



## THE CONCEPTION OF THE HOUSE IN THE SHUGHNI LINGUISTIC WORLDVIEW



Shahlo Nekushoeva



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### The Conception of the House in the Shughni Linguistic Worldview

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#### Abstract:

This article deals with the analyses of the concept of the *House*, from the cognitive perspectives of the Shughni language, on the basis of material collected among native speakers, which allowed to reveal the inner content of the concept. The analysis demonstrates that the semantic field of the conception of the house in the Shughni language includes notions related both to architectural elements, their religious and philosophical interpretations, and many other abstract concepts related to the motherland. This concept, like in many other languages, has a close relationship with the concept of *Family*.

**Keywords:** concept house, Shughni Language, ambiguity, language picture of the world, semantic field, five pillars, primary elements, sacral status.

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From 2000 to 2013 Shahlo taught the Persian language and literature, as well as special courses at the Department of the Eastern Languages of Khorog State University. Since 2017 she has been teaching the Tajik language at the University of Central Asia in Khorog and special courses at the Graduate School of the Institute of Humanities, named after B. Iskandarov, at the National Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan.

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**Cover picture:** *Ceiling construction of a Pamirian house (from the author's archive).*

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## Introduction

The particular architectural elements of a traditional Pamirian house are shared throughout the entire territory of the Western Pamirs, with minor differences due to climatic zone changes<sup>1</sup>. Traditionally, home for Pamirian people is a place of deep respect and reverence. It possesses an important cultural value linked to many beliefs and rituals still present in the lives of the Western Pamir population. A traditional Pamirian house encompasses a wide range of elements and symbols, which are believed to be rooted in the religion of ancient Iranian peoples, who lived long before the formation and introduction of Zoroastrianism.

The philosophical and cosmological meaning of a Pamirian house is discussed in detail by A. Shohumorov in his article “*Khonai Pairavoni Rostin*” (“The house of truth followers”), which explains the symbolism of a general interior design of a Pamirian house<sup>2</sup>. In particular, the author writes that: according to the cosmological, philosophical views and Aryan religion, the entire universe is God’s House, and humans have no right to build with stone and wood another house trying to isolate God in it. Thus, keeping in mind the laws of the universe, which is God’s creation and home, man built his house to reflect the Great Realm (the Great Universe), i.e. nature, and the Small Realm (the Small Universe), i.e. humanity... In this revered house, man from the beginning to the end of his life is constantly under the protection, patronage and guidance of God, and therefore, has no need for a mosque, church or any other type of “House of God”.<sup>3</sup>



Photo 1. Traditional Pamirian houses, exterior, village in the Pasor valley, Bartang, Rushan district.  
(from the author’s archive, 2014).

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1 Mamadnazarov M.K. “Vidoizmenenie gornobadakhshanskogo zhilisha v zavisimosti ot ego mestonahozhdeniya”. *Pamirovedenie*. Vol. 2, 1985, pp. 175-182.

2 Shohumorov A. *Pamir – Strana Ariev*. Dushanbe, Donish, 1997, pp. 116-152.

3 *Ibid.*, pp. 121, 124.

Architectural characteristics of *čīd* are carefully examined in writings of M. S. Andreev, M. A. Bubnova, M. H. Mamadnazarov. Ethnographic data on ceremonial and ritual practices related to house building is presented in works of I. I. Zarubin, I. Muhiddinov, O. Olufsen. We can also find an analysis of architectural features and construction process of a traditional Pamirian house in a research by K. S. Vasil'tsov, where the author provides a detailed description of symbolism of this construction and philosophical religious meaning Pamirian people put into their house<sup>4</sup>. The spread of Islam transformed the meaning and interpretation of the architectural elements and symbols into the Pamir-Isma'ili tradition, which in the mind of a modern Shughni person has completely shifted to the background the original philosophical and cosmological significance of various elements of a traditional Pamirian house.

Neither within the body of research mentioned above, nor within any other scientific publications on traditional Pamirian houses, could any works dedicated to or even touching upon the cognitive and linguistic-cultural aspects of the concept of the *House* within the Shughni language picture of the world be found. Of great interest in research of cognitive aspects of concept *čīd* for us are works of Shohumurov A. and Vasil'tsov K. S., as they contain more comprehensive information on the place and significance of *čīd* in the worldview of the peoples of Western Pamir.

It should be noted that modern linguistics considers language a tool for learning activities of a person<sup>5</sup>. From this point of view a word as a linguistic unit represents a code, which contains knowledge not only about the thing it indicates, but also knowledge about its connection to other words and concepts in the same linguistic system. A word, as a concept, encompasses abstract, specific-associative and emotional-evaluative characteristics, as well as compressed history of the term<sup>6</sup>. It carries a personal reflection, an interpretation of an objective meaning and an informative minimum of the meaning<sup>7</sup>. It is a reproduction of an operational memory unit, mental lexicon, conceptual system and brain language, the entire picture of the world; it is a quantum of knowledge<sup>8</sup>.

From cognitive point of view the following aspects will be examined in two separate sections within the framework of this research:

*Lexical-semantic field of the concept house in Shughni Linguistic picture of the world:* there different opinions on the concept's structure. Here, we attempt to describe the semantic field of the concept *house* through covering the dictionary definition and a number of synonyms of the word in the Shughni language, as well as terms for architectural elements of a Pamirian house in the context of phrasal units, without which the architectural artifact is inconceivable.

*Representation of the concept čīd from the perspective of ceremonial traditions.* Within this framework the focus is on the cultural value of the concept. Along with the semantic content, every concept as a complicated mental code also encompasses the evaluative aspect of an object and speakers' perception of the object. We attempted to showcase historical parallels of some ceremonial traditions, particularly, in Zoroastrianism.

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4 Vasil'tsov K. S. "“Alam-i-Sagir”: K voprosu o simvolike traditsionnogo pamirskogo zhilisha” // Elektronnaya biblioteka Muzeya antropologii i etnografii imeni Petra Velikogo (Kunstkamera), RAN, pp. 150-179.

5 Maslov V. A. *Vvedenie v kognitivnyuyu lingvistiku*. M.: Nauka, 2011.

6 Stepanov Y. S. *Konstanty. Slovar russkoy kultury*. M.: Yazyk russkoy kul'tury, 1997, pp. 41-42.

7 Likhachev D. S. "Kontseptosfera russkogo yazyka". *Izvestiia Akademii nauk. Seriya literatury i yazyka* 52.1 (1993), pp. 3-9.

8 Kubryakova E. S. "Yazyk i znanie: na puti polucheniya znaniy o yazyke: Chasti rechi s kognitivnoy tochki zreniya. Rol' yazyka v poznanii mira". *Ros. akademiya nauk. In-t yazykoznaneya*. M.: Yazyki slavyanskoi kultury, 2004, pp. 90-92.

This research was conducted based on materials composed of 900 linguistic units, which were collected by the author during field research in the period from 2014 to 2017. In the course of the work, a thematic catalog was created, most of which was used as the basis of this research. Expeditionary investigations were undertaken in Rashtkalya and Ishkashim districts, as well as in the Bartang Valley and several villages of Shughni district (Porshinev, Darmoraht). In two districts (Rashtkalya and Ishkashim) around 30 people were interviewed on the subject, in the Bartang Valley – 12 people, in Porshinev and Darmoraht – 9 people. The youngest of the respondents was 50 years old, the oldest – 80. All of the respondents had lived their entire lives in traditional Pamirian houses and knew and observed many rituals and beliefs related to their home. It should also be noted that the author is intimately familiar with Shughni culture and is a native Shughni speaker, which allowed her to incorporate personal speech use during the examination of lexicon units.

To record Shughni lexical and phrasal units the generally recognized international Iranological transcription based on Latin script was used, sometimes with addition of diacritics (ǰ, ū, ũ, ê, ċ, š, ǰ̃) and several letters of Greek alphabet (γ, ϑ, δ).

It should be emphasized, however, that a comprehensive analysis of the task – examination of the concept house in Shughni Linguistic worldview – can hardly be achieved within the presented work, as the linguistic material related to this field is enormous, and certain areas of it still remain open to research.

## **1. Lexical-Semantic Field of the Concept *House* in the Shughni Language**

Certain units of language that encompass a myriad of linguistic-cultural information can carry characteristic features of an ethnic group. A vivid example of that is the concept *house*, which is one of the most evocative and developed concepts in language picture of the world of different ethnicities. In human consciousness this concept in its various interpretations has functioned since ancient times. Due to historical reasons, for different ethnic groups *house* may refer variously to a living space, a stronghold and support, a temple, and for some – all of the above. Within then collective imaginations of various ethnicities there are both general and autonomous expressive perceptions connected to the concept of the *house*. For instance, space barriers that constitute a house in the broad sense intuitively produces in a person the feeling of emotional security, peace, coziness and comfort. At the same time in a narrow linguistic-cultural context this concept is characterized by a specificity that is associated with a certain ethnic group. Development of social life can bring about changes in ceremonies and traditions, however, their traces are preserved for centuries in the semantics of linguistic units. In the Shughni language lexeme *house* together with its representing linguistics units reflects a phenomenon, which contains the essence of native speakers' worldview.

A traditional Pamirian house has a distinctive regional structure, which is why within the Shughni language picture of the world, the content of this concept, along with various interior design elements, encompasses geographical, religious, philosophical, architectural and environmental aspects of the issue. For Shughni people the significance and interrelation of these notions are so important that should we miss one of them, we could only provide a formal definition of the concept of *house*, which might not entirely be true. Thus, to define the place and substance of this concept in the Shughni language picture of the world we must take into account all informational components of the given subject.



From an etymological point of view the word *čīd* can be traced to ancient Iranian \**kata* “house”, Avestan *kata* – “hut”, *kata*, Sogd. *kt’k*, *kt-*, Persian. *kadag*, Persian. *kada*, Yaghn. *kat* “house”; as compared to the Shughni-Rushani linguistic group: *čīd*, xyφ., pyш. *čod*, барт. *čöd*, poш. *čūd*, cap. *čed* “house”<sup>9</sup>.

