Uyghur Marriage in Kashgar. Muslim Marriage in China

Dissertation

zur Erlangung des Grades eines Doktors der Anthropogeographie
am Fachbereich Geowissenschaften
der Freien Universität Berlin

Vorgelegt von Rune Steenberg Reyhé, Berlin 2013

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Contents

List of Illustrations, Maps, Diagrams and Tables 5
Acknowledgements 8
Note on Names and Transliteration 9

I. CONSTITUTING RELATIONS IN KASHGAR 10
1 Relations 12
2 Approaches to Kinship and Marriage 22
2.1 Kinship 22
2.2 Marriage 37
2.3 Combining the theories 43
3 Situating the Study 46
3.1 Kashgar in space and time 47
3.2 Mapping marriage: Methods and reflexions 69

II. THE MARRIAGE PROCESS 75
4 Local Idioms for Marriage 77
5 A Close Reading of the Marriage Process 86
5.1 Providing an overview 90
5.2 Negotiation and preparation 96
5.3 *Toy*-celebrations 120
5.4 Building affinal relations 141

III. THE LOGIC OF CLOSE MARRIAGE AND AFFINITY 160
6 Across-Relations 162
6.1 Close marriage 164
6.2 Affinity 174
6.3 Marriage prestations 185
6.4 Marriage produces social units 192
7 The Social Implications of Close Marriage 199
7.1 Kinship terms and "relatives" 199
7.2 The conditions of possibility for serial monogamy 212
7.3 Marriage ideals and less ideal marriages 220

IV. CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS OF WEDDINGS IN KASHGAR 229
8 Restaurant Weddings 233
9 Piously Oriented Weddings 248
9.1 Imagining community 249
9.2 Religious influences change the wedding ceremony 258

V. KINSHIP IN KASHGAR 266
10 Conceptualisations of Kinship 267
10.1 Genealogical kinship (kin) 268
10.2 Non-genealogical kinship (relatives) 273
11 Kinship as a Historical Product 280
12 Main Points of the Thesis 290

Glossary 294

Bibliography 302

Deutsche Zusammenfassung der Arbeit 320

List of Illustrations, Maps, Diagrams, and Tables

Fig. 1 Map of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and neighbouring states and provinces 49

Fig. 2 Map of the Kashgar region. Map showing the environmental setting of Kashgar and surroundings 56

Fig. 3 Map of Kashgar and surrounding towns and villages 57

Fig. 4 Contemporary Map of Kashgar City with important place names added 61

Fig. 5 Map of Kashgar city drawn by Lt. Kirilow in 1900 66

Fig. 6 Map of Kashgar city drawn by Ct. A. R. T. Shuttleworth in 1908 66

Fig. 7 Map of Kashgar city in the 1960s, by the XUAR Map Compilation Committee 67

Fig. 8 Map of Kashgar city in the 1990s, by the XUAR Cartographic Bureau 68

Fig. 9 Map of the demolition of old neighbourhoods in Kashgar by 2011 69

Fig. 10 Illustration of a marriage process in contemporary Kashgar in pictograms 94-95

Fig. 11 Asking for the girl (*qiz sorash*; a part of the marriage process) 100

Fig. 12 Negotiations (*toyni békitish, chay épbérish*; a part of the marriage process) 103

Fig. 13 Giving bride wealth (*toyluq apirish*; a part of the marriage process) 105

Fig. 14 Written invitation for the early morning communal wedding meal (*toy neziri*) from Kashgar 2013 112

Fig. 15 Written invitation for the early morning communal wedding meal (*toy neziri*) from Kashgar 2011 113

Fig. 16 Two invitations to the same wedding, for a mother and her daughter respectively, stapled onto each other; from Kashgar 2013 114

Fig. 17 Written invitation for the young men's celebration from Kashgar 2013 116

Fig. 18 Bringing the ingredients (*ashsüyi élip bérish*; a part of the marriage process) 118

Fig. 19 The early morning communal wedding meal (*toy neziri*; a part of the marriage process) 120

Fig. 20 The religious wedding ceremony (*nikah oqush*; a part of the marriage process) 128

Fig. 21 Waiting on the women (*ayallarning toy chéyi*; a part of the marriage process) 133

Fig. 22 Transferring the bride 1 (*qizni yötkesh 1*; a part of the marriage process) 135

Fig. 23 Transferring the bride 2 (*qizni yötkesh 2*; a part of the marriage process) 138

Fig. 24 Transferring the bride 3 (*qizni yötkesh 3*; a part of the marriage process) 140

Fig. 25 Blocking the door (*ishik taqiwaldi*; a part of the marriage process) 141

Fig. 26 The *way béshim*-ceremony (a part of the marriage process) 143

Fig. 27 The wedding night (*nikah kechisi*; a part of the marriage process) 144

Fig. 28 Breakfast and guesting at the groom's side on the weddings second day (*nashtiliq*; a part of the marriage process) 145

Fig. 29 Lifting the veil (*yüz échish*; a part of the marriage process) 147

Fig. 30 Skirmish (*tartishmaq*; a part of the marriage process) 148

Fig. 31 Bowing (*tazim*; a part of the marriage process) 153

Fig. 32 First visits after the wedding (*onbeshkünlük, chillaq*; a part of the marriage 154

process)

Fig. 33 Posters presenting the stipulations for marriage registration at the entrance of the Kashgar City Marriage Registration Service Centre on Semen Road 170

Fig. 34 An idealised illustration of the change of exchange relations between the two sides as the marriage process progresses, exemplified in women's exchange of *dastixan* 187

Fig. 35 The structure of an 'Eskimo'-type kinship terminology 203

Fig. 36 The structure of a 'Hawaiian' type kinship terminology 203

Fig. 37 The official standard genealogically rendered kinship reference terminology and genealogical definition of relatives as kin in a genealogical chart 205

Fig. 38 The practical reference kinship terminology as used most in Kashgar. 206

Fig. 39 Important pairs of kinship terms as given in the official standard reference terminology in Kashgar 210

Fig. 40 Important pairs of kinship terms as mostly used in the practical reference terminology in Kashgar 210

Fig. 41 Variations of pairs of kinship terms applied in address and practical reference terminology among distant relatives and non-relatives 211

Fig. 42 Two conceptualisations of kinship in Kashgar: genealogically based and non-genealogically based 281

Tab. 1 Table of the events and participants of an *oghul toy* celebrated completely at home 237

Tab. 2 Table of the events and participants of an *oghul toy* partially celebrated in restaurants, with markings of the significant changes when compared to the *toy* celebrated at home shown in Tab. 1 240

Acknowledgements

My primary thanks goes to my son Solan for his invaluable support, love, patience and participation. The same goes for my parents and brothers whose support has likewise been a prerequisite for finishing the thesis.

The second largest factor enabling this work has been the hospitality, acceptance and help given to me by so many people in Kashgar and Atush to whom I am much indebted and whose kindness and courage I cannot stress enough.

I am grateful to Saskia Schäfer for her competent and uplifting support both professionally and personally. Thanks also to Sabine Hanisch, Till Jesinghaus, Ablet Semet, Nijat Hushur, Linus Strothmann and Zheng Chuyang for their longterm active participation in my working process as sparring partners, advisors, proof readers and friends.

I am greatly indebted to Hermann Kreutzmann for providing me with a very supportive institutional frame and for feeding me with old maps and reports. Much cherished professional guidance has also come from Ildikó Bellér-Hann, Rahile Dawut, Ilham Tahir, Klaus Hesse, Jeanne Berrenberg, Ingrid Pfluger-Schindlbeck, Georg Pfeffer, Esed Sulayman and Ingeborg Baldauf who have all patiently heard, read and commented on my work in progress. Important advice has further been provided by Anthony Huber, Zhang Haiyang, Sugawara Jun, Shinmen Yasushi, Birgit Schlüter, Matthias Schmidt.

In the final phase of the work further great help was provided by Benedikt Pontzen, Miriam Bentler, Usman Shah, Felix Koch, Tore Steenberg Reyhé and Seema Sanghi.

A big thanks also to Yu Yamamoto, Mette Gabler, Tina Rumpel, Maynur Shatanabieke, Ulan Shamshiev, Nazira Alembayeva, Ayysima Mirsultan, Alessandro Rippa, Alessandra Cappelletti, Jochen Hoffmann, Andy Bauer, Till Grallert, Elinor Morack, Michael Friederich, Zeynep Aydogan, Dauda Abubakar, Syafiq Hasyim, Anna-Luise Kraayvanger, Mahabat Sadyrbek, Tommaso Trevisani, Christiane Milian Escobar, Torben Hansen, Mirsultan Osmanov and many others for their help and support.

This dissertation project was primarily financed by the Elsa-Neumann Stiftung (formerly NaFöG, Berlin) and the Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies (financed by the DFG), who also provided a good infrastructure for the working process. Further financing was provided by the Dahlem Research School (DRS) and the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD). I was gratefully given a working place at the Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies and at the Centre for Development Studies (ZELF, FU-Berlin).

Note on Names and Transliteration

Modern Uyghur is written in an Arabic-Persian script. Between 1960-1980 a latin alphabet was in use in schools and public media and in the north also cyrillic has been employed (cf. Dwyer 2005: 16-25). Several transcription systems exists for Uyghur writing, and in Xinjiang none is adhered to consistently. For Uyghur words I generally use the standard computer version of the *yénge yéziqi* or *uyghur latin yéziqi* (ULY; Uyghur latin script) transliteration, also known as *uyghur kompyuter yéziqi* (UKY; Uyghur computer script). This is used by many Uyghur intellectuals in and outside Xinjiang including the RFA homepage and as found in the textbook *Éling-Éling* by Aysima Mirsultan and Jun Sugawara (2007, cf. Gaines 2010). This means that I use e/é[1] instead of ä/e, that I use ü and ö instead of ue (or v) and oe, differentiate between k/q and h/x and use sh for ش, ch for چ and gh for غ. This transcription also corresponds to that recommended by the XUAR Peoples' Language and Letters Committee (2008).

I use the same transliteration for local names and authors names with some exceptions. In the case of city names well established in English language use I choose the established spelling: I spell Kashgar instead of Qeshqer and Hotan instead of Xoten. Uyghur author's names I transliterate according to the UKY version of *yéngi yéziqi* unless the publications are in English, in which case I use the name given in the publication. The same is true for my writing of Uyghur names generally. Since surnames are little used among most Uyghurs in Kashgar and all local authors cited are known by readers primarily by their first name, and since the names in the publications are given fully and cited without any stress of the surname I also cite the names in this way in the text and in the bibliography. Exceptions to this rule are once again foreign language publications (English or Japanese) where I follow the international system of citing surnames.

For Chinese I use the standard *pin-yin* transliteration as taught in almost all newer textbooks.

1 In 2008 the XUAR Peoples' Language and Letters Committee changed their recommendation for the letter ē from é to ë. Out of convenience use the older é.

I. Constituting Relations in Kashgar

This thesis aims to unravel some of the logics of close social relations among Uyghurs in Kashgar, the westernmost oasis city of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in northwestern China. What social relations consist of and what concepts and institutions they draw upon in a particular social setting is much more difficult to assess than merely recognising their importance. Anthropology offers a range of analytical approaches to grasp and treat social relations. Among these, theories of kinship and relatedness are of special relevance to the setting of Kashgar approached in this thesis. These theories have to be carefully questioned for their implications, connotations and applicability and further adapted to the social context in question. In this thesis, an eclectic but careful use of analytical vocabulary from kinship and relatedness theory provides insights into important aspects of the local practices of constructing social relations. With the empirical focus on marriage and weddings, the interest lies on how close social relations are practiced and conceptualised. Looking at Uyghur marriage in Kashgar from a kinship anthropological perspective, I hope to contribute to a deeper understanding of the creation of social relations, relevant for many of the existing discussions on the Uyghurs and Xinjiang. I thus follow the works of Ildiko Bellér-Hann and others to provide a historically informed anthropological rendering of some of the concepts and institutions most central to the everyday lives of Uyghurs in Xinjiang (Bellér-Hann 2010: 252). Yet, at the same time, I aim to add a further depth to texts on Uyghurs in Xinijang that mention 'social networks,' 'kinship' or 'personal connections' by showing some of the local content circumscribed by these vague terms. Therefore, the starting point of this thesis is the following question: How does marriage contribute to constituting social units and social relations? Following this question, I will look closely at local practice — especially centred on the marriage process — and identify some of the central concepts behind it. In other words: this thesis *looks at* marriage and weddings in Kashgar, while *looking for* local conceptualisations of social relations. At the same time, this work is also the attempt at a thick description, a thematically weighted ethnography of Kashgar, describing a central institution of daily life in this Central Asian and west Chinese oasis town. It aims to add another descriptive chapter to Uyghur studies modeled on the rare ethnographic descriptions of Rudelson (1997), Hoppe (1998), Clark (1999), Cesaro (2002), Wang (2004), Bellér-Hann (1999, 2001, 2008a) and Dautcher (2009).

Wedding celebrations and other steps in the marriage process are important elements in the construction of communities and networks in Kashgar (cf. Bellér-Hann 2008a: 244, 247, 250, 278). The detailed description of the marriage process gives a good insight into many practices, values and conditions of social life. Marriage and relations of affinity are also central to the construction of social units and mutual dependencies on a smaller scale. It is the local ideal for affines to be central relatives and close marriage is a much used strategy to enable close affinal relations. Several conceptualisations of kinship exist in Kashgar, owing to various influences and relevant to different aspects of social life. For the question of social units, i.e. pertaining to social, economic and political organisation, performative notions of kinship, that are created and upheld through gift giving as well as through terminological, spatial and bodily practices, are central.

Affinal giving is one important way of creating relatives.

The situation found today and analysed in this thesis is changing while I write. The city of Kashgar is being re-structured and both state modernist and new religious practices and ideas influence marriage and kinship. This is not new to the region, which has historically been an amalgam of various influences brought along the net of silkroads (cf. Kreutzmann 2007: 373) crossing the area. Kinship and marriage, as I describe them in this thesis are the outcome of historical processes in which they have been shaped vis à vis shifting economic, political and not least religious conditions. While not being centrally concerned with the historical developments, this thesis fully recognises the historicity of the social phenomena described. Policy, state institutions and structures of kinship are not oppositions but deeply intertwined and mutually influential. Today the wedding ceremonies in Kashgar are experiencing both modern and religious influences. The weddings provide an insight into current social phenomena and changes, but being as important as they are, weddings also play an active role in these processes. If we look closely at some of the local variants of the marriage process and of weddings, an archaeology of historical phases and influences becomes detectable in the different layers of contemporary marriage customs.

This thesis is based on research conducted between October 2009 and September 2013, including 18 months of fieldwork in Kashgar, Atush and Ürümchi, plus shorter parts in Beijing, Shandong, Hong Kong and Kyrgyzstan between 2010-2013. During this time, participant observation with its many deep conversations and active attendance at weddings and other marriage related events made up the core method. An extended analysis of local Uyghur literature on kinship and marriage has been undertaken to supply the fieldwork data, as have analyses of wedding videos and written wedding invitations. The analyses presented in this thesis combine situational analysis with more structural analysis. Kinship practice in Kashgar can be fruitfully approached combining analytical tools from both the new kinship studies and more classical approaches like descent theory and alliance theory. I agree with Hardenberg (2009: 64), Peffer (2005) and others that the dichotomy of old and new kinship studies is obsolete and that the latter should build upon the former to critique and transcend it, without disregarding its still useful analytical categories.

Describing social relations in Kashgar in a kinship anthropological perspective, starting out from the role of marriage in constituting social units, involves a range of interrelated topics, well known to kinship anthropology and important in a local perception. Some of the most important amongst these are kinship, affinity, giving, gender, marriage and weddings. The following chapter gives an introduction into these topics within the context of my fieldwork.

1 Relations

"The notion of an 'economy of favors' is especially prominent in sociological writings that discuss cronyism, social capital, and corruption. The cake is cut up in different ways, but one idea is common to this entire literature—that these informal ways of conducting economic activity are done through 'personal connections' that somehow naturally give rise to favors. Yet curiously, *what such personal connections consist in* receives considerably less attention than the fact of their existence. Generally it is regarded as enough to *describe them as 'kinship and friendship' and leave it at that*. As anthropologists know, however, these two categories are not unproblematic, and even if they are accepted at face value, kinship and friendship differ from one another in many ways and both include much internal variation."

Humphrey 2012: 23 (emphasis added, R.S.)

Looking at close social relations is a complex and particular topic anywhere, as the wide range of studies of and analytical approaches to kinship attest to. Kashgar poses some specific difficulties. Bellér-Hann points to the incompatibilities of classical analytical categories on the one hand and local conceptualisations on the other: "We either have to redefine our pre-existing kinship categories in a very loose sense or discard them altogether, since local practices only approximate them." (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 257) Like in the Amazonian contexts studied by Viveiros de Castro, in Uyghur Kashgar "[i]t is quite clear that […] consanguinity and affinity must mean something very different from our homonymous notions," (Viveiros de Castro 2009: 245). During my stay in Kashgar Enwer, the eldest son of my next-door neighbours told me that his elder brother (*akam*, lit. 'my elder brother') was stopping by. Having learned that 'elder brother' is a generic term for a range of different relatives, later in the evening I asked the two of them how they were related and they said that their families were from the same village. What struck me was that he had not used *aka* as a term of address, but as one of reference, talking about someone who was not present. When I asked him how many siblings (*bir tughqan*) he had, he replied more than one hundred. I never understood who exactly was included in this category and on what basis. What I did understand though, was that not just the category, but that the whole practice of categorisation worked quite differently than what I was used to. I further heard a woman refer to her father-in-law as 'my father' (*ئادام*) while talking of him in his absence — to her own father. Being a frequent guest of a farming household in rural Atush, I was instructed to call the eldest man of the household "*ئادا*" (father), not "*aka*" (elder brother), since, as they said, we were now relatives and some of his children were older than me. I had been used to calling friends and acquaintances and even strangers "brother" and "sister" in other parts of Central Asia, but using the direct lineal terms was new to me.

Viveiros de Castro reminds us: "The words may translate easily enough - perhaps - but the concepts they convey do not." (Viveiros de Castro 2009: 241). This is especially true for social contexts like Kashgar in which many of the concepts are not so different from many known to us across Eurasia, including my own Central European notions of kinship. More of a conceptual

slide than a reversal is required. Kashgar offers social contexts whose important local concepts "do not present themselves as candidates for inversion" of our own Western notions (Strathern 1988b: 92). This thesis aims to take up Bellér-Hann's challenge of adapting the analytical vocabulary and models to better accommodate the description and analysis of Uyghur kinship in Southwest Xinjiang. Central to this endeavor is to include those aspects of social relations that are of special importance in Kashgar, such as the local conceptualizations of giving, kinship, closeness, affinity and marriage. Yet, focusing on topics well known in classical kinship studies does not amount to treating these areas as closed, isolated systems. On the contrary, my motivation for focusing on the logics behind gifting and marriage is precisely that they are relevant for so many other areas of society and of social studies. My main concern is to explore how social relations are created, constructed, re-presented, reproduced and constituted on a local microlevel.

Gendered gifts

When I set out for Kashgar for my first extended stay in the region, Nurijan, an Uyghur friend of mine, completely unbiased by anthropological theoretical categories, pointed to the importance of gift giving. When going to a wedding or visiting a house for the first time gifts must be brought, he said. Gifting is, he explained, something through which friendship and kinship is made and broken and gifting is an important way of social integration. He also told me how gifting could be a big nuisance, since it required time and money and entailed responsibilities and duties, or as we may add using David Graeber's idiom: debt (Graeber 2011). This is well illustrated by an example Nurijan provided from his childhood: After Nurijan's father had been promoted to a leading position within the educational department of his home town, his mother would always have good quality foodstuffs and some meters of cloth in store for the many visitors dropping by. She would quickly reciprocate the gifts offered by these visitors in an attempt to ward off their attempts to make the father indebted to them by using, what Nurijan called, the back door (*arqa ئىشىك*). This could jeopardize his neutrality in official matters, or, seen from a bureaucratic perspective, force him into corruption. His wise wife thus did her best to at least formally adhere to the local rules of reciprocity while not compromising her husbands loyalties to another system, that of state bureaucracy. This story introduces the concepts of reciprocity and of debt in connection with gifting. This is a topic that has received wide scholarly attention within anthropology (Sahlins 1972, Gregory 1982, 1994, Graeber 2011) and in studies on China (Yan 1996, Yang 1994, Kipnis 1997) though somewhat less so in Central Asian studies (Werner 1999, 2002; Petric 2002). Pertaining to the Uyghurs Bellér-Hann has skillfully demonstrated the importance of reciprocity in the construction of community and its temporary extension (Bellér-Hann 2008a, 2008b, 2010). Reciprocity and the possibilities of support and connections, but also of disappointments and strife which it entails, centrally structure the marriage process and more generally the construction of affinity and of kinship. Nurijan's perspective on gifting as a nuisance is that of an adult government employed city dweller from Ürümchi. Generally, gifting seems to become more of a game or an annoyance and less of a life necessity as the degree of integration into a wage labour market economy rises. Yet,

no-one in Kashgar lives within completely anonymised bureaucratic structures and social relations managed to some degree through gifts, influence all essential areas of life.

As I was preparing for a field trip based on participant observation, I inquired what kind of gifts would be suitable for me to bring to which occasions. My friend told me that I wouldn't have to worry about that, since gifting is mainly left to women. As I was soon to experience, this is not the whole story, but women, through their task of gift giving, do have a central position in the creation of social networks. My friend's comment also highlights what his parents' story had already suggested: In matters of gifting, debt and responsibility, it is the household rather than the individual that is generally perceived as the acting unit and as the exchange unit. An unmarried, single person will experience great institutional difficulty in his or her social dealings. This is captured in the idiom *kishi qilmaq* (to make or become a person) for 'marrying' and reflected in the wide spread practice of re-marriage of divorcees and widows or widowers: Marriage is the only way to full personhood (cf. Bellér-Hann 2008a: 236, Mauss 1975/1938, Carrithers et al. 1985).

Obligations of affinity

Weddings are the biggest community celebrations in Kashgar and they require scarce resources. While teachers from Ürümchi complained about the amount of time that goes into visiting weddings, housewives in low income households in suburban Kashgar worried if the money would suffice for all the weddings they would have to go to during that year's upcoming peak wedding season. Where they could, they contributed labour to lessen the economic burden. Weddings, the biggest among the life cycle rituals (*toy*), are main events for gift giving, events where social relations are defined. This importantly includes affinal relations, the treatment of which takes up a big part of this thesis. In a comedic sketch by one of the most popular Uyghur comedians in Xinjiang, the Kashgarian Abdukérim Abliz, some of the expectations and connotations of affinal relations and intimately connected to these, of the relations between siblings after marriage, are made visible:

A woman has bought a lottery ticket and together with her husband daydreams about how to spend the five million jackpot, if they win. They are so caught up in the dreaming that they don't notice that the woman's elder brother enters. He catches the last part of their conversation, not knowing that it is mere imagination. The woman has imaginarily "spent" all of the money but 20,000 yuan which she considers to give to her brother. He suddenly, quite unexpectedly steps forward and enters the conversation requesting twice that amount: "40,000 yuan would suffice!" He is about to build a new house, he explains, and needs to borrow some money. He had been worried, that his sister and brother-in-law may not have any cash, but now expresses his joy over their good fortunes, taking their daydreams for reality. When his brother-in-law pulls him off to the side to explain that this money actually does not exist, he immediately takes it as an attempt to conceal their wealth and promises not to tell anyone. This instance demonstrates how wealth creates social obligations among close relations. When his sister's husband insists that there really is no money her brother feels insulted and starts lecturing his brother-in-law on the duties of their relation. The values here displayed correspond well to my observations in Kashgar:

Affines are obliged to help each other since it is the ideal for them to be close relatives and this entails mutual economic support. Kinship is much defined through giving, and this aspect of relationships shows clearly when, following in the sketch, the elder brother reminds his younger brother-in-law that he also lent them money when they were building their house. In this dialogue the fragility and tension of affinal relations is clearly visible too. The elder brother in an insulted tone suggests that his sister's husband may be afraid of not getting his money back and guarantees that he will not tell anyone about their fortune. But his efforts are, of course, in vain. In the end, he turns to his sister, leaving the brother-in-law with the remark that, had it been his own brother (*öz aka*), he would have surely lent (*bérip turmaq*, lit. keep giving) it without second thoughts. This is a way of blaming his sister's husband for not fulfilling the local ideal of affines being close relatives. The wife's elder brother clearly thinks it immoral of his brother-in-law to withhold the money from him and refers to a narrative of the "own" (*öz*) siblings being the closest, lamenting the brother-in-law's inability to move beyond this existing but morally inferior way of thinking and feeling. The ideal of reciprocity between close social relations in Kashgar, which the elder brother here invokes is not one of meritoriously balanced exchange (or *ɔo ut ɔeɹ*, see Bourdieu 1996: 163-169), but rather a notion of close relations (ideally including the affines) being a potential source of resources when they are needed. It is an ideal of mutual dependency, which is expressed as a relation of kinship. The sketch functions so well in Kashgar, because within the local formalised and extremely polite communicative forms, an actual unwillingness to give would always be formulated in exactly this way, stating that one does not have what is asked for in order to avoid open conflict. Everyone can understand the brother's hurt feelings and there is no way out of the dilemma. He then asks his sister for the money, arguing that since she has won it, it is actually hers to give. This reflects the fact of many conjugal couples in Kashgar have split economies rather than shared ones. Yet, she has by now woken up from her daydream realising that she has indeed no money to give. The elder brother leaves in anger, scolding his sister for sticking with her husband instead of being loyal to her brother. This is another important theme relating marriage and social structure: A married woman in Kashgar, for a long time after the marriage, to a very large degree, remains a part of her natal family and sibling group. Her transfer into the family of her husband is a long and slow process, not something punctually achieved at the wedding (cf. Tapper 1991: 16-17). In fact, this process is never fully accomplished. Instead it is the ideal for her not to be transferred from one family to the next, but to bridge and unite the two families, making them one. In the sketch, the agitated words, that the elder brother utters while leaving, subsume the connection between giving and social relations in Kashgar, when he verbally severs their kinship links as a result of their failure to give:

A: *Towa, towa… untup qalma juma, biz ɔégen qérinɔaɹh. 'Boytaghni buzghan tul, tughqanni buzghan pul' ɔégen raɹt gepken - ɔe? Bolɔi, tughqannimu körüp qoyɔuq.*	A: Shame on you … don't forget, we are siblings (lit. of one womb). So it is true what they say: 'The widow destroys the bachelor while money destroy the relative,' isn't it? That's it, we are done as relatives.

B: …	B: …
A : *Ashu pullaringgha … pul sorimaydighan, mendin yaxshiraq 'aka'-din birni sétiwal.*	A: For that money of yours you can go out and buy a better 'brother,' one that doesn't ask for money.

Abdukérim Abliz 2011: 27-28

An exchange-focused conceptualisation of kinship and the connected expectations and tensions between affines and married siblings, and the ideal of affinal brothers to be as close as consanguine brothers expressed in this story will be a big part of the argument explored throughout this thesis. The genealogically defined kin beyond the sibling group do not play a primary role and their kinship must be practically confirmed to be of relevance, just like the relations between neighbours and friends. In general, "kinship" (*tughqandarchiliq*) is in practice defined through mutual trust and dependency in the form of giving and support in several areas, rather than through genealogy. In the constitution of social units, marriage and affinity play at least as important a role as descent. Much is invested into affinal relations and much is expected from them.

Relations

This thesis is about relations. It is about important (though not necessarily necessary, cf. Oppitz 1993) relations on two levels of abstraction. The first one is what in the tradition of British social anthropology is called social structure: the actual relations between persons and other social units and the institutions and conceptualizations connected to these. The second one is the relation between concepts and ideals on a more abstract level, and their use in practice as well as their complex relation to other parts of practice. These are the kind of relations that the Chicago School of cultural anthropology or the French structuralist and poststructuralist anthropology have been concerned with in various ways (see Bourdieu 1996: 14-23). This includes the relation between concepts of marriage, the person and afterlife. It also includes the relations between ideals and practices, as well as that between formal analysis and situational analysis and between structure, practice, context and history.

This thesis delivers a thick description of marriage in south-west Xinjiang within "the entire conceptual and socio-structural framework within which it occurs" (Barnard and Good 1984: 91) and shows how marriage contributes to shaping not just social units, but social relations in general and how it is instrumental in creating specific modes of sociality. Or phrased differently: This thesis gives an insight into some of the basic social logics in southwest Xinjiang, their complex mutual interconnections and their embeddedness in various factors of 'conditions of possibility' from the empirical starting point and perspective of marriage. Different elements and parts of the marriage process relate to creating and maintaining certain kinds of social relations. Social change can be detected in – but also influenced through - shifts in marriage practices.

I could have chosen to focus on something else and learned about similar things – this is merely an attempt at reading certain traces, as Carlo Ginzburg (1983) says, in looking for social values and conceptualisations that surely leave other traces as well. I could have blindfoldedly

been led to a different part of the elephant. Opting for marriage was a pragmatic choice but also one well-guided by anthropological theories of kinship and social and relations and more directly by Nathan Light initially and Ildiko Bellér-Hann throughout the whole process.

The main arguments of the thesis

Marriage is central in constituting the social units that extend from the household and the sibling group that protrudes from this household. Persons, households, families, neighbourhoods and various sorts of social networks are re-presented (de Coppet 1992a: 64-66) at different events in the marriage process. They in this process also go through important steps of their life cycles (all social units, not just persons have life cycles). This thesis provides a thick description of marriage practices and conceptualisations in Kashgar and shows how marriage contributes to the constitution of social units and relations. Marriage entails two central modes of production of social relations: one within each *terep* (lit. side[2]; family) of the marriage respectively and one across the two sides connected through marriage. The former corresponds to local community and existing kinship networks, the latter to affinal relations. Though these do in practice overlap, especially within the very common close marriages, they are structurally quite distinct and connote different kinds of relations. This thesis focuses on the affinal relations across the two sides but shows that they have to be situated within the broader system of close social relations of the community and networks within one side.

Conceptualisations of kinship

To understand the structural place of marriage in the production of close relatives and the constitution of social units, a closer look needs to be taken at conceptualisations of kinship and relatedness. Different conceptualizations of kinship (*tughqanchiliq*) exist in Kashgar. They each inhabit distinct, but related areas of relevance within the wider social practice. Close social relations and inclusiveness into groups is often formulated in the idiom of kinship. This is not just a matter of metaphorical uses. What is locally perceived as non-metaphorical uses of terms for kinship and kinship terms defining relatives as a heterogeneous category is not only defined by genealogy. So, relatives are not primarily genealogically prescribed, but must be produced and reconfirmed. Marriage is an important tool in doing this. Kinship practice in Kashgar is heterogeneously influenced by dissimilar conceptualizations, that can be said to contain two major strands: Descent oriented and non-descent oriented imaginaries of kinship. Descent based imagination of kinship along agnatic and cognatic lines is well known throughout the literature on the region. The other lesser known and less explicitly described one is the conceptualisation of kinship as close social relations based on gift exchange, verbal categorisation and other kinds of semantic performance, including spatial and bodily practices. Affinity is a central and important base of the latter, but it also includes kinship based upon spacial proximity and mutual trust and dependency in various ways. The importance of non-genealogical kinship is visible in

2 The *qiz terep* is the bride's side or family; the *oghul terep* is the groom's side or family. But the notion of side goes beyond that of family in its regular sense and may during the wedding include all guests or either side respectively.

the functioning of the kinship terminology, which in official standard language has the features of what is called the 'Eskimo system' of terminology, dividing cousins from siblings and uncles and aunts from parents, but in practice is used much like an adapted variant of what is called a 'Hawaiian system' of terminology including all relatives into the basic categories of siblings and parents (cf. Haller 2005: 214-215, Fox 1967: 256-260, Barnard and Spencer 2002: 720). This form of classification is even taken beyond the genealogically defined boundaries, or rather, defined primairily in a performative way. Performativity is essential to all forms of kinship, but centrally defines those kinship imaginaries not based on descent, including affinity. Affinity is a local value that is encompassed within the local conceptualisation of kinship (cf. Dumont 1983: vii, 5, 76-78). Within this conceptualisation it occupies a central but somewhat ambivalent position. Many expectations and tensions are connected to relations of affinity. It is the local ideal to overcome these tensions and fulfill the expectations inherent in the relation by making affines central close relatives. This is attempted through the long and complicated process of marriage, starting with the first negotiations between the two sides and not completed before the birth of the first few children.

The classical model of kinship systems and social structure in Central Asia, built upon descent theory and a social structure imagined as descent groups, does not work in Kashgar, where no descent oriented social units are of any structural importance. New models must be developed that view the agnatic bias as an ideology and not as a sociological description and that take into account the structural significance of marriage and affinity. Kashgar is an extreme case regarding this structural significance. Non-descent oriented understanding of kinship is crucial to understand the local practice of marriage in Kashgar, but the logic here analysed does not contradict the importance of descent or the agnatic bias in some areas of social life.

Close marriage produces social units

Various forms of close marriage are found in Kashgar. Both genealogical connections, neighbourhood and friendship or business relations are drawn upon in match making (*layiq tallash*, lit. to choose suitably) and no categorical difference is made between these (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 256-58, Hoppe 1998: 135-137). The key to understanding this logic is to recognise the centrality of affinity. Since affines are supposed to be central relatives and as so much support and giving is expected from them, one aims to chose affines who can fulfill these expectations and with whom such a close exchange and 'mutuality of being' (Sahlins 2013: 19, 62) is possible. Close marriage is therefore often a preferred strategy, whereby the closeness may be defined by different criteria and is often formulated in the idiom of kinship. Marriage, being of great importance to household strategies and the creation of social relations and social units, is rarely the first instance of exchange between the families. Instead, marriages enter into a relatively open system of exchanges and other practices creating close social relations between households and sibling groups. Accepting the child of someone as a spouse for one's own child is an honour and a confirmation of close relations while a rejection is an affront. Marriage often marks and defines the closest and most important relatives. It is the ideal for marriage to make one family out of two and for the bride to bridge the two units rather than to be transferred from one to the

other. This becomes visible when looking at the marriage prestations which are explicitly not given in exchange for the bride, but enters into the reciprocity of the two sides constructing their relations and of which much value is directed at the new household unit and the bride, being in effect a transfer of wealth from one generation to the next, rather than from one side of the marriage to the other. Marriage thus produces social units beyond the household and sibling group. Social categories and units imagined as being based on descent (clans, tribes, ethnic nations) as well as on spacial proximity and exchange (neighbourhood communities, villages, oases, regions) are well known and described throughout Central Asia and China. These factors are important in Kashgar as well, though descent categories or groups play no role in social structure. Here it also becomes very clear that marriage and affinity can provide an equal grounding for such categories and units. This is connected to the local ideal of affines having to be turned into or confirmed as close relatives, and to the widespread practice of close marriage. The ideal is not always achieved, nor always strived for. Many strategies exists that even contradict this logic. But it is of structural and central significance for how marriage and kinship are understood and practiced. The other strategies and practices of marriage all relate to this logic. It must be analytically treated as an ideal.

Close marriage and serial monogamy

The ideal of making affines close relatives and of marriage creating social units interrelates with the common local practice of close marriage and produces important conditions of possibility for the equally common phenomenon of frequent divorce and serial monogamy (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 266). The marriage process of confirming affines as close relatives is very sensitive and liable to breakdown at any time. This makes marriages that are based upon existing close links an even more sensible choice. The process of making the affines close relatives is so central to the household and family that a failure is to many not acceptable. If for some reason such intimate bonds can not be created, the marriage has failed in important respects and for many, divorce is the logical consequence. A new attempt can subsequently be started with a new family, since divorce and remarriage are accepted practices for both partners, drawing no social stigma. This makes divorce an accepted and sometimes necessary, though always regrettable, practice. This is one logic contributing to the cultural conditions of possibility for frequent divorce and serial monogamy. An importantly related element in this is also the very gradual transfer of the bride from her parental household to that of her husband in terms of rights and responsibilities. The break of communication between the two families would thus leave the bride on the side of her parents long after the wedding. This would effectively dissolve the marriage, or, to be more precise, abort the ongoing but not yet completed process of marriage.

This logic does not apply to all marriages in Kashgar. It formulates and ideal of marriage and is connected to the local ideals of affinity and kinship more generally. Such marriages do exist in Kashgar. Yet, other types of smaller and less ideal marriages also exist and provide valuable insights into the essentials of the local understanding of marriage.

Modern and piously oriented weddings

Each step in the marriage process is involved in constructing certain social relations. As

weddings and marriages change so do the relations they contribute to constituting. Currently, the choice of holding part of the wedding in a restaurant changes the relations of the household in question to its neighbours and relatives, who lose their role as co-hosts and can only contribute money to the celebration. A similar substitution of social capital for economic capital (cf. Bourdieu 1986) is caused by the dissolution of old neighbourhoods in the course of Kashgar city's state led architectural modernisation. Here families deprived of their neighbourhoods are forced to pay for labour services for their weddings. These developments are part of a more general monetisation of weddings and of social relations. This supports the development of social networks based upon balanced reciprocity and a core of close cognatic and affine relations, while de-emphasising the importance of local communities and more generalised giving (cf. Sahlins 1972: 191-210).

In recent years weddings, oriented towards a more textual Islam and a striving for piety and excluding many local customs such as music and dance, have become an issue of discussion in Kashgar. Ethno-nationalist discourses support the very elements that pious Muslims aim to remove. Connected to such piously oriented weddings is a different logic of giving at weddings. Adherents of this more textual Islam (reform Islam, cf. Waite 2007) distance themselves from giving as a means of creating social obligations and instead support an ideology of giving that is free of obligations, but instead creates religious merits (cf. Parry 1986). This logic makes possible a conceptualisation (or vision) of community, which is no longer based on mutual dependency and obligatory gifting relations, but instead on shared ideals of piety and modesty and on relations to God. The deeper influences of these religious ideas are not confined to those families actually holding piously oriented weddings. They also change the current wedding customs in Kashgar and surroundings on a broader scale. Such processes are not new, but ongoing in Kashgar including recent religiously motivated transformations.

Outline of the work

This thesis is divided into five parts which are in turn divided into two or three chapters each, adding up to a total of 12 Chapters. Part I is an introduction; Part II provides the ethnographic basis for the more structural analyses of Part III; Part IV returns to a more empirical description of current developments in wedding practices in Kashgar, while Part V draws some conclusions concerning kinship in Kashgar and its historical construction.

The following Chapters 2 and 3, in Part I, treat two related types of issues: theoretical issues and regional and local issues. Though the headings of the two subchapters suggest that they may be treated in isolation, they are of course heavily intertwined. This will become obvious in the chapters themselves. The subdivision merely places the focus of perspective from which to approach the same complex social reality respectively. In Chapter 2 some important anthropological approaches to kinship and marriage are presented and related to the ethnographic findings of this study. This includes a thematically focussed review of the literature on the Uyghurs, Xinjiang and the wider region particularly relevant for this thesis. Chapter 3 introduces the region historically and critically discusses some central categories employed in this thesis, such as 'Uyghur' and 'Xinjiang' and their analytical utility. This part concludes with methodical reflections on how the matter and context are treated analytically.

Part II provides a thick description of the marriage process, including local idioms for marriage in Chapter 4 and a detailed description of each step in the marriage and situational analyses in Chapter 5.

Part III analyses the phenomenon of close marriage in Kashgar and connects it to local ideal of affines becoming central relatives and their expression in marriage prestations in Chapter 6. This is related to local non-genealogical, performative conceptualisations of kinship, as expressed in the use of kinship terms treated in Chapter 7. This chapter further connects this structural logic of the close marriage to the phenomenon of serial monogamy and of divorce not being stigmatising. Lastly, this logic of close marriage is contextualised as one among several existing logics of marriage entailing different strategies and stressing different parts of the marriage process. Yet, though the process and logic described in the Parts II and III is far from universal to Uyghurs in Kashgar, as a local ideal, it is of structural significance to the local conceptualisation and practice of marriage. These two chapters provide a somewhat formal analysis of kinship practice in Kashgar including classical topics like marriage rules, marriage prestations and kinship terminology.

Part IV turns to the aspect of historical changes and explores two contemporary phenomenon related to weddings and their effect of the local construction of close social relations. They are: 1) weddings partly held in restaurants, discussed in Chapter 8; and 2) weddings aimed at being closer the the Sunnah and at putting the display of piety over local ideals of reciprocity, discussed in Chapter 9. In the light of the latter, several religiously inspired influences detectable as traces in contemporary marriage practice in Kashgar are accounted for.

Part V summarises many of the above findings. The different conceptualisations of kinship in Kashgar are drawn up and some of their logics and areas of relevance are identified in Chapter 10. Then this complex web of kinship concepts and practices is put into a historical perspective, seeing todays findings as the 'product in flux' of passed and ongoing historical transformations. This draws on historical fragments and connections becoming obvious by comparing historical sources and my contemporary field material. Chapter 12 provides a short summary of the findings and main points of this thesis.

2 Approaches to Kinship and Marriage

"If one could picture to oneself a person like Kant among the old Maoris—which indeed is difficult—one should not be surprised if to the fundamental categories of knowledge, time and space, he had added kinship." (Prytz-Johansen 1954: 9)

"The original sin of anthropology was to divide the world into civilized and savage. The social systems of all those other peoples supposedly rested upon a foundation of blood relationships. Anthropologists therefore became at once the experts on the primitive and on kinship. In the 1970s Western kinship systems began to undergo radical change. Simultaneously, the old orthodoxies about kinship crumbled in anthropology. Young ethnographers generally lost interest in the topic. Kinship systems have nevertheless not gone away, out there in the world. But to understand them we must first abandon the opposition between the modern and the traditional, the West and the Rest." (Kuper 2008: 717)

2.1 Kinship

Relations understood and lived on the basis of a certain understanding of something loosely translatable into the English terms "kinship" are crucial to most people in the world – probably including most of us readers. This goes even more so for social contexts in which an area possibly called "kinship," "family," "privacy" or "personal relations" has not widely (in dominant public discourse and ideology) been isolated and disconnected from other areas constructed as "politics," "religion" or "economy," as has arguably been the case in many of the so-called "modern" contexts from which social scientists have, for a very long time, derived a great deal of their analytical tools. This ideological and discursive disconnection is to be viewed as relatively independent of, though not completely unrelated to, technological material advance[3]. In and around Kashgar — though high rise apartments, asphalt roads and a multitude of new cars may give a Western observer the contrary impression — political affiliation, place of residence, production, and consumption as well as other elements of locally lived practice cannot be separated from local notions of kinship. As Parry has shown in India, paid labour and a structural centrality of kinship are not necessarily mutually contradictory (Parry 1979). Wedding documents, required birth permits as well as cheap products on the market, not to speak of business opportunities, are all accessible mainly through social networks – and even where they are accessible otherwise, people approach them through these networks: not just utilising the network to reach a certain personal goal, but also utilizing the opportunity of this personal undertaking to reify existing social relations or create new ones.

The relevance of kinship in Kashgar

Securing jobs for one another is one of the central duties of close relatives among Uyghurs in

3 The relation between material "modernisation" and certain "modern" structures of social organisation is complex to say the least and shall only be peripherally touched upon in this thesis.

Kashgar, and it is a proud parent who can 'place' (*orunlashturush*) their children and the children's spouses in steady jobs (*muqumluq xizmet*). During my time in Kashgar I experienced many examples of relatives helping out with economically significant tasks. This was something expected and claimed of them: A young woman overburdened by her work as a nurse in the hospital had her maternal uncle find a new job for her as a school nurse in a local middle school. Similarly, an entire group of brothers and their sisters' husbands work as drivers for the same transport company transporting light building materials from Kashgar to Osh. They have all been recruited through each other. It is likewise no exception to find children of a government official working in his office after he has retired. Both a retired journalist and a retired water inspector amongst my acquaintances had their daughters 'placed' at their old working place. Several big building projects were proceeding while I was in Kashgar and I witnessed the recruitment of labour for one of the high-rise buildings. The company was from Shandong, the home province of the then Governor of Xinjiang, Wang Lequan. Hired Uyghur senior workers (*xizmetchi*)[4] under the supervision of a Han foreman were responsible for working units. They were given a certain budget to hire local workers on short or long term and to flexible conditions (*ishchi*, *emgekchi*). These recruitments were done based on rather loose social ties and showed a high fluctuation, but relatives and friends from age cohorts of one *mehelle* made up the reliable core in these arrangements. The responsibility of a work unit leader was thus often divided amongst some of his closest social contacts: a cousin, a *baja* (wife's sister's husband), a childhood friend and the neighbour of his parents.

Business and kinship

Trading (*tijaret*) in Kashgar is often done based upon close social contacts since the basis for trust generally lies not in an abstract set of rules sanctioned judicially by the state, but rather in social relations sanctioned morally by the community. If not fulfilling a contract jeopardizes close social relations along with the business connection, the contract is more likely to be fulfilled. At the same time business is a good opportunity to build up social relations. The aim here is thus not only the business, but also often the social relation in itself (cf. Alvi 1999: 285). When purchasing things on the market, traders will often show great willingness to help costumers find certain goods at other traders' stands, just as acquaintances are often eager to help in big purchases, stating that their friends will give a good price. The fear of buying overpriced goods at markets without steady prices is certainly present, but a weighty reason for this willingness is also that each trading situation holds the potential of strengthening social ties to the traders involved. Once again not the pure commodity aspect, but also a social logic figures behind these commercial transactions. The most important relations are such that draw on dependencies in several areas of life including economic, political, kinship and religious concerns, approaching the Maussian concept of 'totality' (Mauss 1990/1925: 17-18). These include, and are often symbolically expressed through, mutual help in daily life (for instance lending of tools, labour help or gifts of cooked food) and participation in celebrations and ritual events like weddings and religious holidays. Business relations may come to extend into these areas as the bonds

4 *Xizmet* means salary work and is mostly associated with working for the government, especially if the adjective *muqumluq* (stabile, steady) is added. *Ish* signifies all kinds of work or work in general, while *emgek* signifies manual labour including paied labour on a week-to-week or day-to-day basis (cf. Bellér-Hann 1998a: 13).

strengthen, but to many people it seems more safe and closer at hand to draw on existing relations for their business. Such relations may extend from a variety of bases including consanguinity and affinity, but always involve notions of mutual dependency, participation and reliability. They are often called "*tughqan*" (relatives). Such ties are by many seen as the best basis for trust in business, as in the following examples: A rich business woman from Peyzawat, 50 kilometers east of Kashgar, who wanted to set up a branch in Kashgar, hired her sister's husband and paid the couple's rent in the city. A clothes merchant from Yengisar moved to Kashgar with his family including the daughter and her husband, for whom he rented a separate apartment. The entire family worked in their shop in the bazar and ate at the parents' home every evening. The son-in-law was treated with reverence and often ate in a separate room with his friends. The owner of a store selling lightbulbs stressed the importance of finding trustworthy employees (*ishenchilik bala*) and the difficulty it poses. "If we know them or their parents well, it helps," he stated. He employs several of his cousins, his wife's brother and his sisters husband. The possibility of sanctions was one factor, he stated. But the closeness also had a reverse effect, since they would expect more leniency and generosity from him as a relative than strictly as an employer. The crucial advantage he saw in employing relatives was their identification with the shop and the business. Seeing the business as one of their own, from the success of which eventually they themselves and their families would profit motivated them to contribute properly, he said. This depends on their trust in his success really benefitting them and their family, and thus on a felt connection of mutual obligations between them. Many employ "relatives" (*tughqan*) - often siblings, cousins, affines or people from their own town. A very successful shoe trader from rural Atush employs only affines and younger men from his home village. His younger brother who had worked with him in the beginning split off and started his own branch, employing from the same pool of young men as his brother, except for the relatives of their respective wives who also played a big role.

Work and kinship

Preference for hiring relatives shows the close interrelation of kinship and what can be defined as economy (the commercial side of it, see Gregory 1982, Rasanayagam 2002, Strathern 1985). Yet, this is only a small part of the labour obligations between relatives. Unpaid labour is one of the most important elements of close social relations, predominantly categorised as kinship or neighbourhood relations. During harvest time in the countryside, siblings' children and youth of the village circle the fields to manage the workload and the hired workforce on their uncles' or neighbours' fields. In the villages of Beshkérem, west of Kashgar, labour help units for the wheat harvest prominently include affines and neighbours. Some farmers give the young men a gift of money to thank them for their help. However, this is not agreed on beforehand but depends upon the skill of the nephew and the generosity of the uncle. A friend or relative of the same age and status would never take such money. They take part in labour circuits between equals. Such circuits also exist for house building. At the construction site of a house in Beshkerem only five of the twenty people working on it for several days were paid labourers. The rest were neighbours, friends and relatives helping out — but also counting on this institution (much more than on the direct reciprocity of this particular help) to provide them

with labour when building their own house. Looking at agriculture in Turpan in the 1990s Rudelson remarked: "Kinship practices of the Turpan Uyghur, which emphasize cooperative sharing of work, have placed them in a strong position to take advantage of the dramatic economic changes in their oasis." (Rudelson 1997: 109). He stresses the cooperation between affines (ibid.: 108). House work is as important as field work in this respect. At feasts or when many guests arrive neighbours and relatives will help with the household chores. In one rural family the wife was gone for three days for the funeral of her husbands mother's brother in the neighbouring village. During this time the neighbours, who called themselves "the real relatives" (*resmiy tughqan*), cooked for the husband and children until the wife came back. As we shall see below the term *tughqan* (relative) is polysemous and can be defined in various ways. The definition here invoked is a non-genealogical one drawing mainly on exchange and dependancy.

Social security and kinship

One of the most important tasks of relatives and other close social relations is the provision of social security. State social security is used as a supplement by a wide range of people, but it can never be relied on as insurance in situations of economic hardship. Especially in the case of illness, close relations will feel obliged to contribute money to paying the hospital bills, as I observed many times. I visited a tax official in his home who had fallen and broken his arm at work some weeks before. During my visit a group of his colleagues stopped by, asked about his health (*exwal sorash*), drank a cup of tea and left within ten minutes of their coming forcing a bundle of red 100-yuan bank notes into his healthy hand, which he accepted with the required air of reluctance. The upkeep of networks from which money can be acquired in situations of need is a central task to households in Kashgar and this monetary support is becoming increasingly important. Social relations and institutions of giving at weddings, death or illness are by many explicitly seen as social security systems. Though social relations are much strived for and talked about as a value in themselves in Kashgar, their utility as social capital and their potential transformation into other forms of capital is kept in mind (cf. Bourdieu 1986). The idiom of money lending and access to funds is used to talk about social relations, as we saw demonstrated in the sketch of Abdukérim Abliz featuring a man asking for money from his sister and brother-in-law, presenting this as his good right as a relative. But it is not the only way to formulate such relations and in many cases idioms of responsibility and love (*méhri-muhebbet*) are more suitable than those of right (*heq*) and obligation (*perz*). Money is becoming increasingly important in Kashgar, where a monetisation of both weddings and social relations is taking place, but money is still just one of several important media of exchange. Time, skill, labour, knowledge, connections as well as various objects are also central. Money, while being an increasingly important element is not the underlying "infrastructure" (in a Marxian reading) of these relations, neither in a local understanding nor as a functioning analytical model.

Kinship is, as the examples above show, an important resource in economic undertakings. Access to other state resources is also achieved through close relations designated as kinship. Getting a passport and leaving China for studies or trade in the neighbouring Central Asian republics often requires the deposit of a certain sum for security (*qapalet puli*), to guarantee (or

make more probable) the return of the outbound person. This amounts to 10,000 – 40,000 yuan. According to a government official very few people end up depositing this money though, since most of them will have good relations to someone in the right office. He exemplified the usual kinds of relations: "a brother's wife's mother, a brother's classmate - an *uruq-tughqan* (relative, cognate) or a *quda-baja* (affine)." The high frequency of affinal relations figuring in the examples is telling; it is no coincidence. As the last quote shows affines are not only frequently drawn upon in practice, but are also a central part of the local imagination of "close relatives," i.e. relations to be depended on. We will look more closely into the background of this below.

Everything touches upon kinship

The importance of social relations on a micro level is widely recognised by social scientists writing on Xinjiang and the Uyghurs. This is visible in the high frequency with which "social networks," "kinship," "local communities" and "personal relations" are used. Bellér-Hann (1998) points to the economic and livelihood relevance of social networks vis à vis reform era state institutions and markets: "In this new era of 'free markets' Uyghur peasants too continue to make use of a variety of informal relationships to assist them in getting away from poverty." (Bellér-Hann 1998: 702). She cites Pieke 1980 to assert that: "Personal relations provide an arena for social action in which actors can trade and convert the resources obtained in the bureaucratic and market spheres," (1998: 702 citing Pieke 1980). This refers to well known narratives from Soviet Central Asia, where "informal connections" and "informal markets" provided access to otherwise unobtainable goods and services and shows the strong interconnectedness of the so-called formal and informal spheres, as demonstrated by Rasanayagam in Usbekistan (Rasanayagam 2002).[5]

Clark (1999) attests a rising economic importance of personal relations and kinship since the start of the reform era in 1979. He too identifies their supplementary function to state institutions and concludes that: "Extended families ties have become even more important in this era due to the state's retreat from many of the issues that concern families. These would include health insurance, housing costs, school fees, wedding finances, and career options for young people" (Clark 1999: 1). Friederich makes a connection between family ties and economic relations across the Chinese (XUAR) and ex-Soviet Central Asian border after its gradual reopening in the 1990s (Friederich 2007: 103), and Wang describes the importance of kin for agricultural and ritual cooperation in rural Turpan (Wang 2004: 118). Wang further provides a useful connection between wider social structure and kinship in stating that: "basic social relations among the villagers are determined by their position in their families" (Wang 2004: 118). Thus inner family relations have a defining influence on the position of a person within the wider community and social setting. He also mentions "relations either as kindred or as friends" between the inhabitants of adjacent villages (Wang 2004: 114). This attests to 'kinship' as a possible idiom and conception of relations of larger groups and communities. Chen similarly describes how

5 The "informality" of these networks seems to be defined from the perspective of the state and of economic theory, rather than from a community perspective, from which they are very much primary and have their own very pronounced formality (cf. Borofsky 1987).

Uyghur students at boarding schools in mainland China "imitate family and kinship style networks," being far from home (Chen 2008: 162-163). Newby, in discerning the political loyalties of 19th century Uyghur peasants, draws on a notion of "family loyalty" among others, as opposed to "national loyalty" or "loyalty to supreme rulers" (1998: 278), and later invokes the concept of "family power" (1998: 288). Wang, in a similar way, opposes authority and status based on kinship to authority based on "local Islamic custom" (Wang 2004: 115).

Despite these references and their implicit recognition of the importance of kinship, studies explicitly on kinship in Xinjiang are fairly rare. Few works treat kinship, family and marriage specifically (Hoppe 1998: 128-137, 42-45, Rudelson 1998: 83-94, 106-108, Dautcher 2009: xiii-xiv, 11, 116-122, Wang 2004: 118-120, Bellér-Hann 1999 124-132, 2008a: 218-284). Still, kinship keeps turning up here and there in publications and connects closely to important issues such as economic networks, local allocation of state resources, ethnic imaginaries and perceived discrimination. A notion of kinship is used to explain loyalties, social connections or economic networks. But little is said on how it actually works, and the local conceptualizations and social practices connected to kinship among Uyghurs in Xinjiang are rarely discussed at any length.

Some of the contributions quoted above treat social relations and kinship as social forces that in themselves hold explanatory power. When describing aspects of social life that do not fit into the used analytical models, "kinship" is invoked as a force in itself, as quite literally in Newby's quote (Newby 1998: 288). Relations designated as "kinship" seem not to require any explanation themselves. The detailed content of such social relations, and of kinship at the heart of these, is rarely analysed, nor are the relations between kinship and other close social relations or the relation of kinship to social structure. The definition, meaning and significance of different types of relations are not treated explicitly. They are in most cases not even really reflected upon. As Humphrey has recently pointed out discussing favours in Mongolia and Russia, much is written about personal connections and much importance is given to their effects, but very little is said about what they consist of. "Generally it is regarded as enough to describe them as 'kinship and friendship' and leave it at that" (Humphrey 2012: 23).

Several interrelated reasons may be given for why kinship has hardly ever been a primary issue addressed by Western social scientists working on Xinjiang and Uyghurs: Firstly, ethnicity and politics, oppression and resistance as well as religion have, for political reasons, drawn more scholarly interest. Secondly, the political sensitivity of the region makes the necessary kind of fieldwork difficult to undertake. Thirdly, kinship had already "demised" (Stone 2004: 241) as a central topic in anthropology, when in the wake of Deng Xiaopeng's reform policies Xinjiang started being somewhat accessible to fieldwork by Westerners. Schneider (1968, 1984) harshly criticized the ethnocentrism implicit in the analytical models. Schneider revealed and discredited "kinship" as an analytical category based on Western imaginaries of biology and descent. This led to a massive turn away from kinship studies, until then a heart piece of anthropology (Carsten 2000: 2-4, Hardenberg 2009: 61-62, Stone 2004: 240-242, see below). Benson's, Bellér-Hann's, Rudelson's and Hoppe's work from the 1990s tellingly feature some of the best information to be found, while still not being overly concerned with the issue as such. These first

foreign anthropologists allowed to do (restricted) fieldwork in Xinjiang were trained in environments where kinship was still recognised as an important issue in anthropology and were thus familiar with many of the basic topics without regarding them as of any special interest. Bellér-Hann is the only one who has followed up on this initial work (1997, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2008a, 2008b) and focussed on concepts and conceptualisations central to daily life.

