



Evaluating Cultural Wedding Traditions of Hakkari From Past to Today

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Abstract

Hakkari, one of the cities in the east part of Turkey, is very rich in terms of its cultural heritage, including weddings. Every society has its own cultural wedding traditions. As for the weddings in Hakkari, it cannot be expressed by words. People who participate in wedding ceremonies in the region know how lively and full of fun they are. Besides the amusement, the cultural traditions related to marriage are also noteworthy. As in the other areas of life, there have been a lot of changes in cultural wedding traditions in the region in this century. In this study, we have tried to handle the weddings both in the past and in the present time to make a comparison between them. We hope that cultural wedding traditions of Hakkari belonging to both periods will attract a great attention of the ones who are interested in culture, tradition and customs of different societies and we hope that there will be a positive contribution to the cultural heritage of Hakkari province. We wish this study would make a significant contribution in both introducing wedding traditions, one of the important elements of the region culture, and protecting it against the external factors that could affect it in a negative way.

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1. Introduction

Hakkari, one of the provinces in the east of Turkey, comes into prominence in terms of its natural beauty (high plateaus with various endemic plants) and its rich cultural heritage based on a deep-rooted history. These two values have a significant place in the lives of the locals and strike the visitors with admiration. It is known that wealth cannot be limited with money and worldly goods. Cultural heritage is also an important source of wealth that has a significant place in our lives besides the moral values. If you are lack in either of them, you can't provide a happy life. So, the traditions and culture from the past generations to our age take an important place in our lives. If we don't protect them, we may lose them. There is no need to remind that such values can't be replaced with anything. The wedding traditions of the locals of Hakkari also take an important place in their culture. Due to the changes in the worldwide, they are also under the risk of being affected by the wedding traditions of different societies. One of the important ways of

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protecting them is attracting the attention of the locals and creating awareness. Let us direct your attention to the one of the important cultural elements of Hakkari province, marriage and wedding traditions.

2. Weddings and Marriages

“Wedding” can be described as a ceremony in which a man and a woman, who love each other, get married and officially become husband and wife. All the societies in the world give a great importance to weddings and marriages. Wedding preparations and activities emerge as a part of cultural heritage of a community. They have close relations with each other. The richer cultural values of a society, the more splendid wedding activities are. As the weddings reflect the morals, traditions and culture of a community, they take an important place in familiarizing them. As it generally happens once in your life and it is the most important occasion in your life, you would like to have it be organized very special. On the other hand, as the matter is in broad scope and requires prevalent customs, it needs a lot of preparation and of course, money, as well.

3. Types of Marriages in Hakkari

3.1. Arranged Marriages

Two types of marriages come to the forefront in many communities. They are “arranged” and “love” marriages. Although there is a rise in love marriages, arranged marriages are more common in Hakkari region. **In the past**, it was very rare for the girls and boys at the marriageable age to see each other. Although the bride and groom were asked for their consent, they wouldn’t object to their parents’ decision. However, the parents were very careful about to whom their children would wed. They didn’t want their children to have an unhappy married life. **Today**, parents are taking the consent of their children about to whom they will marry and if they don’t want to marry him/her, they may object to the decision.

3.2. Love Marriages

Love marriages are more common in the cities, especially among the university graduates. We can see that love marriages are increasing day by day in the region. If parents don’t approve of the marriage, the lovers may elope. As this may cause some troubles between the families, it is very rare for the parents to object to whomever their children would like to marry.

3.3. Bride Exchange Marriages

Although it is not common, there is also a type of marriage called “**berdel**” (bride exchange marriage) in Hakkari province. The procedure for this type of marriage is exchanging two daughters of two different families for their sons mutually. While the family gives their daughter to the other family, they take their daughter for their son, as well. Such marriages emerged as an alternative to bride token. Some of the families, which couldn’t afford the bride token, used to have their children at the marriageable age marry in this way. By means of bride exchange marriages, families get rid of the wedding expenditure mutually.

3.4. Marriages As a Result of Abduction

This type of marriage is unwelcomed in the region. There are different reasons for abducting a girl. In some instances, although there is mutual love between the boy and the girl, the families object to their decision. Seeing that they may not attain their desire, the boy abducts the girl. In some cases, although the girl doesn't want to marry, the boy wishes to marry her, and even insists on. When seeing that there is no other way to make their desire true, they abduct girls. In such events, the boy is not alone. Some of his friends or relatives help him in carrying out this event. The abducted girl is usually driven to a near village and hidden for some time. Some respected people try to mediate and reconcile the families. The first hours and day is very important to get through without any fights.

Everyone tries hard to calm down the girl's family and her relatives. The respect people and elders continue their attempt until they persuade the families to talk about the issue. However, it is not such an ordinary talk. It is very tough and controversial. It is a defamation event for the girl's family. So, in return for this, they stipulate a girl, a horse and a gun from the boy's family. If they don't have a girl at a marriageable age or they don't want to have their daughter marry one of their boys, the abducted girl's family demands a vast sum of money. If they don't smooth the situation over, undesired events may happen. There might be a fight between tribes or they may abduct a girl as a reprisal.

The ones who have influence in the community intervene in and try to solve the problem in a way, but the relations between the families are not at will. Some pairs demand a wedding after solving the problems. However, as society shows this response to abducting, only a few people participate in such weddings.

3.5. Marriages As a Result of Betrothed in the Cradle

This is a tradition of agreeing on a betrothed in the cradle of two new born children of two different families, a boy and a girl, and having their wedding when they become of marriageable age. Such betrothals are generally between relatives or very close friends. Today, it is very rare to see such a custom.

4. Some Preliminary Information about the Weddings of Hakkari

4.1. Bride Price

Bride price/bride token used to be a big problem for the groom's family. There is almost no bride token in Hakkari province today. Instead of a bride token, there is "süt parası", the money given to the bride's family for breast-feeding (nursing). This money is given in an envelope at the engagement ceremony. This money is still given as a custom; however, all of it is returned. This is the mutual expression of respect to each other in a way.

