

## MISSION ATLAS PROJECT

Central Asia

### Tajikistan

#### Basic Facts

Country Name: Republic of Tajikistan

Country Founded: September 9, 1991

Population: 7,163,506

Government Type: Republic

Geography: Central Asia, west of China, north of Afghanistan, east of Uzbekistan

Number of People Groups: 45

#### Demographics:

As of July 2005, the population of Tajikistan was 7,163,506. The population growth rate is +2.15%.

Age structure stands 0-14 years 38.5%; 15-64 years 56.7%; 65+ years 4.8% (2005 est.)

The birth rate stands at 32.58 births per 1000 population and the death rate 8.39 deaths per 1000 population. Infant mortality rate is 110.76 deaths per 1000 live births.

Life expectancy is 61.68 years for males and 67.59 years for females.

Less than 0.1% of the adult population is infected with HIV/ AIDS.

The urban/rural division stands at 32.86% urban with a 2.8% urban growth rate.

The largest cities are Dushanbe (745,895), Khudzhand, also called Leninabad or Khojend, (210,679), Kul'ab (101,561), Kurgan- T'ube (74,794).

Encarta Encyclopedia: Johnstone and Mandryk

[www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ti.html](http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ti.html)

#### Land/Geography:

Tajikistan is in Central Asia, east of Afghanistan and west of China. It is a landlocked country, joining with Afghanistan, China, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. Tajikistan is slightly smaller than Wisconsin. The country's landscape is mostly dominated by the *Pamir* and *Alay* Mountains. The western *Fergana Valley* is in the north and the *Kofarnihon* and *Vakhsh Valleys* are in the southwest.

[www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/print/ti.html](http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/print/ti.html)

#### Language:

The official language of Tajikistan is *Tajik*, although Russian is used by many in business and government.

#### Society/ Culture:

Almost 45 people groups make up Tajikistan.

The primary people divisions are:

*Tajik* (79.9%)

*Uzbek* (15.3%)

*Russian* (1.1%)

Kyrgyz (1.1%)

Other (2.6%)

The people of Tajikistan are a diverse group of people with almost 45 people groups making up the population. Most Tajiks consider hospitality to be a matter of great importance. Many groups in Tajikistan go out of their way to make guests feel welcome and often greet their guests with a meal of tea, bread, and yogurt made of goat's milk. It is normal to remove one's shoes, but not socks, when entering a home and a person should never turn bread upside down.

Family is also important to most families in Tajikistan. It is not uncommon for marriages to be arranged with little input from the bride or groom. Arranged marriages, however, are less common in Tajikistan than other Muslim areas. In many families, the daughters must marry in order of age.

Some couples marry and move into a home of their own. Many, however, marry and live with the groom's family. Most families also tend to have a high birth rate and women are generally expected to have their first child within their first year of marriage. Divorce is becoming more common in the more urban areas of Tajikistan.

The people of Tajikistan have a rich culture. They often hold lavish celebrations and many enjoy music, poetry, and ancient crafts. The national dish of Tajikistan is called "*osh*." It consists of rice, carrots, onions, oil, and lamb. Many homes serve this dish on Thursdays and it is a common dish served at celebrations. Fruit, raisins, chicken, mutton, and yogurt are also commonly served in Tajikistan. Bread and tea are almost always served at meals.

As in most predominately Muslim countries, men do not wear shorts in public. Dress for women is different in rural and urban settings. In large cities, women may wear more western dress, including shorter skirts, shirts with bared shoulders, or pants. In rural areas, however, this is not acceptable and women dress more conservatively. Shirts should be below the knee, and although a short sleeve shirt may be acceptable, the shoulders and front must be completely covered. In most places, is not necessary for foreign women to cover their heads.

Tajikistan is a male dominated society. Many men attend teahouses called chaikhanas. While foreign women are sometimes allowed in these tea houses, they are mostly a men's club where men gather to talk. Local women do not typically go to these teahouses. In social gatherings, men and women usually sit separately, except for "honored guests." Tajik women do not typically shake hands and a man should never initiate greeting an unknown woman. Foreign women should dress conservatively when going to a crowded public place and should not travel alone in these places or after dark.

The majority of the people in Tajikistan are Sunni Muslim. The people in Tajikistan who are Muslim celebrate several religious ceremonies. Most take part in a month of fasting called *Ramazan*, *Eid Al-Fitr*, or *Ramadan*. Many start the month by wearing new clothes and going to prayer. Children often receive gifts during this time. At the end of the month, they take part in a three-day feast. This *Eid-i- Ramazan* is a time of joy where relatives get together. Another important celebration is *Eid-i- Kurbon* or *Eid Al- Adha*. This feast celebrates Abraham's sacrifice of a sheep in place of his son as ordered by Allah. Usually during this celebration, families slay a sheep and give some of the meat to the poor. Another important celebration is the celebration of Mohammed's birthday, which is called *Mawleed Al-Nabi*. Ashura is the tenth day of the month Muharram

according to the Islamic calendar. This is seen as a day of mourning of the martyrdom of Hussein and his followers at the battle of Kerbala.

Other holidays include New Year's Day on January 1, Women's Day, in March, Navrus in March, Victory in May, International Labor Day on May 1, Independence Day on September 9, and Constitution Day on November 6.

<http://www.wtgonline.com/data/tjk/tjk070.asp> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tajikistan#Culture>

[http://www.cac-biodiversity.org/tjk/tjk\\_culture.htm](http://www.cac-biodiversity.org/tjk/tjk_culture.htm)

[http://foia.state.gov/mms/posrpt/pr\\_view\\_all.asp?CntryID=157](http://foia.state.gov/mms/posrpt/pr_view_all.asp?CntryID=157)

[http://www.gl.iit.edu/govdocs/afghanistan/People in Afgh.](http://www.gl.iit.edu/govdocs/afghanistan/People%20in%20Afgh)

[www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ti.html](http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ti.html)

[www.plasma.nationalgeographic.com/mapmachine/profiles/ti.html](http://www.plasma.nationalgeographic.com/mapmachine/profiles/ti.html)

<http://muslimministries.itams.org/asia/tajiks.php>

### **Government:**

Tajikistan is a republic. President *Emomali Rahmonov* has been chief of state since November 6, 1994, and was head of state and Supreme Assembly chairman since November 19, 1992. The president is elected by popular vote for a seven year term and the next election is scheduled for 2006. In 2003, a referendum allowed Rahmonov to run for another two consecutive terms.

The head of government, who is appointed by the president, is Prime Minister *Oqil Oqilov*. He has been in office since January 20, 1999. In the executive branch, there is a Cabinet of Ministers that is appointed by the president with the approval of the Supreme Assembly. The legislative branch is made up of a bicameral Supreme Assembly, called the *Majlisi Oli*, which consists of the Assembly of Representatives, which is the lower chamber, and the National Assembly, which is the upper chamber. The Judicial Branch consists of a Supreme Court in which judges are appointed by the president.

[www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/print/ti.html](http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/print/ti.html)

<http://www.country-studies.com/tajikistan/government.html>

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/eur/8366.htm>

### **Economy:**

The Gross Domestic Product of Tajikistan stood at \$7.95 billion in 2004. This is one of the lowest GDP's among the former Soviet Union. Only 5%-6% of the land is good for farming, although with proper irrigation, up to a third of the land can be used. Cotton is the most valuable crop to the country. Mineral resources are limited, but include silver, gold, uranium, oil, coal, and tungsten. A lack of technology, finances, and good infrastructure hinders their production.

Tajikistan's industry is limited to one large aluminum plant, hydropower facilities, and small light industry or food processing factories. Agricultural products common to Tajikistan include fruits, vegetables, grain, cotton, and livestock. Other industries include aluminum, zinc, lead, chemicals, fertilizers, cement, vegetable oil, metal cutting machine tools, refrigerators and freezers.

Tajikistan's main exports are aluminum, electricity, cotton, fruits, vegetable oil, and textiles. About 13.1% of Tajikistan's exports go to Latvia, 11.5% goes to Switzerland, and 11.3 goes to Uzbekistan. Norway, Russia, Iran, Turkey, Italy, and Hungary also receive exports from Tajikistan. Tajikistan's major imports include electricity, petroleum products, aluminum oxide, foodstuffs, machinery, and equipment. 17.8% of Tajikistan's imports come from Russia and 13.4% come from Uzbekistan. Tajikistan receives about

9.7% of the country's imports from Kazakhstan and 6.3% from both Azerbaijan and Ukraine. Turkey and the United States also send imports to Tajikistan.

In 2001, almost 80% of those in Tajikistan lived in poverty. The average monthly income was about \$25. In 2004, 60% of the population was below the poverty line, which was an increase from previous years. The country has experienced steady economic growth since 1997. Along with shortages in employment, Tajikistan also faces a shortage of housing and medical care. In 2000, the employment breakdown was 67.2% agriculture, 7.5% industry, and 25.3% services. Tajikistan received \$60.7 million in economic aid from the United States in 2001.

Drug trafficking is becoming an increasing problem in Tajikistan. It has become a major transit country for Afghan narcotics that are going to Russia and to Western Europe. There is limited cultivation of opium poppy that is for illegal domestic consumption. The country seizes about 80% of all drugs seized in Central Asia. Tajikistan is third in the world in opiate seizures.

There are many development opportunities in Tajikistan. One group, Mercy Corp, is working to reduce conflict in the Ferghana Valley region. They have started a conflict prevention program. They are also organizing projects to improve water, and provide electricity and natural gas to the area. In the *Rasht Valley*, they are setting up school latrines. They are also working to reduce malnutrition and food insecurity. They are teaching nutrition and mother and child programs. They are also increasing agriculture production and processing, spreading low cost hygiene technologies, and marketing goods. Another project they are working on is increasing the counseling skills of community health promoters. Village health programs are also being established. People are also needed to help with training women in business or usable skills. Many women are left to care for themselves and their children, with little outside help. The labor force is extremely segregated, and few jobs are available to women. Many women are being tricked into being trafficked into the Gulf States. Many are turning to suicide, abortion, and getting into prostitution. The average age of prostitutes is now between 11 and 12 years old. Drug trafficking and addiction is a growing problem and almost two thirds of addicts are under age thirty. The Mercy Corp has partnered with the National Association of Business Women to provide micro-credit and business training to women. Women are needed to help these women and girls come out of prostitution and to help to provide them with skills that will enable them to make a living in other ways.

Tajikistan is a very poor country. People are needed to help with their medical program. Medical supplies and personnel are not enough to meet the needs of the country.

Teachers are needed at all levels of education, to ensure that all receive a good education.

<http://www.mercycorps.org/items/309/> <http://www.win1040.com/countries/a0000056.cfm>

[http://www.fh.org/prayer\\_tajikistan](http://www.fh.org/prayer_tajikistan)

[www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/print/ti.html](http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/print/ti.html)

<http://www.country-studies.com/tajikistan>

[http://www.fh.org/prayer\\_tajikistan](http://www.fh.org/prayer_tajikistan)

[http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe\\_eurasia/car/index/html](http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/car/index/html) <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/uz.html>

## **Literacy:**

Tajikistan has a total 99.4% literacy rate, with 99.6% of men and 99.1% of women above the age of 15 able to read and write.

[www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/print/ti.html](http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/print/ti.html)

## Religion:

Percent of population in the major religions: 85% Muslim (Mostly Sunni)

All Religions and % for each:

Muslims (Sunni)	85%
Muslims (Shi'a)	5%
Zoroastrians	0.1%
Hindus	0%
Baha'is	0%
Jewish	0.1%
Buddhists	0.1%
Christians	1.28%

Government interaction with religion: The constitution provides for freedom of religion in Tajikistan. There are no government opposed restrictions on worship, however, the Committee of Religious Affairs, which is headed by the council of Ministers, registers and monitors religious activities to make sure they do not become overly political.

Religious activities have been monitored more closely due to the government's fear of Islamic fundamentalism. There are no restrictions on the possession or distribution of Bibles.

## Brief History of Tajikistan

### ***50,000 BCE-2,000 BCE***

Most historians believe that the Saxon tribes of Western Europe originated in the area that is modern day Tajikistan. It is also believed that the inhabitants of the *Pamir* Mountains are the only pure descendents of the Aryan tribes that invaded India almost 4000 years ago.

### ***Achaemenid Rule, ca. 550-331 BC***

Tajikistan's geographical location drew many foreign invaders. The northern part of Tajikistan was in the ancient Persian province of *Sogdiana*. During the rule of Darius the Great, the Achaemenid (Persian) Empire expanded to its peak and included much of Tajikistan. By the fourth century BC, Persian control of the outlying areas and the internal cohesion of the empire deteriorated. Although the outlying areas tended to resist Achaemenid rule, some areas, like the Bactriana, still fought on the Iranian side during the Battle of Gaugamela in 330 BC. During this battle they were defeated by Alexander the Great.

### ***Alexander and Greek Rule, ca. 330-150 BC***

From the years 330-327 B.C. Alexander the Great swept through Tajikistan and the adjacent regions of the former Soviet Union. Within three years he had conquered the area. Although his expedition through Tajikistan was brief, Alexander left behind a Hellenic influence that lasted several centuries. He founded a city called Alexandria Eskate, or "Alexandria the Furthers," in modern day Khojand.

In 323 B.C., Alexander died and his empire fell apart. One of Alexander's commanders, Seleucus, founded the Seleucid dynasty and allowed Greek colonists and soldiers to enter the region of the Hindu Kush. Around 170 BC, Greco-Roman rule spread throughout

most of Central Asia, but was defeated by two groups of nomadic invaders from Central Asia. These groups were the Parthians and the Sakas.

### ***Central Asian and Sassanian Rule, ca. 150 B.C.-700 A.D.***

In the third and second centuries BC, the Parthians, a nomadic people speaking Indo-European languages, entered into the Iranian Plateau and established control in most of what is Iran. Bactria and Sogdiana first joined the Seleukids, but later became part of a Greco-Bactrian state and the Kushan Empire, which formed about 100 years later.

The Kushans, who were another Indo-European group entered Central Asia and established an empire that would last for almost four centuries. The Kushan Empire spread and become among the most powerful empires of its time. The empire reached from the Indus Valley to the Gobi desert and as far west as the Iranian Plateau.

By the beginning of the second century, the Kushan Empire reached its greatest geographic and cultural peak. It became a center of literature and art and also became a center of trade, especially in silk. It became part of a trade route into East Asia. Kanishka, who was the leader during this time was considered Kushans greatest ruler. During his reign, Mahayana Buddhism, reached its peak in Central Asia.

During the third century, the Kushan Empire became fragmented and was easily taken over by the Sassanians, of the Iranian Dynasty, and the Guptas, of the Indian dynasty. These kingdoms were ununified and fell to the Hephthalites, or the White Huns. The White Huns destroyed the Buddhist culture and left most of the country in ruins. The Hephthalites are believed to have remained in control for about a century, until they were defeated by the Western Turks and a return to power of the Sassanians.

From this time, until the rise of Islam, the areas of that are now Tajikistan were dominated by small kingdoms under Sassanian rule with Kushan or Hephthalite rulers.

During this time, Tajikistan was heavily influenced by the Persian language and the Zoroastrian religion. By the middle of the seventh century, the Buddhist culture and earlier Zoroastrian influence began to fade. Now there is little left that bears witness of these strong influences.

### ***Islamic Conquest, ca. 637-900AD***

After the death of Mohammad, Islam spread the Middle East and Central Asia. Five years after the death of Mohammad, at the Battle of Qadisiya in 637AD, Arab Muslims defeated the Iranian Sassanians and began taking over the regions east of Iran. This raid brought local rulers under the control of the Umayyad caliphs.

Between the seventh and ninth centuries, most of Central Asia was converted from Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and folk religions to Sunni Islam. Semi-independent states began to emerge throughout the empire by the middle of the ninth century as the Abbasid rule began to deteriorate. One of the best known dynasties during this time was that of the Samanid. During this time, Iranian Muslim scholarship, Shia Islam, dominated the area. This dynasty lasted until the middle of the tenth century when Turkish tribes from the north and the Ghaznavids from the south took on the faltering Samanid Dynasty.

### ***Ghaznavid and Ghorid Rule, ca. 1030-1220AD***

In the ninth century, Turkic nomads from the north entered Central Asia. These people were people who lived in the grasslands from Mongolia to the Caspian Sea. They came in as slave soldiers to the Samanid Dynasty and the Abbasid army. As the Samanids began to lose control of the area, these soldiers gained positions of power and they were able to

establish their own states. As these Turkic people rose to power, other Turkic tribes were drawn to the area.

The first Turkic state in Central Asia was the Ghaznavid Empire. This empire spread Islam throughout Afghanistan, Pakistan, and parts of India. Mahmud, the most famous of the dynasty's rulers carried out raids into India, looting Hindu temples and converting the people to Islam. He started universities and saw many scholars arise.

The caliph in Baghdad, which was Islam's intellectual center at the time, recognized Mahmud as the temporal heir of the Samanids. In 1030 Mahmud died and around 1130 Ghazni was captured and destroyed by the rulers of the Kingdom of Ghor. Two large groups of Turks entered the region and undermined the Ghaznavids. The Qarakhanids, in the east, conquered the Samanids. The Seljuk family led a group of Turks into the western part of Central Asia and conquered the Ghaznavid territory of Khorazm. During this time, the Tajiks absorbed the Turkish culture and the Turks absorbed the Tajik people. The two groups lived peacefully and began to intermarry.

The Seljuk Empire grew to dominate much of Central Asia and split into states that were ruled by Turkic and Iranian rulers. Until about 1200 AD, the Ghorids ruled what is present day Afghanistan, eastern Iran, and Pakistan and the Seljuk Turks ruled western Iran, Uzbekistan, and other parts of Central Asia. From 1200-1205, however, the Khwarazm Turks invaded from Central Asia and conquered most of the lands under Ghorid control. This empire was defeated by the Mongols in 1220.

### ***Mongol Rule, ca. 1220-1506***

In 1220 Genghis Khan, overran Central Asia, destroying its cities and people. This conquest quickened the process of Turkification in the region because Genghis Khan's armies, while led by Mongols, were mostly made up of Turkic tribes. As these armies settled, they intermixed with the local populations. His empire spread from China to the Caspian Sea. While his power was great, Genghis Khan failed to loosen the grips of Islam on Central Asia. By the thirteenth century, even his descendents were Muslims. The Mongols destroyed Buddhist monuments and buildings. After Genghis Khan's death in 1227 Central Asia went through a period of fragmentation. This lasted until the 1380's with the rise of Timor Lenk, or Tamerlane. Timor, who was of both Turkish and Mongol descent claimed to be an ancestor of Genghis Khan and was able to consolidate the kingdoms, which founded a powerful state, with the capital in Samarkand. He started a series of military campaigns and by the late fourteenth century, he expanded his dynasty from India to Turkey. Movarounnahr, the new centralized part of Central Asia, saw many advancements in the economy, as well as in social and military institutes that had been undermined by the Mongol domination.

Timor's successors supported Islamic art, culture, and the sciences and several well known poets and artists arose under the royal patronage. Science, town-planning, literature, and arts developed during this time in Central Asia.. The Timurid Empire came to an end around the turn of the sixteenth century.

### ***Rise of the Uzbeks, ca. 1500-1700***

Early in the sixteenth century, the Shaybani Uzbeks drove Babur, who was a descent of both Timor and Genghis Khan, out of his father's kingdom in Ferghana. This is the land that straddles today's Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. In 1504, after several unsuccessful attempts to regain this land, Babur crossed the Amu Darya and captured Kabul from the last of its Mongol rulers.

By 1510, the Uzbeks finished their conquest of Central Asia. Tajikistan was divided into three main states were set up. The most powerful state was the Khanate of Bukhoro, which contained the area around Tashkent and the Fergana Valley. The second state was established in Khorazm, at the mouth of the Amu Darya. These two states warred against each other and by the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Shaybanid Dynasty was replaced by the Janid Dynasty. By the middle of the seventeenth century, the Mughals handed control of the land north of Kabul to the Uzbeks, who had already gained control of the western city of Herat and areas in northern Afghanistan. The third state set up was the kingdom of Afghanistan.

### ***Arrival of the Russians and the Great Game, ca. 1700-1850***

The years of fighting between dynasties and invasions from Iran weakened Central Asia. During this time, a new group of Russians entered Central Asia as merchants. These Russians became aware of the Russian slaves that were being sold to the Central Asians by Kazak and Turkmen tribes and increased hostility toward the Central Asian Khanates. These slaves were obtained by nomads kidnapping them in the border regions or by taking Russian sailors who were shipwrecked and then sold in slave markets.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, new dynasties were set up with centralized states and armies. These states, however, got caught in the middle of the “Great Game” as Russia and Britain both sought to gain control of Central Asia. Russia gained power in the Kazak steppes and Britain established their presence in Afghanistan, and the Central Asians continued fighting among themselves.

### ***The Russian Conquest, ca. 1850-1917***

During the nineteenth century, Russia became more interested in Central Asia. Competing with Britain for land, hostility over Russians being taken as slaves, and the need for cotton, which increased in the region due to the Civil War in the United States, all led turned Russian attention towards Central Asia. The northern part of Tajikistan was annexed by the Russians in the late 1860's; however, the Tajik population in Kuliab, Guissar, Karateguin, and Darvaz was incorporated into the Khanate of Bukhara, which remained a relationship of sovereignty.

As Central Asia came under Russian rule, life did not change much initially. The Russians interfered little with the people and increased cotton production. In the last part of the nineteenth century, however, things begin to change. New Russian railroads were built and more Russians came to the area, which led to several revolts.

Russian oppression led to revolts towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the most important of these being the one led by Vose in 1885. In 1895, a treaty was signed that turned the eastern Pamirs over to Russia. While Russia controlled most of what was Tajikistan, much of the daily life of the people was unaffected until 1917. The biggest change in Tajikistan at this time was the pattern of switching the land from grain cultivation to cotton cultivation and the establishment of the first cotton processing plant.

The Pan-Turkish movement, also known as Jadidism, became the only means of Uzbek, Tajik, and Tatar resistance towards the Russians. This movement originated in the 1860's as a group hoping to preserve indigenous Islamic Central Asian culture, but by 1900 it had developed into Central Asia's first major movement of political resistance. By the World War One, there were several cities in Tajikistan that had underground Jadidist organizations. Uprisings against the amir Bukhoro erupted in the eastern part of the

khanate between 1869-1913. In uprisings that took place in 1910-1913, Russian troops were needed to restore order.

