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**THE MAIN TYPES OF FAMILY RITES  
OF KAZAKHS AND ETIQUETTE**

In this article we talk about the main types of family rites of kazakhs and the etiquettes of the Kazakh people. The article contains data on ancient and modern etiquettes and the custom of our people. Considering modern ethical culture of Kazakhs, it is possible to say that there are both new and traditional lines. In general traditional culture of Kazakhs including the etiquette investigated by us, is gradually transformed under the influence of modernization processes in the direction of unification and simplification. as well as we answer such questions as «why it is necessary to observe etiquette norms», «what is the difference between modern and ancient etiquette norms», «what custom is used in what circumstances». As a result, we learned many interesting things about the peculiarities of our custom and got a comparison of the etiquette norms of all times.

**Key words:** family rites, etiquette, custom, traditions, norms, rules.

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**Қазақтардағы негізгі отбасылық рәсім түрлері мен этикет**

Мақалада қазақтардың отбасылық рәсімдерінің негізгі түрлері мен қазақ халқының этикеті туралы қарастырылған. Сонымен қатар халқымыздың ежелгі және қазіргі этикасы мен әдет-ғұрыптары туралы салыстырмалы мәліметтер бар. Қазақ халқының заманауи этикалық мәдениетін ескере отырып, жаңа және дәстүрлі ерекшеліктер орын алғанын айтуға болады. Жалпы алғанда, қазақтардың дәстүрлі мәдениеті, оның ішінде зерттейтін этикет, біртіндеп жаңғырту үдерістерінің бірігуі мен жеңілдету бағытында сабақтасқан. Біз сондай-ақ «неліктен этикеттің нормаларын сақтау керек», «қазіргі заманғы және ежелгі этикеттің нормалары арасындағы айырмашылық қандай», «әдет қандай жағдайда қолданылады» деген сұрақтарға жауап береміз. Нәтижесінде біз әдет-ғұрпымыздың ерекшеліктері туралы көптеген қызықты нәрселерді түйіндеп, барлық уақытта этикеттің нормаларын салыстыру мүмкіндігіне қол жеткіздік.

**Түйін сөздер:** отбасылық рәсімдер, этикет, салт-дәстүр, нормалар, ережелер.

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**Основные виды семейного ритуала и этикета у казахов**

В этой статье мы расскажем об основных типах семейных обрядов казахов и этикетов казахского народа. Статья содержит данные о древних и современных этикетах и обычаях наших людей. Учитывая современную этическую культуру казахов, можно сказать, что существуют как новые, так и традиционные черты. В целом традиционная культура казахов, в том числе и исследуемый нами этикет, постепенно трансформируется под влиянием модернизационных

процессов в направлении объединения и упрощения. Авторы отвечают на такие вопросы, как: «почему необходимо соблюдать нормы этикета», «в чем разница между нормами современного и древнего этикета», «какой обычай используется и в каких обстоятельствах». В результате мы узнали много интересного об особенностях нашего обычая и получили сравнение норм этикета всех времен.

**Ключевые слова:** семейные обряды, этикет, обычай, традиции, нормы, правила.

## Introduction

The rituals of the family cycle provide ample opportunities for the study of the most diverse semantic categories in structural, evolutionary, symbolic and other relations.

The analysis of the semantic load of symbols and signs, ritual actions indicates, on the one hand, categories of the worldview order, and on the other, it reveals the mechanisms of functioning of sign-related phenomena in the family rituals of the Kazakhs.

According to archaic ideas, symbols and signs are, in fact, an instrument of ritual influence. In crisis situations of transition, which form the basis of family rituals, an ideal model of overcoming them is developed by the archaic consciousness, consisting of a set of manipulations with symbols and signs. Thus, in the birthing ritual, the symbolic model duplicates knowledge based on empirical observations and traditional medicine. Thus, practically meaningful ritual actions, allegedly, reinforce (or rather «provide») their successful resolution or overcoming. By influencing this model through dominant symbols and signs, «for example,» childbirths are «adjusted,» thus «stimulating» the expected actions (Ernazarov, 2003: 98).

