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# POLITICAL SCIENCE ISSUES

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## NATIONAL TRADITIONS OF THE PEOPLES OF DAGESTAN AND THEIR ROLE IN SOCIAL COHESION

*This article is devoted to the role of national traditions and customs of Dagestan in social cohesion. It examines the relationship of the traditions with ethnic relations. It focuses on such traditions as the unity of the peoples of Dagestan, as hospitality, kunachestvo, labor and family traditions.*

**Key words:** *society, traditions, custom, national relations, patriotism, unity, hospitality, kunachestvo.*

The preamble of the Constitution of the Republic of Dagestan reads: “We, the multinational people of the Republic of Dagestan, an integral part of the multinational people of the Russian Federation.”

Instilling love for Russia, its history, culture, language, traditions, peoples living in it, we are equally called upon to instill love for multinational Dagestan, for our small homeland, native language, our traditions and customs.

The unique subject of the Russian Federation, which is Dagestan, has long been home to more than 30 nationalities who live in peace and harmony, forming a single and integral multilingual Dagestan community. One of the factors of consolidation of the Dagestan society is the unity of its people.

The III-rd Congress of the peoples of Dagestan supported the policy of preserving unity, peace and harmony in the Republic, strengthening friendship and unity in Dagestan society, updating ancient traditions and all spheres of life and established the day of unity of the peoples of Dagestan, celebrated every year on September 15.

The role of the Russian language is great in ensuring Dagestan unity. Public authorities engaged in the field of national relations are trying to ensure a balance between all languages.

Russian language is not only the language of interethnic communication for Dagestanis, but it also acts as a means through which the highlanders master Russian and world culture. Introduction to Russian culture, and through it, to the world culture has become an important condition for the formation of Dagestan's national intelligentsia and strengthening of national consciousness.

Thus, the Russian language, having become the language of interethnic communication for Dagestanis, contributes not only to the unity of the peoples of Dagestan, but also acts as the core of the all-Russian national unity, strengthening of friendship between the peoples of the country.

The role of Russia in strengthening the unity of multi-ethnic Dagestan should be specially emphasized.

In the eyes of Dagestanis, the Russian people, in their absolute majority, are creative people, internationally minded, characterized by diligence, wisdom, humanism, high will and endurance.

The unselfish help of Russian and other peoples in the creation of industrial centers and development of the economy of the Republic was expressed in the most various forms: provision by the Federal Government of gratuitous cash loans in the form of grants, preferential loans; assistance in the creation of large industrial centers by sending to the factories of machines, tractors and other machinery and equipment; exchange of advanced technical and economic experience, patronage of advanced enterprises, sending to the Republic of skilled workers and specialists, training of workers and engineering personnel from among the representatives of the Dagestan peoples at the enterprises of various Russian regions.

Russian people provided immense help in the development of culture, education and spiritual life of the peoples of the mountainous region. Many representatives of the Russian intelligentsia worked selflessly for the benefit of Dagestan. Teachers, doctors, scientists, artists, representatives of other specialties came to our Republic from Russia and conducted fruitful work aimed at training national personnel and development of national culture of the people of Dagestan.

On the basis of interaction with Russian teachers and experts, the majority of citizens of Dagestan of the older and middle generations has developed a certain idea of Russias as honest, decent, simple, educated, diligent, wise, willing to help, etc.<sup>1</sup>

For many Dagestanis, the first lesson of the Russian language by a Russian teacher remains unforgettable. Many people engaged in education and health care spent their best years in the distant villages of our Republic, carrying the light of knowledge and love to Dagestanis; they played a huge role in strengthening health and reviving the spiritual life of the peoples of Dagestan.

It should be noted that the invaluable assistance of the Russian people to the Dagestanis has never been one-sided. Thus, representatives of all the peoples of Dagestan, took an active part in the restoration of cities, towns, mines, roads to and post-war periods in different regions of Russia, in the de-

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<sup>1</sup> Abdulatipov R. G., Kadiev Z. M. Russian-Dagestan interethnic relations. Historical essay. – Makhachkala, 1990. – P. 68.

velopment areas of the North, Siberia, the Far East and other mutual aid and mutual support is enhanced by taking account of the challenges facing Russia in the current difficult conditions.

The friendship of the peoples of our country, as we know, grew and strengthened mainly due to the solution of many problems of development of Nations and national relations.

The peoples of Dagestan have always trusted each other, respected each other, learned from each other, borrowed the best qualities from each other. The feeling of unity never left Dagestanis, although there were forces seeking to prevent it. The ideas of unity of Dagestanis have become a national tradition of unity. Handed down from generation to generation, it has acquired special significance and relevance in our time.