It should be noted that in the Shughni language the lexeme *čīd* is used exclusively to indicate a traditional Pamirian house. However, a number of vernacular terms for a house can also be found, such as *čīd*, *mālā*, *xūnā*, *bunā*<sup>10</sup>, as well as the phrase “*dar at palandar*”, all of which can be differentiated by their use and ethnic affiliation. The differences between said lexemes are reflected in their linguistic peculiarities and types of structures. Those variances can be explained by the situational use of the lexemes<sup>11</sup>, as well as by the origin of nominative units. While the lexeme *čīd* is the primordial word among the synonyms for house in Shughni, the other linguistic units belong to an adopted language group: Shug. *xūnā* < Pers.-Taj. *xona*<sup>12</sup>; Shug. *mālā*, Taj. dial. *mahalā* “city block” to Arabic *mahalla* “facility”, “room”; *bunā* to the Tajiki *buna* “house”, “building”, “nest”<sup>13</sup>; phrases *dar at palandar*// *dar at dargad* generalized expressions used to refer to “house”, “habitation”, “yard” of an entire building. These expressions are comprised of words borrowed from Tajik: *dar* “door”, conjunction *at* “and”, *palandar* “household”, “housing”, “yard” (with all services), and in the case of the second one *dargad* “yard”, “noblemen’s house”, “big yard”<sup>14</sup>. As the primordial linguistic unit, the word *čīd* is used far more often than the adopted ones. The recently created expression in Shughni *pomeri čīd* “Pamirian house” serves as the definition of the traditional housing structure and demonstrates the differentiation of the lexemes. Accordingly, within this word combination (or in such as *dod čīd* “father’s house”, *čīdedi* “house-warming”, etc.) the other adopted lexemes cannot be considered as an analog of the word *čīd*. However, depending on various situational contexts all three lexemes can also be used as general terms. For instance, *čīd tar čīd*, *xūnā tar xūnā*, *mālā tar mālā* “from house to house”; *tar čīd*, *tar xūnā*, *tar mālā* “in house”, “at home”, etc. Hence, by the example of correlations between the terms *čīd*, *xūnā*, *mālā* we can see that all three of them can have both general and specific meanings, but in certain situational contexts the adopted lexemes cannot replace the primordial word *čīd*.

In this lexeme group the word *čīd* is the only one characterized by its ethnographic informativity, which can be explained by the fact that Shughni ceremonial and traditional system, much like that of other peoples in West Pamir, is connected to building and living in a traditional Pamirian house, where historically every spot and every corner, every architectural element had its own ritual meaning. We believe that other terms for housing in the Shughni language were adopted due to the introduction of new types of houses in the lifestyle of Pamirians in the not so distant past.

Introduction of new terms for the same object, similarly to human practice of learning and discovery, is based on the method of categorization, for people tend to compare everything identifying in the

9 Steblin-Kamenskiy I. M. *Etimologicheskyy slovar vakhanskogo yazyka*. – St. Petersburg: Sankt-Peterburgskiy gosudarstvenniy Universitet, 1999, p. 128.

10 Ibid., p. 280.

11 Nekushoeva S. “Situativnoe promeneniya sinonimichnyh yedinitov otnositelno ponyatiya ‘dom.’” *Vestnik Tadzhiikskogo Natsionalnogo Universiteta*, Vol. 2, No. 48, 2008, pp.74-77.

12 Djuraev R. *Etimologiyai 100 kalima*. Dushanbe, Donish, 1985, p. 25.

13 *Farhangi tafsiri zaboni tochiki. Childi I, Pazhuhishgohi zabon va adabiyoti Rudaki*, 2008, p. 245.

14 Ibid., p. 412.

process similarities and differences between objects<sup>15</sup>. We therefore hold the view that the adopted terms for housing entered Shughni speech mainly because of the necessity of differentiating between a traditional Pamirian house and new types of houses.

According to D. Karamshoev's dictionary the Russian translation of the word *čīd* is *house; yard*. The author also provides a number of linguistic units with *house* root: *čīdaki* "homebody", *čīdbūn* "protecting house", *čīd(d)edi* "house-warming", *čīd(d)or* "homeowner", etc.<sup>16</sup>

For a more cognitive point of view of the definition of *house*, we turn to L.R. Dodyhudoeva, who in one of her works analyzes the word *čīd* "house" and points out its polysemy, saying it can mean:

- a) a house with a fenced yard;
- b) an apartment building;
- c) a house as family space;
- d) "own" space;
- e) a household (quantitative unit)<sup>17</sup>.

Due to lack of explanatory dictionaries of the Shughni language we decided it was necessary to consult several explanatory dictionaries of the Tajik and Russian languages, which provide the following definitions of this word:

In the Tajik language dictionary:

- 1) a house with a yard;
- 2) a building with several rooms;
- 3) a residence of certain groups of people: *xona-i bachagon* – "kindergarten"; *xona-i madaniyat* "cultural center"<sup>18</sup>;

In the Russian language dictionary:

- 1) a residential (or business) building; housing structure;
- 2) own living space, as well as family or people living together, their household;
- 3) a place, where people with common interests or conditions live;
- 4) a dynasty, clan;
- 5) a family, owners with their dependents;
- 6) collective residents of a building (The entire building came down running at the cry)<sup>19</sup>.

Within the Shughni language picture of the world the semantic field of the concept *house* does not include business buildings, dynasties, or residents of a building. In our opinion the definition "owners

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15 Shumilova A. A. "Leksicheskaya sinonimya: traditsionnoye i kognitivnoye videnie problemy". Vestnik Chelyabinskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta. 2009. Vol. 22, No. 160, pp. 144-148.

16 Karamshoev D. *Shughni -Russian Dictionary*. Vol. III. Nauka, 1999, pp. 372-374.

17 Dodyhudoeva L. R. "Etnolingvisticheskiy slovar: 'dom', 'zhiliyo', 'hozyaistvo.'" *Malye yazyki i traditsii: sushestvovanie na grani*. I – M, (2005): p. 217.

18 *Farhangi tafsiri zaboni tochiki. Childi II. Pazhuhishgohi zaban va adabiyoti Rudaki*, 2008, p. 445.

19 Ozhegov S. I. and Shvedova N. Y. *Tolkoviy slovar russkogo yazyka*. 4th ed. Izdatel'stvo "Az", 1992, p. 9.

with their dependents” in the perception of Shughni ethnicity also does not qualify as a direct context of the semantic field of the concept house. However, since this definition is closely related to the term *jamāt* “family”, it has an intimate and binding link to the concept *house*. Keeping that in mind, we focused this research paper on the definition “a living space, where people related by blood live”, as well as space, to which Shughni people refer to as *čīd*.

The semantic field of the lexeme *čīd* covers such key terms architectural interior design elements as *kicor* “hearth”, *pīnʒ sitan* “five columns, which support the roof of a Pamirian house”, *rūʒ* “an opening on the ceiling of a traditional Pamirian house, which functions as a window and smoke ventilation, *čorxūnā* “four-step construction in the roof part of a Pamirian house”, *poygā* “the lowest part of a Pamirian house”, *ʒīngak* “hearth ledge”, *nex* “benches along a wall”, *bučkičij* “crossbeam between two columns at the house entrance”, *čālak* “step next to the hearth”, *wiđum* “ceiling” *wūs* “ceiling beams”. This row of terms typical in the architectural structure of a Pamirian house can be expanded by dozens of other words, which have subordinating relation to and an important part in the construction of the concept *čīd* “house”. Every one of the mentioned architectural parts has a religious and a philosophical meaning that stretches back to ancient times. In the semantic field of the concept *čīd* we have assigned central position to following five lexemes in descending order:

1. *kicor*, combining such key lexemes as *yoc* (fire), *garmi* (warmth, *seri* – satiety, *buzurgi* – sanctity, sacral, *yagūnagi* – unity, *γinik*, *kaxoy* – woman, *zirjot* – children. Traditionally, in a Pamirian house the surface of one of the benches along a wall is used to place a much-revered hearth – *kicor*. A hearth, as the place for lighting fires (*yoc*) and cooking hot meals – two elements necessary for physical existence – became an object of special reverence for Pamirian people. The vital role a hearth and fire play in the lives of Shughni people, as well as many other Indo-European ethnic groups, carries a cult-ritual value. Hearth is perceived by a Shughni person as a revered place and the central point of a Pamirian house, it symbolizes home, sanctity and purity.



Photo 2: The hearth of an old-construction Pamirian house (from the archive of Dr. A. Shoinbekov, captured on the left bank of the Panj river, Afghanistan, in 2019).

2. *pīnʒ sitan* – five columns, which according to their religious meanings and ceremonial and ritual traditions represent the following lexemes: *tozagi* – purity, *buzurg* – holly, *osoyāxi* – peace, *tawftiq* – luck, *tartīb at nizūm* – order, *barakat* – grace, *yagūnagi* – unity, *pok* – spiritually pure. Cut down trees used for building of traditional houses gain a special meaning as they are put up in place; those columns (*sitan* – column to Persian / Tajiki *sutun* – pillar, column<sup>20</sup>) become symbols – patrons of abundance and peace, purity and sanctity of both the space and people, who live there. According to Pamirians' belief these five columns personify five gods in Zoroastrianism – Surush (god or angel of obedience and discipline, masculine strength, symbol of eternal life and happiness), Mehr (god of love), Anahita (goddess of fertility and patron of women), Zamyad (god of the land) and Ozar (god of fire)<sup>21</sup>. However, after the introduction of Islam and its rapid spread across the globe, the philosophical-cosmological interpretation of the columns and all other architectural elements along with their ceremonial tradition were transformed and given new Islamic meaning. The five columns inside a traditional Pamirian house now symbolize five representatives of the Shia branch of Islam: the Prophet Muhammed, the Imam Ali, the Prophet's daughter and Imam Ali's wife Fatima, their sons Hasan and Husein. Every column has its meaning reflecting the language picture of the world of ethnicities – Shughni speakers. In particular, these columns are named depending on their purpose or location. The columns are the personification of purity and sanctity of a traditional Pamirian house, as through their mere existence and symbolism the house attains the status of a temple. For centuries Pamirians did not build temples and mosques for praying but practiced their religion within the walls of their house, which was supported by five columns and harbored all aspects of various ethnic groups' faith. Traces of such attitude toward one's house are found in early Zoroastrianism too: “It is likely that, like in the time of Paganism, ceremonies were conducted either in the house of a priest or the requesting person. Early Zoroastrianism had no need in holy buildings nor permanent altars and did not leave any archaeological artifacts”<sup>22</sup>.