In the past, bride price was a must and the bride's family used to ask for large payment from the groom's family. It could be money or animals such as sheep, horse or oxen. Due to the bride token and limited budget in the past, it wasn't easy to fulfill all the requirements by the groom's family. That's why some weddings would happen maybe six months or even a year after the engagement. When the demand was too high, in an

amount that the bride's family couldn't afford, respected persons would help to reconcile the two sides.

4.2. Trousseau

Trousseau is a custom continued from the past to present. The preparation of trousseau starts from the early age of the girl and it is prepared by the girls themselves, their mothers, aunts and grand-mothers. Trousseau includes bridal accessories, jewelry, toiletries, headscarves and bed linens, knitted and woven works, such as kilims, woolen socks, and needlepoint work such as upholstery, wall hangings, and etc. Except for the bride and the groom, some gifts such as woolen socks and headscarves are provided for the invitees of their wedding and the groom's relatives. All these are kept in a wooden dowry chest.

In the past, as for household goods, there weren't TVs, sewing machines or furniture. Mattresses, pillows, duvets and rugs (kilims) were the main household goods taken by the bride which were made by herself, her mother and her relatives. As the bride would stay with her father-in-law and mother-in-law, she needed only enough for her own room.

Today, the bride and groom decide on what to buy together. They do shopping together. In the country, the goods are generally kept at the bride's home until the wedding day. When the bride leaves her family's home, the goods are loaded on a truck and brought to bride's home. However, in the city, what is bought is carried where the new couple will stay and the house/flat is furnished before the wedding day.

4.3. Invitation for the Wedding

After all the preparations are completed, a date is planned for the wedding. **In the past**, there were no invitation cards. The invitation was carried out by the relatives who would go to the surrounding villages and visit all the families. The inviters, first of all, would go to the most notable person's home there. They would tell about the reason why they were there. After having food and refreshments, the host would tell one of the relatives to accompany the inviters for inviting the neighbors and they would visit all the houses in turn and invite them viva voce. **Today**, invitations cards are sent or phone calls are made by both the bride and groom's family to whom they want to participate in the wedding ceremony.

4.4. Garment

Traditional garments of Hakkari attract a great attention in terms of their diversity, colorfulness and liveliness. Although the new clothes styles and fashion have influenced the way of dressing of some tribes intensively, it is seen that, especially in weddings and on special occasions, traditional garments are very common in some tribes. However, there is fashion of the traditional dresses, as well. Although they cost a lot of money, especially, unwed women don't want to wear the same dresses for another wedding. Some of them even don't want to wear the same one on the second day of the wedding. Thus, this costs families a lot. The garments worn by women are called "kiras and fistan" and the clothes worn by men is called "şel-şepik" (Photo 1-2-3-4).

Photo 1: Traditional garments worn by men, Jirki Tribe, Mehmet Adiyaman



Photo 2: Traditional garments worn by men, Jirki Tribe.



Photo 3: Traditional garments worn by men and women, Jirki Tribe.



Photo 4: Traditional garments worn by women, Jirki Tribe.



4.5. Folk Dances and Accompanied Songs

The folk dances played at the weddings of Hakkari are really very thrilling. Some of them are not only played in Turkey, but also in many parts of the world. The folk dances can be played either accompanied with or without musical instruments. When they are played without musical instruments, there is antiphonal singing. Generally a group, consisting of 3-5 people, sing some of the lyrics and then another group sing the same lyrics in a descant way. The folk dances generally move in a line / circle from right to left. This is one of the distinctive features of Hakkari folk dances. Women and men do the folk dances separately. There are various folk dances with specific movements. While the young do very animated folk dances, the elders usually do slow ones (**Photo 5-6**).

Photo 5: Women doing Folk dances, Jirki Tribe



Photo 6: Men doing Folk dances, Jirki Tribe



In the past, as there were no musical instruments, there was only antiphonal singing. **Today**, singing accompanied by musical instruments is more common. Some of the folk dances played in Hakkari are: Zozan, Mome, Şeyhanı, Kıçmeyro, Şere, Nêrî, Koçêrî, Yarguzel, Bablekan, Dolabê, Gûlşeni, Gani Bergani, Basu, Hîcrokê, Zêrînê, Heygo heygo hey govendê, Endêlî, Kelya Başkala, Bekirok and etc.

It can be said that the folk dances of Hakkari have a significance place in the culture of the local people. Each of them has a story and they have mainly emerged from actual events. They reflect either a story of lovers, uprising against an unjust justice situation and etc. Here are the stories of some of them:

- **Gulşênî:** It stands for a “nice rose”. It is a kind of dance which can be done by both women and men hand in hand. Young girls and boys try to draw attention.
- **Hicrokê:** It derives from the word “hicrok” which means “a small room” - used for “prayer”. The movements of ascetics during the prayer are reflected in the folk dance.
- **Nêrî:** It is a Kurdish word used for the male goat. The master of Behdinan (a tribe) has 1,000 sheep plundered from a family. They take the sheep to the other side of the Habur river. In this event, a male goat in the sheep herd and the shepherd dog begin talking and the conversation between them is reflected in this folk dance. One of the steps, in this folk dance, is dragging on the ground. This movement reflects the suggestion by the male goat to the dog that the dog should attach a bush to its tail in order to disappear without a trace.
- **Zêrînê:** Inspired by the love of a rich girl and a poor man, the expressions in the words of this song are transformed into a folk dance. According to the story, the poor boy tries to show that he loves the girl not because of her wealth because it true love.
- **Heygo heygo hey govendê:** In Islamic religion, a man is not permitted to hold a girl’s hand, unless she is his sister, mother, wife, aunt or a very close relative. That’s why men and women generally do folk dances separately. In this wedding folk dance, in which men and women sit separately, a boy goes to the section where girls do folk dances and holds a girl’s hand. The folk dance emerges from the song which narrates this story. In the folk dance, the dancers go three steps forward and then three steps backward without

looking around. The given message is related to the situation of sitting separately.

