thousand more; for they obviously reckon the length either along with the guls or along the part of the Carmanian seacoast that is inside the Persian Gulf. (Our note: *2,800 km. This is a tremendous length. Even if we curve the road, the length exceeds the distance between today’s Tehran, Iran and Hotan/Khotan that is part of Eastern China today. Significantly, this includes Tajikistan.] (Strabo 15.2.8 continued. Translation by H.C. Hamilton & W. Falconer): The name also of Ariana is extended so as to include some part of Persia, Media, and the north of Bactria and Sogdiana; for these nations speak nearly the same language. (Strabo 15.2.8 continued. Translation by Horace Leonard Jones): The name of Ariana is further extended to a part of Persia and of Media, as also to the Bactrians and Sogdians on the north; for these speak approximately the same language, with but slight variations. (Our note: Ancient Ariana included parts of the more modern Persia and Media.)

» Further reading: Location of the Aryan Homeland, Aryan Vaeja

- © Author: K. E. Eduljee, Zoroastrian Heritage, 2005-14 (researched from 1979 onwards) • Contact • Page validated by W3C.org
AVESTA: YASHTS (Hymns of praise)

Edited by Joseph H. Peterson, 1995. Spelling has been changed to conform with other texts in this series.

19. ZAMYAD YASHT ("Hymn to the Earth")

This Yasht, inscribed to the Genius of the Earth, is devoted to a description of the mountains and the kingly Glory (kavaem Hvareno), which are invoked, together with the Earth, in the corresponding formula of he Siruzah (par. 28) there is no Yasht devoted to the Earth itself.

The mountains are simply enumerated (pars. 1-8). The rest of the Yasht is devoted to the praise of the Hvareno, or, more precisely, to that of those who possessed it, whose powers or feats are described. The list begins with Ahura Mazda (par. 10), and closes with Soshyant (par. 89); that is to say, it begins with the beginning of the world, and closes with its end. It includes the Amesha-Spentas (par. 15), Haoshyangha (par. 26), Takhma Urupa (par. 28), Yima (par. 31), Mithra (par. 35), Thraetaona (par. 36), Keresaspa (par. 38), the kings of the Kianyan dynasty (pars. 66-72), Kavi Husravah (par. 74), Zarathushtra (par. 79), Vishtaspa (par. 84). The unsuccessful efforts of Franghrasyan to take possession of it are described at length (pars. 56-64).

0. May Ahura Mazda be rejoiced!....
Ashem Vohu: Holiness is the best of all good....
I confess myself a worshipper of Mazda, a follower of Zarathushtra, one who hates the Daevas and obeys the laws of Ahura;
For sacrifice, prayer, propitiation, and glorification unto [Havani], the holy and master of holiness....
Unto Mount Ushi-darena, made by Mazda, the seat of holy happiness; unto the kingly Glory, made by Mazda; unto that Glory that cannot be forcibly seized, made by Mazda,
Be propitiation, with sacrifice, prayer, propitiation, and glorification.
Yatha ahu vairyo: The will of the Lord is the law of holiness....

I.

1. The first mountain that rose up out of the earth, O Spitama Zarathushtra! was the Haraiti Barez. That mountain stretches all along the shores of the land washed by waters towards the east.

The second mountain was Mount Zeredho, outside Mount Manusha: this mountain too stretches all along the shores of the land washed by waters towards the east.

2. From there grew up Mount Ushi-dhau, Ushi-darena, Mount Ererizya, and Mount Fraorepa. The sixth was Mount Erezara. The seventh was Mount Bumya. The eighth was Mount Raodhita. The ninth was Mount Mazishishvau. The tenth was Mount Antare-danghu. The eleventh was Mount Ererizha. The twelfth was Mount Vati-gaspa.

3. And Mount Adarana, Mount Bayana, Mount Ishkata Upairi-saen, with the .... snows; the two Hamankuna mountains, the eight Vasna mountains, the eight powerful Fravanku, the four Vidhvana summits;

4. Mount Aezakha, Mount Maenakha, Mount Vakhedrakae, Mount Asaya, Mount Tudhaskae, Mount Isavae, Mount Draoshishvau, Mount Sairivau, Mount Nanghushmau, Mount Kakahyu, Mount Antare-Kangha;

5. Mount Sichidava, Mount Ahuna, Mount Raemana, Mount Asha-stembana, Mount Urunyo-vaidhkae, Mount Asnavant, Mount Ushaoma, Mount Ushita-hvarenah, Mount Syamaka, Mount Vafrayav, Mount Vourusha;

6. Amongst which stand Mount Jatara, Mount Adhutavau, Mount Spitavarena, Mount Spento-data, Mount Kadrva-aspa, Mount Kasirisa, Mount Taera, Mount Bara-srayana, Mount Barana, Mount Frapayau, Mount Udrya, and Mount Raevant, and all those heights to which men have given the name of mount,

7. To the number of two thousand mountains, and two hundred and forty and four, O Spitama Zarathushtra!

8. For its brightness and glory, I will offer it a sacrifice worth being heard, namely, unto the awful kingly Glory. Unto the awful kingly Glory we offer up the libations, the Haoma and meat, the baresma, the wisdom of the tongue, the holy spells, the speech, the deeds, the libations, and the rightly-spoken words.
Yenhe hatam: All those beings of whom Ahura Mazda....

II.
9. We sacrifice unto the awful kingly Glory, made by Mazda; most conquering, highly working, that possesses health, wisdom, and happiness, and is more powerful to destroy than all other creatures;

10. That belongs to Ahura Mazda, as (through it) Ahura Mazda made the creatures, many and good, many and fair, many and wonderful, many and prosperous, many and bright;

11. So that they may restore the world, which will (thenceforth) never grow old and never die, never decaying and never rotting, ever living and ever increasing, and master of its wish, when the dead will rise, when life and immortality will come, and the world will be restored at its wish;

12. When the creation will grow deathless, - the prosperous creation of the Good Spirit, - and the Druj shall perish, though she may rush on every side to kill the holy beings; she and her hundredfold brood shall perish, as it is the will of the Lord.
   For its brightness and glory, I will offer it a sacrifice ....

III.

14. We sacrifice unto the awful kingly Glory, made by Mazda ....

15. That belongs to the Amesha-Spentas, the bright ones, whose looks perform their wish, tall, quickly coming to do, strong, lordly, who are undecaying and holy;

16. Who are all seven of one thought, who are all seven of one speech, who are all seven of one deed; whose thought is the same, whose speech is the same, whose deed is the same, whose father and commander is the same, namely, the Maker, Ahura Mazda.

17. Who see one another's soul thinking of good thoughts, thinking of good words, thinking of good deeds, thinking of Garo-nmana, and whose ways are shining as they go down to the libations;

18. Who are the makers and governors, the shapers and overseers, the keepers and preservers of these creations of Ahura Mazda.

19. It is they who shall restore the world, which will (thenceforth) never grow old and never die, never decaying and never rotting, ever living and ever increasing, and master of its wish, when the dead will rise, when life and immortality will come, and the world will be restored at its wish;

20. When the creation will grow deathless, - the prosperous creation of the Good Spirit, - and the Druj shall perish, though she may rush on every side to kill the holy beings; she and her hundredfold brood shall perish, as it is the will of the Lord.
   For its brightness and glory, I will offer it a sacrifice ....

IV.

21. We sacrifice unto the awful kingly Glory, made by Mazda ....

22. That belongs to the gods in the heavens and to those in the material world, and to the blessed ones, born or not yet born, who are to perform the restoration of the world.

23. It is they who shall restore the world, which will (thenceforth) never grow old and never die, never decaying and never rotting, ever living and ever increasing, and master of its wish, when the dead will rise, when life and immortality will come, and the world will be restored at its wish;

24. When the creation will grow deathless, - the prosperous creation of the Good Spirit, - and the Druj shall perish, though she may rush on every side to kill the holy beings; she and her hundredfold brood shall perish, as it is the will of the Lord.
   For its brightness and glory, I will offer it a sacrifice ....

V.

25. We sacrifice unto the awful kingly Glory, made by Mazda ....

26. That clave unto Haoshyanga, the Paradhata, for a long time, when he ruled over the seven Karshvares of the earth, over the Daevas and men, over the Yatus and the Pairikas, over the oppressors, the blind, and the deaf; he who smote two-thirds of the Daevas of Mazana and of the Varenya fiends.
   For its brightness and glory, I will offer it a sacrifice ....

VI.

27. We sacrifice unto the awful kingly Glory, made by Mazda ....

28. That clave unto Takhma Urupa, the well-armed, while he ruled over the seven Karshvares of the earth, over the Daevas and men, the Yatus and Pairikas, the oppressors, the blind, and the deaf;

29. When he conquered all Daevas and men, all the Yatus and Pairikas, and rode Angra Mainyu, turned into the shape of a horse, all around the earth from one end to the other, for thirty years.
For its brightness and glory, I will offer it a sacrifice ....

VII.

30. We sacrifice unto the awful kingly Glory, made by Mazda ....

31. That clave unto the bright Yima, the good shepherd, for a long time, while he ruled over the seven Karshvares of the earth, over the Daevas and men, the Yatus and Pairikas, the oppressors, the blind, and the deaf;

32. Who took from the Daevas both riches and welfare, both fatness and flocks, both weal and Glory;

33. In whose reign there was neither cold wind nor hot wind, neither old age nor death, nor envy made by the Daevas, in the times before his lie, before he began to have delight in words of falsehood and untruth.

34. But when he began to find delight in words of falsehood and untruth, the Glory was seen to flee away from him in the shape of a bird. When his Glory had disappeared, then the strong Yima Khshaeta, the good shepherd, trembled and was in sorrow before his foes; he was confounded, and laid him down on the ground.

35. The first time when the Glory departed from the bright Yima, the Glory went from Yima, the son of Vivanghant, in the shape of a Varaghna bird.

Then Mithra seized that Glory, Mithra, the lord of wide pastures, whose ear is quick to hear, who has a thousand senses. We sacrifice unto Mithra, the lord of all countries, whom Ahura Mazda has created the most glorious of all the gods in the heavens.

36. The second time when the Glory departed from the bright Yima, the Glory went from Yima, the son of Vivanghant, in the shape of a Varaghna bird.

Then Thraetaona seized that Glory; he, the heir of the valiant Athwya clan, who was the most victorious of all victorious men next to Zarathushtra;

37. Who smote Azhi Dahaka, the three-mouthed, the three-headed, the six-eyed, that most powerful, fiendish Druj, that demon baleful to the world, the strongest Druj that Angra Mainyu created against the material world, to destroy the world of the good principle.

38. The third time when the Glory departed from the bright Yima, that Glory went from Yima, the son of Vivanghant, in the shape of a Varaghna bird.

Then the manly-hearted Keresaspa seized that Glory; he who was the sturdiest of the men of strength, next to Zarathushtra, for his manly courage.

39. For Manly Courage clave unto him. We worship Manly Courage, firm of foot, unsleeping, quick to rise, and fully awake, that clave unto Keresaspa;

40. Who killed the snake Srvara, the horse-devouring, men-devouring, yellow, poisonous snake, over which yellow poison flowed a thumb's breadth thick. Upon him Keresaspa was cooking his food in a brass vessel: at the time of noon, the fiend felt the heat, and stood upon his feet: he rushed from under the brass vessel and upset the boiling water: the manly-hearted Keresaspa fell back affrighted;

41. Who killed the golden-heeled Gandarewa, that was rushing with open jaws, eager to destroy the living world of the good principle;

Who killed the brood of Pathana, all the nine; and the brood of Nivika, and the brood of Dushayana;

Who killed the golden-crowned Hitaspa, and Varesava, the son of Dana and Pitaona, attended by many Pairikas;

42. Who killed Arezo-shamana, him of the manly courage, who was strong, well-beloved, hail, energetically rushing, fully awake, never falling back;...

43. Who killed Sandvihtaka, him who killed with his nails, the stone-handed: thus did he exclaim to all around: 'I am an infant still, I am not yet of age: if I ever grow of age, I shall make the earth a wheel, I shall make the heavens a chariot;

44. I shall bring down the Good Spirit from the shining Garo-nmana; I shall make the Evil Spirit rush up from the dreary Hell. They will carry my chariot, both the Good Spirit and the Evil One, unless the manly-hearted Keresaspa kill me.'

The manly-hearted Keresaspa killed him, his life went away, his spirit vanished.

For its brightness and glory, I will offer it a sacrifice ....

VIII.

45. We sacrifice unto the awful Glory, that cannot be forcibly seized, made by Mazda ....

46. For which the Good Spirit and the Evil One did struggle with one another: for that Glory that cannot be forcibly seized they flung each of them their darts most swift.

The Good Spirit flung a dart, and so did Vohu-Mano, and Asha-Vaishesha and Atar, the son of Ahura Mazda.

The Evil Spirit flung a dart, and so did Akem-Mano, and Aeshma of the wounding spear and Azhi Dahaka and Spityura, he who sawed Yima in twain.

47. Then forward came Atar, the son of Ahura Mazda, thinking thus in his heart: 'I want to seize that Glory that cannot be forcibly seized.'

But Azhi Dahaka, the three-mouthed, he of the evil law, rushed on his back, thinking of extinguishing it:
48. 'Here give it up to me, O Atar, son of Ahura Mazda: if thou seizest that Glory that cannot be forcibly seized, I shall rush upon thee, so that thou mayest never more blaze on the earth made by Ahura and protect the world of the good principle.'

And Atar took back his hands, as the instinct of life prevailed, so much had Azhi affrighted him.

49. Then Azhi, the three-mouthed, he of the evil law, rushed forward, thinking thus in his heart: 'I want to seize that Glory that cannot be forcibly seized.'

But Atar, the son of Ahura Mazda, advanced behind him, speaking in these words:

50. 'There give it up to me, thou three-mouthed Azhi Dahaka. If thou seizest that Glory that cannot be forcibly seized, then I will enter thy hinder part, I will blaze up in thy jaws, so that thou mayest never more rush upon the earth made by Mazda and destroy the world of the good principle.'

Then Azhi took back his hands, as the instinct of life prevailed, so much had Atar affrighted him.

51. That Glory swells up and goes to the sea Vouru-Kasha. The swift-horsed Son of the Waters seizes it at once: this is the wish of the Son of the Waters, the swift-horsed: 'I want to seize that Glory that cannot be forcibly seized, down to the bottom of the sea Vouru-Kasha, in the bottom of the deep rivers.'

52. We sacrifice unto the Son of the Waters, the swift-horsed, the tall and shining lord, the lord of females; the male god, who helps one at his appeal; who made man, who shaped man, a god who lives beneath waters, and whose ear is the quickest to hear when he is worshipped.

53. 'And whosoever of you, O men,' - thus said Ahura Mazda, 'O holy Zarathushtra! shall seize that Glory that cannot be forcibly seized, down to the bottom of the sea Vouru-Kasha, in the bottom of the deep rivers.'

54. 'And Riches will cleave unto him, giving him full welfare, holding a shield before him, powerful, rich of cattle and garments; and Victory will cleave unto him, day after day; and likewise Strength, that smites more than a year. Attended by that Victory, he will conquer the havocing hordes; attended by that Victory, he will conquer all those who hate him.' For its brightness and glory, I will offer it a sacrifice....

IX.

55. We sacrifice unto the awful Glory, that cannot be forcibly seized, made by Mazda ....

56. Which the Turanian ruffian Frangrasyan tried to seize in the sea Vouru-Kasha. He stripped himself naked, wishing to seize that Glory that belongs to the Aryan nations, born and unborn, and to the holy Zarathushtra. But the Glory escaped, the Glory fled away, the Glory changed its seat, and an arm of the sea Vouru-Kasha was produced, namely, that lake that is called Lake Huoravah.

57. Then the most crafty Turanian Frangrasyan rushed out of the sea Vouru-Kasha, O Spitama Zarathushtra! thinking evil thoughts: '.... I have not been able to conquer the Glory that belongs to the Aryan nations, born and unborn, and to the holy Zarathushtra.

58. 'Then I will defile all corn and liquors, as to greatness, goodness, and fairness.'

59. Then the most crafty Turanian Frangrasyan rushed down into the sea Vouru-Kasha, O Spitama Zarathushtra!

60. A second time he stripped himself naked, wishing to seize that Glory that belongs to the Aryan nations, born and unborn, and to the holy Zarathushtra. But the Glory escaped, the Glory fled away, the Glory changed its seat, and an arm of the sea Vouru-Kasha was produced, namely, that lake that is called Lake Vanghazdau.

61. Then the most crafty Turanian Frangrasyan rushed out of the sea Vouru-Kasha, O Spitama Zarathushtra! thinking evil thoughts: '.... I have not been able to conquer the Glory that belongs to the Aryan nations, born and unborn, and to the holy Zarathushtra.

62. A third time he stripped himself naked, wishing to seize the Glory that belongs to the Aryan nations, born and unborn, and to the holy Zarathushtra. But the Glory escaped, the Glory fled away, the Glory changed its seat, and an arm was produced in the sea Vouru-Kasha, namely, the water that is called Awzh-danva.

63. Then the most crafty Turanian Frangrasyan rushed out of the sea Vouru-Kasha, O Spitama Zarathushtra! thinking evil thoughts: '.... I have not been able to conquer the Glory that belongs to the Aryan nations, born and unborn, and to the holy Zarathushtra!

64. He was not able to seize the Glory that belongs to the Aryan nations, born and unborn, and to the holy Zarathushtra.

For its brightness and glory, I will offer it a sacrifice ....

X.

65. We sacrifice unto the awful Glory that cannot be forcibly seized, made by Mazda ....

66. That cleaves unto him who grows up there, where lies Lake Kasava [Kasaoya], along with the Haetumant river; there where stands Mount Ushidhau, surrounded by waters, that run...
It runs unto him, it flows and swells unto him, bringing good pastures and fine horses, bringing plenty, full of glory; with beauty and weal; powerful and friendly, rich of pastures, prolific and golden. It runs unto him, it flows and swells unto him, bright and glorious, making the white ... grow, smiting away all plagues.

And there comes with him a horse's strength, there comes with him a camel's strength, there comes with him a man's strength, there comes with him the kingly Glory: and there is in him, O holy Zarathushtra! so much of kingly Glory as might extinguish at once all the non-Aryan nations.

And then (through it) living creatures may keep away hunger and death, living creatures (may keep away) cold and heat. Such is the kingly Glory, the keeper of the Aryan nations and of the five kinds of animals, made to help the faithful and the Law of the worshippers of Mazda.

For its brightness and glory, I will offer it a sacrifice ....

We sacrifice unto the awful kingly Glory, made by Mazda ....

That clave unto Kavi Kavata, and unto Kavi Aipivohu, and unto Kavi Usadha, and unto Kavi Arshan, and unto Kavi Pisina, and unto Kavi Byarshan, and unto Kavi Syavarshan;

So that they were all of them brave, all of them strong, all of them healthful, all of them wise, all of them happy in their wishes, all of them powerful kings.

For its brightness and glory, I will offer it a sacrifice ....

We sacrifice unto the awful kingly Glory, made by Mazda ....

That clave unto Kavi Husravah for the well-shapen Strength, for the Victory made by Ahura, for the crushing Ascendant; for the righteousness of the law, for the innocence of the law, for the unconquerable power of the law; for the extermination of the enemies at one stroke;

And for the vigour of health, for the Glory made by Mazda, for the health of the body, and for a good, virtuous offspring, wise, chief in assemblies, bright, and clear-eyed, that frees [their father] from the pangs [of hell], of good intellect; and for that part in the blessed world that falls to wisdom and to those who do not follow impiety;

And for a dominion full of splendour, for a long, long life, and for all boons and remedies; 77. So that king Husravah [had the lead] all along the long race, and he could not pass through the forest, he, the murder, who was fiercely striving against him on horseback; the lord Kavi Husravah prevailed over all; he put in bonds Frangrasyan and Keresavazda, to avenge the murder of his father Syavarshan, a man, and of Aghraeratha, a semi-man.

For its brightness and glory, I will offer it a sacrifice ....

We sacrifice unto the awful kingly Glory, made by Mazda ....

That clave unto the holy Zarathushtra, so that he thought according to the Law, spake according to the Law, and did according to the Law; so that he was the holiest in holiness in all the living world, the best-ruling in exercising rule, the brightest in brightness, the most glorious in glory, the most victorious in victory.

At his sight the Daevas rushed away; at his sight the (demoniac) malices were extinguished; at his sight the Jainis drew hack their ways from the mortals and, lamenting and wailing, laid violent hands on the Daevas.

And that one prayer, the Ahuna Vairya, which the holy Zarathushtra sang and repeated four times, with a song that waxed louder and louder, drove back all the Daevas beneath the earth, and took off from them sacrifice and prayer.

It was it, the Glory of Zarathushtra, that the Turanian ruffian Frangrasyan tried to seize to rule over all the Karshvares; round about the seven Karshvares did that ruffian Frangrasyan rush, trying to seize the Glory of Zarathushtra. But that Glory escaped to hidden inlets of the sea; and there those two made my will roll on; they entered my will, as it was my wish, Ahura Mazda's, and as it was the wish of the Law of Mazda.

For its brightness and glory, I will offer it a sacrifice ....

We sacrifice unto the awful kingly Glory, made by Mazda ....

That clave unto king Vistaspa, so that he thought according to the Law, spake according to the Law, and did according to the Law; so that he professed that Law, destroying his foes and causing the Daevas to retire.

Who, driving the Druj before him, sought wide room for the holy religion; who, driving the Druj before him, made wide room for the holy religion; who made himself the arm and support of this law of Ahura, of this law of Zarathushtra;
86. Who took her, standing bound, from the hands of the Hunus, and established her to sit in the middle [of the world], high ruling, never falling back, holy, nourished with plenty of cattle and pastures, blessed with plenty of cattle and pastures.

87. The valiant king Vishtaspa conquered all enemies, Tathravant of the evil law, Peshana, the worshipper of the Daevas, and the fiendish wicked Arejat-aspa and the other wicked Hyaonas.
For its brightness and glory, I will offer it a sacrifice ...

XV.

88. We sacrifice unto the awful kingly Glory, made by Mazda ...

89. That will cleave unto the victorious Naoshvant and his helpers, when he shall restore the world, which will (henceforward) never grow old and never die, never decaying and never rotting, ever living and ever increasing, and master of its wish, when the dead will rise, when life and immortality will come, and the world will be restored at its wish;

90. When the creation will grow deathless, - the prosperous creation of the Good Spirit, - and the Druj shall perish, though she may rush on every side to kill the holy beings; she and her hundredfold brood shall perish, as it is the will of the Lord.
For its brightness and glory, I will offer it a sacrifice ...

XVI.

91. We sacrifice unto the awful kingly Glory, made by Mazda ...

92. When Astvat-ereta shall rise up from Lake Kasava [Kasaoya], a friend of Ahura Mazda, a son of Vispa-taurvairi, knowing the victorious knowledge.
It was that Glory that Thraetaona bore with him when Azhi Dahaka was killed;

93. That Frangrasyan, the Turanian, bore when Drvau was killed, when the Bull was killed;
That king Husnavah bore when Frangrasyan, the Turanian, was killed;
That king Vishtaspa bore, when he victoriously maintained Holiness against the host of the fiends and took off the Druj from the world of the good principle.

94. He, with the eye of intelligence, shall look down upon all the creatures of the Paeshish, her of the evil seed: he shall look upon the whole living world with the eye of plenty, and his look shall deliver to immortality the whole of the living creatures.

95. And there shall his friends come forward, the friends of Astvat-ereta, who are fiend-smiting, well-thinking, well-speaking, well-doing, following the good law, and whose tongues have never uttered a word of falsehood.
Before them shall Aeshma of the wounding spear, who has no Glory, bow and flee; he shall smite the most wicked Druj, her of the evil seed, born of darkness.

96. Akem-Mano smites, but Vohu-Mano shall smite him; the Word of falsehood smites, but the Word of truth shall smite it. Haurvatat and Ameretat shall smite both hunger and thirst: Haurvatat and Ameretat shall smite the evil hunger and the evil thirst. The evil-doing Angra Mainyu bows and flees, becoming powerless.
For its brightness and glory, I will offer it a sacrifice ...

97. Yatha ahu vairya: The will of the Lord is the law of holiness ....
I bless the sacrifice and prayer, and the strength and vigour of Mount Ushi-darena, made by Mazda, the seat of holy happiness; of the kingly Glory, made by Mazda; of the Glory that cannot be forcibly seized, made by Mazda.
Ashem Vohu: Holiness is the best of all good ....
[Give] unto that man brightness and glory, .... give him the bright, all-happy, blissful abode of the holy Ones.
Mount Meru

Mount Meru is a sacred mountain with five peaks¹ in Hindu, Jain and Buddhist cosmology and is considered to be the center of all the physical, metaphysical and spiritual universes.²

Meru (Sanskrit: मे) or Sumeru (Pāli: शुरु), to which can be added the approbatory prefix su-, resulting in the meaning "excellent Meru" or "wonderful Meru" and Mahameru i.e. "Great Meru" (Chinese: 须彌山 Xumi Shan; Pāli: Neru; Burmese: မြို့မီး Myinmo).

Many famous Hindu and similar Jain as well as Buddhist temples have been built as symbolic representations of this mountain. The highest point (the finial bud) on the pyathat, a Burmese-style multi-tiered roof, represents Mount Meru.

Contents

- 1 Geographical
- 2 Hindu legends
- 3 Buddhist legends
- 4 Jain legends
- 5 Javanese legends
- 6 See also
- 7 Notes
- 8 Sources
- 9 External links

Geographical

The dimensions attributed to Mount Meru, all the references to it being as a part of the Cosmic Ocean, along with several statements like that the Sun along with all the planets circle the mountain, make determining its location most difficult, according to most scholars.⁴

Some researchers identify Mount Meru or Sumeru with the Pamirs, north-west of Kashmir.⁹¹⁰¹¹¹¹²¹³¹⁴

The Suryasiddhanta mentions that Mt Meru lies in 'the middle of the Earth' ("bhūrva-madhya") in the land of the Jambunad (Jambudvip). Narpatijayacharyā, a 9th-century text, based on mostly unpublished texts of Yāmal Tantr, mentions "sumeruḥ prthvī-madhye shrūyate drīshyate na tu" ('Sumeru is heard to be in the middle of the Earth, but is not seen there').¹⁵ Vārāhāmihira, in his Panch-siddhāntikā, claims Mt Meru to be at the North Pole (though no mountain exists there as well). Suryasiddhānta, however, mentions a Mt Meru in the middle of Earth, besides a Sumeru and a Kumera at both the Poles.

There exist several versions of Cosmology in existing Hindu texts. In one of them, cosmologically, the Meru mountain was also described as being surrounded by Mandrachal Mountain to the east, Supasarv Mountain to the west, Kumuda Mountain to the north and Kailash to the south.¹⁶

Hindu legends

Mount Meru of Hindu traditions has clearly mythical aspects, being described as 84,000 Yojan high (which is around 1,082,000 km (672,000 mi), or 85 times the Earth's diameter), and having the Sun along with all its planets in the Solar System revolve around it as one unit.

One Yojana can be taken to mean about 11.5 km (9 mi) though its magnitude seems to differ over time periods. E.g. the Earth's circumference is 3,200 Yojanas according to Vārāhāmihira and slightly less so in the Āryabhatiya, but is given to be 5,026.5 Yojanas in the Suryasiddhānta. The Matsya Purana and the Bhāgvata Purāna along with some other Hindu texts consistently give the height of 84,000 Yojanas to Mount Meru which translates into 672,000 miles or 1.082 million kilometers.

Mount Meru was said to be the residence of King Padamja Brahma in antiquity.¹⁶

The Puranas and Hindu epics, often state that Surya, i.e. the sun-God, along with all its planets and stars together as one unit, circumambulate Mount Meru every day.

Mount Meru is also the abode of Lord Brahma and the Demi-Gods (Dev).

According to the epic Mahabharata, Pandavas and Draupadi climbed this mountain to attain heaven. But Draupadi and other 4 Pandavas pulled down due to their sins and died. Yudhishtira and his faithful dog alone climbed the mountain and reached the divine door.
Buddhist legends

According to Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, Sumeru is 80,000 yojanas tall. The exact measure of the yojana is uncertain, but some accounts put it at about 24,000 feet, or approximately 4 1/2 miles, but other accounts put it at about 7–9 miles. It also descends beneath the surface of the surrounding waters to a depth of 80,000 yojanas, being founded upon the basal layer of Earth. Sumeru is often used as a simile for both size and stability in Buddhist texts.

Sumeru is said to be shaped like an hourglass, with a top and base of 80,000 yojanas square, but narrowing in the middle (i.e., at a height of 40,000 yojanas) to 20,000 yojanas square.

Sumeru is the polar center of a mandala-like complex of seas and mountains. The square base of Sumeru is surrounded by a square moat-like ocean, which is in turn surrounded by a ring (or rather square) wall of mountains, which is in turn surrounded by a sea, each diminishing in width and height from the one closer to Sumeru. There are seven seas and seven surrounding mountain-walls, until one comes to the vast outer sea which forms most of the surface of the world, in which the known continents are merely small islands. The known world, which is on the continent of Jambudvipa, is directly south of Sumeru.

The dimensions stated in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam* are shown in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Width</th>
<th>Height/Depth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sumeru (Sineru) mountain</td>
<td>80,000 yojanas</td>
<td>80,000 yojanas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea</td>
<td>80,000 yojanas</td>
<td>80,000 yojanas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yugandhara mountains</td>
<td>40,000 yojanas</td>
<td>40,000 yojanas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea</td>
<td>40,000 yojanas</td>
<td>40,000 yojanas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isadhatra (Isadhara) mountains</td>
<td>20,000 yojanas</td>
<td>20,000 yojanas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea</td>
<td>20,000 yojanas</td>
<td>20,000 yojanas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khadiraka (Karvīka) mountains</td>
<td>10,000 yojanas</td>
<td>10,000 yojanas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea</td>
<td>10,000 yojanas</td>
<td>10,000 yojanas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudarśana (Sudassana) mountains</td>
<td>5,000 yojanas</td>
<td>5,000 yojanas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea</td>
<td>5,000 yojanas</td>
<td>5,000 yojanas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advakarṇa (Assakaṇṭha) mountains</td>
<td>2,500 yojanas</td>
<td>2,500 yojanas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea</td>
<td>2,500 yojanas</td>
<td>2,500 yojanas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vinadhara (Vivataka) mountains</td>
<td>1,250 yojanas</td>
<td>1,250 yojanas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea</td>
<td>1,250 yojanas</td>
<td>1,250 yojanas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nimindhara (Nemindhara) mountains</td>
<td>625 yojanas</td>
<td>625 yojanas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outer Sea</td>
<td>32,000 yojanas</td>
<td>relatively shallow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cakravāla (Cakkavāla) mountains (circular edge of the world)</td>
<td>312.5 yojanas</td>
<td>312.5 yojanas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 80,000 yojana square top of Sumeru constitutes the Trāyastriṃśa "heaven" (devaloka), which is the highest plane in direct physical contact with the earth. The next 40,000 yojanas below this heaven consist of sheer precipice, narrowing in like an inverted mountain until it is 20,000 yojanas square at a height of 40,000 yojanas above the sea.

From this point Sumeru expands again, going down in four terraced ledges, each broader than the one above. The first terrace constitutes the "heaven" of the Four Great Kings and is divided into four parts, facing north, south, east and west. Each section is governed by one of the Four Great Kings, who faces outward toward the quarter of the world that he supervises.

40,000 yojanas is also the height at which the Sun and Moon circle Sumeru in a clockwise direction. This rotation explains the alteration of day and night; when the Sun is north of Sumeru, the shadow of the mountain is cast over the continent of Jambudvīpa, and it is night there; at the same time it is noon in the opposing northern continent of Uttarakuṇḍa, dawn in the eastern continent of Pūrvavideha, and dusk in the western continent of Aparagodānīya. Half a day later, when the Sun has moved to the south, it is noon in Jambudvīpa, dusk in Pūrvavideha, dawn in Aparagodānīya, and midnight in Uttarakuṇḍa.

The next three terraces down the slopes of Sumeru are each longer and broader by a factor of two. They contain the followers of the Four Great Kings, namely nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, and kumbhāṇḍas.