Despite the practice of putting up five columns when building a new house, a commonly used expression in Shughni is *čorsitan čīdow* “setting up four columns”, which shows that originally there were four columns, not five, in a traditional house. The process of setting up the columns has a great significance and is accompanied by slaughtering a sheep (an offering of sorts), as well as reading a *surah* from the Quran. With spread of Islam, in particular Isma'ilism, the five columns in a Pamirian house took a different meaning, being interpreted from Islamic point of view. The columns now personify *panj tani pok* (the five saints) or *āli bayt* (family members of the Prophet Muhammed). Today such interpretation is dominant among Pamirians, and the original meaning behind the columns has practically been shifted to the back.

Along with the strict gender division of the interior of the Pamirian house, the religious interpretation of the architectural form itself, in particular, the presence of the above-mentioned five columns also represents the *family*, which encompasses a significant part of the mentioned above terms for blood ties. Accordingly, the main column – *ḫāsitan* (from *ḫā* – “king” and *sitan* “column”) personifies the Prophet Muhammed, which also implies such family member roles as *father*, *grandfather* and *father-in-law*. The column symbolizes protection and abundance. Shughni people refer to the patriarch of a house by the same name they call the column – *ḫāsitan*. Accordingly, this leads to the common phrases: *tama dod tama ḫāsitan* (your father is your king-column); *wef ḫāsitan az miyen sut*, *wefard taš muḫkil sūd* (their patriarch has passed away, they are going to struggle now).

20 Djuraev R. *Etiomologyai 100 kalima*. Dushanbe, Donish, 1985, p. 28.

21 Shohumorov A. *Pamir – Strana Ariev*. Dushanbe, Donish, 1997, pp. 128-137.

22 Boyce, Mery. *Zoroastriitsy. Verovaniya i obychai*. St-Petersburg: Peterburgskii tsentr vostokovedenie, 1994, p. 60.



Photo 3 and 4. Ceiling construction of a Pamirian house: the first photo – antique building with swastikas carved during Navruz (from the author's archive).

The four other columns embody the four elements of nature: *xok* (land), *ǰac* (water), *awo* (air) and *yoc* (fire). *voǰznéxsitan* (*voǰznêx* – a type of platform along a wall: *voǰz* – long, *nêx* – platform along a wall) – a pillar inserted at the end of long elevation, embodies Ali (in the pre-Islamic period it represented Mehr, and the air element, or the wind) – the Prophet’s cousin and son-in-law. It connotes such family member roles as *father*, *son-in-law*, *husband*, *brother*, *nephew*; *kicōrsitan* (*kicōr* “hearth”, *sitan* “pillar”) – personifies the Prophet’s daughter Fatima, Ali’s wife and the mother of Hasan and Husein (in the pre-Islamic period it represented Aredvi Sura Anahita, and the water element), hence, she embodies such roles as *mother*, *daughter*, *wife*. Fatima is considered to be the keeper of the earth, patron of women and a symbol of purity and piety; the other two columns *poygāsitan*<sup>23</sup> and *bārnéxsitan*<sup>24</sup> in order embody Hasan (a) (pre-Islamic period – Zamyad, the earth element) and Husein (pre-Islamic period – Ozar, fire element) – two sons of Ali and Fatima and Prophet’s grandsons. Hence, there seems to be the mental presence of the holy family and the physical presence of an actual family living in a Pamirian house, which doubles the significance and interrelation between the concepts *čīd* – house and *jamāt* – family in the Shughni language picture of the world.

3. *rūz* – opening, the passage in the ceiling of a house left open during the covering of a traditional Pamirian house. It lets the natural daylight in the house and lets out the smoke from the hearth. Traditionally, due to the lack of a chimney, when lighting a fire in the house, the passage was left open<sup>25</sup>. The smoke would accumulate on the ceiling beams so much that you couldn’t see the wood natural color. This part of a traditional house fulfills a ceremonial role during the vernal equinox holiday – *xidīr ayūm*<sup>26</sup>.

4. *čorxūnā* – combines the lexemes *awo* – which can mean both air and the sky, *tabiat* (nature), and the elements of *zimāδ* (land), *ǰac* (water), *yoc* (fire) and *awo* (air). The passage from the inside of the house is made with a special four-level construction *čorxūnā* “multi-level construction of the ceiling”. The word *čorxūnā*<sup>27</sup>, literally “four houses”, was named because of the exterior characteristics of the multi-level construction. In the Pamiri worldview, the four levels of the construction symbolize the four elements: *zimāδ* (land), *ǰac* (water), *yōc* (fire), *awo* / *havo* (Taj.) / *ǰūz* (air/ wind). In the Aryan worldview these four elements are the source of all creation both on our planet and in the universe. It should be noted that the opening, which provided the room with natural light and ventilation, was also used as a sun calendar and sundial<sup>28</sup>. From the philosophical-cosmological point of view the terms *čorxūna* (multi-level construction) and *rūz* (opening) embodied the sky; the opening served as a channel and a portal connecting the residents with the heaven.

5. *poygā* – the lowest part of a Pamirian house in the broad sense represents the lexeme *zimāδ* (land). It is worth noting that the lexeme *poygá*<sup>29</sup> in the Shughni language is used exclusively for the foundations of a Pamirian house, and in cases of multi-story houses or new types of houses the Russian word *ноя* is used. Traditionally, this part of a Pamirian house was not covered by wood, but rather left as uncovered earth. From cosmological point of view, *poygá* represents Soil and has a direct connection with *rūz* – the heaven. A plot of land used for building a house was chosen very

23 *Poygá* – foundation, the floor in a Pamirian house.

24 *Bār* – wide, well-respected.

25 Shishov A. *Tadžiki (Etnograficheskoye issledovanie)*. Izdatelstvo Almaty, 2006, pp. 121-122.

26 Yusufbekov S. and Shoinbekov A. *Shoguni Bahor*. Dushanbe, Er-graf, 2019.

27 *Čorxūnā* – Pers.-Taj.: *čōr* “four”, see: Djuraev 28; and *xūnā* / *xonā* Taj. *xona* “house”.

28 Andreev M. S. *Tadžiki doliny Khuf* (Verhov’ya Amu-Dar’i). 2nd ed., edited by A. K. Pisarchik, Academy of Sciences of Tajik SSR, 1958, p. 163.

29 A general Iranian unit, Persian-Tajiki *poygoh* (place by the entrance for storing shoes in old types of houses), “level”, “dignity”, From the Persian-Tajiki *poy* (foot) and *gā*, Tajiki. *gah/goh* (place).

carefully, as according to Pamirians' beliefs, it must not be disputed (*janjoli māved*) or should be the house that must be built on father's or grandparent's land (*dod zamīn* "father's land", *bob zamīn* "grandfather's land"), which is blessed by their ancestors – *piyīl suḍjin*. Even an already built house must have the blessing of elders, parents, if it is being inherited. Otherwise, if there is a dispute over the land, there will be no peace, happiness or abundance – *janjoli čīdand osoyaḥi nist* (no peace in a disputed house). Because even the ancestors can curse the residents of a house for waywardness and not getting their blessing to obtain a land or build a house on it: *di čīd pi xu fištīr virod lāk, tu dodi di dird piyīl čūd, wi arwora qār māyoḍd* (leave the house to your younger brother, as your father wished, (otherwise) his spirit might become angry). The linguistic units such as: *uz di čīd turd piyīl kinum/nakimum* (I do/ do not give you my blessing on this house); *yid zamīn māš-ard piyīl suḍj/ nasuḍj* (we have received blessings for that land), *piyīl nasuḍjin čīd-and barakat nist* (a house that was not blessed will never see abundance) all demonstrate the mindful approach taken by the Shughni people toward the choice of a place to live and obtaining a blessing for it. In the same way the phrase *yu čīd xu ti yičiyaḡ nalākiḫt* (the house that lets no one in), illustrates the Shughni belief in blessings (or lack thereof), i.e. if a house is not blessed, it will not welcome people in. There is a common superstition that the residents of an unblessed house would have to leave it often, or worse that their family members die early, or that it is frequently empty and often changes its owners.

Constructing a house is considered by Shughni people as *bulodi kor*, literally "fundamental matter", i.e. it is meant to be lived in for the entirety of one's life, or even for several generations. For this reason, one can often hear from elders the refrain: *čīdmīzd yid bulodi kor, ba maslāt di kin-et* (house building is a fundamental matter that must be undertaken with guidance). Nothing defiled or corrupted must be used in the process – *arūmanj čīdmīzdand boyad māved* (no defiled tool should be used in the construction of a house), and the plot of land must be chosen with the agreement of elders – *katanaken peḡstow darkor* (you should ask your elders). It is likely that such attitudes toward the land under a house is also rooted in the ancient history of the peoples of the western Pamirs. In the third Fragard of the Avesta, devoted to land and land use, Ahura Mazda answers the question "where the second happiest place on Earth" by saying:

Where a believer builds a house,  
which has fire,  
livestock, wife and kids and good herd;  
where animals multiply, virtue,  
food, dogs, wife, kids, prosperity.<sup>30</sup>

The text of this excerpt demonstrates that even in those ancient times a house was associated with warmth, family, agricultural production and prosperity, and the land underneath was considered a lucky place. Building a house, land cultivation, farming were seen as positive human virtues, which helped avoid the evil. To this day such aspirations among the Shughni people are considered to be good deeds, since a house without a fire, and a household without livestock are regarded unfavorably. Expressions such as *kūdak sado wef cīdand nist* (there is no child's voice in their house) or *yi bēḡijaḡ wefand nist* (they don't even have one sheep) are illustrative of Shughni perceptions of a prosperous household.