In 1916, the people reacted violently when Russia revoked their exemption from military service. In July of 1916, demonstrators attacked Russian soldiers in Khujand, in northern Tajikistan. In 1917, revolutions broke out in Russia and spread throughout Central Asia. After the Bolshevik Revolution, in October of 1917, Russian power was established in Northern Tajikistan. In 1918, this part of Tajikistan became part of the Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of Turkistan.

In Tashkent, the tsarist administration of the general was overthrown and replaced by a dual system that combined a provisional government with direct Soviet power. This completely excluded the native Muslim population and took all power from them. The Jadidists and other factions began the Basmachi revolt against Soviet rule. During the 1920's, these more than 20,000 people fought Russian control of Central Asia. The Basmachi guerrilla fighters opposed and resisted Soviet rule for more than ten years. In 1919, Russia killed over 5,000 civilians in Quqon, after declaring a group there to be counterrevolutionary.

Between 1918-1919, there was a severe food shortage in Turkestan leading to an estimated one million or more deaths. This shortage resulted from civil war, a shortage of grain caused by the Communist cotton cultivation policies, and the Tashkent Soviet's refusal to provide famine relief to indigenous Central Asians. In 1920, Faizulla Khojaye, one of the Jadidist leaders, helped communist forces to capture Bukhoro and Khiva. As Bukhoro joined the Basmachi movement, Khojaye became the president of what became the Soviet Bukhoran People's Republic.

The end of the Basmachi revolt came as civil war in Russia ended and the communists drew back, promising local political autonomy. Lenin's New Economic Policy led many Central Asians to join the communist party. Many Tajiks remained under the power of the Emirate of Bukhara, which remained until 1921. In 1921, Russia took over Dushanbe, but it was quickly forced to withdraw from Eastern Bukhara. In 1924, Tajikistan became the Tajik Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, which remained a part of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic until 1929. By 1925, guerrilla fighting in Tajikistan had ended with the exception of remote pockets of resistance. By 1926, the first Tajik newspapers began to appear in Soviet Tajikistan as well as the first state schools.

### ***Tajikistan Purges and Postwar Period, ca. 1927-1991***

During the period of 1927-1934, the collectivization of agriculture became more aggressive. This process brought about violence against peasants, forced resettlement of the mountain peoples and people from Uzbekistan from the lowlands, and a substantial expansion of the irrigation network. This forced collectivization revived the Basmachi movement between 1930-1936. The communists in Tajikistan were critical of the way the collectivization was carried out, and between 19133-1935, nearly 10,000 people were expelled from offices and replaced by the Russians. During the Great Terror, which was orchestrated by Joseph Stalin in 1937-1938, another round of purges took place.

During the 1950's, Russian immigration was encouraged to replace those who had been forced those living in the Garm valley and the Pamirs to move southwest into what is now Afghanistan. Tajikistan's economy and population suffered greatly from 1957-1958 during Khrushchev's Virgin Lands project. This project was an attempt to increase the arable land in the Soviet Union. From 1980 through the next ten years, Kakhar

Makhkamov presided over the Tajik republic. In February of 1990, violent fighting between the Tajiks and Russians broke out and more than 30 people were killed in Moscow. Makhkamov was accused of supporting those responsible for the Moscow coup and he was forced to resign.

### ***Tajikistan Independence and Civil War, ca. 1991-present day***

In 1991, the Soviet Union fell apart and Tajikistan declared independence on September 9, 1991. In December of 1991, Tajikistan became a part of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Rakhman Nabiyev was installed as president by means of a Communist controlled election. This made political tensions in the region even worse and was an important factor in leading up to the civil war that began in 1992 and lasting until 1997.

This breakdown of central authority led to the emergence of several opposing groups. Between 20,000-50,000 people were killed in fighting and more than half a million refugees fled as Kulyabi forces began ethnic cleansing directed towards anyone connected with the Kurgan-Tyube or the Garm Valley. The Garmis joined the opposition Islamic Revival Party and the Pamiris joined the Democratic Party. The two groups formed an alliance and became the united Tajik Opposition. It is estimated that throughout the entire civil war in Tajikistan, up to 100,000 people were killed, up to 600,000 people were displaced within the country, and another 300,000 fled to Afghanistan, Russia, and other parts of Central Asia. In the midst of civil war, Tajikistan was also dealing with bombings from Afghanistan.

A peace agreement was signed on June 27, 1997 between the government and the opposition, along with the United Tajik Opposition which was primarily made up of Islamic groups. Tajikistan is the only country in Central Asia that has allowed a religiously affiliated party to be represented in parliament. This agreement officially ended the civil war. It granted amnesty for all those accused of war crimes and guaranteed the opposition 30 percent of posts in the cabinet. Although the agreement was signed, tensions remained.

*Emomali Rahmonov*, who is a Kulyabi, was made president 1992 and has continued in his presidency. Rahmonov was reelected in 1999 by an almost entirely unanimous vote. Some believe this is due to the strict oppression of the opposition, and Islamic Fundamentalists accused the government of fraud. In 2003, a referendum allowed Rahmonov to run for another two consecutive terms. Rahmonov continues to be supported by Russian dominated forces in order to protect the border with Afghanistan. The Russian 201<sup>st</sup> Motorized Rifle Division never left Tajikistan, but most of these Russian led forces are local Tajik soldiers. Tajik rebels continue to be based in northern Afghanistan and they conduct border raids and smuggling. Since September 11<sup>th</sup>, The United States has also had troops stationed in the country.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tajikistan>

<http://www.wtgonline.com/data/tjk/tjk580.asp>

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## **Christian History**

Christianity first came to Central Asia around 250AD as Christians traveled the Silk Road. At first, it was strongly opposed, however, by 410AD, almost one fourth of the population claimed to be Christians. Nestorian Christianity reached Central Asian in the fourth century. Christianity was, however, completely wiped out by Islam during the time of the Arab invasion. It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that Christianity returned to the region.

At this time, Tajikistan came into contact with Christianity through the Russians and was exposed mostly to the Russian Orthodox Church. As a result, many see Christianity as the religion of the Russians. During Stalin's reign, many minorities in the former Soviet Union were deported to Central Asia including thousands of Koreans. This resettlement brought Protestants and Roman Catholics to the area for the first time.

Local Christians never developed a vision to reach out to the Tajiks or other Muslim groups, so there were very few indigenous believers in Tajikistan. Islam has remained the predominant religion in Tajikistan; however, Orthodoxy is the most widely practiced of the Christian groups. The Russian Orthodox Church has diminished significantly since the 1990's.

Aside from Orthodox Churches, Tajikistan also has members of several other Christian denominations. Roman Catholics, Baptists, the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Union of Christian-Baptist Evangelical Churches, the New Apostolic congregation, as well as a few other congregations exist. The number of people in all Christian congregations has decreased significantly since the country declared its independence. Many non-Muslims have left Tajikistan.

The constitution provides for freedom of religion in Tajikistan. There are no government opposed restrictions on worship, however, the Committee of Religious Affairs, which is headed by the council of Ministers, registers and monitors religious activities to make sure they do not become overly political. There are no restrictions on the possession or distribution of Bibles. Much of the church in Tajikistan is made up almost exclusively of ethnic Europeans.

## **Non-Christian Religions**

### ***Buddhism, Hindu, Baha'i, and Zoroastrian***

Tajikistan has seen many religions and has often been an important religions center. Some believe that Zoroastrianism originated in this area. By the beginning of the second century, the Kushan Empire reached its greatest geographic and cultural peak. It became a center of literature and art and also became a center of trade, especially in silk. It became part of a trade route into East Asia. Kanishka, who was the leader during this time was considered Kushans greatest ruler.

During his reign, Mahayana Buddhism, reached its peak in Central Asia. By the middle of the seventh century, the Buddhist culture and earlier Zoroastrian influence began to fade. There are some small communities of Buddhists, Hindus, Zoroastrians, and Baha'is found throughout Tajikistan. While freedom of religion is allowed, some of these groups face opposition from Islamic groups. In 2002, two Baha'i leaders were assassinated. It is

estimated that by the middle of 2000, there were about 7,426 Zoroastrians, 3,999 Buddhists, and 743 Baha'is Tajikistan.

### ***Islam***

After the death of Mohammad, Islam spread the Middle East and Central Asia. Five years after the death of Mohammad, at the Battle of Qadisiya in 637AD, Arab Muslims defeated the Iranian Sassanians and began taking over the regions east of Iran. This raid brought local rulers under the control of the Umayyad caliphs. Between the seventh and ninth centuries, most of Central Asia was converted from Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and folk religions to Sunni Islam. The Abbasid Dynasty grew stronger and was able to subdue the Arab invaders by the middle of the eight century.

Semi-independent states began to emerge throughout the empire by the middle of the ninth century as the Abbasid rule began to deteriorate. One of the best known dynasties during this time was that of the Samanid. During this time, Iranian Muslim scholarship, Shia Islam, dominated the area. Bukhara was the capital during this time. This dynasty lasted until the middle of the tenth century when Turkish tribes from the north and the Ghaznavids from the south took on the faltering Samanid Dynasty. Rule changed hands many times over the next centuries, but Islam remained the predominate and almost the only acceptable religion of the area until the Russian conquest.

During the Soviet Era, authorities did not prohibit Islam; rather they used it to control the people. In many places, mosques and madrassahs were closed and religious festivals were banned. During the 1920's and 1930's, Muslims experienced harsh anti-Islamic attacks. In addition to bans on festivals and meetings, many were killed. Muslims were forced to go underground and secretly practiced their religion, or they were forced to practice their religion under the close scrutiny of the Soviet government. In the 1940's, Islam became more accepted, but was strictly controlled by the Kremlin.

The 1970's and 1980's saw a new effort at minimizing the influence of Islam and hostility towards Islam escalated during the Soviet military involvement with Afghanistan. Government feared Muslim extremists. In 1990, Muslims from different countries in the Former Soviet Union began to organize the Islamic Rebirth Party. As the political involvement grew, political parties were forced to look at and account for the Muslim heritage of Tajikistan.

Today, Tajikistan has a large Muslim population, with an estimated 95% of the population calling themselves Muslims. Although a large portion of the population professes to be Muslims, the degree of religious observance varies widely. One source suggests that only 30-40% of the rural population and 5-10% of the urban population regularly observe Muslim practices such as daily prayer and dietary restrictions. Many do not know or practice the basic tenants of Islam. Folk Islam is very common and many people mix folk traditions from other religions, such as Zoroastrianism, in with what they know of Islam. Many eat pork and drink alcohol. Most people, between 70-99%, however, observe Ramadan. There are also independent Sufi sects that are operating underground.

Most claiming Islam in Tajikistan are Sunni Muslims. The Sunni branch of Islam has been a part of the sedentary population of Central Asia for about 1,200 years. About 7% of Muslims are Shi'as Muslims, with about 40% of those being Ismailis. Ismailism first gained followers in Central Asia during the early tenth century. Most of the Ismailis live in the Gorno-Badakhshan region and the southern Khatlon region. Many live in

Dushanbe as well. They have survived, despite persecution, mainly due to the remoteness of the Pamir Mountains.

There are more than 4,200 mosques in Tajikistan and about 20 madras as. There is also an Islamic university. Tajikistan is currently the only country in the Commonwealth of Independent States that allows a political party based on Islam. In an attempt to restore Islam to the area, Middle Eastern countries and Asian countries such as Pakistan, Iran, and Turkey are funding the construction of new mosques and schools. They are sponsoring the training of new Islamic leaders and have sent Arabic teachers into the country.

### ***Judaism***

There are about 2,000 Jews in Tajikistan, mostly residing in Dushanbe. Smaller communities of Jews live in Leninabad Oblast and in the Fergana Valley region. Jews have lived in the area that is now Tajikistan since the Middle Ages. In the past, they tended to associate with the general Tajik population and they adopted many Tajik customs. Ashkenazic Jews came to Tajikistan after the Second World War, mostly working as engineers and specialists occupations.

By 1989, almost 20,000 Jews live in Tajikistan, however, that number decreased drastically due to the civil war. The civil war brought about a lot of violence and persecution towards the Jewish population.

Many within the Jewish community call themselves “Isro’il” or “Yahudi.” They speak a dialect of Tajik called Judeo-Tajik. The Jewish population in Tajikistan consists mostly of Bukharan, or Farsi, Jews. A Smaller group of Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews also makes up the Jewish population. Each of these groups has a community center in Dushanbe. In Dushanbe, there are several Jewish schools, a cultural organization, and a synagogue. Although Jews live and worship freely in Tajikistan, many of their activities have ceased since the country’s civil war. Community centers have actively been working with the Israeli government to help with the immigrations of many Tajikistan’s Jews to Israel; however, some are choosing to stay in Tajikistan to care for elderly relatives.

### ***Atheism/ Non-religious***

In 2000, there were an estimated 118,788 atheists in Tajikistan.

### ***Christian Cults and Sects***

#### ***Jehovah’s Witnesses***

In 1995, there were an estimated 60 Jehovah’s Witnesses in Tajikistan who made up one congregation.

#### ***Catholics/ Orthodox Churches***

The Russian Orthodox Church has about 20 registered Russian Orthodox congregations in Tajikistan and seven temples. Two of the temples are in Dushanbe and the rest are in Khojand, Chkalovsk, Kurgon-Teppa, and Tursunzoda. St. Nicholas, in Dushanbe, is one of the main cathedrals serving the Orthodox community. There are an estimated 70,000 Russian Orthodox Christians in Tajikistan which is mostly made up of Russians. Other branches of the Orthodox Church in Tajikistan are the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. There are three registered Catholic congregations with about 250 members. These are mostly made up of Germans, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Lithuanians, and Poles. There are three Armenian Apostolic congregations.

### ***Roman Catholic***

There are three registered Roman Catholic churches in Tajikistan. St. Joseph is in Dushanbe; St. Roch is in Kurgan Tube, or Qurghonteppa. St. Teresa of the Child Jesus is in Khujand, formerly Leninabad. In 1997, Pope John Paul II, gave the Church in Tajikistan the status of “mission of its own right.” This means that their Ecclesiastical Superior acts in many ways as a Bishop and is second only to the Pope in his jurisdiction. The first Catholic community in Tajikistan was the Sisters of the Holy Eucharist. They left the country, however, the Missionaries of Charity, or Sisters of the Mother Teresa, established a community in Dushanbe in the early nineties. There are an estimated 250 Catholics in Tajikistan.

The Catholic Church was established in this area shortly after minority groups were deported by Stalin. The Catholic Community originally met secretly. Fr. Vladislav Bukovinskij was the first recorded to visit the underground community in Dushanbe in 1967-68. Fr. Joseph Svidnitskij was the first priest to officially come to Tajikistan and work with the Catholic community. He came in 1976 and was of Ukrainian origin. Problems with the local government forced him to leave in 1982. At one point, the Catholic church in Dushanbe saw about 3,000 conversions. Most of these were of German background.

### ***Orthodox***

Second to Islam, is the Russian Orthodox Church. The Orthodox Church recently celebrated its 125 anniversary in the region. There are about 20 registered Russian Orthodox congregations in Tajikistan and seven temples. Two of the temples are in Dushanbe and the rest are in Khojand, Chkalovsk, Kurgon-Teppa, and Tursunzoda. St. Nicholas, in Dushanbe, is one of the main cathedrals serving the Orthodox community. The Russian Orthodox Church traces its roots back to 988. Russia adopted Christianity as the official religion when Prince Vladimir of Kiev became a Christian in 988. The ceremony for Prince Vladimir was based upon Byzantine rites and this would serve as a model for the rise of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The church traces its apostolic succession through the Patriarch of Constantinople. At the Council of Florence in 1439, leaders of the Catholic and Orthodox Church agreed to reunify the two branches of Christianity. The Russian people rejected the concessions to the Catholics and Metropolitan Isidore was kicked out of his position in the church. The Russian Orthodox Church today remains separate from the Vatican. In 1448, the Russian Orthodox Church separated from the Patriarchate of Constantinople and installed Metropolitan Jonas who was given the title of Metropolitan of Moscow and all of Rus. Patriarch Nikon, in 1652 attempted to centralize the power that had been distributed locally while conforming Russian Orthodox rite and rituals to those of the Greek Orthodox Church. An example of this conformation was the insistence that Russians cross themselves with three fingers instead of two. People saw these changes as heresy and this led to Nikon’s loss of power. One leader, Tsar Aleksey, however, maintained Nikon’s changes and persecuted those who opposed Nikon’s changes. They were persecuted until Peter the Great’s reign, which allowed people to practice their own style of Orthodoxy.

The Russian Orthodox church grew during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In 1686, the Metropolia of Kiev was moved from Constantinople to Moscow, which brought millions of followers under the authority of the Russian Orthodox Patriarch. Missionaries

were sent across Siberia and into Alaska and the United States. In 1721, Peter the Great established the Holy and Supreme Synod to govern the church instead of leaving the authority with one person. Things remained this way until after the Russian Revolution in 1917. During this time, bishops elected a new patriarch. By 1914, there were 55,173 Russian Orthodox Churches, 29,593 chapels, and 112,629 priests in Russia. The church had to coexist with a secular government and followers were often disadvantaged and persecuted. During the 1920's and 1930's, many churches were converted into secular buildings and over 50,000 priests were sent to Labor camps or executed. Several seminaries were reopened in 1944, but relations between the Church and government got worse after Stalin's death. People were kept from many jobs due to their faith. University students were forced to take courses in Scientific Atheism.

In 1988, the Russian Orthodox Church celebrated its millennial anniversary. This became a turning point for the Russian Orthodox Church. The government changed from trying to work against religion to trying to use religion to gain support.

Russian Orthodoxy was introduced to Tajikistan in the middle of the nineteenth century by the Russians. As a result, many see Christianity as the religion of the Russians. During Stalin's reign, many minorities in the former Soviet Union were deported to Central Asia. This brought Protestants and Roman Catholics to the area for the first time. Local Christians never developed a vision to reach out to other Muslim groups, so there were very few indigenous believers in Tajikistan.

Russian Orthodox Churches have several unique features. The interiors are highly decorative, often decorated with frescos of saints or scenes that reach up to the domes. There is usually an icon of Christ in the main dome. There are often no pews and churches are lit with candles instead of electric lights. Worshippers often buy candles and place them on stands, a ritual that signifies asking a saint for a favor or for honoring a dead loved one. Colors, especially on the domes, have significance. Black represents submission, green represents the Trinity, blue represents the spirit of God, and Gold represents Jesus. Domes which are often very colorful, are designed to look like candles from a distance. The number of domes is also significant on a church. One dome represents Jesus, three indicates the Trinity, and five indicated Jesus and the four evangelists. The crosses on top of the domes have a crescent shape with horns upturned as part of the base. This represents an anchor, signifying that the church is a ship of faith in the sea of vanity. Many churches are not built symmetrically, believing that symmetry is the enemy of beauty.

### ***Protestants/ Evangelicals/ Pentecostals***

Several Protestant organizations of various denominations serve in Tajikistan. Many in the country equate Christianity with Russian Orthodoxy and with the Russian government that tried to impose its ways on the people of Central Asia. Much of today's church in Tajikistan is made up almost exclusively of ethnic Europeans. While freedom of religion is expressed in Tajikistan's Constitution, Christians are still persecuted by some members of government. There are reports of Christians being given excessive fines and being beaten. Some churches have been refused registration. In addition, Muslim fundamentalists have also targeted Christians. In 2000 a church in Dushanbe was bombed by two Muslim fundamentalists.

### ***Baptists***

There are about 500 Baptists in Tajikistan that make up 7 churches. These are mostly made up of Russians, Ukrainians, and Germans.

### ***The German Evangelical Lutheran Church***

The Lutheran group is the second largest Christian denomination in Tajikistan. It is estimated that about 8,600 people make up this denomination.

### ***Smaller Groups and Radio Churches***

There may be up to 40 congregations of isolated radio churches that are made up of about 500 Believers. The Koreans have a few churches. These are the Korean Methodist Church and the Korean Pentecostal Church. Pentecostal churches in Tajikistan are mostly made up of Russians and Ukrainians.

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## People Groups in Tajikistan

### **24491**

#### ***Aimaq- Hazara (6,000)***

The Aimaq-Hazara are a branch of the Char Aimaq people. Due to centuries of oppression of the Hazara people, some Aimaq Hazara are officially classified as Tajik or Persian. Successive governments, which were usually Pashtun dominated, divided the Aimaqs and the Hazaras politically. By listing them as separate nationalities, the governments reduced the official Hazara population in the national percentage. They speak Farsi, with some Aimaq vocabulary.

The Jamshidi, Taimani, Timuri, Char Hazara, and Firozkohi as well as several smaller nomadic tribes are all Char Aimaq tribes. Over the years, they have linked themselves together through marriage and alliances for protection against foreign invasion and they have also been moved, split, and combined by the governments of the areas in which they reside. As the Char Aimaq have joined with other people groups, they have produced a mixed heritage which has caused them much racial discrimination. Most of the Char Aimaq are believed to be descendants from the soldiers of Genghis Khan and many have Mongoloid features.

At one time, the Aimaq Hazara were completely nomadic, however, today they are a

semi-nomadic people that roams freely across the rugged mountain ranges. They only travel during certain seasons. The 1950's and 1960's brought drought and erosion, which led many of the Aimaq Hazara to become farmers. They also practice dry farming and grow wheat and melons. They are also considered semi-sedentary. Conditions for herding in the areas in which they reside tend to be optimal for herding and many raise fat-tailed sheep. They depend on these herds to provide them with meat, milk, fat, cheese, and animal skins for making tents. While they are farming, the Aimaq Hazara stay in towns and live in brick huts, however, during the spring and summer months, they travel through the mountains and live in tents.

Compared to other more devout Muslim groups, women hold a higher position among the Char Aimaq. In some tribes, girls do not marry until they are 18 and some have been known to reject the groom chosen for them by their fathers.

The Aimaq Hazara are almost all Sunni Muslims of the Hanafite branch. The Hanafite branch of Islam claims to be the purest form of Islam and often opposes Christianity, seeing it as a "corrupted monotheism." They are very devout Muslims.