The main, ritually significant situations in the rituals of the life cycle are symbolically played up through appeals to axiologically important categories, such as «aq bata» («white / pure prayer»), «куурук-bauyr» (ritual dish for matchmakers), «sacred blood »And others. That is, in the wedding rituals, to ensure the inviolability of the contract, they swear by the fact that for the matchmakers it fills the category of «holy». These categories are, in our opinion, the dominant symbol of culture, and the associated cycle of ceremonies forms the cultural themes of the ethnos, which are elements of the traditional picture of the world (Shahanova, 1998: 57).

Important, from a semiotic point of view, moments in family ritualism are highlighted with peculiar visual markers and codes. For example, symbols-hints in wedding rituals are used – «with one leg they release a pant leg», hide the awl,

occupying an honorable place are asked to lay them «korpe» (quilt), give «fixing» gifts, etc. Thus, there are in advance «conditioned». Actions, the semantic meaning of which is well known, that is, the «language» of this strategy of behavior is understandable only to members of this ethnic entity. Of great importance is the public announcement of the very fact of the ceremony and the consolidation of the new status through symbolic marking (consolidation). For example, the «labeling» of a girl in matchmaking («Kyzymyza syrga tagyp ketti» – which means taken), that is, the agreement is fixed by means of a special gift – «tagging» [Karky bau – literally «collar», etc.]

## Family rituals of the Kazakhs

Visual semiotisation, in our opinion, allows society to actualize important, from the point of view of culture carriers, value paradigms, focusing attention on ritually significant fragments of the rite. In this perspective, the rite «Beta Shar» appears as a sign situation in which several universal oppositions simultaneously overlap each other. Thus, in the ritual, the situation «to see (that is, to know, in the meaning of «know») – not to see (that is, not to know, in the meaning of «not to know»)» is played up. Visual semiotisation is also present, I think, in the «korimdik» ritual (literally: «for the show»), which is received for showing someone or something, for example, for the bride, for the groom, for the children of matchmakers, for the new yurt, etc. In the ritual display of the hearth to the bride, there is also the idea of introducing the bride to the dominant symbol – the hearth, as a polysemantic category. This universal, semiotic opposition is visible in the ritual practice of many peoples of the world (Bromlei, 1983: 105).

The entire cycle of family rites can be presented as an act of communication between the two parties, which vary depending on the life stage. The main goal of the dialogue is the exchange of values. The moment of symbolic exchange is played out throughout the ritual (Belyi, 1994: 278).

The threshold appears throughout the ritual of the transitional cycle. The threshold is perceived

in the traditional consciousness as a boundary between a world that has been mastered and not mastered. The role of the threshold in maternity ritual is great. One of the important «fixing» rituals is the «burial» of the symbolic twin – the afterbirth, «fixing» the unstable position of the child. The threshold is included in the number of elements that are completed by the groom's party, and hence belong to the male sphere. Crossing the border of the worlds to the direction «from the outside / not mastered – into / mastered» from the right leg (having the semantics of the good, pure, righteous, righteous), the bride becomes «her», the border acts as a kind of filter: «assimilates» a representative of «alien» kind. The threshold is also present in the funeral-memorial ceremony at the stage of removal of the deceased, where the deceased «three times» is lowered to the threshold. Semantically, according to informers, the direction of the head when passing through the threshold (head or feet forward) is semantically meaningful, having a truly signified content projected onto the «future destiny» of the deceased, as a symbolic act of crossing the border of the worlds.

The symbolic category «fat» («May») is also present throughout the family ritual of the Kazakhs as one of the most important «tools» for influencing the sacred forces. The element of the rite is «fat» – sacrificial food intended for the spirits of ancestors. Along with the rituals adapting the bride to the new conditions, one should note the rite of pouring the melted fat into the fire – «ot Maya», in which the symbolic chain «bride-fat-fire-the spirit of ancestors» is seen, where the middle link «fat-fire» stands as a connecting thread, a mediator, establishing relations between the two sides. A similar situation is observed in funeral and memorial rituals: the rites «May Koshysyту», «iis shyfaru» are also devoted to the spirits of ancestors, that is, the mechanism of influencing the sacred forces – a single, throughout the family rites. The last, in our opinion, indicates that this element can be attributed to the dominant symbol of culture, and the whole complex of measures to establish relations with sacred forces – to the cultural themes of the ethnos (Morris, 1938:189).