- **Ez teymezim:** It reflects an event which happened during the Ottoman period. The song which is derived from the event of Hamidiye Alayları (the army established in 1891, during the period of the Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamit II, formed from the people living in Anatolia; Kurdish, Turkmen and Yurok) is turned into a folk dance. When the war is mentioned in this song, the feet stomp hard in the folk dance.
- **Endeli:** The shepherd falls in love with the berivan (a woman who milks the sheep). Berivan also falls in love with the shepherd. When a boy from the village also falls in love with the berivan, he finds out that the shepherd is already in love with her. The shepherd and the boy from the village fight for the berivan. The fight for this girl has been turned into a folk dance. Mounting an argument by using a stick or a dagger is reflected in this fight.
- **Bekirok:** It is a dance inspired from the movements of a man who went crazy due to his love for his darling. His words are arranged as lyrics, and the movements are arranged as a folk dance.

4.6. Henna

Relatives, neighbors and friends are invited to the wedding two to three days in advance. On the first day of the wedding, while the guests of the groom start gathering at the groom's family's home, the guests of the bride gather at bride's family's home. Sometimes folk dances are played with the accompaniment of drums and are either Turkish or Kurdish songs. Men and women don't dance together. They dance among themselves.

The most obvious ceremony on the first day is henna ceremonies held in both houses. Besides the henna, candles, bracelets and dresses for bride are taken to bride's home. The ones who take henna to the bride's home consist of men in front and girls lined up in two rows behind them. The henna is taken to the bride's home in a disciplined and a dignified stance. On the way to the bride's home, while men are singing, women accommodate their pace with dignity... After the henna and other things are given to the bride's family, the group turn back to the groom's home. There is no tradition of eating at the bride's home.

After arriving at the groom's home, a meal is offered to the guests. Playing folk dances continues until the evening. After that, the guests take the groom to the best man's home. After they play folk dances at the best man's home for a while, they start the henna ceremony. The henna is brought in accompanied by the henna song. The henna is applied to the groom's right hand little finger and his toe. Before covering the hand with henna by using a special cloth, some money is put in his palm. Whoever takes the cover off in the next morning takes that money for himself/herself. The remaining henna is given to the guests. They also apply henna as a remembrance of the henna night. Then, the money dipped into the henna is thrown around. In some way, it is a tip to avoid cold jokes to the bride. Otherwise, some jokes can be made to take some money from the best man. For example, the groom's shoes or any other belongings can be held for ransom by the young until

some money is given to them. After the henna ceremony, folk dances are played accompanied by songs until late midnight. The groom and some of the guests spend that night at the best's man's home.

While the henna ceremony of the groom is in joy accompanied by folk dances, the bride's henna ceremony is in a deep sorrow. At the bride's henna ceremony, sad songs are sung which make the bride cry. As at the groom's henna ceremony, the bride is taken to the henna room. The henna, placed in the middle of a special henna tray encircle with candles, is brought slowly by accompanying songs. The bride is seated on a chair and the henna is applied to her hands and feet. When henna is applied to her hand, gold that is brought by the family of the groom, is placed in her palm and her hand is covered with a special cloth or glove.

In the past, especially in the villages, as there were no cars, the ones who took henna to the groom's family used to spend the night. Generally, especially women, didn't have peaceful night there. Because the gifts could be matter for discussion when they weren't of good quality. Such matters weren't mentioned among men. Today, thanks to having automobiles, they go back home, unless the henna ceremony is in another city.

4.7. Best Man

The best man is generally chosen from a wealthy family. He can be one of the relatives or close friends. He is generally young, in his twenties. Before making a decision about the best man, the groom's family first discusses about whom will be the right one to be the best man. After they make a decision, they send a present to him. **In the past**, a ram was tethered in front of the house of whom they intended to be the best man by the groom's family. As it is understood from the clues above, the best man is usually a member of a wealthy family and he is a young one who might cover a lot of expenses and spend energy. The best man typically:

- has responsibility for all the organization of the wedding,
- assists the groom,
- gives gifts to the groom and the bride,
- has his wife assist the bride,
- pays for the groom's shave, his clothes and henna,
- pays for the the bride's hairdressing,
- gives money to the ones who block the way of the wedding procession,
- offers "paşîv", a meal eaten late at night, to the groom and some invitees,
- offers breakfast to the groom and some invitees,
- wears formal clothes,
- spends money on the bride's car, and etc.

4.8. Bridesmaids

Bridesmaids are usually the young women, relatives of the groom, who attend the wedding. Besides the maid of honor, married and respectful women, girls at the marriageable age participate. The maid of honor has a lot of responsibilities. In case, there is a complaint by the bride's family, she tries to solve the problem and she also takes care of the bridesmaids as they are young and have no experience. The bridesmaids generally dress up smartly. The number of the bridesmaids depends on the social statue of the groom. However, it is a fact that most of the girls at the marriageable age like to participate weddings. Therefore, the number is always higher than it is expected. In some societies the bridesmaids are chosen from the bride's relatives or her close friends.

4.9. Forerunner

The forerunner is someone who is chosen to give the news of the comings and goings of the wedding procession to both the bride' family and the groom. **In the past**, a forerunner would go to the bride's family's home in advance and tell them that the wedding procession was coming. In a way, it wasn't good news for them because their daughter would leave them. So, the forerunner would be punished in some way. If he went on horseback, the horse would be terrified and the horse would escape away. If he came on foot, he would be water-soaked. That's why, no one wanted put themselves in for such an unpleasantness. However, someone had to fulfil this challenge.

The forerunner sets off before the wedding procession leaves the bride's family's home, as well. He takes a special package prepared by the bride. When he gives the good news to the groom that the wedding procession is coming and hands the package to him, he has a better reception. The groom usually gives gifts to the forerunner, in particular, some money.