The people of Dagestan have always had very strong Patriotic feelings and love for their Motherland.

The Strategy of the State National Policy of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025 ensures the preservation and enhancement of the spiritual and cultural potential of the multinational people of the Russian Federation on the basis of the ideas of unity and friendship of peoples and interethnic (interethnic) harmony. Russian patriotism is included in the Strategy among the tasks in the sphere of state national policy of the Russian Federation.

Thus, Russian patriotism is also an important means of strengthening the unity and integrity of a multinational state.

Since the mid-80s of the last century, the discussions about the role and importance of patriotism in the development of society are raging in the country. Skeptics even question the possibility of patriotism in modern society. Such approach is wrong.

Russia needs patriotism, because the people living in it should love the society and the state. Patriotism means unity. Without it, it is impossible to solve either tactical or strategic tasks facing the state. Ensuring the unity of representatives of all nationalities living in the country is the most difficult task. It can be solved only by joint efforts.

Since the second half of the 80-ies of XX century, the system of education in our country has been undermined and nothing was offered in return. The youth of the country was deprived of clear guidelines, reliable social support. These processes have led to the collapse of the entire system of Patriotic education. It was actually destroyed.

A powerful propaganda company, deployed in the media, purposefully etched out of the minds of the younger generation of Russians a sense of love for their homeland, respect for the traditional values of the people and its great past.

But recently in our country there have been serious changes in the public consciousness, a powerful patriotic movement for the revival of the former power of the country, the preservation and strengthening of the unity of

the Russian Federation, the unity of the Russian people and the strengthening of friendship between us is gaining strength.<sup>1</sup>

Underestimation of patriotism as the most important component of public consciousness leads to the weakening of socio-economic, spiritual and cultural foundations of society. This determines the priority of Patriotic education in the General system of education of Russian citizens.

Patriotic education, being an integral part of the general educational process, is a systematic and purposeful activity of public authorities and public organizations to form a high patriotic consciousness of citizens, a sense of loyalty to their fatherland, readiness to perform civic duty and constitutional obligations aimed at defending the interests of the Motherland.

Education of patriotism, friendship of peoples, religious tolerance is the most important means of strengthening the unity and integrity of our Motherland – the Russian Federation. In the Russian patriotism, the all-Russian feeling of the citizen (readiness to serve the Homeland, to protect it) is combined with his/her love to the Republic, oblast, district. Patriotism is inextricably linked to the friendly relations of citizens of different nationalities and faiths.

The events of August and September 1999 were a vivid demonstration of the country's strong sense of patriotism. At the behest of civil and patriotic duty soldiers of the federal troops, international groups of people's militia and youth defeated aggressors, defended integrity and unity of the Republic of Dagestan, thwarted plans of its separation from the Russian Federation.

Dagestan has a strong tradition of hospitality. They are one of the most important communication channels for representatives of different villages, societies, peoples. "The traditions of hospitality are common for all nations and all social strata, but the specifics of hospitality vary depending on the ethnic composition of the population and the economic possibilities of the family."<sup>2</sup>

Like all peoples of the Caucasus, Dagestanis treat guests with respect and attention. Whatever is the situation or the family troubles, whatever trouble befell such family, the owner of the house should be attentive to the guests.

The custom of hospitality among the highlanders is largely associated with a kind of cult of home. In oral folk art of mountaineers there are many sayings and parables in which absence of guests qualify as misfortune of the family.

For the highlanders, the hospitality is a sacred tradition. It is associated with many moral precepts that have acquired the power of habits. Therefore, this tradition is treated very seriously and no one under any circumstances

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<sup>1</sup> Suleymanova Z. Z. Patriotic education of youth // Education of patriotism, friendship of peoples, religious tolerance // Materials of the all-Russian scientific and practical conference. – M., 2001. – P. 66.

<sup>2</sup> See: Gadzhieva S. Sh. Family and marriage among the peoples of Dagestan in the XIX-early XX centuries. – M., 1985. – P. 312.



violates it. Hospitality is not limited to food and accommodation only. It imposes on the person a number of other duties. In particular, the highlander was supposed to take an active part in the performance of the business for which his kunak came from the mountains, to protect him from all sorts of accidents, to assist him in the sale of the products and so on.<sup>1</sup>

For Dagestanis, the main thing in the traditions of hospitality is not the nationality of the guest, but that fact that a person got into trouble or finds himself in a difficult situation. It was the most important thing for our ancestors. Is it not the recognition, even if unconscious, of the priority of the universal over the national, i.e. the understanding that we, the enlightened people of the beginning of the XXI century, accept with such difficulty.