In the wedding ritual, the semantic load is borne not only by individual elements of the rite, but all ritual, in general, acts as a polysemantic category. First, the meaning of wedding ritual is the public (public) certification of the act of marriage, secondly, important, from a semiotic point of view, scenarios (ideas of fertility, growth, obtaining «permission» for marriage in aruahs), which, in turn, ensure a

favorable existence and consolidate a new status (Bogatyrev, 1971: 320).

The main factor, from the point of view of traditional consciousness, which allows the possibility of the ritual of «Uryn baru», is the preliminary «permission» of aruahs («Eli-Tiri») and the groom's approval of the bride's society, while the necessary «material» conditions: gift exchange, payment kalym, wedding rituals, etc. fully not implemented. The rite is polysemantic, the main thing is «permission, approval» of the spirits of the ancestors, that is, the sacred forces. Propitiation of ancestral spirits, on the one hand, not only obtaining a «permission» for marriage, but also the possibility of transfer (transfer) of the bride – a representative of one kind (syek) to another family. In the traditional, archaic consciousness, representatives of one society (both living and dead) are presented as a single whole (Altynsarin, 1957: 57).

If we consider the groom's way, as a storyline between heterogeneous societies, then the final stage, the goal is to reach the bride. The bridegroom appears in the society of the bride as a «foreign element»: apparently this explains the obstacles that arise in the way of the groom. Every step he must pay, pay, «conquer». All actions are carried out with the mediation of third parties. In our opinion, in the offerings of the groom, on the way to the bride, a profound semiotic meaning is hidden.

The spatial arrangement of the groom's yurt relative to the aul of the bride's father, with the «secret visit of the bride», has semantic significance, indicating the degree of the groom's closeness [both in direct (spatial arrangement) and figurative sense] to the bride's society. The spatial location of the groom's yurt seems to duplicate the degree of introduction, introduction of the groom to the bride's society. According to the position of the yurt, outsiders can determine not only the number of visits by the bride's groom, but also the periodicity and the stage of passing rituals (Grodekov, 1889).

The ritual proceeds according to a certain algorithm, the final result of which lies in the ritual program itself. Similar we see in the ritual «tartys», where, with all the different variations of the ritual, the bride is given out. The whole point of it, in our opinion, consists in playing up the situation of symbolic struggle and actualizing the very idea of competitiveness, the confrontation of the two initially «alien» sides. The idea of the bride's destiny for another kind is being worked out. Remarkably, the attitude of the Kazakhs towards girls as «guests» in the parents' house, that is, in this presentation, the idea of the girl's destiny for another kind is

confirmed. Perhaps this fact points to the archaic origin of the rite itself.

The ritual of Muslim marriage retained its main features until today. Namely, the main attributes: «neke sui» – ritual water, in which two coins are laid and covered with white matter, prayer reading, mediation of witnesses and the ritual text of their vows. In this ritual the sacrament of the ritual sacrament is modeled: a) water is poured into the cup when reading the prayer; b) in the rite there are things personifying the main participants of the rite: (arrow – groom), (ring – bride); c) a bowl with ritual water covered with a white (clean sacred) handkerchief. Presence, in the past, personifying the main participants in the rite, symbolic elements (arrow, ring, white matter) had, in turn, its own semantics (Divae, 1900).

Many rituals of the wedding and post-wedding cycle correspond with the idea of «introduction», ritual «assimilation» of a representative of another kind, which can be regarded not only as a reverence rendered to the entire groom's society, but also as a ritual overcoming of the bride's alienity. Conditions are created for the speedy adaptation of the bride to new conditions. Many rituals of this stage have the character of «fixing» the new status of the bride. A symbolic movement is carried out from the category of «foreign» to «his».