4.10. Wedding Feast

Besides the relatives and close friends, all of the neighbors (in some weddings, all of the members of the tribe) are invited to the weddings. Thus the number of the invitees could be 500-2000 people. **In the past**, as the invitees went on horseback, they usually spent a night in a village. So, they would be entertained by the neighbors. **Today**, there is no need to entertain the guests at the weddings because most of them have access to cars. However, it is a custom to give a wedding feast by the groom's family. Depending on how long the wedding lasts, they may offer lunch and dinner during the wedding. Two of the wedding meals come to the fore in Hakkari region. They are called Qiris and Doğaba. **Qiris** consists of meat on the bone, onion, butter, oil, tomato paste, grape, chickpea, and meat of a walnut, sumac, mint, savory, salt, black pepper and red pepper flakes. As for **Doğaba**, it includes meat on the bone, cracked wheat, strained yogurt, eggs, flour, butter, mint, savory, salt and red pepper flakes (**Photo 7-8**).

Photo 7: Wedding Meal



Photo 8: Wedding Feast



4.11. Wedding Rituals

In the past, there wasn't a ceremony for the civil marriage. They could declare their civil marriage even after having children. However, it is mandatory for Muslims to have "nikah" (religious marriage ceremony) before the marriage. Today, it is also mandatory by law to have a civil marriage before the wedding day. In the past, as there was no opportunity for the bride and groom to meet, the religious marriage ceremony was generally commenced on the wedding day. However, today, as it is possible for the groom and bride to meet each other the religious marriage ceremony is generally commenced soon after the ceremony of engagement.

4.11.1. The pillars of marriage

- The couple must be free from any legal prevention to be able to marry one another and, mentally, mustn't be handicapped.
- The woman must have the approval of her guardian. The girl's father is her guardian. If her father is dead or has health problems that prevent fulfilling his duty, one of his closest male relative becomes her guardian.
- There must be an offer and acceptance.

4.11.2. The conditions of marriage:

- The presence of the couple,
- Their approval,
- The presence of the woman's guardian or the person appointed by her guardian,
- Two male Muslim witnesses.

4.11.3. Mahr

Besides the jewelry, in Islamic countries, the groom or groom's family gives the bride a gift called mahr. It can be money, gold, an animal, a car, a house or something valuable depending on the bride's economic condition. You can't take this money or the valuables from her without her willful consent. It is generally made the promise for the mahr at the religious marriage ceremony

4.12. First Wednesday

It is not a custom to have a honeymoon in Hakkari. Starting from the next day after the wedding, the close relatives of the groom invite bride, groom and the groom's family to have meals during the week. Very delicious meals are offered and gifts are given according to the budget. While the gifts consist of jewelry in the cities, dresses and etc. are given in the villages. The first Wednesday after the wedding is the day named "**sersini**". On that day, the trousseau of the bride is taken from the bride's family's house to the groom's house. The women, especially kin, are invited to see the trousseau. A meal is offered them and trousseau is shown, as well. The invited women also give various gifts to the bride.

4.13. Post Wedding Traditions

In modern times, a week after the wedding day, mutual invitations start between the girl and the boy's family. First, the bride visits her family accompanied with the groom. Following this, the elders of the family have mutual visits and they give gifts to the visitors.

In the past, firstly, the parents-in-law would visit their son-in-law, as well as, his family. When they visited them, they would take some gifts with them for the groom's family and his relatives. They were also invited for dinner or lunch by the relatives and neighbors of the groom's family. When they would go back, they received gifts, as well. While the gifts brought by the bride's family were mostly garments, they usually had sheep in return from each family they had given a gift. Their visit usually took them a week. They would invite their son-in-law and daughter for a visit when they were to be back.

After sometime, the son-in-law and his wife would visit his wife's family and her relatives. They would welcome by them and by their relatives and neighbors. They would take gifts with them for both the bride's family, her relatives and the neighbors. During their visit, they would be invited by the relatives and neighbors of the bride's family. When they were to be back, the bride's father would give his son-in law a gun or a ram. Those, who were given gifts, would see them off with gifts, as well. They were given sheep and goats. If she was married to someone poor, the animals given her would make a significant contribution to their economic condition and make them very happy.

5. Comparing the Weddings of Hakkari

As far as we can see, different societies not only have been influenced in the field of the art from each other, but also in many different areas, including wedding traditions and customs. Considering the other weddings in the world, we can see that Indian wedding traditions and customs are the ones that most closely resemble the ones belong to Hakkari. If we are to compare some features of both, such similarities and differences can be seen:

5.1. Some of the Similar Features

- There is a deep effect of old traditions and customs on both,
- Besides the old traditions and customs, a great importance is given to the religious attitudes regarding the marriage,

- In both places, a lot of jewelry is demanded,
- Traditional garment is worn widely,
- You can see a lot of procedure in both,
- Arranged marriages used to be common,
- With their colors and styles, the wedding attires are of great significance and they attract a great attention,
- With rituals, food, music, fun, excitement and crowded invitees, the weddings both in Hakkari and India are truly in a festive mood.

5.2. Some of the Different Features

- In Hakkari region, the groom's side asks a girl's hand in marriage; however, In India, the bride's side goes to the groom's home to make a proposal,
- Although there is dowry in both, opposite customs can be seen. While the bride's family demands the bride price (dowry) in Hakkari region, In India, the groom's side demands dowry,

6. Weddings in Hakkari

While arranged marriages were common in the past, today, they often take place as a result of mutual love. In arranged marriages, a girl who is a daughter of close a friend or relative, is suggested to the family of the boy.

The boy's family and some of their relatives, including some men and women, go to see the recommended. If they have a positive impression, they reveal their intention and leave. After a few days, they send someone if the bride's family's door is open to them. If they have the intention of relationship by affinity, they demand a certain period of time to consult their relatives.