There are no known believers among the Aimaq Hazara. There are currently no Bible translations or Jesus films available in the Aimaq language. While there are daily broadcasts in Dari, Farsi, and Hazaragi, it is not known whether the Aimaq receive these broadcasts, as many are in remote villages.

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**24492**

### ***Arab Tajiki (1,000)***

The Tajiki Arabs in Tajikistan are found in small villages in Vakhsh Valley of the Khatlon Province, as well as in communities in Kuliab and Leninabad. Many can be found in refugee camps in Pakistan along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, in parts of Afghanistan, and in Tajikistan. During the violence that existed during the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan, more than one million Tajiks fled to Pakistan. These people go by many names and are sometimes called Arab, Tajiki, Balkh Arab, Central Asian Arab, Tajiki, or Arab speaking. Their language is Arabic, Tajiki spoken. This is a dialect of Farsi that is mixed with some Uzbek vocabulary.

Some of the Tajiki Arabs are pastoralists-nomads who migrate from river valleys to mountains. Many raise fat tailed sheep, but some of the wealthier men also raise the karakul sheep which provides karakul lambskins. The Arabs also farm cotton and wheat. In some places, they live in small villages in stone or mud houses with flat roofs.

Historically, the Central Asian Arabs lived in the plains in the north of Afghanistan that used to be called Turkistan. One scholar, Barfield, reports that these Arabs have not had contact with Middle Eastern Arabs since the time of Timur in the late 1300's and early 1400's.

The Arabs in Tajikistan are Muslim, mostly from the Hanafite sect of Islam. Islam is an important aspect of daily life and often dictates what the people eat, how they behave, and how they dress, especially the women. They observe important Islamic rituals, such as the ones related to birth, death, puberty, and marriage. About the population of the Tajiki Arab Christian adherents is unknown, however the percentage evangelical

believers is estimated to be about 1.00%. There are few, if any, churches among them and there are no Bibles or Jesus films available in their language. There are no known agencies targeting these people at this time. There are some Christian audio recording available in the language.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

[www.gl.iit.edu/govdocs/afghanistan/People in Afgh.](http://www.gl.iit.edu/govdocs/afghanistan/People%20in%20Afgh.)

## **00000**

### ***Arab, Uzbeki (1,000)***

The Uzbeki Arabs are found in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Most of them live in small villages. They are also known as Jungari, Kashkadarya Arabic, Uzbeki Arabic, and Central Asian Arabic. They speak a dialect that is close to the North American Spoken Arabic. There are differences in the dialects spoken between the Bukhara and Kashkadarya regions. The dialect in Bukhara is strongly influenced by Tajiki and the dialect in Kashkadarya is strongly influenced by Uzbek and other Turkic languages. Overall, speakers use Northern Uzbek to communicate and as their literary language. Few of these people still speak Arabic.

The Uzbeki Arabs used to be known for their skills in raising sheep, however after the Bolshevik Revolution, Soviet authorities forced the Arabs to settle down and end their nomadic ways. For this reason, many fled to Afghanistan so they could continue their traditional lifestyle. Many tend to be endogamous and do not mix with speakers of other languages. Many are agriculturists and raise cattle. They are Sunni Muslims of the Hanafi school. The number of Christians is unknown. There are no Bibles, Christian audio recordings, or Jesus films available in their language. There are no known agencies targeting these people at this time.

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## **24495**

### ***Armenian (6,800)***

The Armenians of Tajikistan are also known as the Armiane, Ermeni, Ermini, Hai, and Western Armenian. The Armenians use the Armenian language. Armenians come from the Trans-Caucasus Mountains of Armenia. They are an ancient people from the Caucasus with a 3,000 year history that has been researched and detailed. They have a deep tie to Christianity, since 303 when they became the first nation to declare it as the state religion, though many are Muslim. The Armenians have struggled to remain both Christian and free, defending against Turks, Mongols, Persians, Soviets, and Kurds, and so on. The Diaspora of Armenians has a varied and broken connection to this republic. Before leaving Armenia, they experienced much suffering. In the first part of this century, almost half of the people in Armenia were slaughtered by the Turks.

The Armenians in Tajikistan are primarily Orthodox Christians. They are about 50% Christian adherent; however the percentage of evangelical believers is unknown. They have portions of the Bible, Christian radio, the God's story video, and the Jesus Film available in their language. 16% are non-religious. 8% are atheist. There are multiple groups working among these people.

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**24496**

***Azerbaijani, North (4,300)***

The Azerbaijani, also known as the Azeri, are of the Turkic affinity block. They are also called Azeri Turk, Turkmen, and South Azerbaijani. The name is derived from words meaning “fire” and “guardian” and points to the sacred oil fires that were lit by fire worshippers in their homeland. They are found throughout the former Soviet Union, with a large population found in Uzbekistan. This group speaks Northern Azerbaijani. The two main language subgroups are North Azerbaijani, and South Azerbaijani. The differences in the two are in the sound and grammar. The language was written in fourteenth century. The Azeri language is of the southwestern branch of the Turkic language group. This group of people has experienced many invasions. They were first captured by the Persians in the sixth century but were overtaken by the Turks the eleventh century. Russia took over the area in the beginning of the nineteenth century. In Tajikistan some of the Azeri are rural farmers, while others live in the cities and work as technicians and engineers. In some places they work as industrious workers in larger cities and towns. Some work in lower skilled jobs. They also used to be known for their rug weaving. The clan structure was common in the Azeri tradition. A clan, called hoj, would carry the name of a common ancestor. Landless peasants made up the lowest class, called tavyrga. Marriage to first cousins was encouraged before the Soviet era. After which there were unions outside the extended family. It was common that forty members of the extended family live in the same house, called a gazma. The clan works the land for the mutual survival of its members. Marriage outside the family is not allowed before the Soviet period. This has changed over the past decade, however, they still encourage marriage within the family or clan in order to protect their culture. Although many are Muslims, having more than one wife is only acceptable in cases of infertility.

The diet of the Azeri has consisted of rice pilaf, boiled and grilled meats like goat, beef, and lamb. A traditional yogurt soup is called dovga. The traditional mutton stew is called bozartma. Tea and wine are traditional and popular drinks.

The Northern Azerbaijani are mostly Shiite Muslims, however some are Sunni Muslims of the Hanafite branch. They practice Islam, however, the Azeri women tend to be less restricted than the women of other Muslim groups. Many of the women work outside of the home and are allowed to be in leadership positions. The number of Christian of the Azeri in Tajikistan is unknown. They have the Bible, the God’s Story video, Christian audio recordings, and the Jesus Film in their language. In Russia, they are 78% Muslim, 20% non-religious, and about 2% Russian Orthodox.

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<http://www.geocities.com/ayafe/azhistory.html>

[http://www.adoptapeople.com/Profiles/p\\_code/1019.htm](http://www.adoptapeople.com/Profiles/p_code/1019.htm)

Minahan, James B. *One Europe, Many Nations: A Historical Dictionary of European National Groups*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000.

**24497**

***Baloch, Western (4,842)***

The Western Baloch of Tajikistan are a subgroup of the Baluch community. About six million Baloch live in the Balochistan province of Pakistan, and the southern border of Afghanistan and southeastern Iran. They are also found in Tajikistan, Russia, Turkmenistan, and Kenya. Alternative names for this people group include Baloch; Baluch, and Sarawani. The Baluch groups are named and distinguished according to

their languages, which are divided into three branches. These are Eastern, Western, and Southern Baluchi. Baluchi is an Indo-Iranian language that is related to Kurdish. Until recently, the Baluch language was unwritten, and today many of the Baluch people cannot read or write. History and their code of living was passed down through poetry, songs, and stories.

The Baluch was once a nomadic tribe. Today, the Baluch are farmers and herders. Women are often given the task of threshing and separating the harvest, while men do most of the plowing and planting of crops. Women also weave rugs. Drug addiction has become wide spread among the Baluch youth.

Land among the Baluch is not privately owned, rather it belongs to the whole tribe. They are a patriarchal society and are organized into clans and tribes. Clan membership is determined by family ties and tribe membership is determined by territory. All Baluch tribes share common political and social behaviors. Many Baluch live under a sort of feudal system in which absolute loyalty is owed to the tribal chief, or sadar. In the more urban areas, student leaders, poets, writers, and politicians are gaining authority. Democracy is not practiced by the Baluch.

Marriages among the Baluch are similar to others marriages among other tribal groups. They are usually arranged between the bride's father and the future groom. The groom must pay a "bride price" of livestock or cash to the bride's family. When the woman marries, she becomes part of the groom's immediate family and is put under his authority. Unlike some other Muslim groups, Baluch marriages are almost always monogamous and lifelong. A Baluch is not allowed to marry outside of the Baluch community.

The Baluch are known as strong, sensitive people. They live by an honor code, which is called Baluchmayar. Baluchmayar stresses the importance of hospitality, loyalty, mercy, offering refuge to strangers, and honesty. This code is passed down from generation to generation through songs and poetry. Children are taught this code from an early age as they watch the adults in the community and are reprimanded when they do not act according to the code.

The Baluch are Sunni Muslims, however they do not practice Sharia law in dealing with social violations. In this group, authority belongs to the tribal leaders. In the past, feuds would develop between groups if one group violated another group resulting in death. These feuds have hurt the tribe's economy and stature. The Islam practiced by the Baluch is mixed with folk practices. Shrines are visited and amulets are worn as a part of their attempt to influence God's favor. Many fear evil spirits and take precautions to keep spirits from harming them.

All of the New Testament is translated in Baluchi. Gospel recordings have been made in several Baluchi dialects, however, these cassettes have not been widely distributed. Portions of Scripture, the Jesus Film, and Christian audio recordings have been translated into this language. There are no known believers or churches among the Western Baluch of Tajikistan.

[http://www.ksafe.com/profiles/p\\_code/890.html](http://www.ksafe.com/profiles/p_code/890.html)  
<http://www.peopleteams.org/baloch/default.htm>  
<http://www.tcoletribalrugs.com/article9baluch.html>

**24498**

***Bashkir, Bashkort (8,200)***

The Bashkir, or Bashkort people are of the Ural-Siberian people cluster. They are also known as Bashkirian people. This group speaks the Bashkir language. They are mostly found in Russia and make up about 0.9% of the people in Russia. Most live in Bashkortostan, an autonomous republic of the Russian Federation, however even within their own republic they are a minority, outnumbered by the Russians and Tatars. Large populations are also found in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Belarus.

The Bashkir were cattle breeders and hunters before they set up trading centers in the Urals. They were nomadic shepherds before settling down. Along the Silk Road they not only interacted with merchants but with their religion. They became Muslims in the 10<sup>th</sup> century after interaction with the Arabs. They had a real tribal outlook that caused the group to adhere well throughout most of their history. During the past several centuries the number of other peoples moving into the Bashkir area has burgeoned. There are over 100 nationalities in Bashkortostan. There were many farmers that lost land. Most still are small farmers, but some have acquired jobs as skilled industrial workers.

Family is important to the Bashkir people and the new married couples live with the husband's parents at first. Polygamy exists on a small scale, mostly among those of high social status. Many of their traditions have been lost, however there is still a strong sense of kinship and loyalty to kinsmen. The village is considered the key to their social structure. Many live in peasant communities and rely on farming and animal breeding. They raise horses and sheep, as well as cattle and goats. Koumiss is a fermented drink they make from horses milk.

The Bashkirs are closely related to the Russian Tatars and are only distinguished by their language dialect. They speak Bashkir, however many claim Tatar as their native language. Before the Russian Revolution, the Bashkirian culture did not exist, rather they thought of themselves as being Tatars until the 1930's.

The Bashkirs are primarily Sunni Muslims, however, to many, being a Muslim is more about maintaining family traditions than about spiritual convictions. The older generations practice Islam most fervently. To them, Christianity is closely linked with being Russian. A small minority of Christians converted by the Russian Orthodox Church called the Nagaibaks still exist. There are tensions still lingering from Communism and from foreign peoples. They have the portions of the Bible, Christian radio broadcasts, and the Jesus film available in their language. They are 70% Sunni Muslims. About 7% are Christian adherent and about 1.0% are evangelical. They are basically unreached by the Gospel with only a small group of Bashkort believers worldwide.

<http://www.adoptapeople.com/Profiles/clusters/8003.htm>

<http://www.imb.org/centralasia/people/bashkort.htm>

<http://www.hope4ufa.com/>

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

<http://www.janzteam.com/OSTEUROPE/en/cr2.htm>

[www.MIRFocus.com](http://www.MIRFocus.com)

<http://www.russiatoday.ru/en/profile/people/nat/891.html>

## **24500**

### ***Bulgar (1,300)***

The Bulgar are of the Southern Slav people cluster. They are primarily found in the Balkan region of southern Europe, however are found throughout Central Asia and Europe. The largest groups of them are found in Bulgaria, Moldova, Ukraine, the United States, and Turkey. They are also known as Bogomil, Bulgarian, Moldavian, Palityan, and Pomak. This people group speaks the Bulgarian, however many are bilingual.

The Bulgar people are often thought of as Bulgarian since they speak Bulgarian and have many features and practices that are Bulgarian. The Pomaks, however, are different from Bulgarians in their non-Bulgarian names and their practice of Islam, instead of Orthodox Christianity.

Many rely on farming to make a living. They grow rye, barley, corn, flax, tobacco, and hemp. They also raise cows, goats, and sheep. Some of the women make a living weaving. Foods common to them are bread, potatoes, beans, yogurt, cheeses, lamb, and goat. In some places they live in two story buildings, living in the top story and keeping the animals on the first floor.

Marriages are often arranged and many marry in their mid to late teens. Although polygamy is allowed by Islamic law, it is uncommon. Weddings often combine Muslim and Christian traditions.

Most of the Bulgar people today Orthodox Christians. Some, however, are Muslims. They are believed to have been forcibly converted to Islam in the 1370's. Overtime, they have adopted Muslim customs, however, there is still an absence of Islamic practices among many of the Bulgar people who are Muslims. Their language lacks many religious words and important Muslim saints are unknown to many of the Bulgars. They do, however, observe some of the feast days of some of the Christian saints. To them, Christianity is closely linked with being Russian, so there is often a mistrust of Christians. About 72% are Christian adherent, most of those being Bulgarian Orthodox. They have the Bible or portions of the Bible, Christian Radio Broadcasting, Gospel audio recordings and the Jesus Film available in their language. Many of them are not religious or atheist.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

[http://www-gewi.kfunigraz.ac.at/csbsc/ulf/pomak\\_identities.htm](http://www-gewi.kfunigraz.ac.at/csbsc/ulf/pomak_identities.htm)

**24501**

### ***Byelorussian (4,900)***

The Byelorussian are of the Eastern Slav people cluster. They are found throughout the former Soviet Union. They are also known as White Russians, Baltorusins, Baltorussians, Belorussians, Belarusins, Baltorusians, Belarus, Beloruthenians, White Ruthenians, and Krivichis. They speak the Belarusan, which has four basic dialects. In some places, the Byelorussians depend on lumbering and growing potatoes to support themselves.

The Belarusians are made up of several groups that evolved into this ethnicity. Some of these groups are the Krivichi, Radzimichi, Dregovich, and Viatichi people. Among the Russian people, they are sometimes looked down on and simply categorized as Russians. Throughout their history, the Belarusins have suffered a lot. Under Stalin's rule, about 15% of their population was deported to concentration camps, where most of them died.

Another 5% of their population died of starvation after the state took their produce. During World War II, three out of every four Belarusian towns were completely destroyed. The Germans killed more than a million Belarusians and deported tens of thousands more for forced labor. Stalin, after Russia regained the area of Belarus in 1944, continued killing and persecuting the Belarusins. The Belarusians were also negatively affected by the Chernobyl nuclear accident in 1986. The reactor was located northern Ukraine, however, radiation spread widely and more than 2,000,000 people were exposed. Epidemiologists began detecting unusually high rates of cancer and neurological disorders in the Belarusian people by 1991.

The Belarusians have had to fight to maintain their culture. Aside from persecution and genocide, they have struggled to maintain their identity. In 1986 a group of students organized the Talaka Historical- Cultural Association in order to bring about a Belarusian national revival. They emphasized their ties to Poland and Lithuania and pulled away from their ties with Russia. In 1991 Belarus was recognized as an independent nation within the commonwealth.

Their primary religion is Russian Orthodoxy and they are 70% Christian adherent. The number of evangelicals is unknown. They have the Bible or portions of the Bible, Gospel audio recordings, Christian Radio Broadcasting and the Jesus Film available to them in their language.

Olson, James. *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of the Russian and Soviet Empires*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

<http://www.peopleteams.org/teambelarus/default.htm>

<http://www.russiatoday.ru/en/profile/people/nat/897.html>

## **24502**

### ***Chuvash (3,000)***

The Chuvash are of the Ural- Siberian people cluster. They are also known as the Bolgar and Bulgar people. They are found throughout Central Asia and the former Soviet Union. They speak Chuvash which belongs to the Turkic group of languages. It is said to be the only remaining branch of the Old- Bulgaric language.

The Chuvash are likely descended from Bulgar ancestors that moved from Asia into the Mid-Volga area. The Chuvash influenced the Turkic language in the 4<sup>th</sup> century and the language today shows the different dialects that have been mixed over its history. They established their own Chuvash Empire that came under the influence of Ilmaic and Mongol forces in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. In 1552 Russia took over the Chuvashia area and the people became Orthodox Christian. The Russians acted as protectors of the Chuvash. There is no Chuvash written history until the 1500's. The first Russian documentation of the Chuvash name was in 1521. By the 1800's, Chuvash as a written language had developed. In 1920 the area of the Chuvash was called the Chuvash Autonomous Region, but in the 1990's it was called the Chuvash Republic.

The Chuvash are primarily Christians, however there are some Muslims among them. About 35% of the population is Christian adherent, with most of those being Orthodox Christians. There are few, if any, evangelical believers among them. Some of the population is animistic or non-religious. They have the New Testament, Bible portions, Christian Radio broadcasting, and the Jesus film in the Bolgar language.

<http://www.unpo.org/member.php?arg=17>

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

<http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/cultural/oldworld/europe/chuvash.html>

[http://www.ozturkler.com/data\\_english/0007/0007\\_15\\_07.htm](http://www.ozturkler.com/data_english/0007/0007_15_07.htm)

<http://www.chuvashia.com/cap/main.asp?prev=103&pos=11>

[http://www.helsinki.fi/~tasalmin/europe\\_report.html#Chuvash](http://www.helsinki.fi/~tasalmin/europe_report.html#Chuvash)

## **24503**

### ***Crimean Tatar (8,700)***

The Crimean Tartar people are of the Ural- Siberian people cluster. They are a part of the larger Tatar population found in Russia. They are also known as Crimean Turks, Kazan Tatar, Krymchak, Nogai, Tatar Nogay, Tartar, and Tatar people. The Crimean Tatar people are located in their historical homeland on the Crimean Peninsula in Russia, however, many were deported in 1944 to what is now Uzbekistan. Some were also deported to Tajikistan, the Ukraine, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. Many have returned to

their homeland. They are also found in Bulgaria, Jordan, Moldova, Romania, Kazakhstan. The largest group of them is found in Turkey.

Their language is Crimean Turkish. There are several dialects: the Northern of Steppe dialect, the Central dialect, and the Southern or coastal dialect. The dates of their written language go back to the thirteenth century. Some reforms were made to the literary language in the nineteenth century. The Arabic script, the Latin alphabet, and the Russian Cyrillic, in that order have been used as the Crimean Tatar alphabet. When the mass deportation occurred in 1944, the culture suffered serious setbacks. A generation of children was uneducated due to relocation and it was not until 1957 that they were allowed to publish their own newspaper in Tashkent.

Historically, the Crimean Tatars established the Khanate of Crimea in 1443 as a remnant of the Golden Horde. They were powerful in the 16<sup>th</sup> century through the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century in the eastern European region. Turkey was an allied partner with the Crimean Tatars until in the 18<sup>th</sup> century Russia annexed the Khanate during its wars with Turkey. By the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century many of the Tatars immigrated to Turkey while Russians emigrated into the former Khanate. As the 19<sup>th</sup> century came to a close the Crimean Tatars had established hundreds of schools, and were in a full awakening of nationalism. This eventually led to a call to the new government for cultural autonomy. They were given territorial autonomy later. In 1921, the Crimean Autonomous Republic was established and for a while toleration existed. By 1928, however, there were acts of suppression and sovietization of the Crimean Tatars. The Germans were welcomed as liberators in 1941, but this led to the deportation of 183,155 Crimean Tatars on May 18, 1944. Almost half of them died in concentration camps on the way to their new homes. They were declared traitors to the Soviet Union and deprived of autonomy. Further repression was taken during the 20th century, and only nearing the end of the Soviet Union were the Tatars allowed to return in small numbers to Crimea. Even with fall of the old government, there is still strong Russian opposition to the establishment of a Crimean State.

Due to their deportation, it has been difficult for the Crimean Tatars to maintain their identity. They have assimilated into Russian culture, however, the older generations still hold to their ethnic traditions. Children do not have schools of their own and are educated by the schools of the ethnic majority. For this reason, they do not learn about their own history, language, or culture. About 75% of these children cannot read or speak their native language of Krym.

Family is very important to this group. It is common for two to three generations to live in the same house. They tend to marry within their own culture, however a small percentage of them marry in other groups. Families are patriarchal and patrilineal, where the lineage is traced through the male. Work is often divided by gender and men tend to work outside of the home, while women work within the home, taking care of the house and children.

The Crimean Tatars are Sunni Muslims of the Hanafite branch. The Quran, however, is not available to them in their language. There are few, if any, known Christians among them. There are portions of the Bible, the Jesus film, and Christian radio broadcasts available to them in their language. There are no Christian audio recordings or God's Story Video's available.

[http://www.eki.ee/books/redbook/crimean\\_tatars.shtml](http://www.eki.ee/books/redbook/crimean_tatars.shtml)

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

<http://www.kresy.co.uk/krym.html>  
[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_language.asp?code=crh](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=crh)  
<http://www.unpo.org/member.php?arg=20>  
<http://www.irex.uz/?id=publications&file=art006>

**24504**

### ***Georgian (1,100)***

The Georgian people are of the Caucasus people cluster. They are also called Adjari, Adzhar, Gruzin, Imerxey Georgian, and Western Georgian. They are mostly found in Europe, Central Asia, and the former Soviet Union. The Adjari are a separate ethnic group and speak a Georgian that is heavily influenced by Turkish. Gruzin is the Russian word for the Georgians. Within the Georgian people there are subgroups that are distinct in religion and location in the Caucasus. They speak Georgian a language in the Caucasus language family which has had its own script since pre-Christian times.