Ritual «introduction» of the bride is carried out from the first steps young. This led to an abundance of semiotic phenomena in the initial period of the bride's stay in the groom's aul. High semiotics status is associated with actions associated with the threshold (they cross the right foot), the focus (visual semiotization – «see join»). In semantics dwellings are particularly distinguished among its main elements: «Shakira» (vaulted circle), hearth, «barefoot» (doorway) (Toleubaev, 1991: 167).

Like many key rituals of the wedding cycle, the rite «betachar» is multifunctional. In addition to the function of acquaintance of the bride with her husband's older and younger relatives, it also has the value of publicly approving the new status of the bride. With respect to the «betaschar», the information of the respondents, as can be seen, necessarily indicates the threshold of this important ritual. After the ritual, a number of restrictions are imposed on the bride – so, she can attend a joint meal with her husband's relatives, should participate in the economic life of the house.

In the structural relations of the symbolic chain «bride – fat – fire – the spirit of ancestors», the middle link «fat-fire» acts as a connecting thread, a mediator that establishes the relationship between

the two actors. The bride renders reverence to the sacral forces, which, in some cases, in the person of fire personify with the spirits of ancestors, in other cases – the semantics of the hearth shifts somewhat, and the focus is defined as «Ot-ana, May-ana» – the spirit of the patrons of the family hearth (cult of family shrines). Perhaps these variations are manifestations of a specific situation, where, depending on the specificity of the ritual situation, they turn to certain sacral forces. The semantic significance of these actions, in our opinion, is: a) in an effort to propitiate the spirits of ancestors; b) admission to the family hearth (smears his face); c) the element of the ritual «fat» is interpreted as a separate symbol of unity («the old people sentence: be unanimous as fat»); d) functions as an «instrument» for soliciting «permission» for an action (contrary to traditional paradigms) (Polyakov, 1983: 150).

From the analysis of the prescriptions and prohibitions of the field-wedding period it follows that finally the bride is admitted into the society of the groom only after the birth of the first child, it is the birth of the child that finally establishes the status of the young as a full member of the groom's society.

Thus, the whole cycle of wedding ceremonies can be presented as an act of communication between two societies. The main goal of the dialogue is the exchange of values, the key of which is the bride. The moment of symbolic exchange is played out throughout the ritual. In the rite, through a series of semiotic actions, the bride's alienity is overcome, which ends (according to our information, a year later) in the groom's society.

The bulk of symbolic measures in maternity rituals is aimed at modeling two situations: 1) exit situations (as the intersection of the symbolic boundary of the worlds); and 2) situations of «communication with otherworldly forces» (this situation provides «mechanisms» for overcoming the border of worlds, values).

In especially difficult births, the intervention of the entire society is required, and at the same time all the symbols and cultural themes that exist in the arsenal of society are actualized, with the highest sacral force of influence on the otherworldly forces.

The cultural theme associated with the «dog» is widely encountered throughout the ritual and is related to the child and the mother in childbirth. When considering the spatial structure of the rituals in which the «dog» appears, at first glance the following picture is seen: first, the «dog», as a symbolic category, is located on the verge of the worlds («mastered – undeveloped»), it is assigned the role of a mediator,

a conductor between the worlds, and secondly, the idea of a «dog» is actualized, in the overwhelming majority of cases, when the participants of the rite find or approach the sacred fragments of the world model, not defined, marginal zones [in the first dangerous days for the child's life, e (literally: «dog shirt»), with the disease «it aura» (literally: «dog disease»), the child is treated with various magical actions, which, for all their variability, are associated with the dog and others].

It seems that the vestment of a child in «it kyulek» in the first period of his life is a kind of marking the place of the child as an undecided, unsupported being. In this regard, it is noteworthy that until a certain time the child «is not ranked» in the category of people. So, according to our informants, a child can not be kissed, admired by him, much to look at him, etc., since the baby, as a social being, is not registered (socially «not mastered», ritually «not humanized»), Which occurs only after the name of the child and finally after the passing of forty days. That is, it is present biologically, but socially «does not exist» (Makovecki, 1889: 97)

In the rite of «tsuau kesu», in our opinion, the semantic line «the first steps – the life path – destiny» can be traced. That is, the «correct» ceremonial design of the first steps in life creates the possibility of a symbolic impact on the future course of a person's life («he will look like a person who has cut the fetters»).