The dangers and particularities of "kinship"

The concept of "kinship" may not be uncritically applied to any given social context nor treated as a universal category. Kinship studies had long worked at distinguishing the realms of biological reproduction on the one side and the cultural particularity of any one notion of kinship on the other side, when in the late 1960s and 1970s anthropological kinship studies were attacked for their implicit assumption that something that could be called 'kinship' existed in all cultures, and that this universal notion built upon a Western biologistic and descent centered understanding of kinship. David Schneider (1965) showed how the analytical categories of anthropological kinship studies were based on Western imaginations of biology and descent. Schneider unmasked the anthropological subbranch of kinship as ethnocentric and laid the ground for its deconstruction. Similar criticisms were also phrased by Edmund Leach and Rodney Needham, who designated both kinship and marriage "odd-job words" devoid of analytical utility (Leach 1961: 105, Needham 1971: 5, 7). Needham took up some of the presumed "universal categories" and showed how attempts to define something like kinship or marriage either only applied to certain groups and cultures or alternatively became so abstract, as to be void of meaning – or at least, void of analytical usefulness. Kinship, must thus from the outset be called into question. It is by no means a proven fact that an important categorical distinction is made of what we would view as kin (affines and cognates) as opposed to other forms of social connection that would justify such a term as an analytical or descriptive category.[6] In case no local designation exists that matches this understanding (as is often, if not mostly, the case; see Sahlins 2013), either the category must be discarded or explicitly redefined to suit the purpose, thus, as Needham has pointed out, losing some (but, I dare to argue, not necessarily all) of its comparative and analytical potential.

Kinship is not biological but historical

Kinship or relatedness is, just as all other social concepts, nothing natural. Kinship is a social fact and not something biological. Seen from a social science perspective that is interested in meaning and social relations, even birth can be said to be primarily a social or cultural event and only secondarily a biological one (Sahlins 2013: 67-69). This is not to deny the obvious biological processes at work in any human action, including walking and talking. The point is, that biology does in no way determine the socio-cultural phenomenon of kinship, and may not be taken as

6 On a smaller scale but of equal importance concept like the person, household, neighbourhood community, and other social units as well as institutions like marriage and friendship must be subjected to similar critical examinations, arising out of ethnographical evidence.

primary or basic to it. Similar points have been made for eating (cf. Berger 2007: 32-46) and other presumably "natural" or biological features of human life. The closest, the "previously given" or the "ascribed" social relationships in any given social context need not be based on either biology nor on genealogy. They are often closely tied up with micro economy and local politics and their historical developments. Kinship is culturally and historically specific. I will demonstrate this in a scholarly debate on kinship in Europe, as rephrased by Jon Mathieu in an article focusing on marriage law in Switzerland (Mathieu 2007).

Mathieu recaps two views on the development of kinship in Europe (that is mainly Central Europe) between 1700 and 1900. While Gerard Delille describes kinship as becoming less important during this time of early industrialisation and modernisation, the American micro-historian Warren Sabean attests a rising importance to kinship in this period (Mathieu 2007: 212, 223-224, Sabean 1998: 428-448). Looking closer at the two arguments, it becomes clear that although the two are employing the same term, "kinship," they define it differently. Sabean draws on a more contemporary European usage of kinship pertaining to the nuclear family and its extended genealogical connections. Delille, however, starts out from an older conceptualization based upon local communities and exchange. The time frame entails an historical shift of the meaning of kinship, that the two analysts grasp from separate ends. Within this period, "kinship" in Sabean's notion came into existence, while "kinship" in Delille's understanding slowly disappeared. It is not about whether kinship as a universal phenomenon came to mean less or more, but about the definition of kinship. What kinship came to mean subsequently was strengthened, since it was itself constructed in the course of industrialisation. At the same time, what it had meant before was weakened and eventually became insignificant. Kinship is not universal and it can be defined in a multitude of ways with different emphasis placed upon the various complexly intertwined elements it consists of and touches. This is true for social and historical contexts, and it is also true for our analytical approach to the phenomenon, as the example of Delille and Sabean has shown. Similar historical shifts in conceptualisation and meaning of kinship can be observed in Xinjiang and Kashgar, as becomes apparent in parts IV and V.

Theoretical approaches to explaining social relations: Kinship, relatedness and more.

Looking at and analyzing close social relations in a local context has been the objective of kinship studies in social and cultural anthropology since the late 19th century. An impressive body of ethnographic data and various analytical approaches has been accumulated in this field. Inspired by a Western mainly genealogical and biologistic imagination of kinship (with a pronounced male bias) the early theorists were much concerned with descent (Parkin 2004: 29-33).

Descent theory

Rivers founded the 'genealogical method' to explore 'kinship systems,' a formalistic method based upon the belief that kinship is the cultural derivative of the biological facts of reproduction. Kinship terminology was inquired by asking, "who begot whom" (Barnard and Good 1984: 27, Bamford and Leach 2009: 6-8, Fischer 1996). Actual local practice and

differences in conceptualisation found little space within the early approaches. In the wake of new methods of fieldwork and a more structural theoretical outlook, a keen interest in the connection between kinship and political organisation developed (Radcliffe-Brown 1952, Radcliffe-Brown and Forde 1950, Evans-Pritchard 1940, Fortes 1953, Evans-Pritchard and Fortes 1940). Kinship, was now seen as being not just about biology, but also very much about politics. This interest was among other things supported by evolutionist and orientalist worldviews. The othering of "primitive kin based societies" against which a civilised modern self could be constructed (Kuper 2008: 717-723, Goody 1996: 163, cf. Said 1979), combined with certain ethnographical cases and local models strengthened the interest in how these areas interrelated. Descent theory suggested a political structure based on off-branching lines defined through unilineal (mostly patrilineal) descent, secondarily connected or set off against each other through relations of marriage. Politically corporate groups could branch off at any node of the genealogical tree forming opposite sides defined through relative genealogical closeness (Barnes 1962, Barth 1969, 1973 , Lindholm 1982). Descent theory, also known as segmentary lineage theory, proved a very successful model to reach at a sophisticated picture of some social contexts organised differently than Western modern societies — directly reversing some of the logics of our own (Strathern 1988b: 92). Here, politics and kinship, strictly held apart in the Western imagination of our own systems (see the system theories of Talcott-Parsons (1971), Luhmann (1997) and others), were conflated. Besides giving valuable insights into the inapplicability of models derived from one social context (industrialised Western) on another (e.g. acephalous herder communities in Central Asia or West Africa), it also allowed for an upkeep of the division of Us and Them. From a mainly African context the segmentary lineage model was exported to various other geographical and cultural settings (Barnes 1962, Strathern 1988b). For a while it served as an almost universal model of political organisation in "primitive," meaning non-Western or non-modern societies.

Alliance theory

In 1949 descent theory received a blow from which it was never to recover as a theory — though its implications survive well into today's ethnographies. With the publication of "The Elementary Structures of Kinship" (1969) Lévi-Strauss launched his structuralist method on the basis of analysing kinship systems, or more precisely, systems of intermarriage. This introduced a paradigm shift. Drawing on Mauss's concept of reciprocity Lévi-Strauss postulated the exchange of women in marriage as the basis and starting point of social interaction and further the systematisation of this exchange as the structural core of kin based societies. Lévi-Strauss explicitly turned away from the structural functionalism of Radcliffe-Brown and from decent theory to instead introduce into social anthropology a much more abstract notion of structure than had been promoted before and gave name to this way of social analysis as structuralism (c.f. Lévi-Strauss 1962, Radcliffe-Brown 1952, Ingold 2008). The intriguing part of the structuralist argument was that the units were precisely not determined by a certain essence internal to themselves. Instead, they were defined by their structural opposition to other groups, and this opposition was expressed in rules of marriage. Marriage was thus not a way to organise pre-existing groups on a secondary level, as in descent theory, but was instrumental in defining the

groups and categories against each other. Furthermore, the structural principle of categories being defined and drawn up against each other through rules and practices of marriage (exchange of women) was not limited to small scale-tribal societies, but could also apply as an organising principle to large-scale complex societies. Lévi-Strauss was especially concerned with systems of cousin marriage, which he called systems of elementary structures. The defining feature of elementary structures (as opposed to complex structures) was the existence of so called positive marriage rules, that is, marriage rules that not only exclude certain categories of kin from the group of possible marriage partners but positively define from which categories the marriage partner is to be taken. Different marriage rules and the prescription or preference of different types of cousins according to alliance theory, entail different types of reciprocity and create different systems of exchange and thus of social organisation. The theory was used and further developed by Dumont (1953, 1983), Leach (1951, 1954), Needham (1958, 1960, 1973) and others.[7] Despite the explicit rejection of descent theory, many of its basic premises still lingered at the core of the alliance model. The talk of cousins suggests genealogical links. Even when talking about classificatory[8] (and not genealogical) cousins, still the mother of a given ego must have a way to be of the same category as her brother and as her brother's daughter. Likewise ego must have a way to belong to the same category as his father. The solution is an implicit featuring of agnatic or patrilineal descent in the model. However it may be manifested in reality, it seems to be the premise of at least Lévi-Strauss' model. Thus while alliance theory broke with descent theory concerning the structural position of exchange and the constitution of categories, it was not able to completely rid itself of the yoke of descent being a central principle of social organisation. While the affines now also became relatives of a 'given' nature the consanguine and genealogical relations likewise stayed 'given,' as they had in descent theory (see Viveiros de Castro 2009: 256-259).[9]

Though basic structuralist ideas became an integral part of much social analysis, structuralist theory was attacked from many sides. It was said to be too formal and not paying enough attention to the flexible strategies of individuals, that it ignored the factor of power and treated social contexts ahistorically. Within a globalising world in rapid change the idea of static societies in equilibrium (cf. Lévi-Strauss 1962, Assmann 2000: 68-70) had lost its attractiveness. Post-structuralist and interactionalist theories stressing actors' strategical considerations made

7 For good summaries of alliance theory see Dumont (2006/1971) and Oppitz (1975).

8 A classificatory as opposed to a genealogical patrilineal cross cousin is someone who may not be ego's genealogical mother's brother's daughter in our restricted sense of these words, but who is classified as such - that is e.g. a woman of ego's generation belonging to the same social category which ego's mother grew up in and to which her brothers (or other close consanguine male relatives) belong.

9 These interactionist perspectives beside being closer to Western conceptions of the rational self-interested individual (a notion highly relevant in the Pashtun social context (cf. Barth 1969, Lindholm 1982, Tapper 1991), yet not universally so (cf. Dumont 1986, Strathern 1988a) also had the immense political advantage of dissolving the dichotomy of Us and Them: Yes, "they" do live differently and organise differently than we do, but on the basis it is not really different, since it is as negotiable and flexible as our identities and since the self interested individual driving the whole system is someone in which we can see ourselves (cf. Agyrou 1999: 31). This provided the important insight that kinship idioms and vocabulary do not in themselves entail a less flexible or more natural or primitive way of organising society. They offer different idioms than ours, but a context drawing centrally on a local notion of kinship can still include many basic social logics and concepts well known to us. The Pashtu farmer is just another New York broker. While this view entails some truth, I want to warn that at the same time the New Delhi broker may be motivated very differently than his New York counterpart and that the same may be true for a social worker or a homeless person in the Bronx.

the study of kinship systems as systems seem less fruitful. Leach (1958), Barth (1969), Kuper (1982), Parry (1979) and others demonstrated how such systems needed not be in equilibrium, but were often in flux and transformation.

The death and resurrection of kinship: New kinship and relatedness

In the late 1960's and early 1970's a number of critical works started to question the concept of kinship in itself. Schneiders work on American kinship proved a clear connection between local Western conceptions of kinship and anthropological kinship theory. The analytical notion of kinship and the basis for its comparative potential were derived from Western (European and US American) social contexts and the entire methodology and analytical vocabulary were accordingly soaked with the ethnocentrism of Euro-Americans. (Scheinder 1968). These criticisms led to a decline of kinship studies for more than two decades (Hardenberg 2009: 61-62, Stone 2004: 240-242, Carsten 2000: 2-4). Other themes gained in prominence and kinship even started to disappear from the curricula of anthropological institutes (Carsten 2000: 2). In the late 1990s kinship studies were somewhat reinvigorated. A process started, that this thesis is part of today. Kinship came back into focus, but with some changed premises. In an attempt to incorporate the critiques of the 1960s and 1970s and the postmodern traces on social science the so-called 'new kinship' studies established a stronger constructivist view of kinship (Carsten 2000: 5; 2004, Stone 2004). Building upon Schneider's critique of the classical kinship studies, the term "relatedness" was coined to enable the description and analysis of close and permanent social relations that are not necessarily based upon imaginaries of biology and descent. "Relatedness" explicitly does not presuppose the core social relations of every social community to be based upon the biological facts of natural procreation, and is as a process rather than a given state, much related to politics and economics (Carsten 2000: 13-14, but see similar points in Barnard and Good 1984: 125-160). This liberated the study of close social relations (kinship or relatedness) from its biologistic and descent based implications in a more explicit way than had been done before. It also allowed for the critique of kinship studies to have positive and productive effect on the analysis of social relations.

New kinship studies left out much of the established analytical tools and complexities to argue forcefully for seeing relatedness as a culturally constructed system of classification not centered on notions of descent. Instead notions of shared substance, co-residence, exchange and other factors were held to be at least as important to local conceptualisations and practices of close social relations formerly designated as relations of "kinship". Though this approach has been welcomed and embraced widely, there are also skeptical voices from the camp closer to classic kinship studies. The basic idea of this new approach is in fact, it is argued, not very new, and a complete disconnection of descent and procreation from kinship may also hardly be relevant to most societies studied. Kinship has, it is here argued, long been seen as a cultural system of classification and as departed from biology (Sahlins 1976, Barnard and Good 1984: 161-190). Schneider had showed how even this classical kinship distinction of biological mother (genitrix) from social mother (mater), akin to the division of gender and sex had supported the Western dichotomy of Culture and Nature. Natural distinctions are reformulated as cultural

ones but the dichotomy stays (c.f. Strathern 1985: 194-195 on a similar danger in the deconstruction of the category of "woman"). But Schneider had not succeeded in showing any sound analytical way out of this dilemma. Neither do the new kinship studies with their focus on relatedness. In addition many adherents of the new kinship studies can be said to ignore sound analytical developments and distinctions reached at before the so called "demise of kinship" (Parkin and Stone 2004: 139). The New Kinship studies in their radical disregard of the classical approaches seems to have lost many useful analytical insights and tools (Hardenberg 2009: 64), while in an analytical sense they offer little new beyond the vocabulary. Viveiros de Castro has recently criticized the relatedness approach, which he calls the constructivist model of kinship, for its sole focus on the construction (or deconstruction) of consanguine relations, ignoring affinal relations. The approach thereby in its own way reproduces the basic premises of descent theory in which consanguinity is the given and affinity is always a secondary form of kinship, not needy of explanation or in this case not needy of explication as being "constructed" (Viveiros de Castro 2009: 257-258). This was the very imbalance that Lévi-Strauss' alliance theory had debased.

From this brief and biased history of anthropological kinship studies we can extract the following for the further analytical approach to kinship in Kashgar: Not just a given person's particular relatives but also the local notion of kinship itself is a socio-cultural product touched by forces of history and politics. Kinship can provide explanations to understand certain social phenomena, but only if we understand what it entails. Kinship is itself a social phenomenon to be understood and explained. Factors of descent, affinity, co-residence, territoriality, shared substance, and ethnicity and language, may all be important factors in defining close social relationships, and indeed kinship. There is no universal formula. Any analysis must start out from local concepts, but it must also try to capture them, their use and their related practices in an analytical frame that goes beyond local idioms (Bourdieu 1976: 149-151).[10]

Approaching kinship in Kashgar

In Kashgar, the concept of "relative" (*tughqan*) provides the central local idiom for close social relations on a micro level. Chen's example of the Uyghur boarding students "imitating family and kinship networks," mentioned above, is a case in point. He describes how at a boarding school in mainland China "Uyghur students claim that they are respectively real brothers" and "[t]he claims of the "brotherhood" among Uyghur male students are so impressive that even the local Han teachers are sometimes confused. Although they are actually not blood

10 Local correspondents to the linugistic categories denoting and defining kinship must be disclosed within their own semantic fields and seen in their usage in practice. Even this does not do justice to the complexities of the matter, since explicit linguistic categories and informants' explicit assertions have a tendency to be strongly colored by various political and religious ideological frameworks, neither of which necessarily do justice to the complex social whole they refer to. They should not be adopted as a scientific analysis. We do indeed find the Uyghur language full of linguistic categories taken from Arabic, Persian and Chinese - implying certain cultural customs and conceptualizations that have not necessarily entered the cultural and social practice along with the words. The emphasis on patrilineal descent and genealogy more generally found in these languages - and subsequently in Uyghur - does not reflect social realities in Kashgar very well. Reversely some practices may have entered without the words - the sole point being that it would be naive to assume a direct correspondence.

relatives, the claim of family-like relationships proves the sense of trust and obligation in Uyghur and Kazak peer social networks" (Chen 2008: 162-163). Here the Uyghur words for brother (*aka-ini, aka-uka*) clearly imply trust and dependency and are not meant in any metaphorical way. They are just not defined genealogically. This is what confuses the Han teachers in the example and to some degree Chen himself. Epistemological caution should be taken, each time metaphorical use of kinship terms is mentioned (Barnard and Good 1984: 40): When the basis for making a distinction between 'literal' and 'metaphorical' use of kinship terms is not made explicitly clear, the assumption is generally that it is drawn along the lines of genealogy. This need not be the case, and indeed in Kashgar it often is not.

Wang recognises a connection between kinship and exchange. He aims to define relatives (*tughqan*) in local terms equating this relation with social obligations. *Tughqan* are in local terms distinguished from *yat* (non-relatives) to whom no such obligations exist (Wang 2004: 118). He subsequently narrows the obligations down to applying to *yéqin tughqan* (close relatives) whom he defines as "those within three generations bilaterily in the family line of their parents" (Wang 2004:120). Thus he unfortunately, like Chen (2008), sticks to a descent oriented definition of kinship, making the obligations a secondary resulting feature of genealogically defined close kin (*yeqin tughqan*), not a defining or constituting one (Wang 2004: 119-120). This matches older treatments of the relation between kinship and exchange, as exemplified in Sahlins concentric model of types of reciprocity corresponding to social closeness. Here too the model only worked one way: kinship obligated generalised reciprocity (Sahlins 1972: 193-194). Though the general principle was recognised, that "if friends make gifts, then gifts make friends" (Sahlins 1972: 186, 207), still the genealogical imagination of kinship was too deeply rooted to be questioned.[11]

Many descriptions of social structure and kinship among Uyghurs in Xinjiang have adhered to this imagination. They have focused much on the patrifocal extended family as a key main social unit including several nuclear families, most often a father and his married sons with wives and children. This large family can then be further extended agnatically into family groups (Wang 2004: 119) tied by descent. In the academic literature on Xinjiang the concept of kinship is mainly described as patrilineal, following the so called "bloodline". Rudelson writes about "lineages" as corresponding social units (Rudelson 1997: 108-109). Cognatic descent is recognised especially within the very important sibling sets stressing the "horizontal relations among male and female siblings" (ibid.: 108). But agnatic descent is given special structural significance: "*Uyghur kinship is* unilateral through the father" (ibid: 108, emphasis added, R.S.). And although Rudelson recognises the importance of affines (ibid.: 107-108), he does not draw the connection to sibling groups or attribute any structural significance to affinity. The importance of affinal relations and their economic relevance is mentioned in the literature on the Uyghurs and Xinjiang, but their structural relevance for kinship practice more generally is not recognised. More particularly, an á priori hierarchy structures the general view of these elements, putting descent based kinship over affine kinship, and agnatic descent over cognatic descent. While the former part of each of these pairs is attributed structural significance respectively, the latter is too often seen as a merely secondary phenomenon.

11 Sahlins later very much made up for this theoretical blunder, becoming one of the main advocates of a non-biological, cultural and flexible conception of kinship (Sahlins 2013, 1976).

The patrilineal bias in social organization may be of more relevance in the cases treated by Hoppe, Rudelson, Wang (all in the area of Turpan in east Xinjiang) and Dautcher (in Ghulja or Ili in the north of Xinjiang), than for Kashgar, Hotan and other oases in the southwest. The differences between these areas are pronounced. As shall be further discussed later, the fact that these people are all designated as "Uyghurs" does neither make their social organization nor their kinship conceptualizations identical. Rudelson mentions an important local difference in marriage customs between the northern and southern oases. Though all have tendencies towards close marriage, mainly in the form of village or oasis endogamy, and though all practice cousin marriage, patrilineal parallel cousin marriage (marriage between the children of brothers) is prohibited to Turpan Uyghurs, while it is practiced in the southern oases (Rudelson 1997: 108). The southern case recalls Middle Eastern patterns of FBD-marriage, which to Rudelson seems to indicate a similar importance of lineages. He adds that FBD-marriage is conducted "to keep the wealth within the lineage" (Rudelson 1997: 108). Not just FBD, but also all other kinds of cousin marriages are to be found in Kashgar (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 256). This indicates that in the south less differentiation is made between patrilateral and matrilateral kin. This is indeed reflected in the kinship terminology. In Kashgar, maternal and paternal uncles are not terminologically distinguished, while in some other areas of Xinjiang, such as Aqsu and parts of Ili (Ghulja), they are. In Kashgar, nothing akin to patrilineages exists. Bellér-Hann writing about the Kashgar area consequently sets a less patrilineal focus. Though she still detects an agnatic bias, maternal relatives are of great importance (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 220, 239).

Bellér-Hann takes a close look at kinship practice in written sources from before 1949. The similarities with today's practice are striking. In the late 19th and early 20th century, the conception of kinship was equally bilateral and descent did not constitute lineages. This corresponds perfectly with my findings in 2010-2013, where I did not find descent constituting social units of political or economic significance, though filiation does in form of the household and the sibling group. Genealogical imaginaries and even charts depicting family trees do exist, but they are tied to traditions of sufi brotherhoods, rich merchant families, genealogical language in Islamic texts and teachings and quite newly introduced ethno-national concepts of descent. It is telling that such pedigrees have become increasingly popular in the wake of a surge in ethno-nationalist sentiments since the 1990s (cf. Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009b, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2010). Pedigrees have no prominent place in daily practices of exchange or social organisation. Local communities in the form of neighbourhoods, often defined through a common mosque (*mehelle*) were and still are central to social organisation. The relations within such *mehelle*, deliver important social categories for the formation of groups and for the perception and categorization of self and other. The relation is often named using kinship terminology, not just in addressing someone, but also in referring to this person and the use of the attribute *tughqan* (relative) is not rare. The conduct between neighbours much resembles that of relatives as regards to greetings and other bodily signs of respect, as well as the crossing of spacial boundaries in daily life (such as entering the courtyard and crossing the house's thresholds) and the status relevant symbolic use of seating order. The same goes for many aspects of gifting and mutual help. Though a categorical differentiation between relatives and neighbours can be phrased, and in some cases is relevant, such a differentiation is tied to certain

social contexts and discourses and in other situations is deliberately not made. The closeness between households and individuals created within a closely knit *mehelle* is symbolically constructed in the same way as that of other kinship relations.

Summing up

Leach (1961), Schneider (1968, 1984) and Needham (1971) were some of the first to question the universality of kinship and thus the utility of an analytical category so named. The entire school of new kinship studies was later to be built upon these doubts, many of whose adherents initially followed Schneider in discarding the category of kinship to the benefit of a wider and explicitly non-genealogically framed notion of relatedness. They explicitly demonstrated the different conceptual ranges of concepts of relatedness and close social relations (Carsten 1997, 2000, 2004, White 2004). Why then should we concern ourselves with kinship? The answer is straight-forward: Even if something akin to "kinship" is not universal, it certainly seems to be of great relevance in Kashgar. It is central to many people's lives: to their social relations, to their economic opportunities, to their dealings with the state and to their emotional life. As Kuper puts it: "It would be a disaster if anthropologists found that they had nothing to say about matters that are so essential to most of the people we live among, to say nothing about our recent ancestors, and, perhaps, even ourselves"(Kuper: 2008: 733). Though "kinship" may have rightfully lost its universality as an analytical concept, it has not lost its relevance in Kashgar. Analytical categories may certainly be of use without being universal, and in Kashgar a local concept of social closeness does exist that may best be translated as "kinship," even though it is understood somewhat differently than in Western Europe or the United States. Still the crisis in kinship studies and maybe the representational crisis in anthropology more generally has taught us an important lesson to be taken account of: Our own concepts are poor and questionable starting points for the analysis of other modes of cognition and other social practice. So while "kinship" may be the best translation at hand, local concepts most certainly give us a better entrance into the matters of interest. Some of these (*tughqan, uruq-tughqan, qanداsh, qérinداsh*) will be elaborated on below. Here it suffices to summarize that the most common and most general word for kinship in Uyghur *tughqanداrchiliq* in its central uses covers consanguine and affinal kin as well as close neighbours and several others with whom close relations of exchange, mutual help and lasting dependency exist. The other terms can be seen as subcategories of this each carrying a certain definition and context, each connoting structural oppositions in specific uses. When in the following I write "relatives" or "kin" it is a translation for *tughqan* (grammatical derivative of *tughqanداrchiliq*) unless otherwise stated. The content of this relation in practical terms varies over a wide range of political and economical areas. The relevance of kinship to daily life of all Uyghurs in Kashgar is evident. To most people relatives are of central importance to every day life, to accessing and managing resources and to being a person. Exchange and marriage are important ways of establishing such relations.

2.2 Marriage

" 'Nikah toy' a'ile jama'etchilikining qurulushi we üzlüksiz tereqqiy qilishining, uruq-tughqanlar arisidiki ijtima'iy munasiwetning tiklinishi we kéngiyishining menbesi."

(Marraige is the source of the construction and unbroken development of the family community and of the establishment and widening of the social relations of relatives.)

(Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 128, cf. Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 104)

"*Tughqan bilen nikah-a'ile otturisida zich munasiwet bolidu*" (There is an intimate relation between kinship and marriage; Mut'ellip Hüseyn 2002: 149)

Few people probably question marriage being important or weddings being important social events, but most would be hard pressured to name exactly what makes them so important and how they interact with other social phenomena. The most mentioned phenomena connected to marriage amongst Uyghurs in Xinjiang have been close marriage, frequent divorce, serial monogamy and the creation and upholding of community. All these themes occupy prominent places in this thesis, which aims at tracing their interconnectedness and their embeddedness in the wider social context. In Kashgar, marriage belongs to the main social events at which social relations are negotiated and thereby families and communities constituted.

A difficult concept - anthropological approaches to marriage

An introduction to the concept of marriage in many ways mirrors that of the introduction to kinship: It is a culturally and historically specific concept. Categories such as marriage and wedding are problematic since they are English terms carrying a lot of culturally specific connotations besides those that they are given in explicit kinship theories or models. Though these terms may be translatable into certain languages in an almost unambiguous fashion, these concepts do not necessarily have exact local correspondents. Even when they do have very close local correspondents, the social contexts are different. Certainly no one global definition captures all phenomenon, that may be named or translated as marriage (Barnard and Good 1984: 89-91, Berrenberg 2002: 29-31), unless it is cut down to minimal features with little analytical utility, such as Pfeffer's "the connection to the other"[12] (Pfeffer 1985: 70, see Needham 1971: 5-7). Within the realm of studies on the Uyghurs and on Xinjiang, marriage is mentioned but receives little specific treatment, the exceptions being Bellér-Hann (2008a) and (Clark 1999). Marriage or weddings among Uyghurs in Xinjiang are further mentioned and described in Bellér-Hann (2004a, 2004b), Hoppe (1998), Rudelson (1997), Dautcher (2009), Wang (2004), Zang (2008), Wang and Zhou (2010), Cesaro (2002).

As shall be shown below no one Uyghur expression exists for "marriage". A range of

12 Even this minimal definition seems to carry connotations of alliance theory and seems more applicable in contexts of exogamy, than to marriages experienced and categorised as endogamous. It can be said in defense of this definition that the marriage (much like Strathern's constituting relations (1985: 201-204)) in itself creates the differentiation into mutual 'others' in the connection. This would clearly count as a structuralist argument.

different idioms and tropes are used, each carrying special connotations, such as *toy qilish* (make wedding), *nikahlinsh* (hold the religious wedding ceremony together) or *béshini ongshash* (straighten her or his head). All these areas contribute to a complex local notion of what we may in English translate as "marriage". The case of the term wedding is simpler. The wedding is the central celebration in a marriage including the most important rituals, sealing and sanctioning the marriage. This is translatable as '*toy*' in Uyghur. Yet unlike the English 'wedding,' '*toy*' is also used for an array of other life cycle rituals, thus carrying different connotations (see below).

Marriage has had different positions within the different traditions of anthropological theory of kinship and social structure mentioned above. Older descent theory paid little attention to marriage. It was seen as a side phenomenon connecting pre-existing groups defined through descent. But the role of exogamy in defining the borders of such groups was soon recognised by Radcliffe-Brown and other structural functionalists. Rules of exogamy were seen as providing the basic organisation of descent groups within larger communities among many peoples in Australia and Africa (Radcliffe-Brown 1931, 1952, Radcliffe-Brown and Forde 1950, Fortes 1945, Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1940). The social significance of borders of exogamy and endogamy (as in 'ethnic endogamy') fit well into the understanding of descent theory as a political theory for non-modern, non-state societies (see above, further Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1940, Barth 1969, 1973). Within these approaches marriage was still secondary to descent. Much of today's mention of marriage and kinship in Central Asia and among the Uyghurs in Xinjiang adheres to this precondition. This hierarchical relation was turned on its head by Lévi-Strauss' alliance theory (Parkin and Stone 2004: 121-131, Dumont 2006/1971, Barnard and Good 1984: 93-104). Lévi-Strauss followed Mauss in claiming exchange as the foundation of society and saw the systematic exchange of women in marriage as the backbone of exchange and thus society in general. This gave marriage and affinity a primary position in the study of social structure. Marriage rules and preferences were seen as essential in defining the categories and groups as such, not just as instruments in relations between pre-existing groups. Through such rules society was clearly divided into categories of marriageable and non-marriageable people. Within this frame the category of affines (not the actual spouse) came to be seen as central and as lasting, indeed as 'given' a category as consanguines based on descent (Viveiros de Castro 2009: 256-259). This approach was further developed by a range of scholars including many of the most outspoken critiques of the classical kinship studies (Needham 1971, 1973, Leach 1954, 1970, Kuper 1982, Dumont 1953, Trautmann 1981).

Marriage prestations, strategies and structures

It is a question of definition whether the bride transfers from one family into another in the course of marriage in Kashgar.[13] But a whole range of things certainly are both transferred and exchanged. While the gifts and contribution within one side makes up an important part, so do

13 Transferring or exchanging women brides and daughters sounds odd and rather sexist to most Western ears. The point, as has been spelled out quite often (cf. Benteler and Hanisch 2007) is certainly not that women are objects. Rather, all persons are parts of bigger social units and not first and foremost individuals. This means that they have social units of belonging (e.g. a family) between which they can transfer. Furthermore, the female agency and desicion making in such transfers is pronounced, though that of the individual (male or female) is rather limited.

the marriage prestations exchanged across the two sides, in both directions. Marriage prestations may take on various meanings depending on the context and the understanding of the marriage, and globally various types exist (See Madan 1989: 218-224, Goody and Tambiah 1973, Bell 2006, 2009, Tambiah 1989, Kuper 1982), Comaroff 1980, Benteler and Hanisch 2007). While compensation for the loss of a daughter is stressed in certain contexts (Madan 1989) other prestations can be seen as generalised exchanges moving counter to the transferring women and legitimising their transfer (cf. Evans-Pritchard 1940), as adding value to the bride in an attempt to secure high status alliances in a hypergamous context (Parry 1979, Van der Veen 1972), or even as pre-mortem inheritance (Goody and Tambiah 1973). Though an important political issue in Central Asia's various modernisation campaigns, marriage prestations have hardly been analytically treated in scientific studies of Xinjiang or Uyghurs (for a notable exception see Bellér-Hann 2008a: 246-255). In studies of social structure in China (especially South East China) marriage prestations have received somewhat more attention (Chin and Freedman 1970, Siu 1993, Bell 2008, Harrell 1992). Here interestingly, the relation between bride wealth (prestations given from the household of the groom to that of the bride) and dowry (prestations given from the household of the bride to the bride herself and her new household) has been discussed (Siu 1993: 180-188, Bell 2008: 11-13). This relation is also interesting in Kashgar, especially since these two types of prestation are explicitly related to each other by many people in Kashgar and since the relation between them varies locally.

Post-structuralist writing and its skepticism towards grand theories and towards the structuralist disregard of individual agency inspired a range of works dealing with marriage in a more interactionist way. Marriage was seen as a means of achieving honor, status and wealth and was connected to notions of power (Bourdieu 1976, Tapper 1991, Barth 1969).These approaches focused on marriage strategies of individuals and families or households and moved away from the notion of structures (see Bourdieu's break with objectivism 1976: 148-149). Barth provides an early example of this. To him, marriage choice among Pashtuns is to a large degree a rational decision aimed at maximising personal gains on economic and political levels (Barth 1973: 13-14). The individually maximising strategy of any certain social unit is made a (sometimes *the*) central aspect of marriage choice. This draws on the logic of alleged utilitarian thinking particularly well developed in Barth's approach, that still has a strong scholarly tradition in the region, partly coming from political science (Collins 2006, Luong-Jones 2002). It is also well condensed in Boudieu's theory of the gift as a veiled calculation (*do ut des* - I give to you so that you will give to me; Bourdieu 1998a: 161-169, cf. Benteler and Hanisch 2007). Nancy Tapper in her study of the Maduzai Pashtuns in Afghanistan managed to combine structural and interactionist (or actor centered) approaches in a productive way. She shows how marriage alliances are entered as an element of conscious household strategies, but that they at the same time are limited by, and importantly contribute to, the wider social and political structures of the group. (Tapper 1991, cf. Berrenberg 2002: 56). Bourdieu has formulated this perspective into a more nuanced post-structuralist theoretical frame, placing the actor and his agency within interior (cultural, social) and exterior (economic, political, social) structures (Bourdieu 1976: 164-169, 1998a: 134, Alvi 1999: 176-177). Pfluger-Schindlbeck, writing on social structure in rural Azerbaijan, similarly manages to combine structural approaches with

approaches paying attention to the actor's perspective. Pfluger-Schindlbeck approaches the issue from a more structural perspective, providing a formal analysis of the agnatic base for the formation of solidarity groups, but likewise recognises the implementation of marriage as a political tool within the limitations set by the structures (Pfluger-Schindlbeck 2005).

Treatment of marriage in the region

Within the region of Central Asia marriage has mainly been treated from two different perspectives. One of them focusses on the importance of marriage and especially weddings to local community and circles of gift exchange. The other perspective foregrounds the marriage strategies of individual actor and households. In relation to the construction of kinship, marriage has been somewhat neglected, for the reasons mentioned above. Yet, I want to show that the two perspectives of strategies and production of community when reconsidered within a framework putting more focus on performative kinship and affinity, show precisely the structural importance of marriage in constituting kinship and social structure in Kashgar and other parts of traditionally settled agricultural Central Asia: The perspective of marriage strategies shows the flexibility and performativity of kinship practices, while the perspective of weddings as loci of gift exchange cycles shows its groundedness in local community, giving and wider structures of political and economic dependency. When looking at close marriage , these two perspectives can be combined under the heading of social closeness.

The constituting effect of marriage, and especially weddings, for local communities has been recognized and treated by a number of authors working on both Central Asia (Werner 1997, 1999, 2002, Petric 2002) and China (Yan 1996, Yang 1994, Kipnis 1997, Freedman 1970). These approaches focus on weddings, the biggest celebration within the marriage process, as life cycle rituals. Such rituals are described as important elements in exchange circles of mutual labour help and exchange of food stuff, clothes, cloth and money constituting lasting social relations between friends, relatives and neighbours.

Marriage helps constitute community, but it also forms the shape of such communities and the hierarchy within them. Weddings have been thematised as important stages to flaunt wealth and enhance prestige within the community (Dautcher 2009: 117-118, Hilgers 2009: 103, 107, Werner 1999, Clark 1999: 158, Louw 2007: 77, Kehl-Bodrogi 2008: 106). Conspicuous consumption at weddings and other life cycle rituals poses economic challenges to families in many parts of Central Asia. The high and rising costs of weddings in economically weaker segments of society may lead to postponing of the marriage or to families taking up high debts. State campaigns have aimed to reduce spending at weddings in many Central Asian countries (Roche and Hohmann 2011: 114, Rasanayagam 2011: 73, 175, Clark 1999: 158). Marriage is an important element in the strategies of households positioning themselves politically, economically and religiously within society and within their communities (Yalcin-Heckmann 2001, Schiffauer 1987, Bellér-Hann and Hann 2001: 136-158).

In parts of Central Asia ethnicity and marriage have been treated by social scientists in ways more focussed on conflict and politics. Roche and Hohmann describe how marriage customs have been implemented in nation building in Tajikistan (Roche and Hohmann 2011). Their

article is particularly interesting because it puts marriage choices and strategies into a micro-historical perspective and demonstrates how the changed conditions before, during and after the civil war in Tajikistan influenced marriage choices. Aksana Ismailbekova has provided another interesting analysis of change in marriage choices and strategies in times of conflict. She shows how in Osh after violent clashes between groups identifying themselves primarily in ethnic terms in a changed environment of increased ethnic tension, marriage choices became much more ethnically focused than before. Similar to the case of Tajikistan during the civil war, Uzbeks in Osh after the clashes were eager to have their children married and temporarily gave up strategies of close marriage to welcome unfamiliar and sometimes even unfavourable marriage partners, judged by previous standards, as long as they came from the 'right ethnic categories' (Ismailbekova 2012: 18-25). I would argue that the criterion for the closeness relevant for close marriage was simply changed during the conflict.

Xinjiang Uyghur marriage

Many authors recognise the micro level strategical importance of marriage among Uyghurs in Xinjiang, although only Bellér-Hann (2008a) and Clark (1999) elaborate on the theme. The strategical and political aspects of marriage in Xinjiang beyond the local realm are more widely recognized. Hoppe points out that weddings may profitably be analysed for their role of reproducing ethnic borders (Hoppe 1998: 44). Its role in identity politics becomes apparent in a popular Chinese book published in Xinjiang, in which the marriage traditions of different ethnic groups in Xinjiang are described and come to represent each of the groups (Lou 2006). Here marriage traditions are made a marker of ethnic identity in what Bellér-Hann has called the folklorisation of local culture (Bellér-Hann 2001: 10, cf. Fuller and Lipman 2004: 322, Gladney 2004b: 109-110). Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq describes wedding customs as special to every ethnic group (2009a: 210) and Rudelson mentions the importance of marriage for political and economic cooperation as well as for political boundary demarkation and identity (Rudelson 1997: 85-86, 96, 107-109).

Antagonistic groups, such as the White Mountain sufi brotherhood and the Black Mountain brotherhood in the 18th century are locally said to not have intermarried (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 237). Here non-intermarriage is made to stand as an idiom of antagonism. Today, intermarriage between Uyghur and Han or Hui is extremely rare in Kashgar (Kaltman 2009: 68-73, Bovingdon 2010: 89-90, cf. Ma 2008). In a similar line of argument villagers from Atush told me how they did not intermarry with the village across the river with whom water conflicts had long existed and people from Üstün Atush (a large area of villages north of Atush) are said to not have intermarried with people from Atush until recently. Political ties and alliances are made or symbolically sealed through intermarriage, or the giving of a daughter. Iparxan, the 17th century Uyghur princess given from Apaq Xoja, the ruler of Kashgar to the emperor in Beijing may be the most well known and controversially discussed example (Fuller and Lipman 2004: 320-322, Thum 2012a). Herein an important symbolic element of marriage politics comes to light. The submissive part in an alliance is generally the one giving a daughter. Accordingly, the wife-giver side is in some ways structurally inferior to the wife-taker side in contemporary Kashgar. This is connected to the virilocal marriage tradition and to practical hypergamy: A family will be

concerned with giving the daughter a good place to live and since what she is contributing to the family is the connection, so most parents are eager for their daughter to 'marry up'. It is also connected to the structurally in-build hypergamic tendencies found in Kashgar, connected also to the logic of shame and honour (cf. Tapper 1991: xv, 20).

The structural importance of marriage beyond individual strategies finds less explicit mention in the literature. Wang writes that the so called vicinity marriage within village communities makes "most villagers [...] more or less related to each other." (Wang 2004: 118). What "more or less related" means more precisely does not become clear. Underlying, we can detect a classical conflict of descent theory interpretation and alliance theory interpretation: Is the maternal uncle a relative because he is the mother's brother or because he is the father's affine? Or in this case: Are the villagers related because they have common ancestors (through cognatic descent) or because they intermarry (alliance)? Most treatment of the topic so far, including Wang's further descriptions, suggests a heavily descent theory oriented answer. I argue that, in this case, both notions play a role and that the affinity may even be structurally more important in some cases.

The concept of affinity is very important to kinship imaginaries in Kashgar. Though the importance of affines is mentioned by some authors, the structural significance of affinity has not been widely recognized and its place within the construction of kinship and its relation to social organisation is still being presented as secondary to ties of descent. Affinity is treated only indirectly in the literature on Uyghurs. Only affines are discussed, while affinity as a concept and social principle is not taken up.

In her historic ethnography of south-west Xinjiang Bellér-Hann's main focus is less on kinship or family than on community (2008a). Households figure as the main units in these communities. This takes her towards a focus on social units connected through reciprocity and mutual dependency, which is to my understanding a more apt approach to Uyghur kinship than one that gives primacy to descent and individual ties as they can be found on genealogical charts. Bellér-Hann further, is the only author so far who recognises the full significance of the marriage process in Kahsgar. She describes the process of marriage as one that creates community and as one that over the turn of the process makes the two sides relatives (2008a: 283). While she does connect marriage to the understanding of community as created through gift giving and mutual obligation, she does not explicitly connect this to the local conceptualisation of kinship and does not pay any great attention to the concept of affinity as such. Thereby Bellér-Hann recognises the non-descent nature of relatedness and closeness in Kashgar, but does not take the discussion of this to the conceptual level. Bellér-Hann does not attempt to bring together local descent imaginaries with the strong affinal and exchange aspects of kinship in Kashgar in any attempt to define the latter.

Several Uyghur authors have recognised the interconnection between marriage and kinship, but do not further elaborate analytically on the topic (Raxman et al. 2008: 128, repeated in Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 104, Mut'ellip Hüseyn 2002: 149). Furthermore, most of the authors write about "Uyghur customs" in general, paying little attention to the pronounced local

differences.[14] Most of the local literature treat marriage from the perspective of customs and show little concern with making explicit the meanings and functions of each step in the marriage process or with offering any detailed discussion of the role of marriage in the different social contexts in Xinjiang. In the following descriptions the local literature has been used as sources to correct and supplement my own ethnographic findings. Descriptions of weddings and the wider marriage process can be found in Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq (2009a: 210-227, 521-545), Abdukérim Raxman et al. (2008: 127-136), Abdurehim Hebibulla (2000: 234-245, 250-258), Abdukérim Rehman et al. (2009a: 345-347) and Enwer Semet Qorghan (2007: 104-140). Further, recent local publications used in this thesis deal with the marriage law (Muttellip Hüseyin 2002), divorce (Memet'imin Yaqup 2009), the concept of family (Abdushükür Muhemmet'imin 2002), genealogies (Enwer Semet Qorghan 2010, Yarmuhammet Tahir Tughluq 2009b) and marriage and children (Tahirjan Ömer et al. 2008). These sources will be drawn on in the following description of the marriage process and the treatment of local conceptualisations of kinship.

2.3 Combining the theories

I recognise three great paradigms in the treatment of kinship and related analytical approaches to marriage. They are:

1) Descent theory featuring marriage as a secondary phenomenon connecting pre existing groups.

2) Alliance theory featuring marriage as the central element relating but also constructing and defining these groups.

3) New kinship study – the constructivist or performative approach – in which marriage plays almost no role,[15] but can be seen as a performative way of producing kinship.

These three paradigms and the analytical concepts that follow from them, all make theoretical contributions to the task of understanding Uyghur kinship practice in Kashgar. So far, especially the descent view on kinship has been prominent in writings on the region, while the aspects of affinity, as prominent in alliance theory and of performance including exchange, as figuring in the new kinship approach, have been only peripherally treated. As post-modern and post-structural theory have demonstrated for decades, the social reality that we are looking at is too complex to be framed by one big overarching theoretical model. Instead, several different theories and analytical approaches may deliver useful epistemological and analytical tools. A combination of elements taken from the above approaches as Hardenberg (2009) and others call for entails no contradiction. Insights from different theories mutually complement each other. The contradiction, as Bourdieu points out, is rarely based in the theory itself, but rather in the institutional or even personal rivalries within the academic field. The positions are only socially

14 For notable exceptions see Abdukérim Rehman et al. 2009a, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007, but here too, no explicit or detailed comparison is made and the ethno-nationalist agenda is generally maintained.

15 With Viveiros de Castro we could also say that contrary to the intension of this analytical approach it ironically reproduces the division of affine and cognatic kinship with a clear emphasis on the latter, by not treating affinity or marriage as structurally important (Viveiros de Castro 2009: 257-258).

incompatible within the field of the scientist, but not analytically incompatible on a theoretical level (Bourdieu 1996: 62-63).

Looking at kinship practice among Uyghurs in Kashgar through the lens of descent theory, alliance theory, and theories of relatedness, each point to certain aspects of the local social organisation. Hardenberg argues that the new kinship studies have opened up new perspectives on kinship and social relations, but that these may not be seen as substitutes for, but merely as supplements to analysis based on structural kinship analysis of the classical kind (Hardenberg 2009: 61-65, cf. Pfeffer 2005). In the following analysis of marriage practices in Kashgar these different approaches will complement each other, without either taking on the centrality which Hardenberg reserves for what he calls the classical approaches (e.g. descent and especially alliance theory).

Descent theory stresses the importance of social units beyond the nuclear family and household in social organisation. Further, its critical reception points to the fact that societies or social structures are not "patrilineal" or "agnatic," but that only certain elements in these structures are influenced by descent imagination (Barnes 1962, Parkin and Stone 2004: 34-39), while other parts may be dominated by other principles and conceptualisations. In Kashgar, idioms of descent are applied in several contexts (as on invitations for the early morning wedding meal and in discourses invoking ethno-nationalism and Islamic texts) without being structurally important factors in social organisation.

Alliance theory points to the structural centrality of marriage in the constitution of social units, which despite the complex marriage structures found in Kashgar, is still highly relevant. The concept of affinity can be adapted to suit the context of complex structures, as shall be demonstrated below. Alliance theory furthermore, having structuralist roots (and even to some extent being the very roots of structuralism in social science) celebrates the very important emphasis on relations as opposed to entities, which lies at the basis of this study. Though we can and do speak of social units, these units consist of relations and each unit is constituted and created through its relations to surrounding social institutions.

Constructivist theory contributes the notion of non-genealogical imagining and creation of kinship, which is highly relevant to the creation of social relations in Kashgar. Through this, the exact role of genealogy in social reality can be analytically grasped while the bias of placing it at the centre from the outset, derived from European and American kinship imagination can be overcome (c.f. Bamford and Leach 2009, Schneider 1968, 1984).

A combination of alliance and constructivist (New Kinship) approaches seem to be especially promising for capturing important aspects of the social complexities of the kinship practices of Uyghurs in and around Kashgar, and to balance the existing descent bias found in much scientific writing and in parts of local ideology and terminology. Viveiros de Castro's Amazonian model stresses the constructiveness of consanguinity and the central importance of affinity as a given. Both these parts are relevant in the case of Kashgar, though the concrete relation between the concepts consanguinity and affinity is very different from the Amazonian case. This relation is treated in the parts III and V.

Such an eclectic theoretical approach offers many benefits, but it also poses some dangers and vices, especially in an epistemological sense. Combining in analysis different theories with their different premises presupposes that the abstraction and reduction, always necessary in social science, be done in this case particularly carefully and reflectively. During the entire process, it must be kept in mind that models are always reductions underscoring some but disregarding other aspects of the social complexity under scrutiny. Thus certain aspects of social structure can be usefully approachable using one theory, while other aspects appear open to other approaches. This does not necessarily imply departing from any idea of an existing approachable social reality to the benefit of a mere flow of different perspectives. It just implies acknowledging that social reality is too complex to fit into any one frame of abstracted theory and its according analysis. This makes social theory akin to chaos theory (cf. Kiel and Elliot 1996, Eve et al. 1997). Like chaotic or non-lineal systems, social systems also have too many variables to be accounted for by theoretical modeling and the degree of change made to one variable is not directly proportional to the degree of the resulting change in dependent variables and in the whole system (Kolding-Jørgensen 1998). If we acknowledge the 'chaotic' character of the complex social reality we look at, theoretical models become nothing but tools (Foucault 1974: 523-524) for approaching aspects of this reality, not to create a comprehensive model of it.

3 Situating the Study

This thesis is inspired by Bellér-Hann's historical anthropology, approaching the study of daily life and cultural categories on a small-scale level (Bellér-Hann 2010: 241-246). Constructivist and poststructuralist approaches have stressed the importance of history as an important resource and field of study also for kinship (Sahlins 1985, Dumont 1986, Sabean 1998, Mathieu 2007, Kuper 2009). Kinship is heterogeneously defined and is not just culturally and locally, but also historically constructed. That means that the structures we can identify in contemporary Kashgar are not just the products of historical developments and events, but a part of these (cf. Sahlins 1985: 153). Thanks to Gunnar Jarring, the Swedish missionaries and others, many written sources are available to supply historical information. They provide students of kinship amongst Uyghurs in south Xinjiang with some of the historical insights earlier schools of kinship were blamed for ignoring. Both the British School of social anthropology and the structural anthropologists were criticised for being ahistorical. The study of Uyghur kinship in this sense has been fortunately tilted towards a historical perspective from the start.

Positioning Uyghurs within a wider geographical and historical perspective is not merely a question of scholarly traditions. It is also very much a politically loaded topic (Bellér-Hann et al. 2007: 1-6). Just looking closely at the category 'Uyghur' itself opens up a range of relevant questions. The Uyghurs are an entity defined by the bureaucracy of Soviet inspired CCP minority politics and by Uyghur nationalist discourses that reverse the hierarchy of the state classification and somewhat bend the stereotyping. Ethnicity is the field of the struggle *of* and the struggle *against* the state respectively (cf. Gladney 2004b). The very act of writing about 'Uyghurs' can be seen as a political act in itself (cf. Newby 2007: 15, fn. 1): On the one hand it may support Uyghur ethno-nationalist strivings for positioning 'their people' as a cultural and political unity with a long history. Depending on how and what one writes about 'the Uyghurs,' it may on the other hand also perpetuate Chinese government discourses on minorities more generally. Such discourses tend to portray Uyghurs as 'people who can dance and sing' but little else. Fuller and Lipman call this "disneylandization" (2004: 322), while Bellér-Hann opts for the term "folklorisation" of local culture (2001: 10, cf. Gladney 2004b: 99). This view is actually superficially perpetuated by a focus on marriage as merely wedding customs, as in a book on wedding customs in Xinjiang published in Ürümchi which lists the official minorities and their weddings (Lou 2006). This is a connection that the fieldwork of this thesis has probably profited from: An anthropologist researching marriage arouses less suspicion than one researching say religion or ethnic conflict (see Bellér-Hann 2001: 9-10). But it is a connection which this thesis obviously strongly opposes by pointing to the intimate connection of marriage, economy and politics. A strong focus on ethnogenesis in the view of many Uyghurs, runs counter to their claims of a long ethnic history, a locally perceived quality marker for 'ethnic groups' or 'peoples' (民族 *minzu, millet*). The importance of 'a people's history' is a shared narrative predominant both within the Chinese and former Soviet discourses on ethnicity or 'nations' (Slezkine 2000:

314-315, Haugen 2003). It also plays a crucial role in Uyghur ethno-national claims to legitimate ownership of the land and resources of Xinjiang. These discourses on ethnic or national legitimacy draw on the concept of a nation which the early Soviet ideologists adopted from Central European nationalist ideology (cf. Van Ree 1994: 214-217) which was then in turn adopted by the CCP and Mao (cf. Gladney 2004b: 6-20, 28-29). Besides "common customs, common history, common language" this also included a "common territory". In this view, the territory thus legitimately belongs to the 'ethnic group' or 'nation' who can prove historical ownership. Thus the historiography of the region is similarly politically laden (Bovingdon 2004), debating not least which ethnic group has the historical legitimacy to the region of Xinjiang. This is intricately connected to today's questions of legitimate ownership of land and natural resources, especially coal and oil (Millward 2007: 300-303, Dillon 2004: 39-41). Therefore, the history of Xinjiang and the Uyghurs exists in several versions, each with its own distinct political background and agenda (cf. Kamalov 2007, Bovingdon 2004).

This chapter will present some of the important categories and events of the conditions of possibility, that is, the wider political, historical and geographical context relevant to the study and some of the central categories within this context. The last part provides reflections of my own position during the fieldwork and insights into my methods of fieldwork and analysis.

3.1 Kashgar in space and time

Xinjiang is the largest autonomous region in the People's Republic of China and larger than any Chinese province. It is an arid and sparsely populated region bordered by several high mountain ranges. The name Xinjiang was coined by the Qing administration in the 1880s and other names for the region exist, each carrying different political connotations, such as Eastern Turkistan,[16] Six Cities (*alte sheher* see Bellér-Hann 2008a: 38-40) or Uyghuristan. I use the term Xinjiang since it is the most common in scholarship and among Uyghurs in Kashgar today. After the communist take-over in 1949, the region formally became Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). The Uyghurs, Turkic speaking Muslim oasis dwellers, at this point still made up the vast majority of the region's population. This has since declined to less than half of the population, primarily due to Han-Chinese in-migration. Tensions, deriving from attempts by the Chinese authorities to control and modernise the region and from differences in interest with in-migrating Han-Chinese settlers, have existed at least since the initial conquest of the region by Qing troops in the 1750's. The historical influences on the region and its inhabitants are diverse: Turkic, Altaic, Mongolian, Indo-Iranian, Islamic, Chinese, Buddhist, Soviet, communist, modernist and capitalist influences must all be taken into account at different levels (Millward 2007, Dillon 2004, Boykova und Rybakov 2006, Woodman Cleaves 1977: 65-93, Yaldiz 2000:

16 According to Ablet Kamalov Soviet scientists became especially concerned with the non-Chinese, Central Asian heritage of the Uyghurs after the cooling of Sino-Soviet relations in the 1960s (Kamalov 2007). These studies popularised the term 'East Turkistan' today a marker of Uyghur nationalism and forbidden in the Peoples Republic of China (Light 2007: 62-63).

90). The Uyghurs make up one of the largest so called "ethnic groups" (*minzu* 民族) in China, currently figuring in position five with 10,069,346 people counted, according to the 2010 official survey (http://www.thechinastory.org/lexicon/xinjiang). The term 'Uyghur' in its present use is relatively recent. When the term was re-introduced at a conference in Tashkent in 1926 by Russian trained (jadid) Central Asians (Gladney 1990, cf. Haugen 2003), it had hardly been in use for five hundred years. Earlier it had been applied to Buddhist groups in the eastern parts of today's Xinjiang. Only in recent decades has the term been established among wider parts of the population through Soviet-inspired ethnic policies of the Chinese government and Uyghur nationalist elite discourses (cf. Rudelson 1997, Gladney 2004b, Brothy 2011, Haugen 2003, Slezkine 2000, Roberts 2009). As Gladney has argued the interactions with several Chinese state powers, and the experience of standing in opposition to their view and a 'Chinese culture' that they introduced, were very instrumental in shaping an Uyghur and pre-Uyghur Turkic identity (Millward 2007, Gladney 1990, 2004a). The population today categorised as Uyghurs is quite heterogeneous. It is an important political category in Xinjiang today, yet it is not a useful analytical category when looking at social organisation or marriage customs, unless it is strongly locally qualified. There would be little or no analytical reason to include the Uyghurs in North Xinjiang into an analysis or a comparison, while leaving out the settled Turkic speaking oasis dwellers of the Ferghana Valley just because they are not called 'Uyghurs'. In the north and east named descent communities (*jemet*) are still to be found, which is not the case in the south. Kinship terminology varies across the region too. Further differences include the intensity and type of Islamic and of Chinese influence and marriage customs. I have therefore chosen to focus on Uyghurs in southwestern Xinjiang, and more particularly on the oasis town of Kashgar and its surrounding towns and villages. Kashgar is one of the westernmost cities in China, situated in the part of the region that borders Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Around 3,5 million people live in the prefecture of Kashgar, whose administrative centre, Kashgar city itself, has a population of around 400,000 (Ma 2008: 396). People classified and identifying as Uyghurs make up the majority population of the Kashgar area (82,8% according to the official 2005 survey, Ma 2008: 396). They are mainly Sunni Muslims adhering to the Hanafi school of law and speak an eastern Turkic dialect classified as 'new Uyghur'.[17] The traditional occupations of the population in and around Kashgar have been in irrigation agriculture, artisanship, and trade. Today many work within the state system and the last ten years, with its state supported economic boom, has seen a strong increase in private companies in Kashgar, many owned by Han-Chinese from other regions.

