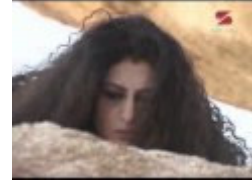


LEGENDARY FOLK TALES OF SINDH

SUSUEE- PUNHOON

A lovely music video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=egpfrqjBdHQ>

Please see after reading the touching love story.
The song is sung by the famous Singer Mohd Rafi



Once a king named Dilorao ruled the south east district of Karachi in Sindh. In that kingdom one Brahmin named Naon used stay on the banks of Bambrah canal. The name of his wife was Mandhur. After along wait in their middle age they were blessed with a daughter. She was as beautiful as the moon itself. As was customary the astrologers were called to read her future. After all the planetary calculations it was predicted that she was destined to marry a Muslim. As Naon was a Brahmin this was not acceptable to him.

A big wooden box was made, the child was put in it and set afloat in the canal. The box kept with the flow of current and reached near the city of Bambhor. There the chief of washer man's clan named Mohammed used to stay. He had about five hundred people to work under him. When they got the box the same was brought to their chief. In the box they found a beautiful girl child. Since he did not have any child of his own he thought her as a gift from God and adopted her as his own daughter. Due to her exceptional beauty she was named Sasuee (like a moon). As she grew day by day her beauty also increased with every passing day. She was an apple of eye of all the people. Mohammed the washer man was also a very happy person. As he was chief of his tribe and had no dearth of money he got one beautiful palace with a vast garden surrounding it made for Sasuee, where she would play carefree with her mates and would some times spin cotton thread on the spinning wheel.

As Bambhor lay on the trade route to Thatta and other commercial centers many a mercantile caravan would pass through it. The caravans from Kich Makran a kingdom situated in south west of Sindh also used to pass from there. This way the fame of Sasuee's beauty reached the ears of Punhoon the prince of Kich Makran, who was son of Aari Jaam the ruler. He was anxious to see such a beauty. In the guise of a musk trader and other scented perfumes he came to Bambhor .When Sasuee learnt of this caravan carrying rare scents she came with her friends to purchase the same. When eyes of Sasuee and Punhoon met some thing inexpiable happened. As if two souls who were in search of other half to complement itself had found each other and became one. All said and done it was a love at first sight. Both would pine for the company or even glimpse of each other.

Sasuee confided the secret of her heart to her friend who went and informed about the situation to her father so that both may be married. Mohammed the washer man sternly refused, saying "he does not belong to our caste". Her friend was privy to the deep attachment of Sasuee and to counter that objection said, "He is from our caste". On hearing this Mohammed wanted to test Punhoon and gave him a sackful of clothes to wash. Punhoon was not a washer man. In his desperation he tore all the clothes that were given to him for washing. Seeing this Sasuee suggested to him to put one gold coin in every piece of cloth and give it to the owners. On getting a gold coin no one would complain. Punhoon followed her advice and this strategy succeeded. This convinced Mohammed that Punhoon was washer man indeed! Sasuee and Punhoon both were married with befitting pomp. Before marriage he got an undertaking from Punhoon that he would stay in Bambhor only.

Chunro a brother of Punhoon who was with him tried his best to dissuade him but miserably failed. He returned back to Kich Makran and related the entire episode to his father, Jaam Aari who sent his special messenger to Punhoon telling him if did not return immediately he would die in his separation. When messenger reached Bambhor he found Punhoon washing clothes along with other washer men. He pleaded with Punhoon to return but to no avail. Ultimately Punhoon's brothers Chunro, Hotu, and Notu consoled their distraught father and promised to bring Punhoon back.

When all the three brothers reached Bambhor they were received by all the warmth by Sasuee and Punhoon. They were lavishly entertained with choicest food and wines. One day while Sasuee was asleep and brothers were reveling Punhoon's brothers' conspired to intoxicate him to the extent of unconsciousness. Thus in this state they took Punhoon away on the back of fast running camels.

Next day early morning when Sasuee woke up she did not find Punhoon. On enquiring she came to know that Punhoon's brothers had carried him away during the night. She became inconsolable. Her parents as well as her friends tried to calm her down. Separation from Punhoon was unbearable for her. She abandoned everything and set out in pursuit of her beloved Punhoon.

In her pursuits through difficult terrain she would some times blame herself for sleeping and some times her brother in laws who had treacherously abducted Punhoon and some time she bemoaned her luck! In the words of Shah Latif:

All are enemies, camels, camel men and brother in laws,
 Fourth enemy is wind that removed the foot prints of Punhoon,
 Fifth enemy is sun which delayed its setting,
 Sixth enemy is sky which did not make travel easy,
 Seventh enemy is moon which did not shine longer,

Sasuee was dead tired. All her limbs badly ached; she was hardly able to move. But she resolved, 'to Punhoon she must go and she has to continue to move' and she fortified herself with the thought:

'You have to keep moving all the time, be it a bitter cold or scorching heat,' (Shah Latif)

Again she wants to entreat Punhoon;

'I would bow and touch his feet,
Entreat him to stay for a night at Bhambor,' (Shah Latif)

After the tortuous journey when she reached near Pubba mountain she fell down totally exhausted. Miraculously a water spring appeared there. Sasuee drank water and rested for a while. (Still That water spring is there for any one to see). She moved again in pursuit of he beloved Punhoon. When she reached near Mabuhur canal, she saw a hut of a shepherd at the top of the hillock. She asked the shepherd if he had seen any caravan passing that way. Seeing her beauty and her being alone the shepherd made advances towards her.

She asked him for some water. As shepherd went to his hut to fetch water, Sasuee prayed to god to save her chastity. God granted her prayer- the hillock broke into two and Sasuee found eternal refuge in its womb. In this entire incident a portion of her upper garment remained visible outside. Shepherd when returned not only with the water but milk also was astounded to see this miracle of nature. As repentance for his deed he became a caretaker of the grave of Sasuee.

On the other hand when Punhoon regained consciousness he pleaded with his brothers to free him and allow him to return to Bambhor. His brothers obstinately refused his pleas and brought him back to Kich Makran and handed him over to Aari Jam. Punhoon was all the time melancholy and restless, and he lost his health and reached a perilous condition. Seeing this Aari Jam told him 'go with your brothers and bring Sasuee back here with you.'

All set out in the search of Sasuee and when they reached Mabuhur canal seeing the fresh grave he thought it is possible this grave may be of some saint. Thinking so he went to there. Shepherd related the entire episode of Sasuee to him. Thinking it to be a grave of an ardent lover he prayed that he should also meet his beloved. Lo and behold! The hillock again parted and he eternally joined his beloved.

True lovers do not hesitate to sacrifice their life to meet their beloved. Such another Story of immortal love is that of Sohini – Mehar.

Sassui : Picture taken from www.aseensindhi.com

Click on <http://www.aseensindhi.com/Sasuee%20Punhoon.htm>



For Further Reading visit http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sassi_Punnun