6.1. Asking a Girl's Hand in Marriage

After parents make decision about to whom their son will marry, either the groom's father or an influential person on behalf of him goes to the bride's parents' to inform them about the matter. On the way back, he is asked if he is a "**lion or fox**". If he says "I am a lion", it means that the bride-to-be and her family looked positively on such a matter. However, the bride's parents can demand a certain period of time to make a decision about it. If the proposal is accepted by the girl, her parents and relatives, they send a message that they are open up to their wish. After that prevalent customs are followed:

Firstly, a few people, including a religious leader, trusted relatives and family neighbors go to the woman's parents' to ask for girl's hand in marriage from her family. In this arrangement, an engagement ring, a watch and jewelry, depending on the financial situation of the groom's family is taken for the bride. (In the past, an engagement ring was not required). After having a chat for a while, the most respected person starts to mention about the issue and tells them about the reason why they are there. If the woman and her parents approve, the religious leader (Imam) says a prayer and then al-Faatihah is recited. After that one of the relatives

of the groom thanks everybody who participated the ceremony by kissing the elders' hands and shaking the hands of others.

6.2. Betrothal

A few days after the girl's hand has been requested in marriage, the groom's family, relatives and some of their neighbors go to the bride's family's home for betrothal, called "**desteser**". When they go there, they take some presents such as a golden bracelet, a dress, a pair of shoes, a pair of slippers, etc., with them. The bride's family also offers them variety of refreshments. There haven't been so many changes in this betrothal from the past to the present time.

6.3. Engagement

After the betrothal, the engagement ceremony is held. At the engagement ceremony, both the boy and the girl's families invite as many relatives and neighbours as they wish. Almost all the relatives and neighbors accept the invitation. The engagement ceremony is usually held at the girl's home. The bride is dressed in an engagement dress in memory of this day. Substantial amounts of jewelry are taken for the bride and all of it is pinned on her. They play folk dances accompanied with songs / live music.

In the past, asking for a girl's hand in marriage from her family and engagement ceremonies were held separately. When the engagement and dowry are proposed separately, more invitees participate in the engagement and bride price ceremony. That's why it is called "**büyük nişan**" which stands for "big engagement". Stipulations of the woman's family was discussed. If the expenses such as jewelry, gifts for relatives and bride token was not affordable by the groom's family, the notable person would make a request for favorable demands and they would finally agree on the proposal.

Today, betrothal and engagement ceremonies are usually held together. In today's marriages, it is very rare to ask for money. However, the jewelry requested costs a lot. Especially the golden necklace called "**malxırap**", which stands for "ruins one's family" is very common. Both the bride's and groom's family bear the cost together, but the bride's family spends much more.

6.4. Sweet Ceremony

Both sides, the groom and the bride's families, invite all the relatives and the neighbors to the sweet ceremony. The invitees come together at the boy's home and then they make their way to the girl's home. On the way to the bride's home, they sing songs. They take "şirinahi" (sweets) such as candy, delight, waffles, biscuits, etc. with them. These delights and candies are offered to the guests on the trays.

In Şeker Kıрма (sweet) ceremonies, it is a mere formality to give some money, put in an envelope, by the boy's family to the girl's family. This money is called "**süt parası**" (the money given for bringing up the girl). This money is usually returned. This behavior reflects mutual respect and trust. Another prominent characteristic of this ceremony is to decide on who will be the best man. Before sweets would be

taken to the bride's home, the best man would be ascertained. Because, most of the responsibilities are fulfilled by him.

6.5. Wedding

Weddings in Hakkari region are really unique in terms of the traditional folk dances accompanied by songs with/without musical instruments, traditional garment worn at the weddings and very delicious meals. After all the preparations are finished, the families decide on the wedding day. In the past, it could be any week day, but today, as many of the invitees work in state offices, they are generally held at weekends. Close relatives may come a day before the wedding to see if everything is OK and anything they could do for the hosts (the families of bride and groom). If they are crowded, they are invited by the relatives and neighbors and the guests are treated with respect.

On the night before the wedding night, they have a mirthful night both at the groom and bride's family's home. While there is hen-night at the bride's family's home, there is bucks night at the groom's family's home. Applying henna to bride and groom's hands occur separately, usually, in a garden accompanied music, folk dances and fireworks. The amusement lasts until mid-night.

On the wedding day, everybody gets up early and wears their traditional garments. After having breakfast, wedding procession sets off. In the past, all the attendees were travelling on horseback, but they travel by very comfortable and expensive cars today. It is a custom that the groom doesn't join the wedding procession. He stays at his home and looks forward to the wedding procession coming back.

Fetching the Bride; if the wedding is planned to be continued for two days, the bride is fetched on the second day. There is a wedding program at both the bride's family's home and groom's family's home. Both the bride and groom have their final preparations at their parents' homes individually. The groom has his breakfast at the best man home. Then the barber gives him a shave and cuts his hair. After that he has a bath and puts on his suit. While doing this, his friends play folk dances accompanied by songs. He doesn't join the wedding procession. He stays at his home.

There is a rush and excitement at the bride's family's home on the same day, as well. The bride has her hair done at the hairdresser and about 10-20 single women also join her and have their hair done. All the expenses are usually paid by the best man. All her friends and neighbors come to see her off and help her in her preparations. She is ready by the time the wedding procession arrives there. Depending on the wedding meal, the bride is fetched in the morning or in the afternoon. While lunch is offered in the villages, dinner is offered in the cities. It is because of the invitees. The invitees have to be back from the village before it gets dark. However, as most of the invitees of a wedding in a city are living in the city, there is no problem for them.