17 Cf. Hahn 1991, Engesaeth et al. 2009, Dwyer 2005, Friederich and Yaqub 2002.

Fig. 1 Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and neighbouring states and provinces. (Cartographic basis: Google Maps; design by the author, supported by Zheng Chuyang)

A history of Uyghurs and Xinjiang

The term "Uyghur" originally meant 'united,' 'alliance' or 'association' (Gollings et al. 2008: 11, Newby 2007: 17, Kamberi 1999: 283). When the term first appeared to designate a kingdom of nomadic tribes in today's Mongolia it was coined to refer to a political rather than an ethnic, territorial or tribal unit. Around 744 A.D. the Uyghur army defeated the Turks to set up an Uyghur khanate that lasted until 840 when they were displaced and exiled by a Kyrgyz federation and went southward (Light 2006: 336, Millward 2007: 46). They consisted of three major groups containing more than twenty tribes. The first branch was lost track of in northern China while the second was to become the Yugur or Yellow Uyghurs in the neighbouring Gansu province. The third group dispersed between the oases of the Tarim from Turpan to Kashgar. They were Buddhists and established a state based in Turpan, which lasted from 850-1250. During this period, Kashgar was a part of the Kharakhanid empire. By this time they were settled and had highly developed traditions of art and architecture as well as an equally well-developed aristocracy (Millward 2007: 50-53, Dillon 2004). Islam reached the Tarim in the 10th century. Starting in 950 with the conversion of the leader Satuq Bughra Khan in Atush north of Kashgar during the rule of the Kara-Khanids, Islam slowly entered the region from west to east (Hoppe 1998: 119). It took more than 500 years before the whole area was Islamised. During this time 'Uyghur' was the word for the non-Islamised parts of the population, especially in

Turpan. The term disappeared with their transition to Islam in mid- 15th century. Designations of locality and profession of mode of subsistence provided the main social faultlines and social identities and Islam had begun to provide an important source of identification. After the Mongol conquests of the 13th century the area was under Chagatai rule with brief Ming interferences around the 1480s (Bregel 2003: 37, Millward 2007: 60-76, Dillon 2004: 12-13). In 1533, nobles of the sufi brotherhood Naqshiya Bandiya, the so called Khojas, based in Kashgar and Yerkent, brought the region under their control (Newby 1998: 279, Dillon 2004: 17, Millward 2007: 83). The Khoja rule was only brought to an end by the Chinese Qing conquest of Kashgar in 1759. The Qing established a loose tributary rule of what they termed as *'xiyu'* (the western regions). There had been periods of Chinese rule or patronage in the region during the Han (250 B.C.-250 A.D.), Tang (744-870 A.D.) and briefly Ming (1368 to 1644 especially around 1480) dynasties, but the Chinese influence important for forming what was to become an Uyghur identity was really initiated by the Qing conquest and especially with the arrival of Han Chinese settlers in the region after 1821. It has been widely accepted that no common identity that could be called 'ethnic' existed in the region at this point, or in fact did not emerge until the 20th century. Instead the importance of local and religious identities has been stressed. As Newby critically evokes:

"The notion that the peoples of East Turkestan thought of themselves primarily as being of this or that oasis may well have originated in the early twentieth century with Barthold who noted that when asked to state his identity a Turkestani will reply "first a "Muslim," then an inhabitant of such or such city or village"(cited by Shahrani, 1984: 26). This has been echoed repeatedly in various forms by scholars throughout the twentieth and twentyfirst centuries, specifically with regard to the peoples of East Turkestan, e.g. "As a whole the people of Eastern Turkestan had no common ethnic designation for themselves other than *yerlik*, which merely means local. Even foreign Muslims did not see the Eastern Turkestanis together as a distinct ethnic group" (Fletcher, 1978: 69). "Uyghurs still identify themselves according to the oasis in which they live, and perceived differences between the oases are extremely significant" (Rudelson, 1997: 40)." (Newby 2007: 16, Footnote 2, see also Hoppe 1998: 58)

No international scholars seriously question the novelty of the use of the ethnonym "Uyghur" for Turkic speaking Muslim agriculturalists of the area today known as Xinjiang. However a topic of much attention has been whether or not a common conscious identity spanning a similar area and connecting similar people existed as a predecessor to the category subsequently named "Uyghurs," and also when such a process may have started and how large the role of the different Chinese states was in forming it. (Newby 1997, 2007, Clarke 2004, Thum 2010, 2012b, Roberts 2009, Borphy 2011). This is one of the most prominent discussions in Xinjiang studies. We will here follow the line of argument brought forth by Laura Newby, since it also shows us the close intermingling of state and local structures, relevant to the argument of this thesis. According to Newby, during the initial one hundred years of Qing rule in Xinjiang (then called *xiyu*, Western Region or *huibu* Muslim Region) no attempts were made to assimilate even the elites into Manchu or Chinese culture.

"The Muslim-Turkic elite of this region had no nation to lose, no supreme ruling family to

betray. The calls on their loyalty were those of religion, culture, family and locality, none of which was ever challenged by the Manchu. Their conquerors did not aspire to impart to them the customs or ritual practices of the Chinese, but on the contrary, to legitimize their own specifically Manchu rule through the preservation of local tradition and recognition of cultural differences. This, in turn, was to have strong implications for the development of an ethnic consciousness among the sedentary, non-tribal peoples of Xinjiang" (Newby 1998: 278).

What Newby calls a "cultural divide" was upheld by the administration, prominently featuring prohibitions against intermarriage (Newby 1998: 296). Yet this experience of differences nurtured an experience of unity vis à vis the Manchus which dissolved local disparities and provided the basis for what Newby sees as an 'ethnic' identity:

"[I]n the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the people of the oases of Altä Shähär[18] did not simply think of themselves as people of this or that oasis, but shared a discrete group consciousness, which extended to the sedentary Turkic Muslims north of the Tianshan and west to the region of Qumul and Turpan, so-called Uyghuristan. In other words, just as labeling may help to create group consciousness, the absence of a label, in this case an ethnonym, does not preclude the sense of a common identity that may comprise all those elements regularly found in the hotchpotch of ethnicity. While it is definitely not my intention to suggest that in eighteenth or nineteenth century East Turkestan loyalty resided in the "nation," group identity can and did precede national consciousness and by the eighteenth century it is clear that it rose above the oasis, i.e., there existed a sense of community among the people whom we now refer to as Uyghurs that was discrete and did not extend to other peoples." (Newby 2007: 16)

What may have further contributed to this experience was the fact that the legal system under Qing rule was divided along perceived ethnic and not strict religious lines. While the local Muslim population was subject to Shari'a law in a wide range of areas subsumable as civil law, the Chinese Muslims were generally subjected to Qing imperial law (Bellér-Hann 2004a:175). Though the Shari'a courts to a limited degree did function up until the communist take-over (Bellér-Hann 2004a: 189), the policies of segregation started to change after the interim of Khokhandi general Yaqub Beg's Islamic khanate. After several attempts Yaqub Beg succeeded in conquering much of today's southwest Xinjiang, which he ruled from his capital in Kashgar from 1864-1877 (Millward 2007: 116-123). He instigated a strict Muslim rule by the standards of the day including Shari'a law in all areas of life (Bellér-Hann 2004a: 175, cf. Millward 2007: 120-121). During the rule of Yaqub Beg religious law was strengthened in the region, as was, arguably, the tendency to identify primarily as Muslims. During this time the region was crucial to the colonial 'chess board game' of power played out between Russia and Britain known as the 'Great Game' (Kreutzmann 1997, Gollings et al. 2008:11). The region was reconquered without much opposition by the Qing army after Yaqub Beg's death in 1877. It was renamed Xinjiang (新疆, lit. new dominion) and became a main issue in the political and military attempts to save the

18 The term is found in several sources from the 18th and 19th century (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 39-40). It covers approximately the area of today's southwest Xinjiang and the six cities involved are most likely: Kashgar, Üchturpan, Korla, Kucha, Yerkent and Hotan (Sugawara and Mirsultan 2007: 140). Today *alte sheher* is little used, positively connoting Uyghur nationalist sentiments. It is the name of a critical Uyghur rap band from Ürümchi.

dying dynasty (Millward 2007: 125-130). According to Newby, by then an Eastern Turki (pre-'Uyghur') identity was already well established (Newby 1998: 297, 2007: 16). Rian Thum has argued that shrine pilgrimage across the region had lead to a localised identity spanning across entire southwestern Xinjiang, then also known as the 'Six Cities' (*alte sheher;* Thum 2010).

After the fall of the Qing dynasty and the establishment of the Chinese Republic in 1911, the Russian and Soviet influence on Xinjiang increased (Millward 2007: 178-186). When the term "Uyghur" was adopted for the sedentary Turkic speaking Muslim population of the Tarim depression (Southwest Xinjiang) at a Soviet conference in Tashkent in 1923 Soviet historians and local intellectuals had already pointed to a historical connection to the pre-Islamic Uyghur Kingdom of the 9th century and it was used in some intellectual progressive circles, not least the Jadids (cf. Baldauf 2001) or Jadid inspired (Millward and Tursun 2004: 73). The term served well to provide the new social category with an explicitly non-religious marker. The tension between religious and more secular national strivings was also very present in the inner structures of the first East Turkistan Republic (ETR), which was established in Kashgar in 1933 and lasted only one year. Here nationalists, Jadids and Islamic reformers collaborated to form the government. A second ETR (1944-1949) was established in the area of Ili (Ghulja) with help from the Soviet Union and carried less obvious Islamic undercurrents. Sheng Shicai who from 1933-1944 acted as the second republican governor of Xinjiang under the Guomindang (国民党) used an administrative ethnic categorisation as basis for the distribution of resources and positions (Millward and Tursun 2004: 80, Millward 2007: 207-210). Sheng was strongly inspired by Soviet ethnic policies and drew up his own ethnic model for Xinjiang comprising eight ethnic groups of which the 'Uyghurs' were the largest. His categorisation was initially adopted by the CCP after the relatively peaceful seizure of power by the Liberation Army in 1949 (Millward and Tursun 2004: 89-92). Ethnic categorisation was later further developed and is until today at the basis of the administrative system.

The modernisation campaigns and collectivisations of the communist era introduced grave changes of significance to the lives of people in Xinjiang (Hoppe 1998: 117-118, Bellér-Hann 1998: 707-708, Millward 2007: 240-242). This period was marked by the tragic events of the Great Leap Forward and the subsequent famine in all of China (1958-1961) as well as by political turmoil especially around the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976; Millward and Tursun 2004: 95, Millward 2007: 254-271). Starting in 1979, three years after the death of chairman Mao, the reform period under Deng Xiaopeng offered a new form of economic development and a relaxation of policies of 'social engineering'. The 1980s saw a revival of pre-communist forms of social organisation and of religious awareness as the state pulled back from many areas concerning people's daily lives and reformed the distribution of land (Dillon 2004: 37-39, Bellér-Hann 1998: 703). Yet in the 1990s primarily Uyghur opposition against Chinese rule in Xinjiang was met with the so-called 'strike hard' campaigns by the Chinese government (Dillon 2004: 84-109, Gladney 2004a, Millward: 2007 331-332, 341-343, Dwyer 2005: 63). The relative relaxation in the 1980s had given a stronger base for voicing ethnic and religious identities and the collapse of the Soviet Union may have inspired worries in the government as some Uyghurs drew inspiration from the newly established Central Asian republics (Gladney 2004a: 379, Starr 2004:

4).

The strength of ethno-nationlism today

Besides figuring in a range of different discourses, ethnicity or ethnic nationality (Uygh. *millet*, Chin. 民族 *minzu*)[19] is the criterion for a range of administrative purposes today, and ethnic quotas exist for university entrance. The ethnic status is noted on the required state issued ID-cards (*kimlik*). Ethnicity is a central way of categorising people both by the government and in daily life. The administrative system, schools, TV programs and people in their daily lives to a large degree define themselves and others in ethnic terms. I myself was often asked what '*millet*' I belonged to after stating my country of origin. Ethnic sentiments are strong among all parts of the Uyghur (and other) population of Kashgar. Friederich remarks that:

"it is difficult to find Uyghur poems depicting people other than Uyghurs. Most Uyghur poets write solely about Uyghur people. This observation is true not only for Uyghur poets and poetry, but also for Uyghur literature in general, Uyghur films, and Uyghur music videos, where the images, whether they depict people, objects or scenery, are almost exclusively Uyghur." (Friederich 2007: 93)

Friederich calls this an "single-nationality-mindedness". This includes striving for authenticity and consistency in an imaginary 'ethnic purity,' which also plays a role in debates on changing marriage customs. As Nathan Light remarks:

"Uyghur scholars of Uyghur folk culture often avoid acknowledging foreign influences because they feel it threatens ideas about Uyghur cultural authenticity and autochthony (native origins). Uyghur scholars are acutely aware that Han Chinese vaunt their supposed long and ethnically distinct history and culture as proof of their civilised essence, and these scholars promote a similar sense of Uyghur distinctiveness." (Light 2006: 345)

Ethnic nationalism has come to be seen as a serious security problem in Xinjiang. It is made responsible for conflict and violence by several actors of different camps. The ethnicised rhetoric is predominant with all parties involved, including many foreign scholars. Counter-ethnic discourses,[20] prominent during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), have gained in importance during the harsh anti-separatist campaigns of the central government in the 1990s: "… anything Uyghur which is not confined to mere folklore (in the Soviet understanding) is regarded by state authorities with suspicion and is readily condemned as 'nationalism' (*millätchilik*) or 'separatism' (*bölgünchilik*)" (Friederich 2007: 95). Some of the main Uyghur accusations uttered against Han-Chinese is precisely that they are very strongly ethno-nationalist, not wanting to employ members of other nationalities and controlling the government policies to their own people's advantage.

The feeling of being discriminated against as an ethnic group is widespread among Uyghurs

19 The Chinese term *minzu* and the Uyghur term *millet* both define nationality in ethnic terms. The civic counterparts to this *zhongguoren* (中国人) and *junggoluq*, meaning national citisen of China are clearly bound to the state and the geographic area without creating any sense of a "nation" in the sense found in Europe and parts of South East Asia (cf. Anderson 1981).

20 The increased importance of religion as an identity marker has likely been supported by such discourses and by "long-standing government policies promoting the 'friendship of the peoples' (*millätlär ∂ostliqi*)" (Friederich 2007: 93).

in Kashgar. Many Uyghurs and foreign analysts see an increasing assimilative pressure exerted on the Uyghur population of Xinjiang by economic and language politics intertwined with so called 'security issues' (Dwyer 2005: 58). While these were mainly aimed at 'separatism' in the 1990s the discourse turned to countering 'terrorists' in the wake of US President Bush's declaration of a global 'War on Terror,' of which the Chinese government launched their own version targeting not least so-called Uyghur separatists in Xinjiang (Dwyer 2005: 63, Dillon 2004: 157). In the wake of this, so called 'illegal religious activities' (*qanunsiz diniy pa'aliyetler*) have been harshly targeted. This has had the effect of loading religion politically (and to many also ethnically) even more so than had been the case before (Gladney 2004a: 393, Starr 2004: 5), by positioning lived religion and the Chinese state as oppositions. Religious piety and focus, as has been on the rise in Xinjiang in the last decade (Waite 2007, Fuller and Lipman 2004, Dillon 2004: 169), thus also has clear connotations of political resistance. Besides rare violent or very outspoken instances of resistance against government policies, criticism is most often phrased in small non-systematic instances of ridicule and resistance which James Scott dubbed 'hidden transcripts' (Scott 1985: 289-298, 1990, Light 2007: 51, 63, cf. Rudelson 1997: 116).

The last decade has been marked by an astonishing economic development in the region. The large scale government campaigns to 'Open up the North-west' and start off the 'Great Develop the West' (西部大开发, *xibu da kaifa*) has introduced massive investments in Xinjiang, partly implemented by East Chinese partner cities (Millward 2007: 298-309). Though these politics have undoubtedly changed the city-scapes in Xinjiang and brought money into the region, critics argue that the Han Chinese part of the population, not least the hundred thousands of settlers invited in from mainland China, have been the real beneficiaries while Uyghurs have often lost out. Many Uyghurs however still assert that the economic situation and life in general have improved within the last thirty years. Largely due to state sponsored in-migration during the decades of communist rule, the Han-Chinese population in Xinjiang has increased from a few hundred thousand to eight or nine million. This almost matches the Uyghur population of around ten million. By far the highest concentration of Uyghurs is to be found in the southwestern part of the region.

Southwest Xinjiang

Concerning kinship and social structure we cannot assume, that today's political borders are reflected in either superficial empiry (e.g. marriage customs, vocabulary) nor deeper structural similarities (e.g. conceptualisations of kinship, logics of close marriage) of praxis and conceptualisation. Of course, administrative powers and above all states administrations as present and dominating as the Chinese, to a certain extent, phase social practices. But the various areas of what is today called Xinjiang have historically been subjected to extremely diverse influences. In Millward's history of Xinjang there is a time line in the appendix which is divided into two different columns: one for northeastern and one for southwestern Xinjiang (Millward 2009: 373-381). Other authors subdivide Xinjiang into three large areas: the lower Tarim depression bordering Tibet, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, also known as southwestern Xinjiang, the Ili region to the north of the Tian Shan mountain range bordering Kazakhstan, Russia and Mongolia, and lastly, the eastern part of Qumul (Hami) and

Turpan bordering Mongolia and the Chinese provinces Gansu and Qinghai. I will mainly focus on southwestern Xinjiang, an area in which the Islamic and Persian influences are particularly strong, whereas the north is more strongly associated with Russian, nomadic Mongolian and Kazakh and the east with early Chinese influences. Even within the broader areas local differences are often quite large.

I want to stress that this thesis is concerned with patterns, connections, systems, and interrelations, not with the search or construction of *a* system of neither Uyghur nor southwestern Xinjiang kinship per se. Ethnographically focusing on Kashgar and surroundings, this thesis treats categories, values and logics that may have different emphasis and be expressed differently from place to place, but that I believe to be of relevance to most Uyghurs throughout the whole region of southwestern Xinjiang. I contend that certain deeper patterns and values are roughly similar for these localities, though often expressed in superficially different phenomena, such as different wedding customs or kinship terminology. These could be understood as variations or indeed as 'transformations' of one another (vgl. Kuper 1982, Barnard and Good 1984: 138, see below). Such a notion cannot stop at today's political borders. Large parts of former Soviet Turkestan, especially the Ferghana Valley, have been intimately connected to southwestern Xinjiang for centuries. Newby notes that many foreign travelers asserted that "the Sarts of the Ferghana Valley and the 'Uyghurs' of Altishähär were essentially one people" (Newby 2007: 18, see also Rudelson 1997).

South Xinjiang consists mainly of the Tarim Depression of which the Taklimakan Desert takes up the largest part. The western part, with which I am mainly concerned, is framed by the mountain ranges Tian Shan in the north, the Pamirs in the west and the Kunlun Mountains rising towards the Tibetan Plateu in the South. It borders Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. The mountain rivers uniting as the Tarim River in the Tarim Basin of southwest Xinjiang deliver the much needed water when the snow starts melting on the mountain ridges in spring time. The area is generally very arid. Irrigation agriculture, animal husbandry, artisanship and trade have long been the main sources of subsistence. Cash-crops like grapes, melons and cotton have become increasingly important to the regional economy over the past decades (compare with Turpan: Hoppe 1987: 241 , 1992; Rudelson 1997:109-112). The region has a more than 1000 year old history of urban settlements in the oases. Half of the population of Xinjiang is rural, but more than 65% are agricultural (Toops 2004: 250). This is interesting, since it shows that a lot of agriculture is conducted in 'urban' areas. Indeed, the border between city and countryside is gradual in oases like Kashgar.

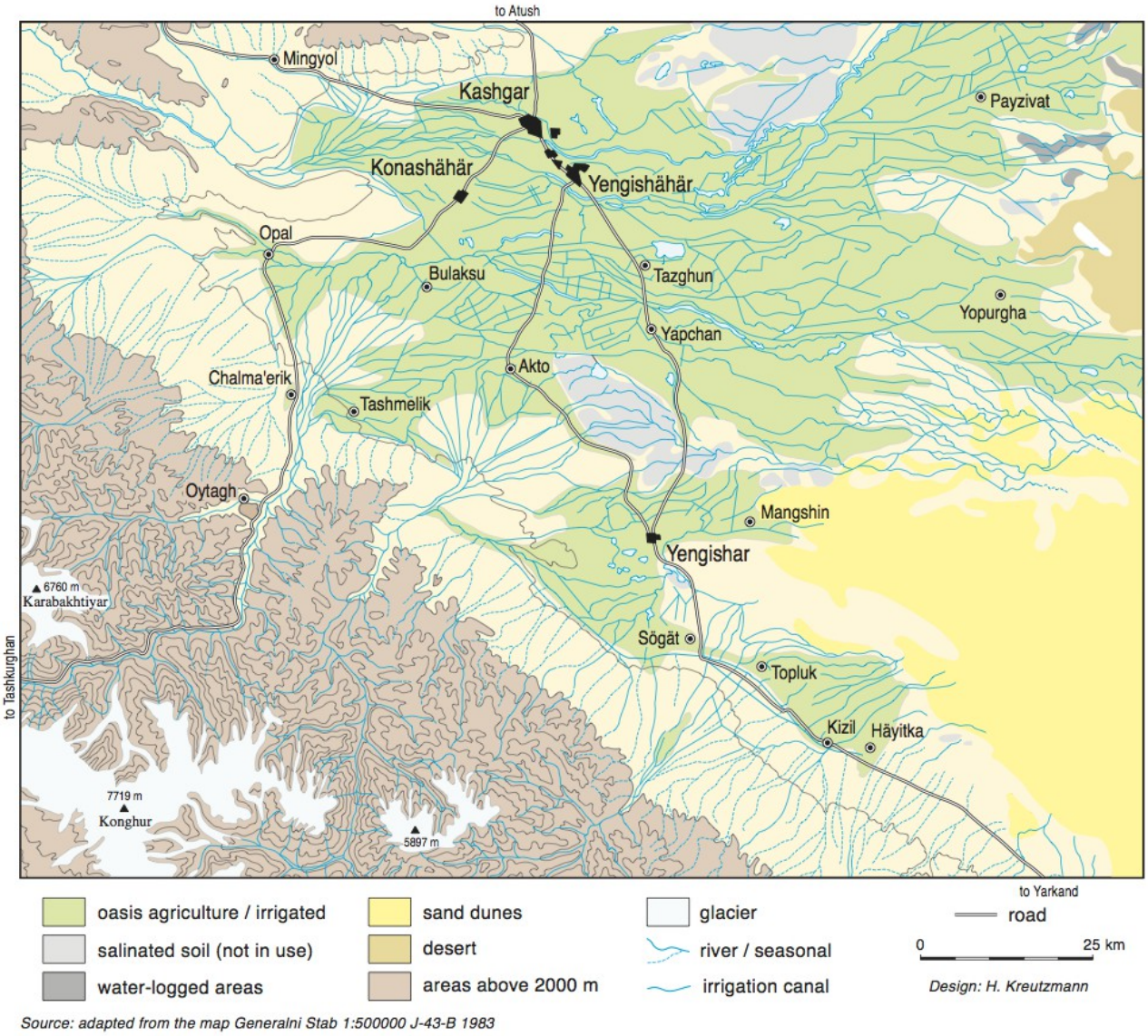


Fig. 2 The Kashgar region. This map gives a picture of the environmental conditions of the area flanked by desert on the east side and alpine mountain ranges to the south-west. This is an area of oasis irrigation agriculture with many man-made irrigation channels, as the straight lines of the water ways bear witness to and with large areas of salinated soil. (Source: Kreutzmann 2007: 374)

Despite massive government investment and economic campaigning in the large cities of Xinjiang, industrialisation has been relatively sparse. Yet, since the reopening of many border crossings to the Central Asian republics and Pakistan after the collapse of the Soviet Union and not least the establishment of the SCO (Shanghai Corporation Organisation), trade and transport have once again become important elements of the local economy. Large amounts of cheaply fabricated goods from Eastern China are exported to Central Asia and the adjacent countries via Xinjiang (cf. Angermann 2006: 44-56). Much of the traffic passes through Kashgar, especially since the opening of the Irkeshtam border to Kyrgyzstan in 1999. Concrete political implementations and small administrative changes, such as border openings and the restructuring of the old city are often more important to most people than the great national historical dates, especially in what concerns social organisation, kinship and community

practices. Friederich, for instance, argues that not 1949 but the early 1960s with its changing political attitudes "mark the major shift in the history and culture of Xinjiang's Uyghurs and other non-Chinese-speaking 'Muslim minorities' in Xinjiang" (Friederich 2007: 104). In southwestern Xinjiang some of the most important changes have been the two major phases of land reform in early 1950s and 1980s respectively (Hoppe 1987: 230-232, 1998: 117-118, Bellér-Hann 1998: 702-703, 707-708, Rudelson 1997: 109), the state management of religious affairs (Fuller and Lipman 2004: 333-338), the implementation of new family laws in 1950 and 1980 (Engels 1984) and of the One-Child policy in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Rudelson 1997: 106, Bellér-Hann 1997: 101-102).

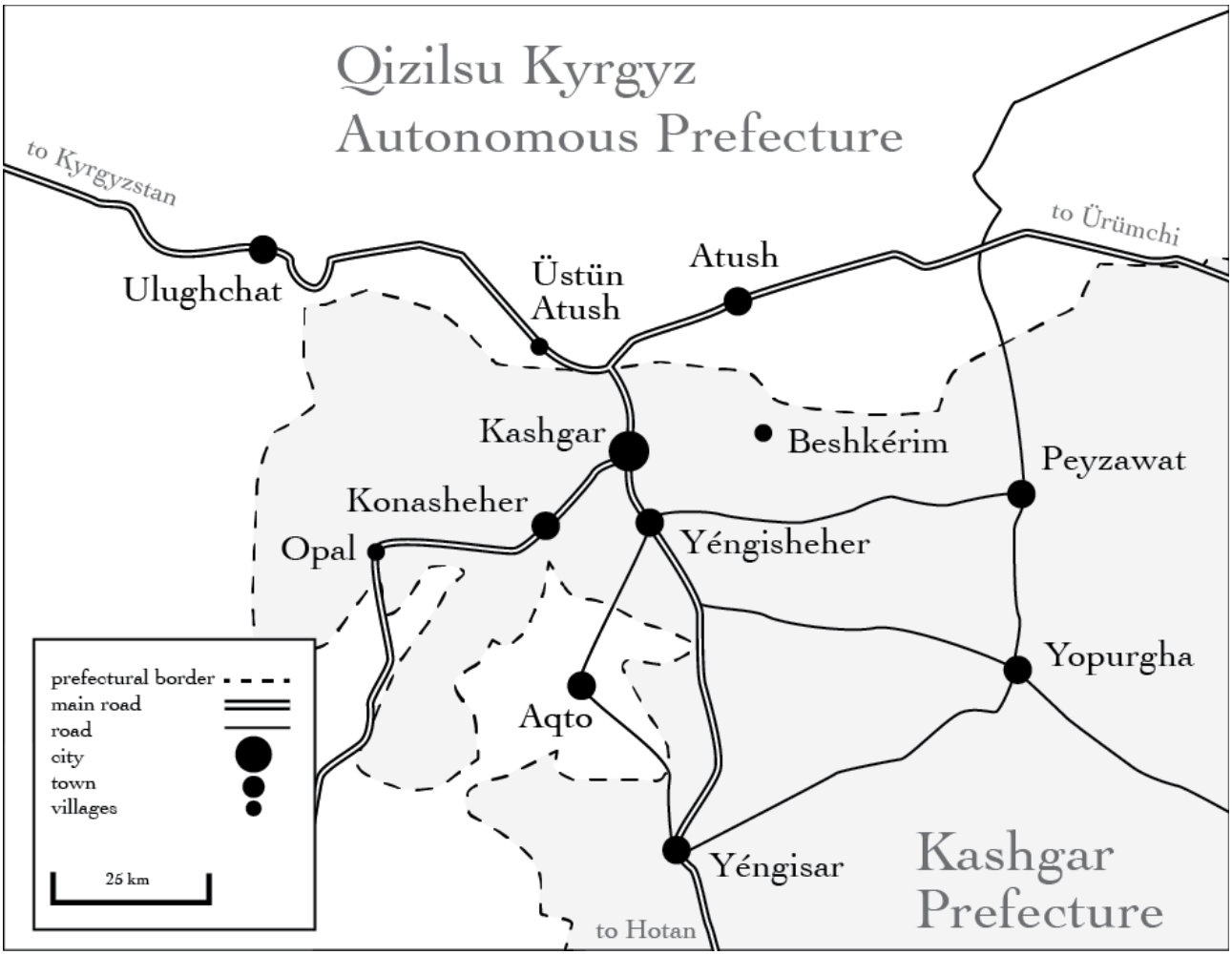


Fig. 3 Kashgar and surrounding towns and villages. (Cartographic base: Map of XUAR, Shandong Provincial Map Publishing House (□ □ □ ? □ ·; 2010); design by the author, supported by Zheng Chuyang)

Kashgar

Kashgar has been a trading post along the so-called Silk Road for centuries. This has brought various influences and various rulers to the region: tribal leaders, Chinese Dynasties, Buddhist rulers, Mongols, Timurids, Kharakhanids, nobles of Sufi Naqshbandiya brotherhoods, Manchu bureaucrats, Khokhandi warlords, Chinese governors, Islamic leaders, and communist cadres (cf. Gollings et al. 2008, Abdukérim Xaliq 2010, Zarcone 2010). Early on, the city served as a political, cultural and religious centre for the wider region, sometimes even the entire Tarim

Basin. In many phases of its long history it hosted large numbers of foreign traders. At present, traders particularly from the Central Asian republics and Pakistan frequent the city (cf. Rippa 2012). Many traders even marry locally, for which there is also a longstanding tradition (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 267-270, Benson 1993). Various foreign powers have been represented in the city, including a Russian consulate (built 1890) and a British consulate (built 1913). In 1884, the Swedish mission was set up in Kashgar, which continued to conduct its missionary and medical activities up until 1938, when it was ousted by Sheng Shicai's administration (Hultvall 1981, cf. Jarring 1975). During the early 2000s some American and British missionary activity took place in Kashgar, but the missionaries were forced to leave the city after the violent incidents in July 2009. These events also severely damaged the tourism industry in Kashgar, which had been on the rise. Xinjiang Tourism Bureau has initiated a campaign to boost tourism to Kashgar stating, that "you haven't seen Xinjiang unless you have been to Kashgar".[21] Many of my friends and acquaintances in Kashgar quoted this saying when proudly talking about their city and it captures a narrative common in all of Xinjiang, of Kashgar being the cultural (and religious) centre of the Uyghurs (e.g. Rudelson 1997: 153), featuring ancient scholars such as Mahmud Kashgari and Yusup Has Hajib, prominent figures in the construction of an Uyghur identity.

Kashgar's symbolic geography

The main icon of Kashgar is arguably the Idgah mosque (rebuilt 1838), which is the biggest mosque in the city, drawing thousands of believers every Friday and tens of thousands on religious holidays. It is one of the landmark places of the city which people arriving from the villages will visit and where classmates meet up. It is a point of orientation in daily conduct and a place that must be passed in any wedding procession through Kashgar. It also features prominently as a symbol for Islam and for Kashgar in all of the many wedding videos produced in the city, that I saw. Many videos start by showing a standard scene of the *muezzin* entering the roof of the mosque at dawn to call for prayer. The Idgah mosque is a symbol for Uyghur Islamic identity and a at the same time a hub for contestation about the position of Islam within Uyghur and local identity (Fuller and Lipman 2004: 340-344, 347) and vis à vis the Chinese state. The imams working at the mosque receive a government salary and are strictly controlled (Fuller and Lipman 2004: 333-338). In May 1990, the imam of the Idgah mosque was attacked with a knife for his alleged collaboration with the Chinese authorities (Gladney 2004a: 379).

A further landmark is the People's Square (Xelq meydani, Guangchang 广场) featuring one of China's last big statues of chairman Mao. This is the place for events and rallies arranged by the CCP or the local government. It is decorated in modern Chinese style with bridges, fountains and huge red lanterns sidelining the large empty square. Besides being a common feature of most larger modern cities in China in Kashgar this square stands for government control because it is the place where troops and police set up preliminary camps when stepping up security after violent or political incidents, which occurred a few times during my stay in the city. The Public Security Bureau is found just across the street. The square is even when speaking Uyghur often called by its Chinese name "Guangchang" (People's Square). It is for many Uyghurs in Kashgar

21 Cf. www.kashgartravel.com (last accessed 19.10.2013).

clearly a Chinese place and a place of the government, one that they do not identify with. This is not the case for the People's Park just behind the square, despite the architecture being very Han-Chinese too, including benches with pig heads carved in stone. This park is frequented by most inhabitants of Kashgar and referred to by its Uyghur name Xelq Baghchisi (I never heard any Uyghur call it by its Chinese name, *renmin gongyuan* 人民公园) . Here Han-Chinese elders dance in the evenings, Uyghur youths play basketball, badminton and elders play cards at the many tables set up and couples sit closer together than in any other public space in Kashgar. Unlike the square, the architecture of the park does not keep people from claiming this place as their own in various ways. This park itself would be worth a study of its own, as would Kashgar's social geography more generally.

One of the largest daily markets popularly known as the New Bazar (Yengi Bazar) is another central point of orientation in Kashgar. The name hints at international trade but today the bazar is more a place for retail than for wholesale and most customers are local. Handicraft souvenirs are sold in the front part of the bazar next to dried fruit and tea, but the hinder part is one of main centres for cheap clothes and shoes, kitchen utensils and soap. The bazar was sponsored and opened by the government in the early 2000s and the shops are run almost exclusively by Uyghur traders. The bazar epitomises the longstanding trading tradition of the region featuring an impressive architectonic facade in new-traditional, or what is locally called *milliy* (ethnic or national), style. Walking through the bazar with its areas of souvenirs, prayer mats, headscarves and hats in the beginning, its following rows of cloth, towels, bedding and of cheap clothes and shoes, stationary, soaps, honey, then electronic devices, DVD-players, washing machines, lamps, cables and electric equipment on the western side towards the river and more clothes on the eastern side towards the second hand market and the vegetable market in the adjacent streets. To many, it signifies the development, consumerism and relative prosperity that has come to the city over the past decade. Having a shop or a stand at the New Bazar marks one as a well established though not particularly rich trader. Richer businessmen will strive to have their own shops near the Chinese business centres on West Renminlu. Some half kilometer out of the city towards the east from the New Bazar another big bazar, that of Taxta Köwrük (Wooden Bridge), features a large area of fruit whole sale, where in winter and spring melons and apples imported from southern China are offered, next to another bazar offering a wide range of cloth stores. This is where many women among my acquaintances go to buy wedding gifts. As shall be explored below, cloth is an indispensable part of wedding gifting, and in some areas even giving name to the event of gift exchange among women at noon of the wedding day: *rext qoyush* (to put down/place/give cloth). All the bazars are points of reference and orientation in the city. The same goes for smaller bazars like the evening bazars near Idgah and in front of the International Bus Station (Xelqara Biketi, Atush Biketi) and a number of place names that signify former bazars in the old city near the mosque: Qonaq Bazari (maize bazar), Xam Bazari (leather bazar), Ketmen Bazari (hoe bazar). This inner core of the city also features a number of place names referring to the former palace and to the former city gates of pre-communist Kashgar: Orda Ishik (the palace door), Orda Aldi (before the palace), Qum Derwazisi (the sand gate). Other central places of orientation left only in name are the above-mentioned Taxta Köwrük and Bulaq Beshi (the spring's head). Some of these names have been

turned into official street names posted on blue signs in Chinese and Uyghur writing, some of them exist mainly in people's memory and in quotidian discourse. Many of the official street names derive from neighbourhoods (*mehelle*) comprising an area consisting of several streets rather than a line. Thus streets like Quruq Terek Kochisi (dried willow street) are divided in street one and street two right next to each other, framing what is more commonly known as Quruq Terek Mehellisi (Dried Willows Neighbourhood). This shows the intermingling of two systems of spatial organisation. The same can be seen on other levels too, since the neighbourhoods are at the same time integrated into the Chinese administrative system, yet also clearly mapped with steady border lines and named with numbers added onto the Chinese administrative unit names: 第2个小队 (*∂i erge xiao∂ui, 2-mehellisi,* the 2nd neighbourhood).

Newer, but no less important, points of reference in the cities are schools. Very often wedding invitations will state the place of celebration in terms of its vicinity to a certain school. All schools have numbers rather than names, which to local ears gives them a ring of Chinese administration, as seen in the case of the neighbourhoods above. One exception is the Pedagogical Institute of Kashgar, a large teachers training school. This school too is most widely known by an Uyghur version of its Chinese name, Sipenshüeyüan (师范学院 *shifanxueyuan*).

After passing the Idgah mosque most wedding processions will turn left past the People's Square, but not because of the square itself. The eastern extension of Renminlu going past the square (quite significantly) runs on a dam passing between two parks comprising artificial lakes fed with water from the Tümen Deriyisi (misty river) running through Kashgar. The new two-lane street is brightly lit at night. To the north lies one of the last picturesque parts of Kashgar Old Town, the old quarter of the potters, the alleged neighbourhood of Sit Nochi (Seeth the Great), a popular hero who during the Qing rule is said to have delivered his own death sentence to the *amban* (Qing title for city gouvernor) of Kashgar in order to keep his word. The neighbourhood lies on an elevated part of the city providing a great view from the road below. At night it is illuminated with big spotlights. To the south of the road a new stone embankment was built around the Sherkiy Köl (东湖 *∂ong hu*, Eastern Lake) just prior to the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. The lake is now equipped with small squares, stone steps, and a small building resembling the Sydney Opera House connected to the shores by long board walks. Electric palms around the lake brightly proclaim the arrival of Chinese modernity and prosperity to the region. Similar to the Peoples Park the lake has been embraced and claimed their own by a large part of the population of Kashgar. It is much frequented and not missed out in any wedding processions. It is one of Kashgars scenic spots for the wedding photographer's camera, but it is also one of strong symbolic significance. Both the Idgah Mosque and the Eastern Lake have become a standard part of weddings. Since weddings are also life cycle rituals instrumental in producing persons these places have thus with all they symbolically stand for become elements in people's lives, but more importantly they also have become integrated parts of the local conceptualisation of what a person is more generally.

Modernity and state-initiated restructuring of the city scape has created much controversy. Kashgar was in May 2010 declared a Special Economic Zone and has experienced a booming rise in investment construction since. Yet, many Uyghurs in Kashgar remark that Han-Chinese

settlers and businessmen have profited disproportionately much from these developments, while they have even been to the disadvantage of the bulk of the local Uyghur population. One often mentioned example of this is the destruction and rebuilding of Kashgar old city , about which much has been written.[22] The government politics connected to this rebuilding have both provided opportunities for locals to make profit from speculation in building sites and to people being driven out of their neighbourhoods and losing their livelihoods, social networks and business opportunities. As in most cases of social change and restructuring those in the poorest segments of the population have been the most vulnerable. Much discontent is expressed and the relation between the local administration and many inhabitants of the old city is further strained. The dissolution of old neighbourhoods certainly has an effect on the social structure and in many ways even on kinship. Communities who lose their spatial basis often change their way of social interaction to resemble networks of distant relatives rather than communities of neighbours. This has a great effect on the flow of exchange and thus on the economic and labour dependencies of individual households. The loss of closely-knit local communities, as described by Bellér-Hann (2008a) and Dautcher (2009), may often lead to a strengthening of genealogical relations, thus very much in Sabean's sense (see Sabean 1998, Mathieu 2007) a genealogical understanding of kinship is strengthened.

Fig. 4 Contemporary Map of Kashgar City with important place names added. The Idgah Mosque, the Peoples' Square and the Eastern Lake, representing traditional Muslim Kashgar, the Chinese State and capitalist modernity respectively, are passed by almost all wedding processions. (Source: Kashgar International Tourist Office, 2013; additions of place names by the author)

22 Cf. Global Heritage Network 2010, Uyghur Human Rights Project 2009, 2012, Mong 2011, Bellér-Hann 2013: 75-78.

Divisions of the city

Kashgar City is divided into four administrative parts, each of which has its own local government. They are subdivided into quarters (*дадui*) and further into neighbourhoods (*xiaoдui, mehelle*). When talking about houses and accommodation in Kashgar most people are concerned with whether one lives in an apartment (*bina öy*) or in a house (*öy, pingpang öy)*.[23] One-family houses from the 1970s, old multi-generational houses and new houses with covered courtyard, houses built by the government and houses built by the family are all subsumed under the heading of *pingpang öy*. The latter is associated with traditional living and closely knit neighbourhoods, but also with being one's own master and staying in a place permanently. Apartments, though often bought, are associated with rent (which has profoundly negative connotations) and mobility. This is connected to the architecture often not being expected to last more than 25-50 years and unlike the *pingpang öy* the apartment blocks provide no land for its buyers. At the same time apartments are also associated with modernity and comfort, especially since they have heating (*par*) which most *pingpang öy* do not. Many apartment blocks are gated in a more or less strict fashion. Some of them belong to government institutions or big companies housing primarily their employees (e.g. the Publishing House (Gezitxana), a big transport company, the Pedagogical Institute), others are built and distributed by real estate companies mostly from the eastern costal regions of China receiving massive government support. Some of these blocks are critically referred to as *mante mehellisi* (dumpling neighbourhoods), *mante* being a often derogatory metaphor for sex or female genitalia, to point to the lack of neighbourly moral control and to problems of poverty and prostitution. Neighbourhoods of *pingpang öy* (ground floor houses) are likewise to be found in great variations. Besides the multi story almost organically grown houses of the inner parts of the old city, semi rural neighbourhoods are to be found on the fringes of the city. These newly built quarters of *pingpang öy* with a high rate of fluctuation make up a large part of the city. These neighbourhoods often have the same institutions as older neighbourhoods, like the community of elder men (*jama'et*), labour help and the obligations at life cycle rituals, but they do not play the same role in people's lives or in a household's economy as in the rural areas or old urban neighbourhoods in the inner city. Some of the old *mehelle* that still exist in the inner city nevertheless carry the connotation of the artisanship for which they were once centres. In some of them these works are even still carried out, such as Chiasa Mehellisi (also the official name of the street which runs through it), which was for a long time the place of the shoemakers (*mozдuz*). Today, little shoemaking is practiced in Kashgar due to the large amounts of cheap footwear brought in from factories in Wenzhou and other southeastern Chinese cities, but when I started my fieldwork in 2010, Chiasa was still full of shops and workshops producing leather socks and the networks of mutual help and lending of material and money between the shoemakers were still well developed. This has decreased since, mainly because the new shops built in the process of reconstruction are too expensive for this profession, which mostly has marginal profits.

The rural communities around Kashgar are predominantly agricultural, growing mostly

23 Interestingly the Chinese word for square meter (pingfang 平方) is used to designate groundfloor houses while the purely Uyghur term '*bina öy*' is used for apartment blocks. This is curious since the apartment blocks carry Chinese connotations while the ground floor houses do not.

fruits, wheat and maize. Much of this is sold on the markets in Kashgar. Many city dwellers have connections of kinship and friendship to the rural surroundings, sometimes partaking in the circles of mutual labour help in these rural communities. Often women will marry from a village into the city and rarely the other way around. Material from these communities, as well as neighbourhoods in both rural and urban Atush and other small towns and villages in the wider surroundings shall be drawn on. Yet, the main concern of the thesis and the following analysis will be the marriage and kinship customs of the urban and semi-urban neighbourhoods in the city of Kashgar.

It is difficult to provide any concise description of the very heterogeneous social landscape of Kashgar. Certainly the categorisation of its neighbourhoods can hardly provide any complete picture of the city's great diversity. Uyghur society in Kashgar is split by economic differences or what we might call class, by religious differences (confessional and intensity, cf. Schrode 2008), and by relative distance to state institutions and resources. The latter pertains on the one hand to access to state resources in form of financial support, bureaucratic legitimation, education and jobs. On the other hand it includes the embeddedness in state led discourses and control as well as the acceptance or rejection of de facto state sponsored "Chinese culture". In a local categorisation of means of subsistence government workers (*kaɟer, xizmetchi*), traders (*tijaretchi*), private employees (*xizmetchi*), craftsmen (*hünerwen*) and workers without steady work (*ɯhchi*) are each differentiated and very differently connoted. While it is a great achievement and security to become employed by the government, mainly because of the job being stabile (*muqum*) expectedly life long and entails a pension, it also has several downsides. Nobody can buy a house or a car, or even marry with savings from a government salary, I was often told. This in a local understanding forces government workers to do side business, often including a certain degree of abuse of their position. Furthermore, *kaɟer* are restricted in their religious activities. They are not allowed to pray or fast during Ramadan, to grow a beard or dress in traditional or religious fashion. Working for the government in some circles has a connotation of collaboration and many government workers stress their religiosity and their loyalty towards the Uyghurs when outside *kaɟer* circles. Here again Islam becomes a marker of Uyghurness and of loyalty towards what is perceived as their own people and their own traditions. Successful traders and private business men have an extremely high status and most boys I asked dreamt of following in their footsteps when they grew up. They are seen as the only ones having the possibility to make real fortunes and with a great amount of personal and religious freedom, since they are not dependent on government money and thus less vulnerable to government sanctions. Artisanship still has a high standing in Kashgar (cf. Bilqut 2010). Yet, as remarked for the case of the shoemakers most crafts have suffered blows from the stream of cheap products brought into the region from inner China. Here tensions between traders and artisans is sometimes detectable.

Another important difference exists between long established families of social standing (what Gollings et al. call a modern Khoja elite; 2008:11) and newly rich or newly arrived families. This entails certain social tensions, as clearly demonstrated in Abdukérim Abliz's sktetch "*men kim ɜen kim*," in which a poor widows son has become rich in the construction

business. His childhood friends who both end up working for him talk about his success and one of them keeps pointing to the low social standing of his family, arguing that the newly rich businessman should therefore show him respect, since he, his poor and unemployed childhood friend, is from a better family (2011: 1-7). The local idiom used in the sketch is that of *tegi* (ground, bottom, background, 'roots'). This derives from the central importance of the household, the parental home (*chong öy*) and the grandparents of both sides — though often primarily associated with the paternal grandparents because of the custom of virilocality. Social networks of long established families seem more centered on larger units or hubs defined as kinship, while households not belonging to such well established families depend more on neighbourhood connections and networks of individual connections of less duration. The obligation within these networks is not tied to as many levels as in the more closely-knit large well-situated families. Furthermore such "old families" especially within the urban area, seem to marry more within the family in a genealogical (consanguinal) understanding of the word. The status of a family is often connected to its moral and religious reputation. The religious stratification of the population of Kashgar is complex (cf. Wang unpublished , Fuller and Lipman 2004). The authority of *molla* (religiously learned men) and other religious authorities is pronounced but not undisputed. Some *molla* have acquired the status of celebrities through preaching at marriage ceremonies (*nikah*), one of the few places where religious teaching can be carried out legally and uncontrolled by the government. Striving for piety has achieved a very high symbolic value in the past decade. This is also clearly detectable within changes in wedding practices. New religious ideas are entering the region through people returning from pilgrimages to Mekka, trading in the Central Asian republics and through the internet. Many youths in Kashgar are inspired by these ideas and use religiosity to establish a positive (often ethnic) identity as a reaction to what is felt as ethnic discrimination. Islam is clearly a marker for Uyghur identity.

During and beyond Qing rule the city has had designated Chinese quarters. This is clearly visible on historical maps of Kashgar such as one drawn in 1900 by Russian lieutenant Kirilow (Hartmann 1908: appendix "Tafel II") and one drawn in 1910 by the British Captain Shuttleworth. Kashgar has both a new and an old city (*yengi sheher, kona sheher*). The new city used to be a Chinese military bastion. During certain periods the living areas of the Chinese and Muslim population were strictly segregated. Today the border between the Chinese and Uyghur parts of the city is also sensed. When walking down Jiefang Lu (Liberation Street) in the centre of the city, the crossing with Renmin Lu (People's Street) marks a clear shift in architecture and population. Hereafter, Han Chinese and Chinese stores dominate the picture. The tendency is one of segregation, but this division is by no means intransgressible. Uyghurs generally shop in the Chinese part of town and especially in the new building blocks Han and Uyghurs often live door by door. Some of the government institutions make efforts to ethnically mix the housing. In some blocks within the campus of the Pedagogical Institute the apartments are given out primarily to Han Chinese on the left side and Uyghurs on the right side of the stairway to facilitate close neighbourly contact between the two groups. Yet there is in many social groups in Kashgar a general suspicion towards the other ethnic category and Ma asserts that "only in the

few large state-run economic organisations (horticultural gardens) have harmonic relations between ethnic groups been developed and obtained" (2008: 405). In a study focussed on Kashgar's prefecture, he detects a large degree of avoidance between Han and Uyghurs and concludes that "the present pattern of geographic distribution and residence undoubtedly has a negative impact on contact and exchange between the Uyghur and the Han people" (2008: 406).

In the light of the context sketched in this chapter the marriage process and the art of creating and upholding close social relations, which, as shall be described in the following chapters, can be seen as charged with historical influences, economic circumstances and religious and ethnic sentiments. The irrigation agricultural organisation as well as the trading milieu of Kashgar city set a frame for kinship practice which is also coloured by ethno-nationalist and religious sentiments as well as the policies of the Chinese state. Regional and even local differences are pronounced due to general endogamic tendencies and the city of Kashgar offers a range of spaces and places signifying and carrying the memory of historical and recent developments. These developments are all reflected in kinship practice and since both marriage and weddings are such central parts of daily life, these are some of the areas in which they most clearly show.

The following historical maps document the development of Kashgar city from a walled city of the so-called 'oriental city' design with a division into neighbourhoods as quasi-closed-off compounds (cf. Wirth 2000) to a modern city according to the modernistic design used all over China, featuring a central crossing of the two main north-south and east-west bound roads. The People's Square and several central administrative institutions are situated in this very centre which historically grows out of the 'Chinese Quarter', as identified in the southern part of the walled city on the old map. Following this redesigning of the city former central Uyghur areas thus become spatially marginalised and the new Chinese building blocks stretching from the administrative centre around the Peoples Square and north-westwards towards Shamalbagh and Semen become as much a part of the centre of the city. In recent years this development is continued in the aimed demolition of old neighbourhoods in the old city of Kashgar and the reconstruction of houses and streets according to modern standards.