The Georgians who live on the Black Sea, trace their ancestry back to Japheth, Noah's son. They are known for their horsemanship and in 79AD were said to have performed before the Roman Emperor Vespasian. They tend to be very nationalistic and many take pride in their "native son" Joseph Stalin. They are also known to be resourceful and ambitious. They were considered the "black sheep" of the Soviet Union.

Due to the location of Georgia, being sandwiched between the West and the East, it has been invaded numerous times, impacting the people in the culture and livelihood.

Georgia became a Christian state in the fourth century and was a strong influence in the area until Islam became too aggressive to contain. The Arab-Georgian conflicts lasted from the seventh through the ninth century. By 1008 there was a united Georgian kingdom which had a Golden Age in the twelfth century. The Golden Horde engulfed the entire country in the thirteenth century. The tie to Byzantium has kept Georgia in contact with Christians, but the disruptions of the invaders, then the fall of Constantinople pushed Georgia into stagnation. The state disintegrated into three kingdoms, and fell further with the Turkish-Persian Wars. Russia influenced the Georgian people, later taking them into the Russian Empire and Soviet Union. Internal strife in the Caucasus through most of the twentieth century was coupled with harsh purges by the Soviet leaders. Industrialization and urbanization expanded rapidly and the Georgian Communist Party pressed for nationalist policies. Under Gorbachev, Georgian nationalism grew into reforms and a national revival. The Georgian Orthodox Church and nationalist groups pushed for moral regeneration and independence. Georgia declared independence in April, 1991, but by the end of 1992 civil war erupted. In 1995, a popular election restored progression by electing Eduard Shevardnadze as President. He held office until legislative election manipulation in Nov. 2003 led to his resignation. Mikheil Saakashvili was elected president in early 2004. Since the independence of Georgia, many Georgians considered moving back under the Georgian government's active immigration policy.

The Georgian population is primarily non-Religious. In Tajikistan, they are estimated to be about 30% Christian adherent, but the number of evangelicals is unknown. They have the Bible, Jesus Film, Gospel audio recordings, and Christian radio broadcasting in their Georgian language.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>  
<http://www.janzteam.com/OSTEUROPE/en/cauc3.htm>  
[http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Russland/etnisk\\_b.exe?Gruzian](http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Russland/etnisk_b.exe?Gruzian)  
<http://www.imb.org/centralasia/pray/Adjari.html>  
<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/gg.html>

24505

***German, Volga German (2,400)***

These ancestral Germans moved to the Volga valley in Russia in July 1763 when Catherine II, the Russian Empress invited them to settle there. The situation in Germany at that time was bad. There was religious persecution, poverty was extreme following the Seven Years War and there were high taxes. An invitation to leave was welcomed by many. When they settled they were expected to farm the land only in the Volga region. The government paid for a church within each colony, but required it to be repaid for the cost. Four years later there was a set of detail instructions and regulations for them to follow.

By 1890's there were almost 1.8 million German inhabitants in Russia. The Volga region had run out of land and so the newer immigrants were sent to Siberia. When the Germany declared War in 1914, hostility towards the Germans in Russia grew and the passage of the Laws of Liquidation formally gave threat to the Russian Germans. The laws were not enacted but served to keep the Germans in submission. The first relocation of the Volga Germans took place in July of 1915, when they were sent to Eastern Russia. In the communities of the Germans, of which 76% were Lutherans, the religious solidarity was seen as a threat when the Bolsheviks took over in 1917. The Volga-Germans were severely persecuted. A labor commune of Volga Germans was established on October 19, 1918. Males in these camps had a very low survival rate. By 1919, pastors were sent to slave camps because they were considered propagandists against the Russian government.

Between 1921 and 1922, widespread famine wiped out one-third of those Germans still in the Volga Region. On December 19, 1924, the Volga German ASSR was established but later closed on August 28, 1941. The city of Engels was the capital of the Volga-German ASSR. In the 1930's, collectivization began and private property was removed. Nearly all the clergy were killed and the churches were beyond repair. With World War II the condition of the Volga Germans only worsened as they were considered enemies of the state. Along with the closing of the Volga-German ASSR, the Decree of Banishment forced a mass evacuation. The young men were sent to the Russian Army and young women became domestic servants in the big cities. Everyone else was banished.

In September 1955, amnesty was given to the remaining Volga Germans but they were asked not to return to their original settlements. In August 1964, the U.S.S.R. admitted guilt in charging innocent people and urged Soviets to give assistance to Russian Germans. In January 1965, the Decree of 1941 was voided. Afterwards, many Volga Germans attempted to return to their former cities and found they were unwelcome. They settled in the Ural Mountains, Siberia, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan. Others immigrated to the United States and Canada. The Law/Right of Return was used by many people of German ancestries who wanted to return to Germany but were living in Eastern Europe. They are 78% adherent to Christianity, with about 12.5% being evangelical. They have the Bible, Gospel audio recording, Christian radio broadcasting, and the Jesus film available in Standard German.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Volga\\_Germans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Volga_Germans)

<http://www.lhm.org/LID/lidhist.htm> see article

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

<http://www.volgagermans.net/>

<http://www.grhs.com/archive/reviews/volga.html>

<http://www.irex.uz/?id=publications&file=art006>

**00000**

***Greek (700)***

The Greeks are sometimes called Dimotiki, Greek Crypriot, Hellenic, Romei, Romeos, and Urum. The Greeks in Tajikistan are mostly from Russia. The Black Sea area was a place of trade between the Byzantine Empire and its neighbors for centuries. As power changed hands the Black Sea remained a place of importance in trade relations. The spread of religion also occurred throughout the Black Sea region. Greek Orthodox and missionaries have carried their Christianity to the Slavs, Khazars, and Alans. The Russians raided the Black Sea during the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Centuries but later traded with them. During the era of the Golden Horde, Greeks immigrated to the Russian lands and contributed much to their culture. After the fall of Byzantium, trade with the Ottomans and Russians made use of the Greeks. Conditions for the Greeks changed drastically from the Tsarist years to the Bolsheviks revolution. The Greeks fought against the Bolsheviks and many were deported to remote areas of Russia. Churches and schools of the Greek Orthodoxy were closed. More hardship came during World War II under the Nazis. The Greeks were caught in the Crimean War conflict and some were deported to Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Siberia with the Crimean Tatars. After Stalin died, many Greeks were allowed to return to the Black Sea region. Many immigrated to Greece as well. They are 90% Greek Orthodox. They have the Bible, Gospel audio recordings, and the Jesus film in Greek.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

[http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Russland/etnisk\\_b.exe?Greek](http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Russland/etnisk_b.exe?Greek)

**00000**

***Guhjali, Wakhi (10,000)***

The Guhjali, also known as the mountain Tajiks, are of the Tajik people cluster. They are also called the Guhiali, Khik, Vakhan, Wakhani, Wakhi, Wakhigi, or Wakhs. The Guhjali are found in China, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan. In Tajikistan, they are found in small, remote villages around the Pamir region. The Kirghiz live in the high mountain valleys of the area, while the Wakhi lived in the lowlands areas. Relations between the two groups are often tense, yet both groups are economically dependent on each other. The Kirghiz depend on the Wakhi for grain, while the Wakhi depend on the Kirghiz for animals. The center of the areas where they reside is Khandud. Many have scattered and are refugees now. They speak Wakhi, and Indo- Iranian language. The literacy rate is below 1%.

The Guhjali are Ismaili Shi'a Muslims. Some, however, are Imami Shi'a and Sunni. There are few, if any, Christians or churches among them. There are no known groups working among them. There are Christian audio recordings available in their language, however there are no Bibles, Jesus Films, or radio broadcasts available to them.

<http://realafghan.com/history/language.htm#WAKHI>

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php>

[http://www.ethnologue.org/show\\_language.asp?code=wbl](http://www.ethnologue.org/show_language.asp?code=wbl) [www.gl.iit.edu/govdocs/afghanistan/People in Afgh.](http://www.gl.iit.edu/govdocs/afghanistan/People%20in%20Afgh)

<http://www.country-studies.com/afghanistan/wakhi,-farsiwan.html>

**00000**

***Gypsy, Domari, Churi-wali (2,200)***

The Domari are Gypsies. Gypsies are sometimes called Barake, Churi-Wali, Dom Gypsy, Ghagar, Ghorbati, Ghorbati Gypsy, Haleb Gypsy, Helebi, Indian Gypsy, Karachi, Kowli, Kowli Gypsy, Kurbat, Luli Gypsy, Middle East Gypsy, Mussulman Gypsy, or Nawar.

The Domari speak a dialect of the Gypsy language Romany called Domari. It is related to the North Indo- Aryan language and contains many Arabic words.

These people originated in India and often worked as musicians, entertainers, and metal workers. They were discriminated against, and in most places today, they continue to be looked down upon. After moving to Persia, they were separated into two groups. The Romany-speaking European Gypsies traveled north, while the Middle Eastern Gypsies, who became known as the Domari, traveled south.

The Russian Gypsies have been settled in Russia for centuries. The post-communist policies on Gypsies in Eastern Europe have helped to solidify some of their identity. Most often they are required to assimilate into the broader culture or face exclusion. The Ruska Roma represents the largest group within the Gypsy peoples. They were living in Russia before the October Revolution in 1917 as horse traders who rented homes in the winter and traveled in the summer. Their reputation as horse traders and horse thieves shifted to car dealers and car thieves in the Soviet era. During the Soviet era many were deported to Siberia and Central Asia.

The Domari typically have dark skin and eyes and are considered outsiders wherever they are. Many are nomadic. It is not uncommon for them to have two or more occupations and will travel to wherever there is a need for their particular skill. Men will often be skilled in making sieves, drums, bird cages, reed mats, cloth, shoes, or kitchen utensils, and the women sell the crafts made. In some places, men and women make money telling fortunes. Many times, women and children must beg or steal food in order to survive.

There are some Gypsy villages and communities in the Middle East and some are able to live in cities. Gypsies are often thought of as dirty, as many of them practice poor sanitation and hygiene. Many do not wear shoes and children are often poorly cared for. They use the same carts for their shops that they use for their transportation. Health care and education are often not very good among the Gypsies.

Gypsies often marry in their teens. Having more than one wife is acceptable, but occurs rarely. They hold to a strict social code that was derived from their Hindu background and they value justice, fidelity, morality, courtesy, and friendliness. Purity is of up most importance among Gypsy women and a woman must prove that she has never been with a man before she can be given in marriage. Any immorality can lead to a person being cast out the community.

The Gypsies in Tajikistan are primarily Sunni Muslims. Some, however believe some of the Gypsy traditions, such as the belief that snakes, lizards, and ghosts can harm humans, and in the curse of "the evil eye." There are currently no Christian resources in the Domari language, and the number of Christian adherents among them is unknown.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

[http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Rusland/etnisk\\_b.exe?Gipsy](http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Rusland/etnisk_b.exe?Gipsy)

<http://www.errc.org/cikk.php?cikk=1844>

<http://www.geocities.com/Paris/5121/pariah-ch14.htm>

Minahan, James. *Encyclopedia of the Stateless Nations: Ethnic and National Groups Around the World*. Vol. 3, L-R. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

**00000**

### ***Hazara (9,200)***

The Hazara people reside primarily in Central Afghanistan, however, they are also found in Tajikistan, Pakistan, and Iran. They are a Turko- Mongol people whose Mongolian features immediately distinguish them from other groups in Tajikistan. Ismaili Hazaras tend to live in the Hindu Kush area. They are sometimes called Afghan Persian,

Berberi, Khawari, or Teymur. The primary language of the Hazara is Hazaragi, which is a variation of Dari, their trade language.

Hazaras are of low ranking in ethnic status, usually just above Gypsies, and are often discriminated against. In Afghanistan, many are not allowed to marry Hazaras. The Hazara have been the targets and victims of several massacres, including in the ones in May of 2000 and January of 2001. In some places, they make a living with unskilled labor occupations and some jobs have become known as “Hazara occupations.”

The yurts are often unsanitary and eye trouble from dust storms is often a problem among the Hazara who travel. Many of the children have worms and it is estimated that over 50% of the Hazara may have tuberculosis.

The Hazaras value generosity and family. Men attempt to build their reputations with generosity, possessing a government job, or reciting the Quran or poetry. Men are the head of households among the Hazara. At times, the Hazara form compound households, putting the senior wife in the husband’s position until the oldest son reaches maturity. This often leads to an intense, unpeaceful situation in the home. Hazara daughters and fathers often form a close bond and sisters and brothers are often very close. Hazara’s tend to marry first cousins to avoid having to pay a bride price. The Hazara people enjoy storytelling, wrestling, and a game which is similar to baseball. They also play Buzkashi. The main occupation of the Hazara is farming. Unfortunately, more than 30 million unmapped landmines are in the country, many of them on Hazara farmland. In addition to landmines, drought has made surviving even more difficult and now even small wheat crops are almost impossible to sustain. In the past, the Hazara would only grow enough crops to meet their needs and many would seek jobs in Southern Afghanistan or Northern India during the winter months. From May to September, about one third of the Hazara in the villages lead their herds into the highlands. During this time, they live in circular tent dwellings called yurts.

Villages are usually small, with only 30-100 houses in each. Since the Hazar- Afghan war, a system of self rule has been replaced by government control. The Hazara people have experienced many feuds and raids. Some of the feuds led Ismaili Shi to convert to Twelver Shi and vice versa in order to form political alliances. In order to win a court case, some Hazaras have converted to Sunni Islam. In the past, Abdur Rahman declared jihad against the Shia Hazaras.

While some Hazaras are Sunni Muslims, the Hazaras are the largest Shi group in Afghanistan. Most of the Hazara are “Twelvers” or Imami Shi’ites. Other Hazaras, who have strong ties with the Tajik people, are Ismaili Shi’ites. They are often called the “Twelvers.” The Sayyid is an Islamic leader among the Hazara who serves the religious needs of the community. Boys receive one or two years of formal education with the teachings centered on Islam. Girls usually do not receive formal education.

The percentage of Hazaras in Tajikistan that are Christians is unknown. There may be a few churches among them, however the believers fear persecution from their surrounding Muslim groups, so the exact number is unknown. While no Bible in their language has been made available to them, there are Jesus Films, radio broadcasts, and Christian audio cassettes in their language.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopetry.php>

[www.gl.iit.edu/govdocs/afghanistan/People in Afgh. http://www.imb.org/centralasia/pray/Hazara.html#](http://www.gl.iit.edu/govdocs/afghanistan/People%20in%20Afgh.%20http://www.imb.org/centralasia/pray/Hazara.html#)

<http://www.hazaranet.com/who.html>

<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/afghanistan>

**00000**

### ***Irani (76,000)***

The Irani people of Tajikistan are of the Persian people cluster. They are also called Bagdadi, Balochi, Ebhele, Farsi, Parsiwan, Persian, and Qazilbash. They speak and Eastern and Western Farsi, an Indo-Iranian language. Farsi is an Indo-Iranian language and is one of the oldest languages still in use today.

The Irani people descend from the Persian groups that settled in Iran around 1000 BC. The Persians became the rulers of the Achaemenid dynasty during the sixth century BC. The Persians were ruled by many dynasties over the centuries. Some of the ethnic Persians were the Sassanids, the Buwayhids, and the Samanids. Unethnic Persians that rules were the Seleucids, Seljuk Turks, Mongols, and the Safavids.

Many are farmers; however some rely on crafts such as hand woven items, rugs, and pottery to make a living. Irani society is both patriarchal, which means male-dominated, and patrilineal, which means they trace ancestral descent through the male lineage. Irani women are generally submissive to their husbands in public, however, in private are given more freedom in the decision making. The men are responsible for defending family honor, especially concerning the purity of their daughters and sisters. Marriages are often arranged and marriages between cousins are preferred.

In more urban areas, the Persians are divided into five social classes. Former villagers who came into the towns make up the lowest group and are often unskilled laborers who live on the outskirts of towns. Real estate investors, merchants, and other businessmen make up the higher class. The ulama is the social class that is made up of priests and clergymen.

Until the Arab invasion, the Persian people were primarily Zoroastrian. The Zoroastrian religion stresses the struggle between the forces of good and evil. In the sixteenth century, Shia Islam became the national religion of Islam. Most Persians today are of the Ithna Ashari branch of Shia Islam. There are few, if any, known Irani Christians in Tajikistan. The Bible, Jesus Film, Christian radio, audio recordings, and web recordings have been translated into their language.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

<http://www.adoptapeople.com/Profiles/clusters/8034.htm>

[http://www.adoptapeople.com/Profiles/p\\_code1/932.htm](http://www.adoptapeople.com/Profiles/p_code1/932.htm)

<http://www.peopleteams.org/psw/>

<http://philtar.ucsm.ac.uk/encyclopedia/islam/shia/shia.html>

<http://www.uga.edu/islam/shiism.html#ithna>

**24499**

### ***Jew, Bukharic, Central Asian (5,900)***

The Bukharic Jew people group is sometimes considered the Central Asian Jew people group. The Central Asian Jew is also sometimes called Sarikoli, Sarykloy, Tadzik, and Tajiki. In Tajikistan, they prefer to be called “Isro’il” or “Yahudi.” They have a strong sense of Jewish identity, however the Jews of Asia have a distinct lifestyle. Most of these Jews are Ashkenazim which are descendents of the Jews who inhabited the Germanic region of Europe. They speak Eastern Yiddish, a German dialect that is mixed with Hebrew. The Bukharic Jews speak Bokhara, which is a Jewish dialect of Tajik. This is one of the Asian Jews distinguishing features. Most of the Jewish population in Tajikistan lives in Dushanbe. Smaller communities of Jews live in Leninabad Oblast and in the Fergana Valley region.

Jews have lived in the area that is now Tajikistan since the Middle Ages. In the past, they tended to associate with the general Tajik population and they adopted many Tajik

customs. Ashkenazic Jews came to Tajikistan after the Second World War, mostly working as engineers and specialists occupations. By 1989, almost 20,000 Jews live in Tajikistan, however, that number decreased drastically due to the civil war. The civil war brought about a lot of violence and persecution towards the Jewish population.

The Soviet era was particularly hard for Jews in Russia, with synagogues shut down and religion repressed, some were imprisoned by the State. They were at times compared to Nazis in the media. A movement for Jewish rights was bolstered by the Six-Day War and many began applying for entry into Israel in the 1970's. Under Gorbachev more freedom was attained and in the early 1990's ten's of thousands of Jews were emigrating annually. Approximately one million fled after the fall of communism.

In the past, the Bukharan Jews worked as peddlers, shoemakers, barbers, factory workers, and collective farmers. Today they continue working in these traditional occupations and are also working as engineers, doctors, teachers, and musicians. In addition, women often dance at Jewish and Muslim weddings. In the past, these people faced a lot of persecution, especially from the predominant Muslim population. They were often forced to live in mahallas, which were isolated parts of cities, and were required to wear signs on their clothing marking them as Jews. They also had to pay special taxes that other groups did not have to pay. In the past ten years, however, they have gained more freedom.

The Bukharan Jews are indigenous to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. They settled mostly in Bukhara, which is how they derived their name "Bukharan." These people claim to be descendants from the ten tribes of Israel who were forced to Persia in the fifth century. Traditionally, these families were patriarchal and patrilineal and households were made up of extended families. Nuclear families, however, are becoming more common. In the past, Bukharan Jews only married other Bukharan Jews. Ashkenazic Jews in larger cities, however, are now intermarrying with Muslims. Traditionally a matchmaker was sent to the parents of the bride and a dowry and bride price was agreed upon.

Jews in the cities tend to not adhere strictly to Jewish practices, however, the Bukharic Jews tend to hold tightly to their traditions and religion. They follow the Law of Moses and have strict laws concerning diet, circumcision, and the Sabbath. There are few, if any, known Christians among the Bukharic Jews in Tajikistan. They have the Bible, Jesus film, Christian radio broadcasting, and Gospel audio recordings in their language.

<http://www.adoptapeople.com/Profiles/clusters/8095.htm>

<http://www.peopleteams.org/forzionsake/upgs.htm>

[http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/Human\\_Rights/sjmove.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/Human_Rights/sjmove.html)

<http://www.wzo.org.il/en/resources/view.asp?id=1547&subject=131>

<http://www.blossomingrose.org/chernobyl/howmany.htm>

[http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Rusland/etnisk\\_b.exe?Jewish](http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Rusland/etnisk_b.exe?Jewish)

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

## **24508**

### ***Kazakh (13,800)***

The Kazakh are a Turkic people. They are also known as Hazake, Mazax, Qazaq, or Qazaqi people. They are the second largest Muslim group within Central Asia. While most live in Kazakhstan, they are also found in Mongolia, Ukraine, Russia, China, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkey, Tajikistan, Iran, Germany, Belarus, and with smaller populations in a few other countries. In Tajikistan, groups of them are found south of Kulob and in the Fergana Valley region. They speak Kazakh which belongs to the Turkic branch of the Ural-Altai language family. Their written language is based on the Arabic alphabet.

As clans joined together for protection, the Kazak became a distinct ethnic group in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. During the nineteenth century, Russia claimed Kazakhstan, and during the Russian Civil War, during the 1920's-1930's, about half of the Kazak population was killed. During this time, many fled to parts of China and Mongolia. Since the 1960's, however, many have returned to Kazakhstan.

They used to be nomadic shepherds, however, they lost much of their land during the Soviet rule and were forced to do collective farming. They lived in yurts, dome shaped tents. Many times, poor, individual families cannot survive without living with a clan. In cities, outside of Afghanistan, western dress is common among the Kazak, however, within Afghanistan, the Kazaks dress more like other groups within their region. A common sport among the Kazakhs is a sport called "girl chasing" in which a young man and a young woman on separate horses, chases the man and if she catches him, lashes him lightly with a whip.

Kazakh society is both patriarchal, which means male-dominated, and patrilineal, which means they trace ancestral descent through the male lineage. In some places, however, this gradually changing and shifting legal authority over to the heads of collective farms. This has caused a breakdown in the overall traditional family structure. The nuclear family, which generally consists of a man, his parents, his wife or wives, and their children, is the most important unit within the Kazakh society. Traditionally, feudal lords and tribal chiefs practiced polygamy and marriages were arranged. Richer men could marry up to four wives, while the poorer could not afford the bride price to even marry. This changed, however, and families began exchanging their daughters as each other's daughter-in-law without asking for gifts. When a girl marries, she becomes part of the husband's immediate family.