When the wedding procession arrives at the bride's family's home, the bride's father and her relatives welcome them. However, as the bride is flying the nest, there is sadness at her home. So, it is unusual for the invitees to do folk dances at the bride's home. When going to fetch the bride, as in the henna of the groom

ceremony, the men line up in front and the women line up behind them. While men sing songs in front, women walk at a dignified pace. Most of the elder women wear silk fabric called "**hizark**" on their dresses. In front of all, there are girls below the age of teens in motley. Young girls, who are marriageable age follow the group and married ones follow them in a single line. When they arrive at the bride's home, the women, named **berbük**, go to fetch the bride with the best man. The bride's youngest brother or another member of her family is invited inside to tie her "**maidenhood belt**". After the maidenhood belt ceremony, some money is given to whomever tied the belt. That's not all given to the bride. Some money is also given for the dowry chest and for the locked door... All of the money required is given by the best man. When the bride is ready to leave, one of the hands of the bride is held by the best man, and the other one by the best man's wife. She is made to sit and stand up three times and the best man throws money around and the money is scrambled by small children. After they go out, everybody hurries to get into their cars. The bride's car leads the wedding procession and then the most respected ones and the elders follow it. The best man and his wife also get into the same car with the bride.

While the wedding procession is heading towards the groom's house, they are sometimes blocked and money is requested. This money is usually given by the best man. The best man should have enough money on him, especially in 5, 10, 20 or 50 TL bank notes. When the wedding procession comes back, especially in the villages, they fire guns into the air. The groom approaches the bride and welcome her, but the driver locks the doors. After he receives some money, he unlocks the doors. When the bride and the groom walk together, everybody claps enthusiastically. He throws money and candy. As for the groom's mother, she throws a pot, in which there is water, in front of the feet of the bride. This stands for wishing a happy marriage. After the bride sits in her armchair, the groom leaves. During the wedding the best man accompanies the groom and his wife is with the bride. In the meanwhile, both men and women continue folk dances separately. The amusement continues till lunch/dinner. After the meal, the invitees come far away ask for permission to leave. The others continue folk dances. Whoever asks for permission to leave, first gives the gift to the bride/groom and then says goodbye. While women usually give gifts to the bride, men give gifts to the groom. While they give the bride gifts, such as gold or bracelet, they give money to the groom is often in banknotes, from 50 to 1000 Liras. In the past, the most popular person would give money first and no one would give more than him. The amount of the money given by anyone was announced. Today, in Hakkari region, this tradition is almost at an end.

The groom sits in an arm chair like a throne on the wedding day. He starts accepting congratulations after sitting there. It is a customary to sit on the seat prepared for him during the day. He does not leave unless it is necessary.

After most of the invitees leave, the best man and the others, who continue staying, take the bride to the groom's room accompanied by songs with candles. The groom approaches to the bride and steps on her foot. This event indicates the male supremacy within the family. In the meantime, they are offered a glass of sweetened water. Firstly, the bride drinks half of sweetened water in the glass and

then he offers the other half to the groom. Having this sweetened water expresses sharing bad and good days together throughout their lives. By doing so, the first step in marriage is set together. After praying surah al-fatihah, the guests leave the house. Both the bride and groom perform their night prayer (isha prayer) and pray to have a happy marriage life.

Today, the new couples usually stay in their own flats/houses or rented ones. **In the past**, the new couples generally used to stay in the same house with the parents of the groom. There used to be very crowded families. There could be 20 – 40 people in the same house. Uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews, nieces, grandparents, grandchildren, brothers and sisters were all living together. It was a custom that the couples didn't call each other with their names. They call each other as "husband" and "wife". When the husband would mention about his wife to someone he would say (if they had a child) the mother of X and if the wife would mention about her husband to someone, she would say the father of X. We can't see such a custom in Hakkari now; however, we can see in some of the districts of Van that the brides don't talk to any men during the first year of her marriage. When someone asks them about something or someone, they use body language (gesture and facial expression).

7. Data Collection

7.1. Anber Buğrul (1930), Housewife.

We were living in a village, called Hisane (Yağmurlu) when I got married. The life conditions were very bad then. No jewelry was brought for the brides like the ones marry nowadays. There wasn't even a wedding ring or a beautiful dress. Henna night wasn't arranged. Only simple dresses were brought for the bride and there was an outer garment called "hîzark". However, there were some similar traditions as we have today. Few people came to my father's home and asked for me in marriage. After sometime, my father sent them a message that they could bind with a promise to wed. My wedding was in winter. There wasn't much trousseau. As we were living in a village and there were no cars, it was difficult to have a chest. So, the trousseau was put into a "têr", a-two combined sack was put on a horse back from a place to place. However, it was winter. The animals weren't able to move in the snow. Due to this, someone had to carry my trousseau on his back which mainly included a set of bedding (a pillow, a quilt and a mattress) and some presents such as woolen socks and other weaving and knitting objects. At that time, all the invitees would be given a present brought by the bride.

As I said the wedding was in winter. So, the wedding procession could hardly walk in the snow. We had a rest in two villages on the way. We had meals and received gifts from the landlords when we were about to leave.

My mother came to visit me in the spring. It was a custom that the bride's mother first visited her son-in-law. When she had paid him a visit, she brought presents for all the relatives and neighbors. It was also a custom to do that. It was a small village, about 15 homes. So, it wasn't a problem to deliver presents to all of the families. All the villagers invited my mother and they also gave her gifts, but instead of a dress, each family gave her a sheep or a goat.

After staying for two weeks, my mother was back with her son-in-law. I couldn't go with them due to the traditions. My husband stayed there for a week. However, he didn't take any presents with him for them. The villagers also welcomed him. They also invited him for the meals and when he was about to be back, a ram was given to him as a present by my father.

In autumn, this time, I went to visit my family without my husband. It was unwelcomed to see the new married couples together. I took presents with me for my family and for all other families living in the village, as well. I was also welcomed. When I was back, I received sheep and goats as presents by the families I gave presents. My father gave me a cow. I was very happy.

7.2. Adil Erdoğan (1933), Retired Teacher

It was a rare occasion to see girls walking around in Hakkari before. When visiting neighbors, the marriageable ones wouldn't go with their parents. It was treated as disgraceful. So, there was almost no opportunity for both boys and girls of marriageable age to see each other. However, the elders could go to the neighbors' homes and see all the household at home. So, they knew whose girl could be the best bride. When parents intended to have their sons marry, they were very careful in making a decision. As there was nowhere to go and no other work to do except the family business, the new couples had to live with them. So, they were looking for someone would get along with them and also was very skillful. The girls' father was also very choosy in giving their daughter in marriage. They wanted to make sure that the groom candidate was the right person for their daughter. They generally got information from the families familiar to them.

After deciding on whose daughter would be marriageable by the parents of the son, they would send word to the girl's parents with a respected person. The girl's parents would tell their relatives about the issue. After asking their daughter and their relatives, they would come to an agreement and then they would send a message by means of the respected person. If the answer was ~~in~~ positive, they would go and see the marriageable girl with some respected personalities. They would take some gifts both for the girl and her parents depending on the wealth of the families. There would also be a religious leader (imam). After the families agreed on their children's marriage, the imam would say a prayer.

After agreeing to give their children in marriage, the engagement ceremony was arranged sometime later. At the engagement ceremony, they would also talk about the dowry and the gifts that must be brought by the family of the bride. The amount of the money and gifts that would be bought was discussed. If the dowry was unaffordable by the son's family, the respected persons would become a part of the discussion and they would solve the problem. If the girl was a daughter of a poor family, the family would take some money for themselves and spend the other for the necessities of their daughter.

After the preparation for wedding was completed, they would decide on the wedding day. The relatives, close friends and neighbors of both bride and groom's families would be informed by means of inviters. There weren't any other communication means then. The weddings generally lasted for two or three days. On the night of the wedding day, henna was applied to the bride and groom's

hands. The henna of the bride would be obtained and given by a few women and men in groom's family. If the families were far away from each other, they would spend the night there and would be back with the wedding procession the next day. Of course, a gift such as gold would be brought by rich families with the henna for the bride. The henna would be in different places but almost at the same time.

If the bride's family was living far away, the wedding invitees would go on their horse back to fetch her. Depending on the distance, they might have spent a night there. The neighbors of the bride's family would lodge them. They would have enjoyable time there, as well. On the next day, wedding procession would set out early in the morning and arrive at the groom's home at noon time. They would eat lunch together and then play folk dances. The invitees, came from far away, would give the bride's and groom's presents and require permission to leave. The invitees would also be given presents which were brought by the groom before they left. However, the fun would continue until late mid-night...

7.3. Sabri Turan (45), Civil Servant

My wife is from the same village and she is my relative. There used to be one or two weddings a year in a village. The wedding preparations took a long time. We could sell our sheep for the wedding expenses in spring or autumn. The merchants would go to the villages in these seasons. They would take them to Iran and we would be able to get our money after they sold the sheep. Thus, weddings were often in the autumn or early summer. In the past, there were not many rich families to pay for the weddings. The bride's family would request trousseau and dowry depending on the financial situation of the groom's family. Besides the dowry, bride's family required some money, named "**şirmix**" (breast-feed/nursing).

After getting married I had neither a house nor work to do except the work all the family members did. Therefore, it was out of question to leave my father's house after getting married. We also continued staying at my father's house and helping them. However, everything has changed these days. The number of the youth who finish universities is quite high. After they finish university, they have their own job. After they get married, they have their own flat or house. Most of them go to the other cities and they settle there. The pleasing thing is that, we still have very strong family bonds. We can see this clearly at weddings and condolences

7.4. Salih Kaya (45), Director

The Girl's Hand in Marriage; as soon as the girl's family responds positively, they give the boy a date to come to their house. Depending on the place, power and importance of the boy's family, some people from the family of the boy, the relatives, members of the tribe and the imam, go together to the girl's home for the girl's hand in marriage. As soon as they arrive, the girl's hand in marriage ceremony officially starts. At the beginning there is a meaningful moment of silence on both sides. In this atmosphere generally the respected elders on both sides talk and the others listen with great care. First of all, the oldest or the most respectable of the girl's family welcomes the guests. After this hearty welcome, they engage in small talks for a while. After sometime, the oldest or the most respectable one reveals the reason for the "arrival" to the eldest of the groom's

side and he says; “if Allah allows and with the spoken words of the Prophet, we are here for girl’s hand in marriage of X, the daughter of X for X, the son of X. The one who is in charge of speaking on behalf of the girl’s family says, “Welcome to the top up. We give her away”. This answer means “yes”. Therewith the imam prays and recites Surat Fatiha and makes a wish for good luck for both sides. Meanwhile, a young man from the boy’s family stands up and kisses the elder’s hands, especially the ones’ from the girl’s side. Then the packages of cakes, candies and fruit juices prepared by the groom’s family are offered to the guests. After drinking tea, offered by the girl’s family, they ask for permission to leave. By the way, it is important to mention that the boy (groom) stays at home. He doesn’t go with the group who went for the girl’s hand in marriage.

Betrothal; few days after the girl’s hand in marriage, the groom’s family, relatives and some of their neighbors go to the bride’s family’s home for betrothal, called “**desteser**”. When they go there, they take some presents such as a golden bracelet, a dress, a pair of shoes, a pair of slippers, etc., with them. The bride’s family also offers them a variety of refreshments.

Engagement; after the betrothal, the engagement ceremony is held. At the engagement ceremony, both the boy and the girl’s families invite as many relatives and neighbors as they wish. All the relatives and neighbors accept the invitation. The engagement ceremony is usually held at the girl’s home. Those who participate in the ceremony are kept in such a festivity which is equally good with a wedding. They do folk dances accompanied with songs / live music. The bride is dressed in an engagement dress in memory of this day. Substantial amounts of jewelry is taken for the bride all of it is pinned on her. In recent years, betrothal and engagement ceremonies are held together.

Wedding; after all these ceremonies, it is time to have an enthusiastic wedding. The wedding ceremony generally takes place at a weekend. Weddings are usually held ~~in~~ outdoors. The wedding is held both at the groom’s and bride’s home and it takes two days and within this period different entertainment programs are organized. The guests wear their most beautiful clothes. While girls and young women wear “Kiras and Fistan”, traditional dresses which are colorful and long up to the foot heel, men wear clothes made of plain patterns called “şel-şepik”.