The names and dimensions of the terraces on the lower slopes of Sumeru are given below:
### Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Height above the sea</th>
<th>Breadth</th>
<th>Length (on one side)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cāturmahārājika</td>
<td>40,000 yojanas</td>
<td>2,000 yojanas</td>
<td>24,000 yojanas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saddānāda</td>
<td>30,000 yojanas</td>
<td>4,000 yojanas</td>
<td>32,000 yojanas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mālādhara</td>
<td>20,000 yojanas</td>
<td>8,000 yojanas</td>
<td>48,000 yojanas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karoṭapāni</td>
<td>10,000 yojanas</td>
<td>16,000 yojanas</td>
<td>80,000 yojanas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Below Sumeru, in the seas around it, is the abode of the Asuras who are at war with the Trīyastrīṃśa gods.

### Jain legends

According to Jain cosmology, Mount Meru (or Sumeru) is at the centre of the world surrounded by Jambūdvīpa, in form of a circle forming a diameter of 100,000 yojanas. There are two sets of sun, moon and stars revolving around Mount Meru; while one set works, the other set rests behind the Mount Meru.

### Javanese legends

This mythical mountain of gods was mentioned in Tantu Pagelaran, an Old Javanese manuscript written in Kawi language from 15th century Majapahit period. The manuscript is describing the mythical origin of Java island, and the legend of moving some parts of mount Meru to Java. The manuscript explained that Batara Guru (Shiva) has ordered the god Brahma and Vishnu to fill the Java island with human beings. However at that time Java island was floating freely on the ocean, ever tumbling and always shaking. To make the island still, the gods decided to nail the island upon the earth by moving the part of Mahameru in Jambudvīpa (India) and attaching it upon Java. The resulting mountain is Mount Semeru, the tallest mountain of Java.

### Notes

4. The Geopolitics of South Asia: From Early Empires to the Nuclear Age, 2003, p 16
5. Graham P. Chapman - Social Science; The Panmirs and the Source of the Oxus, p 15
15. J.P. Mittal, History of Ancient India: From 7300 BC to 4250 BC, page 3
19. CIL, “Indian Cosmology Reflections in Religion and Metaphysics”, *India.nic.in*

### External links

- Description of Mount Meru in the Devī-bhagavatam-purāṇa 1 (http://www.sacred-texts.com/san/m06/m06006.htm) 2 (http://www.sacred-texts.com/ind/hin/m08/m08ch15.htm)
- Painting of Mount Meru found in Buddhist cave sanctuary in Xinjiang, China (http://phoenixandturtle.net/images/meru.jpg)
- Mount Meru in Encyclopedia of Buddhist Iconography 1 (http://huntingtonarchive.osu.edu/Encyclopedia%20Buddhist%20icon/01%20Mount%20Meru/MountMeru01.html) 2 (http://huntingtonarchive.osu.edu/Encyclopedia%20Buddhist%20icon/01%20Mount%20Meru_Yogin%20Series/MM_YoginSeries01.html)
- Sumeru in Encyclopedia of Buddhist Iconography 1 (http://huntingtonarchive.osu.edu/Encyclopedia%20Buddhist%20icon/01%20Mount%20Meru/MountMeru01.html) 2 (http://huntingtonarchive.osu.edu/Encyclopedia%20Buddhist%20icon/01%20Mount%20Meru_Yogin%20Series/MM_YoginSeries01.html)
- Ngari (http://www.tibetinfo.com/tibet/tal/shamhu/menu.htm)
Aryan trade is intimately tied to Aryan history, migration and the grouping of the sixteen Avestan Vendidad nations. Understanding the nature of the trade also helps us to develop a better understanding of Aryan Homeland, Airyana Vaeja’s possible location.

Trading required the development of a very special infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and inns; it required manufacturing and craft industries with related tools and equipment; it required, most importantly, security and the development of laws including contract law; and it required kingdoms and local authorities working collaboratively to assist that trade which was a potential source of revenue through a taxing of the trade.

Stone & Metal Age Aryan Trade
The Aryans started trading between themselves in the expanded lands formed by their migrations very early in their history, and there is evidence of their trade during the Neolithic (new) Stone Ages, that is, towards the end of the Stone Age some 7,000 years ago.

Precious Stones & Metals
The immense tectonic forces deep within the earth and upheaval that thrust to great heights the rugged mountains that characterized the original Aryan lands, also produced precious stones, crystals and metals that became sought after around the world known to the ancient Aryans and their neighbours.

The Aryans began to trade very early in their development and the precious stones and metals such as lapis lazuli, rubies, emeralds, mountain crystal, gold and silver, that they found buried in the earth and mountains was among the very first items they traded.

Amongst these items, lapis lazuli played a very special and significant role, since the Pamir-Badakshan region was home to the only lapis mine known in those early days, and because the known world developed a hunger for this prized stone, a demand that the Aryans met by carrying the lapis to distant lands.

**Badakshan Lapis Lazuli**

By the second half of the 4th millennium BCE, Badakshan lapis lazuli (stone of blue) was being traded in countries as far west as Sumer and Akkad (Mesopotamia), and the Nile Delta (Egypt) (cf. Ancient Mesopotamian Materials and Industries by Peter Roger Stuart Moorey, p. 86). The 2500m / 9,000ft high Sar-e Sang, Badakshan mines, now in north-eastern Afghanistan, were the only known source of lapis lazuli in the ancient world. By the 3rd millennium BC, the lapis lazuli trade had extended south to Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro in the Indus Valley Civilization (Hapta Hindu of the Vendidad's list of nations. Modern day Pakistan and north-western India).

The ancients found numerous uses for lapis lazuli. Among the uses was the making of the expensive pigment ultramarine which was used in illuminated manuscripts and panels. The pigment was made by grinding the lapis to a powder.

The Aryans acquired exotic items from the lands they visited and traded these items in the other countries they visited. Stone age artefacts from the Harappa and the Tigris / Euphrates (Sumer) valleys have been found in the ruins of Central Asian towns presently in Turkmenistan, towns and settlements such as Altyn Depe.

The British Museum site that describes the seal described below also states, "The Sar-i Sang mines in the region of Badakhshan in north-east Afghanistan were probably the source for all lapis lazuli used in the ancient Near East. From here it was carried across Iran, where several lapis working sites have been discovered, and on to Mesopotamia and Egypt. Another source for lapis lazuli exists in southern Pakistan (a region of the Indus Valley civilization) but it is unclear if they were mined at the time of this seal."

Captain John Wood, a surveyor with the British Navy was commissioned to explore the Amu Darya River and in December 1838 came upon the Sar-e Sang mines. He wrote: "Where the deposit of ladjword (lapis) occurs, the valley of the Kokcha is about 200 yards wide. On both sides the mountains are high and naked. The entrance to the mines is in the face of the mountain, on the right bank of the stream, and about 1,500 feet above its level."

"The workmen enumerate three descriptions of ladjword (lapis). These are the Neeli, or indigo color; the Asmani, or light blue; and the Suvsi, or green. There relative value is in the order in which I have mentioned them. The richest colours are found in the darkest rock, and the nearer the river the greater is said to be the purity of the stone."

The Afghan word for lapis lazuli is ladjword while the Persian word is lazvard.

Marco Polo visited the Sar-e Sang mines during his travels along the Silk Road. The area is rich in other gemstones such as rubies and emeralds and precious metals such as silver and gold that were actively traded throughout the ages (see GeoVision / Gem Hunter & Gubelinlab sites).


**Tepe Hissar**

Tepe Hissar, an archaeological site of largest known urban settlement in the northeast corner of present-day Iran, flourished from 4,500 to 1,900 BCE (Metal Age). It is located ninety kilometres southeast of the Caspian Sea, near the modern city of Damghan, along the south slopes of the Alburz mountains, and south of Turkmenistan. Hissar was strategically and centrally located on the east-west trade route. Amongst the artefacts found at the site, were those made from lapis lazuli turquoise from Badakshan in the east. According to The Shelby White-Leon Levy Program for Archaeological Publications, Harvard University: "Its strategic location along the major East-West trade route, between southern Mesopotamia, Iranian plateau and Central Asia, further heightens its presumed economic and political role in the region. The importation of lapis and turquoise implies connections with the east, and at the same time links with the west have been documented by blank clay tablets reminiscent of Proto-Elamite tablets, and a cylinder seal. Its importance, therefore, as a cornerstone of chronology, cannot be overemphasized."

According to the British Museum in their description of a Bronze Age, c. 2400-2000 BCE, Lapis lazuli stamp seal from the Ancient Near East (? - placed in Room 52 - Ancient Iran), "... Behind the man are a long-horned goat above a zebu. This last animal is related in style to similar creatures depicted on seals from the Indus Valley civilization, which was thriving at this time. There were close connections between the Indus Valley civilization and central Asia. One of the prized materials that was traded across the region was lapis lazuli, the blue stone from which this seal is made."
CARAVANS

The principle method the Aryan traders used to travel and carry their wares along the trade routes was the caravan (From Persian karvan). The caravan is a group of individuals and pack animals (or beasts of burden) travelling together for safety in passing through hostile and inhospitable territory such as deserts and rugged mountains. There was safety in numbers to help resist bandits and aid injured fellow traders along the way. Caravans were not just formed by traders. Travellers, and ancient tourists, wishing to go from one place to another would also use the caravans, and these travellers were an additional source of income for the caravan organizers.

Since safety from bandits and even soldiers was an ever present hazard, it was necessary for the travellers to have negotiated safe passage before hand. It was also incumbent on states that relied on trade income to supplement their coffeers by taxing the caravans, to ensure the safety of the caravans, and to therefore assert their authority beyond urban areas. Some kings and local rulers built resting places for the travellers to assist them in their travels.

Herodotus notes the existence of caravan-series, the established stops and rest places for the traders and the animals in his Histories 5.52 as does Isidorus Characenus (Isidore of Charax) in his Parthian Stations.

CARAVANSERAI

The inns at which the traders and travellers stayed either overnight or while they conducted their trade, were called caravanserais (from Persian کاروانسرا = caravanserai or caravanseray), in Mesopotamia, they were called khans (for instance, the caravanserai in Damascus was called Khan As'ad Pasha), while in Asia Minor (Turkey), they were called hans and kervansaraylar (for instance, the Agzikara-han Kervansarayları). The caravanserais were usually built a day’s journey, about thirty to fifty kilometres, apart. Isidorus Characenus (Isidore of Charax) calls them Stations.

The caravanserais provided board and lodging, as well as courtyards for the animals and storage areas for their goods.

In the images to the right and below, the caravanserai building is built around a courtyard which it encloses. The upper photograph is of the ruins of the building without the upper floor, which we presume is missing because it was built from wood. The arch shaped cubicles are storage areas, above which were the rooms in which the travellers stayed. The animals rested in the courtyard.

An artist’s reconstruction of the caravanserai building is in the lower image.
Xenophon (Xen. Cyrop. 8.6, 17) ascribes the institution of way-stations or rest-stations to King Cyrus the Great, who, having found out what distance a horse could cover in a day, divided the roads into corresponding stages depending on the terrain, and at these stage junctions built stations consisting of stables and rooms, and where he stationed horses, couriers and a man in charge.

Below is the section on caravanserais from *Herodotus’ Histories, Terrapchore 5.52* giving an account of the Persian Royal Road which ran from Sardes to Susa. The distance between the rest stations along the road varied depending on the terrain and the abilities of local beasts of burden. As can be expected, because of the animals, the distance between caravan stations (average 121 stades or 4 parasangs = 24 km.) was somewhat shorter than the average distance of a day’s march by say a soldier (150 to 200 stades or 30 to 40 km.). A stade (length of a stadium is approximately 0.2 km in length). Herodotus notes two kinds of rest stations καταγωγαὶ σταθμῶν (katagogai stathmon) and σταθμοὶ καταγωγέων (stathmoi katagogeon), κατάλυμα meaning accommodation.

A parasang (Farsang) is according to some references equivalent to about 6-8 km. and by others 3 1/2 miles, i.e. 5.6 km. perhaps an hour’s travel by caravan.

(Translation by George Rawlinson:) Royal stations exist along its whole length, and excellent caravanserais; and throughout, it traverses an inhabited tract, and is free from danger. In Lydia and Phrygia there are twenty stations within a distance Of 94 ½ parasangs (approx. 570 km.). On leaving Phrygia the Halys has to be crossed; and here are gates through which you must needs pass ere you can traverse the stream. A strong force guards this post. When you have made the passage, and are come into Cappadocia, 28 stations and 104 parasangs bring you to the borders of Cilicia, where the road passes through two sets of gates, at each of which there is a guard posted. Leaving these behind, you go on through Cilicia, where you find three stations in a distance of 15 ½ parasangs. The boundary between Cilicia and Armenia is the river Euphrates, which it is necessary to cross in boats. In Armenia the resting-places are 15 in number, and the distance is 56 ½ parasangs. There is one place where a guard is posted. Four large streams intersect this district, all of which have to be crossed by means of boats. The first of these is the Tigris; the second and the third have both of them the same name, though they are not only different rivers, but do not even run from the same place. For the one which I have called the first of the two has its source in Armenia, while the other flows afterwards out of the country of the Matienians. The fourth of the streams is called the Gyndes, and this is the river which Cyrus dispersed by digging for it three hundred and sixty channels. Leaving Armenia and entering the Matienian country, you have four stations; these passed you find yourself in Cissia, where eleven stations and 42 ½ parasangs bring you to another navigable stream, the Choaspes, on the banks of which the city of Susa is built. Thus the entire number of the stations is raised to one hundred and eleven, and so many are in fact the resting-places that one finds between Sardis and Susa.

(Translation by William Beloe:) In that space of country about
which Cleomenes had inquired, the Persian king has various 

[Our note: from Greek σταθµός i.e. stathmós meaning station, port or depot], or (also called) mansions 

[Our note: cf. ma'nsio from the Latin mansus manere "to remain" or "to stay"], with excellent inns*; these are all splendid and beautiful, the whole of the country is richly cultivated, and the roads 

good and secure. In the regions of Lydia and Phrygia, twenty of the above stathmi occur within the space of ninety parasangs and a half. Leaving Phrygia, you meet with the river Halys, where 

there are gates which are strongly defended, but which must be necessarily passed. Advancing through Cappadocia, to the confines of Cilicia, in the space of one hundred and four parasangs, there 

are eight-and-twenty stathmi. At the entrance of Cilicia are two necks of land, both well defended; passing beyond which through the country, are three stathmi in the space of fifteen parasangs 

and a half: Cilicia, as well as Armenia, are terminated by the Euphrates, which is only passable in vessels. In Armenia, and within the space of fifty-six parasangs and a half, there are fifteen 

stathmi, in which also are guards: through this country flow the waters of four rivers, the passage of which is indispensable, but can only be effected in boats. Of these the first is the Tigris; by the 

same name also the second and third are distinguished, though they are by no means the same, nor proceeding from the same source: of these latter the one rises in Armenia, the other from 

amongst the Matieni. The fourth river is called the Gyndes, which was formerly divided by Cyrus into three hundred and sixty channels. From Armenia to the country of the Matieni, are four 

stathmi: from hence through Cissia, as far as the river Choaspes, there are eleven stathmi, and a space of forty-two parasangs and a half. The Choaspes is also to be passed in boats, and beyond 

this Susa is situated. Thus it appears, that from Sardis to Susa are one hundred and eleven stations, or stathmi.

Notes by the translator, William Beloe: 
*Excellent inns: There can be little doubt, but that these are the same with what 

are now called caravanserais, and which abound in all oriental countries; these are 

large square buildings, in the centre of which is a spacious court. The traveller 

must not expect to meet with much accommodation in these places, except that he 

may depend upon finding water: they are esteemed sacred, and a stranger's goods, 

whilst he remains in one of them, are secure from pillage. Such exactly are also 

the choutries of Indostan, many of which are buildings of great magnificence, and 

very curious workmanship. What the traveller has there to expect is little more 

than mere shelter.

[Other references: Athenæus / Athenæus / Athenaeus (bk. xi, chap. 103, page 800) 

speaks of Amyntas (of Heraclea; who accompanied Alexander of Macedonia) as the 

author of a work, Σταθµοί Περσικοί or Stathmoí Persikoí sometimes referred to as 

the Stations of Asia or Stathmi of Asia. Eratosthenes (c 276 - c 195 BCE) based 

some of his geographical calculations on the Register of the Stathmi also called the 

Register of Days' Journey, stathmi being several stages from place to place. 

Amyntas' Stathmi of Asia is thought to be the same as the Register of the Stathmi. 

Athenaeus (10.442 b) also cites Baeto's work on the station used by Alexander of 

Macedonia.]

CHAIKHANAS - TEA HOUSES

A chaikhana, which in Persian means tea-room or tea-house, is a traditional community meeting place and a place to find inexpensive, but wholesome food, became popular with travellers and a 

place where the locals and travellers could exchange stories and information.

CHAIKHANAS - TÉA HOUSES

A chaikhana, which in Persian means tea-room or tea-house, is a traditional community meeting place and a place to find inexpensive, but wholesome food, became popular with travellers and a 

place where the locals and travellers could exchange stories and information.
Loreena McKennitt, born February 17, 1957, is a Canadian singer, composer, harpist, accordionist, and pianist who writes, records, and performs world music with Celtic and Middle Eastern themes. McKennitt is a member of the Order of Canada.

One of McKennitt's is the song Caravanserai. Its lyrics read as follows:

This glancing life is like a morning star
A setting sun, or rolling waves at sea
A gentle breeze or lightning in a storm
A dancing dream of all eternity

The sand was shimmering in the morning light
And dancing off the dunes so far away
The night held music so sweet, so long
And there we lay until the break of day

We woke that morning at the onward call
Our camels bridled up, our howdahs* full
The sun was rising in the eastern sky
Just as we set out to the desert's cry

Calling, yearning, pulling, home to you

The tents grew smaller as we rode away
On earth that tells of many passing days
The months of peace and all the years of war
The lives of love and all the lives of tears

Calling, yearning, pulling, home to you

We crossed the river beds all etched in stone
And up the mighty mountains ever known
Beyond the valleys in the searing heat
Until we reached the caravanserai

Calling, yearning, pulling, home to you
Calling, yearning, pulling, home to you

What is this life that pulls me far away
What is that home where we cannot reside
What is that quest that pulls me onward
My heart is full when you are by my side

Calling, yearning, pulling, home to you
Calling, yearning, pulling, home to you
Calling, yearning, pulling, home to you.

* A howdah is a platform placed on the back of a pack animal. It can have a palanquin-like covered enclosure of a person to sit in or on which to place goods.

Bactrian Camel

The two-humped Bactrian camel was, if we may be forgiven this term, the workhorse of the caravans that plied the trade routes. If it were not for the Bactrian camel, the success and sustainability of the trade along the varied terrain and climate of the trade routes, would be questionable. The Bactrian camel was particularly suited to the task of carrying heavy loads over long distances through extremes in climate and temperature - from freezing cold to blistering heat.

The camels have a remarkable ability to go without water for months at a time, but when water is available they can drink up to 57 litres at once. When well fed, the camels store excess food in their humps which become plump and erect. When food is not readily available, the camel uses this stored food and the humps shrink and lean to one side. They are steady walkers and fast runners. They can walk consistently for hours at an end, and they have
been recorded as running at speeds up to 65 kmph / 40 mph. As pack animals, they are able to carry 170-270 kg / 375-600 lbs at a rate of 47 km per day, or 4 kmph over a period of four days. They can swim, see well and have a keen sense of smell.

Bones of the Bactrian camel have been found in northern Afghanistan dating back to the first half of the third millennium BCE. By the late third and early second millennium BCE, images of the Bactrian camel were being used in the iconography of copper stamp seals and figurines found in the Kopet Dag hills of neighbouring Turkmenistan, but which are thought have originated further south in Bakhdis / Bactria.

**ROYAL ROADS OF DARIUS**

Herodotus (Histories 5.52-54) gives us his account of the Persian empire's roads which he called the Royal Roads. He was familiar with the western Royal roads which he had travelled and which ran from Lydia (Western Asia Minor) at the borders of Ionia and Greece to Susa. These roads passed through Armenia, the Tigris River and Babylon. Branches ran from Susa to Persepolis in Persia, and from Babylon to Ecbatana (Hamadan) in Media and beyond to Ragh and the eastern empire, and the Indus valley.

Herodotus (5.52-54) informs us "Now the true account of the road in question is the following: Royal stations exist along its whole length, and excellent caravanserais; and throughout, it traverses an inhabited tract, and is free from danger." The road was well maintained, guarded and traversed by a regular courier and postal service.

In book 8.98, Herodotus talks about the couriers: "Nothing mortal travels so fast as these Persian messengers. The entire plan is a Persian invention; and this is the method of it. Along the whole line of road there are men (they say) stationed with horses, in number equal to the number of days which the journey takes, allowing a man and horse to each day; and these men will not be hindered from accomplishing at their best speed the distance which they have to go, either by snow, or rain, or heat, or by the darkness of night. The first rider delivers his despatch to the second and the second passes it to the third; and so it is borne from hand to hand along the whole line, like the light in the torch-race, which the Greeks celebrate to Vulcan. The Persians give the riding post in this manner, the name of 'Angarum.'" (The angarum were called pirradazish by the Persians)

Perhaps for the first time in recorded history, travellers and traders could traverse the Aryan lands and the entire Persian empire relatively quickly and safely with a uniform law to protect them. Trade flourished and the revenues helped to make the Persian empire one of the wealthiest known to history.

**THE SILK ROADS**

The Royal Roads of Darius became the Silk Roads. As we have seen above, the Aryans expanded the trade between themselves to include their neighbours. Aryan trade extended from China in the east, to Asia Minor and Mesopotamia in the west, to the Iranian plateau and the Indus valley in the south, an east-west distance of nearly ten thousand kilometres. The Aryan trade routes would come to be known as the Silk Roads. Amongst the different Indo-Iranian groups, the Sogdians would become the principle traders along the Silk Roads.

> Site with photographs: ECAI Silk Road Atlas.

**PARSI TRADERS**

The need to preserve and protect Aryan trade to Susa and Babylon from the plundering and murderous Assyrians, may have been a contributing reason for the predecessors of the Persians to move from Parsua to the southeast of the Iranian plateau.

The strong Persian tradition as international traders continued even after the Zoroastrians Persians migrated to India following the Arab invasion of Iran nearly fifteen hundred years ago. As soon as they had established themselves in their new home, the migrants to India who called themselves Parsees (meaning Persian) revived their tradition of trading between the east and west,
becoming wealthy in the process.

According to the Wikipedia page on Parsees:

“Western Gujarat, Sind and Baluchistan had once been the eastern-most territories of the Sassanid (226-651 CE) empire, and consequently maintained military outposts there. Even following the loss of these territories (after the Arab conquest in 649 CE), the Iranians continued to play a major role in the trade links between the east and west, and in the light of Brahmical discouragement of trans-oceanic voyages, which Hindus then regarded as polluting, it is likely that Iranians maintained trading posts in Gujarat (on the west coast of India) as well. The 9th century Arab historiographer al-Masoudi briefly notes Zoroastrians with fire temples in al-Hind and in al-Sind. (Stausberg 2002, p. 1.374) Moreover, for the Iranians, the harbours of Gujarat lay on the maritime routes that complemented the overland Silk road and there were extensive trade relations between the two regions.”

The Wikipedia article goes on to state:

“The first Parsis originally came from the north-east (i.e. Central Asia) and had previously been dependent on Silk Road trade (Stausberg 2002, p. 1.373). Even so, in the 17th century, Henry Lord, a chaplain with the British East India Company, noted that the Parsis came to India seeking 'liberty of conscience' but simultaneously arrived as 'merchants bound for the shores of India, in course of trade and merchandize.'

“Following the commercial treaty in the early 1600s between Mughal emperor Jahangir and James I of England, the British East India Company obtained the exclusive rights to reside and build factories in Surat and other areas. Many Parsis, who until then had been living in farming communities throughout Gujarat, moved to the British-run settlements...”

The participation of the Parsi trading families was central to the creation and growth of India’s principal trading centre, Mumbai (formerly Bombay). Trading involved the establishment of related businesses such as retailing, banking, finance, wholesaling, warehousing, manufacturing and shipping. (We should not omit that farming and the owning of large land holdings was also a long-standing Parsi tradition.)

Wikipedia: "...an enterprising agent named Rustom Maneck who had probably already amassed a fortune under the Dutch and Portuguese. In 1702 Maneck was appointed the first broker (so also acquiring the name 'Seth') to the (East India) Company, and in the following years he and his Parsi associates widened the occupational and financial horizons of the larger Parsi community’ (White 1991, p. 304). Thus, by the mid-18th century, the brokerage houses of the Bombay Presidency were almost all in Parsi hands. As James Forbes, the Collector of Broach (now Bharuch), would note in his Oriental Memoirs (1770): ‘many of the principal merchants and owners of ships at Bombay and Surat are Parsees.’ “Active, robust, prudent and persevering, they now form a very valuable part of the Company’s subjects on the western shores of Hindustan where they are highly esteemed’ (Loc. cit. Darukhanawala & Jeejeebhoy 1938, p. 33). Gradually certain families ‘acquired wealth and prominence (Sorabji, Modi, Cama, Wadia, Jeejeebhoy, Redimoney, Dadiseth, Patel, Mehta, Allibless, Tata and others), many of which would be noted for their participation in the public life of the city, and for their various educational, industrial, and charitable enterprises.’ (Hull 1913; cf. Paletia 2001, pp. 37-45, 62-64, 128-140, 334-135).”

From India, the Parsi traders fanned out to Aden, South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, China and Hong Kong to name but a few of the more significant places to which they migrated. Once the traders had established themselves, they attracted other Parsees to follow them establishing in the process small colonies of Parsees in these distant lands. The leaders of the communities were the entrepreneurs who employed other Parsees in professional support positions and who used their wealth to set up residential colonies, temples, schools and hospitals for the rest of the community. The Parsi Zoroastrians supported the immigration to India of their Irani Zoroastrian compatriots who also established themselves in business and professional activities - a life style and work ethic that promoted independence, self respect and kindness (meherabani). If the typical Irani small business-person was a bakery and cafe owner, reminiscent of the chaikhanas of old. We believe this is was a continuation of same process that Aryans had employed for thousands of years as they fanned out from their Central Asian homeland to the sixteen Vendida d nations along the Aryan trade roads.

One of the principal items imported into India by the Parsees was silk from China. According to Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, the Parsees were the first traders of India (or for that matter from elsewhere) "to venture to Burma and China to open branches and firms there.

Further reading:

» Sogdian Trade. Silk Roads
» Hormozgan & Aryan Trade
» Far Eastern Lands
» Boteh (Paisley) & Aryan Trade
» Termeh - Heritage Fabric & Aryan Trade
» Isidorus Characenus: Parthian Stations (Mansiones Parthicae)

Off-site reading:

» Old World Trade Routes (OWTRAD) Project
» Old World Trade Routes - Asia
» Caravan Routes: Dahistan, Merv, Urgench 900CE-1300CE

» Aryan Prehistory
» Aryan Homeland in Scripture
Iranian-Aryan Connections with Western Tibet

Also see our page on the Aryan Homeland, and the sections Mount Meru / Sumeru and Airyana Vaeja as Paradise, Shambhala / Shangri-La where we note the possible connections between Western Tibet and Airyana Vaeja, the Aryan homeland.

Evidence of Early Connections between the Early Aryans and Western Tibetans

Dakhma and Sky Burials

A unique connection shared only by Iranian-Aryan Zoroastrians and a group of western Tibetans is the method of disposing of the dead, namely the exposure of the dead bodies to birds.

In addition to the method of exposure, other similarities include the wrapping of the body in a clean white shroud and placing the body on rock. When the Zoroastrians migrated to areas that did not have rocky hills, they constructed towers made from rock and do not permit the body to contact soil.

There are also significant differences in the practice: Zoroastrians place the body in a tower called a dakhma (however, we have read reports that in flat areas, early Zoroastrians did leave bodies in fields ostensibly on a stone platform - away from view - to be devoured by birds) while Tibetans place the body on a designated place on a hillside. In the dakhma, Zoroastrians simply lay the body on a stone surface but do not dismember the body as is the practice in Tibet. Further, Zoroastrians collect the bones in a central ossuary pit where they disintegrate, while the Tibetans do not follow this practice.

Perhaps what is significant when comparing this sharing of a 'burial' custom between the two cultures - one which is not shared with other cultures - is the practical considerations for adopting this form of 'burial' which probably preceded the religious justification and the possible environmental implications.

These practical considerations may give us clues about the environment and topography of the area in which the Western Tibetans and Iranian-Aryans lived.
For the people who lived in mountainous regions near the tree line or in small valleys surrounded by rocky mountains, below ground ‘burial’ options may have been very limited. Arable land would have been scare and digging a deep pit for a burial in the fallow rocky surroundings bordering a village and its meagre fields, would have been very difficult. Wood for cremation would not have been available in sufficient quantities or acquiring such wood would have meant cutting down precious trees and denuding the environment. Improperly disposing a dead body might also have created a health hazard. Residents of such harsh surroundings may have had no sanitary option for disposing of dead bodies other than exposure to birds and beasts. Cave burials, another possible option would have had limited application.

Questions & Possible Answers to the Original Home of the Aryans
(Also see our page Who Were The Aryans?)
For the preceding observations, the sharing of the ‘burial’ customs between the Iranian Aryans and Western Tibetans raises some questions:

1. When Iranian Aryans first adopted this custom, were they living in a environment similar to the Western Tibetans?
2. Did the two peoples, the Iranian Aryans and the Western Tibetans live in close proximity?

The unique similarities in this practice may give us clues about the nature, topography and location of the original Aryan homeland. Among the possibilities are:

1. The Western Tibetans and original Aryans lived in mountainous rocky regions.
2. They were neighbours.
3. The Western Tibetans lived in the Western Himalayas and Tibetan plateau while the original Aryans
lived immediately west in an area that included the Western Pamirs.

**Legend Regarding the First Aryan King & Mountains**

Ferdowski's *Shahnameh*, complemented by the Farvardin Yasht 13.87, recounts that Aryan prehistory started with Gaya Maretan, founder of the Aryan nation. The Shahnameh states that he was the first Aryan King and that during his reign, people lived in the mountains and wore animal skins and leaves. They gathered fruits and other plant foods. Animals were first domesticated, and the herding of cattle began.

[For other references to the original Aryan homeland being mountainous please see Aryan homeland location: Mountains - Hara Berezaiti]]

**Tagzig, Zhang-Zhung, Western Tibet - Land & Culture**

**Tajikistan**

In Tibet there is a minority religion (100,000 adherents?) called Bon that long preceded the coming of Buddhism. Present-day Bon practice allies it with Buddhism. However, the original practice may have been quite different.

According to Bon tradition, the founder of the orthodox Bon doctrine was Tonpa Shenrab Miwoche of Tagzig some 18,000 years ago. Tagzig is believed to be a form of Tajik and some writers identify the region with Balkh/Bactria. The name Shenrab has an Iranian sound to it.

The Bon religion was spread by Shenrab’s disciples and their student-translators to adjacent countries such as Zhang-Zhung (also Zhangzhung, Shaung Shung or Xang Xung - a land north of the Himalayas, which contained Mount Kailash in today’s Western Tibet), India (northern Indus valley cf. Bru-zha / Gilgit), Kashmir (Kha-che), Western China and eventually Greater Tibet. Tonpa Shenrab is reputed to have visited present-day Tibet once. On that visit he found the people unprepared to receive the entire body of his teachings, but he prophesied that his teachings would flourish in Tibet in the coming ages. The students of his disciples continued his mission and Tibetan Bon scriptures were translated from texts in the language of Zhang-Zhung.

The Bon tradition provides a close link between the Aryan and Tibetan cultures. In addition to the place of its origin, the Bon tradition includes additional links to Zoroastrian Aryan culture including what Western writers have labelled as ‘dualism’ and the myths about the original homeland and its Shangri-La like beauty.

Tagzig is more completely called Tagzig Olmo Lung Ring and is described in Bon as a non-dual (one which resides beyond dualism) spiritual realm. The feature of this non-dual realm is that it was a timeless perfect realm where peace and joy were the very fabric of being and evil was not known. Ol-mo-lung-ring is thought by some to be derived from the name of the city of Olmaliq now in Uzbekistan but originally in Tajikistan.

In legend, Tagzig Olmo Lung Ring is said to have been a fragrant land, coloured by beautiful flora and surrounded by snow-capped mountains. It was located west of Mount Kailash.

In the centre of Tagzig Olmo Lung Ring was Yungdrung Gutsek, a pyramidal-shaped mountain whose
four sides faced the cardinal directions. From its four corners flowed rivers, one of which we can
recognize: the river Sindhu (Indus) that flowed south.

