To Modern Wedding Ceremonies of Kazakhs and East Slavic Ethnic Groups Of Kazakhstan

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Annotation. The article on the basis of field ethnographic, ethno-sociological materials and special literature is considers a modern marriage rites of the Kazakhs, and contacting with them East Slavic ethnic groups - Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians of Kazakhstan. Presents common forms of marriage – by traditional matchmaking, as well as through voluntary abduction of the bride or her ritual “escape” from the home of her parents or close ones.

Also presented the basic features that characterize the pre-wedding rituals in the house of the bride's parents and the groom, the wedding party hosted by the groom's parents. Similar actions or examples are typical for the East Slavic ethnic groups.

Considering marriage rites of the Kazakhs and other ethnic groups which are contacting with them, including the East Slavic, devoted to the both traditions and innovations. Rites and rituals dating back to religious roots, including both pre-Islamic and pre-Christian, have much in common and particular. Thus, the changes occurring in them, as well as the interaction between traditional and modern ritual, of various ethnic communities, are of great interest to us.

As a rule, marriage ceremonies and rites of the Kazakhs, Russians or Belarusians, consist of a series of the following stages: courtship, marriage preparation, marriage registration, wedding ceremony and post wedding rituals. Certainly, they have a similar and distinctive moments caused by the peculiarities of their ethno-cultural development.

If to look at the wedding ceremony of the Kazakh people, then, despite some regional differences, they were essentially identical in nature. However, their further development has retained many traditional cultural particularity.

It should be noted, that in the last century the new Soviet laws and ethnic interaction with the Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians and other ethnic groups have a certain influence on the Kazakh rites. In their further development, numerous important cultural features are held up. At the present time Kazakhs marriage occurs in two ways: 1) by a formal courtship and traditional wedding ceremony in the groom's house ("kelіn tusүru toyi"), preceded by a similar ceremony in the house of the bride's parents; 2) Bride elopement ("қashyp ketu") or ravishment with her consent and the marriage ceremony in the house of the groom.

The traditional form of marriage has been widely and fully researched in the literature [1, 207-208 bb.]. In accordance with it, the groom's party sent to the house of the bride's parents official matchmakers from among their relatives. As a rule, groom's father or someone from an older relative acted as the main matchmaker, the second main matchmaker (bi-quda) was respected person, wherein eloquence and wit. As a rule, the number of matchmakers did not exceed 5-7 people, including the groom. Bride's parents are notified in advance concerning the purpose of the visit so that they can prepare for a meeting with them. If they are not satisfied with the groom or his family's candidacy, they will notify in advance that they should not come to woo. Of course, at the present time the forms of matchmaking undergone some changes, and their functions may vary. Now their goal is not to choose a bride, but some kind of to help reach a common understanding by both sides.

Arrival of matchmakers is considered an essential part of the ritual. Besides close relatives, neighbors also take an active part in it, helping in various activities. It also includes a traditional meeting of the matchmakers at the gate or threshold of the bride's parents house, for which the arriving guests must pay a symbolic ransom. The same actions are typical for wedding ceremonies of the Russians, Belorussians and other ethnic groups of the country. Usually the bride and the matchmakers come to the house of the bride's parents on several prestigious cars, decorated with colorful balls and ribbons.

Then, according to the ritual of matchmakers and groom are invited into the house,
where previously served - rich table, which is consist of national meat dishes such as horse sausage ("qazy"), the special meat cuts ("zhaya"), a hot dish of flesh by-products ("kuyrdak"). The main hot dish is the meat in Kazakh ("beshbarmak") with pieces of cooked rolled dough.

The Kazakhs courtship bond ritual is confirmed by applying a special dish of lamb liver and fat ("quiriyq-bauri"), symbolizing the consent of the parties to the newlyweds wedding, otherwise, the liver is not supplied. This dish is also accompanied by a worthy ransom for the women who serve guest meals. This ritual dates back to the ritual games of the past, when one tribe phratry become relative to another [2, p. 84-85].

