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New and traditional in wedding rites of the population of Western Kazakhstan (on example of Aktubinsk region)

On the basis of field ethnographic materials the author, and special literature explores new and traditional wedding ceremonies in the population of Western Kazakhstan on the example of the Aktobe region. It is shown that this ritual organically combines the features of the past and present, is a common Kazakh and common Kazakhstan features, as well as some regional differences. For example, the Kazakhs marriage is carried out both in the form of a formal matchmaking, and by «kidnapping» or «escape» of the bride. The first form of marriage through matchmaking is more common among the East Slavic, mostly European and among other ethnic groups of Kazakhstan; second – among the Kazakhs, the Turkic ethnic groups or those who adhere to the rules of Islam.

Key words: ethnoses, marriage, wedding, matchmaking, fiance and bride, bride kidnapping, escape of the bride.

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Батыс Қазақстан (Ақтөбе облысы) тұрғындарының үйлену әдет-ғұрыптарындағы жаңашылдық және дәстүр

Мақала автордың далалық этнографиялық зерттеу материалдары мен Батыс Қазақстан, соның ішінде Ақтөбе облысы тұрғындарының қазіргі және дәстүрлі үйлену әдет-ғұрыптары жөніндегі арнайы ғылыми зерттеу кітаптары негізінде жазылған. Осы үйленуге байланысты салт-дәстүрлердің ежелгі және осы күнгі, жалпы қазақилық пен еліміздің әр түкпіріндегі дәстүрлермен, жергілікті ерекшеліктерімен байланысты. Мысалға, қазақтардың отбасын құрудағы ресми түрде құдаласу, «алып қашу» түрі немесе қыздың «қашып кетуі» сияқты. Бір түрі құда түсу, бұл – шығыс славян этностары мен басқа қазақстандықтарға тән болса, екінші түрі қазақтармен түрік этностары арасында немесе ислам қағидаларын ұстанатындарға тән.

Түйін сөздер: этнос, неке, үйлену, құдаласу, күйеу жігіт және қалыңдық, алып қашу, қыздың қашуы.

Калыш А.Б.

Новое и традиционное в свадебной обрядности населения Западного Казахстана (на примере Актюбинской области)

В статье на основе полевых этнографических материалов автора, специальной литературы исследуется новое и традиционное в свадебной обрядности населения Западного Казахстана на примере Актюбинской области. Показано, что данная обрядность органически сочетает в себе черты прошлого и настоящего, имеет как общеказахские и общеказахстанские черты, так и отдельные региональные различия. Так, например, у казахов заключение брака осуществляется как в форме официального сватовства, так и путем «похищения» или «бегством» невесты. Первая форма брака путем сватовства чаще встречается среди представителей восточнославянского, преимущественно европейских этносов и среди других казахстанцев; вторая – среди казахов, тюркских этносов или тех, которые придерживаются норм ислама.

Ключевые слова: этносы, брак, свадьба, сватовство, жених и невеста, похищение невесты, бегство невесты.

**NEW AND TRADITIONAL
IN WEDDING RITES
OF THE POPULATION
OF WESTERN
KAZAKHSTAN
(on example of Aktubinsk
region)**

The Wedding Rites under study, mostly Kazakh, have been less subjected to alterations and prominence has been given to traditional moments in these phenomena. Rites and rituals going back to religious, most Islam and pre-Islam sources are mixed in them. Therefore, the alterations going on, the further development and interaction of the traditional and modern, of the different ethnographical phenomena are of great interest to us.

Wedding Rites and Rituals, as a rule consist of several cycles: proposal, preparation for marriage, marriage, marriage itself, and post-wedding rituals.

At the beginning of this century, the Kazakh wedding rites, despite the slight regional differences, have been mostly identical in their essence. Their further development has preserved many of culturally important features. The new Soviet laws and ethnic interaction with the Russian and the Ukrainian people made a strong imprint on the Kazakh rites. The traditional elements are being transformed now and the processes of transformation are not quite similar in different regions of Kazakhstan.

Nowadays, marriage is being realized in two variants: 1) preceding proposal and wedding ceremony at the groom's house («kelin tusuru toyi»), the same ceremony at the bride's house; 2) elopement of the bride («kaship ketu») or stealing of the bride with her consent by the groom and post wedding ceremony at the groom's house.

