

Features of Karakalpak Folk Rituals Songs

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Abstract. *This article describes the features of the national identity of the Karakalpak people on the example of Karakalpak folklore heritage. The article is based on the analysis of songs that have developed due to certain customs and traditions of the people. The content and idea of ritual songs, which from all eternity have been integral part of the life of the Karakalpaks, are revealed. Lullabies, wedding, mourning ritual songs, their performance, originality is the object of study. All these features are supported by the given extracts from the songs.*

Key words: *folklore, songs, rituals, contest, lamentation, tribe, image, plot, composition.*

The Karakalpak people have a centuries-old history. Our ancestors led a nomadic lifestyle: various historical reasons forced them to leave their native places, but one thing remained unchanged - they never parted with the spiritual food that supported them both in difficulties and in joys. The creative heritage of the Karakalpaks consisted of works in which the people expressed their aspirations, everyday problems, and views on the world around them. This can include ritual and labor songs, folk tales and proverbs, sayings, tales of heroes and historical epics.

Scientists such as N. Davkaraev, A. Baskakov, O. Kozhurov, K. Aimbetov, K. Maksetov studied and classified Karakalpak folk songs as a special genre of folklore. In their research, they studied aspects of the song genre as ideological and thematic orientation, performance features and content. According to the prominent Karakalpak scientist N. Davkarayev, “the Karakalpak people, both in their most joyful days and in their most difficult times, never parted with songs. From birth, the song remained a faithful companion of the Karakalpaks” [1.45].

The exponents of oral folk art were storytellers, zhyraus and bakhshis.

When it comes to ritual songs, we mean songs associated with the traditions and customs of the people, which reflect the people’s life and people’s worldview. Sincerely believing that the forces of nature have power over man, the people composed songs in which they worshiped certain phenomena of the surrounding reality, elevating them to cult. For example, according to popular belief, when performing folk songs “Badik”, “Gulapsan”, “Kamshylau”, the spirits, concentrating at the bedside of the patient, caused a wind that expelled damage. Or “Toi baslau” - a wedding song, “Haujar”, performed when a girl is given in marriage, “Bet ashar” - when the bride comes to the groom’s house and greets each of her husband’s relatives with a bow.

The peculiarity of the song genre, first of all, is manifested in its form and content. Unlike, for example, a fairy tale, which is written in prose form, a song is a poetic creation. In terms of content, in the song genre, the most tender feelings, dreams, and desires of a person are conveyed in lyrical presentation.

The songs of our people express grief for their difficult fate, for their lost native lands, beloved sons as a result of the invasions of foreign invaders.

In folk epics (dastans) one encounters the lament of parents, wives, and sisters for heroes (batyrs) leaving for the battlefield. Their farewell to their native village leaves a sad trace in the hearts of their fellow villagers. Let us give an example from the Karakalpak folk epic "Gorugly":

I drove horses along Shamlibel - their trace disappeared.

He treated forty men (dzhigits) - the taste has long been forgotten.

Not only does Gorugly have no son, no daughter,

Life passed without children - oh my Sultan [2.18].

In Karakalpak folklore, songs are a separate genre. It is possible that the song genre is one of the first, most ancient, genres of our oral folk art. In general, the song genre of any nationality is an invaluable storehouse of its spiritual life.

Folk songs and poetry as a literary genre have certain similarities and peculiar differences. The most important difference between folk songs is that they, existing in folk life as an expression of their everyday life, traditions and customs, experiences and feelings, are passed on from mouth to mouth, and information about their authors is blurred by time. In written epic works, songs that are widespread among the people and passed down from generation to generation are cited by storytellers as folk songs. For example, the songs "Bozatau" (the name of the area), "Aizhamal" (the girl's name). And when we say "folk song," we mean songs whose authors have long been forgotten, and their names have not been preserved. These are the songs included in the epics "Alpamys", "Garib Ashyk"

Folk songs differ, as mentioned above, in their content, structural integrity, and artistic means. They may contain rather unique forms and techniques of presentation. For example, within one context (verse), each individual line may not be connected in meaning. Let's take the following lines as an example:

In the morning I drove the cows to the herd,

Our city is dressed in flowers.

Tell Matzhan the boy,

Let him leave his horse and run to the city [3.3].

A similar structure is often found in folk songs, and this technique is an artistic device characteristic of them.

Another attribute of folk songs is the obligatory arrangement to a folk melody. Songs with a love theme, lullabies, even lamentation are characterized by a certain manner of performance.

Ritual songs in folk reality had their place, purpose and special performers. For example, when the time came for a girl to get married and she left her father's house, the song "Hauzhar" was sung, which expressed emotional experiences about the unknown that awaited the young girl, sadness for her native place, her home:

A yoke hangs on my shoulders,

Oh, my uncles, yar-yar-au.

Presses like a willow twig,

My brothers, yar-yar-au [3.14].

"Haujar" also expresses the girl's open resentment towards her parents, for example, towards her father, who coveted a rich dowry (bride price):

Black gun or white gun

Are you shooting, father, hauzhar?

Encroaching on wealth,

He betrayed his daughter, hauzhar [4.128].

The song expresses the girl's despair about what fate awaits her in someone else's house; she compares her home and the house in which she will live:

The doors of my house

Everything is made of silk, hauzhar...

It's worth going out or going in,

They stroke my hair.

I'm going to someone else's house, hauzhar,

The doors are full of thorns.

Will I go out or will I go in?

They will tear me to pieces, hauzhar [3.16].