It will be of interest to those studying the weather change in Airyana Vaeja, that pollen and tree ring
analysis indicates the Chang Tang plateau in Western and Northern Tibet had a far more liveable
environment than it has today - one that supported a primordial civilization - until, starting around 1500
BCE, the climate become colder and drier. The climate change would have caused the population to
migrate out of the northern plateau. This type of climate change from temperate to cold, and the resulting
changes in the environment from comfortable and verdant to harsh and rocky, is similar to the
Zoroastrian stories of a climate change during the reign of legendary King Jamshid.

For a further discussion on the possible connections between Zhang Zhung, Tagzig and the original
homeland of the Aryans, Airyana Vaeja, please see our page on the Aryan Homeland, and the sections
Mount Meru / Sumeru and Airyana Vaeja as Paradise. Shambhala / Shangri-La

**Bon Heaven Stones & Luristan Bronzes**

Giuseppe Tucci and Geoffrey Samuel state in their book *The Religions of Tibet* that according to Bon
Tibetan tradition if anyone finds ‘heaven stones’, thog rde’u, bronze artefacts, in their fields, especially
nine together are assured prosperity. Some of the ‘stones’ are eagle shaped (khyung), while others are
round or in shapes representing monkeys. Tucci and Samuel further state that the objects bear a striking
resemblance to those found in the western Iran province of Luristan / Loristan indicating a connection if
not a trading relationship between the Iranian and Tibetan cultures along the Aryan Trade routes.
Luristan straddles the Zagros Mountains. The bronze objects are dated from the first to the second
millennium BCE and are thought to have been made by the area’s Kassite inhabitants (see Luristan
Bronzes by Donald Wilber).

**Bon & Buddhism in Central Asia**

Buddhism established itself as a major religion and political force in Central Asia long before it was
established as the primary religion of Tibet. There is evidence of its presence in the Central Asian region during the 4th century BCE - that is, during the occupation of the region by Alexander and his successors. Buddhism was later adopted by the Central Asian Kushan kings in the first to fourth centuries CE and it likely existed side-by-side with Zoroastrianism in that region. It could be that some of the existing Bon adherents in the region adopted Buddhism and that this phenomenon spread into the Western Tibetan plateau.

Given that the Zoroastrian and Bon religions may have existed side-by-side in Central Asia, the Pamirs and the northern Himalayan region, it is quite possible that even during the time of the Iranian Sassanian dynasty c. 224 - 649 CE, the relations between the Zoroastrian Iranians and the Tibetan Buddhists was collaborative. There is evidence that we will examine below, that this collaboration survived even after the overthrow of the Sassanians by the Arabs.

The land of Zhang Zhung on its part continued its dominance of the Tibetan plateau until it was annexed by Songtsen Gampo in the 7th century. Songtsen Gampo was the thirty-third king of the Yarlung Dynasty which ruled the Yarlung River (the Brahmaputra in India) and is revered by Tibetans as the founder of the Tibetan state and empire. He is also said to have introduced Buddhism to Tibet.

Iranian-Aryan Relations with the Yarlung Dynasty (c. 7th-9th Centuries CE)
The Tibetan empire established by Songtsen Gampo soon grew in power that extended beyond its borders, so much so, that in the year 763, the Tibetans, allied with the Uighur Turks, invaded the Chinese Tang Empire, captured the Chinese capital Chang-an, and replaced the Tang emperor with a candidate of their own choosing (1).

The Yarlung dynasty appears to have continued the collaborative relationship the Zhang Zhung had with the Iranian Aryans (2). The relationship continued even after the Arabs had conquered the Persian empire. Since it is the Tibetans who had become the dominant eastern power in the seventh century CE, it is they who provided the Persians and Sogdians sanctuary.

As they fled east, the Persians first took refuge in Sugd (Sogdiana) and their presence there has been recorded on Sogdian inscriptions in Panjakand and Paykand. Then as the Persians and Sogdians continued east into China, their presence during the ninth century was recorded on a Chang'an funerary stele belonging to Mahshi Suren.

Author A. Nikitin (3) has proposed that the rise of Tibetan power was because of the assistance of Persian refugees fleeing from the Arab invasion of Persia in the 650s CE. According to Nikitin, when the Persians arrived in the Tibetan court, they trained the Tibetans in the art of imperial warfare. According to another author Beckwith, a Chinese source describes the Yarlung Tibetan warriors and horses as being completely clad in armour in the Sassanian fashion. An important military technological advance and advantage for the Tibetans was their newly acquired ability to produce chain mail for armour.

After the Arab take over of the Sassanian Iranian state, the Yarlung Tibetans fought against the Arabs together with his Turkic allies in order to expel them from Sugd (Sogdiana)(4).

The Yarlung captured Khotan – an Iranian-Tajik kingdom allied with Kashmir and Sugd (Sogdiana) (5). The Tibetan conquest of Khotan was followed by the immigration of many Khotanese Buddhist monks,
craftsmen and merchants into Tibet (6).

**Iranian-Aryan Trade Relations with the Yarlung Dynasty**

The Yarlung Dynasty continued the tradition of participating in the historic Aryan trade especially with the Sogdians (7). The trade consisted of the import into Tibet of luxury goods that included silks and metalwork. The exports included Tibet's famous perfumed musk must prized in the courts of the western Iranian and Arabs. This trade continued well into the 10th century when the noted Geographer Mas'udi from that era noted that some merchants he had met in Eastern Persia arrived there “from Sogdiana through... the mountains of Tibet and China”(8). Furthermore, the Tibetans were aware of the religions professed by the Sogdians (9).

There is some debate as to whether it was the Chinese or the Sogdians who introduced silk to the Tibetans. Given the Sogdian presence in Tibet and the motif designs on the silk, it is likely that it was the Sogdian traders and settlers who brought the silk with them.

Tibetan and Chinese motifs have been found in Sogdian art within Sugd (Sogdiana), and likewise, Sogdian and Iranian / Persian motifs have been found in art and designs found in Tibet and China.

Sogdian artefacts dating to the eight and ninth centuries CE have been found in a cemetery in Dulan, not far from Reshui in China's Qinghai Province. The site was then part of the Tibetan empire's Amdo region. One of the artefacts in a silk fragment that has Pahlavi (Middle Persian) language words. Some coins with Pahlavi inscriptions have also been found in Tibet. Several textiles and metal objects embellished with Sogdian motifs have also been found in the cemetery at Dulan.(10).

**References**

1. - M. Compareti, "Iranian Elements in Kashmir and Tibet, Sasanian and Sogdian Borrowings in Kashmiri and Tibetan Art"  


- A. Heller, "Recent Findings on Textiles from the Tibetan Empire", in: Central Asian Textiles and Their Contexts in the Early Middle Ages, Riggisberger Berichte, 9, 2006: 175-188.

POSTED BY K. E. EDULJEE AT 11:35 PM
LABELS: AIRYANA VAJEJA, ARYAN, DAKHMA, HIMALAYAS, MOUNT MERU, SHAMBHALA, SHANGRI-LA, SKY BURIALS, SOGDIANA, SUGD, SUMERU, TAGZIE, TIBET, ZHANG ZHUNG

NO COMMENTS:

POST A COMMENT
Pamirs
Badakhshan

PO-I-MIH
FEET OF MITHRA

CONTENTS

TAJIKISTAN REGION
Page 1
Tajikistan Region & Zoroastrianism
Page 2
Sugd / Sogdiana
Second Avestan Nation

PAMIR / BADAKHSHAN REGION

Introduction

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

Greater Badakhshan

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

China's acquisition of eastern Badakhshan came about through centuries of westward expansion beyond ancient Chin and the borders of Chin marked by the Great Wall of China. The division of Badakhshan between Tajikistan and Afghanistan, was a result of the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1873 that created a buffer strip between the Russian and British empires.

In these pages, unless otherwise specified, we will be dealing with the full extent of Badakhshan which we will call Greater Badakhshan / Badakhshan, Pamir-Badakhshan or the Pamir region.
The Pamir-Badakhshan region is home to very old Zoroastrian historical sites and most of the Zoroastrian historical sites we have identified so far in Tajikistan, are in the Badakhshan-Pamir region. There are also enigmatic hand and feet symbols carved into the rock of the Pamir mountains. The Pamiri consider the rocks holy, saying that holy men have stepped on these rocks in the remote past.

**Candidate for the Location of Airyana Vaeja**

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

In a related page, Aryan Homeland in the Avesta, we examined references to Airyana Vaeja in the Zoroastrian scriptures, the Avesta. In that page, we listed the sixteen nations mentioned in one of the books of the Avesta, the Vendidad. Airyana Vaeja, the Aryan homeland is the first nation in that list. Its precise location is a mystery. In the map below, the second, third and fourth nations, Sughdha, Mouru and Bakhdhi, are to the left, and the Pamir-Badakhshan region is the adjacent region to the right of the map.
Badakhshan (Badakshan or Badakhshan) is a relatively modern (1,500 year-old) name coined by the Persian Sassanids (c.200-650 CE). Since shan / shon means place (the forerunner of stan, cf. Khorasan), Badakhshan means the place of Badak or Badakh. It is not clear who or what Badakh means. Badakh might refer to the area’s precious stones.

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

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

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

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

- **In the east**, the Pamiri dialects of Sarikoli and Wakhi are spoken across the present Tajik-China border in the Xinjiang (Xinjiang) / Kunlun Mountains. The Pamirs includes Tashkurgan and Kashgar / Kash (presently in China) in the northeast corner (Photographs of Kashgar). The residents of Kashgar were known to have practiced Zoroastrianism and the ruins of a Zoroastrian temple can be found beside the ruins of an ancient fortress. Indeed, it is possible that some of the residents of areas in China that practice Islam today could have practiced Zoroastrianism in the past. The original Indo-Iranian inhabitants of this area have to a large extent been displaced by Turkic peoples. The Shahnameh of Ferdowsi placed Chin (China) to the east of Airan and also east of Turan (Sugd).

- **In the south**, the Wakhi dialect is spoken in the Wakhan / Panj valley bordered by the Hindu Kush in the south (Ivan M. Steblin-Kamenskij at Iranica, Central Asia XIII. Iranian Languages, suggests that the name Wakhan i.e. Vah-kan, is derived from Old Iranian Wahwi/Wahkshu - "good, beneficent," an ancient river name (cf. Av. Vanguhi Daitia, the name of a river in Arianem Vaejah). The Wakhi dialect is also spoken in northern Pakistan. The Vendidad nation that would have bordered the Pamiri-Badakhshan region to the south would be the seventh nation of Vaekerata (Kabul).

- **In the west**, the region continues to include the Panj valley as it turns north and includes lands further west, that is, the present Badakhshan province in Afghanistan. That province has its capital at Feyzabad (Faizabad) that sits of the Kokha River. In ancient times, the Pamiri-Badakhshan lands would have extended west to the fourth Vendidad nation of Bakhdhi (Balkh).
Historic Badakhshan / Pamir Boundaries

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

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

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

(Also see Ethnic Processes in Gorno Badakhshan)

**Physical Features**

**Po-i Mihr, the Feet of Mithra**

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

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

The Pamirs form a connecting link between the Tian Shan, Kunlun, Karakoram, Himalaya and Hindu Kush...
Badakhshan’s terrain is typified by the image on the left. The Panj River runs through the valley that stretches up from the lower left corner of the photograph curving to the right. In the part that can be seen in the photograph, the Panj River marks the border between Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

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

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

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

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

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

According to Wikipedia, the Chinese call the Pamirs ‘Congling’ meaning the Onion Range, a name derived from the wild onions growing in the region.
Panj River's Wakhan Valley & farms. The Panj River is called the Amu Darya (Oxus) in Afghanistan.

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

Topography of the Boundaries

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

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

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

The Pamir's deposits of precious stones and metals that correspond to those described as being contained in Mount Meru, the mountain that stood at the centre of the world, in the Hindu scripture, the Vedas. Mount Meru is the equivalent of the Mount Hara Berezati, Airyana Vaeja's central mountain mentioned Zoroastrian scriptures, the Avesta. In the Vedas, Mount Meru is described as a four sided mountain where the four sides are made from four different precious substances: the south of lapis-lazuli, the west of ruby, the north of gold and the east of silver (or crystal).

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

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

(Also see pages on Aryan Trade and Sogdian Trade.)

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

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

**Bazar-Dara**

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

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

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

A webpage titled Geo-Archaeological Survey of Ancient Metallurgic Centres of the Bazar-Dara Valley contains further information on this ancient Pamiri settlement.
Image sites: Web pages with photographs of the Pamirs:

- Marcus Hauser’s photo gallery 1, photo gallery 2, photo gallery 3
- Uncornered Market Pamirs
- Uncornered Market Pamir Houses
- Pamirs.org
- Flickr

Further off-site reading: Pamir.org

Tajikistan Pages:
- Page 1 Tajikistan Introduction
- Page 2 (Turan & Sugd - Sogdiana)
- Page 4 (Pamirs, page 2, Inside Pamiri Houses)
- Page 5 (Pamirs, page 3, Pamiri Historical Sites)
- Page 6 (Tajikistan History)

© Author: K. E. Eduljee, Zoroastrian Heritage, 2005-14 (researched from 1979 onwards) • Contact • Page validated by W3C.org
Claudius Ptolemaeus was a mathematician, astronomer, geographer and astrologer. He lived in Egypt under the Roman Empire, and is believed to have been born in the town of Ptolemais Hermiou in the Thebaid. He died in Alexandria around 168 CE.

One of Ptolemy's three treatises is his *Geographia*. This too is a compilation of what was known about the world's geography in the Roman Empire during his time. He relied somewhat on the work of an earlier geographer, Marinos of Tyre, and on gazetteers of the Roman and ancient Persian Empire.

The pages below are graphics files embedded in HTML pages. Use the CONTINUE link at the bottom left of each page to advance. Ptolemy's own maps have not survived. There are, nonetheless, a variety of medieval and modern reconstructions. Wikipedia has a number of these which are zoomable, but not particularly clear. [See, for example *Arabia Felix*; *Mesopotamia*; *East Caspian Area*; *Central Asia*; *Scythia*.

Wikipedia's main page for its collection of maps for Ptolemy's *Geographia* is here. Clearer are Heinrich Kiepert's *World as Known to the Ancients* and *Ptolemy's World, and Empire of Iran*. Additional reconstructions by Heinrich Kiepert and other cartographers are available on our Maps Page.

For maps page at Zoroastrian Heritage also see:

- Ptolemy - the World
- Ptolemy - Asia
- Ptolemy - Aria

Chapters (image files):

- Assyria
- Media
- Susiana
- Persia
- Parthia
- Carmania Desert
- Arabia Felix
- Carmania
- Hyrcania
- Margiana
- Bactriana
- Sogdiana
- Sacae/Sacara
- Scythia this side of the Imaus mountains
- Scythia beyond the Imaus mountain
- Serica
- Aria
- Paropamisades
- Drangiana
- Arachosia
- Gedrosia

External links:

- Greek Sources Page
- Classical Sources Menu
- History Workshop Menu

© Author: K. E. Eduljee, Zoroastrian Heritage, Heritage Institute, 2007-10 • Contact • Page validated by W3C.org
The following descriptions are contained in Book Six:

Description of the regions in Asia Major.

1. Assyria Map V
2. Media
3. Susiana
4. Persia
5. Parthia
6. Carmania Desert
7. Arabia Felix Map VI
8. Carmania
9. Hyrcania Map VII
10. Margiana
11. Bactriana
12. Sogdiana
13. Sacae
14. Scythia this side the Imaus mountains
15. Scythia beyond the Imaus mountains Map VIII
16. Serica Map IX
17. Aria
18. Paropanisades
19. Drangiana
20. Arachosa
21. Gedrosia

Provinces XXI Maps V

CHAPTER I

Location of Assyria (Fifth map of Asia)

ASSYRIA is terminated on the north by the part of Armenia Major, as we have said, next to the Naphates mountains; on the west alone by Mesopotamia along the designated part of the Tigris river; on the south by Susiana to the boundary which runs along the Tigris river to the terminus, the location of which is in 84 36 on the east by the part of Media extending along the boundary joining those two termini, which we have named, along which boundary are the Choathras mountains, the terminal locations of which are 80 39 30 and 83 38

The part of this land which is near Armenia is called Arrapachitis; that which is near Susiana is called Sittacena; between these the Garamaei dwell; near these between Arrapachitis and the Garamaei is Adiadena; that which is between the Garamaei and Sittacena is called Apollonitas, and the race of the Sambatae is above this; above Adiabena is located Calacena and above the Garamaei is the Arbelitis region.

Rivers flowing through this land empty into the Tigris river, as the Lycus, the sources of which rivers are in 78 39 the Lycus unites with the Tigris in 79 36 20 and the Gorgos river, the sources of which are in 83 38 unites with the Tigris in 80 35 40

The towns and villages of Assyria and in that part near the Tigris are

Marde 76 38 15
Savara 76 37 15
Bessara 77 37 20
Belciana 77 30 37
Ninus 78 36 40
Sacada 78 30 36 30
Oroba 79 20 36 20
Thelede 80 36
Ctesiphon 80 35
in the remaining interior region

Birthaba 77 40 38 40
Dartha 78 30 38 45
Zigira 79 40 38 45
Darna 80 30 39 30
Obana 81 39
Thesara 81 15 38 20
Corcura 78 20 38 10
Oroba 79 20 38 10
Degia 80 45 38 10
Comopolis 81 30 38 10
Dosa 79 37 45
Gaugamela 79 30 37 15
Sarquina 79 37
Arbela 80 37 15
Gomara 81 20 37 30
Phusiana 82 10 37 40
Isone 82 30 37 30

[ 133 ]
CHAPTER II

Location of Media
(Fifth map of Asia)

MEDIA is terminated on the north by a part of the Hyrcanian sea, which is thus described: after the terminus indicated on the border of Armenia are

Sanina 80 43
mouth of the Cambysis river 81 42 45
river sources 80 41
Taxina 81 40 42 30
Sabaea Altars 82 30 42 30
mouth of the Cyrus river 84 42 15
river sources 82 39 30
Cadusiorum fortification 84 40 42
Cyropolis 85 30 41 30
mouth of the Amardus river 86 30 41 30
river sources 85 38 30
these rivers flow through a lake which is called Margiana located in the interior 82 30 39 20
Amana 87 30 40 40
Acola 88 15 40 15
mouth of the Stratonis river 90 20 40
river sources 88 38 30
Mindagaries 92 40
mouth of the Charinda river 93 40 30
the terminus located on the confines of Hyrcania is in 94 40 30
on the west the border is Armenia Major and Assyria along their eastern confines as we have indicated; on the south the border is Persia to the line beginning at the terminus near Assyria and Susiana thence leading from that position to that which is located in 94 34 30
This border is the western part of the Parchothras mountains; on the east is Hyrcania and Parthia to the southern line, joining the indicated termini, which runs along Hyrcania and Parthia, the position is in 94 39

The most important mountains of Media are the Zagros, the middle part of which is in 85 38
the Orontes, the middle part of which is in 88 30 38
the Iasonius, the middle part of which is in 90 30 38
and the western part of the Coroni, the western terminus of which is in 92 38

The Caspi dwell in the western part near Armenia, below whom is Margiana extending along the entire side of Assyria; near the sea moreover are the Cadusi, the Gela, and the Dribyces, next to whom, extending into the interior, are the Amacifics and the Mardi. The Carduchi inhabit the regions which are near the land of the Cadusi; the Marundae to Lake Margiana; then the Margeso who are below the Gela; after these is Propatena extending as far as Amariaca; and then the Sagarti toward the east of the Zagros mountains, after which is the Horomithena region which extends even to Parthia; on the north of which is Helmyan, from which to the source of the Chardinus river are the regions the Tapuri inhabit; moreover toward the south from Horomithena is Sidica, Sigianica and Rahiana; and from these below the Iasonius mountains is the region of the Vadass and the Dariti; the Syromedia region runs along the entire boundary of Persia.

Moreover the Zargi pass is located in 84 30 37
and the Caspian Gates in 94 37

The towns and villages in the interior of Media are

Scabina 79 30 42
Gabale 80 42
Uca 80 40 42 30
Varna 81 42
Candys 83 30 42
Gabris 80 20 41 15
Saxo 80 50 41 10
Tonzarma 81 30 41 30
Azaga 81 15 41 10
Morunda 82 20 41 10
Tigrana 82 40 41 30
Pharambara 84 10 41 20
Tachasara 84 20 41
Zalace 86 15 41
CHAPTER III

**Location of Susiana**

(Fifth map of Asia)

Susiana is bounded on the north by that side of Assyria, the termini of which boundary we have indicated above; on the west by Babylonia along the designated part of the Tigris river to its termination on the sea coast; on the east by Persia along the boundary from the indicated terminus in the confines of Assyria and Media to the mouth of the Orontes river emptying into the Persian gulf, that is, from the Tigris to the mouth of the Orontes river, the location of which is 86° 30' 30' 30' this coast is thus described:

after the other mouth of the Tigris river which is toward the east through which it flows into the sea 80° 30' 31'

Charax Pasini 80° 40' 31'

mouth of the Mosaeus river 82° 30' 40'
river sources 82° 30' 33'

Pelodes (Cenosus) bay 83° 31'

mouth of the Eulaeus river 84° 30' 30'

The sources of the river which are in Susiana are in 83° 35'

The sources of the river in Media are in 86° 38'

Vadum arenosus 84° 30' 30'

mouth of the Oroatis river 86° 30' 30'
river sources 88° 30' 34'

The Elymaei dwell on the maritime coast of Susiana, the Cossaei in the country on the border of Assyria; the region which is near the Tigris bank is called Melitene, that which is next to Persia (is called) Cabandene, that above Characena (is called) Characene; above the Elymaei is Cissia, above this Chaltapitis, between which and Cissia is the Decra country.

There are towns and villages in Susiana, and on the banks of the Tigris river next to the Herculis Altar, the locations of which are 80° 34' 5'
Agra  80  30  33  45
Aracca  80  10  32  40
Asia  80  10  31  40

The towns in the interior are

Palinza  83  45  35  30
Sarcone  82  45  35
Bergan  84  15  34  45
Susa  84  34  15
Saura  85  34
Dera  81  30  33  40
Agarra  83  40  33  20
Abina  85  10  33  10
Taritana  82  32  30
Sele  84  32  30
Graan  82  31  30
Anuchtha  83  30  31  40
Urzan  84  40  31  40

The island adjacent to Susiana is
Taxiana  84  29  20

CHAPTER IV

Location of Persia
(Fifth map of Asia)

On the north the border of Persia is Media along the line running through the Parchoathras mountains; on the west is Susiana, the eastern line of which territory we have indicated; on the east it is bordered by Carmania to the southern line near the terminus in the border of Media and Parthia running to the mouth of the Bagradus river in the Persian gulf in 94 29 15 on the south by the Persian gulf from the mouth of the Oroatis river to the mouth of the Bagradus river, which coast is described as follows: next to the mouth of the Oroatis river

Taoco promontory  87  30  30  10
mouth of the Rhogomanis river  88  30  30
river sources  92  35
Chersonesus promontory  89  40  29  30
Ionaca town  90  29  45
mouth of the Brisoana river  92  29  40
river sources  93  34  30
Auisnza  93  29  20
mouth of the Bagradus river  94  29  15
river sources  94  35  15

The region of Persia which is near Media is called Paraetacene, from which toward the south are the Mesabatae and the Rapsi, below whom is Misdia, and as far as the sea Mardycena and Taocena, and the Hippophae and Suzaei; also below Mardycena are the Megores, above the Susaei moreover the Gabaei.

The towns and villages in the interior of Persia are
Ozoa  85  45  35  20
Tanagra  86  34  30
Marrasium  92  30  34  30
Aspadana  86  33  50
Axima  87  45  33  50
Poryospana  89  33  50
Persepolis  90  15  33  20
Niserge  91  34
Sicta  91  30  34
Arbua  92  15  33
Cotamba  93  30  33  40
Potica  87  15  32  15
Ardea  88  32  30
Cauphiaca  89  32  30
Battihina  90  32  20
Cinna  92  20  32  20
Paradoana  93  50  32  15
Taepa  87  31  45
Tragonice  87  40  31  40
Maetona  89  10  31  45
Chorodna  90  31  15
Corra  91  20  31  40
Gabra  92  15  31  30
Orobatis town  87  30  50
Taocae  89  30  20
Parta  90  30  20
Mammida  91  30  20
Usia  91  40  30
Pasarracha  93  30  30
Gabe  93  40  30  10

Islands adjacent to Persia
Tabiana  87  29  15
Sopthra  88  29  20
Alexandria or Aracia  90  29

CHAPTER V

Location of Parthia
(Fifth map of Asia)

Parthia is bordered on the west by a part of Media, as we have set forth; on the north by the line extending along the Hyrcanian region and through the Coronus mountains to the terminal position in the same, the location of which is in 101 39 on the east by the boundary line of Aria from
the terminus, which we have mentioned, leading through the Madoranus mountains to the end in 102 30 33 20 on the south by the border line of the Carmania Deserta, which runs through the Parcoathras mountains.

The part of Parthia which joins Hyrcinia is called Comisena, below which is Parthyena; next is Chorana and Partauticina, after this is Tabicina near Carmania, then Sobide.

The towns and villages of Parthia are the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Longitude</th>
<th>Latitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ambroda</td>
<td>94 30</td>
<td>38 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oemynia</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>38 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caripraca</td>
<td>97 15</td>
<td>38 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhoara</td>
<td>78 30</td>
<td>38 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suphtha</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>38 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Araciana</td>
<td>94 15</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dordomana</td>
<td>94 15</td>
<td>37 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hecatompylon regia</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>37 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindaga</td>
<td>96 10</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parbara</td>
<td>98 50</td>
<td>37 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myssia</td>
<td>100 30</td>
<td>37 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charax</td>
<td>94 15</td>
<td>36 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apamia</td>
<td>94 15</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semina</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>36 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriche</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>36 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tastache</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>36 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armiana</td>
<td>101 20</td>
<td>36 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choana</td>
<td>95 15</td>
<td>35 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasacarta</td>
<td>94 15</td>
<td>35 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhuda</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simsimida</td>
<td>96 30</td>
<td>35 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artacana</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>34 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appha</td>
<td>98 30</td>
<td>35 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhagaea</td>
<td>98 20</td>
<td>34 20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAPTER VI

Location of Carmania Deserta
(Fifth map of Asia)

The Carmanian desert is bordered on the west by that part of Persia which is terminated by the Bagradas river thence to the terminus in the Parcoathras mountains the location of which is in 94 31 on the north by Partha the border of which runs through the Parcoathras mountains; on the east by a part of Aria along the line which we have indicated, to the terminus which is located in 104 28 50 on the south by the border line of Carmania Pars uniting the indicated termini. The regions of the Isaticiae and Ghuthi are used as pasture lands in the southern parts; in the interior are the Gadantopdes; the region in the north and the east is called Modomastica.

CHAPTER VII

Location of Arabia Felix
(Sixth map of Asia)

Arabia Felix is terminated on the north by the designated border of Arabia Petraea and of Arabia Deserta; on the northeast by a part of the Persian gulf; on the west by the Arabian gulf; on the south by the Red sea; on the east by that part of the Persian gulf and the sea, which extends from the entrance to this gulf as far as the Syagros promontory.

The maritime coast of this region is thus described: from the terminus of the Arabian gulf near the Elanite bay:

The Arabian gulf

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Longitude</th>
<th>Latitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Omme</td>
<td>66 20</td>
<td>28 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modiana</td>
<td>66 40</td>
<td>27 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hippos mountains</td>
<td>66 30</td>
<td>27 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hippos village</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>26 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoenicum village</td>
<td>67 20</td>
<td>26 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raunathi village</td>
<td>67 15</td>
<td>25 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chersonesus promontory</td>
<td>67 25</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iambia village</td>
<td>68 24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Thamyditaeh inhabit the upper shore of this gulf, and then the Sideni; then the Darrae; next to these the Banubari; then the Arsea.

Cinaedocolpite region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Longitude</th>
<th>Latitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Copar village</td>
<td>68 30</td>
<td>23 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arga village</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>22 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zabram region</td>
<td>69 20</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centos village</td>
<td>69 20</td>
<td>21 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thebe town</td>
<td>69 40</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mouth of Betius river</td>
<td>69 30</td>
<td>20 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>river sources</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>24 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassania region</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badeo regia</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>20 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amba town</td>
<td>70 40</td>
<td>19 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mamala village</td>
<td>71 45</td>
<td>18 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adedi village</td>
<td>72 15</td>
<td>17 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elesara region</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pudni town</td>
<td>72 30</td>
<td>16 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eli village</td>
<td>73 30</td>
<td>16 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Napegus village</td>
<td>73 30</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacatia town</td>
<td>74 15</td>
<td>14 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Coordinates</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persian gulf</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| In the widely extended bay of the Ichthyophagi near which toward the interior, are the Macae; then the towns of the Anaritae Rhegama town 88 23 10 Sacrum Sun promontory 87 20 23 30 mouth of the Laris river 86 30 23 30 river sources 81 18 Capsina town 86 23 10 Cauana town 85 23 then of the Egei Sarcoa town 84 15 23 Carada town 83 40 23 30 Atta village 82 23 15 then of the Gerraei Magindanata town 81 23 20 Gerra town 80 23 20 Bilbana town 80 24 10 then of the Thaemi Ithan town 80 25 Magorum bay 80 25 20 Istriona town 80 25 40 then of the Laenitae Mallada town 80 10 26 10 Chersonesus promontory 80 20 26 30 Leantis bay 79 15 27 Itamos harbor 79 40 27 40 Adari town 79 15 27 40 then of the Abucei Sacer bay 78 15 28 15 Coromanis town 79 28 45 next the terminus on the confines of the desert and the Mesanites bay 79 30 10 The noted mountains of this land are those which we have mentioned toward the interior which are called the Zames, the middle part of which is located in 76 25 the Marithi mountains 80 21 10 the Climax mountains 76 30 16 near which mountains is the fountain of the Stygian waters 78 15 other mountains wanting names above Cinaedocolpita 71 25 above Cassanitae 73 20 below the Marithos mountains 84 30 17 40 and above the Asabon mountains 88 22 30 The Scenitae dwell in the interior near that part toward the north which is entirely mountainous; above are the Oaditae; toward the south from these are the Saraceni
and the Thamydeni; then around the Zames mountains and toward the west from this are the Apataei and the Atrites, and near these the Mesamanes and the Udeni; toward the east are the Laenei, the Asapeni and the Iolytai; to the south are the Catanitai, then the Thanitai; from these toward the west the Manitae, above whom are the Alapeni, and near Cinaedopolita the Malichae. And below the Manitae is the Smyrnofera interior region; then the Minaei, a numerous race, below whom are the Doreni and the Mocratai; then the Sabaei and the Anchitae above the Climax mountains; around the Marithos mountains are the Malangitae to the north, and the Dachareni, the Zeiritae, then to the south the Bliulaei and the Omamitae, from whom to the river source are the Cottabani as far as the Asabon mountains, below whom is the Libanotoforae region; then near the Sachalita region are the Iobaritae; below the Gerraei are the Alumaeotae, then the Sophanitae and the Cithibitae, and extending as far as Climax mountains the Arabanitae; below all these the Chatraemonitae from the Climax mountains even to Sachalitas; toward the south from the Climax are the Masonitae; then the Asaritae, and near Homerita the Sapphanitae and the Ratheni, above whom are the Maphoritae, thence to the beginning near the Chraemonitae is the Smyrnofera exterior region; near Syagrum as far as the sea are the Ascitae.

