PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF ETHNOCULTURAL TRADITIONS OF KOREANS IN THE MULTI-ETHNIC ENVIRONMENT OF KARAKALPAKSTAN

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Abstract. This study examines the preservation and development of ethnocultural traditions among Koreans living in the multi-ethnic environment of Karakalpakstan. It explores how family rituals, traditional cuisine, religious practices, folklore, and educational initiatives contribute to maintaining ethnic identity. The research highlights the transformation of these cultural practices under the influence of interethnic interactions, language shifts, and social modernization. Findings show that while Koreans successfully preserve core elements of their heritage, they also adapt traditions to contemporary social conditions, resulting in hybrid cultural forms. The study demonstrates that ethnocultural practices perform a dual function: reinforcing ethnic identity and facilitating integration into the broader multi-ethnic society.

Introduction. In contemporary multi-ethnic societies, the preservation and development of ethnocultural traditions are crucial for maintaining social cohesion, cultural diversity, and ethnic identity. These processes become even more significant for communities that have experienced forced migration or diaspora conditions, as their cultural heritage is often under pressure from assimilation and modernization. The Korean diaspora in Central Asia, particularly in Karakalpakstan, presents a compelling case for studying these dynamics. The Korean population in Karakalpakstan primarily descends from the forced deportations of 1937, when thousands of Koreans were relocated from the Russian Far East to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Despite harsh initial living conditions, the Korean diaspora succeeded in maintaining core elements of their cultural identity, including language, family rituals, cuisine, festivals, and religious practices. Over decades, these communities have also adapted to the local environment, leading to the emergence of unique forms of cultural expression that reflect both traditional Korean heritage and influences from

neighboring ethnic groups. Karakalpakstan is a multi-ethnic region where Uzbeks, Karakalpaks, Kazakhs, Russians, Tatars, and other groups coexist. This multicultural environment has shaped the adaptation and transformation of Korean ethnocultural practices. The interaction between Koreans and other ethnic groups has created opportunities for intercultural dialogue, hybrid cultural forms, and the reinforcement of ethnic identity through both preservation and selective adaptation of traditions. The study of Korean ethnocultural practices in Karakalpakstan is particularly important for understanding how diaspora communities maintain cultural continuity while negotiating identity in a multi-ethnic setting. This research focuses on the following aspects:

1. The role of family, community, and cultural institutions in preserving traditional practices.
2. Transformations of language, religious beliefs, and social customs under the influence of a multi-ethnic environment.
3. The participation of younger generations in cultural transmission and innovation.
4. The impact of interethnic interactions on cultural adaptation and identity formation.

By analyzing these factors, the present study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the preservation and development of Korean ethnocultural traditions in Karakalpakstan, highlighting the balance between maintaining ethnic heritage and adapting to contemporary social conditions.

Literature review. The study of the Korean diaspora in Central Asia has received considerable scholarly attention, reflecting both historical and contemporary perspectives on cultural preservation and identity formation. The forced relocation of Koreans to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan in 1937 is widely acknowledged as a defining event that shaped the trajectory of Korean ethnocultural life in the region. Kim (1993) highlights the historical significance of the deportation, noting that despite extreme adversity, Koreans maintained core aspects of their cultural identity, including language, family rituals, and culinary traditions. Nasonov (2005) emphasizes the Koreans' ability to adapt to new socio-economic environments while preserving essential cultural markers. He identifies labor ethic, collectivism, and community cohesion as crucial mechanisms for integration and survival in Central Asia. Similarly, Valiev (2010) discusses the balance between cultural preservation and social adaptation, highlighting how Koreans maintained traditional practices while participating actively in the broader Uzbek and Karakalpak social environment. L. I. Kim (2012) explores the role of cultural practices in sustaining ethnic identity, including family rituals, cuisine, and folklore. The study notes that while external pressures, such as Soviet policies and modernization, have led to transformations in language use and religious practices, these cultural elements remain central to