30 *Avesta. "Zakon Protiv Devov"* (Videvdat). Translated by E. V. Rtveldze and A. K. Saidov, E.V. Abdullaev. Izdatelstvo Politechnical University, 2008, p. 85.

The word *poygá* is often used as part of the established set phrase *poygá-tīr xu dust zinêdow* (being a guest), for example, *yu mudūm maš poygá-tīr xu dust zined* (he is a frequent guest in our house)<sup>31</sup>. Traditionally, at the foundation of a Pamirian house a special pit was dug out, a hollow *obxīn*<sup>32</sup>, which functioned as a water sink for washing hands, face, etc., hence the origin of the above expression.

Collectively, all five lexemes represent the general words *Xudooy* (God), *mazab* (religion), *sunat* (tradition), *emūn* (faith), also meaning honor and conscience, *ǰarm* (shame), *tartīb* (order), *ayot*, *zindagi* (life). In the Shughni linguistic worldview many of these terms are fundamental autonomous concepts encompassed within the concept of the house, through the prism of which they formed the worldview and moral and ethical values of both Shughni people and all ethnic groups in the western Pamirs.

In the Shughni language picture of the world, *house* denotes not only living space, permanent or temporary residence but can also invoke the idea of human origins. Such phrasal units as *dod čīd* (father's house), *boboyi čīd* (ancestral house), *nān zīngak* (mother's house), *dod zīngak* (parents' house), *dod zimāδ* (fatherland), (father's house), *bob zimāδ* (land of ancestors), (home) along with expressions of human roots form a personal, intimate atmosphere, spiritually and mentally connected to a person. The linguistic units *dod čīd* and *boboyi čīd* reflect the respect native speakers have toward their parental, ancestral house. Members of this ethnic group hesitate to demolish their ancestral home without a valid reason, as they believe it may cause ancestor spirit anxiety – *arwogūn nosoyaǰ sen* or even anger spirits of their ancestors – *arwogūn qār kinen*. If one's ancestral home must be torn down, a mandatory sacrifice is performed to propitiate ancestral spirits – *ba nūmi arwogūn xudooyi čīdow*. Vasil'tsov K. S. notes the following about the ceremony:

Elders and Halif of the village are invited and prepared ritual dishes are brought to the cemetery and eaten next to the ancestral grave. After that people pray, ask the ancestor's permission to tear down his house and then light up lamps and leave them there for two-three days. It is believed that these actions help to persuade the ancestor's spirit to respond kindly to the request and receive his blessing to tear down the old house and build a new one<sup>33</sup>.

A component of the linguistic units *dod zīngak*, *nān zīngak* is the lexeme *zīngak* "hearth ledge". The respondents, however, provided differing opinions regarding the lexical unit *nān zīngak*, literally mother's hearth ledge. One group stated that there is no such expression, while the other claimed that depending on the situation it can be used along with *dod zīngak*, literally "father's hearth ledge", and it can have an ironic or negative connotation (Nekushoeva 29). It should be noted that the phrases *dod zīngak* and *nān zīngak* may be employed in either a positive or negative manner: *xu dod zīngak ti-yum nūšč* "I'm in my father's house"; *yam na tu dod zīngak* "it's not your father's house". *Zīngak*, being a part of the hearth, in this context symbolizes home, because the hearth – *kicor* for centuries was and still is the center of the house, unifying the family and giving them warmth and light. In the same context subconsciously the lexemes *čīd*, *kicor*, *zīngak* identify concepts *family*, *parent's house*, *motherland*, *homeland*, *roots*, *childhood home*, *clan*.

31 Literally "he often washes his hands in our *poygá*".

32 Persian-Tajiki ob "water" and *xīn*, Persian-Tajiki *šin* present tense of "to sit".

33 Vasil'tsov K. S. "Alam-i-Sagīr": k voprosu o simvolike traditsionnogo pamiirskogo zhilisha". // Elektronnyaya biblioteka Muzeya antropologii i etnografii imeni Petra Velikogo (Kunstkamera), RAN, p. 164.



The terms *home* and *hearth* continue to have sacred status among Shughni people. Because the hearth is the place for fire – *yoc*, which since the beginning of time has been revered by cultures across the world, the Shughni treat it with particular reverence. The *hearth* and *fire* are sources of warmth, light, life, and is the place for cooking food and where all family members come together each day. For this reason, the space must always be kept clean. This almost cult-like attitude toward hearth and fire harkens back to ancient times. While analyzing the ceremonies and laws of the Zoroastrian religion, M. Boyce posits that many of these normative acts “... are likely rooted in Indo-Iranian period as they are similar for both Zoroastrians and Brahmans... Food must be prepared carefully, keeping the surfaces clean, and eaten with gratitude... Same thing with fire – for Zoroastrians it was unthinkable to burn trash”.<sup>34</sup>

The hearth, as a revered place, for a Shughni person is associated with the sanctity, honor and purity of the home. This is evident in the prohibition of jumping over a hearth “*kicor tar tīr ta nazibanen* (you must not jump over the hearth) or to step on it when it is closed “*kicor ti ta naniǰpen*” (you must not step on the hearth), “*ar kicor ta tuf nakinen*” (you must not spit in the hearth), as well as the ritual of *alowparak* “jumping over the hearth during Nawroz”, the process, which is believed to cleanse people of sin and evil spirits, demonstrate the high regard paid within Shughni communities to the hearth and fire. Such attitudes towards the home resting upon five columns representing the five saints – notable Islamic figures – and its hearth led to the development of a number of prohibitions and beliefs among Shughni people, which are to this day strictly adhered to. These prohibitions and beliefs continue to have a profound influence on the moral and ethical underpinnings of this ethnic community’s life.

The interior of a traditional Pamirian house was originally divided into several parts. There are two main sides, indicating gender roles. The one with the hearth – the female side – is dedicated to cooking of food, household chores, the raising of children; during weddings the bride is seated close to the hearth. On the opposite side, the *bārnêx* – a type of elevation – is placed. It is used for recreation and sleep; it is the place of honor and indicates the male space. From one side, is the abode of the female – *ǰinik*, *kaxoy* (woman), which can be *nān* (mother), *yax* (sister), *ǰin* (wife), *rizīn* (daughter), *xīǰ* (mother-in-law), *mūm* (grandmother), *nibês* (granddaughter), *xiyūn* (sister-in-law), *zinaǰ* (daughter-in-law) – is highly regarded (*kicor*) in a Pamirian house. On the opposite side, parallel to her, is the honorary place for the male – *čorik*, *mardinā* (man), which can be *tāt* (father), *virod* (brother), *čor* (husband), *puc* (son), *xisur* (father-in-law), *bob* (grandfather), *nibos* (grandson), *xisīrǰ* (brother-in-law), *dūmod* (son-in-law). Despite the strict division of the space, the masculine and feminine sides of Pamirian house are united on equal terms, reflecting the gender balance within humanity. The terms presented above are a crucial part of the semantic field of the concept of *jamāt* (family), (relatives), which in turn is closely connected to the concepts of *čīd* (house) and *kicor* (hearth). This connection between terms *house* and *family* is fundamental in understanding the two concepts, which “are eternal and significant in the consciousness and culture of mankind”<sup>35</sup>. In understanding the worldview of Shughni ethnic group such fundamental connection is vividly expressed in the semantics of the linguistic unit *čīdjamāt* (family members), (house residents), literally “house-family”: *tu čīd-jamāt-ard-um salūm lūd* (Tell your family I say hi!)<sup>36</sup>.

34 Boyce, Mery. *Zoroastriitsy. Verovaniya i obychai*. St-Petersburg: Peterburgskii tsentr vostokovedenie, 1994, p. 58.

35 Konstrubina I. A. “Tipy kontseptov: Giperkontsept semya – Dom”. *Vestnik Permskogo Universiteta (Rossyiskaya i Zarubezhnaya Filologiya)*. Vol. 6, No. 12, 2010, p. 51.

36 Karamshoev, D. *Shughni -Russian Dictionary*. Vol. III. Nauka, 1999, p. 374.

In the Shughni language picture of the world, the house also symbolizes the four elements of nature. The highest part of a Pamirian house is the *čorxūnā* – a four-level construction of the ceiling which encompasses the primal elements *zimāδ* (land), *ǰac* (water), *yoc* (fire) and *awo* (air). A crossbeam between the two columns adjacent to the entrance – *bučkiǰǰj* contains a carving of the sun – *xīr*. This context reflects the direct connection humans have with nature, the environment, animals and plants, and in a broad sense with the concept of life – *ayot*, *zindagi*. A Pamirian house can be viewed as embodiment of the earth and the universe, which are home to all of humanity. The entire cosmological as well as the ethical and philosophical underpinnings of the daily life of the Shughni people, as expressed in architectural elements of a traditional Pamirian house, are the source of their morals and traditions.

## 2. Representation of Concept *čīd* in Ceremonial Traditions

The center of the concept is its value, as the concept is closely connected to culture, the foundation of which is exactly the principle of value. As a general rule, the concept is presented as a circle, at the center of which is its core – its main understanding; and the circumference consists of things related to its culture, traditions, popular and personal experience<sup>37</sup>.

People construct houses places to spend their lives in, and in turn, this construction builds and influences the residents. The house, as an artifact, and its residents become one, and this is reflected in the everyday traditional rituals and ceremonies of the residents. The rituals and ceremonies related to a traditional Pamirian house, which accompany Shughnis from the moment of their birth, are so deeply rooted in their life that they begin to be reflected in their view of the world and the environment through the prism of linguistic units. These linguistic units, in turn, are endowed with collective wisdom, accumulated over centuries. With that in mind, an analysis of traditional-ceremonial aspects of the concept of the house based on Shughni language materials can identify the content of this concept in the way that it is reflected and fixed in the language. Almost every corner, every architectural element and process related to a house represents all components of the cultural and ethical aspects of the Shughni people's lives, their worldview and understanding. Therefore, within this section we attempt to analyze the meaning and significance of ceremonial traditions through the prism of a number of linguistic units reflecting and explaining components of the concept of the house in the Shughni language picture of the world.