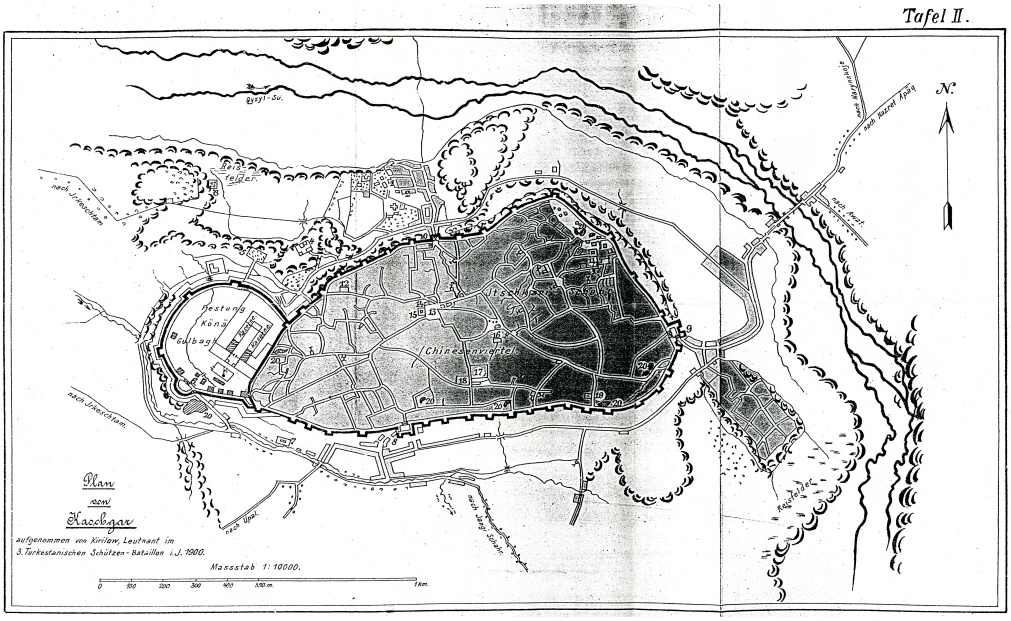


Fig. 5 Map of Kashgar drawn by Lt. Kirilow in 1900. On this map the old outline of Kashgar as a walled city of separate neighbourhoods is obvious. The 'Chinese Quarter' (*Chinesenviertel*) are marked in the southern part of the walled city, where the People's Square, the People's Park and the Public Security Bureau are located today. The city gates, like Qum Derwazisi (here, point 8: 'Kun-Därwazä') at the southernmost point of the wall, today still exist merely as names. (Source: Hartmann 1908: appendix "Tafel II")

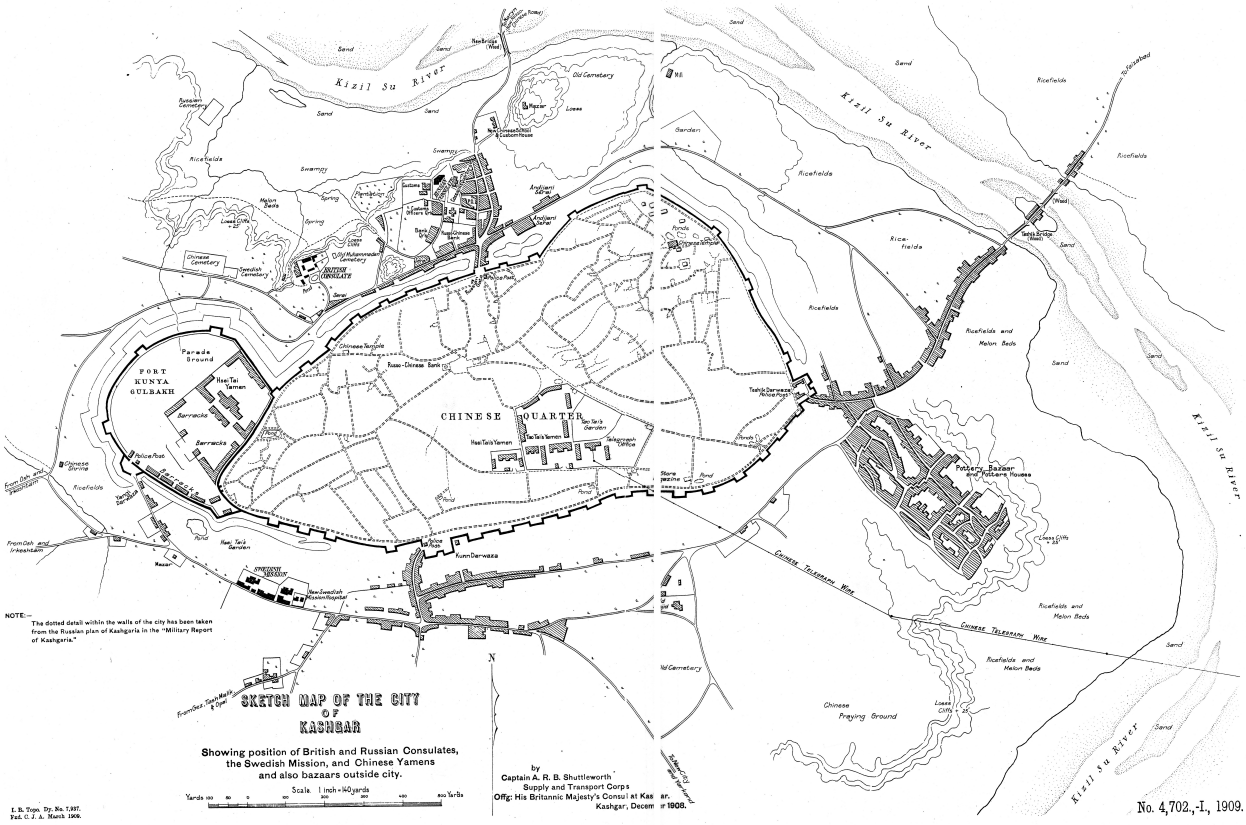


Fig. 6 Map of Kashgar drawn by Ct. A. R. T. Shuttleworth in 1908. The 'Chinese Quarter' is explicitly marked in the very place where much of the city administration is today, and where the two main roads that later came to constitute the centre of the modern city of Kashgar: Jiefanglu (□ □ ;Uygh. Azadliq Yoli) and Renminlu (ũ □ □; Uygh. Helq Yoli). (Source: India Office Library: No. 4, 702, -I., 1909)

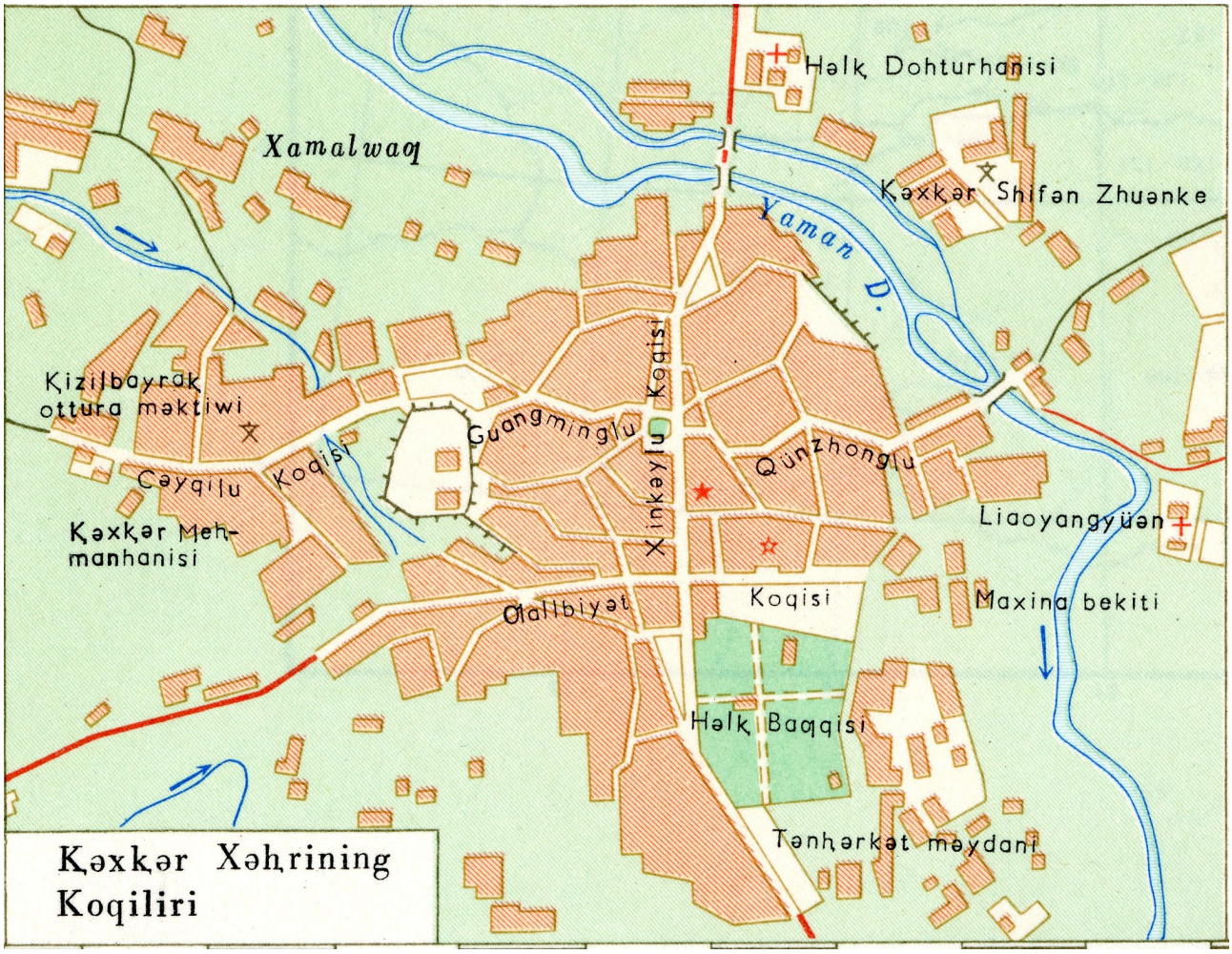


Fig. 7 Map of Kashgar city by the XUAR Map Compilation Committee (1966). Here the typical modern design of Chinese cities is clearly apparent: The central crossing of the two main roads Xinkeylu Koqisi (today Jiefanglu, □ □ □; Uygh. Azadliq Yoli) and Ghallbiyet Koqisi (today Renminlu, ữ □ □; Uygh. Helq Yoli) and the Peoples Square make up the architectural and administrative centre of the city. (Source: XUAR Map Compilation Committee 1966: 138)

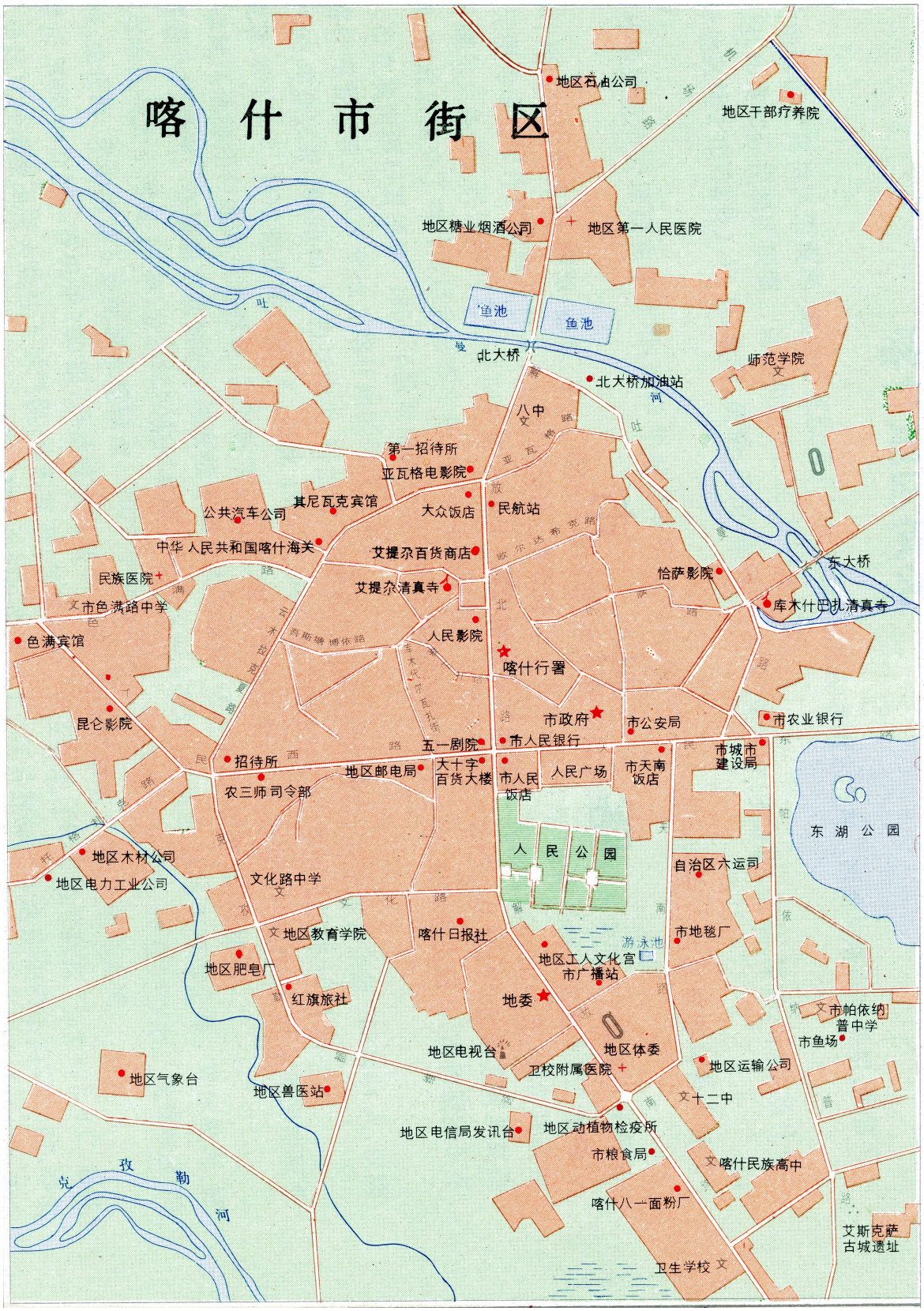


Fig. 8 Map of Kashgar city in the 1990s, by the XUAR Cartographic Bureau. The Renminlu (ئۇ □ □; Uygh. Helq Yoli) passing the People's Square has been extended towards the east as a main road and the artificial East Lake (□ □, Donghu, Uygh. Sherkiy Köl) has been created. (Source XUAR Cartographic Bureau 1995: 161)

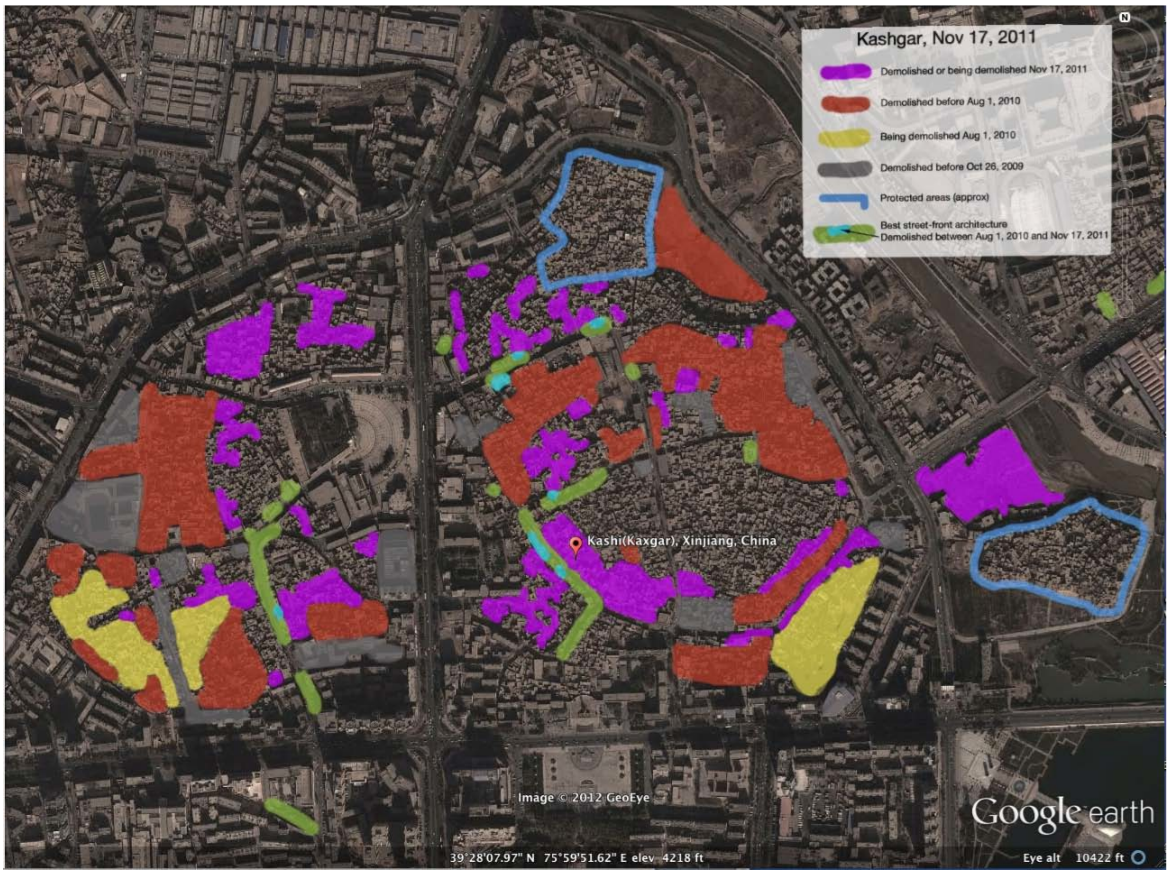


Fig. 9 Illustration of the demolition of old neighbourhoods in Kashgar 2011 by Stefan Geens. The areas of demolition and restructuring are clearly those within the walled city on the early maps. Yet, since 2011 the restructuring has reached areas not marked on the map, including suburban areas beyond the old city wall. (Source: Uyghur Human Rights Project 2012: 36; Retrieved from http://ogleearth.com/2012/02/the-last-days-of-old-kashgar-an- update/?subscribe=success#blog_subscription-3.)

3.2 Mapping marriage. Method and reflexions

The prospects for fieldwork looked grave when I started my PhD-project in the fall of 2009. The political situation in the area had changed significantly since I had first applied for funding one year earlier and my plans for fieldwork in Kashgar had been made much less likely by the violent protests in Ürümchi that very summer. Still through a mixture of good fortune, cautious proceeding and very helpful contacts I was able to arrange for a prolonged stay in the city of Kashgar on which I embarked in August 2010. Including extended trips to Kyrgyzstan, Ürümchi and nort-east China and one two-months return to Berlin I stayed in the area until November 2011 leaving shortly after a most exciting and very instructive *qurban héyit* (Īd al-'Aʼʼʼá, Festival of the Sacrifice). This trip was supplemented by two shorter trips of three months each. I lived in an apartment, half of the time together with my son, half of the time alone, but surrounded by Uyghur families. I took part in the daily activities in the neighbourhood and the lives of my

neighbours, acquaintances and friends and through accessing their networks of social contacts acquired an insight into the inner workings of just these social networks and communities. I witnessed, and to some degree participated in, the regular exchange of food between 'near' or 'good' neighbours and the neighbour's children visited us almost every night. We lived in a new six story apartment building (built in 2006). In front of this block was a walled *mehelle* of approximately seventy low mud and brick houses arranged in rows. They had been built as quarters for the employees of a large state owned transport company in the 1960s and 1970s. The houses had a small walled courtyard and three to five rooms. Some families had torn down the walls between two yards to have a bigger house. Most of the families living here were two or three generational families whose members or members' parents had been working for the company. This included a few Han-Chinese and one local Kyrgyz family. The rest were Uyghurs, predominantly from Kashgar, but having moved to the neighbourhood within a generation or two. This clearly had an effect on the relations within the *mehelle*. Relatives and other relations outside the neighbourhood of the families living here were less intertwined, than I experienced in older *mehelle*, but the daily exchange between the women and the mutual obligation to help at life cycle events were pronounced. Within the last two generations there have been quite a few intermarriages within the *mehelle*.

During my stay in Kashgar I conducted no formal interviews and made no systematic surveys. I relied on the method of participant observation, spending my time at the markets, in the homes of my neighbours and friends, helping out on the fields in the surrounding villages, and then writing it all up when exhausted and dusty I returned to my apartment most evenings. Much information can be obtained in ordinary conversations, or what I call 'practice interviews'. Ordinary conversations can even become sources of systematically collected information without taking on the air of an interview, if the context is taken into consideration and time not too limited. Certain situations of everyday life offer the opportunity to address areas that are otherwise difficult to approach. When sitting in a shop at the market and more general questions about preferences and habits in commercial affairs seem appropriate, as do inquiries into marriage prestations while waiting for the bride at a wedding. Such slightly directed conversations are what I mean by 'practice interviews'. They include a certain element of luck, but can also be more systematically strived and prepared for. They provide information for a more practically and situationally based sociology of local knowledge. I spent much of my time with males between the ages of 25 and 45 and with the married women of the *mehelle* I lived in. Most of these belonged to the lower middle class and made a living as drivers, petty traders, farmers, artisans and housewives. Unlike in Ürümchi the government employees in Kashgar seemed to avoid spending much time with me and were generally quite busy. Towards the end of my stay I also gained some insight into the more wealthy business milieus. Such people often preferred to meet me at their own homes to curb rumors of their associating with foreigners. Though Westerners are generally openly welcomed and generously treated in Kashgar, too much contact with them potentially raises suspicion of both government and religious authorities.

In Kashgar, gender segregation is practiced in many areas of daily life including certain parts of the wedding celebration. My access to designated women's areas and events was limited. Yet, this undeniable empirical male bias was at least partly countered. The segregation is not always

rigorously kept and often has quite pragmatic aspects. It is often more about a division of roles and labour than about the strict division of people of different gender per se. Thus during the time my son stayed with me, I spent a lot of time with the women of the *mehelle* and of the families I frequented, since we all had small children to take care of. Furthermore, as I became more integrated into the families with which I had close associations I was allowed to take part in most, yet not all, of the events of the marriage process. Other events I was told about and saw on the many wedding videos. Unfortunately, I did not have the opportunity to participate in any negotiation meetings in the early phases of the marriage process. I had the good fortune to have some exchange with local female social scientists, and have the BA-thesis of Zaili Memettursun (2012) on weddings in Kashgar as an important reference. A much more worrying male bias than the empirical one is present in the very definitions and language in much of social science. This is clearly visible in the analytical models of the kinship theories treated above: Both the genealogical method and the models of alliance theory generally assume a male 'ego'. Such a bias is less easy to detect and to counter. It is wound up in a male perspective on sociality, which includes a division of 'homely' and 'private' spheres associated with women, from 'public' and 'political' spheres associated with men. To approach this I draw on Marilyn Strathern's insights that the spheres of sociality which evolve more around households and houses than around more 'public' spaces and are therefore associated with being 'private' to many Westerners, are not therefore less social or indeed less important (Strathern 1988a: 92-97, Moore 1988). Surely a female social sphere of gift giving is of central importance to the relations of households and to the construction of community in Kashgar, and also women are instrumental in match making — often defining the possibilities before any man participates in the decision of which of them to choose. Much of the more 'public' male behavior would not be possible or make much sense without the foundation of the female networks.

Situational analysis, structural analysis and narrative

Two main analytical tools complement each other in this study: situational analysis and structural analysis. They draw on the same set of ethnographic data, but treat them differently. For their useful implementation the source and level of abstraction of the data must be clearly stated, as Needham has suggested (Needham 1973).[24] Situational analysis is the thick description (Geertz, 1973: 3-30) of a concrete experienced or narrated situation or phenomenon in great detail. A thick description entails a focus on both practical logic and the conditions of possibility (Bourdieu 1976:146-151). Approaching practical logic treats the reasons and narratives, the 'whys' of the local actors. The connotations of the individual elements of a situation, the minute means of social distinctions (Bourdieu 1982), and the un-said (cf. Foucault 1999/1972: 42-44) are made visible. The connections of elements within the situation or phenomenon are laid out, but also the references and connotations to other situations and phenomena beyond the situation

24 Needham's distinctions shall be further elaborated on below. Introducing it here is a way to achieve more transparency in my descriptions: I show how which information is collected or derived at, and at which level of abstraction it is situated. I distinguish explicitly whether a given information is reached at by observation (inevitably coloured by my own concepts and understandings) or is a statement of informants, (coloured by local concepts and ideologies) and where possible give some background on the situation, the persons involved and my relation to them. Also, I clarify where I consciously interpret and analyse — that is, where I either abstract (raise the level of abstraction) or draw upon conditions of possibility I have not personally been able to confirm.

are taken into account. This is an interpretive process employing hermeneutical tools. This analysis is complemented by structural analyses where they appear helpful. A structural analysis is about the relations of elements beyond their specific employment in any given situation, about the relations of opposition, analogy, parallel, negation and so on, which certain concepts or values have to each other and which give them their meaning and social significance. One such example is the relationship between the concepts 'consanguineous' and 'affine'. In Kashgar they uphold no simple binary opposition, but a relation whose complexity has to be described in more detail (cf. Alvi 2007, Needham 1987, Dumont 1983: viii-vii, 32). Only by paying attention to such relations a deeper understanding and a truly thick description becomes possible. The situational analysis provides the data for the structural analysis and at the same time draws on this to contextualise the situation or narrative analysed. Each situation or narrative must be seen in relation to identifiable structures of different kinds. Having arrived at a structure or a model, the 'logic of practice' (Bourdieu 1976: 164-172, 1990, 130-134, Mc Nay 2004: 183-185) arrived at in the situational analysis has to be reintroduced into the structural analysis to understand the social phenomenon studied beyond abstract 'mechanics'.

Within this analytical model the concept of 'narrative' may be handily applied to name the possible (or perceived) relations between two or more concepts or values (cf.Bruner 1997: 264, Hinchman and Hinchman 1997: xv-xvi). A much quoted proverb like "*quda keldi, xuda keldi*" (the affines came, God came) thus expresses a narrative linking the affines to God in the sense, that both are to be respected and feared - connecting the concepts of (a certain kind of) fear, God and affines. Other narratives may connect these concepts in different ways giving a wide range of possible, or socially meaningful relations. Which of these is stressed in a particular context, willfully or through the given circumstances can be grasped in a situational analysis. The term 'narrative' thus also provides a convenient analytical tool to navigate between situational analysis and structural analysis. The narratives conveyed or referred to in different situations show the possible relations of the employed concepts. The structural analysis then compares and relates these narratives to other narratives showing other possible connotations and referents of the concepts. Returning to the given situation in question this can now be shown to stress a certain area of the possible connotations and connections of the concepts, de-emphasising others.[25]

Another analytical term employed to grasp the connection between concepts including their use in practice is that of 'logic,' which I adapt from Bourdieu's 'logic of practice' or 'practical reason' (Bourdieu 1998b: 82-85) to take it to a more structural level. Bourdieu's concept of practice logic focusses mainly on the point of view of the actor who reads her own position in a certain structure or circumstance and accordingly takes certain measures and employs corresponding strategies within the given conditions of possibility. I use the term 'logics' to grasp the systematic quality of how certain concepts, categories, strategies and practices are intertwined and connected when seen from the actors' points of view. Certain categories and modes of action call for others in ways more direct and pressing than the potential connection

25 This reflects the design of this thesis: Part II offers a situational analysis of the marriage process. Part III deals with the relations of close marriage, affinity, marriage prestations, terminology and divorce in applying a more of structural analysis. In Part IV the structural insights are then returned to the thick description of ethnographical matters by discussing specific developments and phenomena related to contemporary weddings and marriage. This includes a focus on the historical transformations.

through narratives. For instance, the logic of close marriage in Kashgar calls for the affines to be performatively constructed as close relatives and the logic of reciprocity calls for wedding gifts to be remembered or written down in order for them to be returned on occasion. My employment of the term 'logic' thus enters into Needham's categorical level (Needham 1973) of the categories of perception and action in which the world is experienced and dealt with. It captures structural connections between such categories and modes of action, which are central to the meaning and function of these elements themselves and less flexible than the more conscious connections that 'narratives' establish between them.

Words, gifts, bodies and space

In collecting data concerning social relations (within and without the marriage process), I have focussed on four main areas of what I call 'practices of differentiation' or 'practices of categorisation': terminological practices, exchange practices, spatial practices and bodily practices. These categories have been a tool of support in data collection, not a means of analysis. Most practices involve more than just one of the above and they are mostly strongly interlinked beyond what would be meaningful to differentiate for the purpose of this study. Yet, the attention to these different areas is central to escape the pronounced focus on linguistic categories marking much social science. The important thing to take into consideration is that many practical and relevant categorisations are undertaken without entering linguistic categorisation. In the case of socially and emotionally difficult matters, the terminological differentiation may even be consciously avoided and words can be applied differently than what they seem to imply. In our case this insight helps to argue against a basic understanding of kinship in Kashgar as agnatic or genealogical, though local idioms such as *qanداsh* (relative, lit. sharing blood) and *tughqan* (relative, lit. born) may feature these biases. Terminological practice includes: Who calls whom what, who refers to whom as what, who talks how about someone, which words are used or avoided in certain contexts? Exchange practices concern: Who gives what to whom, how and when is it reciprocated (if indeed it is, see Sahlins 1972: 193-196), which expectations and connotations are linked to this and what social rules apply? Spatial practice is about: Who lives where, with whom, where does who meet, sit, stand eat in which contexts, where are objects placed and how is land passed on? Lastly, bodily practices relate to: How does who greet whom, how, where and when does who stand, sit, eat or not, dance or walk? It is important to point out, that the 'who' and 'whom' here mentioned must not be defined along terminological lines, but can be defined within any of the above given areas.

Within the situations in which they are employed these practices of differentiation and of categorisation sometimes create inclusions and exclusions. They do not just refer to individuals, but to larger social units or categories to which a certain relation is expressed. The person employing one of these categorisations (which is mostly done as a part of a general habitus, but may also be done very consciously, even manipulatory) is drawing a line between himself and certain people on one side and certain other people on the other side. This creates a temporary 'us' and 'them'. As an example, by not venturing to be officially waited on at the table cloth (*داstixan*), but instead, eating squatted behind the large cooking pot at an early morning wedding

meal, a helper may signal his belonging to the category of hosts as opposed to that of guests. Similarly by calling their neighbour "our relative," an elder couple includes this neighbour into their category of 'own,' temporarily. Depending on the context a gift can express both 'us' and 'they' to the receiver. Unlike the more abstract and essentialising approach of studies on 'identity' (Jenkins 1996, Assmann 1999, Newby 2007), I chose to use notions of 'us' and 'them' as micro-analytical tools to approach practices of categorisation.

Besides situations and conversations, various forms of text written in and for the social contexts in Kashgar provide rich material for narrative analyses. I have found valuable material in the sketches of Abdukérim Abliz, a comedian from Kashgar who has lived and worked in Ürümchi for many years and whose sketches are known and loved all over Xinjiang.[26] Also various tales and novels have carefully been integrated into the analysis of values and narratives throughout the study. In many cases they provide merely hints or traces (Ginzburg 1983) or serve as illustrative material for narratives and values I have encountered elsewhere too. Any source carries within it the traces of the social context in which it was created and of that which it was created for. Such traces are often some of the best access points to local conceptualisations. One certainly needs to proceed epistemologically carefully, but since our concern is with the meaning and underlying concepts of practice, not merely with its outer appearance, local morality (Rasanayagam 2011: 7-12) and narratives are crucial to the analysis.

The detailed description of a marriage process and the following analyses draw mainly upon my field-work material collected during my stay in Kashgar. I have analysed this material according to the design above: Starting out from situations and instances (including those of books and plays that people relate themselves to), I have extracted central concepts and categories which become apparent in the various parts of practice, such as spatial, bodily, terminological and in exchange. The connections between these concepts and categories I have grasped using the analytical terms of 'narratives' and 'logics' to draw up a structure that is not fixed or rigid, but flexible and shifting, both situationally and historically. I then on the one hand draw on these concepts and their connections to take a closer look at specific current phenomena, while on the other hand trying to draw up a sketch of their historical genesis. As a first step then, let us turn our attention to the ethnographic centrepiece of this thesis: the marriage process itself.

26 In 2013 Abdukérim Abliz became a more controversial figure in the public discourse after producing the much criticised historical TV series 'Anarxan' for Chinese state television (CCTV).

II. The Marriage Process

The sun's first beams reflected in the facade of the high-rise office buildings of Kashgar city visible above the low mud huts of the neighbourhood in front of my quarters. I had been invited for five o'clock to partake in the early morning ceremony of the wedding of my neighbour's daughter. I warmed myself by the fire above which an open black iron pot of one meter in diameter rested solidly. The chef was quickly scooping steaming hot pilau onto large white plates with patterns of blue cotton flowers passed to him by the younger men serving the guests. I asked him how exactly he was related to the bride before whose parents house we were standing. Hospitality and guesting are essential elements and tools in managing social relations among Uyghurs in Kashgar. Being a guest (*méhman bolush*) and making someone else a guest (*méhman qilish*) are widely discussed and used practices in almost all age and gender groups. The roles of guest and host are clearly separated and suggest very different modes of conduct (Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 139-151, Weli Kérem 2010a, Jarring 1975: 37-40). It therefore struck me as peculiar, when the chef answered that he did not know the bride's parents, but that he was the brother of the groom's mother. He was cooking, handing out food, and thus acting as a host in the home of someone he barely knew. He had taken upon himself the most arduous task among the hosts: cooking pilau for several hundred men visiting the home of the bride's parents on this beautiful wedding morning. Yet to my best understanding he, as a member of the groom's family, seemed clearly to belong to the category of guests. I wondered how it could be that he could take on this role, when a guest under normal circumstances cannot even get a spoon from the kitchen himself and has her hands washed in a basin held by the host? The bride's side and the groom's side are clearly held apart as two stabile structural positions in all parts of the marriage process. Were bride-takers and bride-givers of this wedding acting as one unit? Yes, and no, as shall become clear in the description below, affine relations are complexly negotiated throughout the marriage process. The interesting question that this poses is: how are the relations of the two sides in the marriage? How are they thought of and how are they practiced? In other words: what is the conceptualisation and practice of affinal relations in Kashgar?

Weddings are big events in Kashgar. They present a node of obligations, set free a range of emotions and attitudes and claim the most critical resources of households. A trader explained how all these obligations kept him from doing business, while a tailors apprentice looked forward to dancing at the wedding of the boy next door. He and his friends afterwards spent an excited evening watching the wedding video. Weddings and marriages are said to be happy events full of joy. They are. Dance and laughter mark much of the happening, as do high hopes and expectations. I was told that the word "*toy*" (wedding, life cycle ritual) was derived from the verb "*toymaq*" (to fill, to be full). A *toy* is an event where everyone is given enough to eat, where everyone is full including the poor of the community (cf. Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 133). A young man, newly married, took the metaphor a turn further. To him a *toy* was also where family members and relatives had enough of each other (*bir-biridin toyidu*), were fed up with each other.

The attributions of meaning to marriage are as least as manifold as to weddings. It is

therefore necessary and helpful to scrutinize some of the most common local idioms for marriage and their connotations before proceeding to a thick description of a certain kind of marriage, as it is often held in Kashgar. This is a kind of marriage which comes close to the local ideal of marriage and which I during my stay in the city experienced and heard of several times, more or less the way it is described below. Important variations are provided within the description. The marriage follows a certain logic, which connects to the phenomenon of close marriage and serial monogamy. This logic attributes great importance to the affines and within this logic it is the ideal for affines to be made close relatives. The marriage process is full of events and symbols to facilitate this. At the same time the local community is also constructed and re-presented within the course of such a marriage process. Other logics of marriage do exist; yet, I argue that they all have important relations to (in the sense that they are in some way locally seen as transformations of) the type of marriage described here.

4 Local Idioms for Marriage

"*Obdan boptu, qiz chong bolsa yatliq qilidighan gep*" (Very well, when girls reach maturity they should be married off)

(from the movie *Berbat Bolghan Muhebbet* (Destroyed Love), cf. Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq: 2009a: 216).

The English word 'marriage' is loaded with connotations not all necessarily relevant to the social context of Kashgar. It has been a much discussed concept in social anthropology and can be analytically approached in a number of ways including descent theoretical, alliance theoretical and more interactionalist or strategy centred analyses. The only broad consensus on marriage seems to be that it cannot be defined universally, but must be looked at in the local context (Barnard and Good 1984: 90-91, Needham 1971: 5-7, Pfeffer 1985: 68-70, Berrenberg 2002: 30). To approach the local conceptualisation of marriage the most important and frequent local terms and idioms for marriage will be read in light of the ethnographic context of the study. This explores a range of common local perspectives on marriage before proceeding to the description of the marriage process. In contemporary Uyghur Kashgar several different terms and idioms are applied for what could translate as 'marriage'. No one single term denotes this complex conglomerate of social practices, but different tropes are employed. Most of them are more precisely synecdoches, standing for and referring to a whole which they are themselves part of. These tropes are 'peaks of sunken models' (Black 1983/1954: 396). They have beneath the visible tip (the term) a whole range of culturally significant connotations. They stress different aspects of the total process of marriage and thus point to some of the most essential parts of the marriage process in different local views. These tropes shall be our point of departure in approaching the local conceptualization of marriage. As apparent in the speculations on the meaning of the word "*toy*" (wedding, life cycle ritual) above, marriage as a practice is polysemous. Marriages mean very different things to different people and in different situations or contexts. This is not least a differentiation in gender views and in the perspectives of each generation. Both are reflected in the tropes discussed below. The structural positions of wife, husband, parent, sibling, neighbour, married, unmarried influence the view on marriage and how meaning is attributed to it and which tropes may be employed (cf. Berrenberg 2002: 30-31). When people in Kashgar talk about marriage the most common tropes are: '*toy qilmaq*' (to make wedding/life cycle ritual), '*öylenmek*' (to set up a house), '*qiz/hotun almaq*' (to take a wife), '*erge tegmek*' (to touch a man, to follow a man), '*nikahlanmaq*' (to have the religious marriage ceremony conducted) and '*chatmaq*' (to connect). While *toy qilmaq* is the most common phrase used for both genders, *öylenmek* is most common for men and *erge tégmek* for women. We will now look closer at the connotations of these tropes.

Toy qilmaq

The trope *toy qilmaq* (to make *toy*, wedding, life cycle ritual; Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 128, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 122, 123, 127, 138) puts the focus on the life cycle celebrations. Stressing the *toy* celebrations connects the marriage to the range of other life cycle rituals likewise called *toy* (c.f. Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 127-129, Abdukérim Rexman et al. 2009a: 341-347, Bellér-Hann 2008a: 217). They include the cradle celebration (*böshük toyi*), the naming ritual (*isim toyi*; Abdukérim Rehman et al. 2009a: 342), circumcision celebrations (*sünnät toyi, xetne toyi*; Tursunmuhemmet Sawut 2003: 148-149), and formerly the *juwan toyi* (fertility rite for women, see Bellér-Hann 2008a: 279-285, Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 132, Muxter Hoshur et al. 2010: 80-83). In a newer sense of the word it can also be used to name anniversaries and other large celebrations. The unqualified use of the term '*toy*' mostly refers to a wedding. Weddings are the *toy* given most space in all local descriptions of customs and celebrations (Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 127-135, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 104-140, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 210-228, Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 237-258). To clearly designate a wedding qualifiers can be added: *chong toy* (big *toy*), *er-xotun toyi* (the *toy* of husband and wife) or *nikah toyi* (the *toy* of the Islamic marriage rite *nikah*; see Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 104). The latter, stressing the religious sanction, particularly plays down the state aspect of marriages and this compound term can also be used to mean a marriage that is not registered with the state. While '*toy qilmaq'* (to make a wedding) is the most common phrase orally, the verb '*toylashmaq*' (lit. to 'wedding' together) can be employed when talking about both sides being joined. This phrase is primarily used in literary language (Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 235, 237, 255, 257). Two families or two persons can be said to 'be weddinged together' (marry): *ikki a'ile toylashti* (two families got married) or *toylashmaqchi bolghan oghul-qiz* (Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 255).

No letters of invitation (*baghaq*) will invite one to a '*toy*' per se. Instead the honored guests (*eziz méhman*) will be invited to 'the joyfull wedding ceremony of our daugthter/son' (*qizimiz/oghulimizning qutluq toy murasimi*). Despite being called a ceremony (*murasim*) this designates the communal meal at the wedding and to a lesser extent the *nikah* (Islamic wedding ceremony), which is attended by far fewer people and for which no specific invitation is written. The *toy* can itself be regarded as a process stretching beyond the celebrations and ceremonies. Explicitly asked, people will say that a *toy* (meaning a wedding) lasts one to three days. Yet, within the last week of preparation time and during the subsequent mutual visits, when asked where they are, most people will answer "at a *toy*," thus including these parts in the wider practice definition. Putting the *toy* (life cycle ritual) into focus stresses the celebration and the attendance of visitors and guests, especially from what is considered the household's community including the neighbourhood (*mehelle*) and the relatives (*uruq-tughqan*). These visitors and guests witness and legitimise the marriage itself. They also take part in the exchange circles around the event, contribute to the celebration, are made guests and honoured within it and so on. The marriage is recognised as a public event - truly a 'community matter' (Bellér-Hann 2008a). At the same time the celebration and the gathering of the community are also aimed at legitimising the life cycle passage of the bride and the groom. A full, standard wedding of the type to be

described in this chapter contains at least two *toy*: the one of the bride (*qiz toyi*) and the one of the groom (*oghul toyi*). Even in those parts of a marriage, that are celebrated by both sides together, every participant's role is clearly situated within one of the two sides. A guest goes to either a '*qiz toyi*' or an '*oghul toyi*'. A '*qiz toyi*' is the life cycle ritual of a young woman or girl (qiz) becoming a married woman (*ayal, choqan, juwan*), while an '*oghul toyi*' is the life cycle ritual of a young man (*yigit*) becoming a married man (*er*). Strictly speaking, *oghul toyi* and *qiz toyi* can only be held once for each person. Subsequent marriages do not have this aspect of being a proper life cycle rite. The missing life cycle aspect can be detected in the fact that these weddings are often smaller. Still the weddings are always called "*toy*," playing down the difference and the fact that bride and groom have been married before. The full marriage process can be said to include all of the different *toy* mentioned above, since in important ways the marriage process is not completed until after the birth of the first children (see below, Bellér-Hann 2008a: 283).

Turmush qurmaq

The life cycle aspect is stressed even further by another group of idioms: '*turmush qurmaq*' (to construct or establish a life), '*turmushgha chiqmaq*' (to enter into life) or '*turmushluq bolmaq*' (to become someone with a life). The connotation is that the real life starts at marriage, or that this is when you become a full person (an adult; cf. Ziali Memettursun 2012: 9, Wang 2004: 194, Bellér-Hann 2008a: 236, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 134). It has the wider meaning of establishing an own household including own children. As illustrated by the vignette in the introduction dealing with the act of giving, the full participation of both men and women's in social life depends on their being part of an own household, that is, on being married. Bellér-Hann mentions this idiom (2008a: 235) which also occasionally appears in local literature (Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 234, Mavlanjan Memettursun 2012: 10, Zaili Memettursun 2012: 18, Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 234, 357) but I hardly ever heard it used in Kashgar. The idiom is used mostly for women, implying their leaving the role as a *qiz* (girl, daughter) in the parental household, to become a *kélin* (daughter-in-law) in the household of their husband. It can also be applied to men or in cases where the couple is mentioned: "*er-ayalning turmush qurushi*" (Mavlanjan Memettursun 2012: 10, Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 234). The second of the idioms can be found in a grammatical variation that stresses the active role of the parents in 'sending their daughter into life' (*turmushgha chiqirmaq*).

The point that marriage makes someone a full adult person is even more apparent in another set of idioms. '*Adem qilmaq*' (to make a man), *kishi qilmaq* (to make a person) and *kisi qilmaq* (to make a woman) are older idioms for marriage making this exact connection.

Béshini ongshimaq

The necessity to be married in order to become a complete person is not only seen as an outer duty, but also as an inner urge. Marriage is, in this local view, seen as a condition towards which a person naturally strives.[27] This striving may become apparent in nervousness, irritation and

27 Naturally is here not meant in opposition to socially or culturally but includes these. In this case and setting the

unacceptable social behavior like staying out late and not observing the proper social forms. Marriage is said to be a good cure for such malaises: to help straighten out the person, or, as one idiom has it, to 'put his or her head right' or to 'mend his or her head' (*béshini ongshimaq, béshini ongshap qoymaq*). This expression is mostly used about (young) men, but can also be employed for women. Besides the aspect of sexuality clearly also present in the expression, this points to the potential for marriage to integrate people into the proper social world by offering the only way to complete personhood and social respectability. The integrative quality of marriage is exemplified in the Swedish missionary Gustav Raquette's fictional letters from Qasim Akhun in Kashgar to his friend in Istanbul. The letters were probably written around 1913-1914 and were published posthumously by Gunnar Jarring (1975: 8). One of the most important topics of the first letter is Qasim Akhun's reintegration into his family after returning to Kashgar after years of study of Islam and Christianity in Istanbul and Beirut. Newly arrived he meets his uncle with whom a polite but cool exchange of greetings follows (Jarring 1975: 34-35). The uncle seems primarily concerned with the young man's religious status while Qasim Akhun himself worries about what kind of place within the family he will be assigned. The solution to Qasim Akhuns liminal position is for him to marry his cousin Nisa Khan to "make someone out of him again" (Swedish: *göra folk af mig igen*), that is, to reintegrate him into the family (Jarring 1975: 35, see Stenberg: forthcoming). Another idiom referring to the head, expresses the sexual aspect more directly: marriage is signified by 'putting their two heads on one pillow' (*ikkisining béshini bir yastuqqa qoymaq*). This expression is also used more narrowly to talk about the wedding night (Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 224, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 111). Once again this expression (using a 3rd person narrative and the verb *qoymaq*) suggests that the marriage is initiated by someone else other than the couple themselves. Besides the sexual aspect the expression also points to the shared household of the couple, for which the shared pillow stands.

Öylenmek

The verb '*öylenmek*' (to be married, lit. to be 'housed') is used very often both in Uyghur literature, movies and in colloquial speech in Kashgar (Dautcher 2009: 11, Zaili Memettursun 2012: 7, Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 236, 237, 240, 252). The verb is passive. Grammatically it signifies 'to be married off by someone else'. The active pendent is '*öylendürmek*' (to marry someone off, lit. to 'house' someone) which is said about the parents, or more commonly '*öylep qoymaq*' (to marry someone off, lit. to 'house' someone). The latter expression is often said from the perspective of a whole group of relatives instrumental in arranging and organising the marriage. The auxillary verb '*qoymaq*' (to put or place) adds the connotation of a lack of agency or even inability on the side of the person married. All these expressions stress the active role of the parents and the passive role of the groom (or bride). These synecdoches point to the

dichotomy of natural and social or cultural is not of relevance.

marriage as creating the foundation for a new *öy*[28] (lit. house; household, family),[29] that is, of a new social unit. It is used primarily for men (the female counterpart often being *yatliq bolmaq*, see below; Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 237, 240, 252), but can be used for women too (Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 236). Men are seen as the founders of the new household, which is most often virilocally established on geographical and economic grounds provided by the groom's family. The expression '*öy tutmaq*' (to touch a house) is used for both sexes. Besides meaning marriage, it can also signify the time when the young couple departs from the husband's parents to move into their own quarters. If we treat the expression as a synecdoche, this happening is thus included into the core of the marriage process. Though it is rarely realised until many years after the wedding, the polysemia of the expression stresses that it is an important goal of the process. The more polite term *öy-uchaqliq bolmaq* (to become with house and hearth), which stresses the independence and property of the conjugal couple (Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 109, Dautcher 2009: 11, Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 237, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 116, 138) is used both for men and women, especially in the younger generations. These idioms stress the establishment of an own household with own living quarters and an own unit for cooking. Exchanging cooked food is one of the central ways of women to establish social relations within her neighbourhood (Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 45-46). This she cannot begin with before she has her own hearth, since all food cooked on the hearth of her mother or mother-in-law will be perceived as coming from their household, and thus from them.

Nikahlanmaq

'*Nikalanmaq*' (to be married, lit. to have *nikah* made) is one of the most used terms in local publications (Memetimin Yaqub 2009: 1, Mutellip Hüseyn 2002: 171-172, Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 235, 236, 254, 257, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 214, 215, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 105, 106, 108, 111, 114). In daily speech it is hardly used at all. This synecdoche clearly focuses on the religious sanctions. It puts the religious ceremony into the centre of the marriage, making it the main event of the marriage and making marriage mainly a religious matter. This is a narrative supported by many men and women in Kashgar in direct conversation on the topic. The *nikah* (religious marriage ceremony) makes the couple '*halal*' to one another and is an absolute prerequisite for the consummation of the marriage and for cohabitation. Although most people do undertake state registration of the marriage, its status is secondary to the *nikah*. In older sources the expression '*nikahigha almaq, nikahigha bermek*' (to take and give for *nikah*) is often found: the groom 'takes' and the bride's father 'gives' the bride respectively (Jarring 1946: 9-12, 19, 24-26, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 113).

28 '*Öy*' is a very central concept for social units in Kashgar. The different uses of '*öy*' have interesting implications and allow the critical application of theoretical approaches towards 'house societies' (c.f. Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995). The social unit of the 'house' and the various tropes drawing on 'house' are the theme of a further intended publication.

29 A similar construction as the above invokes a different word for the social unit established through marriage: *a'ilelik bolmaq* (lit. to become with family; Eset Sulayman 2006: 13). The word '*a'ile*' seems to be currently gaining in popularity (cf. Abdushükür Muhemmet'imin 2002), but this very expression is not much used.

Chatmaq

Nikah, according to Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq, means 'to pair,' 'to be paired,' 'to bring together,' 'to connect' and 'to join' the sexes in a pure (*halal*) way in front of the community (2009a: 213-214). This local etymology takes us to the next group of tropes used for marriage: those which stress the connecting quality of marriage. We find several different expressions: *chatmaq* (to connect, to bring together), *jüplishish* (become a couple), *birlishish* (become one), *qoshmaq* (to pair, to join) and others.[30] Mahmud Kashgari used the verb '*quwushmaq*' (to connect) synoyomously with *öylenmek* to signify marriage (Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 116, Zaili Memettursun 2012: 7, Mavlanjan Memettursun 2012: 9, Mahmud Kashgari 1980-1984 Vol. 2: 138). Two individuals are brought together in marriage, but the expressions also signify the connections made in this process between the households, families and neighbourhoods involved. '*Chatmaq*' is something done by others: One 'does not marry,' one 'is married off' or 'brought together with someone' by others. Today in Kashgar the expression connotes lack of agency and lack of choice on the part of the couple and to some even an element of coercion, especially when used with the auxilliary verb *qoymaq* as in '*chétip qoymaq*' (Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 239).

Erge tegmek

Erge tegmek (to marry, lit. to touch a man, to stick onto a man) is used for women. It stresses the custom that the women joins her husband in terms of living quarters (virilocal postmarital residence) and it renders woman somewhat complementary, since she is 'added onto' a man. This expression is often used during the *nikah* ceremony, where the groom is asked if he 'takes' (*almaq*) the wife, whereupon her male representative is asked whether he 'gives' (*bermek*) her and lastly she herself is asked if she 'touches' or 'joins' him (*tegmek*). Alternatively she may be asked: '*qobul qildingizmu?*' (did you accept?). *Tegmek* is much used in colloquial speech. It rarely figures in newer texts (but see Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 119, 139), but it is used in tales (see Abduraxman Ebey and Exmet Imin 2007: 7-13). The virilocal aspect also appears in another colloquial expression stating that the groom's relatives '*give bread*' to their new daughter-in-law: '*qizgha nan berduq*' (we gave the girl bread: we have found a wife for our son) '*Memetning öyde nan yeydu*' (she is eating bread at Memet's house: she is married to Memet (or to Memet's son).

Xotun/qiz almaq

The trope inherent in *xotun/qiz almaq* (to take a wife), said only about men, is clearly connected to the active role of the man and of the husband's side in the marriage in the sense that they 'take' the bride (Caprioni 2002: 156). Since *almaq* also can mean 'buy,' it also carries connotations of exchanging the bride for the bride price (*toyluq*) - which is the most important marriage prestation, given from the family of the groom to the parents of the bride (but the matter is much more complicated than this. In an ironic way, the expression may be applied for women in cases where a man marries a wealthy woman out of economic motives. She is then said

30 A similar tropicality is found in Chinese expressions. The most common term for marriage in Chinese is *jiehun* (结婚), *jie* (结) meaning 'connecting'.

to have 'taken' or 'bought' him (*almaq*). In earnest discourse, the connotation of purchase connected to the *toyluq* is expressively denied. *Toyluq* is even contrasted to a price: Abdurehim Hebibulla describes how marriage by purchase (*soda xaraktérlik nikahlinish*) existent in the 'middle ages' (*ottura esir*) by the time of Mahmud Kashgari (1005-1102) had been fully replaced by '*toyluq*' marriage (2000: 254). Variations on the theme of the verbal metaphor *almaq* are idioms where the woman is 'taken as a wife' (*xotungha almaq)* or is taken 'under one's command' (*ermirige almaq*; Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 220, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 115). Here the transfer plays no role, but especially in the latter one the subordination (or objectification) of the woman within the constellation is sensed. Some older idioms seem more gender equal than these newer ones: *erlenmek* (for a woman to become with a husband) and *kisilenmek* (for a man to become with a woman; Ablet Semet, personal communication). These idioms are no longer in use.

Yatliq bolmaq, yatliq qilmaq

The expressions '*yatliq bolmaq*' (to become a stranger)[31] and ' *talaliq bolmaq*' (to become an outsider)[32] for marriage, both express that the woman at marriage leaves her own family to join that of her husband and in this process becomes a 'stranger' or 'outsider' to her own family. This is a well known narrative in many parts of Central Asia. It is also expressed in the saying that a daughter is not one's own, but is destined to belong to other people (cf. Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 111).[33] The expression is found in literary works and is sometimes used by elder people in Kashgar. The narratives alluded to here are more common, but they express a very subjective view - or possibly more of a fear. Actually a daughter is rarely fully lost. She continues to visit her parent's house and to address them as her parents, she has duties and rights in their household and she usually inherits after their death. In case of divorce or widowhood she returns to her parental home. Thus these tropes can be said to express the perspective of the woman's parents and their heavily felt loss, but less a structural truth about marriage as a social phenomenon. Some different readings of these proverbs are discussed below.

Summing up the idioms

Starting out from the idioms looked at above we can locate some of the local emphases concerning Uyghur marriage in Kashgar. In many of the idioms stress is placed upon the bridal couple not being the central actors or initiators, but the marriage being organised for them.[34] As shall be argued below, in most cases this does not mean that they are completely without

31 See Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 234, 237, 240, 252, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 222, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 113, 114, 115, 134, 139.
32 See Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 535, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 134.
33 The opposite side of the same equation is expressed when people say that they will make a girl their child (*bala qilmaq*), which means that this person hopes for the girl to become her or his son's wife (Zaili Memettursun 2012: 5).
34 Ingeborg Baldauf has captured this well in her distinction of '*toy* objects' (the bridal couple) and '*toy* subjects' (their parents and close relatives arranging and hosting the celebrations; Baldauf, personal communication). Baldauf made this distinction when describing an Uzbek wedding in a seminar on Afghanistan at the Zentralasienseminar of Humbold-Universität zu Berlin in the summer of 2009.

influence or are married off against their own will. Instead, it means that the marriage concerns a wide range of people beyond the bridal couple, people that all have a say in it and on whose cooperation the undertaking depends. The marriage of one person concerns these other people too, because their lives are connected in a 'mutuality of being,' Sahlin's definition of kinship (Sahlins 2013: 19, 62). Marriages of children are of utmost importance to their parents and a range of other relatives, including affines like their sibling's in-laws. Securing the marriage of a child is seen as the duty of the parents (Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 134).[35] It is interesting to note that the expressions used for men are generally as passive in their grammar as those used for women (men are also 'married off' rather than 'marry' themselves).

Marriage as an essential prerequisite to becoming a full person appears in several idioms, as does the subjugation of woman to man. The latter is an important part of local gender ideology, but it is in no way undisputed. The idioms ascribing a lesser position to women are comparably rare in contemporary written texts but more wide spread in daily speech among men and women (like *xotun almaq* and *erge tegmek*). Besides the specific gendered expressions, many of the most common tropes may be used for both men and women. The expression that carries reference to the 'house' as a social unit (*öylenmek*) is most often used for men and less for women. This may at first seem contrary to gender ideologies of a male public and a female homely sphere (Bourdieu 1976: 48-65, Strathern 1988a: 92-97). Yet, despite the fact that aspects of such an ideology exist in Kashgar, the concept of the 'house' as a social unit is more prominent than its female connotations within other discourses. The house is not private; it is also a very public unit. Some idioms place importance on the connections that marriages establish. These, besides verbs like *chatmaq*, explicitly meaning connecting, include several grammatical variants of the above expressions into which the mutuality suffix '*-Ish-*' has been added (*nikahlashmaq, toylashmaq*). Both *nikah* and *toy* in these idioms stand out as accentuated essentials of the marriage process. The religious aspect (*nikah*) is commonly stressed in the written language, while the more communal aspect (*toy*) is clearly the most used synecdoche for marriage in oral speech. Furthermore, *nikahlishish* may be used for 'marriage' more generally when contrasted to 'wedding customs' called *toylishish adetliri* (Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 237).

To sum up we may conclude that the most used local idioms for marriage reveal preoccupations with 'connection,' with the agency of the parental generation, with the religious ceremony '*nikah*,' the communal wedding party '*toy*' (life cycle celebration) and with the concept of the house '*öy*' as well as displaying a male bias. These tropes take us to a preliminary compiled quasi-local definition of what it is we are looking at and call 'marriage' as: The connecting of two parties or families to form a 'house' (*öy*) centered on the male side under the sanctions of Islam and of the community. Community is here my shorthand for the totality of close social relations of each household marrying. Of utmost importance herein are the neighbourhood communities and networks of relatives – the latter being centered on sibling groups based upon the '*chong öy*' (big house) of their parents, a 'house' likewise having been created in a process of marriage. Defining and taking part in these communities and social networks is very much what marriages are about as well. They are essential to the 'making of a house,' since the 'house' can only be this within the wider social framework the communities provide. The last group of idioms treated

35 "*Toy balilarning ata-ana üstidiki qerzi*" (Marriage is the parents' obligation/debt)

demonstrated the importance of looking behind the idioms themselves. Although daughters are in some sense viewed as being given out of the family and while this is expressed in the idiom '*yatliq bolmaq*,' in important ways they are not. We must beware not to turn local elaborations into scientific analysis. This goes equally for all the other idioms and beyond: despite idiomatic hints to the contrary, brides and grooms often have quite a lot of say in the matter of their marriage and wedding, and by no means all women are subjugated to their husbands, nor do all men think that they ought to be. The aspects underscored in public discourse and thus found in terminology are by no means said to be the only important ones. Others played down, or too sensitive to be mentioned, may be equally important. We can take the above mentioned aspects to have a certain importance to the phenomenon of marriage in a local understanding, but we must recognize that not all central elements crystallise neatly and accessibly into terminology (c.f. Barnard and Good 1984: 40, 65-66). We therefore now turn to the practices surrounding marriages and weddings themselves.

5 A Close Reading of the Marriage Process

Marriage as a process

Marriage in Kashgar is rather processual than pointedly focussed on the wedding or the marriage ceremony. Allthough the *nikah* is attributed a central importance by many, not just one, but several central points (or even points-of-no-return) are to be found: the settlement of the date of the wedding, the betrothal, picking up the state documents, giving bride wealth (*toyluq*), the religious ceremony (*nikah*), transferring the bride, the wedding night, the subsequent 'opening of the face' (*yüz échish*), and following visits between the new in-laws. I will elaborate on these in the following description. For now the important point is that people are not just married. They become more and more married as their families and wider social relations become more and more interconnected. This is the consequence of the logic of the close marriage described below. Within this logic affines are made close relatives through the marriage process and the success of the marriage depends on this happening.

This is a long and sometimes painstaking process, including many exchanges, mutual invitations and several life cycle celebrations. It is also a process that depends on the cooperation and participation of a range of social relations. Several meetings are needed for the preparation and planning of the process and for exchanging gifts and later marriage prestations to convince each other of their own good intentions and manners. After the wedding celebrations a range of visits follow, they become institutionalised around the religious holidays and further *toy*. In this time more regular and close social relations are expected to be established.

The Western anthropological literature on Xinjiang has been preoccupied with the wedding, which much better reflects the modern Central European point-of-no-return vision of marriage as condensed in the wedding ceremony and the following celebration. Yet, the focus on weddings also reflects a certain local preoccupation: as we saw above "*toy qilish*" (to make a wedding, or to make life cycle ritual) is the most common way to talk about marriage, and no abstract term for it exists beyond the synecdoches. Both Hoppe (1998: 133-135), Rudelson (1997: 87-94), Dautcher (2009: 117-121), and Wang (2004: 195-200) present marriage sequences in which the wedding figures prominently. In much local literature, the period of negotiation and preparation is given a fair amount of discussion in all of these displays, while the exchanges following the wedding are hardly elaborated on.[36] Abdurehim Hebibulla describes the preparation phase very elaborately on seven pages while paying almost no attention to the wedding itself (2000: 237-245). Much local literature describes the marriage explicitly as a process.[37] Bellér-Hann elaborates on the exchanges after the wedding, and presents rituals around childbirth as belonging to and possibly even fulfilling the marriage process (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 283).

36 Cf. Abdukérim Rehman et al. 2009: 345-347, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 210-227, 521-545, Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 127-136 and Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 104-140.
37 Abdushükür Muhemmet'imin 2002: 2, Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 237, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 123, Zaili Memettursun 2012:11.

The focus of this thesis remains around the wedding events; I have however opted to place them in a chronological narrative within the whole process. Having the gradual building of affinal relations in the marriage process in mind, I have chosen to focus on the time between the first indications of interest between the two sides (the point where the parents, as representatives of the household, become involved) and the birth of the first child. This is the core of the marriage process. The time span could arguably be pushed in both directions, since affine relations keep being deepened even after the birth of a child and since the first exchanges in a marriage negotiation are rarely the first contact or the first exchanges between the families. This is simply too great of a risk. The beginning of the process could be set to start as far back as the marriage of the parents respectively creating the prerequisite for the marriages of their children. In many cases the future *quда* (affines, spouses' parents) will have been present at each others weddings. Quite often the initiating conditions of a marriage are created even further back since it depends on marriages conducted between the families in generations past, though not in as systematically a way as in alliance theory. Had I focused more on the relations within each side, I would have described each wedding as a part of the large exchange circles of neighbourhood and kin communities and networks, and consequently would have had to include different events (cf. Werner 1999, Yan 1996, Yang 1994).

Ritual

The marriage process is related to other parts of social life and conduct. This poses an analytical question: How is the relation between marriage and non-marriage to be grasped? How special is the sphere of marriage events and celebrations? De Coppet in the introduction to his edited volume 'Understanding Rituals' makes two important points that can be of use in discussing the relation between marriage and non-marriage (the context). De Coppet points out that a 'ritual' sphere is neither unproblematic to define, nor has any certain universal relation to a non-ritual sphere or category constructed by means of defining the former (de Coppet 1992: 2-3). Secondly, he stresses the fact that rituals do not just reflect, but also influence social phenomena (de Coppet 1992: 4, 8-9). Exactly because a closer look at the former issue raised by de Coppet reveals a very close and direct connection between what may be called ritual and non-ritual conduct in the case of Kashgar, his second point raised becomes the more important. De Coppet begins by suggesting that 'ritual' to anthropologists has only been so easily identifiable (or visible), because the concept was shaped by a Western understanding of ritual as "founded as much upon the Book as on so-called reality" (de Coppet 1992b: 2). This leads anthropologists to identify areas of 'ritual' against such of 'non-ritual,' connecting them to opposite pairs of respectively: symbolic/real, religious/secular, ceremonial/everyday and so on. This has implications for the analytical treatment of rituals such as those within the marriage process. We need to look closer at the meaning of ritual in Kashgar and its relation to the non-ritual context.

