

Pre-Wedding Ceremonies of Khorezm Oasis

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Abstract: *This article describes the pre-wedding ceremonies of the Khorezm oasis and the process of their transformation.*

Keywords: “Eshik ochar (Door opening), “Fotiha (Blessing), non yopar (bread baking), yigit yignar (guys’ gathering), kushana bichar (cutting bridal curtain), yotoq tuyi (Bedroom wedding).

Introduction

Marriage wedding started with activity of match-makers. A match-maker is a person who has been called to bond a relation between two households. The visits of match-makers are targeted on Thursdays or Fridays – lucky days of the week. In our case, men go first as match-makers. Khorezm people say, “The door that opened by men will be fortunate”. The next time the match-makers contained three people, usually the elderly women are assigned to such responsible affair. The match-makers go to the girl’s home three or four times. Usually, the young man’s mother brought a bundle full with a variety of sweets to the house of future daughter-in-law. For the third time, if the girl’s side was agree, patir (thin Uzbek national bread) was served and the white cloth which had been brought by the boy’s mother was received and it was considered the consent. After that, ceremonies such as “stealing patir”, “door opening”, “big patir” began and both houses began the preparation for the wedding.

When sweets were received, the joyous women got to work: they started preparing nine qatlama – a type of national bread but fried, nine patirs, (two nines in many places, we do not need to explain “nine”, it means that the family of these young people will be forever as nine planets), and two little patirs baked joining to each other in the sense of that the family of the younger generation would be stable and women will arrive. This is called “ugri patir (stealing patir)”. On that day the engagement which had still been kept secret from public was “sealed” in order that the opinion of the new relatives wouldn’t change i.e. bread was broken, the lollipop was broken, the blessing was read and only then this good news reached the public.

Materials and methods

Now women’s work got warmer. In the Khorezm villages, there began preparations for betrothal weddings named as “Kazan Palov (Pot pilaf)”, “Eshik ochar (Door opening)”, “Fotiha (Blessing)”. Meanwhile, a ritual was held, which was called “Dasturkhan yigar (Collecting table cloths)”; it was arranged by the relatives the owner woman of the wedding party as part of a wedding ceremony.

In the northern regions of Khorezm – Gurlan, Yangibazar, eighty patirs, eighty qatlamas, sweets, fruits and garments were brought in the “Kazan palov”. The relatives of the girls housing were invited and the engagement was announced. The patirs, qatlamas, sweets, coming from the house of the young man, were shared with neighbors and relatives. The kindergartens and schools in the neighborhood were not forgotten. The first passing – the engagement ceremony passed like this.

On the one hand, neighbor women, aunts gathered together in the “Kurpa yiyima (Quilt and mattress sewing)”, on the other hand, they were busy with a chest stuff, men were busy with the hope of fattening, though, the ram and calf which were aimed for gifting, some of them prepared flour and rice at mills and others were busy with the market. These are all for the “Tuylik”. “Tuylik” is the most important measure that gives full right to the bridegroom to take the girl from her house as his bride. All the expenses of the wardrobe in the girl’s house, the ram with the white scarf, the calf – all this are looked through by the women’s eyes and then men’s discussion begins. Men mark the wedding day with the sign of the women’s “Tuylik” reception.

Three days before the wedding, a ceremony “non yopar (bread baking)” is held and the closest relatives of this house (sister, sister-in-law, and neighbor) take this responsibility. There was a special ritual in this ceremony “rapida guydi”, which included relatives and neighbors who presented a gift to the baker.

In both houses, the elderly gathered to hold the “Kurpa yiyima” ceremony. At first, the elderly are praying for happiness for the young couple. Then the sweets, candies, coins are spread. They are picked by the kids there. This means that the bride and bridegroom’s future children would play well on the beds and mattresses.

The day before the wedding, at the bridegroom’s home there takes place a “yigit yignar (guys’ gathering)” ceremony. The younger friends, neighbors, and relatives came here. After dinner, everyone sat down busy with cutting carrots. On the same day,

all the women in the girl's house were assembled for a ritual "khina yopar (henna)". They were hennaing their hands with joy and fun. That day, the girl spent the last night in her father's home. The girlfriends who had come to congratulate the girl on that day also stayed with her at night in her house. That is why ethnographer T. Kilichev describes this ceremony as "Yotoq Tuyi (Bedroom wedding)"[1].

Result and discussion

This wedding began with a late fall. It was attended by close friends of the bride, women, and little boys. The wedding party was also attended by the girls from the bridegroom's side, who brought nine table bundles. It is set up on a terrace or in a large room. The bride was sitting in a separate circle with her daughters on the honorary place. The girls combed the hair of the bride, plaited her hair and made forty braids, paid attention to her eyelids "in general they were busy with beauty treatment. She was also worn a mahsi – a special national foot wearing like boots, a wide silk white marriage dress and her skull cap and attention was more paid to sitting up dressed.

Participants of the "Yotoq tuyi" are watching the action of the friends. After enjoying the wedding table, they start singing "yor-yor" songs with the participation of the wedding or with the permission of the elders[2]. The halfas also provided the song with attractiveness in a loud voice, drew two cups into their hands and hit to each other.

In the "yotoq tuyi", the lapar is spoken of as a young man, and from a girl's tongue. Lapars, which were sung by girls and boys side by side in ancient times, began to be sung by only women side-by-side with the girl and the young man's language on separate sides[3].

The father of the young man had to agree with the girl's parents. In all Turkic peoples the value of the girl was high. Therefore, the bridegroom side certainly paid for the bride. This payment was in the form of money, gold and silver, sheep and carpets. The girl's garments were different in each region. On the morning of the wedding, the elderly came to the bride's house and held the ceremony "kushana bichar (cutting bridal curtain)". The owners gave them presents.

Then one of the elderly women sang "yor-yor" and took the bride with her sister-in-law and friends to the bridegroom's house on a cart with a bridal curtain on it. This cart was called "caravan" and consisted of four or six carts. In the first cart, the musicians were sitting with musical instruments and in the other, the bride, her friends and two sisters-in-law. The elder woman and halfas, who participated in the "Yotoq tuyi", were on the next cart. The young men of the bride's side came together and stopped the bride's cart and took gifts[4]. When the bridegroom's side hears the bride's arrival, they make fire on the way immediately. That is to say that the devils are burned in the fire and we know that our ancestors worshiped the fire and symbolized fire as purity. So, the bride burst into the fire with a view to bringing clean and loving to the house.

Conclusion

Nowadays it is necessary to study such rituals and to have a positive impact on their upbringing. Such customs, traditions and ceremonies serve as a motive for the upbringing of young people today, the confidence in the future, the propagation of respect for the rich spiritual heritage left by our ancestors, and the propagation of patriotism.

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