

## **KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**Name of the Element: Cot:** The Kalasha system of knowledge regarding the significance and application of symbolic carvings engraved in wood. Cot – (xylography)

**Brief Description:** Cot is Kalasha system of knowledge involving the significance , classification and application of various symbols. These symbols are either inspired by nature /natural elements such as flower , tree etc or are impressed by the geometric patterns. In both cases the symbols represent specific concept ,quality or characteristic of the component it is inspired from.

The symbols are usually carved in cedar wood. The art of Cot is exhibited through wooden carvings engraved on the details or façade of Dur (Kalasha house) , Jestak Han ( Kalasha temple), Gree ( Kalasha Dancing Place) and Bashali ( Kalasha house of menstruation and childbirth). The symbols are usually carved on the surface and other details of walls, doors, pillars/columns, brackets and ceilings of the above mentioned building typologies.

Other than being used as an essential element of Kalasha building craft , Cot is also used to convey and enhance the significance of various concepts represented in material form such as Mandau (coffin) and Gandaw(funerary statue) in Mandau jao (Kalasha graveyard), Maleri (carved post placed in the temple/altar) ,Jestak (Kalasha divinity of family and prosperity) in Jestak Han ( Kalasha temple) and Kundurik ( Kalasha honorary statue ) in Mocnataiken ( Kalasha funeral space) and Dezalik ( Kalasha divinity of birth) in Bashali.

Many symbols used by the Kalasha community in Cot are also impressed by Nooristani semiotics. Various symbols are also created by carefully combing the basic geometric pattern of one symbol with another symbol. Therefore one can conclude that the contemporary Kalasha semiotics is combination of symbols impressed by Nooristani semiotics, traditional Kalasha semiotics and the improvisation of traditional Kalasha semiotics . Due to the lack of documentation a difference of opinion on the significance , classification and meaning of many symbols is prevalent in Kalasha community .

Khai Cot , Malaire Cot , Shingak Cot and Hansh po Cot are the most commonly used symbols of Kalasha Cot.