In Kashgar weddings and other parts of the marriage process are an important part of daily life, in many ways not to be isolated from daily practice. They basically follow the same social rules as the daily life, though certain aspects are amplified and formalised. Yet, such amplification and formalisation is not confined to festive or celebratory events. They also appear at regular meals, visitation, and even meetings in the street. Abdushükür Muhemmet'imin

classifies life cycle rituals and mortuary rituals together with scientific and social gatherings (*ilmiy-ijtima'iy pa'aliyetler murasimi*) as *murasim* (ceremony, formality; Abdushükür Muhemmet'imin 2002: 167). In the numerous new books on morality and right conduct forms of greeting are also described as extremely imortant.[38] If we define ritual in Kashgar as a condensation and amplification of the formality of usual social conduct rather than as a sphere in which separate rules apply (compare Connerton 1986 57-64, 70), then ritual can be said to show up all the time in the lives and daily conduct of Uyghurs in Kashgar (cf. Bellér-Hann 2008b: 149).[39] Ritual in this sense is no exclusive feature of weddings and other celebrations and ritual it is not necessarily religious. Religious reference is one way to formalise a situation and frames much formal conduct, but other ways exist (including pouring of water for hand washing, raised attention to seating order and greeting with both hands).

Certain parts of the marriage process have a quality of explicit symbolic meaning and very formalised conduct which is stronger than that found outside such celebrations. The custom or ritual of '*way béshim*' ('oh, my head'), described below, is explicitly seen as a forbearer concerning the relation between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law. It includes deliberate acting. Yet even these symbolic acts are very much integrated into the regular social conduct and follow the same logics. This is very visible in the case of the ritual exchanges in and around the gift giving event known as *tartishmaq* (pulling each other) also described below. Many of the events within the marriage process have no established names. They are called by very common or insignificantly sounding terms like '*chillaq*' (invitation), '*körüshüsh*' (seeing each other), *onbesh-künlük* (that, on the 15th day) and '*sewze kelemchemu?*' (have the carrots been cut into pencil-sized pieces yet?) and the names vary much locally. They are not presented as outstanding traditions or ritual events different in quality from the usual daily conduct, but are seen as merely further formalisations and fixings of the already quite formalised daily conduct. This also means that the content is often more important than the form of these rituals and that a very direct connection exists to practices outside events related to celebrations and ritual.

No anti-structure in the rituals

I have only in very few cases seen ritual behavior that may be identified as 'anti-structure' of a liminal phase in Turners sense (Turner 1967: 93-111, 1969: 80, 155, Thomassen 2009) or as the reversing of roles and social order connected to carnivals and other celebrations (Eco et al. 1984). These included the reversing of gender roles and obscene dancing at a wedding in rural Atush. This event was more a form of entertainment than it was a ritual and I never saw anything like it in Kashgar. I initially saw 'anti-structure' in the event where the groom and his friends 'transfer the bride' (*qizni yötkesh*) in Kashgar, but this event is given a different interpretation by participants, one much closer to daily conduct: Although I saw a disregard and reversal of usual guesting rules in the ritual, since the young men enter the courtyard of the

38 E.g. Enwer Atawulla Sartekin 2006: 1, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 189-195, Abdushükür Muhemmet'imin 2002: 168, Dautcher 2009: 139.

39 "Commensality among community members was to some extent always ritualised [...]. By the early twentieth century an elaborate system of politeness rules was in force, stipulating which dishes could be consumed from a shared bowl, how many people were allowed to share a bowl and which dishes had to be served individually" (Bellér-Hann 2008b: 149).

bride's parent's home without greeting and without accepting the hospitality of the hosts, I was told that their conduct was displaying modesty and thus very much following the local rules of guesting, since the women of the groom's side were at this time guesting at the bride's parent's place and it would have been very inconvenient to host the young men at the same time. Therefore they chose just to show up and dance without making themselves guests. Though this is of course neither a satisfactory functional, structural nor historical analysis, it points to the fact that the 'ritual' events can be interpreted and judged within the usual moral frame of daily life.

The more strictly religious ritual of the *nikah* in some ways poses an exception. It is the point at which the marriage is sanctioned before God and it functions more as a coherent ritual than the other events along the marriage process, in the sense that the symbolism of it and the form in itself is more important than the (more profane) content. The ritual itself and not the social interactions framed by the ritual is what has the primary effect. A *nikah* cannot be performed ironically or reluctantly and thus be rendered invalid, nor can a different form communicate the same content. It is either done and counts, or it is not (see Connerton 1986: 54, 59). The *nikah*, unlike most of the other events, is not primarily about negotiating the social relations between the participants. It is about the relations to God, invoked in a very recognisable "upon the book" way of rituality (cf. de Coppet 1992b: 2). Here a pact is entered with God, not only with other people. Yet this is no real categorical distinction from daily conduct either. God's presence is invoked and plays an important role in almost all other formalisations of social conduct too and though citations from the Qur'an add a ritual air to the *nikah* events according to several *molla* only the *fatihe* (Al'Fatiha) is really required. Furthermore, the discussion of both the conditions for a *halal* marriage, and of the moral duties within it, takes up more time and importance in the ceremony than the religious formalities. The Qur'an recitation within the ceremony may in fact be seen as an extended form of invocations of God very common in regular speech: '*bismillah raxman rahim …*' (in God's name do I begin …), '*xudayim buyrsa*' (so God will), '*essalamu aleykum*' (may God's peace be upon you), *allahu eqber* (God is great) and the prayers accompanying each meal, visitation and meeting.

Though we have exceptions in tendency (as in the *nikah* ceremony), in the majority of events in Kashgar what may be called 'ritual' context is a condensation and amplification of the formality present at all times and thus more of a gradual than a categorical difference from what may be called 'non-ritual' situations or contexts. This gives weddings and other ritual events an important and very direct role in social conduct more generally and in the shaping of social relations - and the idioms of speech, giving, bodily conduct and spatial practices invoked in these. Though the context is very different, the relation between ritual and non-ritual can here be said to be similar to what Hardenberg identified in parts of Orissa in Central India, where, according to him, rituals function as a sort of social classification (Hardenberg 2009). This leads to de Coppet's second point, that "rituals are not just expressive of abstract ideas but do things, have effects on the world," which he quotes from Goody and Gerholm, drawing on Lévi-Strauss (de Coppet 1992b: 4), and that rituals may be "resources competed for" (de Coppet 1992b: 8). In Kashgar the spheres of ritual and non-ritual context are not particularly divided. Therefore, changing weddings customs also have an important impact on the way social relations are

created more generally: the shift towards holding important parts of the celebrations in restaurants has an impact on the form of social networks of households and the neighbourhood communities. Ritual context in Kashgar generally has a significant influence on other parts of social life and on general social values which they "illustrate, challenge and attempt, above all, to order hierarchically" (de Coppet 1992b: 9). Ritual itself, understood as a condensation and amplification of social formality, has a high standing within this hierarchy, and is thus very worth studying in detail.

Describing marriage in Kashgar

My description of the marriage process draws on about twenty weddings held in Kashgar city and suburban area, that I visited during my stay, and a whole range of others that I heard and enquired about. Some of these weddings I acquired deeper insight into and I was able to participate in a majority of the wedding events and even sometimes other parts of the marriage process. At others I only took part in one or two events of the wedding. These were mostly the early morning communal meal or the afternoon celebration and dance of the young men. In rural Atush I often participated in late evening celebrations on the first or second wedding day including much dancing, but the weddings of rural Atush follow a quite different sequence and are not included in the description below. Whenever I mention information from outside Kashgar city or suburban areas as a comparison or to elaborate one point (such as the dancing in Atush) it will be clearly stated. The weddings drawn on for this description were held by households of lower to higher middle class both in the centre and outskirts of Kashgar city.

Following Needham's distinction of levels of data undogmatically, I distinguish between information that says something about 1) empirically observable local actions, 2) certain local convictions and 3) broadly accepted local categories and values (see Needham 1973, Berrenberg 2002: 33-35, Barnard and Good 1984: 100-104). I will start by providing an overview of the marriage process. Each of the steps is accompanied by a small illustration in form of a pictogram. These will then be reapplied to the more elaborate discussions of each step, which follows below.

5.1 Providing an overview

This sketch of the process of a typical marriage in Kashgar is not a prototype or Weberian ideal type of marriage generally, but a concise description of a kind of marriage that takes place in Kashgar and that I have visited and heard about many times during my stay in the city. It is not the only kind of marriage though, but it is an important one, not just quantitatively, but also because it entails a logic that is central to local conceptualisations of marriage and kinship. Following local literature,[40] I divide the process into three parts: 1) the phase of initiation, negotiation and preparation, 2) the phase of the wedding (*toy*) centered around two-three days of celebration and 3) the subsequent mutual visits of the new affines, in which the affinal relations are being extended and deepened. Each step is provided in the illustration as a pictogram.

40 Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008, Abdukérim Rehman et al. 2009a: 345, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a.

Negotiation and preparation

Though couples do meet at different educational or working places the majority of marriages in Kashgar are arranged or at least mediated. Even couples that do meet on their own and fall in love (*muhebbetlishish*) depend on the agreement and cooperation of their families to make the marriage possible. In case the families do not know each other well on beforehand they inconspicuously inquire about each other in the initial phases. In the vast majority of cases the family of the future groom takes the initiative and sends a representative (*elchi*) to the girl's house (Dautcher 2009: 119). The representative has the task to gently make the interest of the boy's family known but also to test the girl's character and moral education. The initial phase of *qiz körüsh* (seeing the girl, inquiring about the girl and her family) is followed by a phase of *qiz sorash* (asking for the girl), where the groom's side makes their intentions clear. Here very standardized language is used.

Sometime within this phase the future partners are asked for their consent in the matter. In case they do not know each other yet a meeting is arranged, often in a restaurant under the supervision of female relatives. Then follow negotiations to determine the time of the wedding, the *toyluq* (bride wealth) and other gifts and conditions connected to the marriage (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 239; Rudelson 1997: 87; Dautcher 2009: 119). This phase can stretch over several visits of male and female representatives of the groom's family to the bride's house. Gifts are brought along by the groom's side and hospitality is provided by the bride's side. The most common name for these negotiations in publications *kichik chay* is rarely used in Kashgar instead it's called *chay ephérish* (bringing tea). The same goes for the *chong chay*, at which the negotiated *toyluq* is given to the bride's parents, one or two weeks before the wedding itself. In Kashgar this event is most often called *toyluq apirish*, but as remarked above, little attention is paid to the names of these events and rituals and they vary from neighbourhood to neighbourhood or even from family to family.

Now both sides start preparing intensively for the celebrations. Relatives, neighbours and friends become involved in the process and invitations are written separately to the three main social categories of the community: 1) the elder men and mosque communities (*jama'et*), 2) the women, and 3) the friends of groom and bride. The *jang* or '*toy xet*' (the official registration form, 结婚证 *jiehunzheng*) is picked up at the local marriage bureau within a month or a week of the *toy*. In the course of these days, the main part of the bride's trousseau (*qiz méli*) is taken to the groom's house, but this may also happen later. On the *toy* day itself only some mats and blankets are taken.

'*Toy*' celebrations

In Kashgar most people will say that the *toy* lasts for two days; the first day is for the men, the second one is for the women. Both men and women participate on both days, but the biggest celebrations for men take place on the morning of the first day and the celebrations on the second day are primarily arranged for female guests. In rural areas the celebration can last for several more days (Hoppe 1998: 134, Dautcher 2009: 121). The two sides celebrate separately inviting each other to be guests at several parts of the process (cf. Bellér-Hann 2008a: 243). The

central events are mostly recorded on video by a professional wedding photographer. One or two days prior to the *toy* male relatives of the groom will take the *ashüyi* to the bride's parents' house. This consists of all ingredients for a big communal meal of *polu* (pilau). The night before the *toy* relatives or friends of the groom's side stay at the bride's parent's place getting up at two o'clock in the morning to prepare the big communal meal, which is to be ready after early morning *bamdat* prayers around five a.m. Within the time span of 5-9 a.m. the elder men of the bride's and the groom's mosque communities arrive in separate groups and a total of 100-1000 men are fed at the bride's parent's place. The groom's side cooks, while the bride's side serves the food to the guests. This event is in Kashgar called '*toy néziri*'. It has other names in the surrounding areas and in most other areas of Xinjiang, and is often held later in the day. Meals are distributed to the neighbours and a big portion of the *polu* is taken to the groom's house. The last group to arrive is the group of young men, the friends of the groom. They eat and then take part in the *nikah* ceremony held at the bride's parent's place, often featuring the bride and her female relatives in an adjacent room (cf. Wang 2004: 196-197, Rudelson 1997: 91, but see Hoppe 1998: 134).

After the ceremony the groom's party leaves and in some rural areas the bride is moved to a neighbour's house. Both groups now have some hours of preparation time before, in the early afternoon, each side is visited by female guests. They come carrying gifts of mainly cloth and money that are presented to the female host, the mothers of groom and bride respectively, in long sessions using trays to display the gifts. After these sessions the women of the groom's side gather and travel to the bride's parent's house, where they receive hospitality. Meanwhile, in the early afternoon, the friends of the groom dance in his courtyard. The accompanying music is often played by ensembles of three to six men on traditional Uyghur instruments amplified through microphones. This dancing and music is particularly being questioned by strong Islamic discourses in south Xinjiang today and is therefore reduced at many weddings. The young men then eat a meal in the groom's house and leave to transfer the bride (*qiz yötkesh*). They drive the decorated wedding car (*toy mashinisi*) around town before arriving at the bride's place. In Atush and Peyzawat this parading takes place after the bride has been picked up.

Having arrived at the bride's place the groom and his friends dance *sama* (a formerly sufi dance now a local symbol for Kashgar, see Zarcone 2010: 140) in the courtyard for five to ten minutes and then leave. This is very paticular to Kashgar city. The women of the groom's side are responsible for taking the bride, and the two to four female relatives accompanying her (*yengge*), back to the groom's place in the wedding car. When leaving the bride's house each woman from the groom's side is given at least a gift of food (*zelle*) to take home. This takes place in the early evening. Upon arriving at the groom's house the party is not allowed into the courtyard by the younger sister of the groom, who blocks the door until she is given a gift (this custom is called *ishik taqiwaldi*). Then a short ceremony follows in which the bride is to address her new mother-in-law as "*ana*" (mother). Shortly after her arrival in her husband's house, the bride and her companions are served *harduq éshi* (exhaustion food). Later the female relatives of the bride prepare the nuptial bedding.

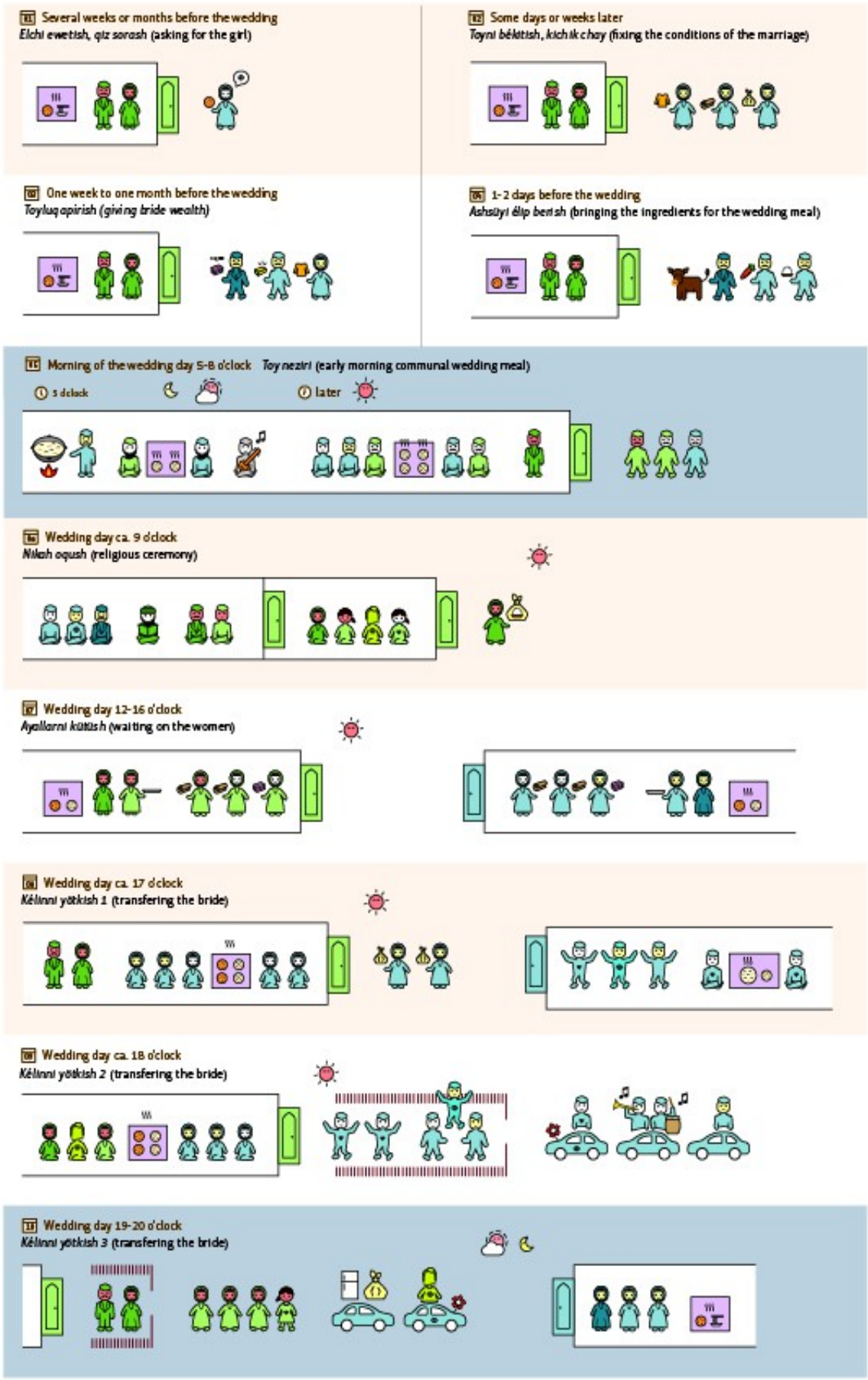
Second day

The following day starts with breakfast for the couple (*nashtiliq*), which female neighbours of the groom's side are expected to prepare. The second day of the *toy* is also referred to as the *toy* of the women. On this day the women of the bride's side are guests at the groom's parents' house, and are served a large number of different dishes. Most of the women come empty handed and leave at least with a gift of food (*zelle*), sometimes with other gifts as well. This mirrors the visit of the women from the groom's side picking up the bride the day before. Towards evening the ceremony of *yüz échish*, (lifting of the veil, lit. opening of the face) is held, featuring the younger sister of the groom lifting the bride's veil while dancing in the central room of the house in front of an all-female audience - except for the camera man. This symbolizes the integration of the bride into her new household (Rudelson 1997: 94), but also concerns the affine relation to her mother, who is present at the ceremony. Subsequently the groom and his friends dance in the courtyard and they initiate a small ceremonial gift exchange between the groom and his new mother-in-law. This event is called *tartishmaq* and includes a small mock skirmish between the two (Cesaro 2002: 130, Mavlanjan Memettursun 2012: 11).

Extending affinal relations

After the wedding the couple stays in one courtyard with the groom's parents or in a separate apartment provided by them. On the second or third day after the *yüz échish* the groom, together with one or two close friends, visits the bride's parents (*tazim*, lit. bowing down) and are guests at their place. This is said to counter his shame in front of them, deriving from the fact that he has slept with their daughter. Mostly within the first week the *onbeshkünlük* (15th day celebration) is held. Here the parents and relatives of the groom take the couple to see her parents. Both the groom's side and bride's side give gifts to the bride, while the groom's side also gives to her parents. Subsequent, several similar visits may follow, though the scale diminishes. Once more the most commonly used name of these visits in publications on Uyghur culture *'chillaq'* (vgl. Bellér-Hann 2008a: 244-246) is hardly used in Kashgar. The religious holidays Roza Héyit and Qurban Héyit offer further occasions for visiting *'quda'* (direct affines). Especially the first *héyit* is an important event for affine relations. Ideally the relations between the two sides deepen over the following time. This is facilitated through labour, hospitality, help on different occasions and prominently business opportunities being exchanged between them and their wider social networks.

At subsequent *toy* celebrations in the two families, it is common for the affines to take a very active part and subsequent marriages between the two groups are often envisioned. An important institution for deliberately intertwining the two side's social networks is the custom of *öy körsetish* (showing the house) where the parents of newly weds are invited to visit all the close relatives of their new affines (*quda*) in turn. The birth of the first child is an important occasion to consolidate the affine relations and the place of the *kélin* (daughter-in-law) within her husband's family and community. Very few marriages stay childless without being dissolved. Bellér-Hann (2008a: 283) has described the events surrounding the birth of the first child in pre-communist Xinjiang as in some way 'fulfilling' the marriage through bringing the two sides together, eventually uniting them. This holds true to a large degree today as well.


01 Several weeks or months before the wedding
Elchi ewetish, qiz sorash (asking for the girl)
02 Some days or weeks later
Toyni béléttish, kichik chay (fixing the conditions of the marriage)
03 One week to one month before the wedding
Toyluq apirish (giving bride wealth)
04 1-2 days before the wedding
Ashsüyi élip berish (bringing the ingredients for the wedding meal)
05 Morning of the wedding day 5-8 o'clock Toy nezri (early morning communal wedding meal)
5 o'clock
later
06 Wedding day ca. 9 o'clock
Nikah oqush (religious ceremony)
07 Wedding day 12-16 o'clock
Ayallarni küttish (waiting on the women)
08 Wedding day ca. 17 o'clock
Kélinni yötkish 1 (transfering the bride)
09 Wedding day ca. 18 o'clock
Kélinni yötkish 2 (transfering the bride)
10 Wedding day 19-20 o'clock
Kélinni yötkish 3 (transfering the bride)

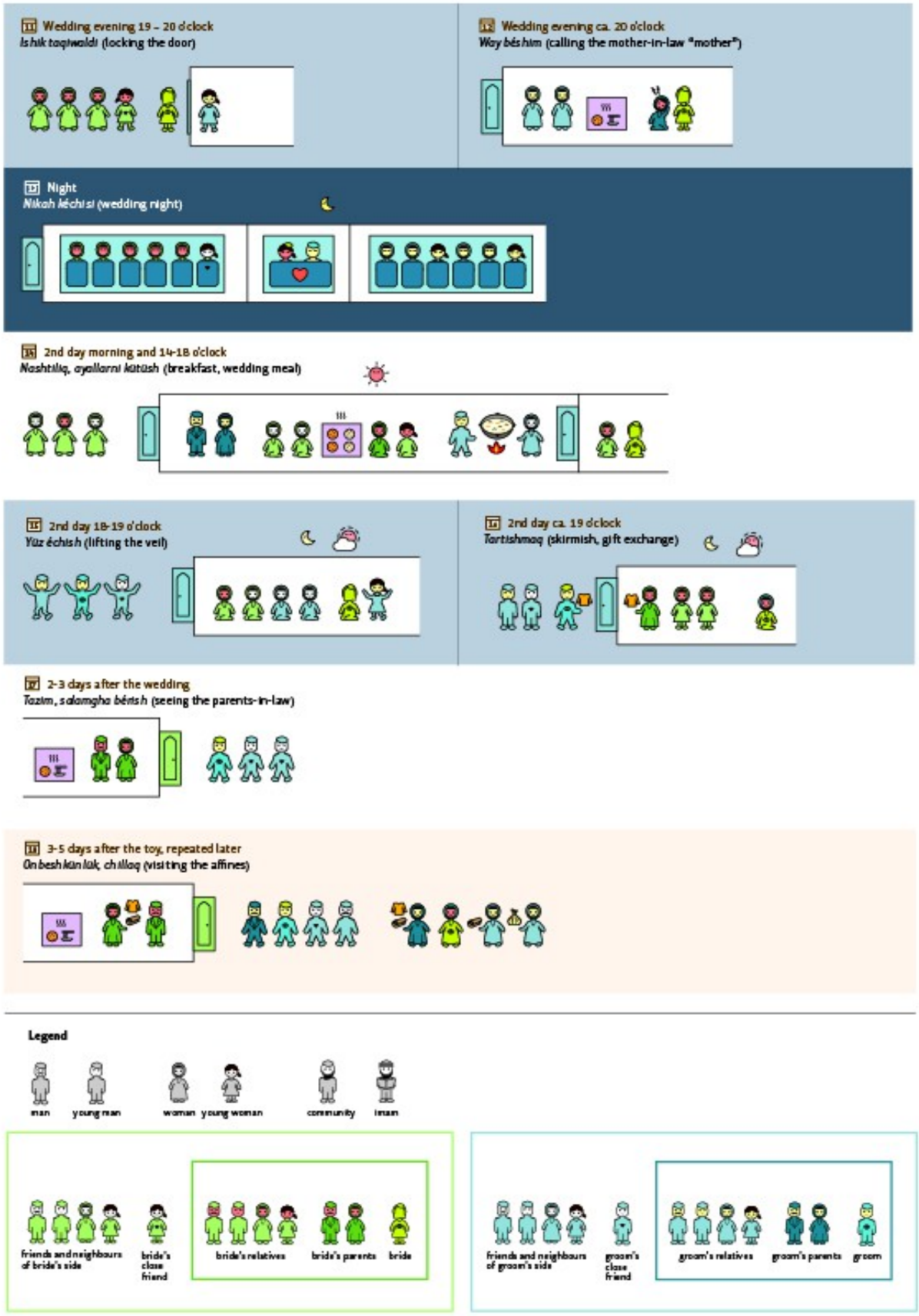


Fig. 10 Illustration of a marriage process in contemporary Kashgar in pictograms, showing each important step. (Design by Steenberg and Zheng)

5.2 Negotiation and preparation

Matchmaking (*layiq tallash*)

Layiq tallash (to choose a suitable spouse) or *layiq tépish* (to find a suitable spouse) concern parents as well as children and is a topic much talked about in Kashgar. It appears as a concept in much of the Uyghur literature concerning marriage.[41] The importance of affines makes this a central and sensitive topic to the entire household and family, and many people may be involved. Married women have a central role to play in these arrangements. A network of close female relatives may be invoked to find the right match for a son or daughter. As the topic is widely discussed many elder people, especially women, have a good overview of potential spouses within their extended social sphere. Earlier specialised matchmakers (*ǝllal*)[42] could also be involved, and in the 19th century matchmaking parties were arranged for (Dautcher 2009: 115-116, cf. Jarring 1975: 40-41). Matchmaking is still said to be a meritorious deed (see Bellér-Hann 2008a: 238). Many families will be looking within their own close relations first. This can be through relatives and neighbours but also friends and colleagues (Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 237, Zang 2008: 625, Wang 2004: 122).

It is said to be important to know the future affines (*quda*) well (cf. Zaili Memettursun 2012: 4). If they are not good people, with whom good relations may be built, the assertion is, that it will be difficult for both the couple and their families. The religious morality of the partner and the partner's family is repeatedly said to be what one should be looking for, while beauty and wealth are mentioned as what is much too often actually the deciding factors (Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 116, Zaili Memettursun 2012: 5). The moral of the single individual is mostly seen in connection with that person's parents. There are several proverbs expressing this connection: "*qizni buzghan anisi, chaqni buzghan tanisi*" (It was the mother who destroyed the girl, it was the spike who destroyed the wheel; Zaili Memettursun 2012: 4) and, "*qirgha körüp boz al, ana körüp qiz al*" (look at the wall bordering the field to choose your land, look at the mother to choose a girl; Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 237). The manner of speech "*atisi körgen*" (having seen the father) designates knowing the opposite side well.

The concern goes beyond the parents. In Kashgar the *tégi* (ground or base, more idiomatically translated as roots) is looked for. This can be understood in a genealogical way, as Zaili Memettursun who mentions the *nesebname* (pedigree) and the *ata-bowiliri* (fathers and grandfathers; Zaili Memettursun 2012: 5), but it is also often understood spatially and in practice also very much concerns the families' connections, economic position and morality.[43] The testing

41 Cf. Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000 237, 240, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 105, 115, Tahirjan Ömer et al. 2008 1-2, Zaili Memettursun 2012: 4.

42 While some people clearly distinguish explicit matchmakers (*ǝllal*) from representatives of one side (*elchi*; Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 239), others use the words interchangeably (Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 122-123). The word *ǝllal* is not used much in daily speech in Kashgar though. Among younger people it even carries negative connotations.

43 Certain neighbourhoods (*mehelle*) are said to be keen on quarreling which makes other people reluctant to marry with families living there. Further the children of people particularly active in the Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution are said to have been unable to find spouses in Kashgar, eventually being forced to move away from the city to marry.

of the potential affines, of whom much may be expected, does not end in the initial phase, but is an ongoing process stretching far past the wedding itself. This testing entails the risk of failing and thus ending the marriage process.

Arranged or mediated marriages

Both Clark (1999) and Zang (2008) using Clark's theoretical basis discuss the phenomenon of arranged marriages among Uyghurs in Ürümchi. Clark stresses the role of the communist state and its modernisation programs. The strict law enforcement in family issues and propaganda for a so-called modern family structure did much to change the family strategies of urban Uyghurs in Ürümchi. The influence of the wider kinship on household issues and the salience of multi-generational households decreased to the benefit of nuclear-family structures. After the pressure ceased in 1979, much of this trend was reversed (Clark 1999: 1-3). The role of the wider family in choosing a spouse once more increased in importance (Clark 1999: 144-158).

Zang (2008), taking up the same modernistic theoretical framework as Clark, focuses on the question of whether a high rate of arranged marriages roots in culture (ethnic traditions) or in economic development (modernity), comparing Ürümchi Uyghurs with Han settlers. He detects a general decrease in arranged marriages, but clearly most changes among Han and less among Uyghurs. He concludes that economic inequality and social status play a big role for the frequency of arranged marriages (Zang 2008: 618), that the level of education among Uyghur fathers has little effect, but that government employment decreases the likelihood for parents arranging a child's marriage. Furthermore, within the "cultural factors" he stresses the issue of gender. The difference between Han and Uyghurs is much more pronounced among women (Zang 2008: 623). Uyghur parents are much more reluctant to let their girls choose a match for themselves than their sons. Besides invoking the logic of the shame of a sister or daughter being essential for the honor of her family (Zang 2008: 622), this bias hints at another important connection. It suggests that the affines of a girl are important. In my interpretation this is because she in many ways stays a part of her natal family even after marriage. Not just the groom's, but also the bride's connections are important to the family.

An elderly well educated and wealthy government employed journalist[44] told me that most marriages in Kashgar today were arranged by parents and relatives (*ata-anisi, uruq-tughqan, öydikiler tapqan*), since, according to him, "if the parents do not get along it cannot be a happy marriage, even if the children like each other," "but of course the couple has to get along too," he admitted. Therefore no-one would force a child into marriage against its will (*unimisa zorlimaydu*), he said, instead they help their children to look for the inner values and not just the looks and to choose wisely and fittingly (*layiq tallash*) by presenting them with several options. He had himself asked a good friend in Ürümchi to find a wife for his eldest son who was studying there at the time. He explained to his friend that he was looking for a family from Kashgar and then described the features of this very friend's family in such praising tones that in the end the friend, who had several daughters himself, was not left in doubt as to the real intention of the journalist. He immediately gave his consent. Their children are still married

44 Cf. Wangs conclusions above.

today and relations between the families are very good. Yet, all his other children have initiated their own marriages, though the parents have been involved from the beginning.

Several people have estimated that around half of the marriages in Kashgar are initiated by parents and relatives, while the other half is between couples who have met and fallen in love (*muhebetliship toy qilghan*). I judge this to be a good estimate, but want to point out, that it is hardly relevant for more than the very initial steps of the marriage. In Kashgar much importance is put on the *layiq tallash* (Zaili Memettursun 2012: 4) and this being a matter involving at least family and kin (*a'ile we jemet;* Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 120) illustrates that the vast majority of marriages can be described as mediated. More people than just the couple are involved in the decision-making process. This does include the couple involved, although the extent of their role varies.

Abdulla, studying water engineering in Shandong fell in love with Maynur and they decided to marry. She was the only one amongst the twenty Uyghur women with whom he studied, who was from his home oasis Atush and conveniently she was from a village very near his own, so the parents have an easy way of staying in contact. This was obviously important for their choice to marry, though they knew that they would be working and living at a factory in northern Xinjiang more than 2000 kilometers away from their parent's place. In another instance in a family known for their frequent cousin-marriages, two cousins fell in love with each other and asked the family to be wed, which was easily agreed upon (see also Hoppe 1998: 134, Twaites 2001: Appendix 2, pp. 5-8).

The process of decision making involving several members of the families is also invoked when the couple initiates the marriage itself, so again a certain degree of arranging between the families is unavoidable. Some fall in love and then present each other to their families; others are introduced through their families and then agree. Those who fall in love 'on their own account' are often introduced by friends or common acquaintances or have gone to school together. As university is an infamous place for self-managed matchmaking (c.f. Rudelson 1997: 86), many rural parents choose to get their daughters married before they allow them to study. The local differentiation between falling in love and then marrying (*muhebbetliship toy qilip*) or finding a spouse for one self (*öz tapqan*) as opposed to having a match made by the parents (*ata-anisi/öydikiler tépip bergen*) is not of as categorical to the decision-making process as the dichotomy of arranged and freely chosen marriage suggests. It is just the first step in a long process including the consent of both the couple and their families. In both cases the families will enquire about one another and mediation by a third party, a middle person (*elchi*) will be necessary.[45]

Even couples that do meet and fall in love depend on the agreement and cooperation of their families to make the marriage possible and the required meetings take place in a similar fashion as those of fully arranged marriages (cf. Hoppe 1998: 133). More people than just the couple have their lives affected by the marriage and accordingly have their say in the matter. It is indicative that the engagement ring now sometimes given, is often given to the future bride by her future mother-in-law, signifying their relation as future *kélin* (daughter-in-law) and *qéyin-ana*

45 Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq describes how the young couple may let their parents know their intension indirectly through an *elchi* (2009a: 215). An *elchi* may also be employed in the reverse case of the parents initiating the match (Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 237-238).

(mother-in-law). The relative ease and social acceptance of divorce (see Bellér-Hann 2008a: 273-274, 278) also provides those being married 'as a duty to their parents' (*mejburiy*) with the possibility to subsequently change their own fate (Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 240).

The dichotomy of arranged versus free chosen marriage does not capture the local circumstances very well. This dichotomy presupposes an unconnected individual whose wants and desires can then be supported or opposed by a family acting as an external force. To most Uyghurs in Kashgar though, the person is not first and foremost an individual whose social connections then follow as secondary phenomenon (Dumont 1980: 4-8, 1986: 279, Strathern 1988a: 321-322). On the contrary, people are seen and view themselves as elements and products of such connections, the family (*a'ile, öy*) being the most important of these. These connections thus constitute the person itself and are not external to her. Therefore the wishes and desires of family members are also the desires of the person and the conflicts arising are often as much within the person involved as between certain members of the family. This applies in both directions. Children feel obliged to listen to their parents' advice and adhere to their wishes, and similarly most parents aspire to see their children happily married. Prioritising the good of the family over the will of the individual includes the wishes of the children themselves. The structure of decision making within a family includes an attempt at consensus finding.

Conflicts do arise in the process of the very important decisions of match making and many movies and books discuss this theme. Yet, only in extreme cases do the wishes of the individual person and those of this person's relatives conflict to such a degree, that force can be talked of. Only in extreme cases the marriage can be said to not be the will of the couple, and the statistical assessment of when this is the case is quite difficult to ascertain. This does not mean that the individual person has no agency; it simply means that the agency of the person in most cases is not to be seen as opposed to his or her relatives, but as including their wishes. In Dumont's words, the individual is not a value in itself (Dumont 1986: 279) or at least not one higher valued than the family. The family relations in which the person exists and is a person affirm a close "mutuality of being" (Sahlins 2013: 19, 62), that does allow for harsh conflict, but not for a dichotomic model of the individual versus the family or accordingly of arranged marriage versus free choice.

Asking for the girl (*qiz sorash*)

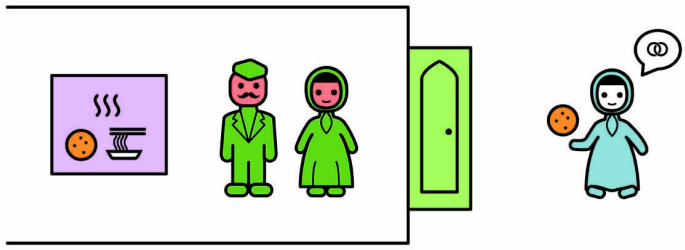


Fig. 11 Asking for the girl (*qiz sorash*). The *elchi* visits the future bride's house to assess her qualities and suggest the union to her parents. (Design by Steenberg and Zheng)

The negotiations around the marriage are in all aspects a delicate process at risk of breaking apart at any time, so a good go-between (*elchi*) is indispensable. The *elchi* is usually an elder woman who knows the family well (Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 123), sometimes, but often not, a close relative.[46] In Meryem's sister's case the *elchi* were the groom's mother's younger and elder sisters. They talked to the future bride's mother, who then talked to the bride's father, who agreed. Several women may go together at subsequent *elchi* visits and be guests at the young woman's parents' house (Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 241, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 215). The female relatives going will often be from the boy's mother's side. This shows the importance of the maternal relatives.

On her first visit the *elchi* also assesses the moral education of the young woman. She pays attention to her way of greeting, sitting and examines her cleanliness, when they touch cheeks to greet. She also pays attention to the way in which hospitality is offered in their house. The most important objective of the *elchi* is to make the intentions of the groom's side known to the potential bride's side and take back an answer without anyone being insulted or hurt. Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq points out that the process includes elements that restrict direct communication on the basis of honor and seclusion (*edep-perdishep*) and which must therefore be conducted by a representative (*wastisi bilen;* 2009a: 528). The proverb *"élchige ölüm yoq"* (for a go-between there is no death; Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 241) expresses her relative emotional non-involvement in the matter. The implication is that parents being turned down when asking for a spouse for their child will suffer as badly as in death, a woman explained, and it would be very embarrassing (*xijil*) and painful to afterwards talk to and take leave from these people. The

46 The *elchi* can also be a male religious dignitary (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 239, Dautcher 2009: 117, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 215) or a male friend of the groom. Some *elchi* bring small gifts of food, like ten flat breads (*nan*) in a tablecloth (*dastixan*) but many go empty handed to the first visit. Male *elchi* do not carry gifts, the language of such gifts being very much seen as a female way of communication. In some villages more gifts of clothing and food are brought by several *elchi* and the affirmative answer is communicated through the woman's family accepting the gifts.

discretion of the *elchi* is of utmost importance, since it may damage a family's reputation if it were to be known, that their son or daughter was turned down (Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 123). Only after the marriage plans have reached a certain stage and the relations between the two sides have be come stabilised, others are informed about the marriage process (*toy ishi tereqqiy qilip melum bashquchqa barghanda we munasiwet muqimlashqanda andin toy jeryanini bashqilargha éytsa bolidu*; Ibid.: 123).

Both the mention of the marriage as a process of steps and the point of the two sides' relations becoming stable are worth noting in this quote. This supports our view of the marriage as a process of building ties between the two families. An *elchi* may be necessary even if the couple has fallen in love and instigated the marriage themselves. It is her responsibility to bring the parents together and make the families agree to connect. An *elchi* often accompanies the entire process (Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 122) and is rewarded with a gift on the day of the wedding. Her services are needed in the negotiations about gifts and the *toyluq* as well as in sensitive questions arising during the preparations.

The initial phase of testing the morality and willingness of the opposite side, often called *qiz köüsh* (seeing the girl) is followed by the more official *qiz sorash* (asking for the girl). This will often be a later visit of the *elchi* accompanied by the mother or father of the boy. Here very standardized language is used. The phrase "our son has come of age, so has your daughter…," has hardly changed in the past 100 years (cf. Bellér-Hann 2008a: 239, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 216)[47].

The standardised language, just like the initial visits of the *elchi*, is a de-personalising strategy, i.e., a strategy to take the focus off the person and shift it to an imagined collectivity. The matter is moved from the persons themselves, feeling shame (*nomus, xijil*) about this matter generally, to a more general level of custom, of how things must be done and of general public interest. This is much like Foucault's introduction to the discourse which takes the pressure off starting to talk, it is a "voice without name" that "was always ahead of me," "a voice behind me that has long ago risen to speak and echoes all I say in advance" (Foucault 1999/1972: 9). In a similar way, the formalised speech and the *elchi* put the weight of custom and community behind the person's actions and individual will.

47 Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq provides an example of a standard speech at the *qiz sorash*:

"Ular nahayiti tekellup we hömet bilen: 'oghul chong bolsa ölinidu, qiz chong bolsa yatliq qilinidu. Siler japa bilen aydek qizni chong qilip reside qilipsiler. Bu xudaning silerge bergen némiti. Bizning pokoni axunning oghli xéli yaxshi, durus, peziletlik, hünerlik, jama'etning hömitige érishken adem boldi. Qarighanda u yigit silerning etiwarlik qizinglargha kögli chüshüp qaptu. Umu xudaning orunlashturushi. Pokuni axunmu mundaq-mundaq adem, shu seweblik biz qizinglarni sorap, aldinglardin ötüsh üchün kirip qalduq. Eger ikki yashning nikahi qoshulup qalsa, bext gülliri échilsa silerge yaxshi, bizgemu yaxshi,' degendek özixaliqlarni éytip qizni soraydu." (2009a: 216, punctation added, R.S.)

(With pronounced reverence and politeness they ask for the girl using the following expressions of solace: 'when a boy comes of age he is made with house [i.e. married] when a girl come of age she is made foreign [i.e. married]. You have worked hard to bring up a girl pretty as the moon. This is a giftGod has given to you. Our XX's son has become a good, straight, virtuous, person who is well respected in the community. It seems like he has fallen in love with your precious girl. This too is God's deed. Mr. XX is like this and that. Therefore we have come before you to ask for the girl. If the marriage of the two comes to be, if the flowers of happiness come to bloom, it will good for you and it will be good for us.)

In some difficult cases several *elchi* may be sent subsequently, as in the case of Enwer, aged 27, who had married his girlfriend secretly by just getting the official state registration (*toy xet*) and having the *nikah* read without holding any wedding celebration (*toy*). The young woman's parents did not agree to the marriage since he was from a poor family and his salary in a private advertising agency, though not low by Kashgar standards at almost 2000 yuan a month, was less than their daughter's own government salary. Her parents thus kept raising the *toyluq* (bride wealth) while he kept sending *elchi* to negotiate and guarantee his good intentions. The parents eventually agreed and the *toy* was conducted.

In the past, only the boy's side would send *elchi* and this is still the most common way. It would not be suitable for a young woman's parents to display such an overt willingness to marry off their daughter. It would look as if something was the matter with her, it would "be ugly" (*ɔet bolatti*). In recent years however, especially amongst religious families *elchi* are sent in both directions. As the pious, wealthy mother of a twenty-year-old woman put it, this is to secure a good son-in-law (*küy'oghul*) and avoid having to give her daughter to strangers. This is no longer necessarily looked down upon in her circles.

Although all marriages may be said to be mediated and even arranged to some extent, how much the bride and groom have seen of each-other before their marriage varies. In some neighbourhoods (*mehelle*) efforts are made to ensure that the couple does not have contact before the marriage. At present however, this seems to be the exception. At some point within this phase, the future partners are asked for their consent in the matter. In case they have not yet become acquainted, a meeting is arranged. This often takes place in a restaurant under the supervision of female relatives of each side. The two are at one point left alone to discuss their personal conditions for the marriage. The woman is supposed to be shy and humble, while the man is supposed to display commitment and generosity. These meetings provide the possibility to demonstrate good conduct and are what an elder woman called a "moral test" (*exlaq ɔinaqi*) of each on their own gender specific premises.

Negotiations (*toyni békitish, chay épbérish*)

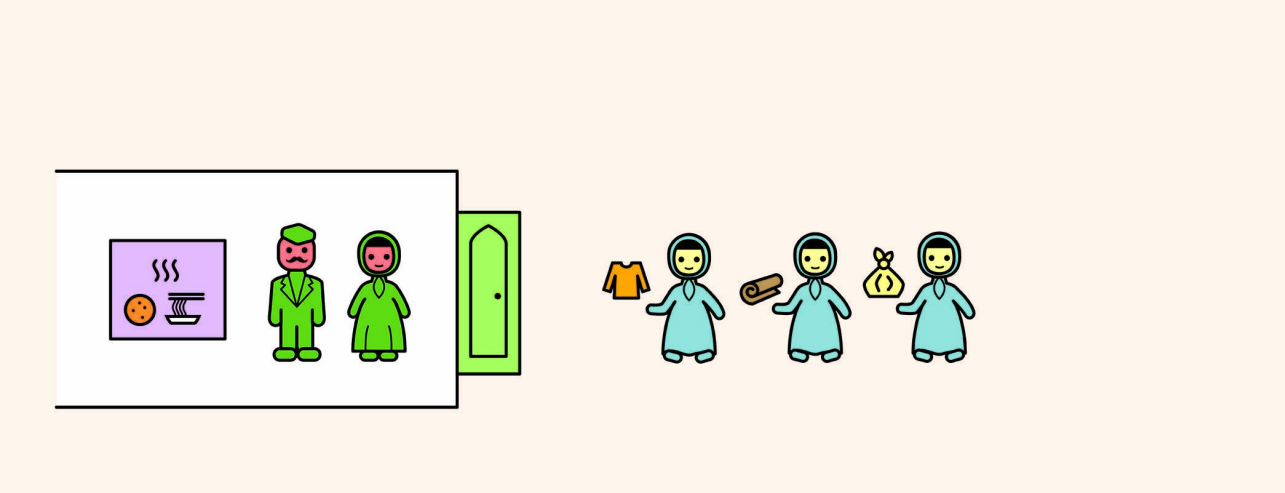


Fig. 12 At the *chay épbérish* women from the groom's side bring gifts to the bride's side to celebrate their acceptance of the marriage proposal, but also to begin negotiations about the conditions of the marriage. (Design by Steenberg and Zheng)

When the agreement of both sides has been established the groom's relatives visit the bride's parents. Between three and twenty female relatives including the boy's mother participate (c.f. Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 241). They carry gifts for the bride's relatives, clothes for the bride and her mother and sometimes the first piece of gold jewelry for the bride herself. They also bring several *∂ashixan*. *Dashixan*, which literally just means "tablecloth" is the generic word for gifts of food brought by guests to the host of the house (*sahibjan, öyning igisi*). They are mostly brought by individual women placing the food in a bowl or between two loafs of bread with a tablecloth wrapped around it. This is a means by which the guests display hospitality towards the host: the gifts figure on the same level as the host's hospitality in kind if not in scale and reciprocate each other. At this event no individual *∂ashixan* are brought by the participating women. Instead collective *∂ashixan* are taken, the whole group of neighbours, friends and relatives give collectively, acting as one unit — the groom's side (*oghul terep*). This marks the event as one at which the affine relations are being focused on and distinguishes it from other events and usual guesting, at which the giving units are individual households. At events in the marriage process that focus on the relations within one side of a wedding, individual *∂ashixan* are brought by each household (c.f. Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 124). Most of the food gifts of the *∂ashixan* are served at this and later guesting situations of the bride's household or are distributed to the neighbours of the hosting household.

Besides being a form of reciprocity for the received hospitality the *∂ashixan* are also seen as direct contributions to ease the burden for the host household. This is a theme repeated within the *toy* events and at other events of giving. It can be said to be the same logic of 'sharing the burden' which transforms into mainly contributing gifts of money at events in restaurants, where money is the main resource needed for hosting the event. To bring fewer guests or much *∂ashixan*, or both, displays at the same time generosity and modesty, two much-cherished values. In this phase, before the marriage the groom's family is very eager to please the bride's relatives

and both families zealously observe the giving of the other side. Bringing many guests signals how well the household is socially situated, displaying social capital (Bourdieu 1986, 1989) and of creating it, since the guests belonging to the boy's side are confirmed in their importance for the boy's parent's household and from this time on may start to establish ties to the family of his future bride. Cooked dishes are distributed among the neighbours. The host household thus strengthens its social ties with the neighbours and the new affines make their first entry into the neighbourhood. On the other hand bringing fewer guests displays modesty and consideration for the other side.

The exact names and conduct of these meetings are not rigid.[48] They vary from family to family and according to each marriage's special circumstances. What is achieved in these early meetings is similar common to all though. They celebrate the bride's side's acceptance of the groom's side's proposal (Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 217, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 124), and mark this with gifts given from the groom's side to the bride's side. At the same time the *chay epbérish* is also an event of negotiations. The time of the wedding, the number of guests each side will bring to the other side and most importantly the *toyluq* (bride wealth) and other gifts are negotiated (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 239; Rudelson 1997: 87; Dautcher 2009: 119, Abdukérim Rehman et al. 2009a: 346). The negotiations are often mediated by representatives of the two sides (*wakil*) and may continue after the *chay epbérish* (Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 242).

48 In most of the literature the name "*kichik chay*" (small tea or small ceremony) is used for this event (Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 128, Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 241, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 217, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 124). This is the name in Ürümchi but it is not a common term in Kashgar, where the event is called "*chay épbérish*," "*chay apirish*," "*chay ekirish*" (bringing tea (in); Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 128, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 124) or *dastixan tashlash* (to throw down the tablecloth; Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 241, Abdukérim Rehman et al. 2009a: 345). All these names focus on the giving of the boy's side, i.e. on the *dastixan* brought, more so than on the hospitality of the bride's side. Neither Abdukérim Rehman nor Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq in their condensed descriptions even mention the fact that the groom's side receives hospitality at the bride's parents place, which is explicitly mentioned in the other steps (Abdukérim Rehman et al. 2009a: 346, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 217). In other parts of Xinjiang this event is also known as "*rexmet chéyi*" (the "thank you" tea or ceremony) or *maqulluq chay* (agreement tea or ceremony; Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 124, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 217, Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 241), since it is held to celebrate the acceptance of the boy's side's proposal by the bride's side. Some people in Kashgar city call this event *meslihet ch'eyi* (consultation tea), which means something different in Ürümchi (cf. Mirsultan and Sugawara 2007: 98).

Giving bride wealth (*toyluq apirish*)

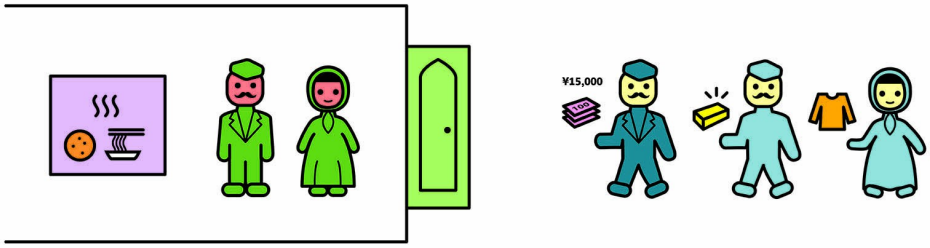


Fig. 13 The groom's side bring the *toyluq* (bride wealth) between a month and a week prior to the wedding and recieve hospitality at the bride's parents' house. (Design by Steenberg and Zheng)

The next big event is the deliverance of the *toyluq* (bride wealth).[49] This takes place in between one month and one week before the wedding itself. For this a number of persons from the groom's side visit the bride's parents, eat and talk, and leave the *toyluq* agreed upon on the tablecloth or place it on a *petnus* (tray) that is extended to one of the bride's parents. It may also be the *elchi* who makes the transfer.

The *toyluq* includes gifts for the bride's family and an amount of money (between 5000-40,000 yuan). The *toyluq* usually depends on the level of income of both sides, the education of the bride and the current market prices of primarily meat and gold (see Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 242-243, Abdukérim Rehman et al. 2009a: 346, Clark 1999: 160). Furthermore, the amount of the *toyluq* asked also reflects the willingness of the bride's side to enter into the marriage, as apparent in the case of Enwer described above. Raising the *toyluq* can be an indirect way of refusing a marriage or a high *toyluq* may be taken as a compensation for an unwanted match. Generally high *toyluq* are dreaded and in most cases members of the neighbourhood community (*jama'et*) will take part in the negotiations, sanctioning too high claims of *toyluq* (Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 242, 245) to make sure that the payments stay within the range usually given within the neighbourhood.

Men or women

Both the boy's parents may bring the *toyluq* and along with ten to thirty guests (Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 244, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 217, Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 128). In Kashgar usually either the father or the mother goes, taking with them male or female relatives and neighbours respectively. Whether men or women go makes a big difference to the event. "*Ayallar uzitish qiyin*" (it is difficult to host and see off women), people say, and indeed the number of visitors is greater and the hospitality more lavish, when women are involved. If

49 In most of the literature this event is known by the name it carries in Ürümchi: "*chong chay*" (big tea or ceremony; Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 244, 245; Hoppe 1998: 134, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 124, Abdukérim Rehman et al. 2009a: 346, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 217). In Kashgar, however, this name is rarely used. Instead the event is known as "*qizning aldigha bérish*" (go before the girl) or "*toyluq apirish*" (bringing the bride wealth).

women go, about 20-30 female relatives, neighbours and friends (*uruq-tughqan, qolum-qoshna, yaru-buraderler*, Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 244) will accompany the groom's mother. They carry several big common *dastixan* with them, holding crystal sugar, eggs and *samsa* (meat-filled buns). Further they bring gifts of clothes and cloth for the bride and her parents and relatives (Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 125), which they give on a tray (*petnus*) extended to the bride's mother, putting the money on top of it. It would look ugly (*set*), several women explained to me, if the money were to be put directly onto the tray, since it would seem as if it were only about the money and not about the social relations between members of the two sides. Personal relations are better conveyed through the giving of cloth and clothes. At this point of the marriage process close relatives and neighbours become more involved in the preparations for the wedding. They may also cook for the female visitors bringing the *toyluq*. The *qizning aldigha bérish* or *chong chay* marks the end of the negotiation phase and the beginning of the proper preperations for the wedding (Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 125, 126).

If men go to give the *toyluq*, fewer people accompany the groom's father. Only one to five close male neighbours and relatives often including the *quda* (affines, the in-laws of other children) go and the hospitality they receive is much more modest than that offered to the women. The men bring no other gifts and no *dastixan*. Men do not carry *dastixan* at any occasion, though they may give other gifts. They also do not stay as long as the women, and the exchange of greetings is more formal and is said to involve less personal conversation than the women's meetings.

These days, most often the *toyluq* is brought by men, while the former event, the *chay epbérish,* at which the same possible variance exists is more often conducted by women (Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 124). This may at first be interpreted in the classical fashion of men being more "official" than women and their word counting for more. Bourdieu argued that the first secretive steps and the actual negotiations of a Kabyle marriage are undertaken by women, often the "practical kin," while the later officialising steps were fulfilled by men as "official kin" (Bourdieu 1977:33–38, Barnard and Good 1984: 167-170). Thus in this reading the *chay epbérish* being earlier in the process is conducted by women and the more serious business of bringing the money and thus sactioning the union is conducted by men. Though this perspective holds some truth to it, and especially elder Uyghur men in Kashgar formulate similar biases, it does not capture the full extent of this gender difference, but rather simplifies and distorts it.

The first contradiction to such a reading arises from the fact that it may actually be the mother bringing the *toyluq*. In the past, informants say, this was more often the case. The reason most often given for men going instead of women is that the event will be bigger and need more resources if the women go. This is said to be *israpchiliq* (unnecessary waste), a narrative invoked for discussing many elements in celebrations in Kashgar today. Many religious and state authorities promote modesty and simplicity at weddings and other rituals. If men go, this counts as a sign of modesty and frugality. The pressure to keep the celebrations simple is counter-balanced by a need to establish social contacts between the two sides through these events, and the choice of whether men or women go may depend on the need for deepening relations further.

The bringing of the *toyluq* will often take place at a point in time, when all is pretty much settled and the wedding itself not far off, providing plenty of opportunities for exchange between the two sides and with the respective neighbours and relatives. Therefore many people view it as being obsolete as an event of giving and opt for a simple male event. Contrarily the *chay epbérish* is an event of negotiations, when the marriage is still very much in the making. Relations, displays of sympathy and discussion are therefore much wanted.

This actually does give the former event conducted by females a more "practical" and the latter event, often conducted by males, a more "official" status, or at least a more formal one. But the actual importance lies in the first meeting and the second one is left to the men exactly because of its lesser importance. Also it may be argued, that in fact the female events are in this case the more official ones in the sense of being more public, since they are attended by more people and representatives of the neighbourhood community, while the male events are limited to very close relations.

The female mode of communication including gifts and extended hospitality functions in a different way than that of the men and entails different possibilities. Especially for creating ties between households and families on a wider basis this form of communication is important (Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 242), since the gifts and extended hospitality opens up a more direct and material way of displaying sympathy and care than the spoken word, which is often very formal, especially between people who do not yet know each other well. This can be seen as a certain female mode of sociality (Strathern 1988a: 92-97) that is sometimes interchangeable with the male mode of communication, but often functions as complementary to this. This once more shows that also in practice the competences necessary to take fully part in social life is only provided within the conjugal union, and thus marriage in this important way constitutes the full person. As Nurijan told me when I left for Xinjiang the first time, gifts are very important, but I as a man shouldn't worry about that – the women will take care of it. The *toyluq apirish* or *chong chay* marks the end of the negotiation phase and the beginning of the proper preparations for the wedding (Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 126).

State registration (*toyxet élish*)

According to Chinese law, every marriage, to be officially legal, has to be registered with the local state authorities. The official marriage documents are usually picked up a few days prior to the wedding. The document is known as *toy xet* or *jangzi* (from Chinese 结婚证 *jiehunzheng*). The document includes a photograph of the couple, bare-headed (*yalangbash*). This is emphasised as important, since it guarantees that the two have at least seen each other once before the marriage. There are photographers at the office and the photo can be done there, or it can be brought from a different place.

