

Children and adults: the traditional practice of relationships among the peoples of Dagestan

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Abstract. The last decades have been characterized by accelerated globalization processes in the world. They directly or indirectly affect all spheres of life of a modern person. The flow of information, which does not always have a positive impact on today's youth, causing a conflict between generations and an eternal message to the classic "fathers and children". Under these conditions, a return to information about the traditions of preparing for the relationship between adults and children among the Dagestan peoples is quite relevant. This is one of the conditions for the continuous intergenerational transmission of culture, influencing a worthy change of generations.

Keywords. Caucasus, Dagestan, large families, intra-family traditions, gender asymmetry, age range

The relationship between children and adults among the peoples of Dagestan, although mediated, began long before the birth of a child in the family: according to popular beliefs, the most important family and social responsibility of a person was the continuation of the life of the family and family line. Perhaps due to the importance of the moment, marriage was (and is still being furnished) with a variety of ceremonial actions and rituals, both spectacular and secret. Most of them were aimed at informing and strengthening the producing abilities in the new family, since procreation was and is considered to be the natural and main purpose of marriage. Numerous proverbs, the focus of centuries-old folk wisdom and experience, testify to the great importance attached to the birth of children, which was associated with the full existence of the family. Such Dagestan proverbs as: *"The sweetest breath is the breath of a child, the sweetest voice is the voice of a child"*, *"He who has no children has no faith"*, *"Where there are children, there is no evil spirit"*, pointed to the importance of motherhood, to the importance of this

function for society. Among the Lezghins, for example, the most terrible curse for a young woman was: "*Vaz veleddin rank takurai!*" (May you not see the face of your child!) [1].

Having many children was seen as a sign of family well-being. Wishes to be a happy mother with many children were expressed to the bride during her first visits to the house of her future husband.

The good wishes, which were typical for almost all the peoples of Dagestan [2], most often spoke of 7 sons and one daughter. A number of rituals and magic techniques typical of the wedding ceremony were also aimed at ensuring large families. To do this, they carried out such techniques as showering the bride with grain, peas or other "seeds of the earth", which symbolized fertility and the tree of life among the peoples of Dagestan. Even the fact that the bride was greeted with honey, they wished her a sweet life in a new home and the same relationship with her husband's relatives [3], also implied the productivity of the bees, and the transfer of these abilities to the bride.

Traditionally, in any Dagestan family, the birth of the first male child was preferable. The reasons for this preference in the mountain society were both economic (the girl takes away her dowry, her working hands) and socio-political roots (a man is the successor of the family; a warrior, defender of the honor of the family and homeland; bearer of spiritual and secular power).

In a situation of constant fear for the life of a woman in childbirth and a newborn, a successful birth was a very joyful event, which, however, depending on the gender of the child born, was furnished in different ways. For example: among some Avars (Koisubuli society) one of the assistants ran out and shouted, if a boy was born: "They put a stone in the wall!" ("*Kiedal kono luna*"). When the news reached the father or grandfather, they went out on the roof and fired into the air, announcing the birth of their son, and immediately marked the cattle. When the girl was born, they said: "The stone was taken from the wall" ("*Kyedasa kono bosun ana*"). And supposedly the girl's father hid for three days.

Shooting from the rooftops at the birth of a son was widespread among the peoples of Dagestan. In all the peoples of Dagestan, at the birth of a first-born boy, the father slaughtered a ram, relatives, friends and just fellow villagers were summoned to a treat.

The birth of a girl was greeted with more restraint, celebrated modestly or not at all. Among the Laks, for example, they said: "*Dush zhula hus Dakar*" ("Daughter is not our wealth") and limited themselves to preparing a special ritual porridge "*kurch*" or halva, which were treated to women who came with congratulations. One of the aspects of gender-role differentiation, which definitely has not only biological, but also social prerequisites, is the ratio of maternal and paternal functions.

Due to the fact that a woman is more closely involved in the reproductive process than a man (she bears a child, gives birth to him), breastfeeds, takes full care of him, the primary socialization of the child depends on her to a greater extent. In Dagestan society, motherhood, her own home and hearth are the main components of the female stereotype. For males, what is more important is what happens outside the home, "the community as a whole serves as its microcosm" [4] In accordance with these ideas, relationships were built and children were brought up in the family.

A man in Dagestan society began to realize himself fully as a father only after the birth of his son, since, according to tradition, the father was not involved in raising his daughters - this was completely the prerogative of the mother. The children's and adolescent life of girls, until marriage, proceeded surrounded by women and with constant and varied contacts with them, in an atmosphere of male dominance - the father, on the basis of paternity, enjoyed indisputable authority, although he almost did not engage in their upbringing (if he was because of what he was dissatisfied and needed to make a remark to his daughter, he most often applied not directly, but through his wife). As for the boys, they were in the same environment for 5-7 years, and then passed under the tutelage of their father. In the family, the boy who grew up among the girls was, of course, the leader, and the girls had to obey him in everything, regardless of the age of the brother.

The milestone, the achievement of which officially consolidated the division of children by sex, was considered the age of seven, traditionally defined as the norm, which in practice could have minor displacements: hence the digital fluctuations for each of the peoples of Dagestan (5-7 years old, 6-8 years old). The formation in an accessible form, through instructions and explanations of certain gender stereotypes adopted by the peoples of Dagestan and adequate to their culture and ideas, the reproduction of family and social gender roles was considered one of the important tasks of raising and socializing a child in any society (in this case, among the peoples of Dagestan). And from the age of seven it became strictly specialized: mother, grandmother - taught girls; father, grandfather - boys.

Conventionally, the age limit began from 7-8 years old, which was brought up to 15 years old, i.e. until the age of majority. But within this age group, there were also conditional gradations. In any case, 10 years of age was considered a serious boundary in the formation of a person - in the adats of the peoples of Dagestan there were articles saying that upon reaching this age, the child, and not the parents, should have been punished for criminal offenses [5]. By the age of 12, children of both sexes had to master all the etiquette provisions and learn all labor processes, both in housekeeping and in the crafts that were characteristic of a particular society. Moreover, it is known that in Dagestan there was not a single village where women did not

produce any items from wool, from high-quality pile carpets and sumax to woolen ropes. The father taught the boys to be male, by this time he already had the concept of "man's" and "woman's" job.

The main condition for attracting young children to work was that he had to be feasible. At the same time - female labor - performing and serving; and masculine - creative, creative. This was especially true of the content of labor - in each region there were only male and only female jobs. This state of affairs was constant, even temporary labor substitution was not allowed under any circumstances.

The relationship between adults and children was built, first of all, in the process of education. The traditional upbringing system was built as a whole in such a way as to develop children's independence, initiative, and self-confidence. Therefore, the child was always encouraged in every any important and useful business or undertaking. First sat on a horse - celebrated by distributing sweets to children; the first success in teaching literacy was celebrated with a treat. Girls who first baked bread on their own, cooked khinkal, finished weaving carpet for the first time, made the first clay pot, were awarded the same honor. The upbringing of children at home was taken very seriously and usually in this connection they constantly emphasized: "What the chick gets in the nest, so it will fly." The main thing is that upbringing in the family should be systematic, planned and continuous. As experience suggested that it is difficult to educate those who did not receive it in due time. It was recommended to love children so that they do not doubt it, but do not abuse it. They believed that surrounded by love and attention, they themselves would treat others in the same way, and especially their younger brothers and sisters. In any family there was a cult of the youngest child, he got the most delicious, the best, he was more than others surrounded by the attention of his mother, and in the absence of strangers, and the father. However, love had to be combined with such severity that would not allow the child to be pampered.

The organization of intra-family ties and relations among the peoples of Dagestan was carried out under the influence and control of traditional ideas about the father, mother, sons and daughters, about what role each member of the family plays and is called upon to fulfill. Relations with parents were built taking into account the notions accepted in society that "there is paradise under the feet of the mother" - she was dearly loved and adored, but should have been tender, open and close enough; grandparents are sociable and affectionate. The peoples of Dagestan did not consider it shameful for a grandfather to go out for walks with his grandson, and even sit with him in his arms in a public place. The father was outwardly stern and sufficiently distanced - he was respected and feared, although the system of physical punishment

for misconduct was not practiced. The most terrible punishment was considered to be ignoring the guilty person.

Such a mode of relationship absolutely excluded familiarity between parents and children, bickering. The regulation of intrafamily relations was also facilitated by the custom of avoidance that existed among the majority of the peoples of Dagestan, although not in the classical form, as among the peoples of the North Caucasus [6], which was strictly observed in people between spouses, in the family between father and children. The father did not take his child, even his son, in his arms, did not caress, did not play with him. In general, I avoided being near the child in front of strangers and in the presence of elders, talking about him with anyone. The younger he was, the less his father paid attention to him. As they grew older, the relationship between son and father remained the same strictly regulated. These are the ideal educational attitudes that operated in a traditional society.

Children's daily life was not limited to relationships with individual family members. The children were taught to build relationships in the family, gradually introducing them into the course of affairs that adults were engaged in, so that, first of all, they would learn the "skills of the complex art of "being among people"[7]. The best place to learn this was considered to be at public events, at weddings, but participation in the custom of hospitality was considered the most effective. When guests came to the house, as a rule, from the age of 7-8, it was the duty of each boy to go out to the guests, to greet them. Often, older children were allowed to stay and stand along the walls of the room in which they received guests, so that they had the opportunity to observe the course of the feast, "so that the eyes could see, the soul absorbed", remembering everything that the elders talk about, sometimes doing their assignments. The guests themselves tried to involve girls and younger boys in communication, specifically reminding parents of their desire to see their son or daughter. Willingness and ability to communicate with a child, to attract his attention, to make him laugh, to talk, to please him was considered an indicator of the intelligence and high culture of an adult.

Public assessment served as a criterion for determining the quality of home education. As a rule, the public opinion did not take shape overnight. If we were talking about a girl, it was important to look neat, to be "always busy", to be able to communicate both with peers and with children younger than myself, and most importantly, be able to please elders with respectful attitude towards them. If it was about a boy, the main thing is not to be considered a coward, lazy, and glutton.

It should be noted, however, that not everything in life was subordinated to the ideal, age-old proven system of education, and, as they said: "As in honey there is wax, and in cheese there is a hair, so the family has its black sheep". Such children caused a lot of trouble for their

parents. they were the first to be responsible for the children, for their moral character. The children's actions, both serious and insignificant, were shameful not only on the family, but on the whole tukhum. In this regard, a very indicative proverb, which is very popular among the Avars: "The evil of bad children goes even to the fish in the sea".

A positive assessment of the correct upbringing of a son or daughter, expressed by neighbors, was the best reward for parents for home upbringing. There was an interdependent and inextricable bond between family and society.

It should be added to this that in a traditional society, the socialization of children was carried out under the influence on the child not only of his parents and other family members, but also under the great influence and strict control of the rural community. Therefore, any adult considered for himself not only possible, but also necessary to give any order, if necessary, and to expect its quick execution, depending on how it was carried out, to praise or scold the child. Any adult could stop and make a suggestion to children or young people who disturb the public order. In such cases, he found out from the guilty, from whose family they were, who their parents were. If necessary, he could report the unseemly actions of children to their father, mother, elder brother; their family as a whole had to be ashamed of the misdeeds of children, especially its adult members responsible for the upbringing of the younger ones.

At the same time, no one considered this an interference in the internal affairs of the family. Society not only sanctioned such actions by elders, but also obliged them to do so.

As we can see, the relationship between children and adults is based on a variety of facts, relationships, attitudes. The love of children raises the authority of an adult, such a person is considered kind, sensitive, almost saint. Conversely, the ability to inflict pain and suffering on a child is seen as evidence of a person's baseness. It is no coincidence that in the most severe institutionalized in Dagestan custom of "blood revenge", where the rule "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" was in effect, women, old people and children were excluded from the objects of revenge. In a humane, attentive and sensitive attitude towards children, there was, of course, a certain socially oriented calculation: correctly built relationships between adults and children gave an excellent educational result, which made it possible to hope that a worthy change would grow and the intergenerational transmission of the existing culture would be continuous.

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