The performance of "Hauzhar" is interspersed with such types of wedding ritual songs as "Aitys" (verbal competition), in which the bridesmaids and horsemen on the groom's side compete in eloquence. In them, the groom's side tries to reassure the bride's overly biased side, and also finds words of consolation for the bride herself.

Don't grieve for your father

You leave in sadness yar-yar-au

Father-in-law with his kindness

Could be a worthy replacement.

Don't cry, beauty, hauzhar-au [3.12].

Thanks to their talent and abilities, girls are ready for any turn during the verbal competition, they boldly improvise, skillfully using various artistic means of singing, thereby improving the poetic value of the song genre.

"Synsyu" is another type of genre performed by a girl-bride. If "Hauzhar" is sung by the bridesmaids, then "Synsyu" is performed by the bride herself. Previously, custom required a mandatory matchmaking ceremony and subsequent seeing off the girl from her home to the groom's house, accompanied by her girlfriends and relatives. The girl left her father's house crying, singing a ritual song that expressed love for her parents, longing for her girlhood and carefree days. And this is regardless of whether she married someone she didn't love out of love and of her own free will, or at the insistence of her father. The performance of this song was considered, on the one hand, an indicator of her upbringing and modesty, on the other, these were sincere tears of despair from the unknown of what foundations, characters, morals she would encounter in someone else's home:

Leaving his corner in his father's house,

I'll find myself at the doorstep of someone else's family.

What awaits me in the unfamiliar direction,

Will I be able to "get back on my feet" again? [4.180].

It is difficult for a girl to get used to the idea that she will have to leave her father's house forever, part with her carefree and independent life. She says goodbye to her parents, loved ones, relatives, and the entire village. Particularly addressed to her mother:

You got up at dawn

My cradle was rocking.

For everything: "Thank you!" - I say,

Dear mother, goodbye! [4.184].

In the songs of “Synsyu”, along with the personal experiences of the girl-bride, the injustice of the existing reality is revealed, where the girl was often burdened with an unequal marriage, leaving all her tender feelings for desecration, exchanging them for cattle or bags of wheat.

Even though my braid is long

But the happiness was short-lived.

My strict father decided everything:

Drew a line to my fate,

Selling it to an old man for money.

Dear mother, goodbye! [3.29].

Currently, “Synsyu” is no longer performed, but still, these songs have been preserved as an invaluable heritage of the past of our people.

“Bet ashar” is a traditional folk song, sung in the groom’s house. It contains advice and instructions to the young daughter-in-law, acquaintance with members of the new family, their relatives and friends, friends of the groom, with the entire village, and also talks about those who are no longer there, but whom she should honor and remember. This custom has survived to this day; not a single wedding takes place without “bet ashar”.

Usually, the performance of this ritual is entrusted to a person with a poetic gift, or, as our people say, bakhshi. “Bet ashar” is built in the form of a teaching. The newly arrived bride is encouraged to have a kind, sensitive and respectful attitude towards her husband’s family, and is advised to be nimble in household matters and smiling in everyday worries:

If anyone comes to visit,

Don’t grumble, daughter-in-law.

Other little things

Don’t attach any importance.

Listen to your mother-in-law,

Don’t you dare contradict her.

If you decide to do something

Ask her for advice! [3.50-51].

The structure of “Bet ashar” skillfully uses figurative expression, comparisons, and epithets. In many songs, along with teachings to the bride, advice is also given to the groom. He is reminded that the time for a cloudless life has passed, and now he needs to gain responsibility for his family in order to become one of the best families in the village in harmony and understanding. Here I would like to note that the teachings of young people in “Bet ashar” carry deep educational value: the ceremony of “Bet ashar” (literally: removing the veil from the face) gathers all fellow villagers, among whom there are a lot of young people, they all hear parting words full of educational meaning. And it seems that these moral teachings will remain in their memory for a long time.

After the bucks finishes his parting speeches, he moves on to his welcoming words. Starting with the groom’s father, ending with fellow villagers, the bucks, with their individual poetic dedications to each of them, introduces the daughter-in-law by name to the new members of her family. The poetic couplet contains an accurate description of each person represented, his character, inclinations, and interests. For example:

Labor and it are inseparable,

Laziness will retreat before him.

He has an unshakable will

It is necessary - to grapple with the mountain.

With Esbergen's brother-in-law

With bow

Say hello, kelin (daughter-in-law) [3.40].

Usually in "Bet ashar", when depicting some qualities of the represented relatives, a satirical form is used. Noting some of their peculiar features, bakhshi tries to present them in a humorous manner:

When he hears: "Gathering!"

Forgets about the soul.

Where wine flows for free,

There you will find him [4.40].

The "Bet ashar" songs, on the one hand, introduce the village to the new bride, on the other hand, the bride herself gets to know new relatives. The value of these songs is that thanks to them, the character and morals of our ancestors are preserved and passed on from generation to generation.

Lamentation is an ancient ritual song of lament for the deceased. The lament is performed primarily by women. Lamentation expresses only the positive aspects of the character of the deceased, his noble deeds during life and, most importantly, the inability to imagine further life without him. Such songs are divided into several types. Here's an example of lamentation for a parent:

The ground collapsed in the middle of the yard

She took my father.

Just yesterday he walked along it,

And today already – he lies under it [4.222].

In lamentation, all memory words sound only in sublime tones.

Summing up what has been said, we would like to note that such songs as "Haujar", "Synsyu", "Bet ashar", "Lamentation" are rich material for us when studying the past of our people, their traditions and customs. Their artistic value lies in the fact that by reading beautifully designed lines, delving into their essence, we touch an inexhaustible source of folk wisdom.

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