Thus, the ritual adjustment of the first steps, in accordance with the ideal model, is projected onto the future destiny of the infant. That is, in archaic consciousness, the possibility of a symbolic impact on fate at the time of transition is allowed. A similar phenomenon – symbolization at the time of transitional situations – occurs throughout the family ritual.

One of the important elements of socialization was the involvement of the child in economic activities. These rituals, in addition to purely pragmatic goals, had a psychological effect. Since childhood, the child's mind has secured a positive attitude not only to nomadic life, but also to the socially approved ethical norms of the nomadic environment.

Accustoming to horseback riding is gradual, but growing. Ritualized are the most significant, from the point of view of society, moments – the first sitting of the baby on the horse and the first independent departure of the child outside the aul. Thus, the ritual is called upon to publicly testify the new status of the child, according to which «the child is traveling not alone with the mother of the horse,

but separately. Contemporary bearers of the culture perceive that «one of those», on the one hand, as one of the main (threshold, status) holidays in the life of the boy, on the other hand, initiation into the Muslim is perceived as a duty of the parents to the child and society («ata-anana parys»).

The very structure of the celebration at the present time is a fusion of several rites. In addition to the main content – the public examination of the dedication of the child in the Muslim, there is an additional semantic load – the passage from one social category to another. Perhaps this led to polysemantic rituals in the treatment of informants. The public marking of the status of the child formalizes the stages of socialization of a person. Perhaps, the ancient Turkic roots of ritualism organically entered the cycle of ceremonies that formalize the initiation of the child. Thus, perhaps, not having a clearly defined, in the classical sense, ritual of initiation, this process of socialization has stretched and includes a whole complex of rituals (Galiev, 1997: 130)

The high symbolic richness of funeral-memorial rites, in general, represents the possibility of a more detailed study of the functions of the sign, the semiotic status of individual elements of the rite, and the hierarchy of semiotic meaning throughout the entire ritual cycle. It is well known that these rituals also allow us to examine in detail the archaic strata of the spiritual culture of the ethnos, archetypes, many universal symbols that are characteristic of all human communities.

A significant part of the funeral-memorial cycle has a semantic significance dating back to the archaic times, and is known in the culture of many peoples of the world (ideas about the world of the living and the world of the dead, ways to the other world, care for the deceased, security, precautions associated with fear of the deceased, a representation of the ritual uncleanness of the room, where the deceased is located, etc.). Important, from the semantic point of view, are universal, iconic oppositions: the semantics of color (burial, mourning clothing: flags displayed on the roof of the deceased's house), spatial objects (sky-earth-underground world), internal orientation of space (top-bottom, right- left side of the house), border zones and situations (internal-external, entrance-exit) – have wide analogies with the rituals of many peoples of the world (Adzhigaliev, 1994: 138).

Among the elements of the rite with a high semiotic status, concepts that most clearly reflect the connection with the traditional outlook of the Kazakhs can be singled out. The main one is, in

our opinion, the concept of «guest». The public significance of the institution of «receiving guests», a special status of the guest among the Kazakhs was reflected in funeral and funeral rituals. The mutual relations of the members of the collective, both in everyday practice (everyday life), and in crisis, borderline, transitional situations (from the world of the living to the world of the dead) are regulated by traditional norms of behavior, ideological attitudes that are concentrated in the concept of «guest». In the transition zone (after the death of a person before his burial), the deceased acquires a new status – a «guest» in his house, a «guest» of all living things. Those who come to the house – members of the collective, are also considered «guests»: but they are accepted «not according to the rules» – they do not see off, as their status as «guests»; is below the status of the deceased person. It is he who now occupies the honorable guest side of the house (Valihanov, 1985: 370).

