

that like all the 'Ghalchas' or hillmen to the north they are supposed to be Sunnis. No doubt, while the fanatical rule of Bukhara over Shughnan and the other valleys farther south lasted, their inhabitants, too, had to profess this orthodox Muhammadan creed, though all of them belonged to the heretical Ismailia sect which has its quasi-deified head in the Agha Khan, so well known in London and Paris.

After rapidly passing down Yazgulam I was glad to gain the mouth of the great valley of Wanj by the new bridle-path along the bank of the Oxus. As it is almost throughout blasted out of perpendicular rock-walls or else carried over boldly built narrow balconies, I could easily realize why the passage of these gloomy gorges was formerly risky even for the local hillmen and impossible for the carriage of loads. After this the open character and abundant cultivation of the Wanj valley afforded a pleasant change. A long but easy march on October 1 up the valley afforded evidence of a moister climate. On the lower hillsides there were to be seen terraced fields tilled without irrigation, and above them plentiful tree growth. Large orchards around the villages and rows of trees between the fields gave quite a park-like appearance to the valley bottom.

In keeping with the altered landscape there was a change in the look and ways of the population. Like all the Tajiks throughout the hills of Bukhara they speak only Persian. Though their old Eastern Iranian tongue has been abandoned, yet they probably represent the Iranian race indigenous to ancient Sogdiana in greater purity than the 'Sarts' of the plains. The large whitewashed homesteads with their flat roofs also reflected changed conditions of climate and life.