The Shughni people associate the concept of the *house* with many religious and pagan beliefs. Numerous phrasal units present the house as a sacred artifact, a kind of temple, a ceremonial place of God. In the Western Pamirs, a traditional house is viewed by locals with an aureole of purity and righteousness of human existence, which is why many ceremonies and rituals are conducted within the space of *čīd*. Vasil'tsov K. S. writes that “Pamirian *čīd* is kind of a syncretic text that contains to a certain extent the ideas of Pamirians about the structure of the universe, which originates from both pre-Islamic beliefs and dogmas of Islam”.<sup>38</sup>

An interesting aspect of the research is the examination of linguistic representation of the concept of the house in the light of traditional ceremonies based on expressions and phrasal units. When building

37 Maslov V. A. *Vvedenie v kognitivnyuyu lingvistiku*. M.: Nauka, 2011, pp. 54-55.

38 Vasil'tsov K. S. “‘Alam-i-Sagir’: K voprosu o simbolike traditsionnogo pamirskogo zhilisha”. // Elektronnaya biblioteka Muzeya antropologii i etnografii imeni Petra Velikogo (Kunstkamera), RAN, p. 164.

a house, the Shughni people perform numerous ceremonies and traditions from the very start of the process to the point of moving in, which is reflected in certain linguistic units. Such phrases as *kiryār čīdow* (calling for help); *kiryār sidow* (coming to help) represent the centuries-old tradition in the Western Pamirs of helping a neighbor or a relative. Since long ago, peoples of the region have lived and worked communally, helping one another with difficult tasks. This tradition became such an important part of people's lives that it became one of the main components of the ethics in the region. The word, which originated from the Persian / Tajiki *kār-yār*, literally “work-friend”, i.e. helper, and has spread to all of the Pamirian languages.

Constructing a traditional Pamirian house, as with building any house, is a long and complicated process, which is why it is accompanied by numerous ceremonies and beliefs. Before commencing, the future owner of the house visits a religious leader (Shughni/ Rushani *xalīfā* < Arabic *xalīfā* (deputy, khalif, successor), to find out a favorable date to begin the construction – *soat-at zamūn fāmtow*. Shughnis, as with other ethnic groups in the Western Pamirs, believe that commencing construction on an unfavorable date will lead to the family not having peace, happiness and abundance in their house. This superstition is expressed via the phrase *nās rūzanden bulod weđj, osoyāxi di xūnayand nist* (that was an unfavorable day when they laid the foundation, as there is no peace in the house).

Since for the Shughni people a house is not simply an architectural object, but a microcosm of the universe, its construction is carefully planned, taking into consideration any subtleties of social and spiritual life and it is considered important to follow all traditions and ceremonies. Expressions *soat-at zamūn fāmtow* (specifying a favorable date) before commencing the construction; *dod//bob zamīn* (father's//grandfather's land) meaning choosing homeland as the place for future house; *s(i)traxm weđdow* (smoking an everlasting fragrant plant) when laying the foundation of the house; *qurbūni čīdow* (offering of a sacrificial lamb), *tangā ar bulod pitēwdow* putting coins into the foundation pit demonstrate the attitude toward one's house as a sacred space for establishing or strengthening the spiritual connection between a person and God or other supernatural creatures, as well as reflect the idea of setting the ground for wellness, prosperity and abundance of the future house at the very beginning of its construction.

In particular, there are a number of prohibitions among Shughni people relating to the interior of a house itself, failure to observe these can harm the peace and happiness of the family living there. It is believed that one must not whistle inside – *tar čīd ta xēlak nakinen*, or clap – *tar čīd ta čapak nađen*, or crush nuts or bones (or something similar) in the evening – *xūm ta tar čīd xoj yo bojak najuken*. According to Pamirians' superstition, breaking these rules can drive angels away and summon evil spirits into the home – *farihtagūn tiyen at dew at jin jām sen* (angels leave, but demons and *jinn* enter). Such prohibitions demonstrate that Shughni view the house as a protective shell for those residing within, so they in turn by creating and adhering to a system of rules and behavioral norms ensure that the wellbeing of the space and aura of the house are maintained. In addition, there are also various amulets and magical tools for the protection of the household. For instance, in Bartang we found a house, where we saw on the beam between two columns next to the entrance – *bučkiyīj* – a dead animal's bone. The house was so old that no one there could remember who had placed the bone on the beam, or to which animal it belonged, or even who built the house in the first place. However, the residents continue to believe that the bone protected their house and them from jinxes and curses – *cem čīdow* “to jinx”, “to curse”. Most likely, the bone belonged to a sacrificial animal, or a wild *argali* sheep, which is considered to be a holy animal, killed during a hunt.



Photo 5. The main column in a traditional Pamirian house  
(from the author's archive, Khorog city, 2009).

We believe that the ritual of wrapping a rope around the main column *ǰāsitan*, which was used in traditional sacrifices, is also regarded as an amulet – a warding charm<sup>39</sup>. Pamiris believe that sleeping close to *ǰāsitan* can cause one to feel unwell and to have nightmares. This is the basis for the Pamiri superstition “*ǰāsitan bīrand ǰēvdow wazmin*” (it is hard to sleep next to the *ǰāsitan*). For this reason, during the Kurban<sup>40</sup> holiday a sacrificial ritual is performed, and then the woven rope around the killed sheep's neck is thrown into the gathered crowd. Whoever catches it, may take it home and wrap it around the main column, thus ensuring the spiritual safety of their house. Since the rope was a part of a very important ritual, it is now considered to be a magical protective amulet. If there is no such rope in the house, *ǰāsitan* is wrapped with any red cloth, as, according to Shughni belief, the color red wards off evil spirits. It should be noted that traditionally the main column was made from juniper wood (*ambaǰc*). This tree is thought to have holy properties and protective powers. Collectively, the choice of wood for the main column and the ritual of wrapping a rope around it magnify the significance of the column's role as a protector of the order, peace and prosperity in the house and its family.

One of the key representatives of the concept of the house in the Shughni language is the lexeme *kicor* (hearth), which is the center in many ceremonial traditions. In particular, the hearth ledge – *zīngak* – is considered to be the place of honor. Such lexical units indicating the Shughni ritual of showing respect to hearth as: *dod zīngak* (literally “father's hearth ledge”, meaning home, *zīngak daryeftow* or *zīngak daryov ċīdow* (literally “pay respect to the hearth ledge”, *zīngak ti bā ċīdow* (literally “kiss

<sup>39</sup> Shohumorov A. In his work “Хонаи пайравони ростин” writes that from Aryan times the main column was miyendvīšcin (strapped). Even Zoroaster, conveying Ahura Mazda's words to humans, says that Surush strapped a belt around his waist and stood guard over Mazda's creation (129-130).

<sup>40</sup> Eid al-Adha.

the hearth ledge”) reflect the centuries-old cultural and behavioral experiences of Pamiris. These ceremonies and rituals served as the basis for the formation of such superstitions as: *kicor tartir ta naziban-en* “you must not jump over the hearth”, *kicor ti ta na-nixp-en* “you must not step on the hearth (when it is covered)”; *ar kicor ta tuf na-kin-en* “you must not spit in the hearth” or *zīngak ti ta naniḡ-ên, yid fariḡtā joy* “you must not sit on the hearth ledge, it is a place for an angel”. These taboos demonstrate sanctity and cult-like function of hearth, breaking them was viewed as a desecration of a sacred place.

A new bride leaving her parents’ house and stepping into her husband’s home would hear words: *ar čīz ca-vud to šičec xu dod zīngak ti lāk* (everything that you had in your life – leave it on your father’s hearth ledge). Such advice reflects centuries-old, cultural-behavioral experience, ethical norms and virtues that support the societal order, like respecting rules in somebody else’s home, deferential attitude toward fiancé’s family, ability to accept new or others’ customs and way of life.

The units *zīngak daryēftow* “worship of hearth”; *barakati zēxtow* “take abundance and blessings (of father’s house)”; *naql čīdow* “tell stories (by the hearth)”; *sūg lūvdow* “tell fairy tales (by the hearth)” point at the perception of hearth as an axis – divine center of a house among the Western Pamiri peoples. If a family member is departing the home for a long period of time, they always do the ritual of “bowing to the hearth” – a tradition, which is expressed by the units *zīngak daryēftow / zīngak daryov čīdow*. This tradition is performed by placing the fingers of both hands on the hearth ledge, followed by the lips and then the forehead. Then the person asks their father or mother, or other elder in the house to bless the trip – *duo zēxtow* – literally to “take a prayer”, by reading a prayer from the Quran or a special prayer for sending someone off or for doing something important. When leaving her parents’ house, a new bride also performs this ritual<sup>41</sup>. In this case, the bride approaches an incense (Shug.-Rush. *s(i)traxm* “fragrant plant (Anaphalis)”), which has been lit on the *zīngak* – the hearth ledge. She holds out both hands to the incense, then brings them to her face as if washing the smoke over it, or puts her fingers to her lips, then to forehead praising God and asking for his blessing. After her the groom repeats the same steps to show his gratitude and respect to the hearth of his future father-in-law’s house. It is believed that juniper’s smoke wards off evil spirits from a house and from a traveler’s path. Burning the plant is a very popular practice among all of the Western Pamir’s ethnic groups. According to superstition, along with warding off evil spirits *s(i)traxm* also helps in producing a sound atmosphere in the house and ensures success of all family affairs. For this reason, juniper is burned during various events and milestones, from births to funerals, making it an important part of people’s lives in the Western Pamir. Juniper is believed to have a sacred origin, connected to the name of the first Shia Imam Ali (a), who is highly revered among the Shia population in Pamir. Legend has it that, once upon a time Imam Ali walked waterless and deserted valleys of Pamir. He was so hot and tired that sweat was dripping down his body, and where it touched the ground, junipers grew. The sacral status of the plant among modern Shughni people is connected to this legend and the first Imam’s name. However, we have a reason to believe that juniper worship is related to the fire cult, the origin of which stretches back to pre-Islamic period. Perhaps, Shughni, like all ethnic groups of the Western Pamirs, used juniper in the process of ancient Aryan fire sacrifice, which consisted of the three elements: “the sacrifice must be performed with dry clean firewood, incense (dry leaves or herbs) and a little bit of animal fat...The fire grows strong with the help of two offerings from