The towns and villages which are in Arabia Felix in the interior are the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Longitude</th>
<th>Latitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aramava</td>
<td>67 30 29 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ostama</td>
<td>69 30 29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thapa</td>
<td>77 40 29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macna</td>
<td>67 28 45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angala</td>
<td>68 15 28 45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madiama</td>
<td>68 28 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achrona</td>
<td>70 28 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obraca</td>
<td>70 15 28 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhadi village</td>
<td>73 30 28 30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phara</td>
<td>79 30 28 40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satula</td>
<td>77 30 28 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lapa</td>
<td>68 10 27 40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thaema</td>
<td>71 27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gea town</td>
<td>71 27 27 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aina</td>
<td>75 40 27 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lugana</td>
<td>76 30 27 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaesa</td>
<td>78 40 27 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soaca</td>
<td>68 26 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egra</td>
<td>70 30 26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salma</td>
<td>74 30 26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arre village</td>
<td>75 40 26 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digema</td>
<td>77 26 30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sapha</td>
<td>78 15 26 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phigioa</td>
<td>79 26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badais</td>
<td>68 30 25 30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ausara</td>
<td>71 25 30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iabri</td>
<td>74 30 25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alata</td>
<td>77 20 25 30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mocurha</td>
<td>69 40 24 30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thumna</td>
<td>71 10 24 50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alvara</td>
<td>71 24 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phalbinum</td>
<td>73 15 24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salma</td>
<td>73 20 24 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorda</td>
<td>76 10 24 30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marata</td>
<td>79 20 24 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibireth</td>
<td>79 40 24 40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lathrippa</td>
<td>71 40 23 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carna</td>
<td>73 30 23 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biavenna</td>
<td>76 30 23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goeratha</td>
<td>77 40 23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catara</td>
<td>79 30 23 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baeba</td>
<td>71 30 22 30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macoraba</td>
<td>73 20 22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sata</td>
<td>81 10 22 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masthala</td>
<td>81 45 22 30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domana</td>
<td>82 20 22 30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atia</td>
<td>85 22 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ravana regia</td>
<td>87 22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chabuata</td>
<td>89 15 22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thumata</td>
<td>74 20 21 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olaphia</td>
<td>77 40 21 45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inapha</td>
<td>79 10 21 40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiagar</td>
<td>85 21 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspa</td>
<td>91 21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agdamum</td>
<td>73 30 20 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carman regia</td>
<td>75 15 20 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irala</td>
<td>80 20 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maecosmus metropolis</td>
<td>81 15 20 40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labris</td>
<td>82 20 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lattha</td>
<td>83 20 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accipitrum village</td>
<td>84 30 20 30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albana</td>
<td>71 30 19 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chargatha</td>
<td>73 10 19 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latthha</td>
<td>75 20 19 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omanum market town</td>
<td>87 40 19 45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marasdu</td>
<td>74 30 18 30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mara metropolis</td>
<td>76 18 40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amara</td>
<td>78 30 18 40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagaras metropolis</td>
<td>81 45 18 40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iula</td>
<td>85 20 18 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magulaba</td>
<td>75 30 17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[139]
and near Sachalites bay, the Zenobi VII islands the middle of which
is

Sarapidis, in which is a temple in the Persian
gulf

Apphana island
Ichara
Tharo
Tylus
Arathos

CHAPTER VIII

Location of Carmania
(Sixth map of Asia)

CARMANIA is terminated on the north
by the line which we have referred to
as extending along the side of Carmania
Deserta: on the east by Gedrosia along the
Persian mountains, and running through
these to the southern boundary as far as the
confines of the desert located near the
Indian sea, which terminus is

on the west by a part of Persia to the ter-
minus on the border of Carmania Deserta,
at the mouth of the Bagradas river, and
where it is called the Carmanicus bay, a
description of the coast of which is the
following:

After the mouth of the Bagradas river
mouth of the Daris river 95 15 28 40
mouth of the Cathrapius
river

mouth of the Corius river 96 26
mouth of the Achindanus
river

mouth of the Andanis
river

mouth of the Saganus river 95 40 24 30
Armucu
Armozon promontory 94 23 30
Carpella promontory 94 22 10
on the south by that part of the Indian sea
which extends to the indicated terminus; of
this part the following is a description:

From the Carpella promontory in the
Paragonicus bay
Canthatis town
Agris
Commana
Rhogan

Islands adjacent to this region and those
which are in the Arabian gulf are

Aeni
Timagenis
Zygena
 Daemonum
Polybii
Accipitrum
Socrates
Cardamine
Are
Combusta
Malichia II
Adani due
in the Red sea
Agathocles II
Cocoonati III the middle of
which
town of Dioscordi island
terminus of the western island

Trente
86 30 12
Organa
92 19
Sarapidis, in which is a temple in the Persian
gulf
84 30 14 15
Thuris
75 15 13
Lachchera
77 30 13 20
Hyela
79 13 50
Maccala
81 13 45
Sachla
82 40 13 20
Sava regia
76 12
Deva
77 40 12 45
Sochchor
78 30 12 40
Bana
80 20 12 40
Dela
82 12 40
Coa
83 30 12 30

65 45 27 20
66 25 45
66 15 24 20
66 45 23 15
67 40 27 40
69 30 19
70 16 40
71 16
71 15 20
70 30 14 30
71 40 14
72 30 12 30
81 20 10
83 9
86 40 9 30
85 10 30

86 30 12
91 16 30
92 19
94 17 30
81 20 28 40
82 25
85 15 24 45
90 24 40
91 40 24 40
104 20
95 15 28 40
95 30 27 40
96 26
96 40 26
96 25
95 40 24 30
94 30 23 30
94 23 40
94 22 10
mouth of the Salaris river 98 10 22 40
Masin 99 22 40
Samyda 99 10 22 40
mouth of the Samyda river 104 30 20
river sources 104 30 20
Tesa 101 10 22
mouth of the Caudriacus river 101 15 21 40
Bagia promontory 101 21
Cuiza harbor 101 15 20 40
Alambate promontory 101 20
Thus far the bay is called Paragonicus; after this are
Deranoebila 101 30 20 10
Cophanta harbor 101 30 20
mouth of the Zoromba river 102 30 20
Badara 103 20 10
Musarna 103 15 20 10
next after this terminus, as we have said, is the Indian sea 104 20
Mountains are in this land near those which we have said are next to Gedrosia, which are called Semiramis or Strongylus, so called from the round figure, the middle part of which is in 94 30 23
Others are an equal distance from Persia from which the rivers run westward as the Samyda, the middle of which is in 99 26

The Camelobosi, who are also called Sozotae inhabit parts of this land near the desert; below these is Rhudiana and Agdennus extending to the sea; then Paraepaphitis, below which are the Aerae and the Caradrae races; then Cabadena and Canthonice, and along the sea the Pasargadae and the Chelonophagi.

The towns and villages that are known in the interior of Carmania are
Portospasia 96 28 45
Carmana metropolis 100 29
Thaspis 98 27 40
Nipista 97 30 26
Chodha 101 30 25
Taruna 96 24 30
Alexandria 99 24 20
Sabas 97 30 24 10
Throasca 99 40 23 40
Ora 103 20 23 40
Cophanta 102 15 23
Sagdana in which is
Cinnabar 94 27 15
Vorochtha 94 20 25 30
in the Indian ocean
Polla 98 19
Carminna 102 18
Liba island 104 19

CHAPTER IX

Location of Hyrcania
(Seventh map of Asia)

HYRCANIA is terminated on the north by that part of the Hyrcanian sea which extends from a terminus in the confines of Media to the mouth of the Oxus river located in 100 43
in which region are
Saramanne town 94 15 40 30
mouth of the Maxera river 97 20 41 30
river sources 98 38 40
Socana town 97 20 42
mouth of the Oxus river 100 43 6
On the west by a part of Media, as we have stated, which extends as far as the Cronus mountains, the middle of which is in 94 39
On the south by Parthia along the border running through the Cronus mountains, as we have noted; on the east by the line running through the Cronus mountains, as the designated terminus.

The Maxerae and the Astaveni pasture their flocks in Hyrcania, being located near the maritime coast; below the Maxerae are the Chirind; next to these is the region of Arsitis along the Cronus mountains, and below the Astaveni is Siracene.

The interior towns are
Barange 99 42
Adrapa 98 30 41 30
Casape 95 30 40 20
Abarbena 97 30 40 10
Sarba 98 40 30
Sinica 100 40 30
Amarusa 95 40
Hyrcania metropolis 98 30 40
Sace 94 15 39 30
Asmurna 98 15 39 30
Maesoca 98 30 39 30
and the island in this region near the shore is Talca 95 43 5

[141]
CHAPTER X

Location of Margiana
(Seventh map of Asia)

On the west Margiana is bounded by Hyrcania along the side to which we have referred; on the north, by a part of Scythia which is near the mouth of the Oxus river and along the section of this river on the confines of Bactria, the location of which is in 103 44 on the south by a part of Aria along the line marking the confines of Hyrcania and Parthia, through the Sarophos mountains to the terminus which is located in 109 39 on the east by the Bactrian mountains in which are the indicated termini.

An excellent river flows through this land which is known as the Margus, the sources of which are located in 105 20 39 and its junction with the Oxus in 102 40 43 30.

The Derbiccae dwell in this region near the Oxus river, and below these are the Massagetae, next to these are the Parni and the Dahae; below whom is a desert land, and from this toward the east are the Tapuri.

Its towns are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Latitude</th>
<th>Longitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ariaca</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>43 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sena</td>
<td>102 30</td>
<td>42 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aratha</td>
<td>103 30</td>
<td>42 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argadina</td>
<td>101 20</td>
<td>41 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iasonium</td>
<td>103 30</td>
<td>41 30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

near which another river flows into the Margus coming from the Sarophos mountains, the sources of which are in 103 39

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Latitude</th>
<th>Longitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rhea</td>
<td>102 40</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antiochia Margiana</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>40 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guriana</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>40 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigaca</td>
<td>105 15</td>
<td>39 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAPTER XI

Location of Bactriana
(Seventh map of Asia)

On the west Bactriana is bounded by Margiana; on the north and also on the east by Sogdiana and a part of the Oxus river; on the south by the part of Aria which extends from the terminus in the confines of Margiana to the terminus in 111 30 39 and along the parallel of Parapanisadus an equal distance through the mountains to the sources of the Oxus which are located in 119 30 39.

Rivers flow through Bactria which rivers empty into the Oxus, and the Oxus river, the sources of which are in 110 39 the Dargamanis, the sources of which are in 116 30 36 40 the Zariaspes the sources of which are in 113 39 the Artamis the sources of which are in 114 39 the Dargoedus the sources of which are in 116 39 it flows into the Oxus in 116 30 44 the others are the Artamis and the Zariaspes which, after uniting their waters in 113 40 they flow into the Oxus in 112 30 44 the Dargamanis moreover after uniting with the rivers in the location 109 40 10 flows into the Oxus 109 44 20.

The Salaterae and the Zariaspe inhabit northern Bactria along the Oxus river; toward the south below the Salaterae are the Chomari; below whom are the Comi, then the Acinace, then the Tambysi; below Zariaspa are the Tochari a great race; below these are the Marycaei, the Scorda and the Varni, and below these are the Sabadi; and next below Sabadi are the Orsi and the Amarisi.

The Bactrian towns in that part near the Oxus are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Latitude</th>
<th>Longitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charracharta</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>44 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zarispa</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choana</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suragana</td>
<td>117 30</td>
<td>40 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phratrua</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>39 20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

near the other rivers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Latitude</th>
<th>Longitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alicodra</td>
<td>107 30</td>
<td>43 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chomara</td>
<td>106 30</td>
<td>42 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curiangra</td>
<td>109 30</td>
<td>12 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavaris</td>
<td>111 20</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astacana</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>43 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evusmi regia</td>
<td>108 20</td>
<td>41 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menapia</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>41 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eucretidia</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[142]
CHAPTER XII

Location of Sogdiana
(Seventh map of Asia)

The boundary of Sogdiana on the west is a part of Scythia near the section of the Oxus river which runs along the confines of Bactria and Margiana, then through the Oxius mountains near the Jaxartes river in 110 49 on the north by a part of Scythia along the Jaxartes river where it bends near the terminus which is in 120 48 30 on the east alone by the Sacara region along the Jaxartes river where it bends from the sources in 125 43 and along a direct line to the terminus which is located in 125 38 30 on the south and the west by Bactriana along the Oxus, which section we have noted, and near the Caucasus mountains which are called the mountains of India, to the line which connects the indicated terminus and the sources of the Oxus river

The mountains between the rivers of Sogdiana have their termini in 111 47 and 122 46 30 one of its rivers flows from the Oxia lake, the middle of which is located in 111 45 and there are other rivers flowing from these mountains called the Comedarum from which the Jaxartes flows, and into which river they empty; another is called the Dymus, the sources of which are in 124 43 where it joins with the Jaxartes 123 47 another of these rivers is called the Bascatis, the sources of which are in 123 43 and where it unites with the Jaxartes 121 47 30

In parts of the region near the Oxius mountains the Pasicae dwell, near the section of Jaxartes on the north dwell the Iati and the Tachori, below whom are the Au- gali; then next to the Sogdios mountains are the Oxyntracae, the Drybactae and the Candari, and below the mountains are the Mardyeni; and near the Oxii are the Oxiani and the Chorasmii; in the parts which are near these toward the east dwell the Drepsiani bordering both of the rivers; and near these but more toward the source are the Aristenses near the Jaxartes, the Cirrodaces near the Oxus; and between the Caucasus mountains and Imaus mountains the region is called Vandabanda.

The mountain towns of Sogdiana near the banks of the Jaxartes are

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Longitude</th>
<th>Latitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cyrescha</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>46 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ooxiana</td>
<td>117 30</td>
<td>44 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maruca</td>
<td>117 15</td>
<td>43 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholbisina</td>
<td>117 40</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trybactra</td>
<td>112 15</td>
<td>45 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria Oxiana</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>44 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicomordana</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>44 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drepsa metropolis</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria ultima</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAPTER XIII

Location of Sacara
(Seventh map of Asia)

The boundary of Sacara on the west is Sogdiana on the side of which as we have before mentioned, is this country’s eastern boundary. The northern boundary looks toward Scythia, the boundary line running along the bend of the Jaxartes river extends to a terminus in 130 49 on the east moreover it is bounded by Scythia along the line running through the Ascatancas mountains to the Imaus mountains 140 43 extending through the Imaus mountains northward, terminating in 145 35 on the south Sacara is bounded by the Imaus mountains along the line uniting the mentioned termini.

The mountains in Sacara, as we have said, are the Comedarum, which extend along Sogdiana 125 43 near the pass of the Comedarum 130 39 here is the Stone Tower in 135 43
Nomads occupy the land of Sacara; but the towns are without caves or forests. Those who are near the Jaxartes are the Caratae and the Comari; those along the mountain region are the Comediae, and the Massagetae, who are along the Ascanaca mountains; next, between these are the Grynaeci, the Scythae and the Toornae, below whom near the Imaus mountains are the Byltae.

CHAPTER XIV
Location of Scythia within the Imaus mountains
(Seventh map of Asia)

SCYTHIA within the Imaus mountains is terminated on the west by the side of Asiatic Sarmatia, as we have said; on the north by Terra Incognita (unknown land); on the east alone by the Imaus mountains running toward the north along the meridian line which, as we have stated, extends to the Terra Incognita; on the south by eastern Sogdiana and Margiana and along their indicated boundary to the mouth of the Oxus river which flows into the Hyrcanian sea, and by a part of the Hyrcanian sea as far as the Rha river, a description of the coast of which is the following:

Next to the mouth of the Rha river
mouth of the Rhytmus river 91 48 15
mouth of the Daix river 94 48 15
mouth of the Jaxartes river 97 48
mouth of the Istaus river 100 47 20
mouth of the Polytimetus river 103 45 30
Aspabota town 102 44
Next to this the mouth of the Oxus river 100 43

The important mountains of Scythia which are between the Imaus and the eastern parts of the northern mountains are called the Alani, the termini of which are in 105 59 30 and 118 59 30
Rhyrmici mountains the termini of which are in 90 54 and 99 57 10
from which the Rhyrmus and other rivers flow into the Rha river, and some into the Daix river; Norossus mountains, the termini of which are in 97 53

and 106 52 30
Aspasio mountains, the extreme parts of which are located in 111 55 30 and 117 52 30
from these also a number of rivers empty into the Iaxartes
Tapuri mountains, the terminal positions of which are in 120 56 and 125 49
from which also a number of rivers flow into the Iaxartes.

Next to these mountains are those which are in the Imaus region, also the Syebi mountains, the terminal locations of which are in 121 58 and 132 62
mountains which are called the Anaraci, the termini of which are in 130 56 and 137 50

After this is a bend of the Imaus mountains toward the north. Those who inhabit Scythia toward the north along the Terra Incognita are called Alani-Scythae, Suobeni, and Alanorsi. The part which is below these is held by the Satiani, the Massaei, and the Syebi. Near the Imaus mountains are the Tectosaces. Near the eastern sources of the Rha river are the Rhoiboci; below these are the Asmani, and next the Paniardi; below whom along the river is the Canodipsa region; below this are the Coraxi, then the Orgasi, next to this along the coast the Erymini, from which region toward the east are the Asiota, next the Aorsi, then the Iaxartae, a great race having the same name as the river and extending as far as the bend of Tapuros mountains. Below the Setiani are the Mologeni; below these, up to the Rhyrmicos mountains, are the Samnite; below the Massaei and the Alani mountains are the Zaratae and the Sasonis, and more to the east are the Tybiae. Next below the Zaratae are the Tabinii and the Iastae; then the Machetegi near the mountains; below these are the Norosbensi and the Norossi, and below these the Cachagas Scythae along the Iaxartes, to the west of the Aspaesi mountains are the Aspasia Scythae or Aspasia; and to eastward are the Galactopagi; and eastward from the Tapurius mountains and the Scymbi Scythae are the Tapurei. The Ascotanae are between the Abariae mountains and the mountains having the same name, also the Scythae. The Anaraci are be-
low the Alanorsi. The Ascotanea are near the Tapiris mountains and inhabit the region up to the Imaus mountains. Between the Oxus mountains and the region which is near the mouth of the Iaxartes and along the coast which lies between two rivers dwell the Ariaceae; below them are the Namastae; next are the Sagaraurae and near the river Oxus are the Rhii, in which region is the city Dauaba.

104 45

CHAPTER XV

Location of Scythia beyond the Imaus mountains
(Eighth map of Asia)

SCYTHIA beyond the Imaus mountains is terminated on the west by Scythia within the mountains and next to Sacae, the mountain range separating it running northward; on the north is unknown land; on the east it is bounded by Serica along a direct line which terminates in 150 63 and 160 35 on the south by the part of India beyond the Ganges river as far as the line which unites the designated termini; a part of the western section of the Auzacis mountains is in Scythia, the terminus of which is in 149 49 and a part of the Casii mountains, as they are called, the terminus of which is in 152 41 and an equal part of the western section of the Emodus mountains, the terminus of which is in 153 36.

In the Auzacis mountains is the source of the Oechardis river which is located in 153 51.

The Scythian Abii inhabit the northern parts of this Scythia, and below these are the Scythian Hippophagi; next to these is the Auzacis region; below this is the region which they call Casia, and below this are the Scythian Chatae; then the Achassa region and below this next to the Emodus mountains the Scythian Chauranaci.

The towns in this region are

Auzacia 144 49 40
Issedon Scythia 150 48 30
Chaurana 150 37 15
Sotta 145 35 20

CHAPTER XVI

Location of Serica (Eighth map of Asia)

SERICA is terminated on the west by Scythia beyond the Imaus mountains along the line which we have mentioned; on the north is unknown land to that parallel which extends through Thule; which unknown land extends to the meridian line, the termini of which are located in 180 63 and 180 35 on the south by the remaining part of India beyond the Ganges and along that parallel line to the terminus, the location of which is in 173 35 and beyond Sinis leading direct along that line to the terminus which is near the unknown land we have mentioned.

The mountains running into Serica, and which are called Annibi, terminate in 153 60 and 171 56 the eastern part of Auzacis mountains the terminus of which is located in 165 54 and the mountains of Asmiraei which are located in 167 47 30 and 174 47 30 the eastern part of Casius, the terminus of which is in 162 44 the Thagurus mountains, the central part of which is located in 170 43 the Emodi, the eastern part of which is called Serici, the terminus of which is in 165 36 and that which is called the Ottorocorae, the termini of which are located in 169 36 and 176 39.

Two rivers flow through the greater part of Serica: the Oechardes, a source of which in the Auzacis mountains has been described, and another in the Asmiraei mountains in 174 47 30 one from the Casius mountains flows into it in 160 49 30 the source of which in these mountains is in 161 44 15 and the river Bautius, as it is called, the source of which is in the Casius mountains, in 160 43.
another which rises in the
Ottorocoras 176 39
one from the Emodus which flows into
this 168 39
the source of which in these mountains
is 160 37

In the northern parts of Serica the races of the Anthropophagi pasture their flocks, below whom the race of the Annibi reside in the mountains of this name; between these and the Auzacios is the Sizyges race, below whom are the Damnae; then the Pialae on the Ochardes river, and below this the Oechardae of this same name. Toward the east from the Annibi are the Garinae and the Rhabbanae, and below these the Asmiraea region above the mountains of this name; below these mountains of Casius the great race of the Issedones dwell, and near the beginning of these mountains are the Throani; below these toward the east are the Thaguri, near the mountains of this name; below the Issedones are the Aspaca-
rae, and below these the Batae, and further southward, next to the Emodi and Serici mountains are the Ottorocoraes.

These are the important towns of Serica
Damna 156 51 40
Piale 160 49 40
Asmiraea 170 48 20
Throana 174 50 47 40
Issedon Serica 162 45
Aspacaera 162 30 41 40
Drosache 167 40 42 30
Palliana 162 30 41
Thogara 171 20 39 40
Araga 163 30 39 30
Daxata 174 39 40
Orosana 162 37 30
Ottorocora 165 37 15
Solana 169 37 30
Sera metropolis 177 15 38 35

CHAPTER XVII
Location of Aria
(Ninth map of Asia)

A R I A is terminated on the north by Mar-
ghana and by a part of Bactriana, the
south boundary of which we have men-
tioned; on the west by Parthia and Car-
mania Deserta along the eastern lines of
these as we have also mentioned; on the
south by Drangiana along the line which be-
ginning at this terminus near Carmania, as
we have indicated, turns toward the north
running thence through the Bagous moun-
tains to the point where it turns toward the
terminus, the location of which is in
this mountains bends into that direction in
on the east the boundaries of Aria are Paro-
panisades along the meridian line which
joins the mentioned termini in the western
part of Parapanisades. The position of
Parapanisades is defined by the three points
on the south 111 30 36
on the north 111 30 39
on the farthest east 119 30 39

An important river flows through this
land which is called the Arius, the sources of
which are in the Parapanisus mountains in
and in the Sariphe 103 38 40
at the terminus it flows into a lake which
is formed by it; this lake is called
Aria 108 40 36

The Nisaei and the Astabeni inhabit the
northern parts of Aria; the Masdorani are
near Parthia and the Carmanian desert;
the Cesirotae are near Drangiana, and next
to Parapanisades are the Paratae, below
whom are the Obares, and the parts which
lie between these the Drachamae inhabit,
below whom are the Etymandi, then the
Borgi, and below these is the Scorpiofera
region.

The towns and villages in Aria are these
Dista 102 30 38 45
Namaris 105 40 38 50
Tava 109 38 45
Augara 102 38
Bitaxa 103 40 38
Sirmagana 105 20 38 10
Siphara 107 15 38 15
Rhaugara 109 30 38 10
Zamuchana 102 37
Ambrodax 103 30 37 50
Bogadisa 104 15 37 40
Varpna 105 30 37
Godana 110 30 37 30
Pharava 110 37
Chatrica 103 36 20
Chaurina 104 20 36 20
Orthian 105 15 36 20
Tauciana 106 10 36
Astanda 107 40 36
CHAPTER XVIII

Location of Parapanisades (Ninth map of Asia)

PARAPANISADES is bounded on the west by the eastern side of Aria as we have indicated above; on the north by the part of Bactria which we have mentioned; on the east by the part of India joining the meridian line, which extends from the sources of the Oxus river through the Caucasus mountains to the terminus, the location of which is in 119 32 40 on the south moreover it is terminated by the northern border of Arachosia along the line which runs through the Parvietis mountains.

Rivers flow from this land; one the Gardamanis into Bactria, the sources of which are indicated above; another joins with the Coa river in the Goryae region, the sources of which are in 115 34 30.

The Bolitae inhabit the northern parts of this land, the Aristophylis the west, and below these are the Parsii, in the south the Parsietae, in the east the Ambatae.

The towns and villages in Parapanisades are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Longitude</th>
<th>Latitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parsiana</td>
<td>118 30</td>
<td>38 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barzaura</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>37 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artoarta</td>
<td>116 30</td>
<td>37 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baborana</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>37 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catisa</td>
<td>118 40</td>
<td>37 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niphanda</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drastoca</td>
<td>116 30</td>
<td>36 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gazaca</td>
<td>118 30</td>
<td>36 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naulibis</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>35 30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parisia | 113 30 | 35
Locharna | 118 | 35
Daroacana | 118 45 | 34 45
Cabura or Ortospana | 118 | 34
Tarbacana | 114 20 | 33 40
Bagarda | 116 40 | 33 40
Arguda | 118 45 | 33 30

CHAPTER XIX

Location of Drangiana (Ninth map of Asia)

The border of Drangiana on the west and also on the north is Aria along the line which we have said passes through Bagous mountains; on the east the boundary is the meridian line of Arachosia to the terminus which is in the confines of Aria and Parapanisades running in a straight line, the position of which is in 111 30 28 on the south it is bounded by the part of Gedrosia along the line which connects the termini in the Bactius mountains.

The river which flows through this land empties into the Arbis, the sources of which are located in 109 32 30.

The Darandae inhabit the part near Aria; next are the Batri near Arachosia; the region which lies between is called Tatacena.

The towns and villages said to be in Drangiana are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Longitude</th>
<th>Latitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prophthasia</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>32 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruda</td>
<td>106 30</td>
<td>31 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inna</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>31 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aricada</td>
<td>110 20</td>
<td>31 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asta</td>
<td>107 30</td>
<td>30 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xarxiare</td>
<td>106 20</td>
<td>29 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nostana</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>29 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharazana</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bigis</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>29 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ariaspa</td>
<td>108 40</td>
<td>28 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arana</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>28 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAPTER XX

Location of Arachosia (Ninth map of Asia)

ARACHOSIA is bordered on the west by Drangiana; on the north by that side of Parapanisades which we have mentioned; on the east by a part of India along the meridian line, the terminus of which is
on the confines of Paropanisades, thence to a
terminus which is located
in 119 28
on the south it is terminated by the part of
Gedrosia along the line which connects
the mentioned limits through the Betius
mountains.

The river which flows from this land
emptying into the Indus river has its source
in 114 32 30
and joins it in 122 30 27 30
in which locality it empties into a lake
which it forms, and which lake is called the
Arachotus 115 29 40

The parts of the land which are called
the northern the Pargietae inhabit, those be-
low them are the Sydri, and next to these are
the Ropluta and the Eoritae.

The towns and villages of Arachosia they
say are
Azola 114 15 32 15
Phoclis 118 15 32 10
Alexandria 114 31
Rhiza 115 31 10
Arbaca 118 20 31 20
Sigara 113 15 30
Chospa 115 15 30 10
Arachotos 118 30 20
Asiaca 112 20 29 20
Gammaca 116 20 29 20
Maliana 118 29 20
Damman 113 28 40

CHAPTER XXI

Location of Gedrosia
(Ninth map of Asia)

GEDROSIA is terminated on the west
by Carmania along the meridian, lead-
ing as we have stated above, as far as the
sea coast; on the north by Drangiana and
Arachosia as mentioned; on the east by the
part of India next to the Indus river along
the line leading from the terminus in the
confines of Arachosia to the terminus which
is located on the shore of the
sea 109 20
on the south by that part of the Indian sea,
which is described in the following manner:
ater the terminus located in the confines of
Carmania
mouth of the Arbis river 105 20 15
river sources 110 27 30
where the river rising in Drangiana flows
into it 107 40 25
Rhagiava town 106 20
Mulierum harbor 107 20 15
Cocamba 108 20
Rhizana 108 40 20 15
after which is the indicated terminus near
the sea.

The mountains which extend through
Gedrosia are called the Arbori, the termini
of which are 107 22
and 113 26 30
from which rivers flow into the Indus, the
source of one of which is
in 111 25 30
in like manner one flowing from the Baetis
mountains runs through Gedrosia.

On the maritime shores of the land are the
Arbitari villages; in the direction toward
Carmania dwell the Parsirae; near Aracho-
sia the Musarnaei; all of the intermediate
region is called Paradene and below this
Parisine; after this near the Indus dwell the
Rhamnae.

The towns and villages of Gedrosia are
Cuni 110 27
Badara 113 27
Musarna 115 27 30
Cottobara 108 25 30
Soxistra 112 30 25 45
Oscana 115 26
Parsis metropolis 106 30 23 30
Omiza 110 23 30
Arbis town 105 20 20 30
Islands adjacent to Gedrosia
Asthena 105 18
Codane 107 30 17
Choosing the Path

Zoroastrian Scripture pages:
- Avesta / Scriptures: Texts, Translations, Content Description
- History: Composition, Transmission, Compilation, Destruction
- Avestan Manuscripts
- Scripture Selections: Choosing the Path
- Additional Reading
- Avestan, Iranian, Persian Languages. Scripts
- Site Contents

Search Our Site: Google Search

The Two

Gathic text
Zarathushtra:
30.1 Gathas / Yasna
At¹ ta² vavahsha² ishento³
y¹ Mazdatha⁴ hyat² chit³ vidushe⁴
staot¹ cha² ahura³
yesny³ cha³ vangheush² manangho⁴
hu-manzdra¹ ashaye² cha³
ya¹ raocbehish² daresara³ urvaza⁴

30.2 srata¹ gueshaish² vaahista³
avaenata¹ sucha² manangha³

English Translation
Zoroaster:
Now¹ I will speak² to the assembled⁴ of the two²,
who¹ Mazda-created² be³ it⁴ known⁵,
with² hymns³ and² divine³
dedications¹, and² highest³ thoughts⁴,
and³ the good-principles¹ of Asha⁴,
- that which¹ is the light² of guidance¹ for souls towards bliss⁴

Free Rendering
Zoroaster:
Now I will speak to the assembled of the two
who were created by Mazda, be it known
And sing hymns with divine dedications
And the highest thoughts
The good principles of Asha
that light the path for souls towards bliss

Listen¹ with (your) ears² the highest³ (ideals),
consider¹ the most enlightened² thoughts¹,

Listen with your ears the highest ideals
consider the most enlightened thoughts
then between the two choose person by person each for oneself before the great reckoning this we make known to awaken each one

Then let the path between the two be chosen person by person each for oneself Before the great reckoning awake ye all to this my counsel

Now the two mainyu primordial who were twin well-working, became in thoughts and words and deeds, apart, the good and the bad, And of which the hu-daongho rightly choose (but) not the duz-daongho but not so those in ignorance. Now the two mainyu, primordial who were twin well-working, became in thought and word and deed separate, the better and the bad And of these two the wise do rightly choose but not so those in ignorance.

The Two Paths in Life & The Best Existence - Vahishtem Anghuim

Avestan Text
Vispa Humata - Khordeh Avesta
vispa1 hymata2 vispa3 hukhta4 vispa5 hvarshta6 baodho-varshta7 vispa1 dushmata2 vispa3 dzhukhta4 vispa5 duzhvarshta6 not7 baodho-varshta7 vispa1 hymata2 vispa3 hukhta4 vispa5 hvarshta6 vahishtem7 anghuim8 ashaeta9 vispa3 dushmata2 vispa3 dzhukhta4 vispa5 duzhvarshta6 achiismem9 anghuim9 ashaeta9 vispa1 hymata2 vispa3 hukhta4 vispa5 hvarshta6 vahishta7 anghuili8 at2 hacha2 chithrem3 ashaheme4

72.11 (colophon to the Yasna)
aevo1 pantao3 yo4 ashaeht5 vispa1 anyeashem2 apantam3

English Translation
Every good thought every good word every good deed is of wisdom born Every evil thought every evil word every evil deed is not of wisdom born Every good thought every good word every good deed is the best life leads Every evil thought every evil word every evil deed the worst life leads Every good thought every good word every good deed is the best life is that which is begotten of righteous order The one path is that of Asha all others are not-paths

Free Rendering
Every good thought every good word every good deed is of wisdom born Every evil thought every evil word every evil deed is not of wisdom born Every good thought every good word every good deed is the best life leads Every evil thought every evil word every evil deed is the worst life leads Every good thought every good word every good deed is the best life is That which is begotten of righteous order The one path is that of Asha all others are not-paths.

Fravarane - Pledge of Faith

Avestan Text	ext
Yasna 12.8.9
Person praying:
Mazdayasni1 ahmi2 Mazdayasni1 Zarathushtrish2 Fravarane1 astuathaascha2 fravratascha3

English Translation
Person praying:
A worshipper of God I am A worshipper of God I am a Zarathushtrian I declare these pledges and intents

Free Rendering
Person praying:
I am a worshipper of God A Zarathushtrian in worship of God These pledges and intents I do declare:
I pledge my thoughts to good thoughts\(^3\) (the) mind\(^3\)
I pledge my words to good words\(^3\) (the) speech\(^3\)
I pledge my actions to good deeds\(^3\) (the) actions\(^3\)
I pledge myself to the highest discerning belief in worship of God\(^4\)

**Avowal**

**Avestan Text**

Yasna 10.16

-panchanam\(^1\) ahmim\(^1\) panchanam\(^7\) noit\(^4\) ahmim\(^5\)
-humataha\(^1\) ahmim\(^2\) dushmataha\(^3\) noit\(^4\) ahmim\(^5\)
hukhtahe\(^1\) ahmim\(^2\) dzhukhtahe\(^3\) noit\(^4\) ahmim\(^5\)
hvarshtahe\(^1\) ahmim\(^2\) dzhvarshtahe\(^3\) noit\(^4\) ahmim\(^5\)
sraoehahe\(^1\) ahmim\(^2\) asrooehahe\(^3\) noit\(^4\) ahmim\(^5\)
ashaono\(^1\) ahmim\(^2\) dzhava\(^3\) noit\(^4\) ahmim\(^5\)
at-chit\(^1\) ahmat\(^2\)
yatha\(^1\) apemim\(^2\) mainvao\(^3\) anghat\(^4\) niaitish\(^5\)

**English Translation**

of five\(^1\) I am\(^2\) of five\(^3\) not\(^4\) I am\(^5\)
of good thoughts\(^1\) I am\(^2\) of evil thoughts\(^3\) not\(^4\) I am\(^5\)
of good words\(^1\) I am\(^2\) of evil words\(^3\) not\(^4\) I am\(^5\)
of good deeds\(^1\) I am\(^2\) of evil deeds\(^3\) not\(^4\) I am\(^5\)
with conscience\(^1\) I am\(^2\) without conscience\(^3\) not\(^4\) I am\(^5\)
of righteous order\(^1\) I am\(^2\) of the lie\(^3\) (also falsehood, disorder and destruction) not\(^4\) I am\(^5\)
of these alone\(^1\) I am\(^2\)
so that\(^1\) finally\(^2\) the (two) spiritualities\(^3\) between\(^4\) differentiate\(^5\)

**Free Rendering**

I am of five, of five I am not
I am of good thoughts, I am not of evil thoughts
I am of good words, I am not of evil words
I am of good deeds, I am not of evil deeds
I am with conscience, without conscience I am not
I am of righteous order, I am not of falsehood

Of these alone I am
So that I may differentiate absolutely between the two spiritualities

**Creed**

**Avestan Text**

Vendidad 18.17

-ma\(^1\) thrayam\(^2\) vayhishatanam\(^3\) awituyho\(^4\) buyata\(^5\)
humata-he\(^1\) manangho\(^2\)
hukhta-he\(^1\) vacangho
hvarshta-he\(^1\) shyaothnahe

**English Translation**

on\(^1\) three\(^2\) highest ideals\(^3\) ever intent\(^4\) be\(^5\)
good thoughts\(^1\) thought\(^2\)
good words\(^1\) spoken\(^2\)
good deeds\(^1\) done\(^2\)

**Free Rendering**

On three noble ideals be ever intent
the good thought well thought
the good word well spoken
the good deed well done

**Great Artisan**

**Avestan Text**

Yasna 44.5

tat\(^1\) thwa\(^2\) peresa\(^3\) eresh\(^3\) mo\(^5\) vaoocha\(^6\) Ahura\(^7\)
ke\(^1\) hvapo\(^2\) raoch-cha\(^3\) dat\(^5\) temas-cha\(^5\)
ke\(^1\) hvapo\(^2\) khvafnem-cha\(^3\) dat\(^5\) zema-cha\(^5\)
ke\(^1\) ya\(^2\) usha\(^3\) ares\(^4\) pitwa\(^5\) khsha-cha\(^6\)
y\(^1\) manaothir\(^2\) chadzhovah\(^3\) arahah\(^4\)

**English Translation**

This of You\(^1\) I ask\(^2\) truly\(^4\) me\(^5\) tell\(^6\) Lord\(^7\)
Which\(^1\) artisan\(^2\) light-and\(^3\) made\(^4\) darkness-and\(^5\)
Which\(^1\) artisan\(^2\) sleep-and\(^3\) made\(^4\) wakefulness-and\(^5\)
Which\(^1\) who\(^2\) of (that) dawn\(^3\) half\(^4\) sun\(^5\) dusk\(^3\)
who\(^1\) instils\(^2\) the discerning person\(^3\) (with) purpose\(^4\)

**Free Rendering**

This of You I ask; tell me truly Lord
Which artisan made light and darkness?
Which artisan made sleep and wakefulness?
Who at dawn, noon and dusk
Instils the discerning person with purpose?

Translations by K. E. Eduljee, 1985-2008
Zoroastrianism

OVERVIEW - EXPANDED

Suggested pre-reading:
» Home page. Zoroastrian Creed, Way, Purpose and Goal of Life.

This page contains references and a greater number of Zoroastrian names.

For a simplified version of this page with no references and only a few key Zoroastrian words, please see our Overview-Simplified page.

Words in red are links.

WHAT IS ZOROASTRIANISM?

- Zoroastrianism is an ancient Iranian (Persian)*-Central Asian religion founded by Zarathushtra (also spelt Zarathustra).
- Zarathushtra is the western version of the name Zarathushtra (also spelt Zoroaster).
- Zoroastrianism is possibly the oldest religion based on a belief in one God (commonly called monotheism) practiced today.
- Zoroastrian scriptures are called the Avesta.
- [* See Iran and Persia, Are They The Same? The page also introduces Zoroastrianism's Central Asian connections.]

WHAT IS THE ZOROASTRIAN ETHICAL CREED?

- The Zoroastrian creed is to commit to a life based on good thoughts, good words and good deeds.

WHAT ARE ZOROASTRIAN BELIEFS AND PHILOSOPHY?

Creation, Existence & Coexistence
- Creation consists of mainyu, the spiritual and gaetha (gaethya), the material (physical) existence. [In later language: menog and getig.]
- The spiritual existence was created before the material existence.
- The spiritual existence consists of two primordial spiritual entities or mainyu (explained below).
- At creation, the two spiritual entities were manifested in the material or physical existence as gaem (being) and ajyaitim (not being). (Hymns, or Gatha, of Zarathushtra, 30.1-4)
- Every element of creation can be described as an entity of being and its negation that is simultaneously opposite and complementary.
- Examples of the duality of existence, existential duality, are light and not-light (darkness); hot and not-hot (cold). In human beings, this duality is
manifest as wisdom and not-wisdom (ignorance) and in human actions as beneficence and not-beneficent (harm) - actions that stem from a human spirit that is good (beneficent or righteous) or not-good (harmful or bad).

- The primordial cosmic fire was a transition between the spiritual and material existences.
- In the Iranian poet Ferdowsi’s (935-1020 ACE) epic Shahnameh, the Book of Kings, Zarathushtra tells King Vishtasp, “Look upon the heavens and the earth. God, Ahura Mazda, created them not with dust and water. Look upon the fire and behold therein how they were created”.
- The universal laws of asha govern and bring order to the spiritual and material existences.
- Human beings are constituted from both, the spiritual and material existences.
- Human beings also have two conscious selves (ahva): the thinking (manangho) and corporeal (physical, astavant) selves (Hymns, or Gatha, of Zarathushtra, 28.2).
- Consciousness (bod) enables us to think, speak and act and in so doing, make conscious choices.
- The universal laws of Asha are available, through individual choice, to bring order and goodness to human thoughts, words and deeds.

**Choice**
- In human beings the moral and ethical opposites of good and bad, right and wrong, form dichotomies - mutually exclusive opposites that require a choice between one or the other.
- These moral and ethical opposites are asha (principled, honest, beneficent, ordered, lawful living), and druj (unprincipled, dishonest, harmful, chaotic, unlawful living and living by the lie - deceiving and deluding others).
- Human beings have the ability to choose between the two, and when they do, they choose their path in life and display the nature of their spirit.
- Those who live by asha are called the ashavan and those who live by druj / dreg are the dregvant.

**Moderation**
- The guiding principle for many life-style choices (not moral or ethical choices) is moderation between the extremes of too much and too little.
- Applying the principle of moderation does not preclude the need to apply the tests of goodness to every choice (for instance if something is helpful or harmful).

**Understanding & Wisdom**
- Understanding the difference and then deciding between coexistence, choosing or moderation, requires listening with open minds, seeking knowledge and gaining wisdom, khrateush or khratu.
- Correct choices and reasoned decisions, ratavo, are the hallmark and product of wisdom.
- Good thoughts, words and deeds follow as a natural, intuitive outcome. Goodness does not come from dogma. Goodness is grounded in wisdom.

**Free Will, Reason & Choice**
- Within the limits of circumstance, human beings are endowed with free will, the freedom to make choices, the ability to separate good from bad, the ability to separate right from wrong, and the ability to reason.
- The ability to reason, see differences and make choices from available options, enables us to make choices in our thoughts, words and deeds.

**Age of Reason**
- Parents and other early childhood caregivers have an important role in guiding young people in the basic choice of spirit they make before the time they reach the age of reason - fifteen years of age - and in the development of a conscience.

**Conscience & Intuitive Wisdom - Sarosh**
- A developed conscience, yaksh, enables growth in wisdom and makes choices grounded in wisdom intuitive. Intuitive wisdom, the inner voice of wisdom within us, is called sarosh (also saroosh or sarush). Intuitive wise words and actions flow from intuitive wisdom.

**SPIRITUAL COMPONENTS IN NATURE & HUMAN BEINGS**

**The Spirit - Mainyu**
- Mainyu, the spiritual existence, is the co-existential dual opposite of the physical existence, gaetha. It is the non-physical or non-material existence that exists side-by-side with the physical existence. It is what the material existence is not.
- Mainyu is beyond our senses; though perhaps not beyond our feelings and intuition.
- Human beings are constituted from both the material and spiritual existences.
- Our spirit shapes and determines the nature of our attitude, our mentality and every thought, word and deed.

**Spenta & Angra Mainyu**
- A brilliant, positive, constructive, and beneficent spirit that seeks wisdom is called a spenta mainyu.
- The archetype and embodiment of spenta mainyu is called ratush, the righteous leader.
- A gloomy, negative, destructive, and harmful spirit that wishes to remain ignorant is called an angra mainyu.
The archetype and embodiment of angra mainyu is called ahriman, the devil incarnate.

**Spirit & Attitude - Fundamental Choice**
- The fundamental choice we make is the nature of our spirit and attitude.
- Because our choice can change and because a spenta mainyu is particularly vulnerable, we need to periodically and continuously reassess and reaffirm our choice of spirit. For orthodox Zoroastrians, this is done through daily prayers.

**Character**
- This fundamental choice in spirit determines the nature of our character, which is also the character of our soul.

**Disposition**
- Depending on the spirit we choose, we become cheerful or angry, constructive or destructive, helpful or harmful, honest or dishonest, loyal or unfaithful, healthy or unhealthy, serene or agitated, peaceful or conflicted, holistic or imbalanced.

**The Soul, Urvan - Fate of the Soul**
- All living creatures have a soul, urvan (also ravan).
- With human beings, a person's character and that of their soul is built on the spirit a person chooses and is within that person's control through free will.
- With free will and free choice come responsibility and accountability.
- Human beings are responsible for their choices and therefore accountable in this life and in the after-life.
- The fate of the human soul depends on its store of thoughts, words, and deeds. The human soul receives in the afterlife what it has given out in this life.
- The soul creates its heaven or hell, both of which are a state of spiritual existence and not places.
- All souls come from God. At the end of time, all souls will be cleansed and will return to God.
  (Also see *After Life, Body and Soul*)

**Concepts of Time**
- In Zoroastrianism, there are two concepts of time:
  1. Zravanahe daregho khvadhatahe (or khadhatahe / hvadhatahe) - time-span of long sovereign dominion (self-governed) but with a beginning and end, or measurable time, and
  2. Zravanahe akarnahe - time-span that is not bounded - without a beginning or an end, or immeasurable time (alternatively, beyond the constraints of measurable time).
- Akarna (a-karna) means not-bounded, i.e. boundless or infinite.
- Amertat (a-mordad) [in later language amordad (a-mordad)], similarly means not-mortal or im-mortal (im-mortal) i.e. undying.
- Zravan (zruuan / zurvan) became zaman [time-span, (time) period, life-time] in Middle Persian.

**Fravashi**
- There is another spiritual component that resides in all of creation, living and not living, called the fravashi (later farvard or farohar in Middle Persian).
- An aspect of the fravashi, sometimes called the divine spark, gives every part and particle of creation the laws of asha - the laws that govern the spiritual and material universe.
- This aspect of the fravashi maintains, sustains and helps creation progressively move or evolve towards frasho-kereti (Middle Persian frashigird, frashigird or frashogard), an ultimate and ideal future existence (also see reference in Khvarenah below).
- The fravashi can be thought of as the hand of God in all of creation, or perhaps, the means by which God's plan resides in all of creation. Since God's law and plan are in every part and particle of creation from the very beginning, there is no need for God to intervene in the evolution of creation from time to time.
- While the soul is personal, the fravashi is universal.
- The fravashi gives a person intuitive access to the moral and ethical laws of Asha, and allows a person to gain insights into the nature of creation through introspection.

**Khvarenah**
- [Also spelt khvarenko, khvarana or khwarnag (the 'khv/khw' are at times denoted by 'hu'). Middle Persian Pahlavi: khwar, khwarr, or khwarrah. New Persian: Khrra(h). Related Old Persian: farnah. New Persian: far.]
- The khvarenah is the archetype of the person one can grow to if allowed to grow to the limit of her or his capacity in grace, that is, in keeping with the fravashi and thereby in keeping with Divine purpose. In the Avesta, the khvarenah is frequently described as 'Haoma-datem', i.e. God-given or God-gifted.
- The khvarenah is also a person's higher calling - their meaning in life [the Middle Persian Pahlavi rending of khvarenah is khvash-kari meaning own-work or own-purpose (in keeping with Divine purpose i.e. the higher calling)].
- Every human being is endowed with natural talents that can be harnessed and developed to achieve one's highest potential or one's higher calling [sometimes thought of as one's latent destiny in life]. Alternatively, through choice, these talents can be employed to achieve base ambitions.
- A spenta mainyu - a brilliant, positive, constructive, and beneficent spirit - allows a person to perceive their higher calling.
- An angra mainyu - a gloomy, negative, destructive, and harmful spirit - leaves a person vulnerable to base ambitions.
A spenta mainyu enables a person to choose asha, the path of goodness, and pursue her or his calling without expectation of reward. The khvarenah is specific to a person and is different for each person. There is a strong implication in Zamyad Yasht (Yt 19.46-57) that the khvarenah does not belong to a person cannot be seized by another person. The implication is that we should be content with our khvarenah and not be jealous or greedy of the other's khvarenah (here, good fortune).

When all human beings realize their calling or full potential in grace, the world will attain vahtanem anghuis & frasho-kereti - the ultimate and ideal future existence, a heaven on earth. (Also see the section on Aryan homeland, as paradise.)

Human beings often limit or lose themselves. In either case, they do not achieve their full potential or capacity. To lose oneself is to lose one's khvarenah.

In mythology, the khvarenah is like a bird that hovers over a person, and one that can fly away. If grace is replaced by evil ambitions, the bird is replaced by serpents growing out of that person's shoulders [see Yasht 19.34, Yima Khshaeta (King Jamshid) in the Zamyad Yasht, and Shahnameh - Kings Jamshid and Zahak].

The source of the khvarenah is said to be the divine spiritual light that is eternal and which casts no shadow (Denkard Madon 347.6-7).

A person's realization of her or his khvarenah is evidenced by a halo (farr in Persian), glowing brightly over her or his head - radiant as the sun (khvar/khor). (See portrait of Zarathushtra at the top of the page - a physical representation of something perceived by the spiritual eye and senses.) The opposite of the light of a halo is darkness - like a dark cloud hanging over someone.

A person's realization of her or his khvarenah cloaks that person with the aura of charisma and grace, the kind possessed by Zarathushtra and King Cyrus the Great.

Khvarenah and the resulting charisma enable leadership that does not rely on authority.

[For those interested in the etymology of the modern Persian names; Farr, Farah, Farahmand, Farrokh derive from the Old Persian farnah. Farr is United Fravashi A person's spiritual components, that is, the person's urvan (soul), mainyu (spirit), fravashi and khvarenah can unite and the spirits of the departed are generally referred to collectively as that person's (united) fravashi:

\[\text{havahe uruno fravashi} \] from Y (Yasna). 23.4
Free rendering: My own soul's fravashi.

\[\text{khvanvaitish ashahe verezo yazamaide, yahu iristinam urvano shayente ya ashaonam fravashayo...} \] (from Y. 16.7)
Free rendering: We extol the asha (abiding) deeds of those urvan (souls) of the dead that dwell with the asha (abiding) fravashis and we extol the highest goodness of the bright (enlightened) whole khvathra.

If the spirit, soul and khvarenah are in harmony with asha, they come together to form a united fravashi. If they are not in harmony with asha, then there is separation from the fravashi in this life, and by extension in the after life.

The united soul and fravashi of the departed can be thought of as a spiritual soul, while the soul of the living - a living soul.

The united fravashi of the righteous have the ability to become guardian angels.

\[\text{In the Farvardin Yasht (at 13.70):} \] Taahe jasaonti avanghe yezi-she bavainti anazaretao khshnutao ainitao atbishtao ughrao ashaunam fravashayo, taao dim ava nifravayente manayen ahe yatha na merekho hupareno.
Free rendering: They, the asha-abiding fravashis, come to assist those who are beneficent and not hurtful or offensive. To them, the fravashis will assuredly come flying like birds well-winged.

**United Fravashi**

A person's spiritual components, that is, the person's urvan (soul), mainyu (spirit), fravashi and khvarenah can unite and the spirits of the departed are generally referred to collectively as that person's (united) fravashi:

- havahe uruno fravashi (from Y (Yasna). 23.4)
  Free rendering: My own soul's fravashi.
- khvanvaitish ashahe verezo yazamaide, yahu iristinam urvano shayente ya ashaonam fravashayo... (from Y. 16.7)
  Free rendering: We extol the asha (abiding) deeds of those urvan (souls) of the dead that dwell with the asha (abiding) fravashis and we extol the highest goodness of the bright (enlightened) whole khvathra.

If the spirit, soul and khvarenah are in harmony with asha, they come together to form a united fravashi. If they are not in harmony with asha, then there is separation from the fravashi in this life, and by extension in the after life.

The united soul and fravashi of the departed can be thought of as a spiritual soul, while the soul of the living - a living soul.

The united fravashi of the righteous have the ability to become guardian angels.

- In the Farvardin Yasht (at 13.70): Taahe jasaonti avanghe yezi-she bavainti anazaretao khshnutao ainitao atbishtao ughrao ashaunam fravashayo, taao dim ava nifravayente manayen ahe yatha na merekho hupareno.
  Free rendering: They, the asha-abiding fravashis, come to assist those who are beneficent and not hurtful or offensive. To them, the fravashis will assuredly come flying like birds well-winged.

**Farohar or Fravahar**

The rock engraved image to the right is called a fravahar or farohar (also spelt faravahar). Fravahar / farohar/is the modern word for the (united) fravashi. It is an image found on rock inscriptions and carvings commissioned by the ancient Persian Achaemenian kings. The image is usually portrayed above the image of a king, and the figure in the farohar is identical to the king below in features as well as clothing.

According to Prof. Mary Boyce in her article on the Fravashi, J. H. Moulton - in his Early Zoroastrianism (1913) at p. 260 - "rejecting the then prevailing Western interpretation of the Achaemenid winged symbol as that of Ahura Mazda, identified it as the king's fravashi, and it is still generally regarded as a fravashi symbol by Zoroastrians. Strong arguments, however, have by now been put forward by Western scholars for its representing khvarenah (for references see Boyce, Zoroastrianism II, p. 103 n. 82; Boyce and Grenet, Zoroastrianism III, p. 104 and nn. 197-98).

In 1925 and again in 1930, J. M. Unvala, a Parsi scholar, wrote articles identifying the image as a representation of the fravashi of the king or king's ancestor. In 1928, Dr. Irach Taraporewala identified the image as a representation of the king's khvarenah or farr.

Since then, the farohar as proposed by Moulton and Unvala has become the principal symbol of the Zoroastrian faith and is displayed on the facade of many fire temples.

The symbol of the fravahar or farohar therefore has three meanings nowadays:
As a general symbol of the Zoroastrian faith: a symbol of belonging to the Zoroastrian community and of being a Zoroastrian (a symbol in a manner similar to the Christian cross).

As a fravahar or farohar: a general symbol of the united fravashi or a guardian angel.

As a symbol used by a Persian Achaemenian king: a personal symbol of the king's khvarenah or farr, his kingship in grace, or his fravashi.

SPIRITUAL QUEST

Based on the hymns of Zarathushtra - the Gathas including Chapters 30 and 48:

- A person's quest for spiritual awareness, growth, or realization is an individual quest.
- The path to spiritual realization is through an open mind, a good mind, reason, wisdom, goodness, security and serenity.
- Spiritual awareness and connection comes through introspection, reflection and meditation while reciting a mantra preferably facing a source of light such as a flame.
- Spiritual understanding comes from an open mind, listening, and then deciding person by person, each one for herself or himself, that person's individual path to spiritual realization.
  - [Keeping an open mind and listening does not mean blindly following others or unquestioned faith. Blind faith leads to delusion (Gatha 48.10).]
- Spiritual development comes through possessing the six Amesha Spenta qualities (developing the spirit, mind, body and indeed all aspect of one's life) and simultaneously being in tune with each element of nature, thereby being in harmony with God's work.

GOAL IN LIFE - USHOT

- The goal in life is to achieve ushta: abiding spiritual resplendence, happiness, and peace - an individual at peace with oneself and humanity at peace with itself. Spiritual resplendence gives a person the light of wisdom, a sense of spiritual confidence that the path a person has chosen will lead to a meaningful and fulfilling life. It is inner enlightenment of the spiritual self and a beacon that lights the path ahead.
- As with the Amesha Spentas, ushta is a conceptual word rather than a word with a single meaning. Realization of ushta follows as an outcome of leading a life based on the Amesha Spentas of which two have a special connection: asha and armaiti. While a person's spiritual quest is an individual one, achieving ushta requires living the life of an ashavan - a life of beneficent goodness towards all. One cannot achieve ushta by isolating oneself or being self-centred. A manifestation of abiding peace is serenity or armaiti.
- Ushta is a spiritual state and a state of being.

  - (From the Book of Yasna, chapters 27, 28, 29 and 43-46 (the Ushtavaiti Gatha). The Yasna is one of the books of the Avesta, the Zoroastrian Scriptures.)

  - Avestan (scriptural) selections:
    - « Ushta ahmai yahmai ushta kahmaichit. (from Gatha Y. 43.1)  
      Free rendering: (Ushta) Happiness comes to them who bring happiness to others.
    - Ushta asti ushta ahmai, hyat ashai vahishtai ashem. (from Y. 27.14)  
      Free rendering: (Ushta) Abiding happiness and peace is theirs who choose (asha) goodness for its own sake.
    - Metaphorically speaking, if individuals in their spiritual quest journey to a mountain-top seeking solitude and the space for the inner voice to be heard; the space for introspection, reflection and meditation while occasionally reciting a mantra when facing a source of light, the spiritual resplendence of ushta will be found on their return - in the toils of their labour, in selflessly serving God's creation, in the happiness and peace they bring to others, and at the end of the day in the secure knowledge of knowing that there's, no matter how humble, was a life well spent.
    - Introspection, reflection and meditation are only a means to an end. They are not ends in themselves. One purpose of introspection, reflection and meditation is to clear the mind of negative thoughts and replace them with positive thoughts. Another is to develop a clear understanding of who we are, what we can capable of doing and how we can best deploy or talents. Introspection, reflection and meditation are ways to develop a good mind - the start of a process that leads to a wise mind, good words and ultimately good deeds.
    - Good works are the efficacy of enlightenment (cf. Denkard 3.355-356, 359, 361) and ushta (also called spiritual wisdom). Laziness deprives the mind of enlightenment and ushta. Good works by people aid creation attain in goal and the manifestation of its potential. Good works are evidence of humans being in concert with God's purpose for creation.
    - Zoroastrianism promotes the concept of a life spent in beneficent action.

  - Top

THE NATURE OF GOD, AHURA MAZDA

Based on Sad-o-Yak Nam-e-Khoda, the Hundred and One Names of God:

- God (Khoda) in the language of the older Zoroastrian scriptures is Ahura Mazda.
- There are no Zoroastrian images or representations of God.
- The Zoroastrian concept of God is that:
  - Understanding the true nature of God is beyond human comprehension (an-aiyafah).
  - God is not of human form (akh-tan) i.e. non-anthropomorphic and without gender. God is a spiritual entity (mino-tum) and thereby formless (an-annah) and invisible. God has no human frailties (a-bish) or emotions (rakhoh). God shows no anger and no favour (a-sato).
  - God is without duality (a-dui).
God is uncreated and without end (abadah), without cause (a-chem), the great cause (jamaga), the cause of all causes (chamana), and the root of all creation (bune-stih).

Other texts state that while the eye cannot behold God, and while the mind cannot conceive God, God is nearer to us than our own corporeal selves [cf. Pursishniha in possession of Ervad Tahmurash Dinshaw Anklesaria, 1842-1903 CE (also called Tahmurash Fragments) 58, 59].

Mohsen Fani, a seventeenth century author of The Dabistan, 'The School', describes the Zoroastrian concept of God by stating that except God, who can comprehend God? Entity, unity, identity are inseparable properties of this original essence.

The closest we can come to understanding the nature of God, Ahura Mazda, is through six abstract attributes called Amesha Spentas (see below).

Mohsen Fani, a seventeenth century author of The Dabistan, 'The School', describes the Zoroastrian concept of God by stating that except God, who can comprehend God? Entity, unity, identity are inseparable properties of this original essence.

Writing from the perspective of Greeks who worshipped multiple anthropomorphic gods during his time, Herodotus (c. 430 BCE) says: "They (the Persians) have no images of the gods, no temples nor altars, and consider the use of them a sign of folly. This comes, I think, from their not believing the gods to have the same nature with men, as the Greeks imagine." Third cent. CE Greek biographer Diogenes Laertius in his Lives of Eminent Philosophers wrote, "The Magi... condemn the use of images, and especially the error of attributing to the Divine difference of sex." Further, Avestan and Iranian languages do not have gender based pronouns. Pronouns such as 'he' or 'she' cannot be applied to Ahura Mazda who is our creator of all of creation, not our father or mother. The Middle Persian "Dadar Hormozd" translates as "Creator Ahura Mazda".

God's relationship with creation is understood, as best as is possible, through the very nature, beauty and grandeur of God's creation, and through God's six transcendental, creation-related, abstract attributes called Amesha Spentas.

**Amesha Spentas - Eternal Beneficent Brilliance**

The Amesha Spentas (amesha meaning eternal & spenta meaning brilliance and beneficence) as attributes of God are:

- **Vohu Mano**, the high mind (creation was caused by a divine thought)
- **Asha**, cosmic order and universal laws
- **Khshathra**, dominion
- **Armaiti**, equanimity
- **Haurvatat**, ultimate wholeness
- **Ameretat**, immortality

In a further attempt to understand God and how God interfaces with God's creation, the six qualities and attributes, the Amesha Spentas, were thought of as archangels - abstract extensions of God - each associated with an aspect of creation.

**Zoroastrian Ethos**

In the Vaetha Nask, a question is asked about how a person can be recognized as a Zoroastrian. The answer given is through that person's good mind, intellect without deceitfulness, good speech and good actions. (Vaetha Nask, a Middle Persian text translated from the Avesta and Pahlavi By Dastur Dr. Kakihushroz M. Jamaspasa and Helmut Humbach. Publishers Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden.) Middle Persian texts such as the Dinkard (DkM 266.1), and travellers' observations about the shared characteristics of the Zoroastrians they encountered, provide us with additional information. The following are some traits and qualities that contributed to the reputation of Zoroastrians:

- **Persona**: Grace, generosity of spirit, good manners.
- **Traits**: Wisdom in thought, measured speech, and beneficent action.
- **Possessing six virtues**: Reason, self-control, modesty, trustworthiness, gratitude, and hope.
- **Without six vices**: Malice, anger, arrogance, deceitfulness, greed, and despair.

The Zoroastrian ethos was developed into a list of guiding principles that is read out during a Zoroastrian marriage ceremony. A condensed list of these guiding principles are provided in our page on marriages.

Amongst travellers' records are the observations of Johan Albrecht de Mandelslo, a German adventurer from 1638 CE, and those of an Anglican chaplain.
In the chronicles of his travels through Persia and India, Mandelslo writes that he saw the Zoroastrians of India, the Parsees, as ‘diligent’, ‘conscientious’ and ‘skilful’ in their work ethic.

John Ovington, a chaplain in the Royal Navy, reported in his work, published in 1696 CE, that in the Indian Gujarati city of Surat, Zoroastrians “assist the poor and are ready to provide for the sustenance and comfort of such as want it. Their universal kindness, either employing such as are ready and able to work, or bestowing a reasonable bounteous charity to such as are in affligh and miserable, leave no man destitute of relief, nor suffer a beggar in all their tribe” (Ovington 1929, p. 216).

More recently, after a visit to Yazd Iran, Karl Vick wrote in a June 18, 2006 article in the Washington Post: “Zoroastrians appear to enjoy the most respect (by the majority Muslims from amongst the other religious minorities) inside Iran... Zoroastrians enjoy a vivid reputation for honesty. Prices in a shop owned by a Zoroastrian are regarded as the benchmark that competing shops are compared against. Children are told that when arriving in a strange town near dark, seek out a Zoroastrian home to spend the night in. 'I'm sorry to say it and it might sound offensive, but these Zoroastrians are better Muslims than we are,' said Mohammad Pardehbaff, a Yazd driver.”

THE RELATIONSHIP OF HUMAN BEINGS TO NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Living in harmony with nature and the environment is working in harmony with God's creation.
- Nature is God's creation and therefore sacred.
- Defiling the environment is working in opposition to God's creation.
- The Zoroastrian approach to the environment is guided by the ethical imperative to be beneficent and a respect, indeed a reverence, for the environment.
- The approach towards the environment is balanced between preserving the environment and enhancing the environment. Where needed to sustain human life, the principle is to make barren or desolate land fertile and productive.
- Ancient Zoroastrians developed elaborate techniques to avoid polluting the environment in a harmful manner. Some examples:
  - Waste was disposed in impervious stone-lined pits where it degrated naturally through exposure to the sun (sometimes aided by lime) without polluting the surrounding land and water.
  - Household waste was disposed in stone or stone-lined pits adjacent to a home (Vendidad 17.2.1).
  - Community waste was placed in stone or stone-lined pits in designated areas.
  - Settlements were constructed away from the banks of streams.
  - According to Herodotus (c. 430 BCE): "They (the Persians) never defile a river with the secretions of their bodies, nor even wash their hands in one; nor will they allow others to do so, as they have a great reverence for rivers." Strabo, Book XV, Chapter 3.16, (written 17-23 ACE) states: "For the Persians neither urinate, nor wash themselves, in a river; nor yet bathe therein nor cast therein any thing dead or any other thing that is considered unclean."
  - Fires, athra/atash, were made from selected dried woods and other materials that produced the least amount of smoke. It helped that neighbourhoods maintained central continuously burning fires in a fire-house, the atash-gah, tended by a fire-keeper, an athravan. In the west of Iran, this task was performed by the Magi. According to Strabo: "They (the Persians in Cappadocia - present day Turkey) also have Pyraetheia (fire-houses), noteworthy enclosures; and in the midst of these there is a container, on which there is a large quantity of ashes and where the Magi keep the fire ever burning." The fire container was a deep urn which contained the ashes and hot coals produced by the fire. The system allowed the base of the fire to remain very hot resulting in a fire that produced the least amount of smoke and pollution. Every evening, the fire keepers would carefully cover the fire with its ashes so that it would continue smouldering throughout the night while saving fuel, ready to resume when the ashes were removed in the morning. While not perfect, it was a system, in those ancient times, that best adhered to the principles of the faith. Householders would come to this central place to light their home fires when needed. Maintaining fires continuously in homes would have denuded a fragile environment of trees and the smoke would have greatly polluted the air. There are indications that woods from Juniper and Plane (Chenar) trees were traditionally used for the atash-gah fires. (Also see our page on Fire.)
  - In order to prevent rotting flesh from contacting the soil, dead bodies were either placed in stone tombs above ground level, or exposed to birds (in towers placed on hill tops or surrounded by lush gardens) who ate the flesh, after which the bones disintegrated to a harmless powder.

Lush Gardens - Paradise

Bagh - Pairidaeza

- Zoroastrians have a reputation for creating lush gardens or baghs. The word paradise comes from the Old Iranian word for exceptional gardens, pairidaeza, which in later years was shortened to parideiza and then to paridiz. Also see our page Persian Gardens.
- The Hanging Gardens of Babylon, one of the seven wonders of the world according to Greek writers Alexander Polyhistor quoting Berossus, were reputed to have been built by King Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 BCE) to placate his Median wife, Amytis, daughter of Cyaxares, the King of the Medes. Nebuchadnezzar made for Amytis, a vast terraced garden full of trees and exotic plants of every description with cool glades, fountains, and bubbling streams. By copying the lush gardens from her childhood home on the slopes of the Zagros mountains, he hoped that she would not miss her Iranian homeland and think of the palace as home.
Zoroastrian Religious Texts - The Avesta and Zand

- The Zoroastrian scriptures are called the Avesta.
- The hymns of Zarathushtra called the Gathas are part of the book of Yasna contained in the Avesta.
- The classical explanations, interpretations and commentaries are called the Zend or Zand.
- An old edition of the Avesta with Zand interspersed is called the Zend Avesta or Zand Avesta.
- The Avesta contains books composed in various related old Iranian languages, broadly called the Avestan languages.
- The Zand was composed in Middle Persian and written in the Pahlavi script.
- Among Middle Persian religious texts is a 9th century CE group of books called the Dinkard / Denkard meaning 'Acts of Religion'.
  - The books of the Dinkard cover a variety of topics, provide answers to questions and provide a listing and summary of the 21 books of the recompiled Sassanian Avesta (see Size and Extent below).
- Another Middle Persian religious text considered to be part of the Zand is a 9th cent. CE book called the Bundahishn meaning 'Creation'. It is sometime sub-titled Zand-Akasih/Agahih meaning 'Knowledge of (or from) the Zand'.
  - The Bundahishn is available in two recensions or versions: the shorter or Lesser (Indian) Bundahishn and the longer or Greater (Iranian) Bundahishn
- While the poet Ferdowsi’s (935-1020 CE) Persian epic, the Shahnameh or Book of Kings is not a Zoroastrian religious text, it is widely quoted by Zoroastrians many of who believe that Ferdowsi’s information is based on Zoroastrian sources.

Books of the Avesta

The original Avesta has been destroyed (see destruction below) and some portions survive. The surviving reconstituted Avesta can be organized in various ways. One way is to organize them as five books:

- the Yasna - service and prayers. The Gathas of Zarathushtra are part of the book of Yasna.
- Yashts - hymns to concepts and angels.
- Visperad - liturgy used to solemnize Gahambars (seasonal gatherings and feasts) and Nowruz (New Year’s Day).
- Vendidad - purification laws.
- Khordeh Avesta - Concise Avesta & selections for daily prayers.
- Various fragments.

Size and Extent of the Original Avesta

- According to Martin Haug, Hermippus, the philosopher of Smyrna (ca. 250 BCE), ‘is reported by Pliny (Historia Naturalis XXX., 1) to have made very laborious investigations in to all Zoroastrian texts, which were said to comprise two million verses, and to have stated the contents of each book separately.’ Hermippus’ work has been lost.
- The first reported written texts compiled during the Persian Achaemenian dynasty (c. 600 - 300 BCE) were written on 12,000 hides.
- The written Avestan texts during reign of Sassanian king, Khosrow Anoshirvan (531 - 579 AC) the Just, consisted of twenty-one nasks or books.
- The nasks were encyclopaedic in nature and dealt with philosophy, theology, rituals, prayers, hygiene, medicine and the medicinal properties of a thousand plants and herbs, history, astronomy, geography and other forms of knowledge.
- The religious texts have repeatedly been destroyed by Alexander, the Arabs and the Mongols (see below). As a result, only five books and some fragments survive.
- The Zand and other Pahlavi texts contain summaries and translations (as understood at that time) of the lost texts.
Composition, Transmission & Preservation

Zarathushtra (also spelt Zarathustra) memorized and conveyed his ideas and teaching through hymns called the Gathas. It is probable that writing was not known during Zarathushtra's time. The verses of the Gathas were memorized and sung by his followers, thereby in turn conveying the ideas to others and subsequent generations. When priests, the Magi, were introduced to the religion, their task was to memorize the hymns. The method proved very effective in preserving the teachings - so effective that the hymns continued to be faithfully memorized, shared and transmitted even when the language of the people reciting the verses changed and the meaning of the verses was lost. (Also see Compilation & Destruction of the Avesta)

Destruction of the Avesta

Successive invasions of Persia (Iran) resulted in the destruction of the bulk of the Zoroastrian scriptures, the Avesta. The first was Alexander of Macedonia's invasion in 330 BCE accompanied by senseless devastation and the mass killing of priests who carried the verbal tradition. Between 640-650 CE came the Arab invasion bent on mass conversions and the burning of the Avesta. What fragments were left or secreted away were further destroyed by the extremely violent Mongol and Turkic invasions with the extermination of entire communities.

Today, out of the twenty one books of the Sassanian era Avesta, only one complete book and fragments of others survive. The surviving texts are nevertheless one and a half times the size of the Koran, and are and arranged as five books plus fragments.

For further details, see Compilation & Destruction of the Avesta.

Mathra / Manthra

A verse of the Avesta, and more specifically a verse of the Gathas, was called a mathra or manthra - insightful thoughts (thoughts for reflection, contemplation and meditation). Reciting a manthra today, even when the ancient words are poorly understood, has a calming, soothing effect that allows the mind to refocus itself.

Traditional Name of the Religion

Daena Vanghuh Mazdayasni / Behdin Mazdayasna

Zoroastrianism is a name given to the religion by the west. The traditional names of the religion are Behdin meaning Good Religion [a name which was derived from the original Avestan Vanghuhim Daena meaning highest discerning belief] and Mazdayasni / Mazdayasna meaning worship of God - used separately or together.

A more complete Avestan name is found in the Fravarane, the pledge of faith (cf. Avesta's Book of Yasna, Chapter 12), namely, Daenam Vanghuhim Mazdayasnim or, Daena Vanguhi Mazdayasni, meaning the highest discerning belief in worship of (or belief in, dedicated to, celebrating, venerating) God. In later language, this would be Behdin Mazdayasni or Behdin Mazdayasna - Zoroastrian God Worshipper or Zoroastrian Believer in God.

For further details, see our page on Liturgical Ceremonies.

In addition to containing the traditional name of the religion, the Fravarane contains the name given to members of the Zoroastrian faith: first as Mazdayasni (eight times) and then qualified (four times) as Mazdayasni Zarathushtrish - Zoroastrian God Worshipper or Zoroastrian Believer in God.

The Fravarane reads as follows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avestan text</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mazdayasni ahmi</td>
<td>I am a worshipper of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mazdayasni Zarathushtrish</td>
<td>A Zarathushtrian in worship of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fravarane astuataascha fravaratascha</td>
<td>These pledges and intents I do declare:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astuye humtem mano</td>
<td>I pledge my thoughts to good thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astuye hukhtem vacho</td>
<td>I pledge my speech to good words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astuye hvarashtem shyaothanem</td>
<td>I pledge my actions to good deeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astuye daenam vanghuhim Mazdayasnim</td>
<td>I pledge myself to the highest discerning belief in worship of God</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yasna 12.8,9 (and Khordeh Avesta). Translation by K. E. Eduljee

[A further discussion on Mazda Worship can be found on our page on Aryan Religions.] The Farvardin Yasht's verses 89 & 90 contains a complete name or description of the religion: Mazdayasno Zarathushtrish Vidaevo Ahura-Tkaesho meaning Zarathushtrian Mazda-Worship opposed to the daeva through the laws of the Lord (Ahura). In ancient inscriptions there is scant use of Zarathushtra's name. Since other religions are commonly ascribed to a person, non-Zoroastrians are puzzled by the lack of use of Zarootar's name. The covenants made by Zoroastrians in prayer are to a belief and to a way of life - not to a person. Zoroastrians hold that a religion focused on a person is a cult rather than a religion based on spiritual, personal and societal development. Zoroastrianism is a way of being and is not focused on the personage of Zarathushtra (also spelt Zarathustra).
We will use the name 'Zoroastrianism' in these pages since it is the common English language name for the religion.

**LABELS PLACED ON ZOROASTRIANISM**

The name Zoroastrianism and labels such as monotheism, monism, dualism, pantheism and panentheism have been imposed on the Daenam Vanghuhim Mazdayasnim by those seeing or seeking to understand the religion through western frames of reference. However, these labels have become value laden, and can cause misunderstandings and confusion about the religion. In addition, the labels produce a confirmation bias on the part of those who wish to prove their understanding of 'Zoroastrianism' must necessarily fit one of the models. This invariably leads to divisiveness and a change in focus from what Zoroastrianism means in every thought, word and deed, towards the need to prove someone's point of view embedded in a label.

The Daenam Vanghuhim Mazdayasnim has its own philosophical and belief system which is unique and for which western labels do not apply. Zoroastrians have always been known and recognized not by the labels imposed on them or their religion, but by their upright character, generous community spirit, and their reverence for all of creation. The efficacy of their beliefs is not found in thoughts relegated to a life of philosophical enlightenment in seclusion, or words consumed by futile and divisive debates, but rather by beneficent and constructive deeds.

We suggest that the reader suspend assumptions and prejudgments while seeking to understand Zoroastrianism for what it is - a religion understood by its adherents not by what is found in books or philosophical arguments, but by the way of life and principles passed down through the generations as a heritage. The Zoroastrianism that has lived from its inception, and, which lives in the heart of its adherents is a way of being and living. It is quite different, indeed alien, from the supposed 'Zoroastrianism' that is labelled and debated in western literature. The former is authentic. The latter is manufactured.

**THE ETERNAL FLAME**

Zoroastrians turn towards a flame, athra/atash, or source of light when they worship. At the heart of a Zoroastrian place of worship burns a fire - and where possible the fire burns continuously as an ever-burning flame symbolizing an eternal spiritual flame.

The temporal fire represents the spiritual flame, mainyu athra, within us, the divine fire of creation, and the undying ethical values of Asha: honesty, order, beneficence, fairness and justice. The symbolism of the eternal flame in Zoroastrianism can be compared to the symbolism of the Olympic flame - it symbolizes core ethical values and principles. The ritual in lighting the Olympic flame and in its installation, the reverence with which the flame is treated, and the awe the flame inspires, are all very Zoroastrian-like. While it is the values behind the flame that are at the core of its symbolism, the flame in this context acquires an aura of sacredness, for to harm or sully the flame means harm to the values represented (in a fashion similar to the manner in which a nation's flag acquires an aura of sacredness. Desecrating such a flag can cause great offense for it is not the cloth of the flag being desecrated but everything the flag represents).

In Zoroastrianism, light represents wisdom while darkness represents ignorance. Ignorance and darkness are the absence of wisdom and light. Indeed, a contemplation of the fire reveals all the values and principles at the heart of Zoroastrianism.

For a further discussion, please see our pages on Fire and the Olympic Flame.

The passing of Zoroastrian ideas and values from one person to the next is symbolized by a new flame being lit from an existing one. When these ideas and values are passed from one generation to another without interruption, we have the notion of an ever-burning 'eternal' flame, one that will endure the passage of time and our mortal lives.

The concept of an eternal flame is now widely used throughout the world - as are other Zoroastrian concepts and ideas.
We find the prehistory of the Aryans recorded in the Zoroastrian scriptures, the Avesta (in particular the Zamyad Yasht 19), in Middle Persian texts, in the poet Ferdowsi’s epic, the Shahnameh or Book of Kings, and in the Hindu Scriptures, the Vedas.

The significance of the prehistory contained in these texts, is not necessarily a sense of recorded time, but rather a record of sequential human development that is unique amongst existing ancient literature. Unlike other ancient myths and legends, the individual reign of a legendary Aryan king, at times thousands of years in length, includes developments that correspond to archaeological / historical ages such as the Stone and Metal Ages. For instance, the developments during the reign of the first Aryan king, Gaya Maretan (see below) parallels what archaeologists and historians now call the Stone Ages. Therefore we can refer to the legendary reign of Gaya Maretan as the Stone Age of Aryan history.

It would be unreasonable to expect the prehistory to contain a detailed record of individual kings from the dawn of history. The names of the kings that were preserved by legend, were in all likelihood those whose reigns were noteworthy in some fashion, and the length of their reigns would have been expanded to include that of their less noteworthy predecessors and successors. As a consequence, the length of a legendary reign often spans the length of several human lifetimes.

In addition to being a sequential record of human development, Zoroastrian texts also provide us with a sequential listing of early nations associated with the Aryans. Together with archaeological records, this information can be combined to construct a history of the Aryans.

**Aryan Stone Age**

**Age of Gaya Maretan**

[Gaya means life and maretan means mortal. In some sources, Gaya Maretan is the first mortal or human being. The name Gaya Maretan evolved to Gayomard (Pahlavi), and then Kayomars or Kaumars (Persian).]

Ferdowsi's Shahnameh, complemented by the Farvardin Yasht 13.87, recounts that Aryan prehistory started with Gaya Maretan, founder of the Aryan nation. The Shahnameh states that he was the first Aryan King and that during his reign, people lived in the mountains (also see Aryan homeland location: Mountains - Hara Berezaiti) and wore animal skins and leaves. They gathered fruits and other plant foods. Animals were first domesticated, and the herding of cattle began.
During the age of Gaya Maretan, religion and religious rites were developed. According to the Avesta and the Shahnameh, Gaya Maretan was a Mazdayasni, a worshipper of Mazda or God. In the oldest Hindu scriptures, the Rig Veda, worship in a supreme God, Asura Varuna, preceded deva or polytheistic worship amongst the Aryans. (For further information on Pre-Zoroastrian Aryan religious practices, see our page on Aryan Religions.)

The Shahnameh tells us that Ahriman, the leader of the deva worshippers was envious of Gaya Maretan and wanted to seize Gaya Maretan's throne, the throne of the Aryans. As a result, the first religious wars between the Mazda and deva worshippers took place during this period. At first the deva worshippers were victorious in a battle in which Gaya Maretan's son Siyamak was killed. Gaya Maretan regrouped, assembled an army under the command of his grandson Haoshyangha (Hushang - see below), and defeated the deva worshippers. While this second battle established the Mazdayasni as the dominant religious group between the Mazda and deva worshippers, the two groups continued to live together in close proximity. (Later, at the end of the Jamshidi / Yima era, dominance would shift to the deva worshippers (see below), after which it would move back and forth between the two groups.) Implicit in the references to ancient Aryans in the literature, is the development and establishment of national governance through the establishment of a hereditary kingship and a royal line. In this system of governance, Aryan kings had a sacred responsibility to protect the people, establish and uphold the law, encourage human development and lead the progress of society to a better life. When Aryan kings maintained this sacred trust and ethical compact (what in modern days we call a social contract), they were said to rule in grace in keeping with their khvarenah.

**ARYAN METAL AGE**

**PISHDADIAN ERA**

**Age of Hushang**

Civilization came to the Aryan world during the age of Haoshyangha (Hushang), Gaya Maretan's grandson.

Some texts state that Hushang was the first Aryan king. In any event, Hushang developed governance according to the rule of law and as a result he was called **paradhata** (first law giver). The title paradhata evolved to **peshdat** and then **pishdad**, a title that became the name given to the dynasty started by Hushang. Allied to the rule of law was the concept of common justice.

During the Age of Hushang, the Aryans developed agriculture and furthered the domestication of animals and - two elements essential for the development of settled, civilized societies.

The domestication of animals that had started with the herding of cattle during the Age of Gaya Maretan, now developed to include animal husbandry and the domestication of horses, ass and sheep. The domesticated animals were used for ploughing, as beasts of burden, for transportation, and for the making of dairy products. The animal and dairy products were used to pay taxes - and taxation was born.

To support agriculture, the Aryans during the age of Hushang dug irrigation canals and ducts. They learnt to bake bread as well.

**Discovery of Fire-Making**

Jashne Sadeh / Festival of the Hundredth Day  

The Hushang Age also saw the discovery of how to make fire. This discovery is celebrated annually by people of Iranian (Persian) descent at the Jashne Sadeh, meaning the festival of the hundredth day. Yazdi Zoroastrians celebrate Sadeh 100 days before the New Year's day (Nowruz), while Kermani Zoroastrians celebrate the festival 100 days after the Ayyaithrem gahambar. (For further details, please see our page on Fire.)

The discovery of fire also led to the extraction metal from ore. According to legend, during this era, people acquired the skills of blacksmithing, crafting axes, saws and mattocks (a tool like a pickaxe with one end of its blade flattened at right angles to its handle and used for loosening soil and cutting through roots.)

The Age of Hushang was therefore the start of the Metal Age in Aryan history. However, unlike other metal ages which started with the processing of copper, Aryan and Saka legends place the use of gold before the use of copper in Central Asia - possibly even a few thousand years earlier. In Central Asia, gold was the more readily available and accessible metal. The Shahnameh of Ferdowsi states that gold was used in ancient times to make surgical knives used to perform Caesarean operations.

The Age of Hushang was also the start of the agricultural age and the age during which the Aryans began to establish an international trade network. In general, it was the start of the age of civilization.

**Age of Tahmuras**

Haoshyangha was succeeded by his son Tahmuras during whose reign, the art of shearing sheep, weaving and the making of clothes and draperies were developed. The reared animals were fed barley, grass, and hay, indicating that rather than leaving reared animals to graze in pasture, the animals were fed a diet that increased their strength and productivity. As a result, the horses became strong and swift. Fowl and other birds were added to the list of reared animal. Falconry and the taming of hawks were also developed during this age. The law of the land developed to include laws that required the animals be reared with kindness. These are probably the first records of animal humane laws in history.

Art too developed under the patronage of the king.
During the age of Tahmuras, the deva worshippers rose in rebellion, a rebellion that was put down. As part of the agreement to spare their lives, the deva-worshippers taught Tahmuras thirty different alphabets from different nations to east, west and south, thus teaching him the science of delineating sounds. From this account, it would appear that the deva-worshippers were the original travellers who had knowledge of the lands of China, Asia Minor, Arabia, Sogdiana and other neighbouring states. Aryan international trade would have been firmly established during the age of Tahmuras.

To the structure of Aryan governance, Tahmuras added a prime minister charged with the administration of justice.

Age of Jamshid

The Name Yima and Yama in the Avesta and Vedas

In the Avesta, Jamshid is called Yima-Srira or Yima Khshaeta, meaning Yima the radiant, son of Vivanghat. In an Old Persian tablet found at Persepolis, he is called Yama-kshedda, and eventually in Middle Persian Pahlavi, his name is transformed to Jam-shheed (to this day, the Parsees of India continue this penchant for converting the Y sound to a J sound). In the Vedas, he is called Yama, son of Vivasvant.

The Avestan references to Yima are found in Vendidad Fargard 2, Gatha 32.8, Yasna 9.4-5, Avan Yasht 5.25-6, Ram Yasht 15.15-6, Ashishvang Yasht 17.28-31 and Jamyad Yasht 19.30-44.

While in the Avesta, Gaya Maretan is the first mortal, in the Rig Veda, Yama is the first mortal. This might indicate that for the Avestan people history started with Gaya Maretan, while for the people of the Rig Veda, their history as a people - as an identifiable or sovereign group - started with Yama. The Avesta and Vedas start to share prehistory with Yima / Yama.

Start of the Tragic Aryan Epic Cycles

In the legends, the legendary king who follows Tahmuras is Yima Khshaeta (later called Jamshid). As we have done previously, in an effort to extract historical developments from the myths and legends, we will say that the Jamshedi age followed the age of Tahmuras.

During the Jamshidi age (the age of Yima), the rule of law - a law grounded in grace and justice - developed and heralded a golden age during which time Airyana Vaeja, the Aryan homeland, became a paradise on earth. In legend, Jamshid is considered one of the wisest and greatest kings ever, but one who would nevertheless fell from grace, thus heralding the start of tragic epic cycles in Aryan history, cycles that rotated between good and evil times. (For a further discussion on this golden era, please see our section on Airyana Vaeja as paradise in our page on the possible location of Airyana Vaeja.) Regrettably, subsequent monarchs did not learn from past errors and declines, dooming themselves and the Aryan nation to repeat the tragic epic cycle.

Since the Jamshedi age in legend lasted for over one thousand two hundred years, it would be unrealistic to expect this to be an accurate time period. Rather, it could indicate a long period of history that may have spanned several dynasties. Within this age, an early king, perhaps an eponymous Yima, would have ushered in a golden era - one that was sustained by subsequent Jamshedi age kings who may have continued presiding over significant societal change for the better. However, later kings might have become arrogant and complacent.

We have examples of this scenario is later times where is have more historical information. For instance, in the last of the tragic epic cycles - the age of the Persian kings - we have historical records of an age that lasted about a thousand years from the Achaemenians to the Sassanians (about the same span of time as the Jamshidi age). During the Persian age, there was a golden era brought on by the rule of Cyrus the Great. Later, there came a time when the kings became arrogant. The dissent from within weakened the Persian Empire making it vulnerable to foreign aggression. Ultimately, what followed was the destruction of a historic civilization.

Zoroastrians need to pay heed to the lessons of history, least those who have sacrificed so much to preserve these legends have done so in vain. History has been kind to Zoroastrians when they gained grace, but cruel and unforgiving when Zoroastrian leaders lost their grace. Arrogance, internal bickering, dissension and a loss of fundamental ethical principles are some of the symptoms of a fall from grace.

Metal Age Developments

During the Jamshidi age, iron was used to manufacture helmets, chain-mail tunics, breastplates, and coats of armour both for man and horse. Weaving was developed to a high art and included silk, cotton, and animal hair to produced finely woven and brocaded fabrics.

Calendar, Nowruz and Weather

The age saw the establishment of a calendar with the spring equinox being set as New Year’s day - Nowruz. Holidays were promulgated and music began to be composed.

At the outset of the Jamshedi era, the weather in the Aryan homeland, Airyana Vaeja was fair and equitable, with the spring equinox heralding the start of spring and a renewal after the winter.

However, a thousand two hundred years after the start of the Jamshed era, there was a sudden climate chill (Vendidad 2.22-25) and a drastic cooling (also see Aryans, page 3) - a mini Ice Age of sorts. Knowledge of Central Asia's climate and climate changes during the past 12,000 years can assist in an understanding of the historical periods in Central Asia. For instance, in an event called the Younger Dryas, the earth is known to have experienced a sudden cooling starting 12,800 years from the present, with the cooling lasting about 1,200 years. In addition, there is evidence of more recent and shorter cooling spells of, say, 100 years. Different regions
could have experienced different degrees of change and a severe cooling event could also have been regional rather than global. If the location of Airyana Vaeja was an area like the Pamirs, a 5° to 10°C drop in average temperatures would have been sufficient to make winter life very harsh (Vendidad, a book of the Zoroastrian scriptures, chapter 1.2 and 2.22). We are informed by the Avesta, that after the change in climate, the warm months (the ratapithwan months) in Airyana Vaeja were shortened from the normal seven months to two months in duration (Vendidad 1.3, notes in Vendidad Sada and Bundahishn 25 - the warm months being those when the ground waters are cooler than the surface).

The Vara Settlement

The sudden cooling and the onset of severe winters required the construction of a new kind of settlement and dwellings called a vara (Avestan Vendidad, a book of the Zoroastrian scriptures, chapter 2.25 - part of Zoroastrian scriptures). Vara is both the name of a settlement and the dwellings that made up the settlement (from vara, enclosure).

The concept of the vara enabled sustainable living for a people and their live-stock in a mountainous region beset with harsh winters. Surviving severe winters without migrating to warmer regions must have been an incredible challenge and a profound development for the people of those days.

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

The vara settlement was to be of three sizes: a settlement of a thousand inhabitants with nine streets, six hundred inhabitants with six streets, and three hundred inhabitants with three streets.

Also see the page on the Pamirs.

Territorial Expansion

The Avesta tells us that during in the first thousand two hundred years of the Yima / Jamshed era, the territory of Airyana Vaeja expanded up to four and a half times “southwards, on the way of the sun” (prior to the climate change), presumably into Afghanistan and possibly even the upper Indus valley. The people who remained in the original mountainous Aryan homeland appear to have dealt with the severe winters by staying in the varas for the entire winter, snowed in and cut off from the rest of the world, in the same manner as the Yagnobi in Tajikistan (close to the Pamir region) live through the winter to this day (also see Weather Change in Airyana Vaeja During Jamshid’s Reign in our pages on the Aryans).

Professional Guilds & Initiation

King Jamshid developed the concept of specialized professions. He instituted the four main professional guilds of priests and learned (athravan), nobles and warriors (rathestaran), farmers (vasteryosan), and artisans (hubokshan), with members of each profession working in freedom and dignity. Farmers had their own land free from dispute. King Jamshid also instituted the tradition of the wearing the sacred thread or belt as an mark that the wearer had been initiated into the guilds (see (Sad-dar - ‘Hundreds Doors’ chapter 10, and chapter 39.18-19, Dadestan-i Denig - ‘Religious Decisions’).

The Hindu Vedas list four similar professions called varnas (from var, to enclose, cf. Av. vara meaning enclosure): the priests and learned (brahman), nobles and warriors (kshatriya), merchants and farmers (vaishyas), labourers and artisans (sudra). Each varna has its own dharma or system and rules (also called laws) which included an initiation ceremony called the upanayana (meaning bringing within).

The Vedas name for the systems of professions, varnas, and the Avestan name for the Jamshed settlements, varas - both from the root vara meaning enclosure is significant and bears further examination.

The Hindu initiation ceremony like the Zoroastrian initiation ceremony is also called a thread ceremony. Hinduism calls the initiate a dvijas meaning twice born signifying that the initiate is “born again” into spiritual life. Zoroastrianism uses the term navjote meaning new life. The Hindu initiation is conducted during a person’s teen or early adult years. The Zoroastrian age for initiation was the age or reason, deemed by tradition to be fifteen years of age.

Hinduism developed the professional guilds into a caste system, a development that violated principles that Zarathushtra would promote. The initiation ceremony in Hinduism is now limited to men of the first three castes, while the initiation ceremony in Zoroastrianism is available to all women and men. In Zoroastrianism, the initiation ceremony is an initiation into the faith and a coming-of-age ceremony for all Zoroastrians - rather than an initiation into a guild or caste.

Start of Human History in the Hindu Vedas

In the Vedas, human history starts with Yama and Hindu reverence for Yama, King Jamshid, grew while he lost favour with the Mazdayasni Aryan predecessors of the Zoroastrians. The Avesta tells us that the once wise, noble and honoured King Yima grew too proud, thought himself a god, and lost his place and grace - his khvarenah. In his hymns (Gatha 32.8), Zarathushtra laments that King Jamshid lost his way and became a sinner.

It is within the realm of possibilities that the Jamshidi king at that time abandoned the Mazdayasni faith in favour of becoming a deva worshipper, thereby becoming the first deva-worshipping Aryan king. (For an explanation of the different Aryans religions and the schism between them, please see our page
End of the First Tragic Aryan Epic Cycle

Following Jamshid's loss of grace and the vassal kings and lords of Airyana Vaeja withdrew from the court of Jamshid and Airyana Vaeja. A hundred years later, weakened by internal dissention, Airyana Vaeja was invaded by an evil foreign king, Zahak (also spelt Zahrak and called Azi Dahaka in the Avesta). That event marked the end of the first tragic epic cycle in Aryan history and also the end of the first part of Pishdadian royal rule. The foreign domination supported by the deva worshippers lasted for a thousand years.

The Jamshidi loss of grace and arrogance had resulted in a nation that became weak from within and one that fell prey to conquest and domination by a foreign king for a thousand years until their liberation by Feridoon.

Regrettably, the Aryans would not learn from this painful lesson in history. In eras yet to come, the Aryan nation would rise and fall with epochs of golden ages followed by despair brought about by an abdication of the ruler's sacred trust and ethical compact to rule for the benefit of the people.

Our examination of the Aryan's prehistory continues on the page Legendary History.
**CONTENTS**

**AFTER LIFE & FUNERAL CUSTOMS**

**Page 1**
- Body & Spirit
- Preparing for One's Demise
- Imagery
- Assault of Evil Spirits
- Spiritual Guide / Daena
- Chinvat Peretum - Bridge of the Requirer
- Meeting One's Daena at the Chinvat Bridge
- Eschatology / Frasho-kereti

**Page 2**
- Traditional Ceremonies / Geh Sarnu
- Preparatory Arrangements
- Death Ceremonies
- Removal to the Mortuary
- Spiritual Unity - the Payvand Connection
- The Fire
- Ritual Bath / Sachkar
- Wrapping the Kusti
- Whispering Prayers in the Deceased's Ears. Final Respects
- Demeanour of the Bereaved
- Handing Over to the Nasa-Salars or Pall Bearers

**PAGE 3. MORTUARY. METHODS OF LAYING THE DEAD TO REST. MEMORIAL PRAYERS**

**MORTUARY**

In our discussion, a mortuary is any place, room or building, where bodies of the deceased are kept until they are laid to rest.

Immediately after its demise, the body of an individual is taken to a mortuary for the ritual bath and funeral services. The mortuary can be within a private home, a building within a housing complex, a neighbourhood building, or a building that is part of a tower of silence complex. The requirements of the mortuary room and the attached bathing area is the same whether the mortuary is a private or public place.

An important feature of an orthodox mortuary is that any surface or object with which the body of the deceased comes into contact after the first six hours of death, needs to be made of an impermeable non-porous material. Nowadays, with the availability of climate control, this stipulation (based on when the body started to decompose in warm climates), can be relaxed somewhat. In all cases, the mortuary must be clean and sanitary.

**Private Homes**

Older large orthodox Zoroastrian homes had a room to be set aside for family funeral services. These were homes close to a tower of silence or the place where a body would eventually be laid to rest.

**Neighbourhood Mortuaries / Nasa-Khana or Margzad**

Some Zoroastrian residential complexes or neighbourhoods have a building called a nasa-khana (Parsi Gujerati) or margzad (Persian) both meaning a place for the deceased - a mortuary. These buildings have the necessary facilities to clean and house the body of the deceased.

Alternatively, some towns have a complex that includes a mortuary and homes for the nasa-salars, khandhias and their families.

**Bungli**

In India, bungalows called bunglis (that are in essence a temporary home with an attached mortuary), are part of some tower of silence complexes called
a doongerwadi in India. Doongerwadis contain a tower of silence, surrounding gardens and bunglis. The bunglis consist of bedrooms, bathrooms, kitchen facilities, a dining room, a room to house the body of the deceased on the first day, a ritual bathing room with a stone platform upon which the corpse is first laid and washed, and a large hall for the funeral service that follows the ritual cleansing.

**METHODS OF LAYING THE DEAD TO REST**

The guiding principle for the laying to rest of the dead body is that the environment (land, air, and water as well as the element of fire) should not be polluted when disposing of a dead body, and the living should be harmed in any way. Cremation using fire pollutes the fire, the air, and at times river water as well. Burial without adequate lining of the grave, will pollute the ground, ground waters, and through rain water run off - the surrounding land.

The following methods are the least harmful and the most sanitary:

- Towers of Silence
- Stone, above ground level, tombs
- Impervious stone or concrete lined graves

**Towers of Silence / Dakhma**

Disused tower in Yazd, Iran - view from the ground. In the foreground, are the khialele, buildings belonging to individual communities and used for monthly remembrance prayers.
Towers of silence, or dakhmas, are squat circular walled stone structures, inside which bodies of the deceased are exposed to birds who eat the flesh. The bones that remain after the flesh is consumed, are dried and bleached by the sun. Coining of the term 'tower of silence' is attributed to Robert Murphy, who, in 1832, was a translator of the British colonial government in India.

The dried bones are collected and placed in a central well (also see ossuary below), where in dry climates, they naturally disintegrate to a powder. The disintegration is so complete, one well has only five feet of accumulated powder after forty years. No tombs or headstones mark the place where the bones are disposed.

The towers are built on hill tops and are often surrounded by lush gardens.

This method has several advantages:
• The method is ecologically sound especially in drier and rocky regions where fertile land is scarce and cemeteries can result in pollution and occupation of land more suitable for agricultural or residential purposes. In such regions scarce ground water sources are especially fragile and susceptible to pollution and contamination. Towers of silence use hills and any run-off water is treated before being released to the surrounding land. In any event, burial in desert or rocky mountainous regions can be particularly troublesome and shallow graves are often exposed by the elements.
• The method was the best system ancient Zoroastrians could use that acknowledged the sacredness of the elements of land, water, air and fire and the attendant imperatives not to pollute or defile these elements.
• Once a tower (that can last for hundreds of years) is constructed, it is an economical and egalitarian method of laying a body to rest and there is no difference due to status in the way the body is finally disposed. The remains of rich and the poor lie side-by-side on a common platform, meeting in death.
as one.

- As compared with insects consuming a body's flesh over several years when buried in the ground, consumption of the flesh by birds of the bodies is speedy provided birds of prey are present in adequate numbers. The birds can eat the flesh in less than half an hour. The skeletal remains are then dried and bleached by the sun.
- In feeding the birds, it is a final act of charity on behalf of the person being laid to rest.
Entry to the tower is via steps that lead up to a massive iron door in the eastern side of the twenty-five feet or eight-meter high stone walls. The door provides access to a circular sloping platform about 300 feet or 100 meters in diameter. The platform is made from slabs of solid stone and slopes towards a central well.

The platform is divided into three concentric circles representing good thoughts, words and deeds. Bodies of children are placed in the inner circle. The middle circle is for the bodies of women, and the outer circle for the bodies of men. The bodies are placed in shallow depressions in the slabs of stone. There are numerous depressions in a row that allow bodies to be placed side-by-side.
Narrow channels connect the depressions in the rings to drain fluids to the central well. Between the three rings are three concentric raised ledges that serve to separate the rings and as a path. Rain water washes the slabs and drains into the central well via the channels.
When there is adequate population of birds, the body is completely stripped of its flesh within a couple of hours (often sooner). The bones are allowed to dry and bleach in the sun.

Once the bones are completely stripped of their flesh either by birds or by rain and sun, the dried bleached bones are gathered by the attendants and placed in the central well where they reduce to a powder, a process sometimes aided with the addition of lime. As stated above, the disintegration of the bones is so complete, that after forty years, one tower's central well had only five feet of accumulated residue.

The central well goes down in depth to the base of the tower. At the base of the well are filter layers of sandstone, sand and charcoal. Fluids and rain water that collects in the well are filtered by these layers and drain through grates on the well's side into four underground channels, each sloping towards underground pits at four corners of the tower - just outside the its walls. The bottom of these pits also have a thick layer of sand covered with layers of sandstone and charcoal, which are replaced from time to time. The filtered water leaving the pits is clear and free or any contamination. In wet climates, gardens surrounding the towers absorb the filtered water.

The tower complex contains a small building called a *sagri* within which a fire is kept burning continuously.

In Iran, that is in Tehran, Kerman and Yazd, the customs employed were fairly similar to those described above (until the last operating dakhmas were shut down either because of disuse or by law in the 1970s - see stone / concrete protected graves below).

A video featuring an interview with an eighty-four year old salar, the person who helped carry the last body into the Yazd dakhma, can be seen at IranNegah.com.

In the interview, the salar said that each Yazd city neighbourhood (formerly villages around Yazd city) had a mortuary where the body of the deceased was bathed and wrapped in a shroud. When the body was brought to the dakhma, sixteen individuals (presumably men) carried the body to the top in teams of four individuals (taking turns). At the door of the dakhma, the body was placed on a platform after which the priest prayed for the departed's soul. The two salars, took the body into the dakhma where the laid the body at its appointed place and removed the shrouds. After thirty or forty bodies were consumed by birds of pray, the bones were gathered and placed in the central ossuary pit. Acid was poured over the bones to aid their decomposition.

This method is not advisable when flesh-eating birds are not present in adequate numbers, when a suitable site such a hill top is not available, or when non-Zoroastrian neighbours or governments may not approve. In the 1930s, the Iranian government made the use of towers of silence illegal. The tower in Mumbai India is beset with a lack of birds. The presence of medication in the bodies of the deceased can result in the death of the birds.

The Zoroastrian community in Pune, India has come up with a creative solution given spreading urbanization and the lack of birds. The have placed "solar panels" that help direct the rays of the sun on the body, effectively cremating the body using the sun rather than a fire. This innovation is an extension of the khursheed nigerishn - a beholding by the sun and the drying of the bones.

**Other Methods**

**Modern Practices**

The use of towers of silence or dakhmas is now only practiced by Zoroastrians in India - and there too, other methods are being explored and used. Among
the many factors that are contributing to the decline in the use dakhmas by Zoroastrians are:
- the diaspora of Zoroastrians to countries where the practice is impractical or inappropriate,
- the encroachment of urban areas into the previously secluded dakhma locations,
- the excessive use of medical drugs for dying individuals - drugs that are toxic to birds, or
- a lack of birds in some locations, and
- a change in attitude among Zoroastrians.

If a Zoroastrian wants to maintain Zoroastrian principles in considering other options, a primary guiding principle is to ensure that the surrounding earth, water, and air are not polluted.

**Stone / Concrete Protected Graves**

In places where towers of silence are not an option, graves or burial chambers protected by slabs of stone or concrete are an option that Zoroastrians have used. In Iran, Europe and the Americas, the use of graves is common.

In Iran, the decision to stop the use of dakhmas and bury the dead, took place for the following considerations:

First, Muslims interpreted the consuming of the flesh by birds as a mutilation of the dead body - a practice prohibited by Islam. The dakhmas were repeatedly broken into by Muslims much to the dismay and humiliation of the community.

Second, while the towers had originally been built away from population centers, the spread of urban homes and construction brought the general population close to the dakhmas.

Third, the attitude of Iranian Zoroastrians has changed. With the migration of Zoroastrians from Yazd and Kerman to Tehran, a debated ensued between the anjumans (societies) of Yazd, Kerman, and Tehran. The less conservative Tehranis being in the majority, prevailed over the more orthodox Yazdis and Kermanis, constructing for themselves in 1937 a cemetery, an *aramgah* or place of rest, on the outskirts of Tehran at *Ghass-e Firouzeh* (Firouzeh’s Palace). The graves were lined with rocks and concrete to prevent contact of rotting flesh with the earth.

In 1939, Soroush Soroushian, head of Kerman’s Zoroastrian Anjuman (Society), lead a move to establish a cemetery in Kerman. However, some Kermani Zoroastrians, as a matter of personal preference, continued to stipulate that their bodies be consigned to their dakhma, until that dakhma was finally closed in the 1960’s. The Zoroastrians of Yazd, traditionally, the most orthodox of the Iranian Zoroastrians similarly established a cemetery in 1965 at the base of the Safaieh district dakhma hills, and it was not long before the Yazd city dakhmas stopped being used. Shahriyab, near Ardakan, seat of Yazdi Zoroastrian orthodoxy continued to use their dakhma into the 70s, when the Iranian government prevailed on the Zoroastrians to stop using the dakhmas and shut them down by law.

**Ancient Practices**

Once a body had been stripped of its flesh in a dakhma, the dried and bleached bones were not considered polluting. As a consequence, there were several options for the disposal of the bones.

The egalitarian, communal option was to place the bones in the dakhma's central pit, a communal ossuary, where the bones decomposed to a powder.

Another option was to place the bones in a private ossuary - a stone or plaster box - and to then place the ossuary in a tomb or even in a grave. Yet another option, an option that we have only heard of in Greek literature and not in Zoroastrian tradition, was to coat the bones with wax before burial.

**Ossuary / Ossuaries**

An ossuary is a place to collect the bones of the dead. While often an ossuary is thought of as a box, it can also be a pit or a cave carved into a rock. In Iran, a place to collect bones is called an astudan - a place for the bones. In the Sogdian regions of Central Asia, it is called a tanbar.

An ossuary burial can be performed after exposing the body in a *towers of silence* (dakhma). The ancient residents of Sugd (Sughdha) and Chorasmia (Khvarizem) - present day Tajikistan and Uzbekistan - collected the stripped and dried bones from the dakhma and placed them in an ossuary. The family of the deceased would then bury the ossuary or place it in a special area such as a miniature tomb.

The Sogdian and Chorasmian practice of using ossuaries is further described in our page on [ossuaries](#).

If the local practice of Sogdians and Chorasmians was to use container ossuaries, some Persians (Iranians) developed another form of ossuary burial.
Stone and Cave Tombs

Persians are known to have used above ground stone tombs, and tombs carved out of the sides of stone cliffs, in which ossuaries containing the bones removed from the dakhma were placed. Alternatively, the cave itself could function as an ossuary.

Even though the tombs of royalty are ostentatious, the tombs have provided us invaluable information about the history of the times. The tomb of Persian Achaemenian king Darius I is at Naqsh-e-Rustam, located about 12 km northwest of Persepolis in Pars. It is part of a set of four Achaemenian dynasty tombs carved into the side of stone hills.

Funerary Couches
Some traders from Sugd or Sughdha - areas of present day Tajikistan and Uzbekistan - who travelled and resided in what is China today, used the practice of funerary couches.

A funerary couch is an elevated stone bench on which a coffin was placed. It is assumed that the couch in turn was placed in an area such as a tomb.

The example of the late 6th to early 7th century ACE funerary couch shown here was found in northern China and dates back to the Sui period. The couch now resides in the Miho Museum in Shiga, Japan (additional page).

The photograph of a panel from the couch show a scene with a priest wearing the padam (the white mask that Zoroastrian priests wear so as not to defile the sacred flame), a sagdid dog (a dog that is able to confirm death), and deceased souls crossing the Chinvat Bridge.

**Memorial Prayers**

While the tower of silence method of laying to rest the body of the deceased and the disposal of the body draws the attention of non-Zoroastrians, it is the fate of the soul and remembrance of those who have passed away, that occupies the minds of Zoroastrians.

Those who have passed away are not memorialized by monuments, but in the prayers of Zoroastrians. Memorial prayers are recited both at the home of the deceased’s family and at the fire temple on the tenth day after death, after a month, and then annually on the death anniversary of the deceased. The prayers are seen as an essential part of keeping the memory of the individual alive.

If Zoroastrians had lived according to the precepts of the faith as ashavans, their souls would have united with their other spiritual components, their mainyu or spirit, fravashi and khvarenah to become a united fravashi and a guardian angel. The fravashis of the departed are memorialized collectively and individually during the farvardigan, or all souls days, ten days at the end of the year dedicated to the remembrance of all souls - and during every major festivals, gahambars, jashans or thanksgiving ceremonies, and every rite of passage (even during the three days leading up to a marriage ceremony during the ceremony of varadh-patra).

Families are expected to memorize and record the names of their ancestors and name them during the memorial prayers.

We are the descendants of our ancestors. We are what they have made us and we carry their spiritual flame. The world is today built on the foundations they have laid. We would be remise to allow their memories to perish.
SECOND
VENIDAD, AVESTA
NATION

SUGD / SOGDIANA - TAJIKISTAN REGION

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

In Tajikistan, the ancient land of Sughdha form present day Sugd (Sughd) province. Sugd province includes the Yagnobi river valley as well as the Ferghana / Syr Darya valley in the north.
A hundred kilometres north of Tajikistan’s capital Dushanbe, over the Anzob pass in an eastern spur of the mountains stemming from the Pamirs, lies the mysterious Yagnob (also spelt Yaghnobi) valley. Yagnob is taken to mean ice river and is a reminder of the very cold winters in the upper valley.

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

Some of the Sogdian traders who plied their trade along the Silk Roads between China and Asia Minor and even resided in China, came from the Yagnobi.
Anzob Pass. Photo credit: Tajikistan Photo Gallery by Mikhail Romanyuk

Sugd-Uzbekistan Region
Sugd - Uzbekistan
Sughdha - Avestan Nation
Sugd - Achaemenian & Macedonia Eras
Samarkand
Bokhara
Nautaca/Kesh, Shakhrisabz & Kitab
Uzunkir & Sangirtepa
Yerkuran

Sugd-Tajikistan Region
Second Avestan Nation
Yagnob
Eternal Coal Fires
Yagnob Winters
Earliest Known Avestan Manuscript
Sogdian Zoroastrian Funerary Panels in China
Spitamen

Sogdian Trade. Silk Roads
Zoroastrianism in China
Sogdian Aryan Trade Along the Silk Roads
Sogdians and the Silk Trade
Sogdians & Zoroastrianism in China
Earliest Known Avestan Manuscript
Princess Jun Zhezhe Letter
Sogdian Zoroastrian Funerary Panels in China
Sogdian Dancer in China

region of Sugd. The Yagnobi Sogdians have special links to Zoroastrianism. They left behind a legacy including Avestan texts written in Yagnobi Sogdian (see below). Even today, names like Rustam, a legendary Aryan / Iranian name, are common among the Yagnobi. The Yagnobi language spoken today is a dialect of the ancient Sogdian language which died out some time after the 10th century CE.

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

(Also see From the mountains to the Lowlands - the Soviet Policy of "Inner-Tajik" Resettlement by Thomas Loy)

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

Eternal Coal Fires

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

Addition information and images can be found at:

» Tajikistan Photo Gallery by Mikhail Romanyuk
» History of the Yagnobi People
» Yagnob at Tourism in Tajikistan
» Yagnob.org. Includes a pdf viewing of Journey to Sogdiana's Heirs by Anvar Jamolzoda.
» Image gallery at Yagnob.org
Here in the caves are coal deposits that have been burning for 3.5 million years, and in the process a vast underground labyrinth of caverns has been created.

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

Yagnobi Winters

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

SPITAMEN

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

PANJIKENT / BUNJIKATH

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

Today Panjikent (also spelt Panjekent, Panjakent, or Penjikent and derived from the Sogdian Panchekanth) is one one of Tajikistan's larger cities. It is home to the poet Rudaki’s mausoleum and ancient Sogdian /Zoroastrian ruins. Located on the southern slopes overlooking the city and the Zerafshan Valley - at the edge of the city of Panjikent - is the 5th century CE archaeological site of Bunjikath. In its day, the city was situated on the rim of a high terrace overlooking a fertile, well-irrigated valley.
Description of the site from *Encyclopaedia Iranica*: “Its (ancient Panjikent’s) citadel (see Isakov 1979) is separated by a ravine from the shahrestan or city proper, which lies to the east of the citadel and is surrounded by fortified walls of its own. Two additional walls cross the ravine, linking the shahrestan with the citadel, and creating a unified defensive system around the entire city. The central structure of the citadel is a square fort built close to the northern part of a mountain ridge, which runs from south to north. In the end of the 7th or the early 8th century CE, a square keep was erected in the southeast corner of the fort. At the foot of the fort and to the north of it lies the lower fortification, watered by the abundant Qaynar spring. It shows traces of habitation from the 2nd century BCE to the 1st century CE. This cultural layer contains remnants of ceramics, but none of buildings. To the south of the fort stood a fortified wall, which defended the citadel against attacks from the top of the ridge. There were no buildings between the wall and the fort. On a hilly site to the east of the fort once rose the richly decorated palace of Devashtich (708?-22 CE), which apparently burned down in 722 CE. It was an expansion and an extensive reconstruction of an earlier building, dating from the 6th century CE. Another palace from the 6th century was located in the lower fortifications.

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

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

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

"The earliest murals in the palaces of the citadel date from the 6th century. Some of the houses built during the 6th century were two stories high, with vaulted ceilings on the lower floor, and murals on the walls of some rooms. However, during the 5th-6th centuries, no building in Panjikant could rival the magnificence of the two temples, and even the houses of the most prosperous residents seemed rather humble in comparison. In the 7th-8th centuries, though, it was the houses of the rich that set the tone of urban architecture in the city. The end of the 7th century and especially the first quarter of the 8th century marked the heyday of early medieval Panjikant. At the beginning of the 8th century the spaces between the houses became passageways (covered with vaults in places), over which towered the walls of the neighboring buildings. Not only the dwellings of the rich, but also those of the poor were more often than not two-story buildings with vaults over the rooms on the first floor. All residential houses from that period—not only those of the rich, but also of the merely well-to-do citizens—were decorated with murals and woodcarvings. Such reception halls were found in more than a third of all houses in the city. The streets were lined with small shops and artisans' workshops, often clustered around the bigger residential buildings. The workshops of the blacksmiths and of other metalworkers are most easily identified among the ruins (Raspopova 1980). The prosperous houses often had a few shops or even a small market built on the master's property. These commercial spaces were wide open to the street, but had no link to the living quarters of the buildings: apparently the tradesmen and small shopkeepers leased the premises from the landowners."
Reception hall of a 5-7 cent. CE Panjikent house
(reconstruction by B. Marshak & E. Buklaeva; after Marshak, 2002, fig. 10).
Image credit: Encyclopaedia Iranica

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

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

Additional Reading:
» Once more about peculiarities of the Sogdian Civilization of the 4th-10th Centuries by Boris V. Stavisky

SARAZM

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

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

As with Panjikent, Sarazm was built on a south-bank terrace overlooking the Zerafshan valley. There the site stretches in an west-east direction. The discovery or the ruins in 1976 were initiated by a local farmer Ashurali Tailonov who after visiting a museum in Panjikent, informed local archaeologists about a bronze axe he had found not far from his home - an axe that was similar to a bronze axe he had seen during his visit to the museum. That axe had been found in the late 19th century in Yor village, Panjikent district.
Sarazm stands at the transition of the Zerafshan valley from flat western low lands and eastern mountainous regions, and is strategically positioned as a mining, manufacturing and export centre on the Silk roads. It was a large ancient precious metal mining center, and the Sogdians exported the extracted gold and silver east, west and south along the Aryan trade routes. In the process the residents developed one of the largest centers of metallurgy in the Central Asia.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The etymology of the name Sarazm is unclear. Some suggestions are sar-sabz meaning the head of greenery, or sari-sabza meaning green beginning, or sari-zamin, meaning beginning of the land. These names could signify Sarazm's location between the low and high lands.
The Saka included groups who were part of the Zoroastrian and Aryan families of nations. They included the Chorasmi from Khwarezm (Khurazmian, "Western Turkestan"), the Parthava (Parthians), the Dahi (Dahae) and the Sistani.

The largest number of ancient Zoroastrian related ruins and artefacts, including a dakhma, a Zoroastrian burial tower known as a 'Tower of Silence', have been uncovered in Chorasmia/Khwarezm. The Dahi were one of the first five nations or people amongst whom Zarathushtra preached his message. The Parthava (Parthians) liberated Iran-Shahr from Macedonian rule and reconstructed the Zoroastrian scriptures, the Avesta that had been destroyed by Alexander. Sistan's heroes, Sam, Zal and Rustam, were the pahlavans, the strongmen and protectors of the imperial Iranian throne. Their stories occupy the largest sections in Ferdowsi's epic poem, the Shahnameh.

For the main part, the traditional land of the Saka forms part of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan today.
**Saka and Scythians**

The Central Asian Saka (Sacae) and the European Scythians are very often referred to as the same people in books on the subject. Unfortunately, many authors of European origin display a strong Euro-centric bias in their writing. These authors find support for their bias in the work of classical Greek writers who loosely called all the peoples who lived on an immense swath of land - land that became in modern times the Russian Empire - as Scythian. That was because these people lived - in the estimation of the ancient Hellenic writers - a similar Scythian-like lifestyle. That life-style was a broad approximation of what they called the nomadic lifestyle of the people living in the Eurasian grasslands - the steppes.

The people caught in this broad approximation were and are ethnically very different: from light haired Europeans - to Mongolian-like peoples - to the Iranian-Aryans. Nor were all these people nomadic. The differences between the dwellers of the Ukrainian steppes, those who dwell in arid lands of Turkmenistan, and those who reside in the expanses of Mongolia are evident today even to the casual observer.

The confusion between the Saka and Scythians in classical literature is understandable since many classical writers had to rely on third-hand information on which to base their accounts, and because some of the groups were only loosely organized as coherent communities - at least in the estimation of outsiders. Greeks and other Europeans rarely travelled through the Eurasian grasslands or east beyond Persia (Western Iran). The Hellenic authors wrote from their frame of reference. They were familiar with the characteristics of the Scythians. Unfortunately, many modern writers are doing the same. Today, however, we have the benefit of a more comprehensive approach and a wide data base. Pliny sums up the difficulty faced by classical author in his *Natural History*, Book 6, Chapter 19, by saying, "Indeed, upon no subject that I know of are there greater discrepancies among writers, from the circumstance, I suppose, of these nations (Saka) being so extremely numerous, and of such migratory habits."
Scythia itself was a fairly small nation. The father of modern history, Herodotus, states the extent of Scythia in his Histories 4.21: Travelling west to east, "Across the Tanais (commonly the Sauromatae, whose country begins at the inner end of the Maeetian lake (commonly taken to mean the Sea of Azov at the north of the Black Sea) and stretches fifteen days' journey north, and is quite bare of both wild and cultivated trees. Above these in the second district, the Budini inhabit a country thickly overgrown with trees of all kinds."

From about 800 to 300 BCE, the Scythia of Greek texts (also see Herodotus 4.21 above) extended east from the Carpathian Mountains in Central Europe - that is east of Rumania, Eastern Ukraine and Poland of today - east from the Carpathians to the Don River. To the south of Scythia was the Sea of Azov (the Maeetian Lake) and to the north, the start of the forests.

In other words the land of Scythia was a relatively small country that consisted of the grasslands of today's Moldova, Ukraine and Crimea. It was far removed from the eastern Saka lands and people. Certainly, as with any group in history, there would have been contact through conquest, plundering raids and even trade resulting in an osmosis of language elements and a borrowing of words. Nevertheless, in our investigation on the Saka, we have found no ethnic link between the Scythians and the Saka. Nor have we found an instance of the two forming a single community. Indeed, if we read the classical Greek accounts careful, we find it stated that the origins of the Saka are to be found in the east as part of the Central Asian Aryan family and not the west. As we shall see below, the Saka's links as well as their making or breaking of community are found with the Aryan and Zoroastrian family of nations.

The Saka were not Scythians - nor any variation thereof.

[Reader's need to make allowance that many ancient and modern writers were and are not scientific or circumspect in their writing. Many filled the gaps in their information with their imagination or skewed information to support a political or racial motive. For instance, Greek writers added to their substantive and convoluted accounts that the nations of Persia (and Media) were formed by Greek gods. Expropriators of The Iranian-N. Indian Aryan heritage (including symbols) claiming eastern migrations of their 'race' as a birthplace of the white Caucasian 'race'. At one time, the Soviet Russians actively promoted the concept of eastward 'Scythian' migrations perhaps to bolster their imperial acquisition of the once Saka lands in Central Asia. Also see our page: Western Views on the Aryan. We are, however, pleased to see some modern writers beginning to voice a contrary opinion to the old Eurocentric bias. The Scythian languages are a group of Eastern Iranian languages of the classical and late antiquity (Middle Iranian) period... While we feel it is untenable to link language associations categorically to genetics (or race) as so many linguists and philologists attempt to do, or to equate the spread of languages solely to migrations of 'races' (race-based constructs provide racists with academic support and thereby legitimacy for their bogus postulations), and while the Wikipedia page persists in using the term 'Scythian' in contexts where 'Saka' is the correct and authentic term, the page nevertheless provides some refreshing insights.

Some authors such as Oswald Szereményi imply that the Sogdians were Scythians i.e. Saka. The Sogdians and various Saka are listed as separate groups in Achaemenid inscriptions. The Sogdians and Saka though separate did live in close proximity and there are indications that some Saka did inhabit parts of Sogdian lands at different points in history. When times of mutual accommodation gave way to competition, there were likely repeated inroads of one group into the lands of the other.]

HERODOTUS & PLINY ON THE SAKA

At 7.64 of his Histories, Herodotus makes a revealing statement, "Σάκαι δὲ οἱ Σκύθαι...", i.e., "Säkai dé oi Skýthai", which translates as, 'The Sakai (Sakas) who are Skythai (Scythas)..." A sentence later, "τούτους δὲ ένδας Σκύθας Αμιργίους Σάκας ἀκόλουθον: οἱ γὰρ Πέρσαι πάντας τοὺς Σκύθας κάλουσε Ἐκάλοσ", which translates as, "But these (people) in reality called Amyrgyian* Sakas. For the Persians call all those Scythians, Sakas." Most translators do not translate τους/τουs (epic form of o, 'the following' and here 'those', a demonstrative pronoun), leaving the phrase to incorrectly read "...the Persians call all Scythians, Sakas." The exclusion of τους/τουs changes the meaning of the phrase substantially. [5th cent. BCE Greek historian Ctesias in his Persica at § 3 has Amorges as king of the Sacae in the time of Cyrus. Polyaeus (2nd. cent. CE) in his Stratagems at vii. 12 has Amorges as king at the time of Darius. 'Amorg' is likely derived from the Old Iranin/Avestan 'amer' meaning 'immortal'.]

The Saka were not Scythians - nor any variation thereof.

Compare our translation to the statement by Roman natural historian Pliny (23-79 CE) in his Natural Geography at 6.19: "Ultra sunt Scytharum populi. Persae illos Sacas universales appellaverelle a proxima gente, antiqui Aramios, Scythae ipsi Persas Chorsoros et Causum montem Croucasim, hoc est nivem candidum". For the primary translation of this passage, we get, "Beyond" (the Jaaxertes River/Syr Darya mentioned previously in 6.18) are the Scythian people. The Persians call all as Saka after the nearest people, the ancient Aramii, Scythians themselves Persians Chorsorae and the Caucasian Mountain Croucasis, that is snow white/whitened (cf. Safed Kuh/Paropamisus)." We get a secondary translation by inserting 'call': 'Beyond (the Jaaxertes River/Syr Darya) are the Scythian people. The Persians call all as Saka after the nearest people, the ancient Aramii, Scythians themselves (call) Persians Chorsorae (Choromian?) and also (call) the Caucasian Mountain Croucasis, that is snow white." ["Beyond" the Jaaxertes means east of the Jaaxertes. **Khor in Old Iranian = Sun; as in Khorasan and Khorasam/Chorasmia.]
Significantly, Pliny places his description of the 'Scythians' after his chapter on the Caspian Sea and before his chapter on the Seres (eastern most lands). His passage states (as does Herodotus) that the Persians call all those 'Scythians' descended from the Arami as Saka. 'Aram' is an Irano-N. Indian word. It could also be a corruption of Herodotus' 'Amyrgi'. Pliny lived during the Parthian reign of Aryana and we also know of Parthava as Khorasan. This might explain Pliny's statement regarding the 'Persians Chorsares'. Paradoxically, even though the West called the Parthians under the general appellation of 'Persians', the Parthians were originally a Saka group.

A note by Maj. Gen. Sir A. Cunningham in his article (at p. 223) published in the Royal Numismatic Society's Numismatic Chronicle (Great Britain, 1888) states, 'In the Babylonian version of the inscriptions of Darius (likely at Behistun), Namiri (Namiri?) is substituted for Saka. Perhaps Arami should be Amari.' King Darius' inscription at Behistun that cessions a succession by the Saka Tiga-Khuda is on column five. Gen. Cunningham's note indicates a possible relationship between 'Arami', 'Amyrgi' via 'Amiri' and the Saka Tiga-Khuda.

Darius in responding to the cession of the Saka Tiga-Khuda, states in his inscription that went with his army to the Saka lands, he crossed a 'draya', a river, likely today's Syr Darya before encountering the Saka. Modern translators inevitably translate 'draya' as 'sea' and therefore translate 'para draya' incorrectly as 'across the sea'.

LOCATION & COMPOSITION OF THE SAKA

The region described below consists of today's Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan and parts of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. (In the passages below we have replaced the word Scythian with [Sacae].)

Strabo (c. 63/64 BCE - 24 CE), in his Geography, writes: "As one proceeds from the Hyrcanian Sea towards the east, one sees ... the tribe of the Parthians (Parthava) and that of the Margianians (Mouru) and the Arians; and then comes the desert which is separated from Hycania (Verkani/Gorgani) by the Sarnius River as one goes eastwards and towards the Othus (Murghab) River...Then comes Bactriana, and Sogdiana, and finally the [Saca] nomads."

In the account above, travelling west to east, Strabo's sources encounter the Saka beyond, i.e. east, of the Sogdians. Since the Syr Darya (River Jaxartes) formed the eastern Sogdian border, that would place those Saka to the east of the river. However, Strabo adds below, that the Saka are also to be found on the left (north) of the traveller starting with the Dahi who lived to the north of Varkana and Parthava (Hycania and Parthia) immediately after the Caspian, followed by the great Karakum (Garagum) desert, and then the Massagetae.

Strabo 11.8.2: "On the left and opposite these peoples are situated the [Sacae] or nomadic tribes, which cover the whole of the northern side. Now the greater part of the [Sacae], beginning at the Caspian Sea, are called Däae (Dahi), but those who are situated more to the east than these are named Massagetae and Saca, whereas all the rest are given the general name of [Sacae], though each people is given a separate name of its own. They are all for the most part nomads. But the best known of the nomads are those who took away Bactriana and Sogdiana, and even crossed the Oxus (Amu Darya) and Jaxartes (Syr Darya)."

To paraphrase the above: various Saka groups, Saka being a general term, inhabit the northern plains that stretch from the Dahae lands that lie to the east of the Caspian Sea all the way to Aria (today's Herat Afghanistan), and that between these Saka and the southern kingdoms of Hycania (Verkani/Gorgani), Nesa (Nisa), the plains of the Parthians (plains just north of the Kopet Dag, Bactria (Northern Afghanistan) and Aria lies a great desert that some of the northern predatory Saka tribes crossed by long marches to raid the kingdom along the south of the desert and particularly the Saka that lived beyond the Jaxartes River (Syr Darya) that coincides with Saka Para-Darya, the 'Saka across the river'. The name Aparni (see above) is found in the Middle Persian Zoroastrian text, the Bundehishn as Aparnak, one of the six male children of the legendary Saka king, palmain and champion of Iran-shahr, Sam, Rustam's grandfather. Aparnak was given over-lordship of the land of Aparnshahr derived from Aparnak-shahr. The Aparni were apparently a royal house of the Dahi.

According to Strabo, the Saka consisted of:
- an eponymous group called the Saka as well as
- Dahi (largest) consisting of the clans such as the Aparni, Xanthi, and Pissuri and who were situated closest to the Caspian Sea
- Massagetae (who were situated east across the desert - today's Karakum/Garagum), and
- Asii, Pasiani, Tochari, and Sacarauil who originally came from the country on the other side of the Jaxartes (Jaxartes or Syr Darya or Sihun) River that adjoins that of the Saca and the Sogdian and was occupied by the Saca. And as for the Dahi, some of them are called Aparni (see below), some Xanthi, and some Pissuri. Now of these the Aparni are situated closest to Hycania (Verkani/Gorgani) and the part of the sea that borders on it, but the remainder extend even as far as the country that stretches parallel to Aria."

Strabo 11.8.3: "Between them (Sacae) and Hycania and Parthia and extending as far as the Arians is a great waterless desert, which they (the Saca) traversed by long marches and then overran Hycania (Verkani/Gorgani), Nesa (Nisa), and the plains of the Parthians Parthaven (Parthava)."

Unlike Strabo, Pliny in his Natural History at 6.19 (see above), does not mention any Saka (Sacae) nation west of the Jaxartes (Syr Darya). Those Saka that others understand as living west of the Jaxartes, Pliny names and the places in the east, but admits, as we have quoted above, "Indeed, upon no subject that I know of are there greater discrepancies among writers..." His account states that the Sacae (Saka) occupied lands east of the Jaxartes. His numerates the Saka groups as follows:
The Saka groups are the, "Sacae (here spelt differently than his previous spelling of Sakas), the Massagetae, the Dahae, the Issedones (Issedones situated in today's Kyrgyzstan?), the Ariacae (They dwelt, according to Ptolemy, along the southern banks of the Jaxartes), the Rhymnici, the Paesici, the Amardi (Mardi, near Caspian), the Histi, the Edones, the Camae, the Carnacae, the Euchatae (today's Bukhara?), the Cotieri, the Anthusiani, the Psacae, the Arimaspi, the Antacati, the Chrosaesi, and the Cetei; among them the Napsei are said to have been destroyed by the Palaei.

"The rivers in their country that are the best known, are the Mandragæus and the Carpasus. ...He (M. Varro) adds also, that under the direction of Pompey, it was ascertained that it is seven days' journey from India to the river Icarus, in the country of the Badri, which discharges itself into the Oxus, and that the merchandise of India being conveyed from it through the Caspian Sea into the Cyrus, may be brought by land to Phasis in Pontus, in five days at most. There are numerous islands throughout the whole of the Caspian sea: the only one that is well known is that of Tazata."

