

languages.^{18a} This conclusion is supported by the fact that the Burish or Wurish are considered to be of the same caste as the Yashkun who form the entire population of Puniāl, below Gūpis, and a very strong element numerically lower down also in the Gilgit valley, as well as in Astōr and Darēl.¹⁹ There is apparently little at present to distinguish the Burish or Wurish people (Fig. 42) in physical features from the type prevailing among the Dard-speaking population, whether of the Yashkun or of other castes in those valleys. But in view of the absence of adequate and systematically collected anthropological materials the relation between linguistic and racial divisions in this area can scarcely as yet be examined with profit.²⁰

Mountain
tract of
Kho.

In my preceding observations on the geographical features, &c., of Yāsīn I have specifically had in view the main valley, i. e. Wurshigūm. But in a political sense Yāsīn all through its modern history included also the small mountain tracts of Kho (Kuh) and Ghizar on the uppermost Gilgit river, and having regard to their geographical position it is clear that this must have been the case also during earlier periods. A brief reference to them is, therefore, needed here. The tract, designated as *Kho* by Colonel Biddulph but spelt *Kuh* by more recent authorities,²¹ comprises the very narrow strip of valley through which the Gilgit river passes immediately above and below its junction with the Yāsīn river at Gūpis. The fact that with a total length of about thirty miles this portion of the valley counted in 1900 a population of only some 1,200 souls, sufficiently illustrates its very confined nature. Of the small side valleys which join it from the south and are included with it, only the Batres-gāh Nullah supports a few hamlets. A very narrow defile, defended by an old tower some miles above the mouth of Batres-gāh, divides Kho from Ghizar, while eastwards, in a still more difficult gorge extending for about nine miles, lies the boundary towards Puniāl and Gilgit.²² It is this easily defended defile which forms the true natural barrier between Yāsīn and Gilgit and explains the inclusion of Kho in the former territory.

Ghizar
tract.

The Ghizar tract extends right up to the watershed towards Mastūj and Chitrāl, formed by an easy saddle (12,250 feet above the sea) immediately west of the Shandur lake. The upper part of the valley from above Ghizar proper is fairly open, and this accounts for the presence of a population about twice as large as that of Kho. The importance of the district, however, is due solely to the easy route which it affords for communication between Lāspur and Mastūj on the one side and Yāsīn and Gilgit on the other. The facilities afforded by this route explain why Mastūj and Yāsīn, though on opposite sides of a mighty mountain range rising to peaks over 21,000 feet in height, were yet for a long period united under one rule. They help us also to understand why the Chinese mission which Wu-k'ung accompanied about A. D. 751, coming from the Pāmīrs via the Barōghil, chose the detour through Mastūj, Lāspur and Ghizar, as I have elsewhere shown that they probably did, in order ultimately to reach Udyāna from the Yāsīn side.²³

^{18a} Cf. e. g. Grierson, *Linguistic Survey*, VIII. ii. p. 6.

¹⁹ Cf. Biddulph, *Hindoo Koosh*, p. 38. Drew, *Jummoo and Kashmir*, p. 427, offers some judicious observations about the ethnographic bearing of this 'caste' distinction.

²⁰ As regards the present racial constitution of the Burish or Wurish people, the possibility of its having been affected also by infiltration from Iranian-speaking 'Galcha' tribes north of the Hindukush ought not to be lost sight of. Thus we find nowadays the northernmost portion of the Hunza valley, known as Guhyāl, occupied by Wakhīs from the uppermost Oxus (cf. my *Ruins of Khotan*, pp. 45 sq.), while small Badakhshī settlements appear in Yāsīn.

A similar process is observable at the head-waters of the Chitrāl river. The westernmost valley of Kāshkār-bālā is held by the Yidghāh, who speak a dialect of Munjānī, one

of the Galcha languages, and in the topmost portion of the Yārkhun (Mastūj) valley I found in 1906 Wakhī immigration in actual progress; see below, p. 49.

Thus we see that the Hindukush does not constitute nowadays either a linguistic or a racial watershed. By assuming similar conditions in the past we can best account for the very close resemblance in physical characteristics which undoubtedly connect the people of Yāsīn and Hunza, as well as those of Chitrāl and Mastūj, with the *Homo Alpinus* type of the Galchas; cf. Joyce, *Notes on the Physical Anthropology of Chinese Turkestan and the Pamirs*, *J. R. Anthropol. Inst.*, xlii. p. 462; *Serindia*, iii. p. 1357.

²¹ Cf. Biddulph, *Hindoo Koosh*, p. 57.

²² For a graphic description of this defile, cf. Biddulph, *ibid.*, p. 55.

²³ See *Serindia*, i. pp. 17 sqq.