

THE MUTUAL ASSISTANCE IN THE WEDDING TRADITIONS OF THE KARAKALPAK (THE EXAMPLE OF PRE-WEDDING CEREMONIES)

This article analyzes pre-wedding traditions among the Karakalpaks involving mutual assistance from friends and relatives. In Karakalpak culture, providing mutual assistance in organizing large family events is crucial. Over time, the institution of mutual aid, which formed within social structures, has evolved into a stable tradition. Similar traditions exist among many peoples and are known by various names. In Karakalpak culture, it is called “kómek.” A comprehensive study of mutual assistance traditions in modern Karakalpak pre-wedding rituals reveals that they have changed and modernized. During field data collection in various districts of Karakalpakstan, the forms of kómek in pre-wedding rituals were documented and analyzed comparatively. The author’s field materials support all the aforementioned conclusions and serve as the foundation for this research. This study draws on data collected from 2021 to 2024 to ensure the reliability of the results. Data were collected in nearly all districts of Karakalpakstan, indicating the broad scope and diversity of the phenomena studied. The most comprehensive and detailed data were obtained in the following districts: Chimbay, Karauzak, Kegeyli, Kanlykol, Kungrad, Muynak, Nukus, Shumanay, Turtkul, and Ellikkala. Analysis of the collected data reveals how the kómek tradition depends on the region. The socioeconomic development of a district significantly influences the mutual assistance traditions. For instance, in urban areas, mutual assistance tends to be more formal and related to financial support, while in rural areas, it tends to be more traditional and involve practical help. Within this study, pre-wedding mutual assistance can be classified according to its role. Examples include the traditions of “nemeurin”, “zhabıw”, “oramal salıw”, and “on bolsı” during pre-wedding events, as well as the assistance provided by relatives and friends.

Keywords: Karakalpaks, wedding, seeing off the bride, mutual assistance, the tradition of “nemeurin”, the tradition of “zhabıw”, the tradition of “oramal salıw”

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