The traditional form of marriage has been widely and fully investigated in the special literature. According to it, the first is proposal, groom's relatives send their representatives to the bride's house. The head («bas kuda») is usually the father if groom, the second man («bi kuda») is a respected member of the community, eloquent and witty. The groom accompanies them as usual. The bride's parents are informed beforehand about the aims of the visit and can make necessary preparations [1].

The institution of proposal has been subjected to strong alterations; its functions have been changed. Now its task is not to choose a bride but to help to achieve mutual understanding of the two sides.

The arrival of the groom's representatives is a ritual itself. Neighbors take an active part in it, for example which can not be stepped over without paying a fine. Or a whip can be hanged like this («kamshi bailar»). Previously, the groom came on horseback

with handkerchiefs tied to his whip for presenting women who met him. Now, he comes in a car with the handkerchiefs tied to it. The ritual of introduction of some interest too («otka mai kuyu»).

Two women lead the groom to hearth and they pour oil to it, after that he throws money around as a ransom. The groom's men are served a generous meal, i.e. the groom is given mutton chest meat, symbolizing close relations, since it was accepted to greet each other touching breast. The groom must do his best to help himself and not forget to pass the meat to the others. For example, oil should be given to elder brother's wife, another part should be given to the relatives on the bride's side. At the end he pays a ransom. The whole party agrees as to the organization of the wedding. After that the groom's side makes a present to the bride's parents – a bag with a sum of money and some trifles.

Kalim, as a ransom for wife still exists in the southern parts of Kazakhstan and the Middle Asia republics. It has been the most necessary part of the whole process, sometimes the groom ransomed his wife at a heavy price and this rite still exist in some changed forms in the southern Kazakhstan and some parts of the northern Kazakhstan where the groom has to ransom his wife at a horse's price.

The horse's parents make dowry for her accordingly to their pocket. It may consist of trousseau, at times furniture, home machines, fabrics etc. («kalta sipar»). They also pay ransom to the serving people, usually it is not expensive rings, bracelets etc.

When everything is arranged guests gather around are served a ritual course – mutton liver with oil, which symbolizes agreement, otherwise the liver is not served. Now the groom's relatives are to go through an ordeal, they are to eat everything. Sometimes guests help them («asatu»). After that the bride's parents and the guests hold the groom's side to a ransom in cash. If the sum is considered to be small, the guests demand more or the former can be drawn out, to make fun. So they try to give the sum demanded to women who serve the meal. This ritual goes back to the ritual games of the past when the tribal system existed.

Nowadays, the elopement of a bride is the form that quite frequently occurs. In this case, the bride's parents are not responsible for the wedding party, limiting themselves to giving a dowry. This form has become quite frequent in the other regions including the Middle Asia, Altai, Siberia the Caucasus. We firmly believe that the reasons causing the adoption of this form are as follows: 1) financial and other difficulties; 2) weakening of the family ties and growing independence of the young; 3) the parent's

dissatisfaction with the choice of their children [1]. This independence in marriage, fixed by the Constitution and laws helps to do without many traditional rites and unnecessary obligation. If a young man is frequent visitor, the bride's parents are already well acquainted with him and try not to be in their way. Usually the girl's friends are taken into confidence. When the news is broken, it is up to the groom's parents to send their excuses with their close relatives (keshirim surau) and to organize a wedding when excuses are accepted and consent is given. In most cases, both sides achieve mutual agreement, when the girl confirms her choice and then gaieties of announcement come.

Adopted forms of marriage are similar both in town and the countryside not with standing ethnic differences. They are mostly limited to marriage at a registry office (any type of municipal government) and the following wedding-party.

Marriage at a registry office can be celebrated at a month's notice. As usual the a month's notice. As usual the wedding-party taken place immediately after the registration, but it is entirely a matter of choice and circumstances. When the day of the intended marriage is fixed, the young couple makes necessary preparations: buy wedding-rings, order toilets, send official invitations with photos. Lately some elements of the national costume have become popular again, such as the tall head dress (saukele), a silk or a velvet jacket without sleeves richly ornamented.

The reception takes place in the day-time and still contains fully many traditional features and elements. Guests greet the parents of the young couple; friends and relatives are introduced to each other. Then the meal is served, usually it is lamb with the sheep's head. By the end of the meal the young couple is invited to get the blessing from old men (aksakals) i.e. «white beards». In other cases grown-ups come to the bride's room to have a look at her. In comparison with the rites of the Middle Asia, a religious wedding ceremony practically never takes place. To conclude the reception, all gather around to sing a special song («toy bastar»), usually it is accompanied by the music of the national instrument (dombra). After that a special prize for the singer is brought, usually it is a plate with presents.