In front of the marriage registration office on Semen Road in Kashgar, two big posters on each side of the door present the stipulations for marriage. On the right hand side it is written in big Uyghur letters, on the left hand side in Chinese characters. Both man and woman have to be present, explicitly agree to the union and each bring their personal papers including their ID

card (*kimlik*) and their birth certificate (*нопуз дәптири*). Neither may be already married[50] or have any serious illnesses "rendering the person unfit for marriage" and they may not be "lineal relatives by blood or collateral relatives by blood up to the third degree of kinship" (Marraige Law of the Peoples Republic of China 2001: Article 7, cf. Engel 1984: 958). According to the posters in Kashgar, the man has to be at least twenty years of age and the woman eighteen. This age limit is two years lower than the official limit for all of China. The new Marriage Law from 1980 raised the limit to 22 and 20 respectively (Mut'ellip Hüseyn 2002: 190, Marraige Law of the Peoples Republic of China 2001: Article 6, cf. Engel 1984), but the age limit has since varied somewhat from region to region in China, allowing for some variation according to local customs (Engel 1984: 958, Article 50).

Legal pluralism

South Xinjiang can be seen as a space of legal pluralism, where local, Islamic and stately legal traditions intermingle and sometimes contradict each other (Bellér-Hann 2004a). In practice they cannot be seen as independent legal traditions. Often they are not clearly distinguishable and though local legal tradition can be compared to the canon of particular schools of Islamic teaching and certain texts, like the Hedaya (Hamilton 1957/1970), most of local tradition is explicitly seen as Muslim by people themselves and a division would be quite artificial (Bellér-Hann 1998: 10, 2004: 173-174, Schrode 2008: 105-106). Each of these legal traditions have their specialists of which the religious leaders and the government officials stand out as quite easily recognisable. Some neighbourhood authorities are not particularly religious dignitaries, but all of them are viewed as knowledgeable of religious matter, which by most people is seen as the very basis of morality. The government officials and stately authorities have a distinct form of communication often omitting religious references when in duty (Wang 2004: 10), however most of them strive for local recognition through demonstrating religious knowledge, when off duty. I have on several occasions experienced high government officials displaying their knowledge of Islam by leading the prayers before and after meals and thereby saying the Arabic words out loud for everyone to hear, which is usually not done, or citing passages from the Qur'an.

Despite their close intertwinement, it can still be analytically useful to distinguish the three areas, especially as "local custom" is being questioned by different Islamic influences (see Cahpter 9). Yet, it must be kept in mind that the borders between Islamic and local tradition are fluid and underlie ongoing negotiation (Schrode 2008: 401, 410-411, 425-427). The legal sanctions of the marriage in these three systems are more easily discernible. They are: 1) the official registration with Chinese state administration, 2) the religious wedding ceremony (nikah) and 3) the wedding party 'toy,' being the sanctioning of the neighbourhood and kinship community. The *nikah* of course falls within the *toy* in a local conception of this word, when denoting wedding as opposed to other life cycle rituals. It is even seen as a centre or climax of the *toy*, a relation which well captures the role of Islam in local tradition, but cannot make up the

50 Often the permission to marry is received at a local office while the marriage certificate comes from a more central marriage bureau. During the Qing administration of the early twentieth century women had to prove this fact, which could be provided by the local imam (Bellér-Hann 2008a:185 drawing upon Sykes and Sykes 1920: 311, Bellér-Hann 2004a: 180).

toy itself or really substitute for the *toy*. Sometimes the *nikah* is not even a part of the *toy*.[51]

Family law

Family law has traditionally been the strongholds of Islamic jurisprudence either as an integrated part of, or sometimes in debated contrast to, local or customary law (Bellér-Hann 2004a: 175-179-180, Schrode 2008). Islamic law had its own place within the legal system of the Qing administration, being responsible for all civil legal matters concerning Muslims (Bellér-Hann 2004a: 175, 179). The Communist Party introduced a family law in 1950 that was revised in 1980 (Engel 1984, Bellér-Hann 2004b) and 2001 (Palmer 2007, Marriage Law of the Peoples Republic of China 2001). It is prohibited for imams or *molla*[52] to perform the Islamic wedding ceremony (*nikah*) without having seen the marriage documents of the couple (*toy xet*). This is no new development, as Bellér-Hann describes in the 19th century under Qing rule "legal documents had to be obtained from the local *bäg* before contracting a marriage" (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 185 drawing upon Forsyth 1875: 84, Bellér-Hann 2004a: 180). In many *nikah* ceremonies the documents are placed before the imam. Yet, many *molla* explicitly refuse to look at these, clearly making a stand for the religious sanctioning being primary and not subjugated to any other authority. On several occasions I have witnessed the *molla* rejecting looking at them, stating that he was not "that kind" of *molla* and thus distancing himself from the state. Marriages sanctioned by religious authorities but not by the state are not uncommon. They are called an '*imam nikah*'.

The fourteenth point on the posters in front of the marriage bureau in Kashgar states that the birth dates on the ID card and birth certificates must match. Besides being practical information this can also be read as a telling comment on the fact that these documents are often manipulated to accommodate under age marriages. The age of young women is often lied about and birth certificates may be forged, especially in the countryside, where the marriage age is often quite low (c.f. Rudelson 1997: 86). Quite a few marriages are either not registered at all or remain un-registered until years after the wedding has been held, the *nikah* read and the couple has begun living as spouses. Registrations may also be made using a forged, or illegally purchased, real documents that have not been registered in the system (cf. Dautcher 2009: 68-69).

Kinship relations and social networks can provide means to circumvent state regulations. Such circumvention strengthens the connections through adding a further function and potential to them in a similar way as the struggle for access to state resources does more generally. These

51 As mentioned above, the *toy* celebrations may be held at a later point in time. However, this often affects the legitimacy of the union, which by some is explained by the fact, that the Qur'an demands for a marriage to be made public to the neighbours and relatives through the *toy*. In the case of Enwer the *toy* was held more than ten months after the *nikah* had been read and his wives parent's refused to accept the marriage, trying to have it dissolved before finally agreeing to the *toy* before their daughter's circumstances became too obviously visible. To the couple the marriage was not complete without the *toy* and Enwer even considered leaving his pregnant wife if her parents would not give in. Murrat was to marry a few days after the tragic incidents of June 2009 in Ürümchi. The *toy* celebration was called off and the wedding consisted of little more than the *nikah* and a common meal with the closest relatives. When a year later the couple still did not have any children they were advised to hold the big wedding celebration by a fortune teller (*∂uakhon*), which they then did.

52 A *molla* in Uyghur signifies a religiously learned person. He doesn't have to be the imam of any mosque or otherwise legally recognised. According to local custom any *molla* may perform the wedding ceremony *nikah*.

connections and networks are often seen as informal, from a state perspective. Yet, from a local perspective they are not informal at all. The state regulations making them "informal" through defining "formality" as being connected to the state or at least registered by it, may ironically play a big part in upholding or even establishing many such networks (c.f. Humphrey 2012: 37-38). At the same time though, as Clark points out, the state regulations do have the effect of changing parts of local custom by altering the circumstances within which family choices are made (Clark 1999: 135-170). This has been the case for former administrative systems as well, as Newby's account of the Qing *beg* system well demonstrates, where the Qing administrative practices created a new elite (Newby: 1998).

Invitations (*baghaq yézish*)

The invitation to a wedding (*chong toy*) in Kashgar is never an invitation to the whole celebration. It is always an invitation to a certain part of the celebration. For me as a young man the invitation was mostly for the early morning communal meal or the afternoon dancing in the court yard. Some individuals and certainly many households will receive several written invitations and oral ones as well. The invitations are always from one of the two sides of the wedding. When stating that one is invited to a wedding the other will ask *'qiz toy yaki oghul toy'* (a girl's or a boy's wedding)? These are viewed as two different kinds of wedding, celebrated separately but including mutual visits and exchanges by the other part. For all happenings within the marriage celebrations every participants role is clearly situated with one of the two sides.[53]

At most weddings that are held in restaurants and at many events within more traditional weddings too, the two side's guests will be placed at separate tables or in separate rooms. While tables or table cloths and thus commensality on the small scale is mostly gender segregated, on a larger spatial scale the room division often more clearly designates the division of the two sides. I have been at several weddings where the guests of one side actually knew nothing of the other side. This is not the case for close relatives more directly involved in the marriage process of course.

Kinds of invitations

We find at least five different kinds of written invitations for a usual wedding in Kashgar today:

1) Invitation for the elder men or *jama'et* to the early morning communal meal (*etigen neziri*)

2) Invitation for the women for the celebration at noon (*toy cheyi*)

3) Invitation for young men (and young women) for early afternoon (*toy cheyi*)

4) Invitations for men for the afternoon celebration (*toy cheyi*)

5) Invitation for women for the 'opening of the face' (*yüz échish*) ceremony on the following day (c.f. Zaili Memettursun 2012: 7).

53 When a local lecturer in Anthropology asked two students to write their theses about weddings in Kashgar (Zaili Memettursun 2012 and Mavlanjan Memettursun 2012) she assigned each of them to one side of the marriage - one to the groom's side or 'boy's side' (*oghul terep*; Mavlanjan Memettursun 2012) and one to the bride's side or 'girl's side' (*qiz terep*; Zaili Memettursun 2012) as the first basic way of dividing such a task.

All of the events on the invitation are usually called *toy merikisi* (wedding celebration or ceremony), though the *yüz échish* ceremony may be named separately. These invitations besides marking separate events also draw out and perpetuate important categories within the community.

1) The elder men (*jama'et*) are invited to the early morning *toy neziri* (communal wedding meal) for eating *polu* (pilau), congratulating the bride's and groom's fathers and blessing the wedding with a prayer. The term *'jama'et'* literally covers the elders of the mosque community, but may also designate all grown men in this community, all that come to the mosque regularly or in this case all adult male friends, neighbours and relatives of one side. It has basic spatial connotations, but may be used beyond the spatial meaning. Both side's *jama'et* is invited. Individuals of a certain standing or closeness to the household getting married receive small printed invitations with the name of the receiver handwritten on them for this event. At the same time the mosque community is invited through the imam at the mosque and expected to collectively proceed to the *toy neziri* after the first prayer of the day (*bamdat*), just before dawn. In many villages the early morning invitations are addressed to the imams of the mosques and not to individuals. The event takes place at dawn at the bride's parent's house, but the meal is financed and prepared by the groom's side, and they print the invitations (Zaili Memettursun 2012: 7).

The invitations are simple, printed on plain paper in mostly blue colours and framed by a pattern. As on all types of invitations the heading reads: *teklip name* (invitation). It has no pictures or symbols except for the patterns and does not carry any poems or proverbs. This invitation is meant to signify the simplicity and earnestness connected to this religious event of *nezir*. The content is printed in red letters.[54] Even the signature is printed. Only the name of the receiver is handwritten, often on location while distributing the invitations. They can be distributed separately or be put into a different invitation, one for the afternoon (type 3 or 4). The text invites the addressee to be an honored guest (*ezei méhman*) at the wedding celebration or ceremony (*toy merikisi*) of the grandchildren (*newriler*) of four men, listing their names. These four men are the grandfather's of the bridal couple, listed in the following sequence: groom's father's father, groom's mother's father (FF, MF), bride's father's father, bride's mother's father (FF, MF). If the person is deceased the word *merhum* (deceased) is added in front of the name. Honorific suffixes with religious connotations like *hajim* (have taken the pilgrimage to Mekka) or *qarem* (knows the Qur'an by heart) are added to the names, often regardless of their factuality.

Using such honorifics is a way for the groom's side to honour the bride's side before the wedding and to stress the religiosity of the event. The honorifics are used for both sides. This could seem like self-praise if the groom's side were to be seen as one corporative unit. But the individuals responsible for having the invitations printed are often not the members of the marrying households themselves. The honorifics on the invitations are thus a part of their paying respect to the household. Such small traces of the creation of relations are found everywhere within the marriage process.

54 Rudelson discribes that all invitations were on red paper In the 1990s. Red is the traditional Chinese colour of happiness and marriage (Rudelson 1997: 89). Today red invitations would never be used for the early morning communal meal (*toy neziri*), but only for the young men's afternoon invitations. Yet, the writing on many invitations is in red letters.

Of special interest regarding the conceptionalisation of kinship and particularly of descent and filiation is that both the maternal and paternal grandfathers are mentioned. A few people mentioned the possibility of it being the father's father (FF) and the father's father's father (FFF) instead of the mother's father (MF), which would put a stronger emphasis on patrilineal descent. This matches the way kinship is often thought of in strongly religiously connoted situations like this one, since the Qur'an displays such patrilineal conceptualisations. Yet the practical considerations of maintaining social bonds mostly dominate. Since many maternal relations of the two sides are expected to attend, it would be risking an insult to these not to add the respective maternal grandfathers' names. More importantly, the groom and bride are seen equally as descendants of all four of these men. The groom's side is mentioned first and the paternal grandfather (FF) is mentioned before the maternal grandfather (MF), but this is no ranking of descent, it is a ranking of gender. The two father's names are signed at the bottom of the invitation just above the time (between 5 and 6.30 in the morning) and the location. The fathers are both hosts and "owners" (*ige*) of this event.

Fig. 14 Written invitation for the early morning communal wedding meal (*toy neziri*). The invitation is written in both father's name and all four grandfathers are mentioned in the text. The couples names do not appear. (Collected by the author in Kashgar in May 2013)

Fig. 15 Written invitation for the early morning communal wedding meal (*toy neziri*). The honorifics *hajim* (have been on the Hajj) and *ωstam* (master) have been added to the names of the groom's grandfathers. (Collected by the author in Kashgar in November 2011)

2) The women of the neighbourhood receive written invitations for around 12-14 o'clock, where they present gifts of cloth and eat at the groom's parents' house. Some of them will subsequently join the party of women from the groom's side, and go to the bride's parents' house to eat and take the bride back to the groom's parent's place. The women's invitation in form and design resemble the ones for the *jama'et* except that they are yellow instead of blue. They also feature another interesting mirroring of the invitations above by carrying the names of the groom's father's mother, the groom's mother's mother (FM, MM), the bride's father's mother and the bride's mother's mother (FM, MM). Both mothers' figure as hosts (*ige*, owner) of this event and their printed names sign the invitations. This looks almost like maternal lines, when viewed through the lenses of descent theory, but are again more precisely interpreted as the representatives of the most important households in the marriage process within the female social sphere. The grandmother's households also represent the "big house" (*chong öy*, parental house) of all the siblings of both within and beyond the female sphere of social gatherings. Even among men, the parent's house is most often called the mother's house, just like siblings are called *qérinɑ̃ash* (those of one womb), stressing their common mother, not father.

Female neighbour with intense daily contact take a certain pride in not needing an invitation, since it in a sense is 'their marriage celebration' as well. They are included into the in-group and

to a high degree take upon themselves the role of hosts during the events. Others on the contrary may be insulted by not receiving an invitation if they do not feel close enough to the household marrying and may not go at all. Though often both spouses are invited and will go to a wedding or other life cycle ritual, the important thing seems to be that at least one goes. When one of the families of my neighbourhood married a woman coming from a village fifty kilometers away, each of the households decided which one of them would go explicitly stating that they would go for each other.

Fig. 16 Two invitations to the same wedding, stapled onto each other. One is for a young woman from the bride. The other is for this young woman's mother from the groom and bride's mothers. On the latter invitation the couple's names are not mentioned, instead the four deceased grandmothers are named. (Collected by the author in Kashgar in November 2011)

3) The young men (*yigitler, yash bala*) receive written invitations for the *toy* celebration in the afternoon, starting around two o'clock with live music and dance and involving the central wedding meal in the grooms house, at the conclusion of which the young men accompany the groom to go to collect and transfer the bride in a decorated wedding-car (*toy mashinisi*). The groom and his father both function as 'owners' of this event, but only the groom's name is printed onto the invitation. Before this, in the early morning, the closest friends of the groom are orally invited to join him at the bride's parent's house for the *nikah* and their part of the *toy neziri* (early morning communal wedding meal) for which they receive the same invitation as the elder men, placed within the larger invitation to the afternoon event. The groom personally asks the closest of his friends to join him for the *nikah*. The invitations for the young men are larger than the formerly mentioned ones, printed on high-gloss paper and may even have a cover. They are often red, but may have all kinds of colours. I saw one black card with a furry velvet surface and decorated with a sparkling fake glass diamond.

The invitation cards are framed by abstract patterns and occasionally quasi-Islamic calligraphics. They also feature symbols like flowers (primarily roses), golden rings, hearts, birds and the patterns of the local *etles* cloth may be found on the cards. Flowers, birds and hearts symbolise the love of the couple and their blooming in the future referring to Central Asian and Persian poetry, which is sometimes quoted on the cards. The rings signify the connection of husband and wife but also stand for the connection of the two families, recalling the *toyluq* (bride wealth) given to the bride and her parents of which a large part is for gold jewelry for the bride. The special thing about the gold given to the bride is that it belongs exclusively to her individually.

The patterns and calligraphy refer to the religious frame and content of the event, but many patterns also carry strong ethnic or national connotations, as do the *etles*-patterns. To many, the Persian poetry also curiously has an ethnic connotation, since it distinguishes the Uyghurs culturally from the Han-Chinese. The second page mostly carries a small poem about love or marriage. Prayer (*∂u'a*), mother (*ana*), father (*∂a∂a*) and happiness or fortune (*bext*), are the most common themes in these poems.[55] Below the guests are reminded to be on time: "*ya∂ingiz∂a bolsun! … waqit altun∂in qimmet! …*" (May it be in your memory! … Time is more valuable than gold! …). This reflects one of the main concerns at weddings, the management of the timing of all the different events.

The groom's friends play an important role in the wedding preparations. They provide many of the cars, dance at the grooms place and are essential in fetching the bride in the evening of the wedding day. Meetings to coordinate and plan these events are arranged for (*meslihet chéyi*, consultation tea or ceremony, see Mirsultan and Sugawara 2007: 98), although in Kashgar, unlike in Ürümchi, they rarely amount to large events.[56]

55 These symbols and poems are interesting material for a separate analysis that has not found space within this thesis. The invitations and the associated social events (like *baghaq yézish* in rural Atush and the distribution) likewise present extremely interesting material for further analysis.
56 The female friends of the bride receive invitations similar to those of the groom's friends. They are usually fewer people though and my information on these particular invitations is sparse, reflecting my empirical male bias but also the fact that much fewer people are invited to these events.

Fig. 17 Written invitation for the young men's celebration. Here, the groom personally invites his friends. The poem on the left side is typical: It stresses the importance of the prayers of parents, the local community and the closest friends for the wedding and marriage to become happy (Collected by the author in Kashgar in May 2013)

4) The invitations for men to the afternoon celebrations held separately at each side, resemble those given to the young men, except that they are signed by the groom's father and are often less decorative. This is not an invitation to a specific event, but rather marks out certain male friends of the household or of the fathers, who are expected to take part in more than the morning meal. They can stop by at any time during the afternoon to congratulate. Many will at this point contribute with money and may provide a car for the transfer of the bride or help cooking. It is not seen as proper to give money at the morning event (since it is a *nezir*) so mostly the money will be given separately in the afternoon. Fewer men contribute money than go to the early morning meal.

5) The women receive a separate invitation for the *yüz échish* (opening of the face) the following day, where officially the bride's veil is lifted at the conclusion of a long communal meal. Here women from the bride's side are being hosted by the groom's parents. Women from the groom's side are also invited, but as hosts as much as guests. Many are asked before hand to help with the cooking and preparations or join in without formal invitation. The invitations for this event resemble the invitations to the women's event of the wedding day itself (type 2) and are

distributed by the bride's mother in the name of both her and the groom's mother, though the latter figures as the real host and owner of the event, while the former is more of a guest.

Gender, age and social closeness

As Bellér-Hann points out the written and spoken traditions in Xinjiang are intertwined. During the last 100 years they have supplemented and commented each other (2000: 90). This also applies to the invitations. The written invitation of a friend of the groom to the *toy neziri* may be supplemented by the oral request for him to join the *nikah* ceremony; or an oral request to help with the preparations addressed at a close female neighbour may be supplemented by a written invitation to the *yüz échish*. The written invitation in this case supplements her status as helper and thus a temporary part of the household holding the wedding, with the further status of officially invited guest at the wedding. In extreme cases a household may receive five different written and several oral invitations to the same marriage.

The invitations mark out the different events and the 'owners' (*ige*) or symbolic hosts of each event. They also point to the categories of persons bound together in networks and communities. The invitations and their distribution entail a categorisation according to gender and age. They also mark the distance and type of relation between the households holding the wedding and the guests, especially if we take the oral invitations into account too. The morning *toy neziri* marks the widest ring of guests, while those men invited for the afternoon belong to the relatively close circle from whom financial distributions are expected. As for the women, most guests contribute cloth, food gifts (*∂ɤstixan*) or money. Those taken along to transfer the bride and those invited for the *yüz échish* on the following day are marked out as particularly close in the sense that they on these occasions not only help, but also represent the household or 'side' vis à vis the affines. The closest group of the groom's friends is the one going with him to the *nikah* and taking part in the *tartiɤhmaq* on the following evening. These are also friends from whom financial contributions are expected. They make up an often relatively closed group of persons obliged to give to each other in turn at such events. When Abdulla's close friend married in their home village in Atush while Abdulla was studying in Inner China, he sent his younger brother with a financial contribution. In this case the contribution is not conditioned on his going to the wedding himself, it is an obligation akin to a credit circle and locally formulated as 'debt' (*qerz*) or as "his money that I have" (*uning puli men∂e*). In the case of close friends the amount may be 300-500 yuan or even more among traders or government workers in Kashgar.

Bringing the ingredients (*ashüyi élip bérish*)

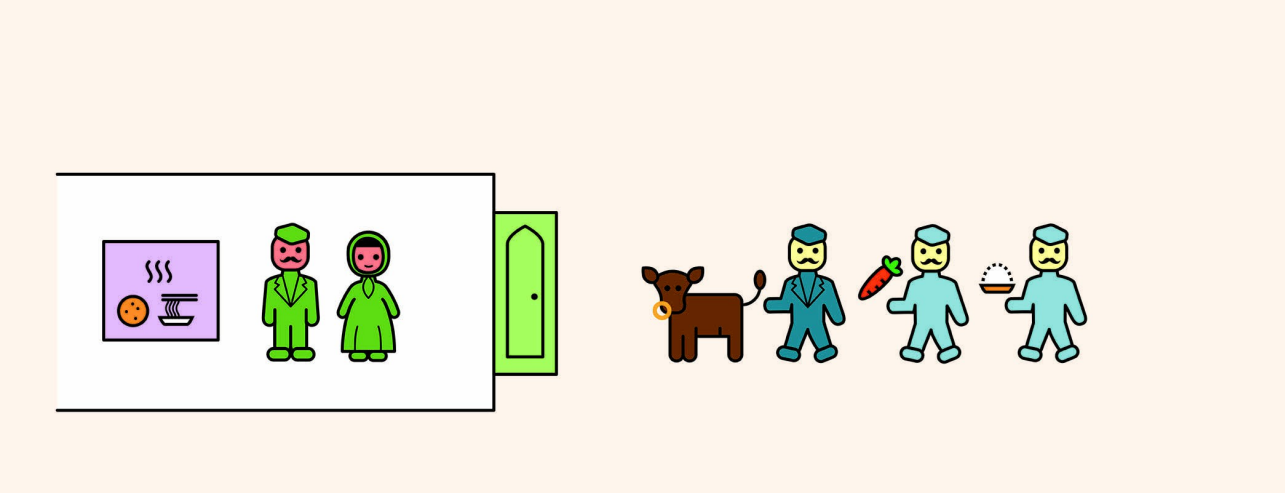


Fig. 18 Bringing the ingredients (*ashüyi élip bérish*). The groom's relatives take all the ingredients for the early morning meal of the wedding day to the bride's place. (Design by Steenberg and Zheng)

One or two days prior to the *toy* male relatives of the groom take the *ashüyi* to the bride's parents' house. This consists of a small truckload containing all ingredients for the big communal meal of '*polu*' being given at the *toy neziri* on the morning of the wedding day. These include a young bull, 40-100 Kg of rice, a similar amount of carrots, oil, salt, often flour and other vegetables, as well as firewood. All this is for the guests of the *toy neziri*, which the two sides will host together. The groom's side provides the ingredients and does the cooking, the bride's side provides the venue and serves the guests. At the same time the *ashüyi* is also a gift and service provided by the groom's side to the bride's side. It is a part of their exchange and it is an element in the groom's side taking over expenses of the bride's side. It also lays the ground for the two sides for the first time acting as one giving unit towards the relatives, neighbours and friends of each side. It is thus also a gift from the groom's side to the wider relations of the bride's side. The size of the calf is critically asserted. It is taken as a sign of the generosity of the groom's side. More often than not it is found to be rather too small. The expectations in the new affines (*quda*) are high and disappointment lingers, as shall become very apparent below.

The groom's party, in most cases, consists of close male relatives of the groom: his brothers and uncles as well as a few male neighbours. They may number up to twenty people, but these days it is also not uncommon for them to be just two to five people (Zaili Memettursun 2012: 7). The groom's father sometimes joins the party, but the groom does not. Unlike his father's and the other relatives, his personal relation to the bride's parents is not in the making yet, but must wait till after the wedding, when the basis for it completely changes. In the phase up to the wedding he thus generally avoids her family being ashamed (*xijil*). At the same time he is too much a main object and too little of an arranging subject for him to be present at this event of preparation.

The guests from the groom's side eat together with some male relatives of the bride's side, getting to know each other as relatives (*tughqan*). Thus they are in the process of becoming relatives through the marriage. As at many of the other events, the intention that the two sides and their extended families may get to know each other and get along is clearly stated. At the

ashüyi of Sherida's marriage the two sides ate in almost complete silence. They were a bit shy but before and after the meal they spoke with one another. The commensality in itself and the giving and taking connected to it had such a centrality in this event that talking was kept to a minimum to not disturb the moment. This is often the case at *nezir* events also (see below).

After an initial welcoming meal the calf is slaughtered and cut by a butcher brought by the groom's side. Men from both sides assist him. The butcher receives the head and intestines and often a gift of clothes and money (100-300 yuan) from the father of the bride. The requirement of bringing live animals to the bride's side is mentioned by Enwer Semet Qorghan for the *chong chay* (or *toyluq apirish*; 2007: 125).

Typically the two front legs and the back pieces are designated for the communal meal (*toy neziri*) on the following morning at the bride's house. One of the hind legs is kept at the bride's house for later use and one is given to the groom's house. This sharing of the meat connects the events at which the meat is served and makes the two households both the giver and receiver of the meat and common hosts of the events to follow. It is also an important symbolic commensality between the two sides and their respective guests. When this work is done most of the men from the groom's side leave.

A few of them spend the night at the bride's place to get up to cook the early morning *polu* starting from around 1 or 2 o'clock so that it will be finished at around 5 in the morning, when the mosque community returns from *bamdat* prayers. In earlier days someone from the groom's side was said to stay with the ingredients overnight to guard them from hungry members of the bride's side. This it not done any longer though. It would look ugly (*set bolatti*) to mistrust each other like that, a woman explained. But looking deeper into the custom, it does not seem to be about mistrust, but about responsibility. Who would be responsible for the disappearance of the ingredients over night and who would have to compensate for them? The responsibility clearly stays with the groom's side, which means that the act of giving is not completed until the meal has been cooked and distributed amongst guests from both sides. The real gift does not consist of the ingredients but in the hosting and providing commensality for the community of the two sides.[57]

57 In many local Uyghur descriptions of *toy,* the event of giving *ashüyi* is not mentioned. Clark mentions it as a part of the *toyluq* but not as an own event (Clark 1999: 160). Abdurehim Hebibulla mentions *ashüyi* as both an event and as a part of the *toyluq* (2000: 242-244). People in Kashgar usually do not see it as a part of the *toyluq* but as a separate prestation. Still *ashüyi* may consist in money given to the bride's side for which they then buy the ingredients themselves, but the cook will still be from the groom's side. In Üstün Atush *ashüyi* is a regular and named part of the *toyluq*. Here, like in most other places than Kashgar, the boy's side does not cook at the bride's parent's place. Abdukérim Raxman describes the event, but doesn't name it (2008: 129) The event is relatively special for Kashgar. It is not found in many of the surrounding towns, like Peyzawat and Atush or in Hotan, but is found in some places in Ghulja.

5.3 *Toy*-celebrations

Communal wedding meal (*toy neziri*)

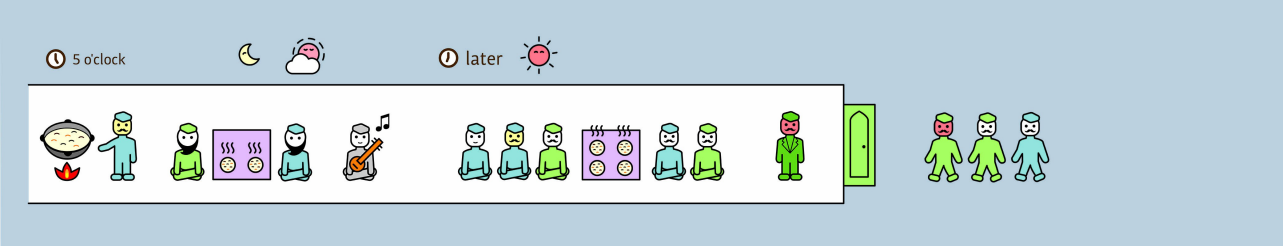


Fig. 19 The communal wedding meal (*toy neziri*). Male guests from both sides eat together and offer their prayers at the bride's side in the early morning of the wedding day. The meal is cooked by the groom's side. (Design by Steenberg and Zheng)

The night before the *toy* relatives or friends of the groom's side stay at the bride's parents' place getting up at one o'clock in the morning to prepare the big communal meal. Within the time span from 5-9 a.m., the elder men of the bride's and the groom's mosque community arrive as separate groups and a total of 100-1000 men are fed at the bride's parents' place. First the *jama'et* (mosque community, elder men) of the bride's side come to eat, say a prayer (*∂u'a*) and congratulate the bride's father. Then the groom's *jama'et* arrives to do the same. In the meantime male guests from both sides come to eat and say a prayer. The two *jeme'et* arrive as two large collected groups directly from morning prayers (*bam∂at*) in their mosques. They eat bread and watermelon, then drink tea and finally eat *polu* from big plates which they share in pairs. After eating, the guests at one tablecloth pray collectively led by the host and leave as quickly as they have entered.

A group of musicians play local folk songs on traditional instruments (*∂utar, rawab, ∂ap, kang*) that are known as *milliy ʒaz* (national or ethnic Uyghur instruments) in the courtyard. Meals are distributed to the neighbours and a big portion of the *polu* is taken to the groom's house. The last group to arrive is the group of young men, the friends of the groom. The groom's side cooks, while the bride's side serves the food to the guests.

This event is known by several names. It is called *toy cheyi* (wedding tea or gethering), *etigenlik jama'et* (early morning community gathering), but the most common and most meaningful of these names is *toy neziri* (Zaili Memettursun 2012: 8). A *nezir* is a communal meal given without the expectation of reciprocation (Bellér-Hann 2008b: 156). It is mostly given for the benefit of some-one, to collect religious merits for this person. The giving of the meal may therefore not be reciprocated by anything but a prayer. At this event no gifts are given. The logic of giving functions much like the giving of *zakat* or *ʒa∂aqa* (cf. Bellér-Hann 2008b, Parry 1986). The most well known *nezir* in all of Central Asia are the commemoration ceremonies for the dead which are in Uyghur called *nezir chiraq* (Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 258). This is but one specific type of a more general event category of *nezir* entailing its own logic of giving. This is comparable to the genre of *toy* (life cycle ritual) that likewise entails it own logics of giving.

For the two sides it is the first event that they host together as affines. It starts off the affinal relations, relations of trust and mutual dependency. The cooperation around the organisation of the event brings together the close relatives of the two sides. Since the two households will in future be closely connected, it is seen as important to develop good relations to the social surroundings of the other household respectively. The new affine household will in many ways over the years enter into these social networks and communities.

Both sides contribute to the event, and for both it is crucial that the other side's members do their part well, since their own reputation (*yüz*, lit. face) before the community depends on it. The groom's side is even supposed to bring the salt, to not have to use anything from the bride's side. It is sometimes expressed as an ideal for the groom's side to take care of all work connected to this event, but in practice it is shared between the two sides. The ideal stresses the logic (or narrative) of the event being a gift from the groom's side to the bride's side. It is. But a stronger and more practically important logic prevails; that of the event being a joint venture of the two sides creating affine relations.

I was invited to a *toy neziri* for the wedding of the daughter of the brother of one of my neighbours. Another neighbour's son was supposed to take me there, but by the time I knocked at his door at around five o'clock in the morning he had already gone and when I arrived at the wedding ten minutes later, I saw him carrying dishes of *polu* from the large pot in the courtyard into his uncles house. His younger brothers and male cousins were responsible for pouring tea and washing the guest's hand using a basin and a tall pitcher. They were all from the bride's side. Generally male guests are served by males while female guests are served by females. The groom's friends may also help to serve the guests (Mavlanjan Memettursun 2012:14). The bride's side is responsible for cutting the carrots, which considering the amounts of carrots having to be sliced into very small slivers, is a labour intensive task. In rural Atush this is done by the elder men of the community at a separate event on the day before. In Kashgar it is usually done by female neighbours.

Even in big houses there will be a lack of space during the busiest times of this morning ceremony. The guests will have to wait in the courtyard or outside the front door until space becomes free. I often experienced that neighbours' houses were also used to host all the guests. This is especially true for people living in small apartments. Since people living in apartments do not know all their neighbours, the guests may be dispersed into four apartments in different stairways and on different floors. This is one of the many ways for neighbours to partake in the role of hosts of the wedding. The bride's side provides the bread, tea and sometimes the melons consumed at the event. The bride's father counts as the main host or 'owner' (*ige*) of the event.

The cooking utensils including the pot are taken from the bride's side. The pot, often measuring a good meter in diameter or even more is mostly a communal pot borrowed from the mosque of the bride's parents' *mehelle*. So is the big stove (*uchaq*) on which it stands and most of the big plates on which the *polu* is served. When these utensils are used, it is said to create religious merits for the mosque and especially for the people who have contributed the most to

its purchase. The objects have been bought by the mosque's *mezin* with money he has particularly collected from the members of the *mehelle* or mosque community. At one wedding in an old *mehelle* at the outskirts of the city, a big ladle with a beautifully carved and decorated handle was favourably commented on by guests. It belonged to a father of four daughters, who had had it made just for this purpose. He lent it out to all celebrations in the *mehelle*, earning spiritual merits every time it was used, he told me, since he was its owner (*ige*). The logic of acquiring religious merits through providing pot, plates and ladle is not unlike the logic of the *nezir* event in general. Here also the '*ige*' owner of what is used receives religious merits for offering and giving. The merits can be directed: here at the couple, but are generally bound to the giving unit.

Nezir events can be given at will to create religious merits for almost anything. I visited a *nezir* given for the youngest daughter of an acquaintance who was leaving for mainland China to study. To some people all of the communal meals at wedding celebrations are *nezir*, but only the early morning event commonly carries this explicit name. In case the *toy neziri* is held in a restaurant (*ash xana*)[58] the groom's side will pay, while it will be the bride's side greeting, serving and praying with the guests before seeing them off. It is thus primarily the bride's side that receives the religious merits of the prayers offered, as the owner of the event and the owner of the house (*toyning igisi, öyning igisi*). An important part of the gift from the groom's side to the bride's side thus includes these prayers and religious merits bestowed upon the bride and her parents - bestowed upon the house (*öy*) of the bride's side.

Greeting

As described above many events that we may call ritual are condensations of formalities and rules of conduct in use throughout the already quite formal quotidian practice. Wearing hats (*∂oppa*) is one small gesture to stress formality during the events of the marriage process. The relatively brief and very formalised visit at a *toy neziri* neatly captures many of these. Rows of chairs are set up in front of the large and decorated gate (*∂erwaza*) leading into the courtyard of the bride's parent's house. They are blue plastic chairs combined into benches on long stable iron structures with three to ten chairs on each, similar to those found in public bus stations. Here some guests and some elders of the neighbourhood sit and talk. When big groups of guests arrive, they get up and greet them with *"essalamu eleykum"* shaking hands with each of them as they pass by in a long row. Especially when the respective *jama'et* or the close relatives from the groom's side arrive collectively, the bride's father will head the row of welcoming greeters.

Long sequences of such greetings featuring long rows of men passing by each other are an important part of the depiction of this event on wedding videos. Some modestly only touch palms while especially people who know each other well will give a closer and tighter handshake. Many use both hands generally signalling respect. The custom of smacking the palms together in a powerful display of joyfulness at seeing each other, often seen among close friends meeting at the bazar, is not deemed appropriate for this greeting. The code of greeting here is tempered, solemn and modest (cf. Abdushükür Muhemmet'imin 2002: 168). In general, this event calls for

58 These events are held in restaurants of the category *ashxana*, not in restaurants called *restoran*. Such restaurants sometimes feature dancing and often serve alcohol. Here it is said that the *jama'et* will refuse to set their foot.

bodily displays of modesty as a central value. Guests join into the row of greeting men, thus being performatively integrated into the host's side. They will even often greet the people with whom they have themselves arrived, including their close relatives, in the same formal manner as the other guests, something they would never do outside this constellation of formal rows of greeting.

When smaller groups arrive the host may not come out to greet them and they will wait in front of the door, not entering till explicitly invited in. For this they move some yards to the side, since standing right in front of the door would be an inappropriately forceful way of inviting oneself in. The area around the door has its own social-magnetic force pulling people in if they come too close. Having a person standing in front of the door not being invited in puts the owner of the house (*öyning igisi*) to shame. When a person enters he rushes through the gate into the courtyard, where he will now wash his hands at long refillable light metal sinks and wait to be invited into one of the rooms of the house for eating. Some important guests may have water poured over their hands personally, as is often the case at guesting events with fewer visitors.

Once more a guest will, if he is not an exceptionally important, honored and haughty person, hesitate and try to downplay his own role as a guest, inviting others to go first or lingering in those few places within the courtyard that can be seen as 'safe havens'.[59] These are places where one can legitimately and without embarrassing the host linger for some time. For young men this can be the far-off wall at which they can stand and talk. No-one will ever be standing in the middle of the courtyard for a long period of time. This space is kept open and empty, much resembling a stage. Dancing and a few other events demanding the bystander's attention take place here. Similar in function to the chairs set up outside the entrance gate, most courtyards will have a *supa*, an elevated platform about 50 cm high for sitting in front of the buildings surrounding the courtyard.[60] Often this *supa* will be covered by a pent roof, creating a shady veranda (*peshaywan*). This is perceived as one of the best places of the house and guests sitting here will be seen as taken care of for the moment, not requiring special attention.

The modesty of most bodily practice at the *toy neziri* may be put into contrast by persons of high standing. First of all the host has the opportunity to mark out special guests by attending to them personally and leading them directly into the inner rooms. This is often done for the elders of the neighbourhood or for religious authorities. On the other hand, the expected modesty also gives the possibility for a person to explicitly mark his own position by not acting accordingly. I once saw a high police officer attend a *toy neziri*. He arrived with two uniformed guards to walk straight past the row of men, greeting his personal acquaintances with a nod, extending his hand only to the eldest and the host himself. Thereafter he entered directly into the rooms, the host hasting after him. This was a stark contrast to the hesitant entrance of most other people present.

Finally the guests in a small group urge each other to enter one of the rooms, where the tablecloth is laid out with bread and melon slices. Often the person of the group closest to the hosting household enters first. This stands in contrast to a similar conduct in many other

59 These places have no generic local term, but local bodily practice clearly marks them out.
60 Cf. Dautcher 2009: 13, Alimjan Mexsut et al. 2004: 147, 188-189, 215-217.

situations where the person that is furthest from the host, in terms of social closeness and thus has a more pronounced role as guest, will be asked to enter first. In this special situation many feel embarrassed (*xijil*) by the honour and unsure of the proper conduct. Therefore someone will have to take the role of leading (*bashlish*) or pulling (*tartish*) the guests to the tablecloth. This person thus takes on a role so close to the hosts that he leaves the communicative games of modest guests urging each other on. The relative switch from the role of guest to that of host is open to anyone vis à vis another guest socially further apart from the hosting household than oneself, or towards especially honored guests. Taking on the role of host is situationally required of some guests and done by many. Besides leading guests to help them overcome their shyness, it also includes serving for other guests. This can take on institutionalised forms, as at one wedding I went to in Üstün Atush, where every plate of food or bowl of tea was, upon receiving, offered to the person to the left, who hadn't received any yet. Often the men eating will invite each other to begin before they eat themselves over and over again during the meal.

Up to 30-40 men sit on mats placed along the walls of the seating elevation (*supa*) filling the hind 4/5 of the room in a half circle around the tablecloths in the middle of the room. In big rooms there is an alleyway of carpet showing between the tablecloths in the middle of the room. This will be used by a designated host and servant for this room, mostly a young man from the house owner's family, to walk around to serve each guest personally, often extending the tea and food to them on a tray (*petnus*). The tray is another feature to add formality and ceremony. In smaller rooms that offer no such alleyway the bowls are passed around. They are passed around starting on the right hand side or on the side furthest from the door, depending on where the seat of honor (*tör*) is, so that those in the seats of honor receive their food first.

Sitting

Urging each other to enter a room first has a function beyond the direct display of modesty at the entrance. The sequence of entrance also determines the relative seating order. Since entering the seating mats (*körpe*) is done walking over the low ranking seats towards the high ranking ones, whoever enters first will sit relatively high. Especially honoured guests and elders will not make all the way around though, but go straight to the seats of honour, often on the right side of the room.

There are three main ways to identify the seat of honor. The first one is at the right side of the room when standing before the *supa*. The *tör* will be the outermost seat or the one right after this (since the seats on the edge for practical reasons may be occupied by someone getting up much to serve the others). The honour diminishes counterclockwise around the table. The youngest sit at the opposite edge on the left hand side, the *pegah* (status lowest point of the table).[61] This is given an Islamic connotation putting right before left and is the most common way to determine the *tör* at *toy* in Kashgar today, unless the right edge of the *supa* is too close to the door.

A second way of determining the *tör* is the edge of the *supa* furthest from the door. This is traditionally connoted, it being the warmest and safest place and the one from which the least

61 The *pegah* also denotes the area in which shoes can be left on. This is the area in front of the *supa* elevation. *Pegah* is thus the antonym of both *supa* and *tör*. These areas may also be called *peste* (at the low end).

work is expected to be done, the most protected place. Importantly, the place furthest from the door is the place furthest from where the shoes are taken off and left when one enters the *ئۈپە*. They are left at the *pegah* near the door. A winter time variation is for the *tör* to be placed at the edge opposite the stove standing in front of the *ئۈپە*. Here one benefits from the heat, but is not responsible for keeping the fire or for cooking.

A third *tör* may be the place absolutely furthest from the door. This is not at an edge of the *ئۈپە*, but at the hind wall of the room, mostly in a corner. This too is a protected place and has a spatial centrality that the others do not have. It is this place that most closely recalls the *tör* I saw defined in southern Kyrgyzstan in 2007: here it was in the very middle of the hindmost wall opposite the door. This last way to define the seat of honour is only used for the groom and the bride respectively at various events during the marriage. This place can further be marked with folded seating mats. This seat of honor does designate centrality, but it does not automatically hold the same honour as the two other possibilities. The third can exist parallel to either of the first two. The two first ones each draw up a distinct and clear social hierarchy, while the third one only marks centrality.

When being seated at tables in a restaurant the *tör* will often be the central place directly opposite the door. The seating does play a role and it is adhered to in private situations of guesting and common eating at small family get-togethers. The elder men will be placed 'highest' (*töpïde*, at the top or high end, is another word for *tör*) followed by the other men, then the women according to age and lastly the children will sit 'below' them (*peste*, at the *pegah*). At the private meeting of two friends and their wives and children in a restaurant this pattern was amplified by leaving several places free between the men on the *tör* side of the table and the women and children on the opposite side. When at home on a *ئۈپە* it will mostly be the second way of determining *tör* that is adhered to: the edge furthest from the door and mostly also furthest from the stove. Though all of these events as any eating situation are framed by prayers their religious connotation is not as pronounced as that of common meals at life cycle rituals in general and of *nezir* events in particular, where the right-to-left counterclockwise rendering of the seat of honour is usually called for.

In the beginning of the 20th century this seating order was of utmost importance. It was subject of negotiations early on in the marriage process. Bellér-Hann writes:

"In the first half of the twentieth century in the south, the seating order at weddings carried so much weight that when A asked for B's daughter to marry his son, B's decision could depend on where A's place during the wedding feasts was, rather than how much money or property he possessed." And: "To determine the seating order of the invited guests was part of the marriage negotiations and carried out in consultation with respected community elders. In the Republican period, the letters of invitation included this piece of information. If the invited guests accepted the suggested ranking, they came, while any dissatisfaction with the place accorded to them around the ceremonial tablecloth could prompt them to refuse the invitation." (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 255)

The seating order thus not just reflected, but, in a de Coppetian way, re-presented (de Coppet 1992: 64-66) and actively shaped the social status hierarchy within a community.

Generally today the *tör* order will be mainly determined by the relative age of the attending persons, though especially honored guests, such as guests from afar, people of high standing or especially knowledgeable of the Qur'an, may be placed further up than their age would require.

Today the *tör* does play a role, but it is used more flexibly than in the contexts described by Bellér-Hann. It is employed to personally honour guests and to display individual politeness and modesty. Elder men coming into the room after others are seated, make a point out of not moving forward to the seats of honour offered to them, but instead seating themselves on the nearest convenient open place. The honouring through seating carries certain ambivalences and is never insisted upon. The right to the *tör* is no longer fought for or given very much importance. The logic of persisting on the right to the *tör* has today become the subject of ridicule and joking (see Daucher 2009: 263).[62]

Among men of about the same age (*teng*) urging each other to take the seat of honor can become a pure game displaying rhetorical skill and cleverness. The winner, on points of cleverness and modesty, is then, ironically, the one that does not end up on the *tör* on which he successfully has urged his mate to take a seat. Another formalising strategy and way of honouring meets less resistance, being less connected with profane hierarchy. This is the 'amen' (*omen*) being repeated after their entrance, which no-one rejects. This is also confined to elder, respected men and is not done when younger men enter. The seating is a question of community standing and thus a worldly matter of personal vanity and profane hierarchy. It can therefore easily be dismissed by the individual and it is even modest and virtuous to do so as it feeds into religious as well as political narratives promoting equality. The *omen* (amen) honours not only the guest, but also the host and God. It frames the whole event as a religious one and may not be dismissed by the individual guest, though its repetition at the same time honours him and points to his importance.

Besides being important where you sit it is also of great importance how you sit. Women sit with their legs tucked behind them (*yükünuep olturush*) to one side while men usually sit cross-legged (in Kashgar: *chasa qurup olturush*). Young[63] men in the company of elder men are expected to sit on their knees with the legs straight under them, as in prayer (in Kashgar: *tizlinish olturush*). This way of sitting displays modesty and takes up little space. A host wanting a relaxed atmosphere may urge his guests to sit cross-legged and thereby take up much space and make themselves comfortable. For this he will ask them to sit "wide" (*keng olturunglar!*). At the *toy neziri* all men, except for the very old ones, start out sitting on their knees, especially during the first prayer. Later, the style of sitting of many of them is relaxed into sitting cross-legged. Others, including the young ones, will sit on their knees during the entire meal (*tizlinish olturush*). This is the proper way to sit at a *nezir,* I was told, since it allows for more people in the room at once, making it easy on the hosts to care for all the guests in time and because this is the way one sits for worship at the daily prayers (*namaz*).

62 Discourses on these topics is saturated with class-related arguments and the early communist persecutions of rich farmers as well as the Cultural Revolution are sure to have been important factors in causing this shift.
63 Wang, who draws on data from Turpan, calls these two ways of sitting *qingiyit olturush* and *badashqan olturush* (Wang 2004: 126).

Eating

Bread is on the tablecloth when one enters, and is subsequently broken into smaller pieces and placed before each person by the guests themselves or by the host. Melon slices on plates are distributed evenly on the table cloth. Tea is served to each person in a bowl on a tray. Then the *polu* (pilau) is brought on big plates from which the guests eat in pairs. A piece of mutton placed on top of the rice is divided into small pieces by one of the two who will eat from it. It will mostly be the honour of the eldest of the two to cut the meat. At the *toy neziri*, the *polu* is eaten with fingers. This to many carries both Islamic and national Uyghur traditional connotations. It is also an attribute of grown men to eat *polu* with their fingers. In a popular TV-commercial for vegetable oil, a family of four eat together, sitting on mats around a tablecloth. The children and mother use spoons while the father eats with his fingers praising the good taste. Much effort is made to finish the plates of *polu* and even to leave a single grain of rice. Nothing should go to waste, they say and point out that what is not eaten is given to neighbours in small plastic packages that are distributed by the women of the family. This is contrasted with the waste (*israpchiliq*) produced at weddings held in restaurants, where each table has a large number of dishes and usually only a tiny percentage of this is eaten. This custom is discursively identified as deriving from Han-Chinese tradition, but is also widespread among wealthy Uyghurs. Drawing on this contrast, the *toy neziri* is constructed as a modest, simple and thus moral event.

Many of the helpers do not display modesty by hesitating to enter the rooms of the house. Instead, they display it by actively rejecting the role of the guest. All helpers are fed in turn, eating the same food, *polu* including a slice of meat placed on top of the portion. They will not eat at the tablecloth with the guests though and often not even in sight of the guests. Like the younger members of the host's own household and neighbours, the helpers will often eat alone, squatting on the ground behind the grand pot or hidden behind a corner. In the country-side, they may retire into the garden or the kitchen where guests do not come. This is an active rejection of the role of guest at the event and temporarily includes the helpers into the giving unit of the hosting households. It is a display of modesty and of closeness and obligation towards the hosts. This modesty does not lead to the young boys or helpers going hungry, a cook explained, at a *toy* all must be full and satisfied. Therefore, he went on, they urge each other to eat and arrange places for each other in marginal spaces where no-one must feel ashamed (*xijil*) to eat. Feeling ashamed in this situation could be caused by undeservingly or inappropriately receiving a certain centrality or role - such as that of the guest. Eating publicly and especially eating a lot connotes such a centrality and importance.

The helpers are never seen eating on the wedding videos, but the depiction of the *toy neziri*, of men greeting, entering, eating and exiting while the dawn slowly breaks and the musicians play in the courtyard may stretch over an hour to one and a half. This is a long event stretching from five until around nine o'clock. Each guest only stays for a very short amount of time though, rarely exceeding twenty minutes, though some will stay to help afterwards or to see the religious ceremony *nikah oqush* that follows.

The religious ceremony (*nikah oqush*)

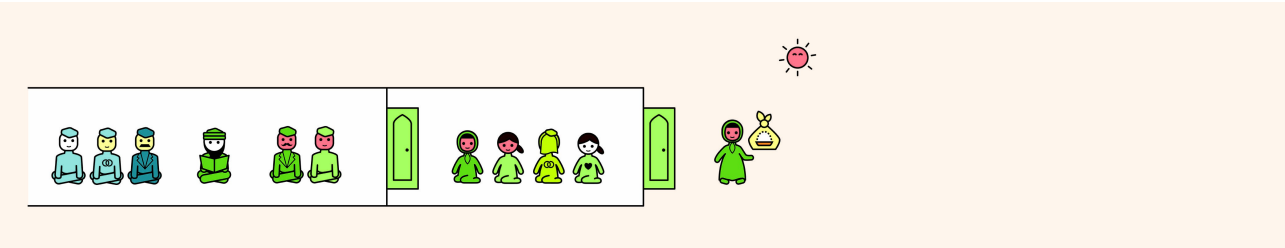


Fig. 20 The *molla* performs the *nikah* ceremony in the presence of the groom and bride's fathers. The bride and her mother partake from an adjacent room. Meanwhile food from the early morning wedding meal is distributed to the neighbours. (Design by Steenberg and Zheng)

In most of the newer wedding videos from Kashgar the exhaustingly long footage of the *toy neziri* ends in a finely choreographed switch of atmosphere: the music becomes dramatic and the first pictures are played in slow motion. They show the groom and his group of friends walking down the street, heading for the bride's parent's place. They are shot walking towards the camera; not fast, but gravely determined. These scenes bear much resemblance with Hollywood scenes of soldiers, cowboys or action heroes heading out for the final battle. It is produced as the introduction to a climax (the *nikah* ceremony) and as the entrance of a hero (the groom). I believe that this cinematic dramaturgy is quite recent, as I have only seen it on videos made after 2010. It documents the raised centrality of the groom as a *toy* object. In summer 2013 I even saw this dramaturgy acted out at a wedding held in a restaurant where the DJ changed the music in a similar dramatic fashion with the entrance of the groom and his friends. The dramaturgy may only be a short-lived phenomenon of fashion, yet the conceptual framing of the religious *nikah* ceremony that follows, and for which these youths are approaching so steadily, as a centre or climax of the wedding, is arguably shared by all Muslims in Kashgar today.

Abdukérim Rehman starts out his description of weddings in Kashgar with the *nikah,* skipping the *ashsüyi* as well as the *toy neziri* (ibid.: 346). Enwer Semet Qorghan places a similar emphasis making the religious ceremony half of the entire wedding when noting that the wedding ceremony (*toy murasimi*) consists of two parts: the *nikah oqush* (reading of the *nikah*) and what he calls *"konkrét toy murasimi"* (actual marriage ceremony; 2007: 128). In several Uyghur movies produced in Xinjiang, the *nikah* ceremony is shown to signify, i.e. synecdochically stand for, a wedding.[64] This centrality of the *nikah* has been strengthened in recent years by new religious narratives that are discussed further below.

The ceremony

The young men enter the house. Despite the choreographic break of the video, the *toy neziri* has not yet ended and the groom and his friends take part in it, eating *polu* in a separate room before they enter the room where the *nikah* is to be performed. One or several *molla* are seated in the room with the fathers of bride and groom and several male relatives and neighbours from both sides (Schrode 2007: 47). The two fathers and important male relatives as well as some

64 To explicate that the *toy* mentioned is a wedding and not any other life cycle ritual, many authors add the word *nikah*: "*Toy (yeni nikah toyi*)" (*toy* , that is the *nikah toy;* Abdukérim Rehman et al. 2009a: 345).

village elders are placed close to the *molla* in the centre of the room. The *nikah* sanctions the marriage in a religious sense, but is also important for receiving the recognition of the community (*jama'et*).

Enwer Semet Qorghan mentions the honored men of the neighbourhood (*yurtning kattiliri*) and the witnesses as particularly important (2007: 128-129). The community's recognition is dependent upon the right religious conduct and the *jama'et* (the elder men of the community and the wider community they represent) are seen as bearer of religiosity. When I asked a 45-year-old man to define a *nezir* he told me that it is an event where the *jama'et* comes. The groom himself does not occupy any central space during the ceremony. He may sit in a far off corner or even close to the door, the lowest seating position in the room. According to Enwer Semet Qorghan "in ancient times" (*qeдemki дewrilerдe*, not further specified) the *nikah* could even be read without the groom being present. A knife or some other instrument with a blade that he has used a lot could be made to stand in for him (2007:130, cf. Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 129). According to Enwer Semet Qorghan, at least three additional men and six additional women should be present at the ceremony (2007: 129).

The presence of women at the *nikah* has increased in recent years (cf. Schrode 2007: 47). This is mainly due to the same religious influences as mentioned above. The women mostly stay in an adjacent room listening behind a half opened door. They include the bride's mother, sisters and friends, but usually no women from the groom's side. Enwer Semet Qorghan mentions the groom's mother being present (2007: 129), but this is not the case in contemporary Kashgar. Though it is not always the case, most *molla* today insist that the bride must be present, listen and give her own consent for the *nikah* to be valid. At the same time, the groom and bride may not be together in the same room since they are not yet *halal* for each other. Though it is explicitly stated that it is the *nikah* ceremony which renders them wife and husband *halal* and no longer *namahrem* to each other (c.f. Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 129, 131, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 220), their segregation is upheld until the end of the other ceremonies and the welcoming of the bride at the groom's parent's place later in the evening. For this reason, unlike in many other villages and towns in the surroundings, in Kashgar the couple is also not allowed to sit in the same car when the bride is taken from her parents' place to that of his parents, though the *nikah* has long been read. This shows that the religious ceremony is very entangled into the other parts of the wedding ceremonies and does not usually function as fully legitimising the union in itself, despite the high symbolic value ascribed to it.

The *molla* is customarily invited by the groom's side but several *molla* may be present from both sides. Recent local government regulations call for him to be from the same place (*mehelle*) as the bride and her family at whose place the ceremony is performed. These are rarely adhered to though. Before starting the ceremony the *molla* is supposed to examine the governmental marriage documents (*toy xet*) since he may only legally wed the couple if they are complete. Many openly reject looking into the documents if they are even handed over, or do so only to reassure themselves of the names of the couple. The *molla* starts out reciting the first Surah of the Qur'an and sometimes several other Surah (*ayetler, nikah xutbisi*, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 130, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 219). He then talks about marriage, about the marital

duties of spouses and gives advice to the couple (for an example see Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 219-220). He often begins the talk by mentioning the conditions for a real *nikah* as put forth by the Qur'an. Of central importance are the witnesses, the settlement of the marriage prestations (*toyluq*) and the clear consent of both bride and groom. Some also stress that it is a prerequisite for a good and real marriage that one important goal of the union is to produce legal offspring (see Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 220).[65]

The *molla* then goes on to speak about the religious duties of husband and wife often addressing current moral but also political and social issues in his talk. In some cases, the ceremony turns into somewhat of a moral or religious lecture and can actually be said to be a form of religious teaching. In some villages around Kashgar besides the groom and two or three friends only married men, mostly elders, attend the small and short *nikah* ceremonies. Unmarried men may even be excluded since their presence is said to heighten the risk for quick divorce (Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 130). In Kashgar city, these are however popular events, often taking place in a large room crowded by young men listening attentively. *Nikah* ceremonies present one of few chances to legally listen to a religious lecture outside Friday sermons which are under heavy government surveillance. Every young man, regardless of his marital status, is urged to join such events as a part of his moral education. Certain *molla* are known for their good and interesting speeches and are on this behalf invited to sometimes hold several *nikah* readings a day. The talk often takes more than half an hour. Themes like domestic violence, the harmony within the family, how to do correct ablutions before having intercourse in a new place, the illegitimacy of short term trader marriages that do not aim at producing legal offspring, and of Sufism as well as information on *halal* and *haram* foods and medicines are some of the themes I heard mentioned at *nikah* readings.

