

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

**Name of the Element: Gand'aw:** Ancestor remembrance through oral and graphic mediums. Literally translates to 'irregular shape'

**Brief Description:** The Kalasha communities have a long lasting tradition of commemorating and reminiscing the lives of their ancestors one of which is through the making of the Gand'aw. This is a human scaled memorial statue/effigy made in the honour of a deceased person. It is believed that the Gand'aw is a statue of the departed ancestor whose ghost protects the interests of the families who build it. After the burial (the exact time may vary), commemorative feasts are held and the Gand'aw are carved out of a Cedar trunk and placed next to the deceased person's grave in the Mandan'jaw (graveyard - Literally the word translated to 'group of coffins'). An offering of walnut bread and fruit is given to a particular cedar tree after which the tree makes a crackling like sound to the craftsman. This sound signifies the tree's consent to be sacrificed to be made into a Gand'aw. The Gand'aw was traditionally made using wide and narrow headed axes, however now various chisels are also used. It is said that there are times when deceased people come in their relatives' dreams and ask them to make a Gand'aw for them. These statues play a prominent role in maintaining Kalasha social hierarchy. Not only is the Gand'aw in itself incredibly costly to make, it has to be accompanied with a sacrifice of 40 goats and a cow. Currently it is a fast disappearing element with only the wealthiest people being able to afford it.