The Kazaks are known as warm-hearted, sincere, and hospitable people. In some places, a guest will be presented with a sheep's head. As a sign of appreciation, the guest cuts a slice off the right cheek and puts it back on the plate. They are known for their handmade embroideries, which usually consist of flower and animal horn patterns on a black, red, and purple velveteen. They have a rich heritage of literature which has been handed down orally. Some play a two stringed instrument called a Combra.

The Kazakh people of Tajikistan are mostly Sunni Muslims; however, many combine the Islamic practices with their traditional folk religions, which involves worship of spirits and fire, animism, and ancestor worship. Many consult Shamans, priests, to cure the sick, communicate with spirits, and manipulate the spirits to control events. There are few, if any, Christians among the Kazakhs in Tajikistan. There are Bibles, Jesus Films, Christian audio resources, and radio broadcasts available in their language.

<http://www.pcn.org.uk/Uzbekistan%20-%202001.pdf>

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

<http://www.chsource.org/Kazak.htm>

<http://www.china.org.cn/e-groups/shaoshu/shao-2-kazak.htm>

## **24510**

### ***Korean (16,300)***

Many of the Korean people of Tajikistan came from Russia. They joined the Bolsheviks during the Civil War, due to hatred of the Japanese for their treatment of their families in Korea years earlier. Many Koreans became Communist Party members. The Koreans successfully worked Rice farm collectives established on the Ussuri River. Some Koreans moved to Central Asia on the promise of free, irrigable land. Stalin deported the remaining Koreans in the Far Eastern territory to Central Asia. In Tajikistan, they are

found mostly on farms and orchards in the Fergana Valley. While most have adopted Central Asian clothes and farm implements, many have been able to maintain their traditional customs, foods, furniture, and architecture.

Koreans are found throughout the world. They are also known as Chaoxian, Chejunal, Chosun, Chosun Jok, Hanghohua, Hanguk Mal, and North and South Korean. The Bible, Jesus film, Christian radio broadcasting, and Gospel audio recordings are available in the Korean language. About 22.30% of them are Christian adherent and an estimated 3.28% are evangelical. Their primary religion is secularism.

[http://www.adoptapeople.com/Profiles/p\\_code2/967.htm](http://www.adoptapeople.com/Profiles/p_code2/967.htm)

[http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Russland/etnisk\\_b.exe?Korean](http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Russland/etnisk_b.exe?Korean)

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

Olson, James. *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of the Russian and Soviet Empires*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994.

## **24509**

### ***Kyrgyz (120,000)***

The Kirghiz are found in Afghanistan, China, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and the Ukraine. In Tajikistan, they are mostly found in the Ferghana Valley, in the Alay Mountains, and in the northwestern part of the country. They Kirghiz became a distinct nationality in the fourteenth century and settled where they are today in the fifteenth century. They are also called Kara, Ke'erkzi, and Kirgiz. The Kirghiz speak Kirghiz, a Kirghizian language belonging to the Turkic group. This is divided into the northern and southern groups. Yensei is a Kirghiz script which was lost. Now Kirghiz have adapted a new script based on the Arabo- Persian alphabet.

The Kirghiz are a nomadic people and travel almost all year round. Many of the Kirghiz practice high altitude pastoralist, raising fat tailed sheep, yaks, goats, camels, and horses. They are able to manage the high altitude living by their multilayered clothing and housing styles. They live in Yurts, round tents that can be heated by fire. The more wealthy Kirghiz live in stone and mud homes.

The Kirghiz are a patrilineal society, where the line of descent is traced through the males. The more wealthy Kirghiz may practice polygamy. Many also follow levirate marriage customs, such as a widow with a least one child is entitled to a husband from the same lineage as her deceased spouse. Contrary to Islam, the women often receive no inheritance, and instead of the sons getting an equal portion of the inheritance, they receive an inheritance based on their birth order. Usually the oldest son inherits the father prestige, political standing, and pasture lands, while the youngest son inherits the family yurt and the herd. In many places, the khan is the judge, mediator, and political and economic leader.

Marriages in Kirghiz society are usually arranged, sometimes even before birth. A gift, such as a roasted sheep, is often presented to the bride-to-be, and gifts are often given from the groom-to-be's family to that of the future bride's. The family is usually composed of three generations, with married couples living with the husband's family. Household decisions are made by all adult members of the household, and no one member can impose his or her will on the rest of the house. Men are usually responsible for herding horses and cattle, cutting wood and grass, and other heavy household chores, while women usually hold the responsibility of milking, shearing, and grazing the animals.

The Kirghiz are very hospitable. All visitors, strangers or friends, are offered the best at the meal. In many places, mutton from the sheep's head shows a high respect for the guest. A guest must leave food in his bowl to show that the host has been generous and

that he has received more than his fill of food. When a guest arrive on horseback, the host unsaddles the guest's horse, and then puts saddles it back up when the guest leaves. Anyone moving his tent is entertained by his neighbors a gift of farewell or welcome. Dependence on alcohol, tea, and opium is a growing problem among the Kirghiz. The diet among the Kirghiz herdsmen usually consists of animal byproducts, as well as some cabbages, onions, and potatoes. They often drink goat's milk, yogurt, and tea with milk and salt. The wealthier eat beef, mutton, horse, and camel meat with flour and rice. Butter is stored in dried sheep and cattle stomachs. Almost all Kirghiz play a musical instrument the komuz. They have songs that express people's anger, joys, sorrows, and losses and sing for almost every occasion, including songs to say goodbye to a guest. They are known for their epic poem called "Manas" which tell a story of a hero whose descendents are the Kirghiz people. They have many taboos, some of which include where one can use the bathroom, how they speak to each other, and an abhorrence of cursing or lying. The Kirghiz are Sunni Muslim, however they tend to hold to their more traditional, pre-Islamic practices. They have continued with their old practice of ancestor worship and Islam is not a big part of everyday live among the Kirghiz. Most do not have their own mosques and are unfamiliar with the Islamic holidays. It is possible that only a few among them actually know the basic tenants of Islam. They are few, if any, known Christian adherents and evangelicals. They have portions of the Bible, Jesus Film, God's Story Video, Christian audio recordings, and radio broadcasts translated in their language.

<http://www.china.org.cn/e-groups/shaoshu/shao-2-kirgiz.htm>

<http://www.chsource.org/Kirgiz.htm>

<http://www.orientaltravel.com/people/Kirgiz.htm>

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

[www.gl.iit.edu/govdocs/afghanistan/People in Afgh.](http://www.gl.iit.edu/govdocs/afghanistan/People%20in%20Afgh)

## **24511**

### ***Lak (1,600)***

The Lak are of the Lori-Bakhtiari people cluster, which is a part of the Indo- Iranian affinity block. They are from the Dagestan Republic in what they call Lakstan. Many Lak live in the basins of the upper Kazikumukh, Tleusarakh, and Khatar Rivers in the former Soviet Union. They live in the high mountain passes that make them isolated in the winter. They also live throughout Central Asia. They are also called Kumux and Laki. They are related to the Dargins. In the Lak language there are five dialects: Kumuk, Vikhli, Ashtikuli, Vitskh, and Balkar-Calakan. Before the nineteenth century, the Lak wrote in Arabic, however, in 1928 they were forced by the Russians to use the Latin script. Ten years later, the Cyrillic alphabet replaced the Latin alphabet and Russian words replaced the Arabic and Persian works. Today the Cyrillic alphabet is used in literature. About 95% of the Lak speak their language but they are multilingual. Traditionally they were shepherds, raising sheep and goats. They practiced transhumant shepherding, which required them to move their livestock from mountain to lowland areas as the seasons changed. In areas where they continue to shepherd, the men raise and tend to the livestock, while the women are responsible for the farming. They depend on meat and milk for food, but also grow peas, barley, wheat, and potatoes. Many were also local craftsmen. They continue to be known for their jewelry and coppersmiths. Today they also work as merchants and make saddles and harnesses. Some work as masons, candy makers, and tinsmiths. Women work in rug weaving, spinning, and making ceramics. They have a history of emigrating to neighboring areas for

economic reasons. In Russia, they assimilated into Russian culture and became one of the most multilingual groups in the former Soviet Union.

Family is important to the Lak people. They used to live in extended family units called Takhums. These were made up of several families, descending from a common male ancestor. Marriages were often arranged and kept within the takhum. The eldest women often played a major role in arranging these marriages. A bride price is a custom that still exists today, but it is more of a symbolic transaction than a financial one.

The Lak were exposed to Christianity by the Armenians and Georgians in the sixth century, but they converted to Islam in the eighth century. They are believed to be the first people in the Dagestan area of Russia to encounter Islam. They are Shafi Sunni Muslims. They are about 1% evangelical. There are Bible portions and the Jesus film in the Lak language. There is almost no Christian witness among them.

[http://www.adoptapeople.com/Profiles/p\\_code5/980.htm](http://www.adoptapeople.com/Profiles/p_code5/980.htm)

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

[http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Russland/etnisk\\_b.exe?Laksian](http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Russland/etnisk_b.exe?Laksian)

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Minahan, James. *One Europe, Many Nations: A Historical Dictionary of European National Groups*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000.

## **24512**

### ***Lithuanian (600)***

The Lithuanians are of the Baltic people cluster. They are found throughout Eastern Europe and Central Asia. There are also large groups of them found in the United States and Western Europe. The Lithuanians are also known as the Samogit, so named for the Samogitian hills in west Lithuania. They are Baltic descendants of the tribes that settled along the Baltic coast and inland thousands of years ago. Their language is related to ancient Sanskrit. It is part of the Baltic group of languages.

During the Middle Ages the Germanic lords set up feudal systems, introduced Christianity and organized the tribes. The Lithuanians were ruled by Poland from 1501 through the 1800's. The Lithuanian society was shaped by the Roman Catholic culture. Lithuania was occupied by the Germans in WWI, and experienced turbulent governmental upheaval after 1917. In 1920 Poland invaded and Lithuania battled in through the 1930's to establish stability. The occupation by the Russians in 1941, divided Lithuanians into many groups that fought for Germany, while others were taken away to German labor camps. About 200,000 Lithuanian Jews were murdered. By 1944, the Soviets had overtaken all of Lithuania, shipping 120,000 – 300,000 religious, cultural, or national leaders off to prison camps in Europe, Siberia, and Central Asia. Nationalist strength grew in the 1980's and a independence declaration in 1990 was restated in 1991 to Russia. Government instability in the 1990's was due to scandal, resignations, and dismissal. Lithuanians did not enjoy the economic growth that other post-communist peoples did. In 1999 they suffered from the highest suicide rate in Europe, with many unemployed and still suffering from the turbulent past.

In Tajikistan, they are about 85% Christian adherent, likely Roman Catholic. Lithuanians have saints that are believed to intervene with God on behalf of peasant welfare. One of these saints is St. Casimir. Other saints are believed to perform lesser miracles. St. George, for example, is considered the protector of animals. They also have a strong devotion to the Virgin Mary and those in Lithuania make pilgrimages to the shrine of Our Lady of Siluva. Those who used to live under Prussian control tend to be Lutheran. They

have the Bible, Jesus film, Gospel audio recordings, and Christian radio broadcasting in Lithuanian.

Minahan, James. *One Europe, Many Nations: A Historical Dictionary of European National Groups*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

[http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Rusland/etnisk\\_b.exe?Lithuanian](http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Rusland/etnisk_b.exe?Lithuanian)

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## **24513**

### ***Mari, Low (700)***

The Mari people are part of the Finno-Ugric people cluster. They are also known as Cheremis, Eastern Mari, and Low Mari people. They are mostly found in Russia along the banks of the Volga River, however groups of them are also found in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, the Ukraine, Latvia, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. Although they are one people, the Mari speak two distinct dialects; Meadow Mari and Hill Mari.

This people groups is believed to have appeared as an ethnic group in the sixth century. In the eighth century, they fell under the rule of the Khazar Empire and survived with slash and burn agriculture, hunting, and fishing. By the ninth century, Volga Bulgarians gained control of the people and remained in power until the twelfth century when the Mongol Tartars took over. During the middle of the sixteenth century, the Russian Empire took control of their area.

Many farm and are in the metal and paper industries. They are also known to be woodworkers. They are about 90% Christian adherent in Tajikistan and are primarily Russian Orthodox. They first came in contact with Russian Orthodox in the sixteenth century by missionaries. They tend to mix Orthodoxy with shaman practices. Pagan rituals take place in the birch forests for fear that the Mari will die. This tie to nature is ancient and the Kugu Sorta is an influential animistic sect among this group. According to Finnish mythology, which some of the Mari believe in, the Juma is the god of sky, thunder, and lightening. The number of evangelicals is unknown. They have the Bible, Jesus film, and Christian radio broadcasting in the Eastern Mari language.

Minahan, James. *One Europe, Many Nations: A Historical Dictionary of European National Groups*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000.

<http://www.geocities.com/ojoronen/FGPEOPLE.HTM>

[http://www.christusrex.org/www1/pater/maps/Russia\\_Autonom.jpg](http://www.christusrex.org/www1/pater/maps/Russia_Autonom.jpg)

<http://www.pantheon.org/articles/j/juma.html>

<http://www.mircorp.com/wwwml.html>

<http://languageserver.uni-graz.at/ls/lang?id=5719>

<http://www.udmnet.ru/udमितem/>

<http://www.dlc.fi/~kokov/finnougrian.htm>

<http://www.ibtnet.org/pdf/mari.pdf>

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

Olson, James. *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of the Russian and Soviet Empires*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994.

## **00000**

### ***Moldavian (500)***

The Moldavian are of the Romanian people cluster. The largest groups of them are found in Moldova, the Ukraine, and Russia. The Moldavians are those descendents from the territory occupied by current Moldova, but their exact ancestry is still debated. They are also referred to as the Moldavians. They speak Romanian and most today use a Cyrillic script.

Their homeland was established in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century and in the following centuries experienced wars over that territory. The Ottomans, Poles, Russians, and Habsburgs were all interested in this land. The Russians and Turks fought over the area in the 18<sup>th</sup>

Century and the Russian empire conquered the people. Consequently, around 100,000 Moldavians moved into Russia. After the Russian revolution, Moldova became a Romanian province when it entered into a union with Romania. In 1924, a Moldovan ASSR was proclaimed to counter the Romanian claims and create a Communist buffer. After 1939, the larger Moldovan area was overtaken and harshly “Russified,” including the relocation of 100,000 Moldavians. A short period of Axis occupation only exacerbated the situation later, when Romania itself was taken over in 1944. National communists later replaced Stalinism in the area. Brezhnev banned Moldovan Romanian cultural contacts by 1970. In 1989, the Latin script was reintroduced and Moldovan language was declared the same as Romanian. In 1990 the Moldovan SSR changed its name to Moldova. They declared independence on August 27, 1991 and in December 1991 Moldova joined the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). There has not been a significant migration of Moldavians to Moldova. The Moldovans remain the second poorest of the European nations after Albania.

There are some differences between Moldovans and Romanians but they are very similar in culture and language. The term Moldovan is used to distinguish a person using the Romanian language that lives in the Bessarabia region formerly controlled by the Soviet Union. They are 82% Christian adherent, likely of the Romanian Orthodox Church. There are few, if any, known Evangelicals. They have the Bible, the Jesus film, Gospel audio recordings, and both Christian radio and audio recordings in the Romanian language.

*One Europe, Many Nations: A Historical Dictionary of European National Groups* by James B. Minahan (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000) 465-471.

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[http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Russland/etnisk\\_b.exe?Moldavian](http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Russland/etnisk_b.exe?Moldavian)

## **24514**

### ***Mordvinian (6,700)***

The Mordvinian are also called the Mordva, Erzya, or Moksha. They are mostly found in the Middle Volga region and in the Mordvinian Autonomous Republic parts of Russia. They are part of the Finnish groups of people. They speak Erzya, which is in the Finnic group of the Uralian branch of the Uralic-Altaic family. They are almost all bilingual and the population of this people group is decreasing, as many are assimilating into the cultures they live in. They are primarily Orthodox Christians. Approximately 65% of the population is Christian adherent and 1% evangelical. They have the Jesus Film and portions of Scripture in their language.

<http://www.peoplegroups.org/MapSearch.aspx?country=Tajikistan>

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## **24515**

### ***Ossete (9,500)***

The Ossete are of the Caucasus people cluster. They are also Allagir, Iron, Tagaur, Western Ossete, and Western Ossetian. They are mostly found in Georgia and Russia, however are also found in the areas of the former Soviet Union. They speak Osetin, which is an Indo-European language of the Iranian group. They use a Cyrillic script. It is influenced by Turkic languages. They are involved in dairy farming, cattle breeding, and timber harvesting. The production of hydroelectric power and metal casting is important in their economy.

The Alans are their ancestors. They call themselves the Iristi. Their presence in the Caucasus is due to invaders like the Huns, Arabs and Georgians. Their intermarriage of

the tribes has led to divisions into three subgroups, the Irons, Tuallags and the Digors. The Iron and Digors are mainly in Russia and the Tuallag are in Georgia. They adopted Christianity in the 4<sup>th</sup> -5<sup>th</sup> centuries, with Russian orthodoxy influencing them in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Kabardian mediation in the 17<sup>th</sup> century led to the introduction of Islam. Some Ossetians remained Christians and enjoyed the Russian protection against the Kabards, while other converted to Islam. These Christians settled Vladdikavkaz in response to the protection and expansion of Russia in the Caucasus. Ossetes generally favored the Russians to their Muslim neighbors. Tensions were high during World War I and after the Bolshevik Revolution groups tried to meet in concilliary meetings to work out the future. The Civil War hit the area in the middle of 1918. Ossetians were among those that were arrested and executed by the Bolsheviks and Muslims. In 1924 North Ossentia was created as an autonomous region. It was occupied by Germans in World War II. The Ossetians did not cooperate with the Nazis, but the Muslim Digors were deported with other Muslims to Central Asia by Stalin (Stalin's mother was Ossentian). In 1957 some Digors returned to Ossentia, but many remained in various parts of Central Asia. The 1980's sparked a nationalist movement. After the collapse of the USSR, Ossetians fought the Ingush in their villages over the right to Vladikavkaz. Ethnic tension remains.

The New Testament, Christian radio broadcasting, the Jesus Film, and Gospel audio recordings are available in the Ossetin language. They are 35% Christian adherent, most of those being Orthodox Christians. Only about 1% of them are evangelical. Their primary religion is Islam.

[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_language.asp?code=oss](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=oss)

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## **24521**

### ***Parsee (74,200)***

The Parsee people, which literally means inhabitant, are of the Indo-Iranian affinity block. Alternate names for this group are Fasli, Kadini, Shahenshahi, Shahinshahi, Zardast, Zarrushti, and Zarushti. They are known to the Russians as Persy. They are found in Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, China, Bangladesh, Canada, India, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan, the United States and the United Kingdom. In 1785, Emir Shah Murad of Bukhara captured a large number of Persian speaking Iranians and forced them into Bukharan slavery. Their descendents mixed with other groups of merchants that originated in Iran, but settled in Central Asia for business reasons. Most of them were Shiites Muslims of the Ja'farite rite. They remained in the region comfortably, until 1910 when a series of mutual massacres between the Sunnis and Shiites occurred in Bukhara. There are three primary spoken languages among the Parsee; however, the one spoken among most of the Persian people in Tajikistan is Dari-Parsi or Western Farsi. Most in are bilingual.

This people group traces its origin to the Persian Kings of the Old Testament including King Darius, Cyrus, and Xerxes who aided in the rebuilding of the Temple. In the Old Testament, Cyrus is noted as the only Gentile whom called "anointed". The magi who came to worship at Jesus' birth are also believed to have been Parsee. Because of their ancient heritage, which is dated at before 3000 BC, they are very proud and cling to their

identity of royal heritage. The Parsee are known as the Zoroastrian Iranians who refused to adopt Islam during the Arab conquest.

Parsee communities are tightly knit closed groups that view themselves as superior to all other religious groups and races. Parsee women who marry outside their people group are no longer considered Parsee. One must be born Parsee and must participate in the blood covenant ritual to truly be Parsee. This ritual takes place just before children reach puberty. The child is bathed and then offered bull's urine, considered to be the blood of their god, by the temple priest and thus establishes a covenant allowing their soul to be one with god. Then the child is given a white shirt and a band of the covenant that is tied around the waste. These articles are never to be removed and are to born the rest of their lives as a reminder of the covenant. The Parsee people hold to a code of conduct which is summarized as, "good thought, good word, good deeds."

Their primary religions are Islam of the Shiite branch and Zoroastrianism. Zoroastrianism has fire as it's supreme deity of worship believing it to be the son of god. All religious rituals and rites of passage are performed with burning fire present, and it is often lit by sandalwood and oil. Fires burn continuously in homes, and the temple fire is forbidden to burn out. Fire worship may include one falling prostrate before the flames. They do hold to the belief in a Wise Creator god, wisdom is the most valued character trait by Zoroastrians. Guardian angles, who are treated more like a magical genii to disperse wishes, are also primary to religious beliefs, conscience is the most important of such angels. Resurrection and salvation are part of their religious terminology though they differ in meaning from Christian definitions. Ancestor worship is an emphasized aspect of worship. Pictures of deceased loved ones hang in homes and are prayed and bowed to. August marks a time dedicated to ancestor worship during which forgiveness is sought and the spirits are asked to join the people. Demons manifest themselves in the likeness of lost family members.

The Parsee people celebrate six seasonal festivals known as Gahambars. Each festival last five days and is a time of worship dedicated to Ahura Mazda. After worship, there are assemblies of feasting, fellowship, and acts of goodwill. Upon a baby's birth, mother and child are confined with a lamp to ward off demons. Children are often given three names, the first a personal name, the second is the father's name, and the third is the family name.