**Parthian Saka as a Part of the Aryan Nations & Zoroastrian Family**

Parthia (Parthava) as an Iranian kingdom was in existence around 1000 BCE. It was a successor nation to Nisaya, the fifth nation mentioned in the Zoroastrian scriptures', the Avesta's, book of Vendidad (see Vendidad nations). As a result, it is sometimes known was Parthaunisa. The Parthians liberated Iran-Shahr for Macedonian-Greek rule left behind by Alexander. They reassembled the Iranian federation of kingdoms, Iran-Shahr and they also reassembled fragments of the Zoroastrian scriptures, the Avesta destroyed by Alexander (see our page on the destruction and recompilation of the Avesta).

The Parthians are thought to be a part of Dahi-Saka, (Dahae in western literature) a part of the greater Iranian-Aryan family that had its origins in an area around the upper reaches of the Syr Darya (Jaxartes) river. The Dahi migrated 1,500 km westward towards land around the southeast Caspian coast and the Kopet Dag mountains. The Dahi are mentioned in one of the oldest chapters of the Zoroastrian scriptures, the Avesta, as one of the five original people to accept Zarathushtra's message, i.e. become Zoroastrian.

The Parthava may have in this manner shared origins with the ancestors of legendary Rustam of Sistan. The strongmen of both groups are called pahlavans, a word related to Pahlavi, a later form of Parthava. The Parthava in turn have Saka roots. The Saka pahlavans were protectors of Iran-Shahr and the Iranian throne, a role they would fulfill very well when they liberated Iran-Shahr from Macedonian rule. The word Sagzi is used in as a title for Rustam with the implication that the word is derived from Sakzig, a derivative of Saka. [We find Sakzig reminiscent of Tagzig (commonly thought to be Tajik), the nation where the Tibetan Bon claim spiritual roots.]

**Dahi & Zoroastrianism**

The country of Dahi or Dahinam (-nam is a usual ending for many Avestan nouns) finds mention in the Zoroastrian scriptures, the Avesta's Farvardin Yasht 13.144 where the fravashis (spiritual souls) of the Dahi's men and women are revered. The implication is that the Dahi, or some Dahi, were Zoroastrians - Zoroastrians worthy of perpetual veneration in each recitation of the scriptures. Contemporaneous with the life of Zarathushtra, Dahi, together with Airya (-nam), Suirya (-nam), Sairima (-nam) and Saini (-nam), are the oldest in the Zoroastrian family of nations - nations that participated in the start of the Zoroastrian era.

**Original Homeland of the Saka**

A strong candidate for the original homeland of the Saka is the land north of Airyana Vaeja, ancient Airya, around the upper to mid Syr Darya or Jaxartes river. Today, that region extends from the Fergana Valley in Tajikistan to Tashkent in Uzbekistan.

According to Justinus, internal discord between the Saka forced the Parthians to leave their original homeland and migrate to new lands. The Dahi (Gk. Dahe) did the same and both migrated nearly 1500 km westwards towards the Caspian Sea. [For a further discussion, please see our Dahi page.] The entire area in-between the upper Syr Darya and the southern Caspian were settled by different Saka groups. Some Saka would have migrated eastward into present-day Kyrgyzstan as well.

The Saka connection with Eastern Iran's Sistan region appears to have taken place via two routes. The first and the more ancient was via the connection with ancient Parthava (Parthians), the Pahlavans or Paladins of Iran-shahr. The second took place during the liberation of Iran-shahr from Macedonian-Greek rule about 2,100 years ago resulting in the formation of Bagastan (Sakastan).
**SAKASTAN - SISTAN**

Sagastan or Sistan is the ancestral kingdom of the legendary heroes of Iran, the protectors of the Iranian throne, the family of Sam, Zal and Rustam. The exploits of these heroes and their often stormy relationship with the Iranian-Aryan overlords, the king-of-kings occupy the bulk of the poet Ferdowsi's epic, the **Shahnameh**, the Book of Kings.

The name Sagastan (Sakastan, meaning the land of the Saka), and Sistan are relatively modern names. We do not find these names in the Zoroastrian scriptures, the Avesta or the Achaemenian inscriptions listing the nations of the Persian Empire (700-330 BCE) where we find the name Zraka or Zaranka (Gk. Drangiana) instead. The name Sagastan emerges in history during the Persian Sassanian empire (c. 200-650 CE) where we find the satrapy or kingdom of Sagastan located in the area of today's Sistan / Seistan province in eastern Iran. George Curzon in *Persia and the Persian Question*, vol 1 (1892), writes, "The derivation of the name Seistan or Sejestan from Sagastan, the country of the Sagan, or Sacae, has, says Sir H. Rawlinson, never been doubted by any writer of credit, either Arab or Persian." Not every writer shares Curzon's certitude.

In their flight from the invading Arabs c 650 CE, the Persians and their allies mounted significant resistance at Zarang in Sagistan (another name variation).

As we have stated above, the Saka connection with Eastern Iran appears to have taken place via two routes. The first and the more ancient was via the connection with ancient Parthava (Parthians), the Pahlavans or Paladins of Iran-shahr. The second took place during the liberation of Iran-shahr from Macedonian-Greek rule about 2,100 years ago resulting in the formation of Sagastan (Sakastan).

**KINGDOM OF RUSTAM - GREATER SAKASTAN. CONNECTIONS WITH INDIA**

According to Ferdowsi's **Shahnameh**, Rustam's grandfather Sam received from his overlord, King of Iran-Shahr, Manuchehr, a throne of turquoise, a crown of gold, a ruby signet-ring and a golden girdle. Manuchehr further gave Sam with a charter investing him him lands under his domain. These included:

- the whole of Kabul (Gandhara),
- Dunbur (derived from Sanskrit Udyapura to Adynpur to Dunpur - a major city of Lamghanat, on the right bank of the River Kabul),
- May-e Hind (from Vay-hind, capital of Gandhara and the region between the Kabul and Indus rivers above their confluence),
- Land from the Darya-e Chin (Chen-ab River, an Indus tributary which irrigates Multan) to Darya-e Hind (Indus River),
- Land from Zabulistan to the other side of Bust/Bost (Lashkar-gah, Southern Afghanistan).

Similarly, Rustam's overlord Kayanian King Kay Qubad granted him a fiefdom from Zabulistan to the Darya-e Sind, with the throne and crown of Nimruz; and Kabul to be given to Mihrab. Maintaining the tradition, Kayanian King Kay Khosrow bestowed on Framarz, Rustam's son, the kingdom of all Hind from Qinnaj (derived from Sanskrit Kanyakujbja to Kanauj, a region of the Ganges) to Seistan, Hind (Sind), Dunbur, May, Bust, Zabul/Zabol, Kabul.

These immense lands cover what is today Seistan and Baluchistan in Iran, Afghanistan northern Pakistan, Kashmir and a large part of northern India.

If this is indeed history in some form, then the greater quasi-empire of Sakastan, a sub-empire if you will of the greater Iranian-Aryan (later Persian) empire, included what the Persians refer to as Hind i.e. India, and there was ample opportunity for Saka influence in India. There is some suggestion - a
very tenuous one - that we have evidence of the Sakas in India. In Mathura, North-Central India (north of Agra and on the banks of the River Yamuna, a tributary of the Ganges, is a first century BCE inscription on the Mathura lion capital "honouring all Sakastanasa" cf. Sakastan, meaning land of the Saka. That reading of the words is debated and in any event, the sub-empire of Rustam would have long predated the 1st century BCE.

Related reading:
- Khvarizem (Uzbekistan)
- Dahi (Dahistan)
- Parthava (Parthia)
- Far Eastern Lands. Phryni & Seres, Tashkurgan, Khotan, Kashgar, Yarkand
- Iranian-Aryan Connections with Western Tibet
- Kangdez - Far Away Land Beyond the Seas
- Great Ocean Vourukasha / Frakhvkard / Varkash

© Author: K. E. Eduljee, Zoroastrian Heritage, 2005-14 (researched from 1979 onwards)  •  Contact  •  Page validated by W3C.org
The languages of the Zoroastrian scriptures, the Avesta, and the Hindu scriptures, the Rig Veda, are classified by linguists as part of the Indo-Iranian family of languages. The people who spoke the Indo-Iranian languages are in turn called the Indo-Iranian peoples. The people who wrote the Avesta and the Rig Veda, called themselves Aryans, and the Avestan-Rig Vedic languages can alternatively be called the Aryan languages.

**Avestan Old Iranian & Rig Vedic Sanskrit Similarities**

The oldest language or dialect in the Avesta, the language of the Gathas and the Yasna Haptanghaiti, is close to the language used in the Rig Veda, the older Hindu scriptures, which for convenience we call Vedic Sanskrit. Together, they form some of the oldest surviving literature in the world.

The following is an example of the closeness of the Avestan and the Vedic (Sanskrit) languages:

Avestan: aevo pantao yo ashahe, vispe anyaesham apantam (Yasna 72.11)

Vedic Sanskrit: abade pantha he ashae, visha anyaesham apantham

Translation: the one path is that of Asha, all others are not-paths.

[The Vedic-Sanskrit translation of the Avestan was provided to this writer by Dr. Satyan Banerjee.]

We are also grateful to Vaibhav Niku, for bringing to our attention a book by Prof. Hermann Brunhoffer titled *Urgeschichte der Arier in Vorder- und Centralasien* (Prehistory of the Aryans in West- and Central-Asia), 1893. On pages 1 and 2 of his Introduction Prof. Brunhoffer quotes Prof. H. Kern's book (from his book *Over het woord Zarathustra* (About the Word Zarathustra), p. 16, (1867)) as stating, "the Bactrian (i.e. Avestan) is so (greatly) related to the Old-Indian language (Vedic), and in particular, that of the Vedas, that without exaggeration it can be called a dialect thereof." By way of an example, Brunhoffer then quotes Yasna 10.8 in Avestan and follows the verse with what it would read like in Vedic Sanskrit (in much the same way as we have done above with Yasna 72.11) Click here for the Vedic-Sanskrit equivalent for Yasna 10.8 according to
Vaibhav Niku states that calling the Vedic language 'Vedic Sanskrit' "is technically wrong, as 'Sanskrit' is bound by Panini's (see below) grammar, which came long after the (Rig) Vedic language. But, 'Vedic Sanskrit' is a common term, and it has no ambiguity, and yours is only an introduction and not scholarly work, so you could use it too. Also, even authorities use it as a shorthand."

**Proto Indo-Iranian**

The comparative example of the Avestan and Rig-Vedic (Sanskrit) languages above demonstrate that the languages are so close that they are for all practical purposes dialects of the same language. They are nevertheless not identical. At the time of their writing, the people of the old Avesta and Rig Veda were likely close neighbours. A conclusion by extrapolation is that at an earlier time the two people shared a common language named by linguists as Proto Indo-Iranian. This is a deduction. There are no known examples of the presumed Proto Indo-Iranian language. Proto Indo-Iranian would have been the language of the ancient Aryans before their separation into the Avestan and Rig Vedic groups.

There are compelling arguments indicating Central Asia was the location of the Proto Indo-Iranians people, the Aryans, and the region where their language originated (also see our page on the Location of the Aryan Homeland, Airyana Vaeja). Given that the Rig Veda is commonly thought to have been written in the Upper Indus region, we have yet one more reason to look at the area immediately to the north and north-west of the upper Indus Valley i.e. the Badakshan-Pamir region as being a strong candidate for the homeland of the ancient Aryans, the so-called Proto Indo-Iranians.

At some point in history, the Aryans coalesced into neighbouring Avestan and Rig-Vedic groups. Eventually, they migrated out of their original Central Asian homeland with one group, the Avestan people or Iranian Zoroastrians, migrating west into present day Iran. In this scenario, the other group, the Rig Vedic people or Indian Hindus, migrated south into the Indian sub-continent's upper Indus valley, a land which the Avestan people would call Hapta Hindu, the land of the seven Indus rivers. We use the word ‘migration’ with some caution. The lands to which the Aryans migrated were already familiar to them through trade and they very well could have had pre-existing trading colonies in these areas. The ‘migration’ did not displace the native people nor was it violent. For the main part the Aryans successfully integrated with the existing populations in a mutually beneficial manner - as the Persians did with the Elamites. Population densities were likely quite low at that time and there is a good possibility that some valleys in the upper Indus region (cold and inhospitable in the winter compared to the warmer plains) were uninhabited. In any event, regionally, the upper Indus was contiguous with the mountain regions of the Pamirs and Central Asia - it was not a foreign land as today’s borders may lead us to believe. The Zoroastrian scriptures talk about a southward expansion and not a migration during the time of King Jamshid, Yima in the Avesta and Yama in the Rig Veda (also see Migration of the Aryans and Expansion of Aryan Lands). There is no mention of 'invading' a neighbouring territory.

**Vedic, Classical Sanskrit & Prakrit**

**Vedic Language**

The Vedic language itself is said to have gone through five stages: 1. The Rigvedic phase said to have existed prior to 1200-1800 BCE (the oldest hymns of the Rigveda are thought to have been composed several centuries after the separation of the Iranian and Indian Aryans and the area of their composition is likely the Upper Indus region). The Rig Veda's incantations or samhitas are said to be amongst its earliest verses. 2. The Mantric phase which include the mantras in the Atharvaveda, Yajurveda, the Rigveda Khilani and the Samaveda Samhita. 3. The Samhita prose phase. 4. The Brahmana prose phase which includes the oldest Upanishads, the Brihadaranyaka, Chandogya and the Jaiminiya Upanishad Brahmana. 5. The Sutra phase which includes the Shrauta and Gṛhya Sutras, as well as the Younger Upanishads such as the Katha and Maitrayaniya Upanishads.

**Panini**

Panini was a Sanskrit grammarian from Pushkalavati, Gandhara, a region which is now part of modern-day Charshadda District in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (formerly known as the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan). One guess is that Panini lived around the 6th century BCE. Ancient Gandhara was part of Hapta Hindu (meaning Seven-Indus, the upper Indus basin of the Indus River and its tributaries), the 15th Avestan-Vendidad nation. Panini's work, the Ashtadhyayi, is the earliest surviving text on Classical Sanskrit grammar. Panini himself refers to previous works such as the Unadisutra, Dhatupatha and Ganapatha. Together with the work of his immediate predecessors Nirukta, Nighantu, and Pratishakya, Panini's
Ashtadhyayi is acknowledged to stand at the beginning of the history of linguistics. His theory of morphological analysis was more advanced than any equivalent Western theory before the mid 20th century.

Vaibhav Niku informs us that ‘संक ृ त’ (commonly transliterated as Sanskrit) means ‘highly elaborated/well constructed speech’.

**Classical Sanskrit**

While the emergence of Panini’s grammar is now taken to mark the end of the period of the Vedic language period (otherwise known as Vedic-Sanskrit) and the beginning of the Classical Sanskrit period defined by Panini’s grammar, we should be careful not to state that his grammar caused or marked the transition since according to some references in Panini’s text, the language of the Vedic scriptures had already fallen out of common use as a spoken language in his time. In other words, the Vedic language had already become archaic by Panini’s time and Classical Sanskrit was an established language to whose grammar Panini gave definition and structure.

**Prakrit**

The Hindu Epics, the Ramayana and Mahabharata, were written in Classical Sanskrit with an admixture of Prakrit a descendant of the Vedic. Prakrit is contrasted from Sanskrit with the former being designated the language of common folk, a vernacular, while the latter was used for religious texts, the scholarly language of Brahmins. Inevitable lower and upper class distinctions attached themselves to the two language forms as well. A variant of Prakrit spoken by the Jains is curiously called Ardha Magadhi meaning half Magadhi.

**IRANIAN ARYAN LANGUAGES**

**OLD IRANIAN LANGUAGES OF THE AVESTA**

An Avestan Language is any one of the Indo-Iranian languages used to compose the Zoroastrian scripture, the Avesta. The Avestan languages range from the ancient language of the hymns of Zarathushtra, the Gathas, to Sogdian and the relatively modern language of the commentaries, the Zand. The language of the Zand is a language that is relatively close to modern Persian. (There are non-scriptural, classical Middle Persian religious texts written in the Pahlavi script (see below).]

**Language of the Gathas and Yasna Haptanghaiti**

The Avesta's Gathas and Yasna Haptanghaiti were composed in the oldest of the Avestan languages called Gathic Avestan or Old Avestan. The Haptanghaiti are seven chapters inserted between two Gatha sections and are believed to have been composed by Zarathushtra's followers either during his lifetime, or shortly after. However, unlike the Gathas which were composed in verse, the Haptanghaiti were composed in prose.

**Language of the Yasna, Yashts & Visperad**

The balance of the Avesta's Yasna together with the Avesta's Yashts and Visperad were composed in a language called Young Avestan, so named because it is believed to have come into use after Old Avestan had stopped being used as an everyday language of the people.

However, while the language of ‘say, the Yashts, is thought to be younger than the language of the Gathas, the content of some of the Yashts such as the Meher Yasht may contain pre-Zoroastrian Mithraic material. Other material in the Yashts such as the Farvardin Yasht lists in some detail the names of Zarathushtra's first followers and would have initially been composed contemporaneously with the Gathas.

There is no reason to assume that all the material for the Farvardin Yasht originated at the same time as when it was finally composed or that the different sections of the so-called Younger Avesta were written at the same time or location. In the Farvardin Yasht, other than the name of the Aryan homeland (called Airyanam Vâdhu in the Yasht) the names of several nations are unrecognizable and bear no resemblance to the nations listed in another part of the Younger Avesta, the Vendidad (see below). The Farvardin Yasht's nation names appear to be far more archaic. For this reason, the time of final composition of any part of the Avesta may not be the same as the date of its initial composition. The same holds true for the Vendidad contents.

**Language of the Vendidad / Videvdat**

The name Vendidad is a later form of Videvdat, which is in turn a contraction of Vi-Daêvô-Dâta - the law against the devas or evil. The language of the Vendidad is reputed to be the youngest of the Avestan
languages and some parts appear to have been composed after the language had ceased to be a commonly spoken language. However, the term 'youngest' is a comparative term since the writing of the Vendidad preceded - perhaps substantially - the formation of Media and Persia, viz. before the 8th century BCE.

In addition, as with the Yashts, the date of composition of the final version does not exclude the possibility that some parts of the Vendidad may consist of very old material. Even in this modern age, we are continually rewriting old material.

**Language of the Zand**

The commentaries attached to the Avesta are called the Zand. A large part of the Zand were composed / written in Middle Persian (see below).

**POST AVESTAN LANGUAGES**

**EASTERN & WESTERN DIALECTS**

For the main part, the Avesta was composed in so-called eastern (Central Asian) dialects or forms of Old Iranian. Old Persian, specific to the Persian Aryans, was a western form of the Old Iranian languages. Each of the Aryan groups spoke their own dialect of Old Iranian. For instance, the Medes spoke a dialect called Old Median and the Persians of the Achaemenian era spoke Old Persian.

**Old Persian**

Old Persian is the language found in the inscriptions of the Achaemenian kings (c.700 - 330 BCE), founders of the Persian kingdom and empire. As we noted above, Old Persian is considered to be a western form of Old Iranian. Old Persian still, nevertheless, maintained close similarities with the eastern forms such as Old Sogdian, an eastern Central Asian dialect of Old Iranian.

No part of the existing Avesta is written in Old Median or Old Persian, the old languages of the Aryan migrants to the far west of the Iranian plateau. Persian priests continued to use the eastern Old Iranian languages in which the Avesta had originally been composed.

Old Persian went through a transformation during the Achaemenian era. The inscriptions of Artaxerxes II (404-359 BCE) and Artaxerxes III (359-338 BCE) show an evolution of the language and a noticeable difference from the language used in the inscriptions of Darius I (522-486 BCE). The difference is significant enough for philologists and linguists to name the language of the later Achaemenid period as 'pre-Middle Persian' or 'post-Old Persian'.

The Achaemenian dynasty ended with their defeat and the conquest of Persia by Alexander of Macedonia in 330 BCE. After Alexander's death, the conquered lands were ruled by his generals, one of whom establish the short-lived Seleucid dynasty.

For a more detailed exposition on Old Persian, its discovery and decipherment, please see our page on Old Persian.

**Parthian**

Macedonian Seleucid rule of the Persian Empire began to crumble in 246 BCE after a revolt by the Parthian Arsacids and their Bactrian allies, Aryan groups from the north-central Aryan lands of Parthia and Bactria. The language of the Arsacid dynasty (247 BCE - 224 CE) is known to us as Parthian (it also called Parthian Pahlavi, Arsacid Pahlavi or Pahlavanik). Parthian Pahlavi became the successor official language to Old Persian in the traditional Aryan lands.

**Middle Persian Pahlavi & Parsik**

The Arsacids rulers of the reconstituted Persian empire were themselves displaced by the Sassanians (224 - 652 CE), and the Persian language they spoke was a derivative of Parthian Pahlavi which we now call Middle Persian, but known locally as Parsik. Middle Persian Pahlavi was the official language of the Sassanian empire.

The language we know as Middle Persian Pahlavi is Middle Persian written with the Pahlavi script. Because of Pahlavi's limited alphabet, it employed Aramaic logograms (symbols that represent words in the way 'B' represents 'and'). While the words represented Aramaic words, they were read as Middle Persian words. The Pahlavi script had yet another short coming. Its alphabet could not adequately represent all the sounds in the Avestan languages.
After the Sassanian Zoroastrians were overthrown by the Arabs in the mid-600s, Pahlavi gradually evolved into Farsi Persian (Persian written using the Arabic script), a gradual transformation that took until the 9th century CE before Farsi became the prevalent language. However, even the 9th century there were a number of Zoroastrian writers who were still fluent in Middle Persian Pahlavi.

Middle Persian Pazend

The Pahlavi alphabet did not contain the range of sounds required to commit the Avestan texts to writing. The Avestan alphabet and script were used for this purpose. The Sassanian era Avesta also contained commentaries and translations called the Zend (or Zand) written in Middle Persian. Middle Persian Pazend was the name given to Middle Persian written with the Avestan script. Because Avestan employed a larger number of alphabets, it did not require the use of Pahlavi pictograms.

DARI

In addition to Farsi (Persian, the national language of Iran), the traditional language spoken amongst the Zoroastrians of Yazd and Kerman is called Dari, a name shared with the dialect of Persian spoken in Afghanistan. However, despite sharing the same name, the Dari dialects of Yazd or Kerman are quite different from the Dari of Afghanistan.

One explanation about the etymology of the name Dari is that it may have evolved from the word darbar meaning court, the implication being that Dari was the court language of the eastern Iranian lands (including Afghanistan) during the Persian Sassanid dynasty (226 - 651 CE). Another explanation is that before the Arab invasion of Iran, the languages of greater Iran were known to Iranians as Dari and not Farsi.

Eastern Dari

The following is a quote from our page on Haroyu (Aria, presently Herat and adjoining provinces in north-western Afghanistan): "The residents of Herat City are mainly the Parsiban (or Farsiwan), a group otherwise simply called Parsi (or Farsi), two versions of an ethnic term sometimes meaning 'Persian speaker'. However, all Afghani Persian speakers are not called Parsiban. For the main part, Parsiban refers to a sub-group of ethnic Tajiks who speak Khorasani Dari, a Persian language dialect. (Khorasan is the northeast province of Iran that borders Herat and Afghanistan.) This is especially true of the rural Persiban who have maintained the tradition of speaking Khorasani Dari. Members of the same ethno-linguistic group are also found in the Eastern Iranian provinces of Khorasan and Siestan / Sistan. Khorasani Dari is native to Khorasan, Herat and Farah provinces - provinces that were once part of Greater Khorasan. The eastern-most district in Herat Province is called Farsi / Parsi. There are about 600,000 Parsiban in Afghanistan out of a present population of just under thirty three million." Given that Khorasani Dari is spoken all along eastern Iran, from Khorasan to Siestan, and that many Zoroastrians from these areas migrated to Kerman and Yazd, carrying with them their language, the eastern Iranian connections with the Zoroastrians of Yazd and Kerman bear further exploration.

The eastern Iranian / Persian dialect of Dari that eventually evolved in Yazd and Kerman, cannot be understood by the speakers of Iran's national language, Farsi, a western Iranian / Persian dialect. The Zoroastrians of Yazd have not been very willing to teach non-Zoroastrians how to speak the language, using it to communication amongst themselves or when they did not want the Muslims of Yazd to understanding what they were saying. (The Dari speakers of Yazd know mainstream Farsi, the language spoken by Muslim Yazdis, as well.) E. G. Browne wrote in his book, A Year Amongst the Persians (1893), "This Dari dialect is only used by the guebres (see gabr above, a derogatory word that Muslims used for Zoroastrians) amongst themselves, and all of them, so far as I know, speak Persian as well. When they speak their own dialect, even a Yazdi Muslim cannot understand what they are saying, or can only understand it very imperfectly. It is for this reason that the Zoroastrians cherish their Dari, and are somewhat unwilling to teach it to a stranger... To me they were as a rule ready enough to impart information about it; though when I tried to get old Jamshid the gardener to tell me more about it, he excused himself, saying that knowledge of it could be of no possible use to me.”

Yazdi Dari Dialect

The principle Yazdi dehs 'villages' or neighbourhoods, have their own Dari variation that can sometimes be distinguished by the accent of the speaker, accents that can be quite 'thick'. While there are twenty-four such variations of Dari in use today, the Yazdis broadly group the different variations into the Sharifabadi and Mahlati dialects, Sharifabadi being the older and most difficult to understand while Mahlati is considered the more 'mainstream' dialect. Sharifabad is one of the oldest and most conservative of Yazdi villages. Mahlati is derived from Mahal-e Yazd / Mahale-ye Yazd, the Zoroastrian section of old Yazdi city proper (the villages or
neighbourhoods of Yazd are discussed further below.

Danger of Extinction
In their paper, The Dari Language Project, Annahita Farudi and M. Doustdar Toosarvandani quote Mazdapour (1995) as listing Deh-No, Deh-Abshahi, Ahmadabad, Shahabad, and Mehdiabad as some of the Dari varieties / dialects that have become extinct within the last thirty years. Given the diaspora and emancipation of Yazdi Zoroastrians, Dari is falling out of use within families.

> Further reading: The Dari Language Project by Annahita Farudi and M. Doustdar Toosarvandani (pdf)

AVESTAN TEXTS

ORAL AVESTAN TEXTS
The original Avesta was transmitted orally by priests and laity memorizing Avestan passages as verse, hymns, and manthra.

WRITTEN AVESTAN TEXTS
At some point in history, the oral Avestan texts were committed to writing. The first record of a written text of the Avesta comes from the Middle Persian language (Pahlavi) writer Arda Viraf, in his book the Arda Viraf Nameh. In it, he writes that the the Persian Achaemenian kings (c. 700 - 300 BCE) commissioned the commitment of the Avesta to writing and deposited the texts in the royal library at Istakhr. "...the entire Avesta and Zand, written on parchment with gold ink, were deposited in the archives at Stakhar Papakan (Istakhr, near Persepolis and Shiraz in Pars province), ... and the invader Alexander of Macedon... burned them. He also killed several judges, dasturs, mobeds, herbads and other upholders of the religion, as well as the competent and wise of the country of Iran" (in an attempt to destroy the oral tradition as well).

After the overthrow of the Macedonian occupation, surviving information was collected and the texts were reassembled as best as possible.

The above mention by Arda Viraf of a written copy of the Avesta during Achaemenian times leaves open the possibility that a script other that cuneiform was in use during Achaemenian times for the writing of the Avesta. We discuss this further in the section on scripts below.

The earliest known written text of the Avesta that has survived is a fragment of a 10th century CE Sogdian manuscript discovered in the 'Caves of a Thousand Buddhas' - a cliff wall near the city of Dunhuang, a town on the Silk Road in northwest China. The manuscript was written in the Sogdian using the Avestan script.

SCRIPTS
The alphabet and system of writing is called a script.

The earliest known written texts of the Iranian language family are the Achaemenian era (c. 700 - 300 BCE) Old Persian written texts that use the cuneiform script. The script used to write the Middle Persian language was the Pahlavi script that was in turn based on the Aramaic script. The earliest known surviving examples of texts written in Pahlavi date to the beginning of the Sassanid era (226-651 CE) - from 3rd century CE to 4th century CE. The earliest known examples of the Avestan script, from the 10th century ACE, post-date the Pahlavi texts even though Avestan is the older of the two languages. The range of vowel and consonant sounds in Avestan is wider than that found in Pahlavi. The range of Avestan alphabet sounds is closer to the range found in Sanskrit. For this reason the Avestan alphabet is better suited for writing the Avestan texts.

The direction of writing for the cuneiform script is left to right, while the direction of writing for the cursive Pahlavi and Avestan scripts is right to left.

Cuneiform
Cuneiform was a wedged shaped system of writing that was developed around 3,000 BCE to write on soft clay that was then hardened. Cuneiform was also used to engrave inscriptions on rock. Some of the earliest examples of cuneiform appear in Southern Mesopotamia (today's Southern Iraq).

The Achaemenians used the cuneiform script for their Old Persian inscriptions, tablets and plaques. Old Persian Cuneiform script is written from left to right and consists of thirty-six signs representing vowels and consonants, eight logograms, and three signs that are combined to represent numbers.
Aramaic was the language of the Aramean (also spelt Aramaean) people, a people who inhabited the upper reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, an area that would have placed it within, or in close proximity to Ranghaya, the sixteenth Aryan nation listed in the Vendidad, a book of the Zoroastrian scriptures, the Avesta.

While the Achaemenian Persians used Old Persian for communication with other Persians, Achaemenian Persian King Darius I, the Great, and his successors used Aramaic as the official language with which to communicate their officials throughout the empire.

We do not have any examples of the Aramaic script used to write Old Persian. However, we have surviving examples of Parthian and Sassanian Middle Persian written in a derivative of the Aramaic script which we know as the Pahlavi script.

Further reading: See our page on Aramaic.

Pahlavi Script

The Pahlavi script is said to be derived from Aramaic and consists of a large number of ideograms - Aramaic words that were read as Pahlavi words. It is written from right to left.

The Pahlavi alphabet and sounds does not contain the range of the Avestan script.
Avestan Script

The Avestan alphabet and script was the writing system used to develop a written Avestan text during the Sassanian era (226-651 CE). For this reason it is also called din dabireh or din dabiri, meaning 'religious script' in Middle Persian.

The Avestan script is written from right to left and is said to have been based on the Pahlavi script. The advantage of the Avestan script over the Pahlavi script was that the Avestan alphabet encompassed a greater range of sounds.

Example of Pahlavi writing

Avestan vowels:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a} & \quad \text{ā} & \quad \text{ā} & \quad (\dddot{a}) & \quad \text{e} \\
\text{e} & \quad \text{o} & \quad \text{i} & \quad \text{u} & \quad \dddot{u}
\end{align*}
\]

Avestan consonants:
Perin Pudumjee Coyaji, based in Pune, India, is a calligrapher who taught herself the Avestan script and then analysed each alphabet - going beyond the script to uncover the art form latent in each letter.
Avestan calligraphy - Perin Pudumjee Cojaaji, Humata

Further Reading:
» Our page on Old Persian

Off-Site Reading
General:
» Online resources at Avesta.org

Old Persian:
» Old Persian at Ancient Scripts
» Old Persian Dictionary at University of Texas
» Wikipedia Old Persian Language

Pahlavi Fonts, Script & Grammar:
» Ancient Iranian Font Project at St. Catherine University
» Fravehr.org Persic Font
» Iran Chamber Pahlavi Font

Avesta Fonts, Script & Grammar:
» Teach Yourself Avesta Language by Dr. Ervad Ramiyar Parvez Karanjia (2005) at Avesta.org (pdf file)
» Ancient Iranian Font Project at St. Catherine University
» Iran Chamber Avestan Alphabet
» Omniglot Avestan
» Avestan Grammar at University of Texas
» Lessons in Avesta by Bharucha at Avesta.org
» Old Avestan at Harvard University
» Wikipedia Avestan Language
» A Grammar of Gatha-Avestan by Robert Beekes

Rig Veda (links provided by Vaibhav Niku):
» Rig Veda: a Metrically Restored Text, by Barend A. van Noorten and Gary B. Holland, 1994
» John Robert Gardner's website on the Rigveda
» Karen Thomson’s homepage with links
ZORASTRIAN HERITAGE
Author: K. E. Eduljee

Search Our Site: Google Search
The above is a reproduction woodcut of the Asia section from Ptolemy’s (90-168 CE) map of the world by Johane Schnitzer (Ulm: Leinhart Holle, 1482). The original map was lost.
Tajikistan - Modern
Tibet West, Central Asia, Himalayas
Turko-Mongol Lands - Altai/Uyghur
Turkmenistan - Modern
Uzbekistan
Vendidad nations
Yazd Zoroastrian/Sacred Sites