The groom served by a special dish of cooked lamb brisket ("tostik"), which symbolizes the close relationship, as it happens during the greeting each other, touching the breast. The groom should eat it in a right way and not forget to endow women with corresponding ransom. After the meal, before the traditional tea, both parties agree on the organization of the upcoming wedding. During the break, the groom's party presents to the parents and relatives of the bride relying expensive gifts - gold or diamond rings, earrings, bracelets to the bride, her mother and sisters; to men - outerwear, suits, to father of the bride - the horse or its cash equivalent. For the rest of the assembled relatives and neighbors – sewn from wool double-sided bag (korzhyn) containing fabric trim, sweets and kitchen herbs, short drinks, ordinary finger-rings, bracelets and others.

In the southern regions of Kazakhstan is still preserved the traditional bride purchasing - a bride-price, which is common in the neighboring republics of Central Asia or the Caucasus. Bride purchasing is charged by cattle or money, which varies between 1-2 thousand US dollars. Besides the bride's parents presented a sacrificial lamb in honor of their deceased ancestors ("olitiri"), as well as a similar ram to the bride’s mother, for raised daughter with dignity ("ana sutі")

In turn, the bride's parents also endows guests from the groom side with the similar gifts, to his parents - more, to others - less. Then, before the wedding reception preparing dowry for their daughter. As a rule, the dowry consists of furniture, appliances, dishes, clothes etc. Groom Party after the importation of the dowry pay for the delivery. Typically, those inexpensive rings, bracelets [1, p. 240-242].

In this form of courtship, most parents of the bride suit wedding feast on the occasion of the marriage of their daughter, into which invited a lot of guests from among close ones, relatives, friends, neighbors, and so forth. It is a celebration that gathers ample guests and passes joyfully, accompanied by weaving both traditional and new elements.

Currently, there is a second form of marriage - "snitch" or a bride running away from home her parents or relatives. In this case, the bride's parents do not bear the financial responsibility for the wedding, limited to only a partial dowry for his daughter. This form has become quite common in many regions of the country, including Central Asia, Altai, Siberia, Caucasus. We firmly believe that the causes of this form of marriage are as follows: 1) the financial and other difficulties; 2) the weakening of family ties and the growing independence of young people; 3) parental dissatisfaction with the choice of the future bride or groom.

The above mentioned trend helps to avoid a number of major traditional ceremonies, additional material and financial expenditures. If the future bride a frequent guest in the house of the bride's parents, and they are already familiar with him, trying not to disturb an establishment of the future family. Usually, friends of the bride and her side is aware of the decision of the young people. After voluntary escape or abduction, groom party shall notify the parents of the bride, send their apologies by close relatives and try to quickly organize a wedding. This event is held in the case, if an apology is accepted and the consent is given. In most cases, both sides are trying to reach a mutual agreement, especially when the bride confirms her choice and the seriousness of his intentions by written notice or cell phone [3, p.71].

Contemplated forms of marriage are identical both in the city and in rural areas and have no special ethnic differences. The Kazakhs, as well as the Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians are mostly come down to marriage through their official registration in state bodies (registry office) and the wedding celebration.

Registration of marriage in a registry office may take place at any time, usually a month after the submission of the application. As usual, the wedding-party is carried out immediately after registration, but may be postponed for a few days or weeks, depending on the circumstances. When the day of the intended marriage is known, a young couple making the necessary preparations: acquire wedding rings, order the necessary outfit, send an official invitation to the guests with a photo. In recent decades, a number of national costume elements became popular again, such as the traditional high head-dress of the bride ("saukele"), a velvet jacket without sleeves, richly decorated with ornaments and beautiful female belt. The groom is also dressed in national costume.