In modern conditions, this custom has undergone a significant transformation with elements of the new, unknown in the past. As Professor R. M. Magomedov correctly writes, “the main new thing are the features of friendship of peoples that permeated the ancient custom.”<sup>2</sup>

In the tradition of Dagestan hospitality there are many progressive traits in the sense of education on the principles of humanism and high morality. The custom of hospitality is not only a Dagestan tradition, it is inherent in all peoples, it is a part of their life.

No less relevant for Dagestanis is the tradition of kunachestvo. Who's a kunak? Kunak is a person who will stick to you closer than your brother and will come to your help at first call and will do for you everything he can, and to whose call you'll come and do for him everything that in your forces in various circumstances, as for example, from matchmaking to participation in the construction of the house. There can be no wedding without kunaks. The birth of children cannot be celebrated without them. The departed cannot be mourned without them.

Kunaks were also connected by mutual economic aid. Mutual friends took part in all activities that were of interest to each other, during the field work people from other villages, which have not started their field work yet, used to come for assistance.

There is a lot of historical evidence, telling us about how kunaks replaced the deceased parents to children or supported kunaks economically until they stand on their feet. Refusal to accept kunaks without reason was regarded as a disgrace not only for the family or family groups, but for the entire village. According to the testimony of rural elders, in the past, to honor the arrival of kunaks, especially from the neighboring area, a celebration was arranged,

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<sup>1</sup> Abdullayev M. A. From the history of philosophical and socio-political thought of Dagestan. – Makhachkala, 1993. – P. 267.

<sup>2</sup> Magomedov R. M. The unity of the peoples is a great blessing of Dagestan. – Makhachkala, 2001. – P. 52.



where elderly people who know the history, traditions and customs of the village or the area were invited. It was typical for all peoples of Dagestan.

As the well-known scientist ethnographer S. Sh. Hajiyeva testifies: "In honor of kunaks (especially visitors from distant lands) rich noble families arranged big celebrations where they invited musicians, singers, people knowledgeable in history and traditions of the people. On such occasion, young people gathered in the house, including girls well-dressed for dancing."

Friendly relations between the two kunaks, as a rule, passed from generation to generation and were observed as a sacred duty.

There are many examples of the role of a kunak and a friend in the resolution of disputes between the auls, jamaats, so hospitality and kunachestvo are factors of Dagestan unity, national traditions of the peoples of Dagestan.

The tradition of mutual aid played an important role in the social life of mountaineers. It was spread to many areas of life and was a great help for the family. Any Dagestan family could count, if necessary, on the support of not only relatives and fellow villagers, but also kunaks and their friends from neighboring villages. Mutual assistance has been and remains a norm of social life for the peoples of Dagestan.

Such custom contributes to the purposeful, organized and systematic effects the family, tuhum and rural jamaat have on the individuals with the aim of forming the norms of universal human morality, ideals, habits and traditions and on the uplifting of the working man.

Mutual assistance, as a moral value, is directly related to the moral upbringing of the individual, which is a dynamically developing process of assimilation of the principles of universal morality and their transformation into the internal beliefs, in the usual human actions.

Mutual assistance among the peoples of Dagestan existed in various forms. First of all, it is mutual labor assistance related to the support and feasible assistance provided in the construction of houses.

Another form of mutual assistance was material assistance provided in case of accidents, as well as in the organization of funerals.

During the wedding celebrations, men help in the implementation of the rites, women-in cooking. Each of the participants of the celebrations provided and provides all possible financial assistance (in the form of gifts to the newlyweds).

In my opinion, financial assistance should be modest, not beyond rural adats. After all, the wedding at all times in all nations was considered a bright holiday. Each of the participants of the celebrations tries to maintain the fun to the best of their abilities: dance, sing, participate in games.

The custom of mutual assistance has played and now plays a positive role not only as a material and moral support in the economy, it promotes the rapprochement of people not only on the basis of family or tukhumnomu principle, but also opens the possibility of strengthening collectivism, the formation

of a culture of intra-national and interethnic communication, education of citizens in the spirit of humanism.

The tradition of mutual assistance helped the people of Dagestan to defend their freedom and independence in the fight against the formidable foreign conquerors, to survive in the years of natural disasters and crop failure, it is easier to overcome grief and misfortune when people assist each other.

Another equally important tradition is mentoring. Mentoring in today's difficult conditions has acquired exceptional importance and relevance. We are talking more about coaching in the field of production. Life has confirmed the fallacy of this approach. We believe that mentoring contains a huge educational charge. Therefore, it should be revived and implemented at all levels: family, educational, industrial and military.

No less important tradition is the labour tradition. It should be noted that labor traditions are not just the accumulation and transfer from one generation to another of production experience, methods of labor, professional skills, but first of all the formation and reproduction of advanced motives of human attitude to work, which are extremely important for the development of the person and education of culture of communication in labor associations.

Work collectives are the main guardians and successors of the labour and patriotic traditions. At the time, we had a widespread movement "honor and glory for work." It received support from the general public. Now times have changed. Different social order and different values. In these circumstances, it is time for us to change, but only for the better. We believe that it is necessary to revive and promote the positive achievements made by the society during the period of its development, including those connectewd with the labour traditions. They contain a certain educational and moral charge, which our youth lacks today, and not only youth. Education of a mature, democratic, free-thinking person is impossible without the formation of a creative, conscious attitude to work. This is the moral core of such a person.

The combination of various forms of education (moral, labor, patriotic, international) in labor groups would contribute to the formation of the leading and basic principle of the way of life inherent in the citizens of the Republic – collectivism. It would increase everyone's responsibility for the success and honor of the team and the responsibility of the team for each of its members.

Joint work in labor associations contributes to the formation of all-Dagestan traditions and rituals that meet the labor needs of all citizens of the Republic. Since ancient times, the peoples of Dagestan celebrated agricultural holidays such as arrival of winter, meeting the spring, the first furrow, harvest, урожай, as well as seeing off and meeting livestock, all of it contributed to the formation of collectivism, upbringing of love and respect for work, the best qualities of human morality.

As a rule, guests from neighboring regions were invited to labor holidays, which contributed to the establishment of broad contacts between the farms of the districts, both of Dagestan and neighboring republics.

This talk about national traditions and customs would be incomplete if we do not touch on family and household customs and traditions. Therefore, strengthening the continuity of generations on the basis of national traditions of the people is one of the meanings of the unity of the peoples of Dagestan. As for family traditions, they are based on the awareness of the family members of their common roots: the further and deeper they go into the past, the stronger they are. Family traditions are among the important subjective conditions that have a significant impact on the process of upbringing. The family, like other social institutions, functions and exists, reproducing traditions.

The family, where relations between spouses are based on mutual respect and trust, is able to form children's respect for parents, elders and women, create an atmosphere of friendliness and humanism.

The family also begins the formation of such traditions and customs as a sense of high responsibility for one's behavior and actions, collectivism, a keen sense of justice, a willingness to respond to someone else's misfortune and even sacrifice oneself for the sake of unjustly offended, love for the native land, diligence, etc.

Family traditions and customs are designed to assist in the change of family relations that act as mechanisms for the transfer of such personally and socially significant qualities of a person as love, kindness, compassion, understanding, willingness to help a loved one.

Traditions and customs reflect the national, cultural and religious characteristics of the family and the professional affiliation of its members.

A big holiday in the Dagestan village is a wedding, which is always held solemnly. It always remains in the memory as a bright holiday, a synonym of the triumph of love, happiness and joy. The wedding was accompanied by a series of rituals and actions, colorful rituals, which not only symbolized the birth of a new important social cell of society, but also served the purposes of entertainment. Wedding ritual brings up a sense of mutual respect in the young people, the right ideas about the honor and dignity of the individual, about their obligations to the family, team, society.

Formed in ancient times the wedding ritual has evolved over many centuries, losing partially or completely some vintage items and gaining new ones. They are in every particular historical period were caused by the peculiarities of the economic and spiritual development of society and the dominant ideological representations, as well as existing moral and aesthetic norms and perceptions.

It is known that marriage in most cases is preceded by matchmaking. Is it good or bad? I think it is good. Agreement of parents to the choice of a life partner, the coincidence of the views of the young people and their parents on this issue is, above all, a manifestation of respect for parents, interested thoughtful approach to the creation of a family. As a rule, public opinion approves such a step of young people. Or let's consider engagement. In the fifties-early sixties of

the XX century, in many places the period from the engagement to the wedding lasted at least a year.

During that time young people could get to know each other better, once again check and test themselves, avoid a rash step. As a result, such a decision had a positive impact on the strength of the marriage. Now, as a rule, these terms do not coincide. Typical for family and marriage relations in modern Dagestan is simultaneous registration of betrothal and matchmaking (about 1 to 2 months), and in some places weddings are appointed during the same month, which could play at any time of the year.

According to a number of researchers, in particular, A. G. Bulatova, in our time, you can take a lot of useful things from the custom of a traditional wedding: the richness of music, songs, dances, the multiplicity of actions with magical and symbolic content. In this sense, the wedding ceremony was a whole system of signs, the ultimate goal of which was to ensure the well – being and the desire of the offspring for the couple.<sup>1</sup>

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