



## DAWTĀNĪ

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**DAWTĀNĪ** (or Daftānī, sg. Dawtānay/Daftānay), Pashtun tribe of the Lōdī confederation, still mainly nomadic. The Dawtānī have sometimes been included among the Lōḥānī tribes because of common migratory patterns (*Gazetteer of Afghanistan* VI, pp. 162-64). All indigenous accounts point to a wholly independent status, however (Ḥayāt Khan, p. 183; Šēr Moḥammad Khan, p. 222). J. A. Robinson (p. 160) has provided the best discussion of internal subdivisions of the tribe, and most of the segments he described were recorded in the Afghan nomad survey of 1357 Š./1978 (unpublished).

In the survey 1,215 Dawtānī nomadic families (about 6,800 individuals) were enumerated. The majority were herders (*māldār*), who gathered in summer on the high pastures of northern Dašt-e Nāwor in Hazārajāt (Balland and Kieffer, p. 78). The remainder were mainly impoverished nomads scattered in summer camps throughout the Ġaznī basin and the upper Tarnak valley around Moqor (eastern Afghanistan), where they looked for daily labor, usually as harvesters (*darawgar*). Most Dawtānī nomads wintered in the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan, in either southern Waziristan or Dērajāt. A minority wintered in southern Afghanistan, mainly in the Qandahār oasis (17 percent), where some owned houses, or in the middle Helmand valley (6 percent). From a social geographical point of view, four different subgroups can thus be distinguished (see [Table 9](#)). A fifth group consisted of sedentary Dawtānī settled in southern Waziristan or in eastern Afghanistan.

Such social geographical fragmentation is typical of Pashtun tribes in eastern Afghanistan. It is the result partly of a general crisis that has impoverished



and depastoralized many nomads in the area in the second half of the 20th century (Balland, 1988a, pp. 182 ff.) and partly of earlier developments specific to the tribe, which can only roughly be reconstructed.

In the earliest sources on the Dawtānī tribe they are described as sedentary rice and wheat growers living around Wāna in southern Waziristan (Broadfoot, p. 394; Elphinstone, p. 387; Ne‘mat-Allāh, II, p. 128 n. 72). In the mid-19th century territorial pressure from the [Aḥmadzī](#) Wazīr gradually ousted the Dawtānī from that region; villages were destroyed, and a growing proportion of the inhabitants was forced to adopt a nomadic life. H. B. Lumsden (p. 97) was the first to mention nomadic Dawtānī. This remarkably late process of nomadization apparently took place rapidly, the number of Dawtānī nomadic families reportedly increasing from about 200 in the 1860s (Foujdar Khan, p. LXXXVI) to 1,000 in the 1890s (King), that is, from about one third of the tribe (Broadfoot, p. 394: estimated at 600 families in 1839) to more than half (*Gazetteer of Afghanistan* VI, pp. 162-64). The need for new seasonal grazing lands increased correspondingly. After the Hazārajāt war of 1309-10/1892, in which they did not participate, the Dawtānī secured access to the large summer pasturelands that they presently hold in Nāwor (Balland, 1988b, p. 272). Competition from the Wazīr limited the availability of winter grazing in the middle Gōmal area, however, and, though pasturelands were available downstream in the Dērajāt and neighboring Žōb district of Baluchistan, they soon became overcrowded (Robinson, p. 160).

The scarcity of winter grazing, coupled with permanent insecurity during the biannual migration through Wazīr territory (King; *Gazetteer of Afghanistan* VI, pp. 162-64; *Military Report*, pp. 147-48), induced several Dawtānī lineages to give up all grazing in India and to take up new winter quarters in less populated southern Afghanistan, thus creating a major geographical division within the tribe (Balland and Kieffer, p. 85). This shift, already in full swing in the 1930s (Robinson, pp. 161, 164), was intensified during the following decades: The entire main nomadic section of the tribe, the Bāzārḳēl, wintered in southern Waziristan in 1311-13 Š./1932-34, but in 1357 Š./1978 two of every three Bāzārḳēl families were spending the winter in southern Afghanistan. The number of Dawtānī nomads whose migratory route crossed the Durand Line (see [BOUNDARIES](#) iii) had thus remained more or less constant since the 1890s, despite demographic growth (according to Robinson, pp. 161 ff., 976 families in 1311-13 Š./1932-34, 933 families in 1357 Š./1978). Nomadic Dawtānī also increasingly engaged in trading activities. Although they were not yet



considered a major trading (*powindah*) tribe in 1860, they gained that status within two decades (Lumsden, p. 91; Raverty, IV, pp. 491, 499; *Gazetteer of Afghanistan* VI, pp. 162-64; for later periods, see Ferdinand, pp. 144, 148). Some even took part in the external trade of Bukhara (Tucker, p. 188). In 1357 Š./1978, however, according to an unpublished survey, only twelve families of the Bāzārḳēl section still reported trade as a significant activity.

In 1357 Š./1978 Dawtānī nomads migrating along the Gōmal route made up the largest single nomadic group crossing the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, a position held by the Nāṣer in the 19th century and the Solaymānḳēl in the first half of the 20th century (Balland, 1991, p. 227). Since then, however, land conflicts between the Dawtānī and the Wazīr have come to an end, especially as the latter are now more dependent upon remittances from the Persian Gulf than on local resources and have consequently abandoned their previous claims to the Zarmelān plain and the adjacent Gōmal valley (Ahmad, p. 5).

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