

KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Name of the Element: **Kutamru:** Etymologically translated to ‘lame stag’ – Ritual held during the Chawmos festival expressing harmony with domestic animals associated.

Brief Description: Kutamru, literally translated to ‘lame stag’ is a ritual carried out during the Chawmos (festival) normally on the 12th or December in Rumbur (Rukmu), 14th of December in the Bumburet (Mumuret) valley, and after Chawmos in the month of January in Birir (Biri). The ritual has a deep symbolic connection to a Kalasha folktale of a couple named Finjiki and her husband Barananga. Being an agro-pastoral society, the Kalasha community greatly values the number of livestock owned by its members. Finjiki and Barananga had no or only a couple of goats which resulted in the wider community looking at them with a sign of disrespect and frequently ridiculed them. It is stated that as a result of being constantly at the centre of ridicule, one day whilst upset Finjiki started making small animals out of wheat flour dough. After making these animals, she picked up a stick and started making ‘Chichick’ sounds, normally made by shepherds (Walmoch) when herding their livestock. It is stated that as she made the sounds and travelled towards the pastures, the entire community that looked in their direction could see life sized silhouettes of Finjiki’s and Barananga’s livestock. The folklore till now acts as a symbol of fertility and signifies the power of the mind, together with the power of seeking help from *Mulawa* (God).

In Bumburet on the 14th of December, early morning children start the day in complete silence (beyond hushed whispers) as they visit the local village temple (Hand), with pens made from reeds made during the prior ritual (Cu’inari). The tops of these reeds are covered with sheep wool which is then dipped in ink made from ashes of burnt wood and water. The children draw different livestock, shepherds, mountains, elements of the solar system, and various symbols found frequently in the Kalasha culture. Around the afternoon, people start separating walnuts and flour to make sculptures of livestock (a process known as *Shara Biray*). Twisted horns of various animals e.g. *Markhors* are made by placing *seskoni gon* – sticks made from reeds in the head of the animal around which the horns are spun. Communal harmony prevails and people make animals in their homes and also visit their relatives’ houses to help in the process. Making the actual livestock starts in the evening. An entire shepherd herding process is represented with sheep dogs (*shone*), male and female goats (*bira*, *pay*), shepherds (*walmoch*), cow (*gak*), and stags (*shara*) being made. Once sculpted the animals are baked on top of a cast iron *tim* (an oven used in the Kalasha household). Once baked the animals are kept on the shelf normally found on the centre/front wall of traditional Kalasha houses. Early next morning around 4 AM, community members join together and symbolically travel to the *Dizilawat* pasture. The pasture holds spiritual significance to the Kalasha tradition and is believed to be the *Otak* pasture located on the boundary of Nuristan. People who arrive late to the proceedings are frequently met with taunts and playful insults. As the ritual reaches its end, preparations for *Madahik* start. The baked livestock are frequently distributed to non-Kalasha neighbours as the Kalasha are not allowed to eat these animals. The leftover animals are mixed with fodder for cattle and livestock to eat.