The people of Balti are Shia Muslims, and have a population numbering around five
acs (five hundred thousand). They, live in both the Ladakh region of the Indian State of
Jammu and Kashmir and Baltistan region of Northern Pakistan. Although they
discarded it long ago, the Tibetan script was once the indigenous script of the Balti
people, and they used it to write both their written language and their spoken dialect.
This script was popularly known as Bodhi or Pot-yik. The Baltis stopped using
the Tibetan script when the area became Islamic in the 15th Century AD. Thereafter,
Tibetan script—which the Baltis see as being the Buddhist script—was lost due to the
influence of the Islamic religion and culture. Although this changes occurred politically
and culturally, the Shias of both Ladakh and Baltistan continued to converse in Balti, a
dialect of the greater Tibetan language and literature. This trend has continued since their
adoption of the Muslim culture and religion in the early 15th Century. Interestingly,
unlike the Tibetan or Ladakhi people, Baltis have preserved the essence of their
former Tibetan written scripture in their pronunciation of the Balti language. A case
study will be made.