8. Evaluation and Conclusion

Folklore is one of the fields that reflects our concerns, thoughts and feelings. It is based on the cultural heritage of a society which comprises the whole cultural elements such as tales, jokes, handmade materials, social life, customs, rituals, celebrations, weddings, folk dances, songs, and etc. When considering Hakkari cultural wedding traditions and customs from past to today, we can see that they include a wide variety of traditions, customs, folk dances, rituals and songs which are based on a rich culture dates to a long time. However, as in all other social life areas, we can see some influences that affect the Hakkari weddings both positively and in a negative way.

As for positive points, we can see that:

There is decrease of marriages as a result of abduction, bride exchange and betrothed,

There isn't bride token anymore,

Announcing gifts for the groom is very rare,

Besides the religious marriage ceremony, there is also a civil marriage ceremony,

Parents also get their children's approval regarding whom they want to marry,

Folk dances in traditional clothes accompanied by songs is still common,

Most of the heart-warming traditions regarding weddings are still carried on.

Many brides and grooms prefer to marry in the tradition of their ancestors.

Some of the traditions still continued, but unwelcome:

Announcing gifts for the bride by the kinswoman is still common,

Wearing bridal gown is increasing day by day,

The jewelry which is demanded by the parents of the bride is often not affordable. So, the parents of the groom may get into financial difficulties.

Result; traditional wedding ceremonies are not only special occasions for the new couples (bride and groom) and their families, but also a means of reflecting a society's cultural background. All phases of the marriage, such as asking for a girl's hand in marriage, betrothal, engagement, sweet ceremony, henna night, fetching the bride and the wedding, constitute a meaningful whole. Nor is this all. Traditional wedding garments, folk dances, songs, wedding rituals, wedding feast and the customs and traditions of the weddings make Hakkari weddings quite unique in the world. This unique cultural heritage can be a significant source for tourism of the region and also cinema sector and television serials as in Indian weddings.

Appendix 1: Information about Whom We Collected Data Regarding Hakkari Weddings

1. Anber BUĞRUL



She was born in a village in Hakkari in 1930. Her father is called Ali'ye Xanzé. Anber didn't have an opportunity to go to school. She married when she was 20 years old (in 1950). She married to a young man from a near village, but from a different tribe. She had 9 children. One of her girls died when she very young. The others (7 sons and a daughter) are alive. Two of them live in Balıkesir, one of them lives in Van and the others live in Hakkari. Her husband went to Korea for his military service in 1952 and he is a war veteran. He died in 2004. Anber has had both bad and good days up to now. She knows poverty and richness, as well. She worked by days and nights until her children grew up. She is very skillful at knitting and weaving.

2. Adil ERDOĞAN



He was born in Hakkari in 1933. He worked as a teacher and a director for 32 years. He is retired now. He married in 1958. His wife's name is Gülüzar, daughter of Münir Aydın. He has seven children, 6 sons and a daughter. He is a member of a well-known family. There are many actors in his family such as Yılmaz and Mustafa Erdoğan. He used to hunt. He sometimes tells about his hunting stories. The young listen to his hunting stories with great interest.

3. Sabri TURAN (1963)



He is from Hakkari. He one of the members of the Jırki tribe. Jırkı tribe is one of the twelve tribes of Ertuşi tribe. As it is seen his photo, traditional garment is still worn widely, especially on special occasions such as weddings and religious days. The women of this tribe are really very skillful at weaving kilims. Selim was living in a village when he was young. Living conditions were very tough once. As other countryside people, he also had many difficulties when he was young. The life conditions in the past are incomparable with the life now. Everything is much better.

4. Salih KAYA



He was born in Bağışlı, Hakkari in 1970. He studied primary school in Yüksekova and after finishing high school he started university in Van. He started working as a primary school teacher in Sinop in 1994. In 1996, he worked at a primary school in Bağışlı, Hakkari and he became the director of the same school in 1999. After working there for few years, he started working at a primary school as a director in Hakkari. He became an assistant director at the Directorate of National Education in Hakkari in 2010. After working as a high school director for a year, he became an assistant director of Family and Social Policies in Hakkari in 2014 and he still works there. He likes travelling, reading books, listening to music and doing sports.

Appendix 2: Expressions Regarding the Weddings of Hakkari in Turkish, Kurdish and English

Turkish	Kurdish	English
Adet / görenek	Bastan, tore	Tradition
Başlık	Qelen, next	Bride price, bride token
Beşik kertmesi	niqirkirî	Betrothed in the cradle
Çeyiz	Mala bavanî, cêz	Trousseau
Damat	Zava	Groom
Davetli	Vexwendî,	Invitee
Davetiye	Vexwendname	Invitation card
Duvak	Xelî	Bridal veil
Düğün	Dawet, dilan	Wedding
Düğün alayı	Xêlîvan	Wedding procession
Düğün ziyafeti	Bezm	Wedding feast
Evlenmek	Zewicîn	Marry / get married
Gelenek	Kevneşop, bastan	Custom
Gelin	Bûk	Bride
Gelinlik	hêrama bûkê, bûkanî	Wedding gown
Gelin getirmek	Guhêztin	Fetching the bride
Giysi	Cilûberg	Garment
Halay	Govend	Anatolian folk dance
Haberci	Qasid	Forerunner
Hediye	Xelat	Gift, present
Nedime	Berbûk	Bridesmaid
Kına	Hene, xene	Henna
Kız kaçırma	Keç / qîz revandin	Abduction
Misafir	Mêvan, mîvan	Guest
Nişan yüzüğü	Gustîla nîşanê	Engagement ring
Nişanlanma	Bidestgirtî bûn	Engagement
Oynamak	Reqisîn	Play
Sağdıç	Birazava, destbirak	Best man
Söz kesme	Desteser	Betrothal
Tepsi	Sênî	Tray