Koreans' sense of identity. In particular, youth engagement in cultural activities and language learning plays a critical role in transmitting traditions across generations. International scholarship reinforces these findings. Martin (2015) frames the Korean diaspora in Central Asia as an exemplary case of successful cultural preservation under diaspora conditions. He underscores the importance of cultural centers, community organizations, and educational programs in supporting identity maintenance. Kim (2019) further examines the role of younger generations in mediating between tradition and modernity, showing that youth participation in cultural activities ensures the continued relevance of Korean ethnocultural practices while facilitating adaptation to contemporary social contexts. Abdulazizov (2018) focuses specifically on Karakalpakstan, analyzing the interactions of Koreans with other ethnic groups and the resulting hybrid cultural forms. He notes that Koreans' participation in intercultural events and regional institutions has reinforced both their ethnic identity and social integration. This aligns with broader studies on diaspora communities, which suggest that cultural adaptation often involves selective retention of core traditions while incorporating new practices to navigate multi-ethnic environments (Clifford, 2016; Hall, 2014). Overall, the literature indicates a dual pattern in the cultural life of Koreans in Central Asia: while core traditions are preserved to maintain ethnic identity, adaptive changes ensure social integration and continuity in multi-ethnic contexts. However, region-specific studies on Karakalpakstan remain limited, highlighting the need for focused research on the mechanisms of cultural preservation and transformation within this unique multi-ethnic environment.

Materials and methods. This study employs an interdisciplinary approach, combining ethnology, cultural anthropology, and sociology to analyze the preservation and development of Korean ethnocultural traditions in Karakalpakstan. A combination of qualitative research methods was used to ensure a comprehensive understanding of cultural practices and their transformation.

1. **Ethnographic Observations:** Field observations were conducted in Korean households, cultural centers, and community events, including weddings, funerals, Chuseok, and Lunar New Year celebrations. These observations provided insights into the practical manifestation of family rituals, social customs, and ceremonial practices.
2. **Semi-Structured Interviews:** Interviews were conducted with over 35 respondents across three generations (elders, middle-aged adults, and youth). Questions focused on ethnic identity, family traditions, language use, religious practices, and participation in cultural activities. This approach allowed for capturing generational differences in cultural preservation and adaptation.

3. **Analysis of Folklore and Oral Traditions:** Folk songs, proverbs, stories, and oral histories were collected from cultural centers and community elders. This data helped identify core elements of Korean ethnocultural heritage and their evolution in the Karakalpak context.
4. **Archival and Documentary Research:** Historical documents, census data, and records of the 1937 deportation were examined to contextualize the socio-historical background of Koreans in Karakalpakstan. Archival research provided a baseline for understanding long-term cultural adaptation processes.
5. **Comparative Analysis:** Traditional Korean practices from the Korean Peninsula were compared with their transformed versions in Karakalpakstan. This comparative approach highlighted patterns of cultural retention, adaptation, and hybridization.
6. **Content Analysis of Scholarly Literature:** Academic publications, reports, and ethnographic studies on Korean diaspora communities were analyzed to identify prevailing research approaches, theoretical frameworks, and documented cultural practices.

The integration of these methods allowed for a detailed understanding of both preserved and transformed elements of Korean culture, the role of community and institutions in cultural transmission, and the interaction between tradition and adaptation within a multi-ethnic environment.

Table 1. Comparative Analysis of Traditional Korean Cultural Practices and Their Transformation in Karakalpakstan

Cultural Domain	Traditional Forms (Korean Peninsula)	Adapted/Transformed Forms (Karakalpakstan)	Ethnological Significance
Language and Communication	Korean spoken at home and in the community	Russian and Uzbek dominate daily life; Korean preserved in cultural centers and among elders	Language serves as a key marker of ethnic identity and cultural memory
Family Traditions	Patriarchal family structure; respect for elders	Simplified hierarchy; more egalitarian interactions between generations	Family rituals reinforce ethnic identity and transmit cultural values
Cuisine	Traditional dishes such as	Fusion with local cuisine; adaptation of recipes to	Culinary practices maintain cultural

