

KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Name of the Element: Walmochi : Transhumance in the Kalasha valleys – shepherds migrating between fixed summer and winter pastures with their livestock.

Brief Description: High and low pastures are considered *Onjesta* (pure) as per the Kalasha religion, normally associated with males. Young to middle-aged male members of the family are handed the responsibility of taking their livestock (goats, sheeps, and cows) to the high pastures around late May or June depending exactly on the weather. Whilst at high pastures, the shepherds stay in traditional stone and wood built huts known as *Donkur*; the animals stay in a hut known as *Istahn*. A typical morning at the high pasture involves the walmoch taking out the livestock from the *istahn*, milking them, and then leaving them to graze freely in the pastures. The younger animals are left to graze close to the shepherd huts. In order to sustain themselves, the shepherds cook traditional foods such as *Amishtonu* (a mixture of clarified butter and a cheese known as *Sachon* – made from boiling butter milk), *Gum' au* (wheat pancakes), and *Jawari' au* (corn bread).

Shepherds are renowned for flute playing (*ishpoini nat*) and a popular tune played at the pastures is called 'O dari o'. If the time allows, they hunt Ram Chakor (Chukar Partridge), *Bishun*, Ibex, and Marco-Polo sheep. After staying in the high pastures for a period of approximately five months, the walmoch return to the lower pastures at the start of October. They stay in the lower pastures for a period of approximately twenty days and then return back to their villages. The exact time of returning to the villages depends on the weather conditions, and some may return around Mid-November.

At times shepherds (walmoch) from the Gujjur as well as Kalasha community are hired to take care of livestock of others. Under these circumstances, Walmoch are currently paid a salary of approximately seven thousand rupees a month to undertake this task. A parallel mode of payment is a contract lasting three years. Under the contract the walmoch are not paid a monthly salary, instead they have the right to take ownership of the livestock born in the third year of their contract.