

# CRAFT RITE "KAMAR BASTE" (INITIATION OF A APPRENTICE INTO A MASTER) IN CENTRAL ASIA

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#### Annotation

This article describes one of the many craft traditions, in particular the rite of initiation into the master of the "kamar band". The term "camar baste" also referred to artisans who had reached a certain level of skill. The rite of initiation of the student into the master is described in detail, after which the student was allowed to work independently.

### Keywords:

Master, apprentice, craft, craft ceremony, tools of production.



For many centuries, the territory of Central Asia has historically been one of the major centers of artistic craft, which was closely connected with the traditional life and customs of the people. Skilled craftsmen created, improved, carefully preserved and passed on to their students artistic and technical techniques, ornaments, craft traditions, many of which, unfortunately, are now irretrievably lost.

Numerous craft traditions, in particular the rite of initiation into the master ("camar band", "camar baste", "ona miyon band"), are preserved in the craft regulations of risol. The term "camar baste" also referred to artisans who had reached a certain level of skill.

The most developed branches of the artistic craft of Central Asia were weaving, blacksmithing, and pottery. They mostly had a hereditary-family character. The rules, secrets, techniques, and subtleties of the craft were passed down from the teacher to the student, most often to the eldest of the master's sons. Until the 1920s, weaving in the Central Asian region was mainly done by men, while women spun. Ceramic products were made by women mainly by hand, and men used a potter's wheel.

According to the weavers ' risola, the kamar-baste ceremony takes place as follows: to the left of the initiate is one of the members of the workshop, to the right – another, who, having wrapped the disciple's waist with a special belt three times, recites the prayer formula "kalima". After that, the former student, with his arms crossed on his chest, stood up among the assembled members of the workshop and was subjected to an examination: he was asked questions recorded in the risola. Then the head of the shop turned to the master and asked: "Master, you fed this disciple, clothed him, gave him money, don't you regret it?" "Disciple, you served the master. Don't you regret your service? "I don't regret it.

At the end of the ceremony, the student gave his teacher a robe, and the kalantar (head of the workshop in Khiva) – a shirt. For example, for the shoemakers ' shop, before the kamarbasta ceremony, it was typical to show the product of a student at the bazaar, while

emphasizing that the product was made by a student of such and such a master. But if it was found that the product was not made of high quality, kalantar drove the student from the bazaar, and sometimes tore the shoes he made.

Among the potters, for example, the master sold the products made by the apprentice, and saved the proceeds specifically for the kamar-basta rite. At the same time, the rite of initiation into the master of the potters had a slightly different character – after the general meal, the initiate into the master stood in front of the senior masters. The guild legend of risol was read aloud, after which the head of the workshop tied the initiate with a belt. Then the master handed over the basic tools of the potter's production to him, blessing the former student. After that, the master and the disciple exchanged gifts, the disciple also gave robes to the head of the shop and the elders in the shop.

For the disciples who were related to the master, only a permissive prayer was enough. In this case, the master prepared a treat in the workshop, invited respected masters of the workshop, demonstrating the work of his student, blessed him, after which the student was allowed to work independently. According to the opinion of the modern Bukhara hereditary blacksmith Sh. Kamalov " a young man belonging to a family of hereditary masters does not need to undergo



the rite of initiation. Future blacksmiths are taught to craft from childhood. At first, they perform simple operations, gradually the tasks become more complex, and by the age of fifteen, the teenager is already working on a par with the older ones." In some European countries, for example, a significant proportion of the students also came from master families. As for the master's relatives, they enjoyed special privileges when joining the workshop: the wife and children were only required to complete an apprenticeship course, they did not arrange treats and did not pay dues. At the same time, the guild privileges and specialty were hereditary - the widow of the master enjoyed the guild rights and could continue the work of her husband.

Interestingly, the transfer of the profession by inheritance was characteristic not only for men, but also for women. For example, the skill of the embroiderer was transmitted through a permissive prayer, accompanied by sacrificial treats. The master, allowing her successor to practice the craft, promised that after her death, her spirit would allegedly help the student in her work. After receiving the craft, the initiate was obliged to periodically spend part of the earnings on a sacrificial treat-the commemoration of the souls of the deceased masters.

In Turkey, for example, the ritual of initiation of a disciple into a master has common features. So, the head of the apprentices-dzhigit bashi, having gathered the members of the workshop and seated the students, who were wearing special "three-sex" red "entari", invited the sheikh to read a prayer for the opening of the ceremony. The dzhigit bashi, having previously wrapped a special belt around the camp of the apprentices three times, tied this belt in three knots, while reciting the prayer formula "kalima".

Then dzhigit basha, addressing the honorary masters, the head of the workshop, asked them for a blessing for the students. One of the masters asks " " Well, how are these fellows, are they skilled in the craft?" The masters answer " " Yes, they have learned the craft well, they are skilled." Dzhigit basha asks the masters: "Are you satisfied with your students?", the masters confirm. Then the dzhigit bashi brings the disciple to the master and asks him: "Have you forgiven him for his sins?"Yes," replied the master. Then it was announced that such and such a disciple became a master, the latter gave gifts to the mentor, and the end of the ritual was a solemn dinner.

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The rite of initiation into the master also existed among the Yakuts. A person who wanted to become a blacksmith, acquired the necessary tools and began to work. If he was to become a real blacksmith, then after a while strangers would hear at night the sound of his hammer and the hiss of the bellows in the workshop, which supposedly meant that the forge was acquiring its own master spirit. Sometimes it happened that the blacksmith after 2 - 3 years of work fell ill, he had non-healing boils on his hands, feet, and back ached. It was believed that this disease was allegedly contracted by people who did not have blacksmiths among their ancestors, or those hereditary blacksmiths who, for some reason, did not engage in the craft. Then the blacksmith resorted to the help of a shaman, who, addressing the feast of the blacksmiths "Kudai Bahsa", sacrificed a three-year-old black bull. After a special initiation, the disease passed, and the blacksmith became a real master.

Among modern artisans, the rite of initiation into the master is still practiced, which takes place in a solemn and festive atmosphere. The mentor announces to the students their readiness to work independently, and the parents of young artisans, as a sign of respect for the masters and gratitude to him, put on the teacher a national robe and belt. According to Master M. Zhuraeva, in silk weaving, the rite of initiation into the master is also practiced, only here, on the contrary, the master puts a robe on the student, tying it with a gauze bandage (5-6 m), and as a sign of blessing gives him material, tools (this is stipulated in the risola) and sets up a "dast goh" (traditional loom) in the student's workshop. (According to the observations of the French scientist P. Jeanlirer, in Tashkent (Afghanistan), the ritual of initiation into the master is eradicated).

Thus, the ritual of initiation of the student into the master played an important role in the craft environment and was one of the important conditions for self-employment of the craft.

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