Some *molla* will enquire about the relations of the close kin of the groom and bride present before they proceed. Then the bride's father, the bride and the groom are asked for their consent (Abdukérim Rehman et al. 2009: 346, cf. Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 130, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 219-220).[66] The *molla* ends the ceremony by reciting parts of the Qur'an (*nikah xutbisi*, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 130), primarily the first Surah, *patihe* (Al'fatiha; Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 255) and finally leading a common prayer (*∂u'a*) after which the young men cry out their congratulations "*mubarek bolsun!*," get up and leave the room.

While the young men leave the room, the following very typical scene plays out in the background of one wedding video: The *molla* gets up to leave. In this very moment, the groom's father gives a few hundred yuan to one of his younger relatives who walks over to the *molla* and presents him with the money. The *molla* refuses to take the money that is eventually forced into his hand. He then walks over to the father and attempts to return the money. The father refuses

65 The local religious understanding of marriage is generally based on Hanafi Sunni tradition (compare Hamilton 1957/1870) as a contract conducted between two persons stipulating the rights and duties of the couple.
66 First the bride's father confirms: "*berdingizmu?*" - "*berdim!*" ("have you given (her)" - "I have given (her)"). Then mostly the groom is asked: "*aldingizmu*?" - "*aldim*!" ("have you taken (her)?" - "I have taken (her)"). He will often be asked to recite a part of the Qur'an. Lastly the bride will be asked for her consent ("*qobul qildingizmu?*," "Did you agree?"). She is supposed to bashfully hesitate for some time, sometimes having to be asked several times before she answers in a very low voice that will then be passed on to the *molla* by her relatives ("*qobul qildim*"; c.f. Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 130, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 219-220).

and in the end the *molla* is left with the money held loosely in his hand by the side of his trousers' pocket which he then slips it into. Groom's or bride's side or both may pay the *molla* (Hoppe 1998: 124, 128). Most often it is the groom's side. The payment usually varies between 200 and 800 yuan for the reading, though it may also be lower at small marriages. The lowest I saw was 30 yuan given by the groom himself in a ceremony comprising only five people. *Molla* I talked to say, that they will never claim any certain 'price' but will take what is given, which should be according to the economic standing of the household. Most *molla* will eventually accept the money, arguing that it is stated in the Qur'an that it is acceptable to do so, but not explicitly recommended (*mustahab*). Especially if they have no steady income, and are not paid for their services by the state, as state employed imams (Wang 2004: 136), some depend on it economically. Other *molla* insist on not taking any money for their services, since it would compromise the *sawab* (religious merits) deriving from the giving of the service. On the other hand, it is said to bring *sawab* to the host to give much to the *molla*.

Missing elements

Drawing on Gunnar Jarring's sources, Bellér-Hann writes about *nikah* in Kashgar in the early 20th century that "[t]he *imam* performing the ceremony took a piece of bread, dipped it in salt and put a piece into the mouths of the groom and the bride." (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 242) This eating of bread dipped in salt water can be found in *nikah* ceremonies in Kashgar and surroundings up until today (Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 129, Zaili Memettursun 2012: 8, Schrode 2007: 48). In many parts of Central Asia, this salt ceremony is seen as the central part of the *nikah*. Ismaelbekova calls it the "most meaningful part of the *nikah* ceremony" among Uzbeks in Osh, Kyrgyzstan (Ismaelbekova 2012: 24-25). Only ten years back it seems to have been viewed as such in Kashgar too and several customs or games were connected to it (see Bellér-Hann 2008a: 243, Dautcher 2009: 119, Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 129). Some elder men still argue that it is a mandatory part of any wedding. It was once a central component of almost every *nikah* in the region, but it is no longer commonly practiced in Kashgar city (cf. Schrode 2007: 47). The reason is that it has come to be seen as a non-Islamic custom, not being mentioned in the Qur'an and is thus said to be unnecessary at the least, if not even *haram*. We look more closely at this phenomenon. In some villages the bride may be moved from her parent's home after the *nikah* ceremony, since she now no longer belongs to the parent's household. She will be in transition in the house of a neighbour or a relative until the groom's side arrives to take her back with them. This is not practiced in Kashgar city where it would contradict the general view of her staying very much a part of her natal family after the wedding.[67]

Making up the bride (*qiz yasandurush*)

After the *nikah,* a few hours remain for the two sides to prepare for their own female guests,

67 I only experienced something similar once, when a bride was moved from her parent's apartment to the neighbours' above to make room for the many guests to arrive in the small apartment, since she would be "ashamed" (*xijil*) to have to meet them. It is by most people understood as a practical arrangement and has nothing to do with the status of the bride versus her natal household, to which she stays closely bound, especially in the early years of her marriage.

who will come to *toy cheyi* (wedding celebration) at the two houses separately. *Polu, qordaq* and other foods are prepared and cooked. The female neighbours are usually very active in assisting during this phase. The bride is dressed and made up during these hours. Some will take her to a salon to get her hair and make-up done which usually involves a lot of white powder and heavy eye-lining. In Atush the groom or one of his friends might go with her and pay the bill, but in Kashgar the two sides are not allowed to meet at this point. Many have hairdressers and make-up specialists come to their own house to not have the bride go outside in this sensitive phase of the marriage. It is paid for by the bride's side.

The bride is often dressed in a Western style white bridal dress entailing elements seen as traditionally Uyghur, like patterns of *etles* cloth. Most dresses are less revealing than Western dresses, though they still show quite a bit of skin when compared to regular dresses in Kashgar. Zaili Memettursun explicates changes regarding the dressing of the bride in the past twenty years. The dress and veil have changed to white following the Western style bridal dressing, the veil has become much more transparent than before and the dress is now mostly rented, which she looks upon with dismay since it has been worn by many before (*nechche qizlar kiygen köynek*; Zaili Memettursun 2012: 9). A further change brought up by Zaili Memettursun and discussed in Kashgar, is the heavy make-up of the bride, which seems to be done at all weddings (Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 221). Certain narratives of "natural beauty" exist in which make-up is frowned upon both on the basis of religious and nationalistic-traditional grounds. The song and video "*guezellik sende*" (beauty with you) by Uyghur 'prince of pop' Möminjan, is a vivid example of the latter tendency. The song rails against make-up and tight clothing and pleads for "natural beauty" (*tebi'iy güzellik*) which in the video is represented by a young girl in what is seen as traditional Uyghur dressing (*etles* dress and *doppa*) dancing the Uyghur national style dance (*milliy ussul*) having her hair in two long braids, to mark her as a *qiz* (girl, virgin). Still, these discourses have little influence upon the practice of getting the girl dressed up. I saw no weddings in which the bride did not wear heavy make-up. Another very important attribute for the bride is gold jewelry (Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 222). This signals wealth, but also her connection with the groom's side, since the gold is mostly what has been bought for the *toyluq*. In recent years, *doppa* (traditional hats) with gold embroidery have become popular for women.

In the meantime, the groom and his friend's meet up at the groom's house in a separate room or in a restaurant. I only participated in such get-togethers at private homes. Here the friends will sit, talk, and play cards and dices to pass the time and make the groom feel at ease. Unlike at other occasions they do not play for money. Instead, punishments aimed at making one feel embarrassed, for instance, wearing their clothes backwards or balancing a pack of cigarettes on ones head for the next round. They will pass the time like this until the women have been seen off and have gone to the bride's side.

Waiting on the women (*toy chéyi*)

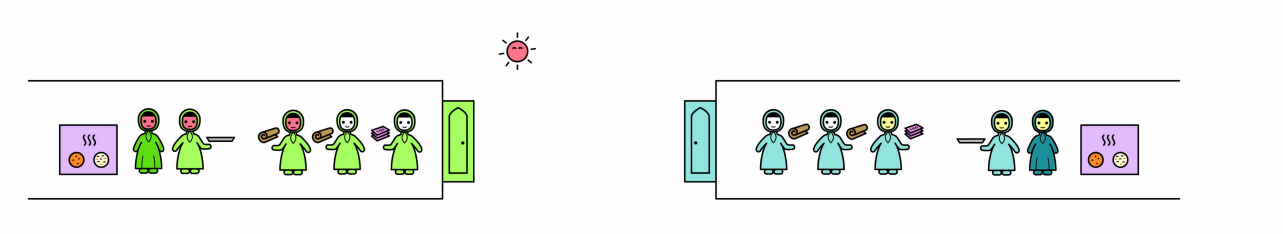


Fig. 21 In the early afternoon both sides are busy taking care of their female guests, who bring gifts and are offered hospitality. The gifts are received on a tray. (Design by Steenberg and Zheng)

Female relatives, neighbours and the bride's and groom's mother's friends respectively arrive at the two houses for separate celebrations (*toy ch'eyi*) around 2-4 pm. Unlike the men women do not hesitate at the doors to either the courtyard or the house, but walk straight in. They are placed at a large tablecloth and are served a variety of dishes including *langpu* (a cold dish made of chickpea flower), *qordaq* (vegetables, meat and potatoes) and lastly *polu*. Most women will come carrying a *dastixan* (tablecloth) with food gifts for the host household or will bring cloth and money for the mother of the respective side. The tablecloths are handed over straight away and may be stored on a bed in the courtyard for all to see or in the small room right behind the entrance to the courtyard. This room counts as a 'free' space for the female hosts and helpers. Here they can rest and eat protected from the guest's view, like the male helpers in the backyard. It is in many ways a room outside of ceremony. Here the gender segregation strictly upheld in the central rooms of the celebration can be somewhat relaxed, as male relatives and helpers may also occasionally enter. This room, whose door is in the gateway to the courtyard, is also where the received gifts of cloth are kept in a big chest (*toy sanduqi*).

The cloth is given personally to the mother after the common meal in the central rooms of the house. The giver will place the cloth folded on a tray (*petnus*) extended to her by a close female relative of the mother and then place the money (usually 50-300 yuan) on top of this. How much is given depends upon the closeness of the social relation and upon the usual standard measure (*ölchem*) of the community, as well as upon personal economic circumstances. These gifts are written down. They are later "to be returned" when this person holds a *toy*, I was told. Some even see the money explicitly as a loan that should be paid back - with corrections for inflation if much time passes.

When the guests leave, some of them are given cloth from the chest and other gifts like glass bowls besides the usual gift of food (*zelle*; cf. Bellér-Hann 2008a: 143). This giving to the guests has been met with a lot of criticism from secular and religious authorities in the last years, as being a waste, unnecessary and as making it difficult to hold a *toy*. The custom has almost ceased, one man told me and went on to explain how this sort of giving really contradicts the logic of *toy*. A *toy* is an event, where relatives and neighbours should help, and their help should be accepted (cf. Bellér-Hann 2008a: 208). They would pool money, labour and resources to enable the hosting household to hold a big *toy*. To give things back on that very day means showing off and being selfish in ones quest for recognition (*abroyperez*). It expresses that one doesn't need any

help and it betrays others that do not have the economic means to do without such help (cf. Bellér-Hann 2008b: 150). Such a household would not be able to build up credit within the community to draw on for their own upcoming events, since the debt would be cancelled the very same day it was created.[68] While more money is given in the city, in many villages they give much more cloth and less money. In parts of rural Atush, the event is called '*rext qoyush*' (to place/give cloth).

Gifts given within one side of the marriage are given centripetally from the periphery towards the centre of one side of the marriage. The receiving unit is the hosting household or its closest relatives. The attribution of centre and periphery is based on the criterion of social closeness, not on genealogical links. These gifts are important elements within the relatively closed circles of delayed balanced exchange between households visiting each other's life cycle rituals (see Yan 1996, Yang 1994, Werner 1999). Such exchanges are embedded into the wider social relations including gifting and the giving of favours between the households, but unlike what Werner (1999) wrote about Kazakhstan and more like the Han-Chinese systems described by Yan (1996) and Yang (1994), in Kashgar the gifts given on the level of life cycle ritual exchange form a quite closed system. They respond to each other and are not reciprocated through gifts outside this system, though the fact that they are given and the relation thus strengthened does very much influence the givings outside of the system.

To illustrate what I mean by this, I will provide a small example. Abdulla's daughter has just finished medical school, but is having great difficulties finding a job. He therefore approaches Toxtiaxun, the director of a small private hospital and a distant friend of his. One month earlier Toxtiaxun's son had married and Abdulla had contributed 300 yuan that he had given directly to Toxtiaxun in the afternoon. Toxtiaxun gives Abdulla's daughter a position at his hospital. Two months later her younger sister marries. Now Toxtiaxun presents Abdulla with 300 yuan. They are responding to the 300 given by Abdulla three months earlier. Abdulla's initial wedding gift cannot be cancelled by the favour done by Toxtiaxun, which is only directly answered by a similar gift at a life cycle celebration. This is a system (of contributions at life cycle events) within the system (of more general exchange and personal relations), drawing up a representational line within the wider exchange. The relation between these two systems is complex. Other systems exist within the system. They include rotating credit systems of various kinds. Both money, cloth, other objects, and also labour is exchanged within the systems established at life cycle events.

Generally, a guest gives to the person by whom one has been invited and to whom one has personal relations. This is very different from my Middle European contexts where gifts are usually given to the bridal couple. The bride's friends give to the bride, the bride's mother's

68 This is connected to the nature of the exchange circles that *toy* establish and that are centrally important for the general social relations of a household. These circles today entail a logic that is very close to that of rotating credit associations, which also exist excessively in Kashgar. This is only one aspect of the giving at weddings, but it is an increasingly important one. Among wealthy Uyghurs in Ürümchi money gifts at the wedding have also taken on such dimensions, that they by far exceed the wedding expenses and by some hosts are seen as their opportunity to get some of the money back that they have invested when going to weddings for many years.

friends and acquaintances give to the bride's mother, the groom's friends give to the groom and so on (cf. Bellér-Hann 2008a: 243-245). Wedding gifts are given separately within the respective gender and age groups, but on behalf of a household. Young men and women do not exchange on behalf of their parent's households, but on behalf of their own future households as imagined extensions of their persons. At the early morning communal meal (*toy neziri*), no gifts are brought, but some close friends of the fathers of either side are invited for the afternoon too and will bring them gifts (*kögül*, lit. heart). This is written down by one of his closest friends (cf. Bellér-Hann 2008b: 158). Sometimes they will walk around with a notebook asking the guests "*köglingiz barmu?*" ('do you have a heart?,' lit. 'did you bring anything for the host?').

Any gift given to the host of a *toy* can be called *köngül* (heart), which symbolises, in the best Maussian fashion, that this is seen as a part of the given person (Mauss 1990: 33). The reciprocating gift at a similar later event will not be his heart returning though, but once more the *köngül* of the giver. Though it will be of approximately (often exact) the same amount as the first gift, it will not sever but instead confirm and deepen their relations, making them parts of each other. It could thus be argued, that the real gift given is not the money itself, but the service of making the money available at a time when it is needed. This corresponds to the duties of siblings and affines as preached by the brother-in-law in Abdukérim Abliz's sketch paraphrased in the introduction of this thesis and to the socio-economic networks I have otherwise witnessed in Kashgar, not least among traders: The book of total expenses stayed balanced, while what was given in a quasi generalised reciprocity (Sahlins 1972: 193-194) was the availability of the money.

Transferring the bride (*qizni yötkesh*)

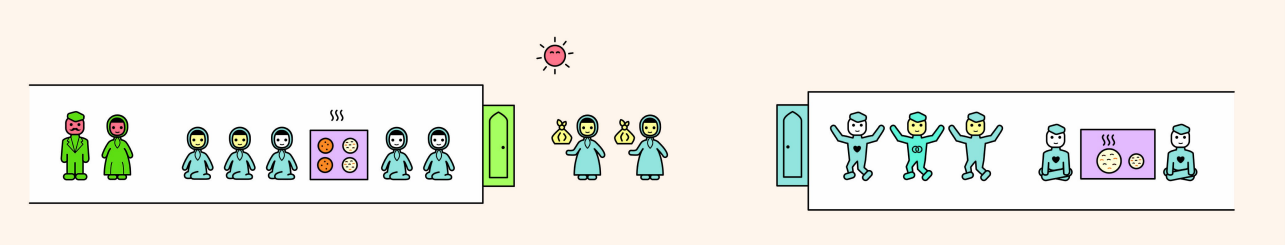


Fig. 22 Transferring the bride (1). While the women of the groom's side are guests at the bride's side in order to bring back the bride, the groom dances and eats with his friends. (Design by Steenberg and Zheng)

The women

At around four or five o'clock the women from the groom's side leave for the bride's side's house to transfer the bride (*qizni yötkesh*; Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 131). Around 30 women usually carry two big collective *ðastixan* (tablecloths wrapped around gifts of food) for the bride's side. One of them contains 15-20 big breads on a tray; the other one may contain cooked meat dishes like *kawab, ʃamʃa* o r *mante*. Some years back the own household, relatives and

neighbours produced these, and still do in many villages. In this sense, it used to be a real collected and not just collective *dastixan,* in the sense that it was put together by the smaller *dastixdan* brought in by the guests of the groom's side. This logic of pooling (Polanyi 1957) is also reflected in the money gifts as elaborated above. Some villages (e.g. in Beshkérem) are still known for serving large amounts of *mante* to guests at weddings and putting them into the *dastixan*. This is quite labour-intensive and involves a lot of help from relatives and neighbours. Today in Kashgar city they are usually bought from restaurants or at the bazar. The women of the groom's side are guests at the bride's side, sitting with the women of the bride's side. Besides facilitating the smooth transfer of the bride, this is an important event for the women of the two side's central relations to get to know each other beyond the households marrying.

The young men

While the women are entertained at the bride's place, the groom and his friends dance in the groom's courtyard. The groom is the main character of this part of the wedding celebrations. A folded *körpe* (mat) is placed on a chair or bench to create a kind of throne on which he sits much of the time, while his friends dance in front of him.[69] The dancing is often accompanied by the same musicians playing folk instruments (*milliy saz*) that played in the morning at the bride's place.[70] The atmosphere is merry and spirited (*shox*), confetti and foam is sprayed upon the dancing men and sometimes they will cry out and display extra vigour.

In Kashgar, the dancing rarely lasts more than twenty minutes. Then the groom's father invites all his friends into the house to eat the wedding meal. This consists of *polu* (pilau) and sometimes *qordaq* (cooked vegetables and meat). This time the groom and his friends take their seats in the central room of the house. He is once again placed on a higher seat in the central corner furthest from the door (the third rendering of *tör* accounted for above). To further stress his centrality, the groom is served both the *yigit chéyi* (groom's tea) and *yigit éshi* (groom's food). Both are extra big portions. The *yigit chéyi* is a large bowl of tea with dried fruits and a huge block of rock sugar added to it. In Atush and Üstün Atush the bowl is passed around for all to drink, but this is rarely done in Kashgar. The *yigit éshi* is a large portion *polu* for the groom, "to strengthen him for the wedding night," some say. It is often eaten by his best man (*qoldash*) and closest friends. These elements all add on to the marking of the groom as central. This contrasts somewhat with his symbolically otherwise relatively peripheral role at the *nikah*, at the *toy neziri* and also later at the lifting of the veil (*yüz échish*). At all these central events, he is not central, but more or less on the sideline.

The groom is marked as special within his own group of friends, within his own celebration. The *toy* may be seen as several celebrations going on simultaneously and touching upon each other at instances: the celebrations of the women, that of the men, those of each side, that of the

69 This is very different from the dancing in rural Atush, where the groom dances constantly and his friends take turn dancing with him. The dancing involves lifting the groom up, encircling him yelling loudly and usually goes on for hours.

70 Mostly the musicians are paid by the groom's side for the entire day. Guests dancing throw money in front of the musicians. Some years back this money was given to them. Now they will mostly receive a salary agreed on before hand, while the guests' money is claimed by the hosts.

bride and her female friends and that of the groom and his male friends. Both the invitations and the giving of gifts attest to this (see above). If we imagine these celebrations running parallel, then we can imagine a spotlight moving from one celebration to the other to illuminate the most important instances and highlight the events where the celebrations overlap and are brought together. The camera is one very convenient indicator of this imaginary spotlight, and it may actually have an influence upon the entire structure of the weddings, since photogenic sections become more important and better remembered, and since (there mostly being just one camera) it forces a more chronological structure upon the sequence of events. The markings of the groom's centrality have a similar spotlight effect, as does the use of certain spaces - the courtyard, the central rooms and the *tör*. As seen above, helpers eating in the garden and the small room in the gateway create spaces of ceremonial or ritual periphery where the condensation of formality is less pronounced.

When the groom's father enters the room and leads the prayer to end the meal, all the young men loudly call out their congratulations ("*mubarek bolsun!*") and exit. They lift the groom up on their shoulders, crying "*allahu ekhber!*" as they carry him out of his own courtyard and down the road. The important thing seems to be to carry him over the threshold and this is repeated as they reach the bride's courtyard. The groom rides in a decorated wedding car (*toy mashinisi*) often an expensive new car lent to him by a wealthy friend or rented for the purpose. Many of his friends rent cars for the occasion to join his cortege to the bride's place. All the cars are marked by putting a long piece of red cloth in the windshield. Upfront a small pickup droves with three musicians seated on the rear platform. Two play *naghra* (drums), while one plays the *surnay* (a traditional trumpet-flute). Usually the car of the camera man is second.[71]

Around town

On their way to the bride's side the cortege at many weddings takes some detours through the centre of Kashgar. This is called *bazarni chögilesh* (to circle the bazar). Almost all corteges pass by the Idgah Mosque, the most important religious and cultural symbol for Kashgar, and pass the *dونghu* (东湖, *sherkiy köl*, Eastern Lake), with its paved banks and sparkling lights a great symbol of Chinese modernity. The latter also has the widest road of Kashgar city running by it and a panoramic view of what is left of the old city close by. Younger men legitimise the custom of driving around with reference to the Qur'an, which states that a marriage should be made public. Yet, others criticise the custom, claiming that this publicity should only concern the couple's own neighbourhood and that the driving around is wasteful and amounts to showing off. One man said that it was neither *qa'ide* (custom) nor *sünnet* (the way of the prophet) or *perz* (religious obligation), but that it could be done if it did not cause any harm. The opponents say that it does, and their argument is a very well known. We have seen it above as a complementary argument concerning the counter gifts given by hosts of *toy* and it is often applied in government campaigns to curb spending at weddings ((Bellér-Hann 2001: 19; 2004a: 191, Waite 2007: 175, Clark 1999: 158-159). The opponents argue that the driving around encourage many and

71 People coming from the surrounding villages, where few traditional instruments are used, have introduced the custom of using a huge amplifier and a keyboard instead. This is frowned upon by many in Kashgar.

expensive cars which raise the cost, since they are most often rented, and that one doing it will oblige - almost force - others to do the same. It puts unnecessary economic pressure on both the groom and his friends.

While in Kashgar this is always done before the bride is picked up, in Atush and other towns it is done after the bride is picked up and the bride and groom ride together in the same car (cf. Rudelson 1997: 94 on Turpan). This is inconceivable in Kashgar, where *perdishep* (segregation, sense of propriety) must be upheld between the bride and groom even after the *nikah* ceremony. I was told several times that *perdishep* must be upheld since the two are still *namehrem* (not lawful, improper; Bellér-Hann 2004a: 185) to each other until the *yüz échish* ceremony of the evening of the following day. This is interesting because it shows that the conceptualisation of when a couple is lawful to each other is decided by custom as much as by religion, although the arguments are phrased in an explicitly religious idiom.

Entering the courtyard

The father of the groom and some close male relatives usually arrive at the bride's place first. They are greeted by the bride's father and are invited in and placed on the *peshaywan* of the courtyard enjoying only modest hospitality (tea, bread and melon slices). They may not enter the inner rooms, which are still occupied by the two side's women, but they also want to witness the scene following in the courtyard. The groom and his friends wait some way off until, when the women are ready, they are called on a mobile phone. Again the groom is mounted onto his friend's shoulders as they carry him into the courtyard, calling out "*allahu ekhber!*" Upon entering, the groom and his friends dance *sama* for ten minutes. The musicians are brought in from the car, their instruments being the right setup for *sama*.[72] When the dancing is over, the party exits in a similar manner as they entered. The groom is carried over the threshold each time. Again the atmosphere is festive, foam and confetti are sprayed and vigour displayed. Unlike most other events in the wedding the atmosphere strived for in the dance is merry (*shox*). Yet, the atmosphere is also tense, and the groom is sometime placed on a 'throne' of seating mats set up by his friends just behind the door, not a suitable place for an honoured guest.

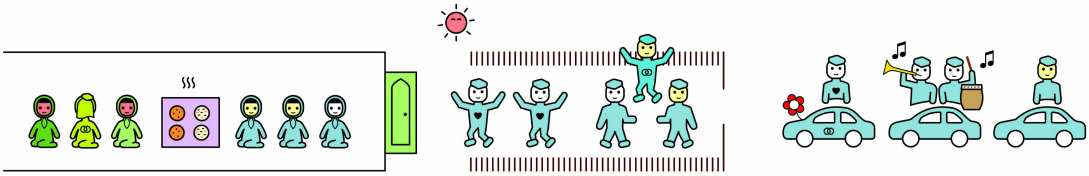


Fig. 23 Transferring the bride (2). The groom and his friends enter the courtyard of the bride's parents, dance for a while and then leave while the bride is still in the house with the groom's female relatives. (Design by Steenberg and Zheng)

72 *Sama* dance was originally a Sufi dance (Zarcone 2010: 140, cf. Inayitilla 1982: 38-57) where several men dance together in a circle. It has become a symbol for Kashgar city and thus for Uyghur culture. It has long been danced at religious holidays in front of the Idgah Mosque and has, in the last twenty years, become a standard part of wedding dances in Kashgar. It has spread to some of the surrounding villages, where it is explicitly described as coming from Kashgar. Many youths from the city take great pride in being able to dance *sama* well and it is practiced at home. The very same persons, at the same time, tend to condemn Sufism as non-Islamic. The connection between *sama* and Sufism is not recognised by most today.

During the entire time of their visit, the groom and his friends do not shake hands with anybody, greet anybody properly or receive any kind of hospitality. They enter the courtyard displaying obvious disregard for usual rules of conduct and leave again without a word to the hosts. This puzzled me, since it is different from the surrounding areas and from Bellér-Hann's descriptions of early 20th century Kashgar (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 243). I was at first inclined to see this as a reversal of social rules in the liminal phase of transition in accordance to the analytical models of Turner and Van Gennep (Turner 1967: 93-111, 1969: 80, 155, cf. Thomassen 2009). In this reversal could also well be elements of male superiority and thus the superiority of the groom's side. I even saw in it the rudimentary abstracted performance of marriage by abduction not practiced in Kashgar, but very common in nearby Atush.

When I enquired as to the meaning of the custom, I was given very different reasons: there is no room for further guests in the house, I was told, since the place was taken by the women. Furthermore, the young men had already been guests at the bride's side in the morning at the *toy neziri* before the *nikah*. Therefore, by just showing up and not allowing any situation that may force the father of the bride to insist on hosting them to keep face, they were being modest and polite, acting out their part of the ceremony of transferring the bride without being of any burden to the new in-laws. At the same time, the groom is shy (*xijil*) in front of his new parents-in-law and therefore reluctant to interact with them. Though this is certainly not the whole story historically, this initially surprising ritual after all is locally interpreted within the frame of usual polite conduct, which well suits our definition of local ritual as an amplification of formality. This may even be deepened when seeing the groom not as an individual, but as a part of the household unit of his parents who do stay, greet and receive hospitality; and if we consequently see him as a *toy*-object, more so than as a *toy*-subject.

The groom and his friends take off, leaving the wedding car (*toy mashinisi*) for the bride. The groom's role is over for the time being. The centrality-creating 'spotlight,' emanating from both camera, wedding car and the groom's parents, is now directed towards the bride.

The bride

The bride is brought out of the house into the courtyard by her own female relatives. She is covered with a large transparent scarf or veil (*gijme romal;* Zaili Memettursun 2012: 9). According to Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq, this symbolises her virginity: "*Bu qizning yüzi échilmighan, pak qiz ikenlikini ipadileydu*" (It testifies to this bride's 'face not having been opened' and to her being pure; 2009: 222). The atmosphere is now so solemn and so quiet that one can distinctly hear the bride sob (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 243, Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 129). She publicly mourns her leaving her parent's house (Enver Semet Qorghan 2007: 132) and will sometimes call out loudly for her parents. A *molla* from the bride's neighbourhood recites the Qur'an and the bride's father leads a last common prayer (*du'a*) before she is escorted out of the courtyard and into the wedding car by her bride's maid (*qiz qoldash*), a few female relatives and the groom's mother (Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 223). It is important that the bride goes with the blessings of her parents (Abdukérim Rehman et al. 2009a: 346, Abdukérim

Raxman et al. 2008: 129). In the surrounding areas, the atmosphere is joyful when the bride exits her parent' courtyard (despite her herself crying here too), while in Kashgar it is solemn. I attribute this and several other differences between Kashgar and other towns, to the fact that the affine relations in Kashgar are more tense, since the shame of 'losing a girl' is more painfully charged. This is connected to the logic of the shame of the woman being central for the honour of the man (included in the above mentioned concepts of *perdishep* and *namehrem*), which is stronger in Kashgar than in the surroundings. This has to do with Kashgar's special role as a religious centre and as the entrance point for certain religious ideas pleading for a return to a more literary reading of the holy texts.

After the bride has left the courtyard, both the women and men of the groom's side leave. The women are each presented with bread and snacks to take home (*zelle*). This is mirrored the following day, when the women of the bride's side visit the groom's parent's house. These gifts are explicitly expressed as a reciprocal pair of givings from the hosting household to the respective other side's guests, to the new affine's close relations. For the vast majority of the guests, the celebrations for the day end at this point. A big bundle of mats, pillows and blankets are transported with the bride to her new place. The main part of her trousseau has been taken to the groom's house a day or two prior to the marriage (cf. Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 222, Rudelson 1997: 87) or may be taken later. This contrasts with surrounding areas like Atush, where the trousseau (*qiz méli*) is brought together with the bride and displayed in public. This is viewed as tasteless and as showing off in Kashgar, where the trousseau is also generally of more modest quantity.

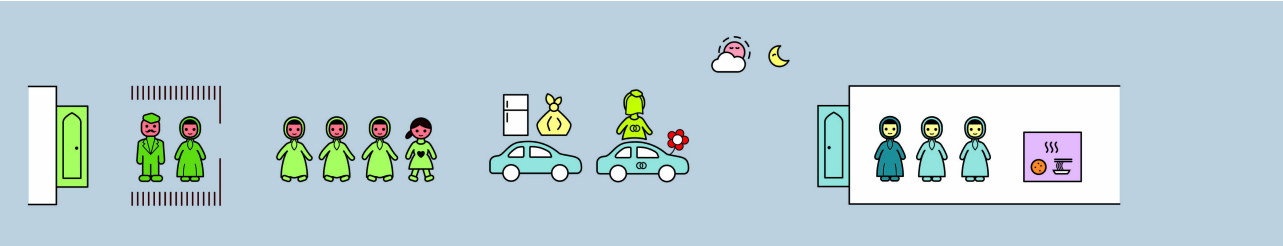


Fig. 24 Transferring the bride (3). The bride is accompanied to the groom's place by two-four female relatives, her *yenggiler*. They ride in the wedding car with her. The nuptial bedding and sometimes a part of her dowry (*qiz méli*) is transported along with her. (Design by Steenberg and Zheng)

Yengge

The female relatives accompanying the bride are described as her '*yengiler*'. The term in standard Uyghur literally means an elder brother's wife (eBW), but is hardly ever used in this sense in Kashgar (here rather *xan acha* is employed). In this case, the term is employed to name a function within the wedding, which can be fulfilled by any married, well experienced close female relative (Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 222). As the female servant Pateham says at Ghunjem's wedding, in the well known drama *Ghunjem dramisi* by Zunun Kadir: "*men qizning yengge boldum!*" (I became the *yengge* of the bride!; cf. Twaites 2001: Appendix 2, pp. 50, fn. 712). Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq calls them "*yengge bolghuchi*" (those who act as *yengge*;

Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 224). The bride will address them "*acha*" (elder sister) or "*apa*" (mother) as usual even within the ceremony. They ride with the bride in the wedding car to the groom's place.

The *yengge* prepare the nuptial bed with the bedding brought from the bride's house. They may spend the night in an adjacent room, unless the groom's parents live in an apartment. In that case they return in the morning to gather the nuptial bed into which a small gift of money may have been placed for them. In former times, they sometimes secretly supervised the wedding night and their role in last minute sexual education can still be relevant. They will often be the ones preparing the first breakfast for the newly wed couple (*nashtilik*, see below).

Mostly four *yengge* are mentioned (cf. Zaili Memettursun 2012: 10), but the number may vary from place to place and according to the concrete circumstances. It is sometimes stressed, that they need to be from the bride's mother's and the father's side respectively. This is interesting, since it once more stresses the cognatic scope of the household. It is not an agnatic household giving a daughter, but rather a cognatic household, the result of one connecting marriage in the past, now starting the process of uniting with another household through marriage. Ideally, all four grandparents could be represented by the four *yengge*, as they are on the invitations described above (type 1 and 2).

5.4 Building affinal relations

Blocking the road and door (*yol tosush, ishik taqiwaldi*)

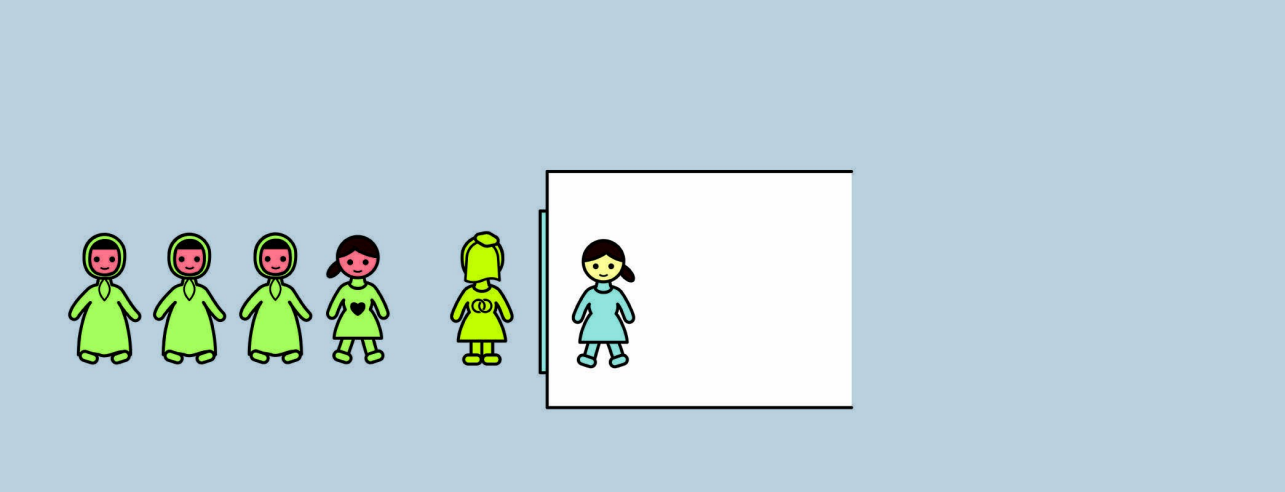


Fig. 25 Blocking the door. When the bride arrives at the groom's place, his younger sister refuses to let her in before she is given a gift. (Design by Steenberg and Zheng)

In the country side, the road may be blocked (*yol tosush*) by neighbours, when the wedding cortege tries to pass (Abdukérim Rehman et al. 2009a: 346-347, Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 129-130, cf. Rudelson 1997: 83, 92, Hoppe 1998: 42-43). The groom and his best man will either

have to pay or dance for the block to be lifted. Bellér-Hann describes the custom as having existed through much of the 20th century in Kashgar (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 244). She connects it to the reluctance of releasing a young woman out of the neighbourhood and sees a symbolic and entertaining function of the custom in cases of close marriages. In recent years, there have been religiously motivated local campaigns against the road blocking, arguing that it is wrong to ask for other people's money. I even experienced aggressive behavior towards the custom, which is at the same time said to not be an Islamic tradition and therefore wrong. Many people in Kashgar say that it is connected to or reminiscent of the custom of carrying the bride over a lit fire (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 244, Abdukérim Rehman et al. 2009a: 347, Rudelson 1997: 94-95). The fire ritual in its pre-Islamic context must have had a completely different meaning, being probably a purifying rite (Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 129-130, Bellér-Hann 2008a: 244, Forsyth 1875: 86, Grenard 1898: 248–51, cf. Rudelson 1997: 83). The interpretation of the tradition has changed over the times. The idea of the fire being purifying has disappeared. It has come to be seen as a barrier to be overcome and is thus likened to the hindering of the transfer of the bride, in a local reading. Neither fire nor blocking the road is today practiced in Kashgar city. But another custom is practiced in Kashgar which some also point to as the heir of the fire ritual: the blocking of the door at the arrival of the bride to the groom's place (*ɯhik taqiwaldi*).

Upon arriving at the groom's house the bride's party is not allowed into the courtyard by the younger sister of the groom until she receives a gift (Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 130). The groom's mother, the bride and her *yengge* have to give a gift before they are finally let in. This custom is said to signify the tense relation between husband's younger sister (HyZ) and elder brother's wife (eBW). A new bride's relationship to the younger sister of her husband is said to be particularly problematic. Qare and his wife decided to live apart from his mother until his younger sister was married. Then they moved in with the mother for him to fulfill his role as the last son and caretaker of the house. The custom of *ɯhik taqiwaldi* is supposed to give a start to their good relations (*yaxshi ötüsh*; Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 223), but many also just see it as an opportunity for the younger sister to get a gift, and as a joking custom. A similar custom figures in Katanov's descriptions from Turpan (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 244). Here, it is the groom's party which is not let in to the bride's parents courtyard upon arrival to transfer her.

A young woman from Peyzawat, 50 Kilometers east of Kashgar, told me about a very similar custom practiced in their *mehelle*, with a different meaning and purpose. Here, the groom's mother stays at home when the bride is transferred and she is the one blocking the door, not letting the new couple in. The aim of this custom is not for the groom's mother to receive a gift, but instead for the bride to call her "mother". She is supposed to call out to her: "*apa, men keldim!*" (mom, I have arrived). Many have severe difficulties calling their new mother-in-law "mother" and cry. The same purpose is achieved in Kashgar in a slightly different rite after the bride (*kélin*) has entered the house. In this sequence of shifted customs and meanings, it becomes clear that not the form (cf. Connerton 1986: 54-57, 70) but the content is of importance in these small rites. The content may be expressed in a variety of rituals or the superficially similar rituals may carry different contents, as in this case of the two closed doors. This is a general feature of most ritual situations in southwestern Xinjiang: the details and the names of events vary much - but the

content, the actual meaning and the relations, conceptualisations and categories that stand behind them, are very similar.

Saying "mother" (*way béshim!)*

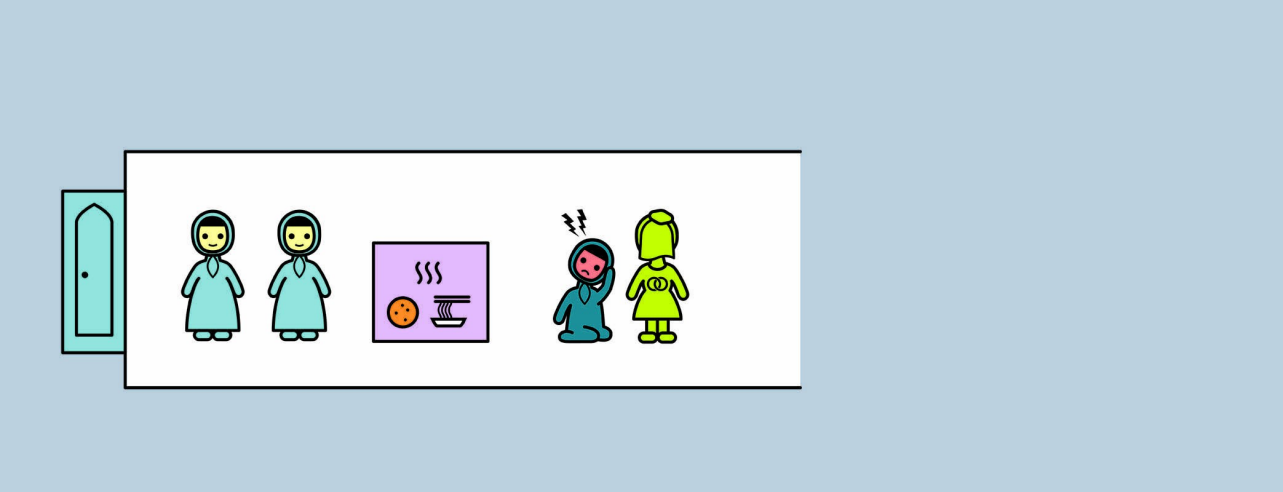


Fig. 26 In the *way béshim*-ceremony *t*he mother-in-law fakes an ill-fit in front of the bride, who is expected to call out to her, addressing her as "mother". (Design by Steenberg and Zheng)

The bride enters, sometimes walking on a piece of cloth or a narrow carpet (*payanðaz*) laid out for her (Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 129, Zaili Memettursun 2012: 10). She is led into the central room of the groom's place where she is joined by her *yengge* and the close female relatives of the groom. The bride is placed on a similar 'throne' of mats, as the groom was before (Zaili Memettursun 2012: 10). In former days, a stone used to be placed on the mats referring to the saying: *"béshi bash, ayighi tash bolsun"* (may her head be a head and her shoes be of stone; see Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 129, Dautcher 2009: 119), signifying the wish for her to stay in the family for a long time. Then her mother-in-law pretends to suffer a sudden ill fit, throwing herself to the ground moaning *"way béshim!"* (Oh, my head!) . The bride is now expected to call upon her to encourage her to get up. It is preferable for her to use the most respectful word for mother *"ana"*.[73] Whether she calls her *"apa"* or *"ana "* is said to determine their future relationship, whether the bride will come to accept her mother-in-law as her real mother. It is not easy for her to say these words, I am told. It is not easy, but necessary to make your mother-in-law your 'mother,' and all the women standing around her will encourage her to do so. She must learn to address her 'new mother' rightly and beautifully (*chirayliq*), and should not 'harden' towards her (*"kélin qéyin-anisigha qattiq bolmisun ðep"*).

In some villages and in Atush, this is followed by a big feast with dancing in the groom's courtyard (cf. Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 223-224). In Atush, this may even end in a meat auction (*barawet*). In Kashgar city though no such feasting takes place. Instead,

73 This is a different local and social context than the above example from a government workers household in Peyzawat, where *apa* is rather used. In most families I knew in Kashgar city and the surroundings *"ana"* was generally used in the house while outside *"apam"* can be employed as a reference term.

immediately after her arrival in the house of her husband, the bride and her companions are served *'hardaq éshi'* (exhaustion food). Zaili Memettursun writes of an old custom, where the bride (*kélin*) was given a small branch with a leaf of a willow to eat with instead of a spoon or chopsticks. This signified the wish that she may follow and honour her mother-in-law like a leaf sticks on to the branch: *"yopurmaqlar özining shexida egilip turghandek, kélinmu qéyn'anisigha égilsun we hörmet qilsun"* (2012: 10-11). This is an interesting metaphor, since it completely de-emphasises the fact that the daughter-in-law has just come from somewhere else and very clearly states the ideal of her becoming a steady and 'naturalised' part of the family. The metaphor of the tree and branches so well known from descent theory and according local practices (cf. Bamford and Leach 2009) is here applied to a clearly non-genealogical context. This relation has an unmistakable hierarchical element, and it is potentially laden with conflict, not just between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law, but also between the wife and her husband, who is often torn in his loyalties between the two. Almost all instances of domestic violence I heard of had developed out of such conflicts. The tension is also present in the proverb *"qizim sanga éytay, kélinim sen angla"* (I will say this to you my daughter; my daughter-in-law, you better listen). The very relation between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law is, in this proverb, used as a metaphor for speaking indirectly to avoid tensions.

The wedding night (*nikah kechisi*)

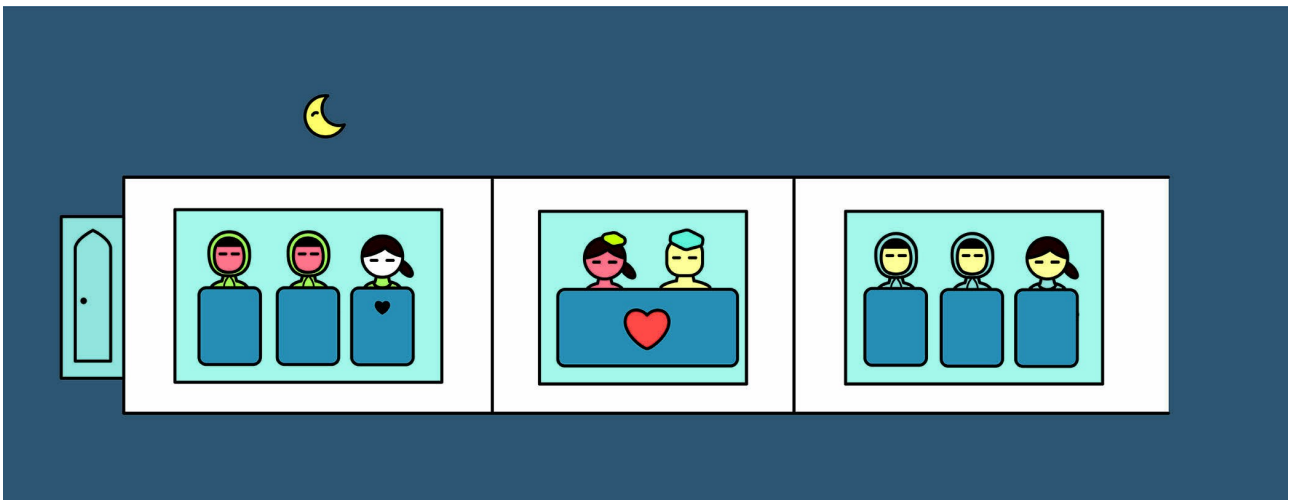


Fig. 27 On the wedding night female relatives of both sides may still today sleep in adjacent rooms to offer last minute sexual education and to keep control of the events. (Design by Steenberg and Zheng)

It used to be one of the roles of the *yengge* to supervise the wedding night and attest to whether the bride was a virgin or not. Since the *yengge* is from the bride's side, this shows that they were still responsible for the bride even after the *nikah* and like in the case of the *ashsüyi* ingredients that were guarded over night even after being given, these matters were not left to be a question of trust. In case the bride was not a virgin (*qiz*, lit. girl), this was a big embarrassment for her family and she could shamefully be sent back to her parent's house. A round flat bread with a hole in it would be displayed to symbolise her perforated hymen. Bellér-Hann elaborates on this for the early 20th century and Zaili Memettursun even mentions it in her description of

contemporary weddings in Kashgar (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 245-246, Zaili Memettursun 2012: 10, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 224), yet I never heard any mention of such scandal, nor even of any problems connected to this in Kashgar.

At subsequent marriages, it is no problem that the bride is not a virgin, as long as she was a virgin at the first marriage, I was told several times. If she wasn't then her "morality had been destroyed" (*exleq buzulghan*) and she was most definitely worth less as a woman - and as a person. But many young women marry several times as non-virgins without this impairing the quality of the marriage or of their wedlock. Virginity is thus not much about the marriage itself, it is not about a bride being a virgin at marriage or not, but more about whether the virginity was lost within a God sanctioned *halal* union (marriage), or not. Virginity at marriage in Kashgar is about the young woman as a person and whether her first sexual contact was a lawful and religiously sanctioned (*pak*) one or not. Virginity is not centrally about the romantic wedlock or about the relation to a certain man, her husband. It is much more about the wedding being a life cycle ritual for the young woman or girl (*qiz toyi*) and about the step to her womanhood haven been taken in accordance with God and with her parents and the wider community (cf. Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 225). Yet, discourses on virginity in Kashgar are certainly about the control of women and of women's sexuality, and men are not subjected to the same restrictions.

Breakfast (*nashtiliq*)

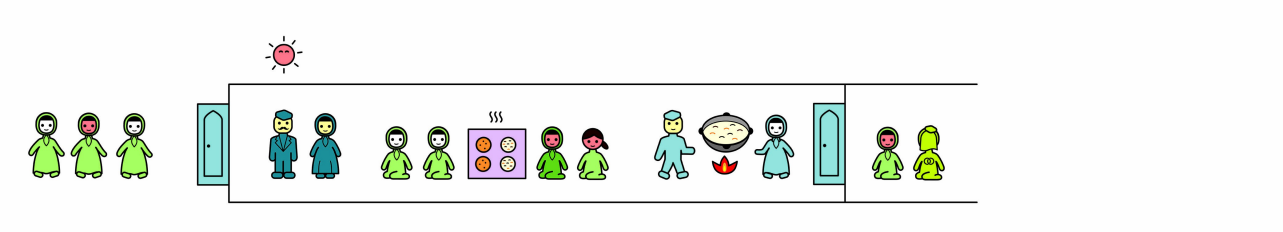


Fig. 28 On the second day of the wedding the women of the bride's side visit the groom's place. The bride stays isolated until the evening. (Design by Steenberg and Zheng)

The following morning, a breakfast is prepared for the new couple by the bride's side. It is either brought by the *yengge* or other female relatives of the bride. They are thanked with a small gift from the groom's side, but handed out by the bride herself (Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 225). From this day forth, the bride's relatives will take turns bringing food (*dastixan*) to the groom's side for several days. These food gifts are all called *nashtilik*.[74] *Nashtilik* has also become a generic term for the whole second day of the wedding where the bride's friends and female relatives are guests at the groom's place. The bride's friends come in the morning, and the bride's mothers' guests around noon. The groom's female relatives will join, mainly to help cooking and serving, but also in order to become better acquainted with their new affine relatives.

74 *Nashtilik* is a small pre-breakfast meal of bread one may eat after rising in the morning, before going to *bamdat* prayers at sunrise. One works a while before having the real breakfast (*etigen chay*). The word is not used much today but quite often found in older tales and stories.

On this second day of the wedding, a large amount of dishes is served and the guests stay for up to six hours (cf. Zaili Memettursun 2012: 6). Within these six hours, several important events take place including the rites of *yüz échish* (to open the face) and *tartishmaq* (lit. pulling each other; see below) and gift exchange among the women of both sides. On this day, the bride often wears red. She is kept relatively secluded and is not allowed to speak with her in-laws directly until after the *yüz échish*. Her bride's maid assists her and acts as her communication channel. The guests are served in the central room of the house and this is also where the official gift exchange takes place. The groom's mother and her closest female relatives are given cloth and money by the guests of their own side. Additionally, they also receive gifts from the bride's side, and also the bride's mother receives gifts during this event.

Many of the groom's relatives that help with the cooking and serving sit and eat more peripheral, in the courtyard or on the *peshaywan* (terrace) in front of the house. Here, the gender segregation is also somewhat relaxed, since it is not in the centre of the event and thus the formality generally gives way to familiarity. Male relatives occasionally join on the edges. At one such event, the groom's relatives (host side) called into the central rooms for some of the bride's relatives (guest side) to join them on the pleasantly cool *peshaywan*. After hesitating for a moment, the guests came out and by changing place, spatially entered into less formal and more familiar relations with those who had now become their "relatives" (*tughqan bolduq*).

When later the guests leave they receive a small package of food, bread and snacks from the hosting household (*zelle*; Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 29). At some weddings all guests receive meat packed in small plastic bags.[75] Besides being an element in the creation of affinal relations, it is also the extension of commensality beyond the personal guests, to their households and neighhbours with whom they will share the food. Packages of left over *polu* are also brought to the neighbours. Their children will even come to pick it up themselves. The close female relatives of the bride, seen as direct affines, receive an especially big portion (cf. Zaili Memettursun 2012: 6). The *yengge* and the bride's mother and the bride's grandmothers each receive large pieces of meat, sometimes even whole legs. They are also explicitly seen off by the groom's mother as the owner (*ige*) of the event and her daughters and sisters.

75 It is a new custom to present guests with uncooked meat, I was told (see Cesàro 2002: 130). In rural Atush I saw similar bags of meat handed out to male guests when leaving, but the meat was always cooked. Some have connected this to a striving to minimise waste: The uncooked meat can be used for regular family meals the next day, while the cooked meat is eaten as a snack. Furthermore it must also be connected to a change in the meaning of cooked and raw food and in a decline of the importance of this distinction.

Lifting the veil (*yüz échish*)

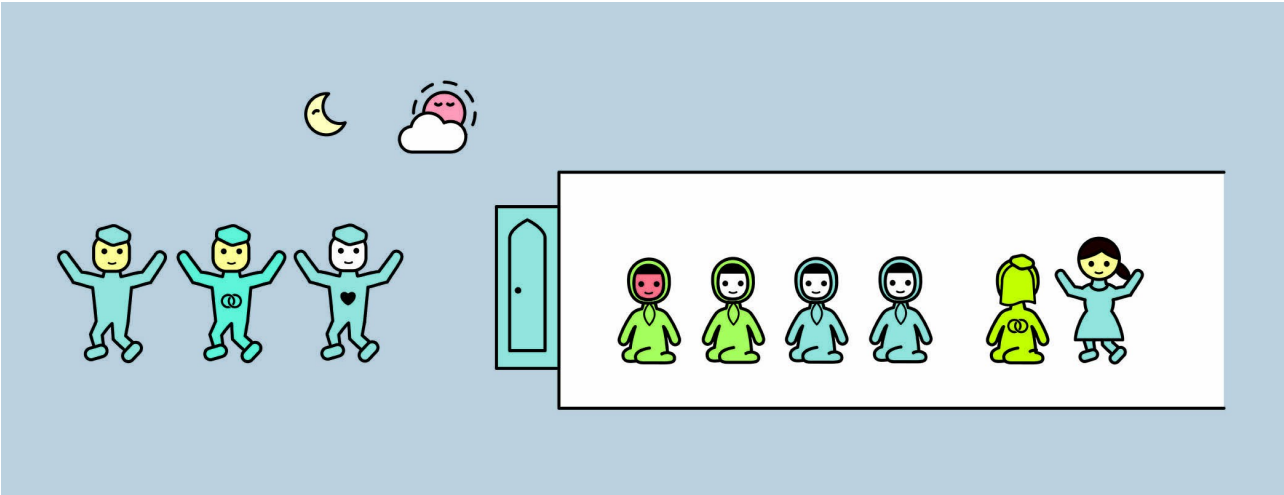


Fig. 29 The groom's younger sister dances and lifts the veil of the bride who is thus ritually incorporated into her mother-in-law's household and family. Outside the groom dances with his friends. (Design by Steenberg and Zheng)

Before the women leave, the *yüz échish* (opening of the face of the bride)[76] takes place in the central room in the house, in attendance of all close female relatives of both sides. Here, the bride is once more placed on a 'throne' of seating mats. Her head is covered with several veils or scarves including the *gijme romal* she wore when transferred the night before (cf. Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 225, Zaili Memettursun 2012: 11). In Kashgar, it is usually the younger sister of the groom who lifts the veils and uncovers her face. She dances *ussul* in front of the bride and one by one lifts the veils covering her face (Abdukérim Rehman et al. 2009a: 347). Then she kisses the bride on her forehead (Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 129). The groom's mother then puts a new (often red) scarf around the head and neck of her new daughter-in-law (cf. Zaili Memettursun 2012: 11, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 225) and may give her a ring or some other gold jewelry. This ceremony signifies the new bride's integration into the groom's household and family. This is explicitly stated and both the bride and her parents-in-law are at this occasion supposed to ask the other part to treat them as their own parents or daughter respectively (Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 226). After this ceremony, the bride will start addressing the members and relatives of this household as her own relatives. Her seclusion phase has ended and she may now speak to them herself. Often the *yüz échish* ceremony ends in a introduction round of the women closest to the hosting household.

Besides signifying the bride's social integration into the household of her parents-in-law, the event also marks the public recognition of her lost virginity by both sides. "*Yüzi achghan qiz*" (a girl with an opened face) means a young woman who has lost her virginity (cf. Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 225). People in Kashgar note that this is important to do after the wedding night, while in many surrounding towns (Atush, Peyzawat) it is done on the evening of the first wedding day right after the bride has been brought home to the groom's parents (see also Wang

76 This custom exists spanning a whole range of very different Eurasian social contexts. It is found expressively both in other parts of Central Asia and China (cf. Engels 1984: 959).

2004: 199 for Turpan, where it is done on the same day).