The wedding party itself can be celebrated late in the evening. The so-called (jastar toyi) is the wedding-party where mostly young generation is present, it is not so solemn as the reception, that's why colleagues, neighbors, unknown people can be present. In summer the wedding-party is usually celebrated out-of-doors, in the yard or something; in

winter – at a café or a canteen. The young couple is met by the special wedding song («jar-jar»), music accompanies the song. The young couple is showered with sweets and silver coins which symbolize purity, wealth and fertility.

The important part is introduction of the bride to the guest («bet ashar»), i.e. showing her face since the face of the bride is covered by the veil. A sings a song, enumerating her (bride's) duties and naming the guests, she knobs after that the veil thrown away. It is well-known ritual among the folk of the Middle Asia and the Moslem part of the Caucasus [2, c. 224].

The modern wedding rituals bear both traditional features and general neutral Soviet features. So when questioned 'In what way would you like to celebrate your wedding' – some 60,0 up to 8,17% of Kazakhs and 48,3-66,7% of Russian approved a modern way of celebrating with some traditional elements.

Together with family, social organization such as trade-unions, party sections and the public in general take part in organizing the wedding ceremonies, parties, provide them with necessities; food, drinks, orchestra etc.

But not we standing many positive sides of these phenomena, many negative problems arise. To illustrate it, one can emphasize the growing tendency to have too magnificent and overcrowded ceremonies, putting the groom's family on the verge of ruin.

As authors stresses, both the Southern and Northern regions face the same problem. Unhealthy rivalry and excitement keep going up, plans grow frenzied but nobody cares for the young couple future. The traditional obligatory exchange of presents make the cost reach astronomical proportions, beginning with the dresses and ending with cattle. The number of kinsfolk reaches 20 men on both sides and each person must to given its share. If to take into consideration, that Kazakh families are mostly large and the other children should marry as well, we can what a deadly blow it strikes on the family budget [3, c. 99].

When the Russian ethnocultural traditions are being analyzed, it is prominent that their wedding rites preserved only some fragmentary elements. This regularity has been emphasized in many investigations in different regions of the country.

As other ethnical groups, the Russian have maintained proposal as the most steady from of marriage. The groom's parents and his relatives are to propose to the girl's relatives.

When paying a visit to the girl's parents, the groom's relatives should bring present for the bride; fabrics dresses, sweets and special ritual bread. Close relatives on the bride's side are usually present.

The party discuss questions connected with ceremony, mutual fees according to the pocket, not hurting anybody's interest, while among the Western Kazakhstan Kazakh a substantial part of fees pays the groom's side. When the agreement is arranged, the bread is cut and served with salt. The same symbol of bread as the basis of wealth, life and credit can be seen in other ethnical groups.

The proposal, as a rule, takes place when the bride and groom live in the locality and the families are well acquainted, otherwise it is more or even ignored wholly. In this case the wedding loses many traditional elements and the ritual is limited to a wedding-party.

Together with the proposal, some rituals are frequent; such as; the ransom for the demonstration of the dowry, the bar at the gate and the house of the bride, hiding of the bride, which are aimed at making fun and are not connected ritual themselves. In their essence, these element are connected with 'the transition from matrilocal settlement of wedded couples to patrilocal, when the community or patriarchate family was stubborn to scoping of its member to the other community's .

Some other elements maintain still as the meeting of the groom's parents with bread-and-salt and shower of sweets, flowers, coins etc.

The wedding ceremony concludes at the 2nd day when guests arrive at the groom's house in the European part- at the bride's house. In other words, the tendency to celebrate ritual at the groom's house grows.

To sun it up, modern wedding rites and rituals can be characterized by weakening of the traditional elements, lost their religious, magic sense, and the strengthening of innovations. The national style can be seen in the Kazakh way of proposal, some types of rituals ransoms, fees, presents, specific songs, etc.

The most important elements of modern wedding rites include the so-called civil marriage, that has become predominant and superseded the religious ones among the Russian the Ukrainian, the Kazakh and other groups of population. The marriage is registered at the registry office, i.e. by the state, and is accompanied by the set of ceremonies; such as exchanging of ring, giving certificates, speeches, visiting the memorable places, photos etc.

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