41 Yusufbekova Z. *Svadba vntri odnoy bolshoy sem’i v Shughnane*. 2nd ed. Pamirovedenie, 1985, p. 243.

plants and one from the animal kingdom”<sup>42</sup>. It should be noted that similar practices continue among Shughni people, who usually burn juniper on hot coals – *ŷêž* as part of fire taken from the hearth just before performing the ritual of bowing to the hearth. Additionally, when burning crushed juniper in the house, Shughni people add some animal fat into the mix. This superstition is reflected in the linguistic unit *nomolt s(i)traxm ta na weđen!* (how can you ignite fragrant plant without crushing it and adding fat!) It indicates that burning the plant when it is dry in the house is strictly prohibited. Although Shughni people today believe that the reason is that dry juniper does not burn well, we believe that the lack of one of the original elements of the ancient sacrificial ceremony – *fat*, is the reason for forbidding the burning of dry incense.

Another thing to note is that according to Pamiris’ believes, this ritual must be performed before the sunset, if not, the scent will attract angels, who must leave the Earth in the evening – *fariḡtagûn as xu pûnd gārđen* (angels are returning). Similar parallels of this kind of injunction can be found in the Avesta, where in the hymn Ardvi-Sura answering Zarathustra’s question “How should I pray to you and what sacrifices should I give?” she says:

Ardvi answered:  
 “Truly, Spitama.  
 Read this prayer,  
 Bring this sacrifice,  
 Tasting libation,  
 From sunrise to sunset...”<sup>43</sup>

Answering Zarathustra’s question “What happens to sacrifices given to you after the sunset?” she says:

Truly, Spitama...  
 Devi are going back for their offerings  
 After the sunset...<sup>44</sup>

The tradition of burning fragrant plants in a house, which was very popular during the Zoroastrian period, continues to be prevalent among the various ethnicities in Central Asia. Different peoples consider different plants to have holy properties: wild rue, juniper, cayenne, frankincense, dog-rose, etc. In the hymn of Avesta answering the question “If a person or a dog dies in a house, what Mazda’s followers should do?” Ahura Mazda responds: “They must take the corpse out of the house and without touching anything inside burn incense like sandalwood, benzoin or any other fragrant plant...”<sup>45</sup>. Such rituals are referenced throughout the Avesta. In the case of the Western Pamirs, *s(i)traxm* is the fragrant plant that is used daily as well as during various ceremonies such as funerals. The Pamirian ritual *jūr s(i)traxm weḡdow* (literally to place double fragrant plant) is performed during a funeral-memorial ceremony by placing on two sides of the hearth ledge metal plates with a handful of hot ashes and crushed fragrant plant *s(i)traxm* infused in oil.

42 Boyce, Mery. *Zoroastriitsy. Verovaniya i obychai*. St-Petersburg: Peterburgskii tsentr vostokovedenie, 1994, p. 14.

43 *Avesta. “Zakon Protiv Devov”* (Videvdat). Translated by E. V. Rtveldze and A. K. Saidov, E.V. Abdullaev. Izdatelstvo Politechnical University, 2008, p. 43.

44 *Ibid.*, p. 44.

45 *Ibid.*, p. 156.

Elders' advise the youth: *xu zīngak daryov kin* (show respect to the hearth) (literally “to the earth ledge”). This is an attempt to foster in children gratitude for having a home, warmth and comfort and to cultivate patriotism. At the same time, it is a remnant of ancient times, which contains information about traditions of the fire and hearth cult once dominant among Pamiris.

Expressions *ba nūmi Xuḍoy zīngak ti yičīz ribīdow* (in God's name offer something to the hearth ledge); *ba nūmi arwo zīngak ti yičīz ribīdow* (in the name of the ancestral spirit put something on the hearth ledge); *murḡā bāx̄ ziwēstow* (take out the share of the deceased), are vivid examples of echoes of ancient traditions connected to sacrificial offerings to the hearth in fire cults. As a rule, if someone is going to bring something out of their house – in most cases a treat, like a *garḍā* bread – in God's name (*ba nūmi Xuḍoy*) or in the name of a deceased family member *ba nūmi arwo* (ancestral spirit), then they would first put the offering on the hearth ledge to consecrate it and then bring it outside and offer it to the first person he sees.

Another tradition that continues to be widespread involves bringing out the last share of food a deceased person (*murḡā bāx̄ ziwēstow* – bringing out the deceased's share). Before removing a deceased person from their house for burial, their share in the form of flour and salt is put on the hearth ledge and then brought out of the house and given to the first person on the street. Only after that is the body brought out. Often if a family member is far away, the women of the house perform similar rituals giving away the family member's “share” to the first person they see outside. Expressions *ḍust juktow* or *zīngak ti ḍust juktow* (“hitting with a hand” or “hitting the hearth ledge”) reflect the strength of faith in otherworldly power of hearth among ethnicities in the West Pamirs. The ritual is performed by striking the hearth ledge three times while cursing a person who has done something bad. The curse can be strengthened by burning fragrant plants on two sides of the hearth ledge *jūr s(i)traxm weḍdow*. Belief in the power of this ritual is so strong that performing it is frowned upon, and if the target of the curse hears about it, they become terrified and try to diminish the situation by offering apologies – *baxiḡ tilāptow*. Expressions such as *damardum (dirḍum) xu ḍust jukt, yid ta barakat navired* (I strike the hearth ledge so she (he) won't find salvation) demonstrates Shughni people's conviction that the curse is effective and irreversible.

The ritual *barakati zēxtow* (take abundance and prosperity (of one's father's house)) is that before (and in some places to this day) a new bride would place a handful of ashes (*ḡīr*) from the hearth of her home into a sock and take it with her into her husband's home for protection from evil spirits. It was said that by doing so the bride takes with her the prosperity and blessings of her parents' house (*barakati dod čīd zēxtow // yēdow* – “take blessings of the father's house”). We can see here traces of the fire cult and the tradition of worshipping the hearth. The rituals and ceremonies conducted at the hearth ledge vividly demonstrate that Shughni view their hearth as a sacred place and its ledge as an altar in the house.

Until recently, a Shughni family during cold winter nights would have traditional gatherings called *naql čīdow* telling stories (by the hearth); *sūg lūvdow* “telling fairy tales (by the hearth)” – a custom, which stretches back to ancient times and reflects living truth, living memory that connects a family with their past and their ancestors. When the fire has burned out, but the hearth is still warm, children and adults would hold their feet over it and tell interesting or intimate tales, important events from their lives or from the lives of their ancestors, religious legends or educational fairy tales. Such

traditions might be the reason behind the existence of expert storytellers among the Shughni people. The essence and significance of the custom can be found in the old generation's expressions such as: *Yu dis bašānd naqligār vud* (he was a master storyteller) or *Wi doḡga sūglūvij Xuynūn-and navud* (here was no match to his storytelling skills in all of Shughni). For centuries during such gatherings the hearth was a place, where all family members would unite; a place for education and cultivation of moral-ethical values in the younger generation; a place, where the past and the present met, slowly but steadily establishing the foundations for a successful future. Because the Pamiri languages are unwritten, to a certain extent this tradition of *gathering by the hearth* can be credited with preserving ancient ceremonies and historical information.

Two parallel spaces in a Pamirian house – *kicor* (the hearth), along with *zīngak* (the hearth ledge) on the one side, and *bārnêx* (the main platform along the wall) on the other, reflect gender values and norms based on complementary roles of all family members, both male and female. These values among peoples of the Western Pamirs have been accumulated for centuries, establishing behavioral norms and societal rules. Within a traditional house a certain kind of atmosphere is created, a space that identifies and allocates roles to men and women.

*Bārnêx* – a platform bed is located next to the entrance parallel to the hearth and is considered to be the main place of honor in a Pamirian house. This spot belongs to the male half of a family. Traditionally, during a wedding as a sign of respect guests and the groom are seated there. In the Shughni language the term *bār* pertains to width or height. This platform bed is not higher or wider than other platforms along walls in the house, but because it is connected to the main column, it is considered to be an honorary spot. Expressions *yu ta bār-and dūnd nīḡt* (literally “he sits only in the honored place) or *yu bārnixīn* (one offered pride of place) has an ironic subtext and is used to mock a conceited person.



Photo 6. *Bārnêx* – an honorary platform along wall  
(from the author's archive, Khorog city, 2009).



*Bār* – an honorary position connected to the foundation of the main platform *bārnêx* is considered to be exclusively a place for the religious clerk, the *pīr*, after whom the *xalīfā* – another member of Islamic clergy – is seated. Even if a *pīr* is not present in a house, the position still remains empty to emphasize his spiritual significance. Occupying this seat is considered to be a mark of disrespect toward the *pīr*. A common phrase among Shughni speakers is *bār-and nêδdow* (to seat someone in the honored position) or *bār-and nistow* (to occupy the honorary position). But here it indicates not only the part connected to the foundation itself but the entire space, which in the Shughni language is referred to as *bārnêx*. The phrases *bār-and def nêδ-et* (seat them at the place of honor); *as bār sifān-et* (please, have a seat on the *bār* – the honorary spot) are used to express respect and hospitality toward guests. At the same time both hosts and guests understand that the *bār* spot must be left empty.