Wedding Celebration for adults takes place in the afternoon at home, in a cafe or restaurant and still includes many traditional
features and elements. Guests greet the parents of a young couple; friends and relatives get to know each other. Table is served in urban standard with a set of salads, cold and hot dishes. The main wedding or guest dish is the kazakh-style meat or Central Asian pilaf of rice and lamb or horsemeat. The most senior and influential guests are served by a boiled head of a horse or a sheep. By the end of the meal the newlyweds are invited for the farewell speech by the elder generation persons of gravitas ("aqsalas"). In other cases, the adults come in a pre-reserved for the bride's room to look at her. In comparison with the rites of Central Asian people the religious ceremony of marriage ("Neke") is less common, and limited to its symbolic conduct in the mosque or at home. The wedding celebration is accompanied by a special ritual songs ("jar-jar"), which is usually accompanied by music of the national instrument dombra.

The main wedding party can be held late in the evening. In this celebration are invited mainly young and middle generation, friends and comrades, relatives, colleagues, neighbors. Invited guests range from 200-300 to 400-500 people. The young couple met by the special wedding song "Jar-Jar" with musical accompaniment. Young couple showered with sweets and coins that symbolize purity, wealth and fertility.

The important part is the symbolic opening of the bride's face ("betashar"), covered with a white veil. Master of ceremonies or special guest singer, virtuoso singing a special song, which lists its duties to the relatives of the groom at the same time introduces his close people. She should make obedience to each of them. At the end he shoots from her head veil, which symbolizes her transition from the bride category to the category of a wife - a woman. This ritual is widespread in other nations of Central Asia and the Muslim part of the Caucasus. As a rule, all in a wedding reception is hosted by the toastmaster of gravitas irrespective of age. Toastmaster not only provides guests with toast, but also regulates the order of submission of wedding dishes, weighed the present guests, organizes dances, various entertainment games. Similar actions are typical for other ethnicities contacting with Kazakhs -Russians, Belarusians and others.

Modern wedding ceremonies are both traditional features and new. So, the question "How would you like to celebrate their wedding?" From 60 to 81.7% of Kazakhs and 48.3-66.7% of Russians respondents in Northern Kazakhstan are in favor of the modern way of celebrating with some traditional elements [4, p. 313-314]. In the organization of the wedding party along with honeymoons family public is taking active part, including the labor collective, trade unions, etc., providing them with essential goods, financial assistance and so on. The same distinctive properties are common for the contacting with Kazakhs ethnicities. Along with the positive aspects of these phenomena, there are a number of negative issues. To illustrate the point, we can emphasize the growing trend of spending too lavish and wasteful ceremonies, often incurring too high costs, especially for weddings, including expenditures for courtship affecting the future of the young couple. Traditional mandatory exchange of gifts, often for 20 or more people on both sides, seems to be burdensome. If we take into account the fact that the Kazakh families mainly medium other children also need to get married, then this strikes at the expense of the family budget.

If to analyze the ethno-cultural traditions of the Russian-speaking population, so in them wedding ceremonies have retained only some fragmentary elements of the past. This pattern can also be seen in several other researches in different regions of our country. So, many of the expenditures associated with the matchmaking is minimal, limited only by the symbolic gifts between the groom and the bride's parents. The same applies to hosting a wedding celebration, which involves no more than 25-30 guests. From pre-wedding ceremonies still existing different ransoms for the relatives of the bride and her friends. As a gift for the bride brought cloth for dresses, sweets and bread.

In general, modern marriage and wedding ceremonies, and the rituals are characterized by the weakening of the traditional elements, partial loss of a number of old, religious and magical meanings, and are accompanied by a strengthening of innovations. National style is more evident in the Kazakh pre-wedding ceremonies and wedding celebrations, in certain rituals, redemptions, gifts, in some ritual songs, etc. [5, p.14].

In recent years, among the youth of Eastern European ethnic groups, Kazakhs partially we can meet unregistered civil marriages, which are in course of time after a few years or the extramarital birth, recorded in the official state bodies.

References: