

## ROLE CARDS FOR THE KEY HOLDER TRADITION

### THE KEY HOLDER TRADITION

#### 1. Key Holder (*Tabilwidar*)

At all museums or places with precious objects someone like me is in charge of protecting the treasures. I am called the tahlilwidar, which means “key holder.” I am responsible for guarding the treasure and will pass this charge onto my son someday. I am bonded, which means I have pledged the house and land of my family, so if anything happens to the treasure, I will have to pay for its loss. Only I hold the keys to the locks of the vaults.

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#### 2. Witness One

I am one of three witnesses. We make sure the key holder does his job properly. Every morning we go with the key holder to a vault or room containing precious objects. We observe as he opens the padlock, and then we sign a paper attached to the lock with our names, the date, and the time of day.

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### 3. Witness Two

After the first vault, we walk in procession following the key holder to a different vault. Once it is opened, we sign the witness paper and proceed to the next vault. At the end of the day, we reverse the process. We inspect that all is in order within each vault, and then after the key holder secures the lock, we record on the witness papers the time of closure next to our signatures.

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### 4. Witness Three

This is an ancient tradition that has continued to modern times. There were key holders guarding treasures during the time of the kings, during the Soviet period, and during the Taliban times. Even now we follow this formal ritual twice a day at the National Museum of Afghanistan, Kabul, at its opening and closing. I consider it an honor to be an official witness.