

**Name of the Element:** Ramman: Religious Festival and Ritual Theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas

**Community:** Villagers of Painkahanda Valley

**Region:** Painkhanda Valley of Chamoli district of Uttarakhand

**Brief Description:** Ramman is a form of traditional ritual theatre celebrated every year in the courtyard of the temple of BhumiyaDevta situated in Saloor Dungra Village in Painkhanda valley of Chamoli district, Uttarakhand, India.

The village deity of Saloor Dungra is Bhumichetrapal where he is better known as BhumiyaDevta. It is in this temple where every year Ramman festival is organized by the local inhabitants. Though no historical account of this tradition is available before 1911, the tradition itself existed much before that. The documents available with the community tell that the history of this particular fair is more than hundred years old. The date for the festival and performance is traditionally fixed by the village priest which usually falls on the 13th of April every year.

On the auspicious day of *sankranti*(Baisakhi) in the month of Baisakh, BhumiyaDevta comes out in a procession from his place of residence (which is one house in the village) to the central temple of the village accompanied by beating of drums and mask dances. After the festivity come to a close for the year, BhumiyaDevta goes to live in one of the houses for the entire year till the next Baisakhi festival. His place of residence in the village is decided by the Village Panchayat.

Ramman: Religious Festival and Ritual Theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas- Inscribed in 2009 on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, UNESCO