This concept structures the relationship between the living and the dead after finding a new home. He (the owner) «accepts» those who came to him as «guests», that is, his status is analogous to the former: «guests» can find in his house protection from bad weather, cook food and so on. The absence of fear of the living before the dead, the inclusion of gravestones in the circle of culturally mastered space fully agrees, in our opinion, with the cult of ancestors among the Kazakhs.

The study of the relationship between the semiotic concepts of «text», «sign», «symbol» in the context of funeral and commemoration rites allows us to make the following conclusion. Elements of the rite, having a constructive meaning (kozet, fidia, burial clothing, roasting ritual cakes during the removal of the deceased from home, distribution of the property of the deceased, funeral service, etc.) have a high semiotic status, accompanied by detailed «interpretations». This content of the elements (units) of the rite, reflecting its meaning and called by us «text», can undergo significant changes (for example, the «kozet» ritual, having lost its original meaning, was transformed solely as the moral duty of the living before the deceased, respect and honor). Signed expression, the symbolism of the elements of the rite, the concrete «code», which also carry important semiotic information, are even more susceptible to the most varied changes. But, nevertheless, the stable existence of these elements of the rite persists for a long time. An example of the amazingly stable existence of the ancient tradition, in spite of the Shariah dogmas, is the «phidia»: the worshippers were forced to include it in their

«scenario» (janaz) and to act as an object that takes the sins of the deceased.

Another example is the potlatch – the custom of distributing property (cattle of the deceased), which was transformed into a tradition of handkerchiefs (oramal, zhyrtys, shulen) in a relatively recent past – around the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. Signed, especially in any material objects, the expression of the elements of the rite generally loses its meaning faster than the ritual «text». Especially noticeable are these «losses» in the foreseeable future. If we compare the sign expressions of the rituals of the burial-commemoration cycle in the Kazakhs, described in the ethnographic literature of the nineteenth century with those preserved in modern ritual, it is easy to see a significant reduction in them.

According to our observations, the element of the ritual (burial in the shroud that displaced the coffin almost everywhere) can be treated as ethnodifferentiating as well. This element of the rite began to be considered a sign of a return to the traditional Kazakh traditions, whereas the former, which existed in the «Soviet era» – ‘not Kazakh’, «alien».

Interesting in the semiotic aspect can be considered the transformation of concepts associated with the cult of the horse. In the past, occupying a special place in funeral rituals, having a high semiotic status as a whole, this cult moved from one stage of the ritual cycle to another (memorial). The data of the language testify to its former semiotic significance. Preservation of semiotic stories related to the horse in memorial ceremonies testifies to the preservation of a sufficiently high semiotic status of these elements of the rite, with the disappearance of their material manifestations (except for preference for slaughtering, in the case of a wake, it is the horse) (Nesterov, 1990:104).

With regard to the funeral cycle, one can speak of the semiotic significance of this stage in its entirety. The wake in the past played an important role in the system of spiritual values of the Kazakhs and represented a series of actions, on the part of the members of the entire collective, designed to overcome the crisis situation, to survive the goy together. Formally, the purpose of the wake-up can be defined as facilitating the arrangement in the other world of the one who left the world of the living. The abundance of semiotic details of ritual actions, in our opinion, is generally associated not with the formal purpose of the funeral feast, but with the «specific weight» of the memorial cycle (its content) in the system of values of Kazakhs.

## Conclusion

The value significance of the memorial cycle is determined by the functional significance of the cycle, which makes it possible to treat it as a «text» from the point of view of semiotics. The function of the funeral feast considered in this perspective has a pronounced social character: in the wake-up procedure, the entire collective participates, demonstrating their cohesion aimed at overcoming the crisis.

The content of the memorial cycles went beyond the framework of purely ritual actions: during

funeral meals and gatherings important economic and social life was decided, that is, they turned from ritual action into a large-scale social event, which underlines its high semiotic status.

At present, the revival of the memory of the figures of the past, the tradition that was revived in the last decades of the 20th century, takes place in particular in the form of traditional cycles precisely because of the social functions of the latter. Modern cycles spend with the purpose of actualization of historical memory, consolidation of a society around any idea or person, as the original form of rehabilitation of these people in public opinion.

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