The foundation bed is also a part of such ceremonies as *sartarošûn*<sup>46</sup> “dressing the groom” during a wedding. This ritual is accompanied by a long traditional singing of *dāfsoz*, where the only musical instruments used are tambourines and the performance is done by men only. A groom’s retinue is made up entirely of the men too. Muslim wedding ceremony *niko* – is done in the bride’s house, specifically at the historically assigned to her part of the house *kicor* (the hearth). During the past, when performing a *niko* ceremony – an Islamic wedding ceremony – some animal fat and a piece of bread (varied depending of the region) were placed in a bowl of water, which was then covered with a rolling-pin and a white cloth and placed on top of the hearth ledge as a sacrificial offering. After this, the bowl was passed around amongst the ceremony’s participants. It was likely done to pay respect to the home hearth and to consecrate the objects used in the ceremony. In the *bārnêx* zone, a religious member *xalīfā* performed his ceremony, who usually read an *ayah* from the Quran over the bowl. Following this, both groom and bride drank the water and took a bite from the sacrificial fat.

In the same area of a house another ritual *cirowpidid* “lighting of a candle on the third night after a funeral”<sup>47</sup> is performed. During this ceremony a religious clerk – *xalīfā* is seated near the *bār*, but the place next to him dedicated to the higher title member of priesthood – *pīr*, remains empty, despite the fact that this level of clergy is no longer present among the local population. In some cases, a piece of cerement, which after a funeral ceremony *cirowpidid* is used as a prayer mat – *jonamoz*, is placed on that spot. Because the cerement of a deceased person is considered to be pure and chaste, a piece of it is suitable to be used as a praying mat and as a symbolic placeholder for an Islamic clerk.

Another notable tradition is *Madoxûni* – singing religious songs during a funeral ceremony or other religious events also happens on the main platform in a Pamirian house, as it is performed by men exclusively.

An interesting fact is that almost all ceremonial traditions performed on the male side of a house – *bārnêx*, are of Islamic nature, while the rituals performed at the hearth, in particular its ledge – the female side of a house are remnants of ancient pre-Islamic times.

A characteristic feature of a Pamirian house is its multi-functionality – a result of the firmly established organization of the interior design, which is reflected in many linguistic units. Such expressions as *kaxoy joy pi kicor* lit. “a woman’s place is at the hearth”; *bār-and ta xalīfā nêδ-en* “a *xalīfa* must

46 Shug. to Taj. sar “head”, *taroš* present time “shave”, Suf. –ûn to Taj. –on.

47 Due to relatively recent religious-ceremonial reforms the procedure of the ritual was slightly changed. Currently, the lighting of a funeral ceremonial candle is done on the second day after reading evening *namaz* before midnight.

be seated at the place of honor”, i.e. on *bārnêx* – the main platform; *bārnêx memûn joy* “*bārnêx* is a place for guests”; *wi/wam joy divi-zibo* lit. “his/her place is behind the door”; *as bār naǰǰiset* “have a seat on *bār*”; *ǰūncī (y)at niwenc ta voǰnêxsitan xezand nêden* “the bride and groom are to be seated near the column of elongated platform”; *kūdak ta ǰāsitan xezand aǰêzen* “a newborn should sleep next to the king-column” vividly demonstrate the strict, almost canonical organization of the space in a traditional Pamirian house. To resolve any social issues in a traditional house people used to put up a low narrow partition *bozparûn* (*boz* “falcon” *parûn* from Taj. *paridan* “to fly”), which was connected to *kicorsitan* “the hearth column”. According to respondents such construction was intended for choosing a leader, the head person in the issue at hand. The procedure usually proceeded thus: after all men were seated on *bārnêx*, a falcon (*boz*) was brought into the house and put on top of this low narrow partition. It was then set free. Whoever’s shoulder the falcon chooses to seat on, is then elected as the leader of the present affairs.



Photo 7. *Bozparûn* – low, narrow partition on the hearth  
(A. Shoinbelov’s archive. Captured on the left bank of the Panj river, Afganistan, 2019.)<sup>48</sup>

It should be noted that two parallel sides in a traditional Pamirian house – *kicor* “the hearth” and *bārnêx* “the platform across the hearth”, while on the one hand divide the space onto the male and female side, on the other hand are two equal parts of a common house. Since ancient times, Pamiris have enjoyed equality, and women always had a strong presence in the culture and were never considered to be lower in status to men. On the contrary a woman was her man’s partner and his companion for life. But a woman was brought up to be obedient and respectful to her husband and to the elders of her family. In Pamiri society a woman was always respected, and at home she was a mother, sister, daughter-in-law. The oldest woman in a family always had a say in various events and day-to-day affairs. However, despite the equal value of both male and female sides, the most important person in a house was the oldest in the family. Such linguistic units as *xu katanak ta niǰuǰen* (listen to your elder); *be katanak maslāt ta kor nakinen* (you must not do anything without the elder’s advice); *māš čīd katanak* (the elder of our house); (*diyen*) *katanakenen lūd* the elders said (so)); *katanak ta fāmt*

<sup>48</sup> Photo from Aloviddin Shoinbekov’s archive was captured in a traditional Pamirian house on the left bank of the Panj river, Badakhshan, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in 2019 during a scientific expedition. Same construction can also be found in old traditional Pamirian houses on the right side of the Panj river. We found a house with *bozparûn* in the Roshtkal’a Valley during scientific expeditions of 2014-2016; the older generation of Shughni speakers confirmed previously its existence in traditional houses and its main function.

(the elder knows what to do) are said in regards to both genders and reflect the hierarchical system of power among family members. If for some reasons there is no male elder in a family, then advice is sought from the oldest woman. At the same time a man, regardless of his age – be he a kid, young adult or an old man – is always treated as an important, significant family member. Such position of man both in family and society is reflected in the phrase *mardinā buzurg* (man is important – in his standing, in birth), therefore it is frowned upon for women to speak badly of men or to mistreat them.

Thus, an analysis of the lexical units expressing significance and place of two parallel spaces – the hearth and the main platform – showcases that despite the strict division between the spaces of different family members, a Pamirian house unites on equal terms both genders, demonstrating their equality in the creation of humanity. All components of linguistic units show that the hearth, as the female space and the altar for numerous rituals, and the main platform, as the male space and place for performing vital ceremonies, are both highly regarded parts of a Pamirian house – *čīd*.

Numerous ceremonies and traditions, which have also played a major role in the moral and ethical aspects of Pamiris' lives, can be seen in the attitude toward the five columns. The columns, as discussed previously, are the physical and moral support of a Pamirian house and its residents. A number of traditions and rituals reflect a characteristic emotional-behavioral attitude of Shughni people toward their home, in particular, the five columns. The main column is *xāsitan* “king-column”<sup>49</sup>. Rituals and beliefs associated with it demonstrate its importance and significance for the family living in a house. As soon as a builder finishes the construction of a house, he hits the main column three times with his hand or in some cases with the head of his hatchet<sup>50</sup> and exclaims: *Mustākam vi!* (Be strong!) During an earthquake a family member would fling their arms around it and pray to heaven: *A Xuđoy osoyaxi nasib kin!* (Oh God, send us peace!) And when a misfortune happens or a family member dies, usually the oldest woman in the house hits the main column and cries out: *Tut xu panoyand nigā načūd* (You didn't protect us!) Such behavioral reactions toward the main column are reflections of its significance and importance in the life of a family. Shughni people believe in its protective power so much that such polemic expressions attest to firm conviction of the language speakers in the column's shielding properties.

Not long ago anyone who enters a house, including the owners, would greet the main column as a sign of respect even if there was no one else around. Eventually this Pamiri tradition changed, and it is now more common to witness during a mournful day, like *cirowpiđid* “the ritual of lighting a candle on the third night after funeral”. During this Shughni ceremony a person, who enters the house would touch *bārnēxsitan* with both hands and greet it, and then kiss the fingers and place them onto the forehead. Short speeches and acts like this, although obviously one-sided, demonstrate that Shughni people view the columns almost as living objects.

The next important column in a Pamirian house is *vožznēxsitan*, inserted at the end of the oblong platform bed – *vožznēx*<sup>51</sup>. Long before the Islamic period this column embodied Zoroastrian angel of love Mehr.<sup>52</sup> After conversion to Islam, *vožznēxsitan* began to represent the first Ismaili Imam – Ali. According to Pamiri beliefs this column symbolizes the deity of love and peace. For this reason,

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49 Shohumorov A. *Pamir – Strana Ariev*. Dushanbe, Donish, 1997, pp. 128-131.

50 Vasiltsov K. S. “Alam-i-Sagir”: K voprosu o simbolike traditsionnogo pamirskogo zhilisha // Elektronnaya biblioteka Muzeya antropologii n etnografii imeni Petra Velikogo (Kunstkamera), RAN, p. 163.

51 *vožz* (oblong), *nēx* (bed).

52 Shohumorov A. *Pamir – Strana Ariev*. Dushanbe, Donish, 1997, pp. 131-132.

during a wedding, when the groom brings the bride into his house, they are seated next to it in the hope that it will bring peace and a love that will last their entire lives.

The column of the right side of the entrance, which is located on the hearth of the house, Pamiris call *kicorsitan* “the hearth column” or *kampīrsitan* “old-lady column”.<sup>53</sup> Among Pamiris this column represents the prophet’s daughter Fatima, and during the pre-Islamic period it symbolized the deity of fertility, water and patron of women Anahita. Fatima is considered to be the guardian of the hearth, women’s patron and a symbol of purity and piety. The fifth Yasht of Avesta is dedicated to Anahita, who is pure and unsoiled. Ahura Mazda mentions this about the goddess:

She was created by me, Mazda,  
For prosperity of a *house*,  
A village and a region.  
She was created to protect,  
To support and guard,  
She was created to save  
The region and the country.<sup>54</sup>

In the worldview of Pamiris *kicorsitan* “the hearth column” also serves as protection, especially for women and children. This column is a guardian of the hearth and fire, a symbol of warmth and light, which represent prosperity of a house. Ancient Aryans pictured her as a beautiful attractive creature wearing precious jewelry. A Shughni bride would be dressed next to this column: *niwenta kicorsitan xezand šay kinen* (the bride is dressed near the hearth column); and during the wedding ceremony she would be seated next to the column too.