Parsees respect other faiths systems and gods. The Bible is treated honorably as a religious text and Christ is also seen in positive light and as a Messiah, though multiple idols may be worshiped. There are few if any know believer among the Parsee in Tajikistan. There are no known groups working among them.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

[http://www.urbana.org/\\_articles.cfm?RecordId=381](http://www.urbana.org/_articles.cfm?RecordId=381)

<http://www.feltd.com/parsee3.html>

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**24520**

### ***Parya, Laghmani (1,200)***

The Parya, or Laghmani, people are of the Tajik people cluster. They are found in the Hissar Valley in Tajikistan, in the Surkhandarya Valley in Uzbekistan, and some in

Afghanistan, in the Laghman province, which is northeast of Kabul. Their heart language is Parya which may either be a dialect of Marwari which is related to Punjabi, or the Laghman dialect of the Southeastern Pashayi of Afghanistan. Parya is the exclusive language spoken in Parya homes and Tajik or Uzbek men who marry Parya women must learn the language and become assimilated into the community. Many Parya are bilingual, with Tajiki being their second language.

The Parya are originally from Laghman in Afghanistan, however they spread to Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in 1880. They often refer to themselves as Changgars. The Parya are mostly farmers. Many work on collective farms and grow rice as their primary crop. They also grow some fruits and corn. The Parya are Sunni Muslims. There are few, if any known Christians among them. They have no resources available to them in Parya.

[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_language.asp?code=paq](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=paq)

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

**24522**

### ***Polish (800)***

The Polish are among the Western Slav people cluster. Until the late 18<sup>th</sup> century the Polish people lived in their independent state, but when Prussia, Russia and Austria-Hungary partitioned the Polish homeland for themselves. In Post-WWI, a new Poland was created and Poles moved into these new areas of Lithuania, Ukraine, and Belarus. After the 1939 repartitioning of Poland by Russia and Germany, nearly two million Poles ended up living in Soviet Union. There were many Poles deported by Stalin into Siberia and Central Asia and half a million of those deported died during transit. The rest of the Poles were subject to the cruelties of Nazi occupation.

In some places, young couples live with a set of parents during the first few years of marriage. Families normally have one or two children, but rural families have three to four. Though nuclear families are the norm, single parent households are on the rise. Traditionally, fathers are stern while mothers serve as mediators between him and the children. While both parents normally are employed, the children take on tasks such as cooking, cleaning, etc.

Religion is a major component of Polish life. They are primarily Roman Catholic and live in relational community based on their past and present as Catholics. Catholicism is important to their identity as Poles.

Before Poland became Christian under the reign of *Prince Mieczyslaw* during 962 to 992, Christians from Moravia had already come into the country. However, no organized church existed. When *Mieczyslaw* married the Catholic daughter of the Bohemian prince, he embraced Christianity. In order for the priesthood to be independent of Germany, *Boleslaw the Great* (992 to 1025), established protection and patronage to the priests. The pope promptly appointed Bishops. In 1006, the Benedictines migrated to Poland. Between 1025-34, a revolution occurred against the church and its ministers.

Nevertheless, *Casimir I* restored Christianity by building churches and convents. By 1079, the Church had grown in stature. They stood up to the corrupt king gaining esteem and influence in the political realm that continues today. The following years brought continued growth in political matters. Over the next one hundred years, debates raged between the state, the pope, and the church over power and rules.

During the 14<sup>th</sup> century, bishops were elected by the State. Much of this influence came from German missionaries moving eastward. Battles were conducted during the Reformation over the church and state influence. For instance, in 1518, Lutheranism

spread to Poland. In addition, Calvinism came in 1548. The debates included arguments over celibacy, Mass in the vernacular, and communion. However, in 1587, Catholicism was given official recognition while Protestants were restricted.

Jesuits came to Poland to open schools. The 1700s brought oppression on Protestants who were considered heretics. Over the years, the laws were loosened on toleration of Protestants. Because of World War II, Poland was transformed into a single religious state. Communism had little effect on the Catholic Church's efforts. After years of Catholic influence, the state-sponsored atheistic propaganda only served to bond most to the church's appealing message.

Today, the people are tied to the Church leadership through love and confidence. The Catholic Church continues to dominate political aspects of Poland. Without question, Poland is one of the most strongly dominated Roman Catholic countries in the world. The highlight of the Catholic Church in Poland was the election of Karol Cardinal Wojtyla who became Pope John Paul II in 1978. In Poland, Protestant beliefs are allowed, but evangelicals are discriminated against and considered sectarian by established denominations. The percentage of Christian adherents among the Polish in Tajikistan is unknown and they are only about 1% evangelical. They have the Bible, the Jesus film, Christian radio broadcasting, and Gospel audio recordings.

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## **24523**

### ***Pashtun, Southern, Afghani (24,700)***

The Pashtun is the largest people group in Afghanistan; however, many have fled to Tajikistan and Iran due to unrest. The Pashtun, also known as the Pathan, Pukhtun, Afghan, or Pushtun. While there are approximately 7.5 million Pashtun residing in Afghanistan, an even larger population of about 14 million Pashtuns resides in Pakistan. There are also groups of Pashtuns residing in Xinjiang, China and some other Persian Gulf states.

The primary language of the Pashtun is Pashto. Pashto belongs to the eastern subgroup of the Iranian branch. The language consists of approximately 20 dialects that are usually divided into two main groups. The northeastern dialect is known as "hard" and the southwestern is known as "soft". Like other Persian languages, Pashto is written in an adapted form of the Arabic alphabet. Pashto has a tradition of prose and poetry, some dating back as far as the seventeenth century. The language is still developing and since the 1940's has tended to pick up more and more of the eastern dialect group.

The Pashtun are a tribal people and consists of about sixty different tribes, and are usually divided between the Durrani and Ghilzay confederacies and among many tribes along the Pakistani border. The Durrani are mostly found in Afghanistan, in the cities of Herat and Kandahar, on into the Baluchistan region of Pakistan, in the city of Quetta and surrounding areas. The Ghilzai are mostly found north of Kandahar among the cities of Ghazni, Jalalabad, and into Pakistan's northwest region. These two groups share family ties, but tend to be antagonistic towards each other. The Durrani and Ghilzay groups are usually further divided into many subgroups or sub-tribes, most of which have the suffix "zai" or "khil" added to them.

Family is very important to the Pashtuns. The family in Pashtun culture is an extended family. Extended families often live together in the same house or in separate houses clustered together. Even in the larger cities, smaller villages are made up extended families. The core of the Pashtun social structure is the kalay, or village. The average kalay is a small socio-economic group that is usually formed from between 50 to 200 individuals. The kalay are related through established reciprocal relationships where they share tools, goods, services, and favors, as well as being related by blood. It usually consists of a few extended families that are directly related to a common ancestor. Pashtuns trace their descendants through the male line. Each tribal group claims a common male ancestor and is then divided into subtribes, clans, lineages, and families. This genealogy is important because it is what establishes inheritance and obligations, as well as social caste. Wealth is generally shared in a Pashtun family and for the appearance in society, poorer family members will be helped by wealthier members. The reputation of the entire family often depends on the reputation of individual family members. For this reason, an individual's behavior is a matter of interest for all family members. One family member can ruin or elevate the reputation of an entire family. The Pashtun family generally consists of a man, his wife, his sons and their spouses and children, and his unmarried daughters. When the father dies, the sons determine whether to stay together or divide the family assets. Authority among brothers is determined less by age and more by economic skill and personal social standing. When a father dies, all male heirs are to be considered equal in the inheritance. Brothers many times will choose either to own things jointly or to be compensated financially for their share. Wives and daughters do not receive an inheritance.

The families are patriarchal, and women are usually confined to work within the home. Women are responsible for the care of the home and for the disciplining of the children. The oldest male member of the family, usually the grandfather, is in charge of the finances. The grandmother usually is in charge of overseeing all of the housework assignments.

In the home, women have a good bit of authority. Pashtun women are usually strong and hard working. For the Pashtuns, the role of the woman is to take care of the household. Some women may have a small garden and a few chickens. They may also sew or weave and make rugs and felt. Nomad women have more freedom and usually make tents. Outside of the home, women have little place. Women must remain veiled and must not be alone in public. They are kept separate from men and play little part in society. Women can take no part in public decision-making.

According to Islamic law, divorce for a man is very easy. To divorce his wife, a man must simply say "I divorce you" three times in front of witnesses. A woman, on the other hand, must appear before a judge and present reasons for requesting a divorce. Although divorce is allowed, it is very rare. If a woman remarries after divorce, the man loses the bride price as well as his honor.

According to Islam, polygamy is allowed, however, monogamy is prevalent in Afghanistan. A man may take up to four wives, but he must care and provide for each of them equally. In some cases, the women live together in the same house, and in others, a separate house is built for each wife and her children.

Children are valued in Pashtun culture. The birth of the first child calls for a full day of celebration. A name is given to the child on the third day by the father's brother. If the

father dies, the uncle is responsible for caring for the child. Six nights after the baby is born, friends and relatives visit and bring gifts. Girls are not mistreated, but the needs of the boys are always put first. Children stay with the woman and are nursed until the next child is born or until the child is too old for nursing. They may be breast fed for more than two years, but weaning may sometimes be very sudden. When children are born, they are bound tightly to a wooden cradle with a drain for urine, or they may be carried by the mother in a shawl. The children are cared for by a large group of female relatives and surrounded by a lot of affection, but they are not picked up or comforted when they cry or are hurt. Childhood is short, and children are quickly taught to take care of themselves and work. Physical punishment is often used, but younger children get away with more than the older children do. As the children grow older, they move freely from the women's part of the house to the public areas, where they learn the ways of living in a group setting.

Children are taught to respect and obey the elderly. They are also taught the values of independence, individual initiative, and self-confidence. Boys are taught the duties of hospitality and caring for guests as well as caring for livestock or keeping a shop. Girls begin learning to help their mothers as soon as they can stand. Both young girls and boys are taught the values of honor and shame and when to show pride as well as when to show honor. Boys are circumcised at the age of seven in a ceremony that usually involves a feast and activities like wrestling. After a boy's circumcision, he begins to wear a turban. It is at this point that they are seen by the society as men. There is no rite of passage for girls, but by age 9 or 10, girls know the skills necessary to be a wife and mother. Some of these duties include grinding wheat and corn, cooking, fetching water, cleaning and sewing.

Marriages are almost never for love, rather they are arranged by the families. Many times a girl will be promised to a boy at a very young age. Marriage is considered an obligation. The average age for marriage of boys is 18-20, and for girls, the average age is 16-18. An ideal marriage is between paternal cousins. Marriages will take place between the groom and a daughter of one of his father's brothers. However, some families try to gain socially by marrying outside of the family. It is not uncommon for a woman of a lower social class to marry a man of a higher social class.

The process of a marriage is much different from the Western culture. First, women meet discretely to discuss the union. The Pashtun are a proud people and want to avoid the risk of a public refusal. After this meeting, the two families meet and discuss the financial aspects of the marriage. The trousseau, dowry, and the bride price is decided in this step. After this is complete, the official engagement begins. During this time, female relatives of the groom bring gifts to the home of the bride. The bride is given sweets to eat before the wedding. The wedding is a three-day event that involves much feasting and dancing. This party is paid for by the family of the groom, and during this time, the marriage contract is signed, there is reading from the Quran by the local Mullah, and there is the tossing of sugared almonds and walnuts onto the bridegroom. The bride is escorted to her new home with an elegant procession. For many Afghani women, this is the one time they are treated with such honor. The lavishness of a Pashtun wedding is seen as an indicator of status and wealth.

Tribal custom is the most important aspect of Pashtun political organization. Second to these customs is Islamic law. There are two major principles of social organization

among the Pashtun, honor and taxes. In areas where honor is most important, there is no central political authority. In areas where taxes are most important, land ownership gives status and the political authority is centralized by the upper class. In the past, the role of the government was to collect taxes, so there was little cooperation among the people. Pashtuns in both Pakistan and parts of Afghanistan wanted to form a new country called "Pashtunistan". Major decisions are made by jirgas. Jirgas are made up of tribal, ethnic, and religious leader. Another function of the jirgas is to settle disputes. It is said that most disputes among Pashtuns are over zar, zam, and zamin, which means gold, women, and land.

Every Pashtun lives by a set of standards called the Pashtunwali, or "the way of the Pashtun". These are unwritten laws or codes belonging to the Pashtuns, but followed by almost all Afghans. Pashtunwali is centralized even more than Islam. Several things make up this code, most revolving around honor and self-pride.

One of the most important codes is known as Melmatia, which is being a good and generous host. The Pashtuns are generous hosts and as a guest of a Pashtun, your protection is guaranteed. The only way harm will come to the guest of a Pashtun is over the dead body of the host. The Pashtun extend their lives and an old Afghan proverb says, "The first day you meet you are friends. The next day you meet you are brothers."

Mosques are generally open as shelter for travelers. In addition, many families will have a guest home set aside. To host a guest is an honor and shows status. Many compete for the reputation of being the most hospitable. Hosts will try to outdo their neighbors and many times, hospitality will include lavish entertainment, which is beyond the means of the host. This generous hosting, however, puts the person being hosted in a debt to the host. It creates a relationship of dependence. Gracious hospitality must be offered to anyone who sets foot on a Pashtun's property, it can even be imposed upon those who do not ask for it. There is one account of a woman seeing a visitor on her property and running two miles from her house with a glass of lemonade. This was so that no one could say that she had given her guest nothing when she was on her land.

Tied in with Melmatia is Nanawati. This providing shelter or refuge for anyone who asks for it. Anyone who begs for mercy in battle is to be spared. All wrongs, except murder, must be forgiven when forgiveness is asked for by a woman, a Sayyed, or a Mullah. Also, anyone who takes refuge in a mosque or shrine must have his life spared. Those seeking refuge cannot simply settle, however. They must become dependents of a Khan, or landlord, who they then owe unconditional loyalty and protection.

Badal, which is also very important to the Pashtuns means revenge, or avenging blood with blood. As mentioned earlier, the major causes of feuds are women, gold, and land. In Pashtun society, people do not forget the past. Wrongs done are usually bottled up until an opportune time to seek revenge. If a Pashtun kills another man who has killed a relative, this is not a crime, but an honorable act. Failure to take revenge is seen as weak or dishonorable. Under Pashtunwali, a Pashtun is free to settle losses by a direct reciprocal revenge.

Ghayrat, another aspect of Pashtunwali, is upholding personal and family honor. This is held so high, that often business deals can be closed with nothing more than a nod of the head. The Pashtuns are very proud and even take sports seriously as a matter of honor. Dishonoring a Pashtun is as good as killing him. Shameful crimes such as adultery are to be punished by death for the sake of family honor.

Tureh, or bravery, is another important part of Pashtunwali. Other codes held to are Namus, which is defending a woman's honor and Sabat, or loyalty. Pashtun are to never kill those considered weak or helpless such as a woman, a minstrel, a Hindu, or an uncircumcised boy.

For a woman, the code is a little different. The main way a woman gains status among other women is through the emotions of sadness, suffering, and grief. It is suggested that just as a gun and turban represent manhood, tears and the endurance of hardship represent womanhood. While emotion in the Western world is seen as uncontrolled, irrational, and weak, emotions among Pashtun women is valued as learned, controlled, and cultural. The main ingredient for stories among Pashtun women is Gham, which is sadness and sorrow. Women often compete in telling of their hardships. A woman will begin her story with a statement similar to, "I'll make you cry more than anyone else can." Young, unmarried women are not expected to take part in the telling of these stories. Until a woman is married, she is considered ignorant and not a mature woman.

According to Pashtunwali a Xadi, a festivity or joy cannot happen during the same year as a major family Gham. A marriage, for example, cannot take place during a national state of mourning or after the death of a close relative.

Pashtuns are very expressive and use many gestures and facial expressions when communicating. They are very affectionate towards the same sex, but are forbidden to touch the opposite sex if they are not closely related. When greeting one another, Pashtuns shake hands with both hands, hug, and kiss each other on the cheek. Another way of greeting is with a handshake, while placing the right hand over the heart. People are often seen walking together arm in arm. When someone enters a room, people stand and greet the person extensively. Even when they sit down, the greetings continue. Factual questions and business are never brought up until much later in the conversation. To do so would be seen as rude. Also, as a sign of affection, Pashtuns may complain about not having heard from or seen their guest in a long time. These complaints, although they seem angry, are meant to show care for a person.

Pashtun love to tell stories. Men and women both usually have a repertoire that they know by heart and love to tell. The Pashtun use stories to teach children about moral issues. One such story is about foolish people who get what they deserve. Other favorite stories are about Mullahs that make fun and are used for humor. The stories make the Mullah look very foolish, but turn out to show them as very wise in the end. Adults love stories of love and heroism. They also love to transmit their history through stories. Real life heroes are told about in stories both for entertainment and for gain social status and respect. For a woman, the more hardship she speaks of, the more she is respected.

Women tell their stories to other women, but never in an audience of men.

Poetry also holds a big place among the Pashtuns. The Pashtun are a romantic people. Most Pashtuns, both literate and illiterate, consider themselves poets. Poetry is usually spoken and not written, and therefore gives the illiterate an equal opportunity of expression. Pashtun poetry flourished from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

To be a Pashtun is to be a Muslim, usually a Sunni Muslim. With only a few exceptions, Pashtuns tend to be Sunni Muslim of the Hanafi legal school. Pashtuns are 99% Sunni Muslim. Religion is very important to Pashtun daily life. People in a Pashtun village may convert to Islam, but this is rare since all children are declared Muslims at an early age. Anyone who seeks to leave the faith will face persecution from the family and tribe. To

save the reputation of the family, they cut off the non-Muslim from the family and in some cases may even kill him.

Among Sunni Muslims, there is no formal clergy, however, a Mullah takes the role of a religious leader. The village Mullah usually receives some religious education, which allows him to teach children and lead Friday prayers. A Mullah is responsible for taking care of the mosque and leading the call to prayer five times a day. They also officiate the rites of passage that make the stages of life-birth, circumcision, marriage, and death. Another important religious leader is the Sayyed. The Sayyed is believed to be a saint descended from Mohammed. Since he is not an ancestor of the Pashtun, the Sayyed is not part of the tribal structure and is not bound by the Pashtun code of honor. For this reason, he is often called upon to settle between conflicting groups.

During the Soviet war, a third type of religious leader emerged in Pashtun area. This group, called the Taliban, was made up of young, Islamic militant leaders. They challenged the authority of the traditional leaders and took on a more political approach to Islam. The Taliban held to a strict interpretation of the Quran and made strict laws for everything. Regulations were set for things as little as the length of a beard, the length of a man's hair, and the length of a woman's burkha. Punishments for breaking any laws were harsh and beatings, amputations, and public executions were commonly used. Most Pashtun villages have a mosque where the people meet to pray every Friday at noon. The mosque is also used to house travelers. Sometimes shrines are built to honor religious leaders and the people of the village come to visit them. The Pashtuns believe that several supernatural forces exist and live among them. It is believed that Jinns are born from fire. Jinns can enter and possess an individual and cause them to do evil. The Pashtun also believe in ghosts of disturbed spirits, witches, and fairies.

While there are no churches among the Pashtun, there are some believers. The Pashtun in Tajikistan are about 1% evangelical. They have Christian audio recordings available in their language, however still need the Bible, radio broadcasts, the God's story video, and the Jesus Film translated into their language. There are currently several groups working among the Pashtun.

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**24524**

### ***Romanian (580)***

The Romanian people are found throughout the world, with a small group of them found in Tajikistan. They are also called Istrio-Romanian and Oltenia. Their primary language is Romanian. In 1944 the Soviets invaded Romania and it remained Communist, depended on the USSR for economic and political support. Anti-Soviets were removed from Romania. Russia and Romania struggled back and forth for power over the country and people. Violence marked the end of the Ceausescu regime and economic stability was not fully restored. Political ties with Europe were developed in the 1990's. The new millennia included positive political development towards democracy for Romania.

They are primarily Orthodox Christians. They have the Bible, the Jesus film, Christian radio broadcasting, God's Story Video, and Gospel audio recordings in Romanian.

<http://www.romania.org/romania/history3.html>

<http://www.answers.com/topic/romania>

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

**983**

### ***Russian (237,000)***

The Russian people are also called Russ, Olossu, and Eluosi. They are the descendants of eastern Slavic origins. Russians include those who have intermarried with the following groups but consider themselves Russian: Menshcheryaks, Polekh, Goryuns, Starozhily (old inhabitants), Bukhtarmans, Polyaks, Semeikis, Kerzhaks, Urals, Kamchadals, Zatundren, Sayans, Karyms, Kolymchans, Yakutyans, Markovs, Russkoustins, Pomors. Their primary language is Russian.

The Russian state was formed in 1521 but the Rus' of Kiev are well known for their leaders Prince Vladimir who converted to Byzantine Orthodox Christianity in 988. The Kievan Rus were isolated from the Catholic West because of this decision, and the Mongol invasion of the 13<sup>th</sup> century held Russia in a developmental lurch for two centuries. The Mongol control forced many Rus' into the West, creating Byelorussians and Ukrainians emerged as well. Moscow replaced Kiev as the most powerful Russian city as Ivan I became Prince of Muscovy and the collector of tribute to the Mongols. Muscovy gained strength and the people of Russia expanded as the Mongol rule faded. In 1453 Moscow was declared the Third Rome by the Russian Orthodox leaders. In 1480, tribute payment ceased and by 1500 much of the ethnic Russian territory was under Muscovy control. Ivan the IV annexed the Volga river basing and Central Asian lands and Cossacks settled into these areas, as well as the frontiers of Siberia. More expansion led to wars with Poland, and conflicts with China. Peter the Great led Russians into Western empowerment, but through oppressive means. He took control of the northern Baltic area after defeating the Swedish King Charles XII. Under Peter the Great, the Russian Orthodox Church became controlled by the government. Russia expanded into Crimea and the Black Sea with Catherine II at the head of the Empire. Russian relations with the Ottoman Empire had weakened Turkey until they were not a threat any longer. Expansion into the Caucasus and into Alaska came in early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Russia became larger than its original ethnic Russia. Russification programs ensued under the leadership of Nicholas I and Alexander II. Central Asia was taken in the 1860's, and Far Eastern relations forced the sale of Alaska to the United States to pay for work in the Far East. World War I and the defeats Russia suffered created ground for the Bolshevik revolution and the end of the Romanov's 300-year dynasty. Civil infighting led the Russians to chose between the new Red Army and old leadership calling themselves White Army. This ended in 1920 with foreign intervention. Lenin's death in 1924 left the Union of Soviet Socialists Republic in the hands of Joseph Stalin.