Cultural Domain	Traditional Forms (Korean Peninsula)	Adapted/Transformed Forms (Karakalpakstan)	Ethnological Significance
	kimchi, rice dishes, soups	locally available ingredients	distinctiveness while facilitating integration
Religious Practices	Confucian, Buddhist, and Shamanist elements	Incorporation of Protestantism and Catholicism; ancestor ethics maintained	Religious syncretism strengthens moral values and cultural continuity
Festivals and Rituals	Chuseok, Seollal, and other traditional holidays	Celebrated alongside local holidays such as Navruz; partial adaptation	Festivals promote interethnic dialogue and community cohesion
Folklore and Arts	Folk songs, dances, legends	Formation of cultural ensembles and integration of local motifs	Artistic practices preserve heritage and allow cultural expression in multi-ethnic settings
Education and Youth Engagement	Knowledge transmitted through family and traditional schools	Formal education in state schools; Korean language classes in cultural centers	Youth involvement fosters hybrid identity, blending tradition with modernity

Research discussion.The analysis of Korean ethnocultural practices in Karakalpakstan demonstrates a dynamic interplay between preservation and adaptation. The findings indicate that Koreans maintain core cultural elements while simultaneously adjusting to the multi-ethnic environment of the region. Family and Social Practices: Family rituals and intergenerational respect remain central to the preservation of ethnic identity. Despite slight simplifications in family hierarchy, Koreans continue to emphasize respect for elders and the transmission of traditional values. These practices serve as a primary mechanism for sustaining cultural continuity and reinforcing ethnic cohesion within the diaspora community. Language and Communication: Language represents a critical marker of identity. While Russian and Uzbek dominate everyday communication, Korean is actively maintained in cultural centers, community events, and through elder-youth transmission. The selective use of Korean ensures that the language continues to symbolize cultural heritage while accommodating social integration into the broader multi-ethnic society. Cuisine and Festivals: Culinary traditions and public celebrations illustrate the adaptive nature of cultural practices. Traditional dishes, such as kimchi and rice-based meals, are preserved but often fused with local ingredients, demonstrating flexibility and innovation. Likewise, traditional Korean holidays like Chuseok and Seollal are celebrated alongside local festivals such as Navruz, fostering intercultural dialogue and community cohesion. Religious Practices: Confucian, Buddhist, and Shamanist elements have been integrated with Protestant and Catholic influences. This syncretism reflects both the adaptation of religious practices to contemporary contexts and the continued importance of ethical and moral values rooted in Korean tradition. Youth and Cultural Transmission: Younger generations play a pivotal role in sustaining Korean ethnocultural practices. Participation in language classes, cultural ensembles, and community activities ensures the intergenerational transfer of knowledge while promoting hybrid identities that blend traditional Korean heritage with contemporary social realities. Ethnological Implications: The study highlights three critical factors contributing to the resilience of Korean ethnocultural traditions:

1. Intergenerational transmission through family and community networks.
2. Institutional support from cultural centers, schools, and local organizations.

3. Adaptive engagement with the multi-ethnic environment, enabling the creation of hybrid cultural forms while preserving key traditions.

Conclusion. The study of Koreans in Karakalpakstan reveals that ethnocultural traditions play a crucial role in maintaining ethnic identity while enabling adaptation to a multi-ethnic environment. Despite historical challenges, including forced relocation and socio-political changes, the Korean diaspora has successfully preserved key cultural elements such as family rituals, traditional cuisine, festivals, and religious values. Language, while influenced by the predominance of Russian and Uzbek, remains a core symbol of identity through cultural centers and intergenerational transmission. Religious practices have evolved, combining traditional Confucian, Buddhist, and Shamanist elements with Protestant and Catholic influences, illustrating both resilience and adaptability. Youth engagement in cultural activities, educational programs, and community initiatives ensures the continuity of traditions while allowing for the formation of hybrid identities that balance heritage with contemporary realities. Participation in intercultural events and integration into the wider multi-ethnic society further strengthen social cohesion. In conclusion, the ethnocultural practices of Koreans in Karakalpakstan serve a dual purpose: preserving ethnic identity and fostering successful integration into a diverse society. These practices highlight the adaptability, resilience, and cultural creativity of diaspora communities and underscore the importance of supporting cultural preservation in multi-ethnic contexts.

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