Two other columns located on both sides of the corridor to the veranda – *poygāsitan* and *bārnēxsitan* according to Islamic interpretation symbolize the sons of Imam Ali – Hasan and Husein<sup>55</sup>. During the pre-Islamic period *poygāsitan* represented the deity of land called Zamyad, and *bārnēxsitan* personified the god of fire, Ozar. Hence the connection with the ground, i.e. with *poygā* “the floor in a traditional house”, is identified only in case of the column symbolizing the deity of land. There is no connection between the other four columns and the ground as they are inserted inside the platform bed (*sānj* “beams on the sides of a bed”). As previously discussed, the *bārnēxsitan* column is believed to be a symbol of warmth and fire, and the place next to it is considered to be honorary. The space between the two columns is also a part of ceremonial traditions. The expression *jumāndīrum arwogūn zoxt xu yatum* (On Friday I took the spirit of an ancestor and came here) is a Shughni code. It is a behavioral guide, because upon hearing it from a person entering the house, the host cannot easily refuse the guest. The ritual is conducted as follows: a guest entering a house stops between the two columns *poygāsitan* and *bārnēxsitan*, says the above phrase and asks the host a favor. Usually it is used to ask for a daughter’s hand, but it may also be some other matter, for instance, asking for forgiveness. The expression *yuyi mu dupečā anjūvd, nay lūvdowum wurd navārδod* (he stood between the two columns<sup>56</sup>, and I could not say no) also demonstrates the significance of the space for Shughni language speakers. The columns are connected together with *bučkičij* – a wooden cross-cut carved beam, and represent land and fire (see photo 8 and 9). The beam connecting the columns is always

53 Shohumorov A. *Pamir – Strana Ariev*. Dushanbe, Donish, 1997, pp. 135-135.

54 Ibid., p. 184.

55 Ibid., pp. 135-137.

56 Literally *dupečā* – a narrow and short corridor between the entrance and the two columns.



Photo 8 and 9: *Bučkiĵj* – the beam between the two columns in a traditional Pamirian house (the second photo was captured in a new-structure house, the first one – in an old-structure house).

covered with symbolic carvings of the sun or swastika, which manifests light, warmth, prosperity and kindness, or four elements and four directions. Traditionally, *argali* horns (Shug.-Rush. *naxčīr xoǎ*) would be hung on the beam, because this animal symbolized purity and chastity. The space between the two columns was likely seen as some sort of arch, the dome of the sky, where the mentioned symbols render it sacred, making it almost impossible for a Shughni person to refuse a favor asked of them there.

Each of the five columns has a name reflecting the language picture of the world of each of the ethnicities. In particular, these columns' names are influenced by their spiritual functions and locations. The columns symbolize the purity and sanctity of a traditional Pamirian house, and their mere existence practically gives the house the status of a temple. On the one hand, the architectural elements are necessary for the building's sturdiness and are predetermined by the geographical peculiarities of the region, but, on the other hand, they are imbued with centuries of accumulated moral and ethical beliefs of the Pamiris, their beliefs in interrelation between humans and their natural environment.

The entire cosmological as well as ethical and philosophical aspects expressed through the architectural elements, such as the two parallel sides of the space, the hearth, the five columns, etc. are a source of morals and traditions in the daily life of a Shughni family. The peoples of the Western Pamirs constructed their houses with their understanding of the principles of the universe, nature's laws, behavioral norms with regard to each other and as a society, and in turn, their houses, which were passed down through the generations, formed Pamiris as individuals and taught them life lessons.

The linguistic units representing the concept of the house reflect the cultural specificities of Shughni language speakers. These linguistic units semantically encompass the historical worldview of Shughni people, expressed in their traditions and relics. The entire linguistic foundation of the semantic field of the concept house in the Shughni language displays the moral and ethical values of the speakers, which they practice in their houses, and which have for centuries shaped their way of life. For this reason, in the context of rapid globalization, both traditional ceremonies and related lexical units, which are on the verge of extinction, require preservation and academic attention. This issue is paramount to the linguistic field and the scientific world.

## Glossary

- āli bayt* – members of the family (Prophet Mohammad)
- ambaǰc* – juniper
- arwogūn nosoyaǰ sen* – the spirits of the ancestors will become worried
- arwogūn qār kinen* – the spirits of the ancestors will become offended
- awo* – air
- ayot, zindagi* – life
- barakat* – grace
- barakati zēǰtow* – to accept the abundance and grace of one's parents' house
- bār-and nēǰdow* – to bestow someone with pride of place
- bār-nēǰsitan* – pillar at the base of the main platform bed of a traditional Pamirian house
- baxiǰ tilāptow* – apologize
- bob* – grandfather
- bob zamīn* – grandfather's land
- bob zimāǰ* – the land of one's ancestors, homeland
- boboyi čīd* – one's ancestral home
- bozparūn* – a construction, narrow partition at the hearth
- bučkiǰij* – crossbar between two pillars at the house' entrance
- bulodi kor* – fundamental matter (i.e. house construction)
- bunā* – in Tajik. *buna* house, nest
- buzurg* – saint
- buzurgi* – sanctity
- čālak* – a step in front of the hearth
- čīd* – house, traditional Pamirian house
- čīd tar čīd* – from one house to another
- čīd(d)or* – house owner
- čīdaki* – a member of the household
- čīdbūn* – house guardian
- čīdedi* – housewarming party
- čīdjamāt* – family members, household
- cirowpiǰid* – the ritual of lighting candles after a funeral
- čor* – husband
- čorik, mardinā* – man
- čorsitan čīdow* – installation of four pillars
- čorxūnā* – four level ceiling construction of Pamirian houses
- dāfsoz* – traditional singing with a tambourine
- dar at palandar // dar at dargad* – house, living place; a yard with apartments
- dargad* – household, courtyard of noble yard, large yard
- dod čīd* – father's house
- dod zimāǰ* – father's land, father's house
- dod zīngak* – father's house
- dūmod* – son-in-law
- duo zēǰtow* – receive a blessing, literally, take a pray
- dupečā* – narrow and short corridor from the door to two pillars
- emūn* – faith, also honor and conscience
- fariǰtā* – angel
- garmi* – warmth
- jamāt* – family
- janjoli čīd* – a moot house
- jonamoz* – prayer rug
- katanak* – the eldest
- kicor* – hearth
- kicōrsitan* – pillar on top of hearth, literally, fire-pillar
- kiryār čīdow* – call for help
- kiryār sidow* – respond to call for help
- madoxūni* – singing religious songs
- mālā* – room, flat
- mardinā buzurg* – man is noble
- mazab* – religion
- mūm* – grandmother
- nān* – mother
- nān zīngak* – mother's house
- naql čīdow* – story telling (stories by the hearth);
- naxčīr xoǰ* – argali (wild sheep) horns
- nex* – platform beds along walls
- nibēs* – granddaughter
- nibos* – grandson
- niko* – Muslim betrothal

<i>niwenc</i> – bride	<i>tartīb at nizūm</i> – order and coherency
<i>obxīn</i> – wastewater pit	<i>tāt</i> – father,
<i>osoyaǰi</i> – rest, peace	<i>tawfīq</i> – success
<i>palandar</i> – household, house, yard	<i>tozagi</i> – cleanness
<i>panj tani pok</i> – “five saints”	<i>virod</i> – brother
<i>pīnǰ sitan</i> – five pillars to hold the Pamirian house’ roof	<i>voǰznēxsitan</i> – elongated platform bed of the Pamirian house
<i>pīr</i> – cleric, special title	<i>widūm</i> – ceiling
<i>piyīl suǰjin</i> – blessed property	<i>wūs</i> – ceiling beams
<i>piyīl čīdow</i> – elders’ blessings, e.g. for new house, land, etc.	<i>ǰac</i> – water
<i>pok</i> – spiritually clean	<i>xalīfā</i> – religious cleric, <i>khalif</i>
<i>pomeri čīd</i> – Pamirian house	<i>ǰarm</i> – shame
<i>poygā</i> – the lowest part of Pamirian house	<i>ǰāsitan</i> – main pillar
<i>poygāsitan</i> – one of two pillars, interconnected by a beam at the entrance of traditional Pamirian house.	<i>xisīrǰ</i> – husband’s brother, sister’s husband
<i>puc</i> – son	<i>xisur</i> – father-in-law
<i>qurbūni čīdow</i> – ritual animal sacrifice	<i>xīǰ</i> – mother-in-law
<i>rizīn</i> – daughter	<i>xiyūn</i> – sister-in-law
<i>rūǰ</i> – a hole in the ceiling of the traditional house	<i>xok</i> – land
<i>s(i)traxm</i> – fragrant plant (Anaphalis)	<i>Xudoy</i> – God
<i>s(i)traxm weǰdow</i> – fumigation of fragrant plant (Anaphalis)	<i>yagūnagi</i> – unity
<i>sānj</i> – beams along the edge of platform beds	<i>yax</i> – sister
<i>sartarošūn</i> – groom dressing ritual	<i>yoc</i> – fire
<i>seri</i> – satiety	<i>zinaǰ</i> – daughter-in law, son’s wife
<i>sitan</i> – pillar	<i>ziryot</i> – children
<i>soat-at zamūn fāmtow</i> – specifying favorable date and time	<i>zīngak ti ǰust juktow</i> – punch on the ledge of the hearth
<i>sūǰ lūvdow</i> – telling fairy tales (at the hearth)	<i>ǰēǰ</i> – hot coal
<i>sunat</i> – tradition	<i>ǰīn</i> – wife
<i>tartīb</i> – order	<i>ǰīnik, kaxoy</i> – woman
	<i>ǰīr</i> – sacred ash
	<i>zīngak</i> – ledge of hearth
	<i>zīngak daryēftow</i> – hearth worship



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