

ETHNOPEDAGOGICAL REALISM AND DIDACTIC DYNAMICS OF THE KARAKALPAK “BET ASHAR” TRADITION

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Abstract: The preservation of universal and national values within the younger generation relies heavily on the transmission of oral folk art. This paper critically examines the Karakalpak “Bet ashar” (Unveiling of the Bride) ceremony as a deeply realistic folklore creation and a robust ethnopedagogical institution. By integrating an analysis of its poetic structure, the performer's artistic delivery, and its use of humor and social characterization, the study highlights how the tradition functions to socialize the youth. It emphasizes the ritual's role in teaching humanity, friendship, patience, and diligence, demonstrating its enduring relevance in bridging family integration with broader societal harmony.

Keywords: Karakalpak folklore, Bet ashar, folk didactics, ethnopedagogy, moral education, youth socialization, poetic realism, traditional performance.

Introduction

In the current era of rapid globalization, the spiritual and moral education of the younger generation stands as a paramount issue. A nation's historical pathway and worldview are profoundly reflected in its cultural heritage. Among the rich folklore of the Karakalpak people, the “Bet ashar” tradition is distinguished by its profound content, realistic form, and long-lasting societal relevance. It is not merely a custom marking the joy of a new family; it is a deeply realistic folklore creation directly connected to the realities of everyday life. The primary pedagogical objective of this tradition is to introduce the newlywed bride to the groom's household and the notable figures of the village, thereby ensuring her seamless social adaptation while simultaneously reinforcing the community's moral code.

1. The Performer: Artistic Delivery and Psychological Impact

The performative aspect of the “Bet ashar” is critical to its pedagogical success. The ceremony is not performed by just anyone; it requires a specialized individual—a *jirov* or *bakhshi*—who possesses a natural inclination for poetry, keen observational skills, and specific vocal resonance (*dawis tolqinlari*). The effectiveness of the didactic message relies heavily on this vocal delivery. By utilizing their artistic capability and commanding voice, the performer captures the collective attention of the gathered crowd, ensuring that the brief but impactful artistic portraits they paint of each family member resonate deeply with the audience.

2. Social Hierarchy, Humor, and Realistic Portraits

When analyzing the ceremony as a tool for socialization, the structural sequence of the introductions serves a direct instructional purpose. The performer creates short, objective, and realistic profiles of individuals based on their actual behavior and character traits.



- **The Pillars of the Household:** The introduction strictly begins with the bride's new father-in-law, followed immediately by the mother-in-law. Historically, the performer would emphasize their positive traits, portraying them as the foundational pillars and the core strength of the household.

- **Modern Adaptations:** Demonstrating the tradition's connection to contemporary life, it has become a modern trend to also mention the professions and trades of these family members during the introduction, grounding the folklore in current social realities.

- **The Role of Humor and Satire:** The performer frequently employs humor and subtle satire to describe the individuals being introduced. By publicly narrating the good or bad qualities of the village members through a comedic lens, the tradition uses laughter as a powerful corrective and educational tool for the community.

3. Folk Didactics and Poetic Counsel

The introductory and concluding phases of the “Bet ashar” are rich in direct folk didactics. Before the formal introductions begin, the bride is given profound advice on walking the right path and cultivating goodness. These lines of counsel are historic axioms that have circulated among the people for generations. A classic example of this poetic counsel translates as follows:

*Jaqsı adam jamannıñ,
Kópkın ashar kelinshek,
Keshe shıqsan úyınnen,
Bet asharı kelinshek...
... Eki jaqsı bas qossa,
Birin-biri qıymaydı,
Eki jaman qosılsa,
Bir el-atqa sıymaydı,
Ádepli bolın kelinshek,
Úlken bolsın túyiniñ,
Qızıq bolsın jıyiniñ.*

These lines serve as a direct pedagogical directive, warning against discord and explicitly calling for politeness, mutual respect, and harmony within the community.

Conclusion

Over many centuries, the Karakalpak people have harnessed the power of folklore to educate successive generations in the highest human virtues. The "Bet ashar" tradition, with its brief but incredibly sharp artistic portrayals, serves as an enduring mechanism of folk pedagogy. Through its realistic connection to daily life, its structured social introductions, and its poetic wisdom, it successfully instills vital qualities such as humanity, friendship, patience, and a love for diligent labor. Integrating these ethnopedagogical principles into modern educational frameworks—particularly in higher education institutions of arts and culture—ensures that these traditional moral competencies continue to thrive and guide the youth in contemporary society.

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