

KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Name of the Element: Suri Jagek: Metrological practice of the Kalasha carried out through the study of the local topography in connection with the Sun, Moon, and Stars.

Brief Description: Suri Jagek (literal translation: observing the Sun) is a traditional Kalasha knowledge system and practice based on observing the Sun, Moon, and the Stars with respect to the local topology. A particular location, called Suri Jagaekain, is chosen in each village to observe the rising Sun, and a separate location is assigned to observe its setting. Traditionally a telescopic view of the rising Sun was taken using a Markhor horn. The specific positions on which the sun casts its shadows are also marked in specific people house on walls or poles etc.

Visual cues existing within the periphery of the topology are now used to mark the specific position of the rising Sun, and hence the collective markings are used to record the position of the Sun throughout the year. Individual localities have their own specific knowledge, generated using the common processes of marking the positions of the Sun.

This practice played a pivotal role in the formation of the Kalasha calendar, and hence outlined dates for important feasts festivals and rituals. The observations made at the Suri Jagaekain made by various community members (particularly Qazi's) are shared in a gathering and a general consensus regarding the observations is reached in a Jirga-however, presently this is only practiced in Rumbur.

Suri Jagek has been used to outline farming practices e.g., what kind of seed to sow at a particular time of the year leading to an increase in yield, indicating the best time for livestock breeding, forecasting weather, and even predicting both manmade and natural calamities such as flood. Knowledge related to the constellations of stars, meanings of various types of rainbows, and the study of clouds as well as shadows are all in the wider ambit of Suri Jagaek. Although the dates for the majority of Kalasha socio-cultural events are set in advance these days, the Kilasaras Spring Feast, Kagayak - a ritual during the Chawmoss festival associated with the sighting of a white crow and offering of met walnut bread being given to it in return for good fortune, Dautatau, and the Pul festival are still carried out according to the positions of the Sun and Moon