Stalin and the Russian people dominated the government and anyone thought to be opposed to Stalin and his policies were executed. The failed alliance with Germany in World War II, forced Stalin into the court of the allies. The Russian losses of 20 million in this war, along with the suppression of the people suspected of working with the Nazis, were a great loss to the Russian people. The state emerged from the war as a superpower. The lands that Russia held prior to WWI were regained in the aftermath of the second war. The peoples of these nations were forced into collectives and many were deported

to slave or work camps in Siberia and Central Asia. The USSR used this slave labor for its heavy industries as it attempted to build huge military stores. Stalin's death ended some oppression of the peoples of the USSR. The Russian people and the Soviet Man became the ideal to which all peoples were to adhere. Soviet Russification led to many new generations of people that call themselves Russian who are of other ethnic descent. Russians felt that the Soviet shadow obscured what it meant to be Russian. Nationalism surfaced during the Gorbachev era with three separate movements that reacted to the West and to Soviet policies. The Russian people have suffered much repression and loss of birth rates due to the environmental pollution by the industrial, petroleum, and nuclear waste created in the Soviet era. Many of the Russians in Tajikistan reside near the border of Afghanistan. They have remained in the country and are a part of protecting the border from drugs and terrorists.

The Russian people in Tajikistan are 31.30% adherent to Russian Orthodoxy and about 1% of those are Evangelical. They have the Bible, Gospel audio recordings, Christian radio broadcasting, the God's Story Video, and the Jesus film in Russian.

<http://www.nationmaster.com/country/rs>

<http://www.ahart4russia.com/Ekaterinburg.htm>

<http://www.eglobalaccess.com/carrie/uzbek/culture.htm>

<http://www.peopleteams.org/stavteam/default.htm>

<http://www.hope4ufa.com/>

[http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Rusland/etnisk\\_b.exe?Russian](http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Rusland/etnisk_b.exe?Russian)

<http://www.pcg.org.uk/Uzbekistan%20-%202001.pdf>

<http://www.russianservice.com/regions.asp?Main=Uzbekistan>

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

[http://www.stopvaw.org/printview/Ethnic\\_minorities4.html](http://www.stopvaw.org/printview/Ethnic_minorities4.html)

Olson, James. *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of the Russian and Soviet Empires*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994.

## **24526**

### ***Sanglechi, Eshkashimi (600)***

The Sanglechi people are of the Tajik people cluster. They are also known as the Eshkashimi, Ishkashimi, or the Sanglechi. They are found in Tajikistan and Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, they mostly live in the Badakshan Province of northern Afghanistan in the Sanglech Valley. Most live in Ishkashim, however, some were forced to resettle in Tajik and Wakh villages. They speak Sanglechi-Ishkashimi, and most are bilingual in Tajik. While the language was used more widespread, now it is mostly used in about 19 villages. It is not a written language.

Most of the Sanglechi people practice Shia Islam. There are few, if any known believers among them. The only resource available to them in their language is Christian audio recordings. There are no known groups working among them.

[http://www.explore-language.com/languages/P/Pamir\\_languages.html](http://www.explore-language.com/languages/P/Pamir_languages.html)

[http://stp.ling.uu.se/~kamalk/indo\\_iran%20lang.html](http://stp.ling.uu.se/~kamalk/indo_iran%20lang.html) <http://realafghan.com/history/language.htm>

[www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net)

[http://ismaili.net/mirrors/pamir\\_001/ishkashmis.shtml](http://ismaili.net/mirrors/pamir_001/ishkashmis.shtml)

## **24516**

### ***Shughni, Pamiri (82,800)***

The Shughni are of the Tajik people cluster. They are found on both sides of the Tajikistan and Afghanistan border, mostly in the Pamir Mountains 30 miles north of Ishkashim. In Tajikistan, they are found around Khorugh. They are also known as Kushani, Shugnan-Rush, or the Shugnan Rushan. They are part of a larger group in the area known as the Pamirian Tajik. Their primary language is Shughni, which is part of the northern group of the Pamir languages of the Iranian group of the Indo-European family of languages. Many, however, are bilingual.

The Shughnis were mentioned in Chinese chronicles from the sixth and seventh centuries. According to these, they always kept the trade route through Shughnan under their control. Stories of them speak of the Shughnis being savage and warlike people who used to raid caravans. In some places, these legends are still passed on. It is believed that they stem from the Saka ethnic group who were first in the Pamirian region around the first millennium BC.

The Shughni carry on a traditional way of life. Some are nomadic. Many are shepherds, however some make a living by the crafts of woodworking, weaving, pottery, blacksmithing, and basket making. Much of their life centers on agriculture. Grains and Legumes are the main crops and cattle, sheep, and goats make up their livestock. They live in villages and support one another during difficult times. Houses are often built on hill slopes, near water. Women often are responsible for the home, as well as some farming. Males are responsible for herding.

The Shughni often settle in groups made up of extended families that share a common male ancestry. When entering a house, a person is expected to greet the shastan, the main column in the house, in order to show respect to the spirits of the family's ancestors. Marriages are often arranged and it is common to marry one's first or second cousin. The average age that a girl marries has gone from age 15 to age 18.

The Shughni are Shia Muslims. They converted to Ismaili Islam in the eleventh century. They follow the Aga Khan and are also known as the "seveners." They have no mosques or official clerics and their doctrines is secretive and only understood by a few. There are no known Christians or churches among them. There are no known agencies targeting this group. There are Christian audio recordings available in their language, however there are no Bibles, Jesus Films, or radio broadcasts available to them.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

[http://ismaili.net/mirrors/pamir\\_001/shughnis.shtml](http://ismaili.net/mirrors/pamir_001/shughnis.shtml)

[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=Afghanistan](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=Afghanistan)

<http://www.eki.ee/books/redbook/shughnis.shtml>

[http://www.explore-language.com/languages/P/Pamir\\_languages.html](http://www.explore-language.com/languages/P/Pamir_languages.html)

## **24529**

### ***Tajik (4,200,000)***

The Tajiks are of the Indo- Iranian affinity block. They are found throughout Eastern Europe and Central Asia, however, the largest populations of them are found in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan. They are believed to be the original Persian population of Afghanistan and Turkmenistan. In Tajikistan, they are mostly found in the western three-fourths of the country. The Tajiks are also known as the Afghani Tajik, the Persian Tajik, Tadzhik, and Tadzhiki. Their primary language is Tajiki, however, most speak Dari. The literacy rate among the Tajik men is about 10% and even lower among the women.

The Tajiks are known as proud, hardworking, gracious, and hospitable. They have a rich tradition and have passed down a heritage of folklore, folksongs, and folk dances through each generation. Buzkashi, or "goat pulling," is their national sport. In Buzkashi, men of horses pick up and drag a goat carcass to a certain place on a field, sometimes miles away. The Tajik place a lot of emphasis on etiquette. The young must greet the elders. When friends and relatives meet, they shake hands and pat each other's beards. Men will often bow with their right hand over their check, and women, with both arms across her chest. They never remove their hats while talking to another, unless a very serious

situation is being discussed. They often go out of their way to greet and help strangers, however in recent times, some have become a little more cautious.

The Tajiks that live in the more rural areas work as migrant farmers and herdsmen. They farm wheat, barley, and grain. Some live a semi-nomadic life. These Tajiks will often plant their crops in the spring, take their herds to highland grazing grounds during the summer, then return to harvest their crops in the fall. When working in the fields, men wear turbans over colorful caps. Rural women tend to wear veils. The Tajiks living in more urban areas often work as skilled artists or traders. Women in the urban areas wear shawls. Many Tajik houses are square, with flat roofs. Many have moved to the cities and will work on farms during the summer, then return to the cities for the rest of the year. This has caused job instability and tension has developed between the Uzbeks and Tajiks, as they often compete for jobs.

It is common among Tajiks for three generations to live in one house. In many homes, senior family members, guests, and juniors sleep on different sides of the same room. In Tajik society, women do not receive an inheritance and they are under the authority of their father, or if married their husband and father-in-law. Traditionally marriages were arranged and one could not intermarry. Today, it is not uncommon for Tajiks to intermarry with Uzbeks and Pashtuns, so they're features are not always easy to recognize. Tajiks have seen centuries of war and tribal conflicts.

The Tajiks are 99% Sunni Muslims of the Hanafite sect. They are very devout and are known to be strong in their faith and adhere closely to its beliefs. Islam is seen in every part of their lives. There are a few Ismaili Shias that live in the more remote areas.

Although devout Muslims, some spiritism and folk Islam is seen among the Tajiks. There are few Christians among the Tajiks. Only 0.02% of the Tajiks in Tajikistan claim to be evangelical. They have portions of Scripture, the Jesus Film, the God's Story Video, and Radio Broadcasts available in their language.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

<http://www.china.org.cn/e-groups/shaoshu/shao-2-tajik.htm> <http://www.chsource.org/Tajik.htm>

<http://www.imb.org/centralasia/pray.htm>

<http://www.russianservice.com/regions.asp?Main=Uzbekistan> <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/ins/uzbeki95.pdf>

[www.gl.iit.edu/govdocs/afghanistan/People in Afgh.](http://www.gl.iit.edu/govdocs/afghanistan/People%20in%20Afgh)

## **24531**

### ***Tatar (87,000)***

The Tatar people are of the Ural Siberian people cluster and the Turkic affinity block. They are found in all of the former Soviet Union and in places in Turkey and China. Their main population is found around the Volga region of Russia. They are also known as the Dada, Dadan, Kazan Tatar, Tatar, Tata'er, Tura, and Turkish Tatar. They speak Tatar, which belongs to the Turkic language family of the Altaic language system. About thirty percent of the Tatar speak Russian.

The Tatar people survived Mongolian invasion in the thirteenth century as well as the Russian conquest in the sixteenth century. By the nineteenth century, their cities were among the great cultural centers in the Islamic world. It was in the nineteenth century that the Tatar dispersed to Central Asian countries. The Tatar are very diverse. Some have blue eyes and blond hair, while others have Mongoloid features. They often have little facial hair.

Most of the Tatar people have lost their tribal structure. They've become settled and are mostly peasants and merchants. In Russia, some work in manufacturing industries and petroleum refineries. Others work on community farms. In more urban areas of Russia,

they live like the other Russians. Many have small families and couples live apart from their families after they marry. Those living in more rural areas are more traditional. They live in homes with three generations living under the same roof.

The father is the head of the household for the Tatar people. He is responsible for the family income and strenuous labor. Women are usually responsible for household duties like cooking, cleaning, and carrying water. Sometimes they also take care of livestock. Marriages are monogamous and intermarriage between the Tatar and other ethnic groups is acceptable. Marriages between cousins do happen, but they are uncommon. During the wedding ceremony, the newlyweds drink sugar water from the same cup as a symbol of a sweet life together. Sometimes the groom moves in with the wife's family, and does not return to his own family until the first child is born. Several ceremonies are held for children. Three days after a baby is born, the baby receives a religious blessing. Seven weeks later, the child's cradle rites are performed. In many places, forty days after the child's birth, the child is bathed in water that is taken from 40 different places. This is a ceremony intended to bring good health to the child. The child is usually given an Islamic name, with the surname of the father or grandfather.

The culture of the Tatars is rich. They play music on instruments such as the Kuni, which is a wooden flute, the Kebisi, a type of harmonica, and a two-stringed violin. Men dance in a way that involves a lot of squatting, kicking, and leaping. A game that is common among them is called the "jumping walk" contest. In this game, people race holding an egg on a spoon in their mouths.

The Tatar are mostly Sunni Muslims of the Hanafite branch, however, most are not devout. Folk Islamic practices are common, such as the belief in supernatural powers like the "evil eye." Many, in other areas of the world, eat pork, which is forbidden in Islam and many do not take part in Islamic fasts. In some places, however, they celebrate festivals, such as the Saban Festival, or the "rites of spring," which have their origins in shamanism. Many are suspicious of Christianity due to the Russian Orthodox Church's attempt to convert them through coercion. In Tajikistan, the Tatar are about 1.50% Christian adherent, with few, if any, known evangelicals. They have portions of Scripture, the Jesus Film, the God's Story Video, and Radio Broadcasts available in their language.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

<http://realafghan.com/history/language.htm>

<http://www.china.org.cn/e-groups/shaoshu/shao-2-Tatar.htm> <http://www.chsource.org/Tatar.htm>

**24532**

### ***Turk (900)***

The Turk people are of the Turkish people cluster. They are found in over 45 countries of the world. They are also called Anatolian, Baharlu Turk, Meskhetian Turk, Ottoman Turk, Rumelian Turk, and Urum.

They are originally from Meskheti, which lies along the borders of Georgia and Turkey. During the Ottoman Empire, Turkish settler moved into Meskheti, which resulted in a mix of the Turk and Meskheti populations. The Russians call them the Meskhetian Turki, which means "Turks from Turkey." In 1944, Stalin forced them from their homeland in Georgia to the southeastern part of Uzbekistan. He considered them a problem because they had strong ties to Turkey and seemed to be resistant to Soviet assimilation. Stalin may have seen them as a threat, although they showed no signs of disloyalty. Contrary to this possible belief, more than 20,000 Meskhetian Turks died fighting Nazi forces in the

Red Army. Another 20,000 or so fought with the Red Army against enemy forces. About 15,000 of them died of starvation or cold in their deportation to Central Asia.

In 1989, there was an outbreak of ethnic violence in the Ferghana Valley and many Meskhetian Turks were forced to be uprooted again. They scattered across Central Asia, Russia, Turkey, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and Azerbaijan. Many feel they were unjustly removed from their homeland. Many want to return to Georgia, however, their government won't allow them to return unless they take on Georgian names and consider themselves Georgians.

Traditionally they were farmers who used sophisticated agricultural techniques. They used wood and ceramic conduits for crop irrigation. They grew fruits and vegetables. They also raised cattle. They lost many of their agricultural practices in their move to Central Asia.

Family is important to the Meskhetian Turks. They have maintained their marriage traditions. The marriages are arranged and the girl's father receives a bride price. After the matchmaking is conducted, the families celebrate with a banquet. Weddings always take place on a Friday. The day before the wedding, a mullah confirms the wedding in the presence of two witnesses. The wedding is celebrated with colorful costumes and decorations. After the celebration, the newly married couple lives in a new home which is made especially for the new family.

The Meskhetian Turks are considered to be all Sunni Muslims of the Hanafite school. They are considered to be devout Muslims, however they also hold to some folk practices. One of these practices is lighting a fire over a grave and praying for the dead. They also celebrate rituals and festivals that are centered around agriculture. They also hold to some of their beliefs in magic and sorcery. Some still try to bring rain with magic. Another practice is the use of "moon water," which is water that is left outside under a clear sky for the night, for healing. The number of Christian adherents is unknown and about 1% of them are evangelical. They have the Bible, the Jesus Film, God's Story Video, Christian audio recordings, and Christian radio broadcasts in their language.

Olson, James. *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of the Russian and Soviet Empires*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

<http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=47557&SelectRegion=Asia&SelectCountry=KYRGYZSTAN>

<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/ins/uzbeki95.pdf>

## **24533**

### ***Turkmen, Turkoman (24,800)***

The Turkomani people are of the Turkmen people cluster. They are found in Turkmenistan, Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey, India, Uzbekistan, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Ukraine, Tajikistan, and Syria. In Tajikistan, they mostly live in the southwestern part of the country. They are also known as the Anauli, Azerbaijani, Chaghatai, Esari, Goklen, Jagarta, Trukhmeny, Turkoman, and Yomud. They speak Turkmen which belongs to the Oguz group of Turkic languages. This language borrows many words Arabic and Persian, as well as Russian. After converting to Islam, they used an Arabic script, then a Latin alphabet was used from 1920-1940. Since 1940, however, it has used a Cyrillic script. Each tribe among the Turkmen speaks its own dialect of the language.

They are very similar to the Anatolian Turks, however, are different in that they have retained strong tribal and clan divisions. The Turkomani are a tribal group and divide themselves into tribal confederations by territory. They used to be called, "children of the desert" because they used to rob caravans of Persian traders. At one point, they were also

involved in slave trading. They used to be nomadic herdsmen, however, now they are more semi-nomadic. They raise cattle and sheep and farm cotton, wheat, and barley. There tends to be a division among the, between the sedentary farmers and the nomadic herdsmen. The farmers tend to live in oases, river valleys, and mountain slopes, while the herdsmen roam the plains for pastures for their herds. Due to lack of rainfall, the Turkomani are forced to live near water sources. No strong political leaders or tribal chiefs have emerged from the Turomani.

The Turkmani are known as being strong, hospitable, sincere, and trustworthy, as well as hot-headed and vengeful. They are known to be tall and thin. Men generally wear baggy pants, coarse shirts, and wool hats. Women wear jewelry and cover their heads. The society is male dominated and the older males in the family have the most authority. Sons must be obedient and respectful of elders, especially their fathers. Women are under the authority of men in their society. Family is very important to the Turkomani. Marriages are often arranged and families tend to intermarry in order to preserve wealth. They tend to marry within their tribe.

Like the Tajik, they Turkmani enjoy playing Buzkashi, which is a game like polo where teams on horseback try to put a headless carcass in the goal. They are well known for their carpets and rugs, which are woven by both men and women.

The Turkomani are Sunni Muslims of the Hanafi branch, however, mysticism and other religious traditions are still practiced. There are few, if any, known believers or churches among these people. There are currently portions of the Bible, Jesus Films, Christian audio recordings, and radio broadcasts available in their language

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

<http://www.farsinet.com/pwo/people.html>

<http://www.ksafe.com/profiles/clusters/8039.html>

<http://www.ksafe.com/profiles>

Olson, James. *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of the Russian and Soviet Empires*. Westport , CT: Greenwood Press, 1994.

**24534**

### ***Udmurt (700)***

The Udmurt are of the Finno-Ugric people cluster. They are mostly found in Russia, however, large groups of them can also be found in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Belarus, and the Ukraine. A small group of them are found in Tajikistan. They are from the Udmurt Autonomous Republic in Russia. They are also known as the Kalmez and Votyak people. They used to be called the Votyaks, Ary, Ariane, and Otiaki. They speak Udmurt which is a part of the Permian group of the Finnic branch of the Uralic- Altaic language family. They are closely related to the Komi people.

This people group is believed to have appeared as an ethnic group in the sixth century. In the eighth century, they fell under the rule of the Khazar Empire and survived with slash and burn agriculture, hunting, and fishing. By the ninth century, Volga Bulgarians gained control of the people and remained in power until the twelfth century when the Mongol Tartars took over. During the middle of the sixteenth century, the Russian Empire took control of their area. In 1552, they voluntarily accepted Russian annexation.

They are primarily Orthodox Christians and many practice Shamanism. Traditionally, they were animists whose lives revolved around the shaman. In the sixteenth century, Russian Orthodox missionaries began the long process of trying to convert them. Their effort became even more intense in the 1800's. During this time, the missionaries developed a literary language for them. Many only accepted Russian Orthodoxy superficially. The number of Christian adherents among them is unknown. They have

portions of the Bible, the Jesus Film, and Christian radio broadcasts available to them in their language.

Olson, James. *An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of the Russian and Soviet Empires*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994.  
<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

## **24535**

### ***Uighur (600)***

The Uighur people, which literally means “allied,” are of the Uighur people cluster and the Turkic affinity block. They mostly live in northwestern China, however significant populations of them can be found in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan, with a smaller population in Afghanistan.

They are also known as the Huihe, Kashgar, Kashgar Turki, Kashgar-Yarkand, Taranchi, Uighuir, Uiguir, Uigur, Weiwuer, and Yuanhe. They originated from the Turkish nomads who resided in Siberia. In 840AD, they were forced to leave their homeland and many fled to western China. They said to be the ancestors of the Huihui of China. During the seventh century Arabs and Persians immigrated to China for trade. Those who became permanent residents built mosques and intermarried with the Han. Their offspring was identified with other Muslim immigrants during the thirteenth and fourteenth century. They lived along the silk road which allowed them to become the middle men between the Orient and Europe. Uyghur, an Altaic Turkic language, is their heart language.

In some places, the Uighur are shepherds and farmers and in other places they are involved in manufacturing, mining, trading, and transportation. Most consume meat and milk daily. Tea is a common drink among them. Noodles and bread are staple foods.

Guests are often honored with a meal of Paulo, which is sweet rice mixed with mutton, sheep fat, carrots, raisins, and onions.

The Uighurs have maintained their culture and simplicity though living an isolated life, however they have also been able to have contact with many cultures. They have been described as both simple and sophisticated. The Uighurs are known as proud, happy and independent. More traditional men wear a qiapan, which is a long gown with a distinctive, slanted collar. Women wear broad sleeved dresses with black waist coats. Many, however, are starting to dress more western. Most Uighurs wear a small cap that has four pointed corners. Long hair, for women, is regarded as a sign of beauty. In the past, girls combed their hair a dozen pigtailed. When women marry, they often wear their hair in two pigtailed.

The Uighurs are Sunni Muslims. While they used to be Muslim in name only, the Uighurs are becoming more devout in some areas. While the Bible has not been translated into their language, the New Testament and Scripture portions have. The Jesus Film, God’s Story Video, Christian radio broadcasts, and Christian audio recordings are also available in their language. There are few, if any, known Christians among them.

[http://www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet/kidsworld/pakistan/pakpeop.htm](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet/kidsworld/world/pakistan/pakpeop.htm)

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_language.asp?code=uig](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=uig)

<http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/profiles/china/chinaPeoples/U/Uyгур.pdf>

<http://www.china.org.cn/e-groups/shaoshu/shao-2-uygur.htm>

<http://www.paulnoll.com/China/Minorities/min-Uyгур.html>

## **24536**

### ***Ukrainian (18,500)***

The Ukrainian people are of the Eastern Slav people cluster. They are found in almost 40 countries of the world, however, the largest groups of them are found in Russia and the Ukraine. Massive resettlements of Ukrainians dating from the end of the nineteenth

century brought many Ukrainians to Central Asia. They've mostly settled in larger towns. They speak Ukrainian, which borrows from Polish. Ukrainian is an eastern Slavic language and is very close to the 9<sup>th</sup> century Slavonic used before the Slavonic from Bulgaria arrived with Christianity in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. In the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century this language was banned, but has persevered and is becoming more widespread. It became the official language of the Ukraine in 1990. Many have intermarried with Russians, which has complicated their ethnic composition.

