
The History of the Family and Marriage of the Peoples of Central Asia

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Abstract: The article discusses the form of family and marriage among the peoples of Central Asia, its historical aspects, and the impact of changes in the form of the family with the change of periods on family relations. It should be noted that, mainly from an ethnographic point of view, Russian researchers comment on the great patriarchy and small number of families in the second half of the 19th century - the beginning of the 20th century with the period of antiquity. In particular, they compare this phenomenon with the life of all the peoples of Central Asia.

Keywords: patriarchal family, small family, ethnographic, nomads, lullaby wedding, kalym, levirate, monogamous family, mountainous Tajiks, Uzbek Karluks, elders, Dungans, capitalist relations, Sharia, polygamy.

Researchers studying the family among the peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan in the pre-revolutionary period have had to deal with two interchangeable forms of its development: the large patriarchal family and the separate small family.

These two forms of the family can be explained not only from an ethnographic point of view, but also historically with the second half of the XIX century - the beginning of the XX century, and even hundreds of years ago - the period of antiquity. S. M. Abramzon believes that the beginning of the transition from patriarchal family communities to small family form among Central Asian nomads dates back to the middle of the 1st millennium AD. This transition period - the small family in the X-XII centuries - coincides with a period when the family became the dominant type.¹

For Central Asia and Iran, the most common period of the large patriarchal family falls in the second half of the 1st millennium BC and the first half of the 1st millennium BC. Most of the peoples of these countries had centralized power in the first class society stage. (Achaemenids and Parthian state, kingdom of Kushan). Most of the information related to the old (pre-revolutionary) family and marriage is characterized by a certain form of patriarchal relations typical of all the peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan in the pre-revolutionary years, characterized by low status of women in the family and male domination. Typically, a number of aspects of family-marriage relations, such as cradle weddings, thick, levirat, i.e., marriages between cousins, are related to cases of kinship. But not all of this work focuses on the study of family-marriage relations, and in many cases emphasizes the already formed ethnography.² As for Central Asia (Sughd, Khorezm), according to influential Soviet historians, in the middle of the 1st millennium AD, a large patriarchal family was also common among the settled population.

When was a large patriarchal family formed among the settled population of Central Asia? To this question, it seems, we do not have the opportunity to answer in any sense. S.P. Tolstov believes that the emergence of large patriarchal family communities in Khorezm

should be associated with the beginning of our era. They may have been formed earlier, but we have no historical evidence of this at our disposal. It should be noted that S.M. Abramzon generally denies the existence of this form of family among the nomads and criticizes some authors who believe that the tribal organization is directly replaced by a small individual monogamous family.³ From the views of S.M. Abramzon, it can be understood that among the nomads, the patriarchal family, of course, had a place in the evolution of the family as a family form, but differed in some features related to the lifestyle of the nomadic Population.

Information on the large patriarchal family and its characteristics among the mountainous Tajiks is covered in studies on family and marriage among the Tajiks. Among the mountainous Tajiks, the large patriarchal family has been preserved in a more cohesive and unchanged form than in other settled peoples. Its distribution areas include families in the Panj, Yagnob and other valleys of Tajikistan. The economy of such families was based on its integrity, the inalienability of the right to own land. Working livestock was common property, but dairy cattle often constituted private property (an important part of which was a woman's dowry), but all used her produce. At the head of the family stood the eldest head of the family, the father, the oldest member of the family; often had two or three wives. Relationships between family members were patriarchal in nature. The younger members of the family were subordinate to the authority of the elders, and the status of women and girls was incomplete. The regulation of marriage was related to the family of the family, not to the work desires of the youth. Concern for the thick problem is peculiar to the father of the groom and the elders of the family, but collected from the common property of the rest of the family.

In Central Asia, the large patriarchal family survived for a long time, and another area studied by MV Sazonova was the Khorezm territory. Such families existed in this area until the beginning of the XX century, and their general structure was restored in the middle of the current century by field work conducted by MV Sazonova through a survey. He gave specific materials on a number of families in the early twentieth century, from 30 to 45 people; in such families lived the head of the family - the father, as well as his married sons, daughters, and sometimes the brothers and sisters of the head of the family.⁴ The head of the family usually had two wives. Both he and his older wife had certain privileges in the family: they were better provided with personal belongings, had the best clothes, and so on.

Studying the Uzbek-Qarluqs (mainly in Uzbekistan), K. Shaniyazov notes that until the end of the 19th century, the main form of the family was a large patriarchal family. In Qarluq Uzbeks, marriage was usually endogamous, with the bride chosen from among her relatives. Girls were not married out of their own lineage, except in cases of poverty, in which parents were forced to marry their daughters even to men of other nationalities or to an elderly man.⁵

For the Uzbek population of the Fergana Valley, the presence of large patriarchal families is prevalent, especially among the self-sufficient population. According to VN Nalivkin in the 80s of the twentieth century, there was a single indivisible property between the parents and several married children.⁶

In data on Dungans in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, they wrote that they did not like to separate children independently and preferred to live as a large family, while the elderly were the mainstay of the family.⁷ Summarizing some of the above information about the large patriarchal family among the settled population of Central Asia, it can be said that although the patriarchal family, as mentioned above, began to disintegrate in the early 2nd millennium AD. in places these processes survived until the nineteenth and even twentieth century's. It can be seen that the annexation of Central Asia to Russia, the penetration of commodity-money relations, in

particular capitalist relations, into the most remote areas of the region played a major role in the disintegration of patriarchal families. As for semi-nomadic Uzbeks, there are reports that they are often married and that other children live inseparably with their fathers. Thus, as noted by A.D. Grebenkin, in some Uzbek families it is customary to separate married sons, while in others, on the contrary, they lived for a very long time around the same hearth with their father. According to him, there were families where up to 10 boys who were married and had their own children lived together.⁸

K. L. Zadykhina reports about the joint residence of several women, sons with their father among the Uzbeks of the Amudari delta.⁹ In the late XIX and early XX centuries, the small individual family had already become the dominant family form in Central Asia and Kazakhstan. If we look at the numbers, we can assume that the average family composition was about 5 people. It can be seen that even among the Fergana Uzbeks, the small family consisted of 4-6 people. Based on a study of villages in Namangan region, MA Bikjanova writes that there is still a large family lifestyle in more backward areas, the number of families has reached 10-12 people, we can conclude that the average number of families in other areas was less.

It is well known that among the peoples of Central Asia, polygamy, which was permitted not only by custom but also by Sharia, was not in any case a mass character. First of all, it was related to economic opportunities and therefore was mainly found in wealthy families.¹⁰

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