

ABSTRACT

This doctoral thesis introduces the Wakhi ethno-linguistic group living in the region of the Pamiri-Hindu Kush mountain knot on territories of Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Pakistan. As a result of the strategic economic and political rivalry and conflict between the British Empire and the Russian Empire for supremacy in Central Asia during the 19th century (the so-called *Great Game*), part of the so far homogeneous ethnic group was forced to leave their native Wakhan Corridor in the late 19th century. The Wakhi people then found themselves on the territory of future states with diametrically opposite development to their own. The goal of this work is a comprehensive analysis of the transformation of the material and spiritual culture of the Wakhi ethnic group or groups living on the territories of Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Pakistan with emphasis on their current status. Very important part of my work deals with the visual context that by means of images and photographs presents significant features associated with the Wakhi everyday life. My primary aim is to uncover the material and spiritual phenomena that are closely related to everyday life, historical and political contexts, socio-economic situation, Shia Ismaili, religion and affiliated features which the members of Wakhi ethno-linguistic groups living in the mountain areas of Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Pakistan are confronted with. The comparative method seems to be the most suitable to achieve this goal, for it represents a meaningful combination of synchronic and diachronic approaches, based on my own field research in the region of the Pamiri-Hindu Kush mountain knot and supported by the study of relevant sources.

Key words:

Wakhan - Wakhi people - Pamir - Hindu Kush - Afghanistan - Tajikistan - Pakistan - Gojal - Ismailia - ethnological field research