Peasant dishes made up of grains and staple vegetables, potatoes, cabbage, beets and mushrooms, make up the average diet. Meat is normally fried, boiled, or stewed.

Cherries and plums are used to sweeten desserts and are sometime baked into sweet breads. The sacred dish in the country is "*Salo*," pig fat. This goes back for centuries, it has the same love that the French have for wine. Borscht, a beet and mixed vegetable broth, is the national soup and is normally served with cream.

In some places, alcohol is an immense problem and plays a major role in Ukrainian society. Ukrainians consume an enormous amount of spirits. It affects the whole of the society, from the workforce, lifespan, and the complete moral atmosphere of the country. Unlike in the past when Vodka was one of the only spirits one could purchase, Ukrainians in their homeland and many other places now have the complete gamut of alcohol including beer, wine, brandy, and rum. It is estimated that there are nearly 1 million confirmed chronic alcoholics or potential alcoholics in Ukraine.

The factors that contribute to the level of consumption are the lack of economic opportunity, demoralism, and no faith in professed ideals. "Alcohol is an anesthetic that helps to survive the operation called life," as quoted by Bernard Shaw. Traditionally, drinking for the average Ukrainian is a ritual and is a part of any social event or family occasion. Generally when family or friends get together, a bottle of vodka comes out. It is considered poor manners to refuse to drink when everyone is partaking, it is seen as an affront and a show of no respect for those around. Among the Ukrainians, education is greatly valued. Most of all children receive a high school education and many of those go on to attend the university or some other form of higher education. Kiev University in Ukraine is recognized as one of the top schools in the world.

Many of the Ukrainians are Orthodox Christians. According to some, the Apostle Andrew sailed through the Black Sea and landed in the area that is known as the Ukraine and preached the Gospel to the tribe's people. The late 10<sup>th</sup> century saw the arrival of Christianity in the Ukraine with the baptism of *Prince Vladimir*. In 988 the Prince accepted Christianity as the religion of the territory and had everyone baptized.

A split in the Church, the Roman Church from the Orthodox Church, occurred in 1054. The Orthodox Church later split into three segments, all having some relation to the Moscow controlled Russian Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism. In 1596 a number of Ukrainian Bishops seeking to achieve for their brethren a level of recognition similar to that of the Catholics, brought their church into full union with the Pope. Although they were in union with the Pope, they were allowed to maintain their distinct liturgy and rites. The Soviets, in their attempt to crush the Ukrainians spirits, destroyed hundreds of churches in the 1930's.

This union and the New Economic Policy eventually produced regrettable consequences for Ukraine. Beginning in the late 1920s, Joseph Stalin sensing nationalistic ideas developing in Ukraine and deciding to show the rest of the empire what happens to

problem children brutally reversed both trends. Peasant landholdings were forcibly collectivized and crops were extorted to support industrialization. The resulting artificial famine in 1932 and 1933 cost the lives of an estimated 5 million to 7 million Ukrainians. In the mid-1930s Stalin initiated mass arrests and executions of his opponents or possible opponents, resulting in the devastation of Ukraine's intelligentsia by the end of the decade. Meanwhile, in Galicia an extreme form of nationalism, embodied in the *Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN)*, developed and called for independence at any cost. In the latter half of the decade he smashed the Ukrainian intelligence agency and went after the *Ukrainian Orthodox Church* destroying over 250 buildings. *Stalin* sought the complete helplessness and hopelessness of the people, even to the point of wanting to deport the whole country.

Having a reputation as a known rebellious region, Ukraine suffered more than the average under the Russians. The first war and the famine were over. As the world approached another World War, the Ukrainians first greeted the Germans as liberators perhaps partly as a result of the 7 million persons Stalin had murdered through the "famine." The tactics of the Nazis quickly transformed this hope. The war, along with the famine, took over half of the male and a quarter of the female population. Six million Ukrainians died in the fighting of WWII.

Many of the Ukrainian people are Orthodox Christians. Many are also non-religious. The percentage of Christian adherents is about 69% and the percentage of evangelicals is estimated to be about 12.50% percent. The Bible, God Story Video, Jesus Film, audio recordings, and Christian broadcasting have been translated into their language.

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<http://reachukraine.org/regional/people.htm>. <http://www.irex.uz/?id=publications&file=art006>

<http://www.brama.com/survey/messages/7479.html> [http://www.mswia.gov.pl/eng\\_mn\\_narod\\_1\\_list.html](http://www.mswia.gov.pl/eng_mn_narod_1_list.html)

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## **24537**

### ***Uzbek, Northern (1,455,000)***

The Uzbeks, literally meaning "master of oneself," are a Turkic people group. They are also known as the Ouzbek, Ozbek, Usbaki, Northern Uzbek, Uzbeki, and Wuzibieke. The northern Uzbeks are usually the Uzbeks that are north of Afghanistan. Those in Afghanistan and Pakistan are usually called Southern Uzbeks. They are found throughout Central Asia, with almost 20 million of them residing in Uzbekistan.

Afghanistan has the second largest population of Uzbeks and Tajikistan has the third largest population. In Tajikistan, they are mostly found in the Laninabad region, the Gissar Valley, southern Tajikistan, around Shrtuz and Kolkhozabad, and the Kurgan Tube. They have broad, flat faces, and usually have lighter skin than the Pashtuns. They speak Northern Uzbek, which is a Turkic language of the Altaic language family. It is closely related to the Uighur language. Most Northern Uzbeks are bilingual, with many speaking Russian or Tajik.

The Uzbeks are believed to be descendants of Central Asian Turks who aided Genghis Khan. The unity of the Turks and Mongols eventually faded and different kingdoms formed. The Uzbeks descended from these kingdoms.

Most Uzbeks used to be semi-nomadic farmers, however today, many are farmers or live and work in larger towns. The farmers grow cotton, fruits, vegetables, and grains. Many in Afghanistan are also stockmen and breed the karakul sheep. In some places, noodles

are a staple food and are used for two common dishes, Ash, which is noodles mixed with yogurt, and Ashak which is an Uzbek style of Ravioli. Bread and tea is almost always part of an Uzbek meal. It is common for Uzbeks to eat with their fingers.

Family is very important to Uzbeks. Uzbek families are patriarchal, with the male ruling over several generations. They often live with extended families, with three generations under one roof. Unlike other groups, marriage between siblings or between other close relatives is forbidden. Most marriages are arranged and it is not uncommon for them to marry Uighurs or Tartars. It is very uncommon to see a single adult in Uzbek society.

Daughters must marry in order of age. Women are expected to have their first baby within the first year of marriage. Traditionally, the groom's family had to offer gifts to the bride's family and cover the cost of the wedding feasts. The ceremony would take place at the house of the bride, then after the ceremony, she would be taken to the groom's home. Sometimes, friends and family would take the bride after the ceremony, and the husband would have to offer gifts to "redeem" her.

Uzbeks often live in villages headed by an elder. Several villages make up an elat, which is governed by a council of elders. Uzbeks interact with various ethnic groups, however tend to have close relationships with the Uighurs and Kazaks. Age and respect for elders is very important in Uzbek culture. The oldest person is the one who prays at meals and breaks the bread. There are different ways of addressing people according to their age. Many Uzbek men enjoy playing Buzkashi, which is a game like polo where teams on horseback try to put a headless carcass in the goal. Singing and dancing is also an important part of Uzbek culture. Most dances are solo dances, with the dancer turning circles while waving her arms. They also have a unique tambourine dance. The Uzbeks love poetry and are taught to recite poems from an early age.

The Uzbeks are Sunni Muslim, most of the Hanafite branch. Islam is an important part of the everyday life of an Uzbek, however, there are still some traditional beliefs mixed in with their practice of Islam. There are few Christians among the Uzbeks, with only about 0.04% in Tajikistan being evangelical. They have portions of Scripture, the Jesus Film, God's Story Video, Christian radio broadcasts, and Christian audio recordings are all available in their language.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net>

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### ***Yagnob, Yagnobi (2,000)***

The Yagnob are of the Tajik people cluster. They are also called Yagnobi and galcha, which means "mountain folk." They are mostly found in Tajikistan, near the border of Afghanistan. They mostly make up twenty villages in the Pamir Mountains between the Zeravshan River and the Yagnob River. The Yagnob speak Yagnobi, which is an unwritten language from the ancient Sogdian language, of the Iranian group of Indo-European languages. Most are bilingual in Tajik.

They tend to live in small villages near irrigated fields. Their homes are often made of stone and built closer together. They are mostly farmers, growing wheat, peas, and barley. Because of their location, their growing season is short. Men are usually responsible for irrigating fields, while women look after the animals. In the winter, large

groups of men go hunting for wild goat. Throughout history, the Yagnob people have repeatedly been persecuted and taken over by their stronger neighbors. They have faced persecution by the Bukhara Emirates, the Soviets, and the Tajiks. As a result, there are many suspicious and bitter feelings toward the Tajiks. The Yagnob people are Ismaili Muslims. There are no known Christians among them and there are no resources available in their language.

<http://www.eki.ee/books/redbook/yaghnabis.shtml>

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[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=Tajikistan](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=Tajikistan)

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### ***Yazgul, Yazgulam (4,000)***

The Yazgul are of the Tajik people cluster. They are also called Yazgul and Yazgulam. They are mostly found only in Tajikistan along the Yazgulyam River in the Gorno-Badakhshan Region. They speak Yazgulyam, which belongs to the northern group of the Pamir languages, which is a part of the Iranian group of the Indo-European language family. The language is unwritten and many are bilingual.

In 1954, the Yazgulamis were resettled to the Vakhsh valley. About 20% were forcibly resettled. The number of people in this group have increased, although the number of villages has decreased by almost 50%. Many in this group are farmers. In the higher altitude areas, they are unable to grow apricots and mulberries and their economy is much weaker than those living in lower altitudes. In spring and fall, the Yazgulamis allow their animals to graze near the villages, however, in the summer, they move them higher altitude pastures. Arable land is scarce and they tend to use land communally. It is not possible for them to use machinery. They also hunt, usually in the winter, for goat. Yazgulami women are known for their knitted woolen stockings. Family is important to them and it is not uncommon for them to marry their relatives.

The Yazgulami are mostly Sunni Muslims, however, they still observe many pagan customs. They still use parts of the human body as part of an ancient calendar. There are few, if any, Christians among them and the only Christian resource available to them is Christian audio recordings.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net> [http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=Tajikistan](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=Tajikistan)

<http://www.eki.ee/books/redbook/yazgulamis.shtml>

***Unclassified/ Other Individuals 6,000***

### **Missiological Implications**

1. Evangelicals should emphasize the Christian family in Tajikistan

It has been suggested by field missionaries that only 6 out of 200 believers in the Muslim world are women. In order to balance out the proportion of men to women, there needs to be an effort to reach entire families. In Tajikistan, it takes women to reach women, however, just targeting Muslim women would not reverse the problem. Entire families need to be reached and discipled.

Missionaries need to work as families to model Christian families for non-believers and new believers. They need to see what a Christian husband looks like and how he honors and protects his wife and family. They need to see how a Christian wife acts and speaks respectfully to her husband. They even need to see how a Christian child respects the parents and how he or she is brought up. A Christian family will stand out in Tajikistan,

and will gain much respect. As a Muslim man is exposed to a Christian family and strong marriage, he will see a beautiful picture of Christ and the church in the wife's voluntary submission to a loving husband, who constantly lays down his life for her needs and desires. This will not only be a picture of the Gospel, but will also show him that he has nothing to fear in the liberation of women in Christ. Muslims do notice that Christian marriages are different than their own, so living out a strong marriage in front of a Muslim can be a powerful witness. If God is in a home, He will shine through even when the family is simply going about their daily lives. Harold R. Cook says, "When a couple goes out to the mission field, its witness to Christ and the Christian life is more than that of two individuals. Something else has been added. It is their joint witness as a Christian family. Here is a place where one and one equals more than two."

2. Evangelicals should provide examples of trust and reliability for the people of Tajikistan who have suffered betrayal and oppression by Russian Orthodox and other religious groups.

The people of Tajikistan have a history of people betraying and oppressing them. In addition, many equate Christianity with Russian Orthodoxy and Russian oppression. For this reason, the message of Jesus Christ must be spread through relationships that are built on trust and understanding. This strategy will help in tearing down barriers and stereotypes.

3. Evangelicals should provide a clear picture of Christianity and Christian people to counter the mistaken views of many people in Tajikistan.

One of the biggest challenges facing those seeking to work with the people of Tajikistan is the Tajikistan perception of Christians. Many of the people equate Christianity with Russian Orthodoxy and Russian oppression and for this reason do not want anything to do with Christianity. Most Muslims believe that Christians have perverted historical data as well as their Scriptures, with a bias against Islam.

Both Muslim men and women view Christian women as undesirable. Many Muslims see them as disrespectful to their husbands, immodest, treated badly by Christian men, and sexually loose. In addition, women without children are seen as not truly feminine. For the most, Muslims think all Americans are Christians. Furthermore, all Americans are like those represented by television shows like Bay Watch, MTV, or the new reality shows. If a Tajik asks if you are a Christian, it is better to ask them what they mean when they say "Christian." This will likely open a door to explain what it really means to be a follower of Christ.

The first step to removing this barrier, or any other, is prayer. The battle is a spiritual one, so missionaries need prayer to face it. Second, to help dispel these misconceptions, it is important for missionaries to live an incarnational life-style. Muslims must have contact with strong Christian families. Christians must live open and transparent lives before their Muslim friends and neighbors. The more contact a Christian has with a Muslim, the better the opportunity to share what devoted followers of Christ should look like. A Christian should study the culture and know what is offensive and avoid those behaviors. They should refrain from eating pork or drinking alcohol in the presence of a Muslim, as this is very offensive. Likewise, men or women wearing shorts or tight fitting clothing is not appropriate.

Because of the western stereotype, many Muslims do not expect Christians to be able to meet the cultural requirements for decency. It is hard to get an accurate feel for what

really is acceptable. For example, one may be told that a certain way of dressing is an acceptable way of dressing in public, however when pressed, the Muslim may say, "It is okay for YOU to wear that, but I never would." Therefore, Christians cannot assume that a certain behavior or dress is acceptable just because they are told by the locals that it is. All situations and behaviors must be analyzed before accepting them as suitable. Since acceptable practices vary from culture to culture, it is best for missionaries to find a local mentor to help them. Any time a question arises, ask the mentor what he or she would do and why. This will help decrease costly mistakes.

4. Evangelicals should base evangelism on personal relationships with followers of Islam. Christians must know and understand the individual Muslim. Muslims in Tajikistan, even within the same people group, can be very different; therefore it is important not to generalize. In order to avoid this, each individual must be understood. Spend time asking open ended questions in order to learn of their background. This will allow you to address the person's needs, hopes, and fears in a more specific way. Ask what they believe and why. Try to understand how their family and relationships are affected by their faith. Understand their struggles and show genuine concern. Care about them as people and friends, and not just a project or someone to convert. Since many will be suspicious about the motives of a Christian or an American, it is important to show concern for them as people. If a Christian says or implies that he or she is there to convert the Muslim or to "save their soul", the Muslim will likely be defensive. It is better to acknowledge the differences of religion and use common ground to develop trust. It is important for In developing a clear understanding of Muslim women and how they see themselves, Christians can begin forming relationships that will lead to an opportunity to share the gospel. Muslim women need to hear how they are viewed in God's eyes. As mentioned earlier, Muslim women are given the idea that their bodies are polluted and polluting. How refreshing it is for them to hear that Jesus, a respected prophet in Islam, did not view women in that way. Jesus, in Luke 8 reaches his hand to a woman who had been bleeding for twelve years. In fact, Jesus treats women with great care and respect. His story begins with the faith of a woman. As Jesus ministers, He talks with and commends the faith and actions of the women He encounters. He defend them and offers them relationship and undeserved forgiveness. God left His throne in Heaven, becoming the person of Jesus Christ and served women. The widow of Nain, the Samaritan woman at the well, Peter's mother-in-law, the woman caught in adultery, Jairus's daughter, the woman with a hemorrhage of blood, and the Syro-phoenecian woman are just some of the women Jesus saw fit to love and serve. In addition, the God who created woman, and her body, looked upon it and said it was good, with all its functions. Christians to be honest in acknowledging that they are followers of Christ, but not to go on to say that they are there to change the Muslim's religion. While this is the hope of many missionaries, it is better to say that the reason for being there is because they are committed followers of God and they believe God has brought them to the place they are serving to love and help Muslims. This will help lower the defense of the Muslim community in which the missionary serves, but only if those words are followed by loving and helpful actions.

5. Evangelicals should help provide contextualized Christian fellowships into which converts can be incorporated.

If a person converts to Christianity, it is important to respect local customs, or Christians will lose even more respect. For example, it may not be wise to encourage a Muslim woman who has become a believer to stop veiling. Since veiling is not in opposition to the teachings of the Bible, to encourage her to stop, would just be to make her more western and not more Christian. If the woman does unveil and her husband and family are not believers, this creates a lot of problems and confirms that Christian women disrespect their husbands. The women can be seen as morally loose and in rebellion. This is not the message Christians want to give. A new convert's testimony will have no value if the first sign of his or her faith is perceived as rebellion and immorality.

6. Evangelicals should develop strategies to share the Good News with followers of Islam in Tajikistan.

In discussing religion, it is important to remember that it is better to lose the battle in order to win the war. Muslims can have a great sense of pride in themselves as well as their religion, and to damage this could be detrimental to the relationship a Christian is trying to establish. When having theological discussions, do not focus on the difference between the religions or quickly raise issues that would cause an argument. For example, referring to Jesus as the Messiah or the Spirit of God would be acceptable to a Muslim since those are titles the Quran gives Him, however referring to Him as the Son of God would be considered blasphemy and the Muslim would be offended. Starting with common ground will help to develop understanding and trust in a non-threatening way. Another important thing to remember is to not demean Islam, Mohammed, or the Quran in any way. Doing either of these would lose the respect of the Muslim. It is okay to admit that you do not agree with the views of Islam, but to do something such as calling Mohammed a pedophile or the anti-Christ, as some public figures have done, will quickly shut the door to further communication. Demeaning their prophet or Holy book in any way will anger them and possibly get the missionary kicked out of the country or imprisoned.

Another critical hindrance in work among Muslims is fear. This fear can be with either the missionary or the Muslim. For a person in Tajikistan to convert to Christianity is a huge step that could have severe consequences. In some areas, if someone even thinks a Muslim is considering changing religions, it could mean death or expulsion from the family. Families will kill other family members who turn from Islam to save the honor of the family. Although proselytizing is legal in Tajikistan, some are facing persecution for doing so. If one person gets caught, it is possible that the entire group that person is associated with will face consequences. For this reason, a missionary must be very careful in meeting with Muslims so as not to endanger them. For a Muslim to be persecuted because he or she converted to Christianity and is standing firm in their faith is one thing; to be persecuted because of contact with a missionary is another. As much as possible, evangelism and discipleship needs to be done through national believers. It is not wise for missionaries to attend the church services of the local believers.

With a few exceptions, Muslim women do not want to hear that Christians have come to free them from their lives that are perceived by Westerners as horrible. C.M. Amal suggests that people change their focus from thinking of challenges facing Muslim women to those facing women in today's Muslim world. Both Muslim and Christian women are concerned about the things that make up daily life. Muslim women think, act, and react like women. Women, Muslim, Christian, or other, face the same problems, only

in a different setting. It is where and how the solutions are looked for that has more relevance to religion.

Of women surveyed by Debi Bartlotti, three common emotions arose repeatedly. The first is a sense of powerlessness. In reaction, some women look to the darker side of Islam, go to shrines, and buy amulets. They seek to gain power by pronouncing curses. The second common emotion that comes up is fear. Muslim women fear gossip, slander, shame, and dishonor. In addition, women in Folk Islam settings fear evil spirits, the evil eye, and death. The third common emotion is a lack of identity.

A missionary must be careful not to further isolate the women that she is trying to serve. Sometimes, going to a woman's house for a long visit can create gossip, and hurt the woman's honor. In areas where this is a possibility, it is best to ask the women to set boundaries for you. Let her decide when, where, and for how long you meet. Respect a sudden change in plan. If a missionary senses that the woman is uncomfortable, she should mention this to the woman and consider leaving. Share about religious things only with permissions and be careful when giving them religious materials to keep. If religious materials are found by a husband or other family member, this could bring the woman danger or end the missionary's privilege to have contact with the woman. Further, it is the task of Christian women to take the Gospel to Muslim women. There are very few circumstance where it would be appropriate for a man to speak alone to a woman about spiritual issues. A man speaking with a woman about such matters could dishonor both him and the Muslim woman and possibly put them in danger.

7. Evangelicals should incorporate the grace of hospitality into their witness and service among the peoples of Tajikistan

Hospitality is another key aspect in working among Muslims. It is a common element among Muslims worldwide, whether in the Middle East or Indonesia. Usually this task falls on the woman of the house. It is important for women to observe and follow the customs of hospitality appropriate for that culture in order to build relationships with Muslims. Not knowing and practicing the customs of hospitality can lead to an appearance of being rude or cold, which could possibly shut the door to further meetings with neighbors and friends.

8. Evangelicals should seek ways to relieve the physical and social needs in Tajikistan and use these loving ministries as starting points for sharing the Good News.

Many development and aid workers are needed. These opportunities give a person legitimate access to the country, however, in order to maintain the company's reputation, it is important that the person do what they say they are there to do. A person can not go as a "missionary." They must go as a Christian who is called by God to help the people of Tajikistan in what ever way they say they are going to help and they must work with integrity towards that job.

9. Evangelicals should help the believers in Tajikistan evangelize their own people and other peoples in the region.

Many indigenous believers in Tajikistan are not reaching out to their neighbors. It is important to disciple them and encourage them to reach out to those with the same or a similar culture.

10. Evangelicals should seek means to provide training and develop for church leaders.

The indigenous churches have a staggering need for leaders. Workers are needed to disciple and train local believers so that they are able effectively lead the local body of believers.

11. Evangelicals should, together with the local believers, seek to find those pockets of peoples who are responsive to the Message of Jesus.

Among the peoples of Tajikistan many are prepared to hear the Good News. Finding and winning these pockets of people is a major goal of Christianity in the county.

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