Skirmish (*tartishmaq*)

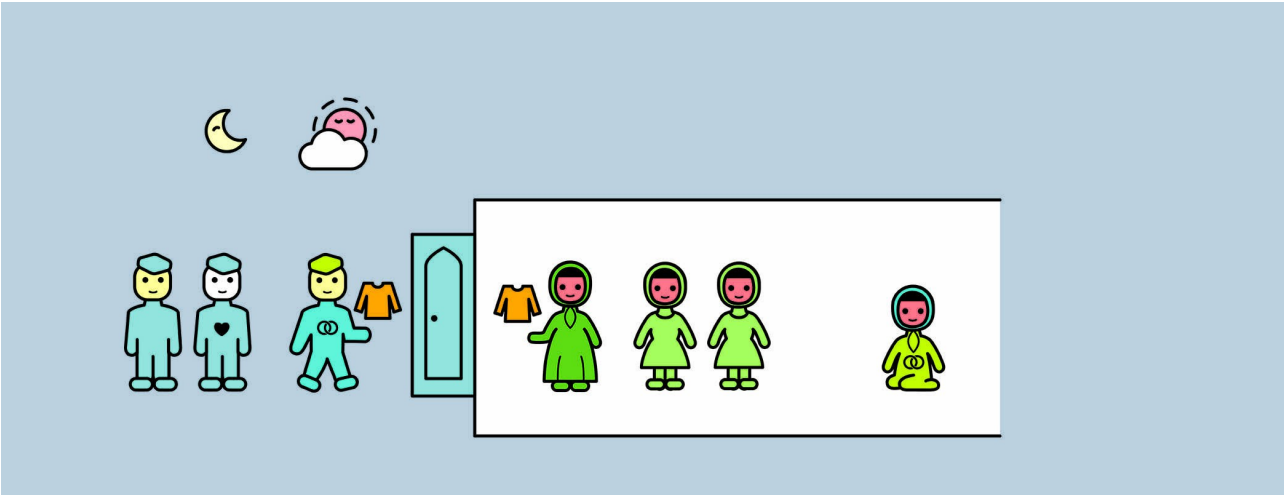


Fig. 30 After a verbal tug-of-war (*tartishmaq*) the groom and his mother-in-law exchange gifts over the threshold of the house's central guest room. (Design by Steenberg and Zheng)

While the women partake in the *yüz échish* indoors, outside in the courtyard the young men dance *ussul* and *sama*. Many of the groom's friends take the opportunity to present him with gifts of money that they put into his shirt pocket and collar. Some especially talented dancers likewise receive money or cloth from the groom's female relatives while dancing and traditional hats (*doppa*) and handkerchiefs are distributed among the dancing men.

Then, the music stops abruptly. The loudspeakers crackle, then give off a short feedback sound. The best man grabs the microphone and speaks into it with a clear voice, sounding jarringly loud in the sudden silence: "*qéyn'anisi barmu, ya?!*" (Is his mother-in-law there, or what?!). This is the beginning of the last event of the day and of the wedding per se: the *tartishmaq* (skirmish, lit. mutual pulling). At this event, the bride's mother and the groom exchange presents and at the same time carry out a symbolic struggle over the bride and over the dominance in their relationship (Abdukérim Rehman et al. 2009a: 347, Cesaro 2002: 130, Zaili Memettursun 2012: 9). The best man puts down the microphone and joins the other young men who have gathered around the groom in the middle of the courtyard. The very positioning of the young men on this 'scene' of the open space in the middle of the courtyard, in itself creates an atmosphere of something about to happen.

Inside the house, the bride's mother's friends and relatives gather around her. Both bride mother and groom carry gifts of clothes in their hands. The best man's voice appears once more, loudly, without the microphone. His opening word: "*qéyn'anisi…*" (his mother-in-law…) is answered by all the young men gathered in the courtyard: "… *chiqsun!*" (… must come out!) He continues with a range of jokingly meant nicknames for her: "*umaq anisi…; bodek anisi…; uz anisi…; chirayliq anisi…; tatliq anisi…*" (his cute, shortish, beautiful, sweet … mother) which are all answered in the same fashion of an energetic choir of young men: "*chiqsun!*" (… must come out!) The groom is at the mercy of his friends who pull him back and forth. They have him approach the open door in which his mother-in-law appears and then pull him back again. The clue of their calling is that the bride's mother now having become the groom's mother too

(through the marriage) should honour him by coming to him (*uning qéshige chiqmaq*; lit. to come before one's eye brow). The bride's mother is likewise pushed forth and pulled back by her friends and relatives. They contrarily are of the opinion that the groom having become her son, and being younger than her, should honour his mother by coming to her (cf. Cesaro 2002: 130).

Both groups slowly approach the threshold of the central room of the house in which the *yüz échish* took place and from which the bride's mother appears. In the end they meet at the threshold and exchange gifts over it. He gives her clothes and cloth, and likewise receives clothes for himself, but also several pairs of socks and a whole bag of eggs for his friends and the male relatives still present at the event. The gifts are given on silver trays (*petnus*). After having exchanged the gifts, they each pull back as quickly as if they had been burnt. The socks and eggs are distributed among the male guests. After a few more rounds of dancing, an elder from the neighbourhood recites the Qur'an and together with the groom's father leads the last prayer (*du'a*) before most of the guests leave the wedding.

I was told that the *tartishmaq* used to be much longer and included several verses and sayings exchanged between the two groups skirmishing. Zaili Memettursun cites a song sung by the groom's friends at the occasion, in which the groom's friends plead for his status being equal with that of his mother-in-law: "*menmu adem, senmu adem*" (I am a person and you are a person; Zaili Memettursun 2012: 9). The event has been shortened, I was told, for it not to cause bad feelings with the bride's relatives (*set bolmisun dep*; lit. for it not to be ugly). The elaboration and the 'mutual pulling' (*tartishish*) may hurt their feelings, the argument went. I read this as a part of a general solemnisation of the wedding, especially the parts including both sides, at which much care is taken on the side of the wife takers to not hurt the feelings of the wife givers.[77] This is connected to the tensions within affinal relations and the logic of female shame and male (or household) honour being an important element in these relations. For similar reasons, the men of the bride's side are not recommended to be present at this and a few other events.

This event entails the counter piece to the ceremonies mentioned above, in which the bride calls her mother-in-law "mother". Here the groom's friends call her "his mother" and both sides argue that their new son or mother respectively should honour them by coming to them. The *tartishmaq* is about the relations between the mother-in-law and her son-in-law. This is seen as a difficult and tense relation (one man proudly told his friends at a dinner that he had never in his life spent one night at his mother-in-law's place), but also one which is necessary to deal with and work on.

Tartmaq

The name of this event hints at an important concept in Kashgar: *tartmaq* (to pull). The verb is often used to express the need to bring someone to do what is expected of her, but which her modesty and embarrassment prevent her from doing. It could be used, for instance, when leading someone into a courtyard or house as a guest, into a car to travel along with someone, or

77 I do not use this distinction (wife giver and wife taker) generally as an analytical tool, since it carries connotations that do not fit many aspects of marriages in Kashgar (bride's side and groom's side are much more precise and reflect the local idiom). Yet, I use the distinction in this very argument, because it aptly illustrates this very aspect of the marriage: the feeling of loss on the side of the wife givers and the tension connected to this.

to compel someone, who is otherwise too shy (*xijil, nomus*), to eat or to dance. The term *tartinchaq* names someone who needs to be 'pulled' in this way. Pulling someone is to do this person an honour. It is telling this person that she or he is important and needed for the event. I was several times asked to 'pull' the groom or an honoured guest at weddings, by the friends who had taken me to the wedding and thus felt somewhat responsible for my behaviour: "*uni tarting!*" (pull him!) This is used on other occasions, too.

Tartinmaq (lit. having to be pulled; be shy, play coy) denotes being modest beyond what is deemed necessary. To pull someone through the gate and into the room, or to eat, as described above, is the action expected by a host. Shyness, shame and modesty are central values structuring communication, not just among women but also very much among young men. Even among elder men shyness and modesty are employed to display piety and morality.

Much play is left open between *tartinish* and modesty (*addiy-saddiyliq*). These are very situationally employed tools of communication between host and guest. Like in the case of guesting, no 'code of conduct' exists beyond a very abstracted level. Rather, we could talk about a 'code for communication' in which each conduct carries a certain meaning very much dependent upon the situation and the relation of the actors. While *tartinmaq* (having to be pulled) communicates modesty ("I am not that important"), *tartmaq* (to pull) communicates recognition ("yes, you are this important!"). Yet, letting oneself be 'pulled' overly much, may invoke the accusation of 'fishing for' being made important. This basic logic of pulling and having others pull (*tartmaq; tartinmaq*) is expressed well in the function of the threshold above: if a guest comes too close to it, it will pull him in. Giving in itself has such a high value that not only is it wrong to deny anyone anything asked, but also even to refrain from giving when the opportunity emerges – be it to strangers or within the own community (see Bellér-Hann 2008b). Therefore, to let such an opportunity emerge, as when innocently walking close to the threshold of a courtyard or house, is akin to requesting in a less verbal, but by no means necessarily less direct or cunning way.[78]

Threshold

The threshold has been attributed much meaning concerning Uyghurs, Central Asia more generally and beyond.[79] Bourdieu saw the threshold of the Kabyle house as the axis over which the outside word was mirrored inside the house, creating two complementary worlds (Bourdieu 1976: 48-65). In Kashgar too, the threshold is a divider between 'In' and 'Out' and which invests meaning into who crosses it and how it is crossed. Crossing the threshold easily connotes familiarity with the house and the hosts, while 'pulling' someone across the threshold stresses this person's importance. This happens at many doors not just at festive or ritual events, but also in daily conduct. A very usual way of greeting one's neighbour or friend walking past is by inviting them in without having the intention of the person actually entering ("*öyge kirmemsiz?*").

A common way of expressing social closeness is by pointing out that the neighbours come

78 It is an important and difficult skill to constantly keep distance from such 'non-verbal requests' without insulting by turning down categorically. The host must be given the opportunity to be generous without being pressured to it; the threshold must be crossed eventually, but it must be crossed in a controlled manner that leaves the initiative with the host.

79 Cf. Dautcher 2009: 18-20, Bellér-Hann 2008a: 107, Fletcher 1977.

and go in one's house and courtyard without formalities. Yet, the crossing of the threshold of a house in which one does not live is in practice almost always accompanied by some sort of symbolic marking of the crossing. This is often in the form of hesitation or by uttering the Islamic greeting (*essalamu eleykum*) when crossing. This significance of the threshold adds further meaning to the small rooms in the gateways, in which helpers and relatives may rest and hosts eat during weddings. They belong to the most intimate areas of the house. Some houses in the villages have gates in which small benches are integrated. It is comfortable to sit within the shade of the entrance but still have a view onto the street. Sitting here is a sign of very close relations to the owners and inhabitants of the house.

Dancing

Dancing is another important way of communicating both honour and inclusion (Light 2006: 342). Dancing at someone's wedding honours this person (cf. Mirsultan and Sugawara 2007: 114), just as 'pulling' someone to dance honours the dancer. In Kashgar, two main dancing sequences exist for men during the wedding ceremonies. The young men dance in the afternoon of the first wedding day, before going to transfer the bride, and before and after the *tartishmaq* on the second day. While the groom dances little, his friends dance *ussul* and *sama* (see above, Inayitilla 1982: 38-50, Light 2006: 342). The Waltz, which is said to have been danced at weddings in Kashgar in the 1990s, is only danced in restaurants and discotheques. The bride may dance with her closest friends at events prior to the wedding itself, but women rarely dance during the wedding celebrations, unless they are held in restaurants.

In Atush and many villages and towns surrounding Kashgar, much more dancing takes place. Here, it is not confined to the young men. In rural Atush, the groom takes turn dancing with his friends most of the time, but individual performances and designated dancing sessions for both elder men (and sometimes women) of the neighbourhood and specifically for the closest relatives also take place. Besides the parents this includes the siblings and their spouses as well as the parent's siblings and possibly their spouses. Additionally, very close friends of the groom or of the household more generally may also join. The dance session is announced as 'that of the relatives' (*tughqanlarningki*). Many dancing guests are given money and cloth by the groom's mother (as host and 'owner' of both the house and the celebration, *toyning igisi, öyning igisi*) while dancing. These gifts are given during the dancing 'on stage' to express thanks and admiration for the performance.[80] In Atush, the dancing events are arranged by the groom's side one or two evenings before the wedding (at the *baghaq yézish*; writing of the invitations) and on the night of the wedding after the bride has been transferred.

Videos and other expenses

Wedding videos are shot by professional or semi-professional cameramen. They mostly accompany the events of the two wedding days just described, but may on occasion include events before and after, if they are friends of the hosts. The cameraman then cuts the video and creates wedding CDs (*toy dey*) with a total of between four and eight hours of material. Many

80 This public giving during a performance also happens at the big music performances shown on official Uyghur television. The musician does not receive the flowers after the performance but while singing. It is a part of the performance.

videos in Kashgar commence with an overview of Kashgar and pictures of the Idgah Mosque. Then for a long sequence photographs of the groom and bride individually and together, as well as of their parents are shown, before the events start at the *toy neziri* and the subsequent *nikah* reading (see above). The videos usually cost between 200 and 500 yuan. Good wedding photographers can live from their trade, but many engage in it only as a side business. Besides this, many Uyghurs today have wedding photographs taken with their closest relatives in photo studios and printed into books on big format pictures. The costs here may easily go into the thousands of yuan. This custom is very wide spread all over China.

Besides the photographers, a range of other small services is usually paid for by the host. They include those of the butcher (*qassap*), the musicians (*musikantlar*), the printing of the various invitations, *molla* reading the *nikah* and drivers of rental cars. Further expenses, beyond the regular marriage prestations and the food consumed, go to paraphernalia like plastic flowers, spray foam, confetti bombs, hats (*doppa*), scarves, handkerchiefs and cloth as small gifts for the guests, weddings chests and rented wedding dresses. All of these things have commercial markets in Kashgar but are often accessed semi-commercially through social relations. Yet, for all of these services and products money is paid. The many gift transactions taking place here are framed by, or at least complemented by, commercial transactions (cf. Gregory 1982, 1994: 922, 928, Alvi 1999: 285, Hanisch forthcoming PhD thesis). The services accessed through social relations are said to be cheaper, better or more reliable; but more importantly, they create and uphold social relations. The financial economy of weddings and its integration of the interdependent spheres of so called 'commercial' and 'gift' exchanges (cf. Gregory 1982, Rasanayagam 2002: 61) is a very interesting topic for further research. Stores making a big part of their revenue connected to weddings are to be found all over Kashgar and could be more throughly examined. Zaili Memettursun estimates the expenses of a regular *toy* (that is the celebration of one of the two sides) to be about 40,000-70,000 yuan. This includes the wedding prestations. Other estimates I have heard fall slightly below this number at 25,000-50,000 yuan. At an avarage monthly income of 1000-5000 yuan this is a great expense, requiring savings and often lending of large sums.

Bowing (*tazim*)

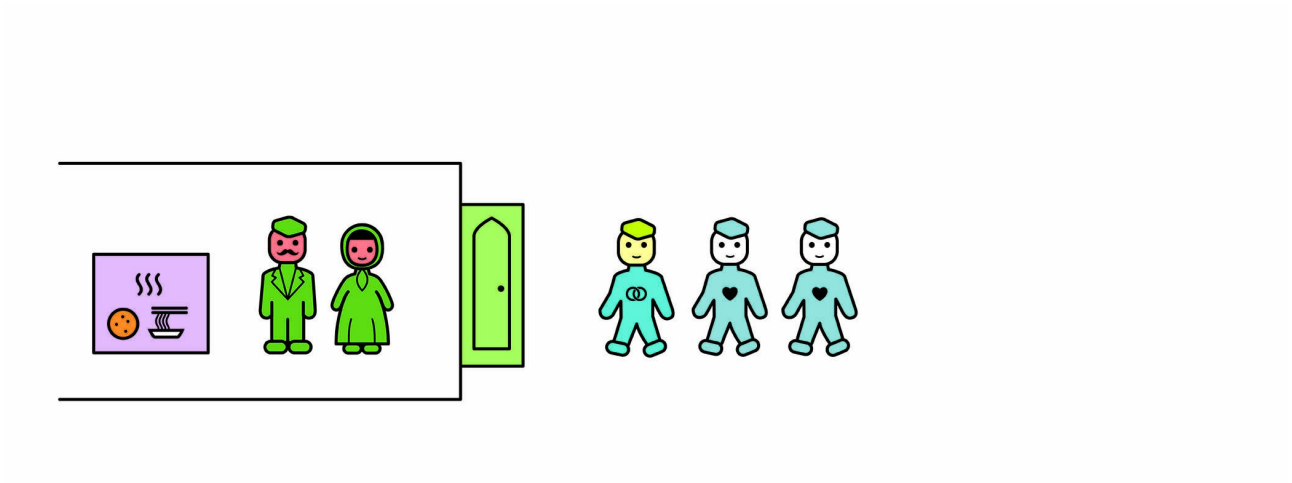


Fig. 31 Following the wedding the groom along with a few friends visits his parents-in-law to normalise relations between them after the stirring wedding events. (Design by Steenberg and Zheng)

A few days after the wedding the groom and some of his friends go to visit his parents-in-law. They go to *petilesh* (officially visit) or *salamgha bérish* (to greet) the bride's parents (cf. Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 130).[81] Sometimes the bride will join with a few friends of her own, to ease the awkwardness and to combine events (see below). The visit is also called *tazim*. *Tazim* means bow, and expresses the honour displayed by the groom towards his "new parents". Many variations of this visit exist, but common to them all is that they are visits meant to normalise relations and calm tensions between the son-in-law and parents-in-law, that have risen from the fact that he has had intercourse with their daughter. More generally, it enters the genre of visits aimed at building up good affinal relations.

A few good friends of the groom are instrumental in these visits. They accompany him and accept the given hospitality and gifts on his behalf or pressure him to overcome his shame (*xijil*) in front of his parents-in-law. Their function is not unlike the bride's maid before the *yüz échish* ceremony, through whom all the bride's communication with her new family went. This is another 'de-personalising' strategy, as described above.[82]

Bellér-Hann writes of a similar custom at the beginning of the 20th century in Kashgar: "On the day following the wedding, after he had received a gift of clothing from his wife's parents, the husband, with a male friend accompanying him, was expected to visit them." (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 245) Yet, she continues: "On the same day, the girl's family took some food to the groom's house, reciprocating his visit." (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 245). This is in contemporary

81 The word *petilesh* is also used for the visits at Qurban Héyit in Kashgar. *Petilesh* is a verb that is derived from the Uyghur variants of the name of the first Surah of the Qur'an, *patihe* or *pete* (Al Fatiha).
82 Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq describes this visit as a "*yüz achqu*" of the groom taking place at the bride's house one week after the wedding, at which he is supposed to meet face to face with her parents. (Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 227). In Peyzawat this is the time where the groom is expected to call his parents-in-law "father" and "mother" for the first time. He is supposed to greet his wive's mother: "*tinchiliqmu apa?*" (how are you mother). In one case, where the groom was only six years younger than his mother-in-law she still insisted that he should call her "mother" and her husband "father," which he did. Her insistence was by their relatives seen as a sign of acceptance and affection.

Kashgar not seen as a directly connected custom. The visit of the bride's family to the groom's house around this time can in contemporary categories be seen as either the continuation of *nashtiliq* according to which the bride's side may go on providing food to the groom's house for several days, or as the mutual visiting of the *onbeshkünlük*. After the wedding, some couples host a small celebration for their friends, to thank them for their efforts during the wedding. This is called *harduq chéyi* (cf. Mirsultan und Sugawara 2007: 114, Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 130). Dautcher writes of an event of the same name in Ghulja taking place a full year after the wedding (Dautcher 2009: 132).

First visits (*onbeshkünlük, chillaq*)

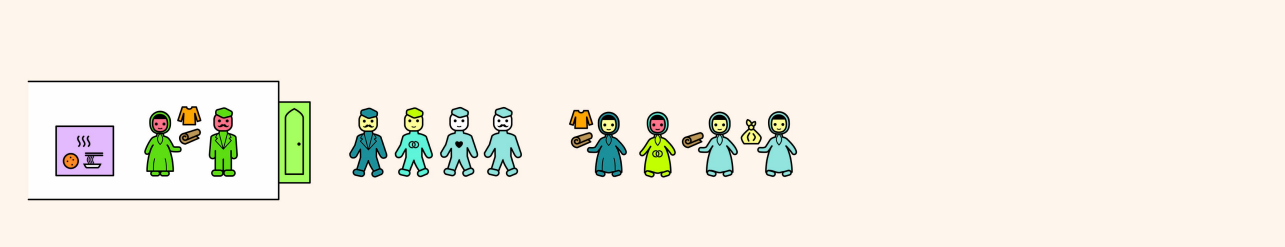


Fig. 32 The first visit of the bride at her parent's place after the wedding follows strict ritual regulation. After a successful wedding further gift exchanges follow at this and other events. (Design by Steenberg and Zheng)

Within a week following the wedding, the groom, the bride and the groom's parents visit the bride's parent's house. This can take place in various combinations, which vary widely between towns, villages and even between different neighbourhoods within Kashgar city. In a quite complex variant, practiced in many neighbourhoods in the inner city of Kashgar and in *mehelle* to the northeast of the city, the groom goes to the *tazim* (bowing) with his friends. One or two days later, his mother and a group of around 15 female neighbours and relatives visit the bride's parents. This event is called *salamgha barıdu* (going to greet). Some days later, the groom's mother again goes to visit her new affines. This time she brings up to 30-40 female guests from the groom's side and also the bride herself.

This event is called *onbeshkünlük* (lit. that on the 15th day). It is supposed to be the first time after the wedding the bride sees her parents again (cf. Bellér-Hann 2008a: 245). After the wedding she is not supposed to see her parents for a certain period of seclusion, and when she does, she comes to their house as the *kélin* (daughter-in-law) of her husband's household. In Peyzawat, this event is called *azna bérish* which means 'to go on leave'. This is said to introduce the weekly leave of the *kélin* (daughter-in-law) where she is allowed to visit her own parents, which is also called *azna bérish* or *aznilik* (cf. Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 134).[83] On this occasion, the rough pattern of the gift giving of the wedding is re-enacted. The groom's side provides gifts for the bride's relatives while they mainly give gifts to the bride. She receives gifts from both sides, in wealthy families including gold jewelry. The two mothers and close relatives

83 In Atush the event is called *chillaq* (invitation, cf. Wang 2004: 189) and is repeated one or several times to likewise function as the introduction to the *kélin*'s weekly visits. *Chillaq* seems to have been the name mostly used in Kashgar too in the early 20th century and it is used widely in the local literature (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 244-246, Abdukérim Rehman et al. 2009a: 347, Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 130, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 131).

also receive gifts of clothing (Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 227).

Some see the *onbeshkünlük* as the explicitly reciprocal visit following the visit of the women of the bride's side at the groom's side on the second day of the wedding. Others hold that a second *onbeshkünlük* in reverse is held at the groom's place, where the bride's relatives come to be guests (cf. Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 130). Sometimes the *onbeshkünlük* can be only for the parents, without the couple going. This can also be called *quda körüshüsh* (meeting of the affines). In rural Atush, the *chillaq* is designated for the young couple while a later *quda körüshüsh* is for the parents.

Again, it becomes apparent that the names are not very important and that the same name may denote different happenings in locations not very far apart. What is important is who participates, what is exchanged and accordingly which relations are strengthened by the event. At the *quda körüshüsh,* the groom's parents are guests at the bride's parents place and often meet their closest neighbours and relatives there. This is explicitly mentioned as an event where the two families, now having become relatives (*tughqan bolup qalghan*) get to know each other.[84] It will later be reciprocated by a visit by the bride's parents at the groom's parent's place. This visit is especially for the bride's father who at this point has not yet been to the house of his new affines. "He does not yet know where the *tör* (seat of honour) and the *pegah* (low end of the seating) is," an elder woman explained. This event can also be called *tör körsitish* (to show the seat of honour; cf. Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 227).

During the first couple of weeks after the wedding, the bride's relatives will take turns visiting her in her new home. They all come carrying *dastixan* (gifts of food) and are made guests (*méhman qilmaq*) by the groom's side. This is connected to the *nashtiliq* of the second day of the wedding and the subsequent bringing of food by the bride's side to the groom's side and can also be called *issiqliq* (Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 130). This marks the responsibility that the two families now take for each other and symbolically lets them function as one family or even as one household (through commensality). At deaths or other big events close relatives cook for each other. The frequency and duration of these visits and of the gifts of food vary (from three days to two months, from daily to weekly), but the logic of the bride's relatives visiting her in her new home and cooking for her new family is to be found in all cases. After these visits, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq ends his description, the wedding customs are over and a family is being created (*nikah toyining qa'ide-yosunliri axirlashqan bolidu, bir a'ile wujudqa kélidu*; Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 227). Again, it is the content that is important, the aim of bringing together the two families. Today many choose not to hold the *onbeshkünlük*, arguing that it is an unnecessary waste (*israpchiliq*). One young woman told me that now the families had become relatives, they did not need these formal celebrations, but could meet more intimately (*inaq*) in smaller circles and eat regular basic every day food. In Atush town the second *chillaq* is rarely held any longer I was told, since the expenses of each event had become so high. The

84 "The two sides invite each other, get to know each other deeper yet, and present the closest relatives to each other" (… *ikki terep bir-birini teklip qiliship teximu chongqur tonushidu, yeqin tughqanlirini bir-birige tonushturidu*; Abdukérim Rehman et al. 2009a: 347; cf. Zaili Memettursun 2012: 11, Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 130, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 131).

hospitality is simply too extensive, a middle aged woman said (*ðastixan molluq*; lit. the tablecloth is filled).

Deepening affinal relations

After the wedding, the affines continue to visit each other and to deepen their relations. At the first *héyit* (religious holiday) after the wedding, the groom's side will visit the bride's side on the second day of the celebrations, which mostly last a full week. On the first *héyit* they will bring up to twenty guests with them. They *petileyðu* (visit and recite the first sure of the Qur'an), are made guests and bring gifts (*ʃowgha-ʃalam*) for their affines (*quða*). When they leave the women receive *zelle* (gifts of food to take home from a guesting situation). Some days later, the visit will be reciprocated by the bride's parents, who also bring gifts, especially bread and *ʃangza* (deepfried dough spirals). This reenacts the sequence of the visits around the wedding, where likewise the groom's side visited first.

Usually a household visits the *quða* (affines) on the second day of every following the *héyit*, right after having seen their own parents and siblings. Some even visit the *quða* on the first day. The *kélin* (daughter-in-law) usually returns to her parent's house for *héyit* in the first years of the marriage. In the second half of the month of Ramadan *quða* also visit each other for *ipta ðu'a* (breaking the fast at the end of the day). Affines will be expected to help at subsequent weddings, other *toy* celebrations and mortuary rites. Affines often assume central roles in the preparation and execution of such events. Moneylending and a whole range of other assistance are likewise expected from the affines. In rural Atush, all affines must be present at the *toyluq apirish* (bringing the bride wealth) of a new marriage within the family and all will be asked for their consent in the matter.

The creation of affinal relations does not stop at the parental households. Within the first year of the marriage, the relatives of each side will take turns arranging guesting events for the new *quða* of their relatives. The mothers of bride and groom respectively and about ten relatives are invited to the homes of the new in-law's closest relatives. These visits are called "*öy körsetish*" (to show the house). The hosts prepare a saturated tablecloth and some gifts for the new *kélin*. Though her own mother is present, the *kélin* at these events will be sitting next to her "new mother," the mother of her husband. She will serve her at the table and also carry her bag. The mother of a newly wed will be going to a lot of such events within the first year since all the close relatives will take turns inviting to *öy körsitish*. Many who hold such events may invite up to five or six newly married women within the close relations and their in-laws at the same time having a total of 50-60 guests at once. Through such a custom not only the closest relatives of the two households whose children have married get to know each other and are invited to each other's houses, but also the relatives of couples married around the same time and connected through links of affinity meet and start building up relations. This leads to potentially very wide networks of relations created along affinal links. Both side's relatives invite their relative's new *quða* (affines) for *öy körsetish*.

Birth of the first children

The marriage is a phase of changing of status for many involved persons and other social units. A household whose first child is married changes status to become a *chong öy* (big house). Several points along the process of the marriage can be identified, that mark transitional phases or changes that are not reversible, points of no return: the agreement of the bride's parents to the proposition of the groom's side; the paying of the bride wealth (*toyluq*); the stately sanctioning inherent in the marriage documents (*toy xet*); the religious sanctioning of the *nikah* ceremony; the transfer of the bride; the wedding night (*nikah kechisi*) and the *yüz échish* ceremony can all be seen as central points of no return within the marriage process. The following visits to establish good affinal relations are likewise an important requisite for the kind of marriage described here, since the failure to establish such relations endangers the marriage. This failure may even lead to the marriage process not being continued and the marriage being dissolved (see below). A last step and point of no return in this depiction of the *toy* is arguably the birth of the first child. In important ways, the marriage is not fulfilled until a child has been born from it, and childlessness is a common reason for divorce.

The wife gives birth to her first child or children at her own parent's home. She is taken back to her natal home one to three months before she is due, sometimes more. On this occasion, the woman's mother takes rice and milk to her daughter's husband's home. Here, she used to cook it and have it distributed to the neighbours. Today, this is done by the husband's mother herself. This resembles the ritual of *ashüyi* and *toy neziri* in Kashgar, where members of the groom's side bring ingredients and cook for the bride's side and their guests before taking this house's daughter as a wife for their son. A pragmatic reason for this is clearly to confirm one's interest in the relation and to extend this to the wider social network of the other side. At the same time, it can be seen as a way to offer hospitality at the other's place in line with *dastixan* as an 'asking gift,' similar to the example of the melon purchase in the early 20th century described by Bellér-Hann (2008b: 146). It also re-presents the unity the two sides through commensality without burdening the host household.

Several reasons are mentioned why a woman should give birth to her first children at her own mother's place. An important one is that she is still a *kélin* at the place of her parents-in-law. This role implies modesty and much hard work. In the last phase of her pregnancy the woman is supposed to rest and eat a lot and not do hard work, which is not compatible with her role as a *kélin*. She would be too shy (*xijil*) to behave in the right manner for a woman in the last phase of her pregnancy. To spare her, and to avoid straining the relations with her parents-in-law, she is taken back to her own parents where she can be more at ease. Another more structural and less directly stated reason is that the married woman is still very much a part of her natal family, who continues to exercise many rights over her, but are also in a way responsible for her producing offspring for the family she has been married into.

The wife's family pays for the expenses of the birth.[85] The responsibility is a central issue in this custom. The wife's family is responsible for her producing offspring, and at the same time

85 All births are supposed to take place in hospital, and of first births a large percentage does. Usually, hospitals take 1000-2000 yuan for a regular birth and around 4000 for the increasingly popular abdominal cesarean section.

the groom's side does not take responsibility for what might happen at birth - for which they could be blamed afterwards. This logic of responsibility is central to the affine relations. We also saw it at work in the old custom of a person from the groom's side having spent the night with the ingredients for the early morning *toy neziri* brought as *ashüyi* and in the custom of the *yengge* accompanying the bride to the groom's place and even spending the wedding night in an adjacent room to secure that everything is done the proper way. In some rich families now the husband's side pays for the birth. The idea has been introduced by Islamic movements stressing the wording of the Qur'an, which according to these groups calls for the husband's family to pay. In the kinship world of the Qur'an which is based on agnatic descent, the bride completely settles over into her husband's family at marriage, and since they will be the social owners of the child, all responsibility is theirs.

The new mother and her child stay for one to three months at her parent's house. To allow her to stay longer is seen as a courtesy on the part of the parents-in-law. Then they are taken back to her husband's house. This event is today called *qiz sorash* (asking for the girl) and entails commensality and gift giving, as in the early 20th century (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 221). This recalls the event of the initial phase of the marriage carrying the same name and in many ways this can be said to be a reenactment of parts of the wedding rituals. At this occasion the husband's side will give a gift of money in compensation to the family of the wife for having taken good care of her and the new child. This resembles the bride wealth (*toyluq*) being given before the wedding. It rarely covers the full expenses of the birth and especially since the introduction of the argument that the Qur'an calls for the husband's side to pay, quarrels do ensure over the issue of the birth expenses. Some are even said to divorce over such quarrels.[86]

Dautcher provides a good example of a custom that stresses the connection of the wedding and the birth of the first child as both being parts of the marriage process. Even though the custom is from Ghulja and I have not heard of it in Kashgar, it illustrates a logic also relevant here.[87] During the wedding celebrations young men of the groom's side will steal two bowls at the bride's parent's place. They are placed upside-down on the bottom on a chest at the groom's place until the bride gives birth to her first child (Dautcher 2009: 120). The childbirth is thus also connected to her natal home and the time in-between wedding and birth is marked as a limited phase. This also poses the question of responsibility for the birth, which is partially attributed to her natal home, from which the bowls were taken.

86 In some places, the *qiz sorash* after a birth is combined with the cradle ceremony (*böshük toyi*; cf. Mirsultan and Sugawara 2007: 128, Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 127). In Kashgar, they are usually held as two distinct events, the latter including predominantly women. The woman's proven fertility was earlier subsequently celebrated in a separate life cycle ritual, the *juwan toyi* held for the woman (cf. Abdrukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 132, Bellér-Hann 2008a: 280-284, Muxter Hoshur 2010: 80-83). It could be held after the first or second time of giving birth. The *juwan toyi* is still practiced in some parts of Keriye, near Hotan (Muxter Hoshur 2012: 80-83)

87 The symbolic language depicted here is very different from what I have seen in Kashgar, but some of the deeper logic and the meaning of the ritual is quite similar to that of Kashgar. In Ghulja the bowls are said to signify the womans breasts which are to nourish the patriline. Neither a 'patriline' nor breasts play any role in wedding rituals in Kashgar. Furthermore, in Kashgar the symbolic stealing is no longer a part of ritual conduct, though it was in early 20th century (cf. Jarring 1979). What is relevant for the Kashgarian context too though, is, firstly, the basic connection of wedding and childbirth as parts of the marriage process and secondly, the responsibility for the new *kélin* reproducing being partially kept at her natal home.

The process of marriage spanning from the first negotiations between the two sides until at least the birth of the first child is a process of creating a new social unit in the household and family (*a'ile, öy*; Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 128, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 104). But it is also a process connecting two families as affines and their social communities and networks. As Bellér-Hann puts it for Kashgar in the early 20th century: "Following the ceremony, the two sides were no longer separate entities competing with each other as wife-givers and wife-takers; through the consolidation of the position of the bride the communal ties between the two sides became solidified" (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 283). In the following chapter we shall look closer at what this logic entails and means today.

III. The Logic of Close Marriage and Affinity

One of the most clear structural elements of marriages in Kashgar is the division of all participants, including the hosts and guests of the various events into 'sides' (*terep*) – the groom's side and the bride's side (*ohul terep, qiz terep*). When going to the bride's side to transfer the bride, the female relatives of the groom's side go to fetch the bride carrying no gifts individually. The groom's mother takes two *ðastixan* on behalf of them all. They are all included in the *oghul terep* (the groom's side) as a giving unit. Prior to this event though, they were on behalf of their respective households and families giving gifts to the groom's mother who received them on behalf of the *oghul terep* — to which they, in this situation, did not belong. This difference shows the two basic types of exchanges taking place within the marriage process: exchanges within one of the two sides and exchanges across the two sides. These two different kinds of exchange relate to and indicate two different modes of creating social relations: one concerned with existing networks and communities (the within-sides relations) and one concerned primarily with the creation of affinal ties (the across-sides relations). Yet, these types of exchange and their according relations are only structurally differentiated. Practically, they often overlap in the sense that the affinal exchanges and relations figure as elements in wider and longer on-going community relations. In close marriages, affinity is an important way to create or reconfirm community. The marriage process stresses difference through the affinal relations following from it. But difference does not primarily part and divide. Difference is here "a positive principle of relationality, meaning both disjunction and connection (Strathern 1995a: 165), rather than a merely negative want of similarity" (Viveiros de Castro 2009: 245). As a matter of fact the differentiation achieved through affinity may lead to a central position within the category of the own relatives as the marriage process proceeds. The exchanges within one side are reminiscent of what Leach called "relations of incorporation," which were for him primarily relations of consanguinity; while the exchanges across the sides constitute what Leach opposed to these as "relations of alliance" (Leach 1961: 20 in Viveiros de Castro 2009: 244). In the case of Kashgar, relations of alliance are ideally turned into relations of incorporation.

Hosts and guests

Whereas the belonging to one or the other side of the wedding is clear in all events, the relation of host and guest within the sides is much more flexible. The roles of guest and host are relative. Almost all guests act as hosts toward other guests during the celebrations. This may seem surprising at first glance, since the concepts of 'making someone a guest' (*méhman qilish*) and its opposite 'being made a guest' (*méhman bolush*) are very clear cut, and belong to the central tools of constituting relationships among both individuals and households. But this structural difference is not dissolved in the wedding celebrations. Each situation entails this set of roles quite clearly. It is just not universally applied to an entire event, but the structural positions may

be taken situationally. They create a different, equally important, structure within each side in the celebrations: In accordance with the relative degree of social closeness to the household holding the wedding or to the person being owner (*ige*) of the particular event, a great majority of the guests at one point or another take over the relative role of host towards an other socially more distant guest. This supports the structure of closeness and distance in a centre-periphery model. Such a model with overlapping, but not identical, positions can also be applied to the amount of gifts (in the form of labour, money, material) contributed by the guests. The siblings of both parents of groom and bride and their spouses are very central as guests as well as hosts and also as gift givers. The same goes for the households of the couple's siblings including the siblings' spouses. Close neighbours (defined more through exchange relations than through spatial proximity, but within the *mehelle*) are central labour sources and act much more as hosts than as guests in most events, but they usually do not contribute very big amounts of money. The groom's friends will help and act as hosts in certain parts of the celebrations, while they are clearly guests or by-standers in most of the other parts. They often contribute relatively big amounts of money to the groom himself. The groom's siblings' friends often take part, but figure on the periphery of both these structures. The spouses of siblings and parent's siblings and even these spouses' siblings are also central in these structures. Such affines have thus become central relatives over the process of earlier marriages.

This brief description of the roles within the marriage process introduces the following part. It is concerned with the structural positions and relations of the actors within the marriage process. After the particulars have been described, we now turn to a more systematic and structural analysis and introduce some analytical elements of the classical approaches to kinship which I supplement with a 'new kinship' or 'relatedness' approach, primarily concerned with local conceptualisations of kinship and relatedness. In the course of this, I enter into analysis of the classical areas of kinship anthropology: marriage rules, gift exchange and terminology. I undogmatically follow Hardenberg in keeping apart the three dimensions of "classification, rules and action," e.g. 1) the empirical patterns of marriages, 2) the explicit rules and preferences of marriage and 3) the kinship terminology (Hardenberg 2009: 64). I keep these areas apart where it seems necessary, yet I do not treat them as closed systems in themselves. I follow the article from which Hardenberg takes his inspiration for identifying the three areas on a more epistemological level. Needham (1973) draws up these areas as levels to be analytically (epistemologically) treated in different ways since they contain different kinds of information. The empirical level conveys information about the regularities of conduct and action, while the rules convey information about local ideology and the terminology about local categories of classification, i.e. local ways of conceptualising the world (cf. Needham 1973: 174, Barnard und Good 1984: 12-14, Berrenberg 2002: 32-33).[88] Though Needham's categories can be criticised and attacked on many levels and should not be treated as closed systems, they do help us deal with the different types of data. This is important when we look closely at the relations between the practices, ideals and logics of marriage in Kashgar.

88 On the distinction of rule and regularity and of models fitting or guiding conduct see Bourdieu (1976: 161-163).

6 Across-Relations

"Nikah toyi bir milletning qa'ide yosunlirini eng merkezlik we eng gewdilik yorutup béridighan medeniyet merikisi hésablanidu. U yalghuzlar ikki yashning qoshulushi emes, belki qanuniy jehettiki mukemmel birlishish, qandashliqni barliqqa keltürüsh, ewlad we ejdadni baghlaydighan, perzent halqisini barliqqa keltürüsh, a'ile hüjeyrisini barliqqa keltürüsh üchün sélinghan ul hésablinidu."

(Marriage counts as a nation's most central, outstanding and shining cultural ceremony. It is not the joining of two single youths, but a lawfully perfect unity that counts as the basis which creates kinship [*qandashliq*, RSR], connects the generations, creates offspring and creates the family cell.)

(Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 213)

Marriage is structurally important

Triloki Nath Madan (1975) wrote about the "structural implications of marriage" among the Pandits of Kashmir in northern India. He thereby added an alliance theoretical perspective to his own descent theoretical approach (Madan 1965). Although alliance theory is no longer in vogue, Madan's example is useful when looking at kinship in Kashgar. Descent theory has been the explicit or implicit model drawn on in much social science work on Central Asia including Xinjiang and the Uyghurs. But in Kashgar, though descent does play a role, marriage is not secondary, but a primary factor in constituting social units and in defining kinship. The possibility of marriage having a structural importance for social organisation is one of the most important lessons taught by structuralism, a lesson which inspired Madan — and which has inspired this thesis. Weddings are prominent social events of almost total Maussian proportions (Mauss 1990: 22) and marriage does have structural implications for the creation and reproduction of social units. Yet it must be noted that marriage is not the only element of structural significance and that it does not play the role it does in classical alliance theory. Instead, some of the analytical insights and concepts of alliance theory can fruitfully be adopted into a newer and more fitting theoretical framework. One of these is the notion of affinity as a locally given and central category (Dumont 1983: 5, Viveiros de Castro 2009: 251-262). I use the term affinity in a different way than the alliance theorists, but still take it equally serious. In doing so, I use the alliance theoretical heritage and embed it within newer theoretical approaches to kinship, which primarily draw on constructivist perspectives as developed out of Schneider, Leach, Needham and other's critiques of classical kinship studies. The combination of newer and more classical approaches has recently met much support (Hardenberg 2009, Kuper 2009, Viveiros de Castro 2009). Such consolidations re-introduce classical analytical categories and tools into the newer approaches. Viveiros de Castro suggests a model that combines structuralist approaches with the more recent constructivist approaches (Viveiros de Castro 2009: 259). He calls this the "Amazonian Model," reflecting his own regional outlook. Though Kashgar is not the Amazon, this theoretical combination seems suitable here as well. Affinity is a central category in daily kinship conduct and marriage and affinity are not secondary factors

complicating an ideal structure of agnatic descent (as in descent theory), but do have structural implications on the level of social units and groups (as in alliance theory). That this practical and structural importance is recognised locally becomes clear from the quote by the Uyghur social scientist Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq above. He not only states the general importance of marriage, but also its basic role in the construction of social units and indeed kinship.

Specific issues related to marriage in Kashgar

Divorce is one of the most frequent issues written about when mentioning kinship among Uyghurs in Kashgar. What Bellér-Hann calls serial monogamy, comprising high divorce rates, non-stigmatisation of divorcees and a high rate of re-marriage of both sexes, has been observed in the region for well over a century (Cable and French 1927, Dunmore 1983, Macartney 1931, Skrine 1926, see Benson 1993, Hoppe 1998: 132, Rudelson 1997: 88, Bellér-Hann 2008a: 260, 282, Wang and Zhou 2010, Memtimin Yaqup 2009). Another phenomenon that has been often described is that of close marriage. This comprises various kinds of cousin marriages, close kin marriages and marriages between other relatives and close neighbours (Rudelson 1997: 108, Krader 1971: 43). The reasons for these themes being so prominent are manifold. Orientalist, colonialist and modernist imaginaries have surely played some role. Both divorce and close marriage offer themselves for the projections of Western moral superiority. This goes for missionaries, political representatives and travellers dispraising the local population as "Orientals" (Högberg 1917, cf. Benson 1993: 227, 230). Furthermore, since the communist takeover both divorce and close marriage have been targeted in campaigns by the Chinese state, making them visible and worthwhile themes for social scientists with interest in the state and in ethnic and power relations. Close kin marriage has been campaigned against following the introduction and reformulation of the communist family law in 1950 and 1980 respectively (Bellér-Hann 2004b: 18, Engels 1984, Hoppe 1998: 139). Divorce has been the target of recent government campaigns and has come to be seen as a sign of moral digression; also by some Uyghurs (Memtimin Yaqup 2009). Yet these two themes are not merely orientalist, colonialist and modernist imaginaries. They are also themes being debated locally as issues of moral and religious significance. They are, and have for a long time been, important parts of the kinship practice in Kashgar, in which they are, as shall be shown below, interconnected and provide important conditions of possibility for each other. This might be a part of the explanation for their apparent resilience against modernist and religious condemnations.

Before I enter into the analysis of marriage related issues in Kashgar, I need to explain a terminological distinction that is central for the following considerations, the distinction between 'kin' and 'relatives'. Drawing on Dumont's analytical distinction between 'kin' and 'affines,' I use the term 'relatives' for all that are locally distinguished as such in a non-metaphorical way including affines and other non-genealogical relatives (Dumont 1983: 21, 74). The local term '*tughqan*' is the most common way of naming this category, but other terms exist (such as *uruq-tughqan, qanداsh, qérinداsh …;* see below). Within 'relatives' I reserve the term 'kin' for genealogical or consanguinal relatives, that is relatives imagined over descent, filiation and

"blood," excluding links of affinity and other non-genealogical means of closeness. This notion of kinship (kin) also exists in Kashgar, though it plays a much lesser role than the former notion (relatives). Interestingly, the notion of 'kin' is designated by the same linguistic categories (*tughqan, uruq-tughqan, qanداsh, qérinداsh*) as the notion of 'relatives,' depending on the discourse and situation in which these terms are used. To make it short: affines and close neighbours are included when I write of "relatives," while they are not when I write of "kin".

6.1 Close marriage

"Scots abroad, Berber villagers, Pakistani and east European Jewish migrants, Tswana aristocrats, and Victorian elites marry cousins for different reasons, but there are clearly common threads in the marriage strategies in all the cases. However the analysis of marriage choices is not enough. Marriage preferences have structural consequences."
(Kuper 2008: 732)

Cousin marriage and other close marriage have received some attention in studies on Xinjiang. It has been targeted by government campaigns (Bellér-Hann 2004b:18, Hoppe 1998: 139) and maybe more importantly in biologistic narratives about inbreeding promoted by the modernization programs in China, the Soviet Union and Turkey. Through alliance theory, the structural implications of marriage had become a central part of kinship theory, but during this time fieldwork in Xinjiang was not open to most foreign researchers. By the time China under Deng entered into an era of policies that allowed some fieldwork in the region, the anthropological concern with cousin marriage had been reduced to just a standard indicator by the heavy criticisms of kinship theory that led to the so called "demise of kinship" (Stone 2004: 241). Thus Xinjiang, like Soviet Central Asia, was never made the object of any broad scale explicit alliance theoretical work, but the issue is only mentioned in passing. There are several mentions of cousin marriage and other close marriage in the literature on Xinjiang, but none of them discuss the point at length within a kinship theoretical framework.[89] Rudelson mentions maternal cross cousin marriage (marriage between MBD-FZS) and maternal parallel cousin marriage (MZD-MZS) as ideal, but little practiced marriages in Turpan and states that "patrilateral parallel cousin marriage is said to be practiced in southern oases like Khotan and Kashgar" (Rudelson 1997: 108). He further mentions that the marriage between two brothers and two sisters is not uncommon (Ibid.: 108). Hoppe mentions a preference for cousins (*birnewre*) in Turpan and observes marriages with different types of first cousins (MZD, MyZD, FyBD, MeBD). He states that no categorical distinction is made between these (Hoppe 1998: 135-137). A similar point is made by Bellér-Hann for Kashgar in pre-socialist times, where she observes "endogamous tendencies" including "close kin and cousin marriages" (Bellér-Hann 2004b:18). According to Enwer Semet Qorghan, "marriage between very close relatives" (*intayin yéqin*

89 Cf. Rudelson 1997: 107-109, Bellér-Hann 2008a: 256-58, Bellér-Hann 2007: 141, Hoppe 1998: 45, 59, 135-137, Bellér-Hann 2004b: 18.

tughqan ara [nikahlinish]) is known in the history of the Uyghurs and close marriages are still widely practiced today: "Among contemporary Uyghurs marriage is attempted to being established among as close relatives as possible" (*hazirqi zaman uyghurlirida imkan qeder yéqinraq tughqanlar ara nikah berpa qilishqa urunush […]*; 2007: 106). He states that Uyghurs prefer to marry within their own extended family (*jemet*). *Jemet* can also mean clan or patrilineal descent group, as existent and relevant in Qumul, but not in Kashgar. Yet, in this case Enwer Semet Qorghan (himself being from Peyzawat and living in Ürümchi) exemplifies what he means by *jemet* drawing on clearly cognatic rather than agnatic categories: "*newriler, ewriler, chewriler … we ularning baliri otturisidiki nikah*" (marriage between grand-children, great-grand-cildren, great-great-grand-children and their children; 2007: 106-107). Bellér-Hann agrees with Hoppe's observation that different cousin marriages are not categorically distinguished, but while Hoppe stresses the special role of first cousins, Bellér-Hann does not see this distinction as relevant to marriage choices. She states that in Kashgar "the combination of propinquity and kinship generated the trust which underpinned the desirability of this type of marriage" (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 256). She thus suggests grouping cousin marriages and kin marriages within a larger category of marriages to relatives and other close social relations. This likens it categorically to the notion of "vicinity marriage," which Rudelson cites from Krader (Rudelson 1997: 108, Krader 1971: 143). According to Krader, vicinity marriage means both genealogical and spatial closeness. This tendency to local endogamy is stressed by several sources, both on the level of oasis (Hoppe 1998: 139, Rudelson 1997: 86, 108) and on village level (Wang 2004: 119). Enwer Semet Qorghan remarks that while the principle of local endogamy remains, the increased mobility has extended the radius of it (2007: 114-115). He also mentions endogamy within certain professions, e.g. barbers (2007: 118). This clearly shows a tendency to close marriage (or to marriage within the group, i.e. endogamy) that goes beyond a genealogical imagination. Also both religious and ethnic endogamy are often mentioned.[90] It may not be so surprising, that Hoppe working in Turpan insists on first cousins being preferred, while Bellér-Hann working in Kashgar rejects this particular preference as the eastern oases seem much more structured by descent than those in southwestern Xinjiang. Therefore, the position of cousins is more clear and important in the east while in Kashgar, as Bellér-Hann describes and I have observed, usually no clear terminological distinction is made between cousins and other close relatives of the same generation. Alessandra Cappelletti has observed that people in Kashgar preferably marry within their own local communities while in Turpan genealogical ties are more important for the choice of marriage partners (Cappelletti 2012, personal communication). Even in contemporary Kashgar, the obligations to give are often more pronounced between siblings of one parental home than between other relatives, the sibling group being a central social unit. This prominently includes the request for a daughter-in-law, whereby the couple would then be first cousins. My fieldwork has shown that within some families in Kashgar first cousin marriage is much practiced. These are well-off families of particularly high status that many trace back to their ancestors before the communist take-over in 1949. But not even in these families any terminological or other categorical distinction is made between first cousin marriages and other

90 Cf. Hoppe 1998: 139, Fuller and Lipman 2004: 321, Bellér-Hann 2004a: 183, Finley-Smith 2007: 31, Kaltman 2009: 68-73, Newby 1998: 296

close marriages, which are practiced as well. Closeness is important in marriage strategies, but this closeness is not exclusively genealogically defined.

Empirical overview

Of the more than sixty marriages I encountered or had the chance to enquire about during my stay in Kashgar, well over forty were described to me as close marriages of one sort or the other. Explicit kin marriages made up about half of these and I know of eight first cousin marriages amongst these. Only one of them was between brothers' children. Marriages between sisters' children are the most common. The state prohibitions against kin marriage and biologistic narratives of "inbreeding" sometimes make it a difficult theme to ask about the kinship relations of spouses. In other cases, at weddings where I did not have the chance to speak to the protagonists at length (or sometimes at all), their kinship connection was stated (*tughqan*), but no-one knew exactly how they were related. Also, marriages within one *mehelle* or village are very common. This is especially true for some of the still existing old neighbourhoods within Kashgar city and for villages in Beshkérem and Atush, but also for the relatively new *mehelle* I lived in. Since its founding in the 1970s, several marriages had taken place within the neighbourhood. Some of the villages in Beshkérim are said to mainly exchange wives among themselves. They do not like to let their women marry far away and do not care to take brides from elsewhere. The same is said of the people from Üstün Atush, especially in the past and also the Abdal from Xanériq near Yéngisheher are said to be completely endogamous (Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 115). In Kashgar city itself such restrictions are not practiced. Quite contrarily, some city *mehelle* uphold quasi-alliance relations with villages of the surrounding area whose women marry into the city. This is to them marrying up (hypergamic), since the 'city' (*ɔheher*) as a concept is discursively elevated over the countryside (*yeza, ɔehra;* cf. Abdukérim Abliz 2011: 21). These regular intermarriages between local communities are no classical alliance relations. They are not prescribed by terminology or marriage rules. They basically employ the connections existent in the first place. One inter-village marriage opens up a channel for subsequent marriages between these villages. Often the women married into another village will actively push for such connections to be joined by relatives. Besides links of kinship and locality, both friendship and apprenticeship are mentioned as possible links facilitating marriages. A tailor's shop close to my neighbourhood was the locus of several marriages mediated by the couple running the shop. I also heard of religious teachers being popular mediators of marriages.

Some households conduct several marriages with each other. In one example, a young man married the daughter of his father's new wife. The former marriage had been set as a pre-condition for the latter, by the woman worried about getting her daughter married. Other marriages likewise practiced in the region lead to the two household becoming scissor affines (*qaycha quda*; Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 232). To become scissor affines the two households each have to "give" the other a daughter-in-law (*kélin*). These two marriages usually do not take place at the same time, and although the name indicates that this practice constitutes a unit of two connected pieces (a pair of scissors) the two marriages are to be seen as separate events, of which the second only takes place if the first one created good and stable affine relations between

the households.[91] Depending on the demographical situation of the households, a second marriage may also be conducted in the same direction as the first, creating the pattern of two sisters marrying two brothers (cf. Rudelson 1997: 108).

The tendency to marry within ones own category is also visible as class or status endogamy, i.e. isogamy (cf. Hoppe 1998: 139, cf. Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 117). Though hypergamic ideals are sometimes uttered and seem to have been more pronounced in the past (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 221, 236) and both hypergamic and hypogamic marriages do take place (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 249, fn. 126), there still is a general strive towards isogamy. This is also explicitly formulated as ideal by local authors.[92] This well reflects the cognatic bias of Uyghur kinship, since cognatic rendering of status and 'roots' (*tégi*) matches Dumont's definition of isogamy as a system in which the status of the mother has an influence on the status of the child, whereas only the father's status counts in systems of hypergamy (Dumont 1983).[93] Enwer Semet Qorghan summarises the more general tendency for like to marry like as follows: "*Derije, tebiqe, qarishigha we emiliyitige asasen 'gül güli bilen, xil xili bilen' dégendek, layiq tallashta a'ililerning omumiy ehwalining mas kélishini ümid qilidu*" (at the matchmaking one hopes for a good fit of the two families' basic standing, class, convictions, and economic circumstances; as they say: " the pattern with its patterns, the type with its types"; 2007: 119).

Rules and preference

In contemporary Kashgar, no preference is expressed for any particular cousin, though some express preference for cousins in general and more often for close kin marriage with no further genealogical specification. No categorical distinction is made between first cousins and others regarded as close relatives. This may include neighbours and various non-genealogical relatives. Preference for close marriage is often expressed and sometimes also cousin marriage is explicitly mentioned, though never any especially preferred type of cousin. I see an expressed preference for cousins and for relatives (*tughqan*) as an idiom for the general practice of close marriage, including various different forms of closeness. The inherent logic of preference for closeness (and the according practice) is common to all of these. For the case of Kashgar other forms of closeness are important. They are often defined through exchange, trust and mutual dependency (see below). No positive marriage rules exist beyond the expressed preferences for closeness and occasionally for first cousins as mentioned above. Negative marriage rules, prohibitions of certain partners are foremost taken directly or indirectly from the Islamic scripts, especially the Hanafi legal texts (see Bellér-Hann 2008a: 219, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 108-112). Furthermore, the influence of Chinese state laws is to be felt on several levels. The way close marriages are talked and written about is certainly coloured by the state restrictions on kin

91 Anjum Alvi describes a similar practice for the Punjab as well (Alvi 2007: 667). Here the second marriage of the scissor takes place in the following generation. The repetitions follow a certain pattern connected to the close connection between brother and sister. The sister, by giving a daughter to her brother's son, in a way returns to her brother's unit, thus being at the same time cognate (Z, FZ) and affine (SWM, WM) to this unit. Therein Alvi sees the ambivalent merging of cognate and affine within this kind of marriage.
92 Abdurehim Hebbibula 1993: 247, Zaili Memettursun 2012: 6, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 119.
93 This argument takes a patrilineal or agnatic inheritance of group affiliation and status for given. In the contrary case of a matrilineal or uterine inheritance, the mother's status would accordingly be of sole importance in hypogamy, while isogamy once again would attribute importance to both.

marriage and new strategies have evolved to evade them. At the same time, it seems that some of the state laws and logics have been adopted in some circles.

Islamic rules

Negative marriage rules are hardly mentioned at all in common discourse in Kashgar. Religiously learned people may upon request list several lineal relatives that are prohibited as marriage partners according to the Qur'an, but as Enwer Semet Qorghan states, these limitations seem very "natural" to Uyghurs (*nahayity tebi'iy cheklimilerdek tuyghu béridu*; 2007: 109). This hints to the fact that the restrictions are well integrated into general social imaginaries, but also to the fact that they are not in conflict with any other tendencies in marriage custom or are therefore worth being discussed as explicit rules. Enwer Semet Qorghan speculates that the Uyghurs had clan or tribe (*uruq*) exogamy, which with the demise of tribes and clans as important social units changed into kin (*qandash*) exogamy more than a thousand years ago (2007: 108-109). With Islam then came the explicit prohibition to marry a certain range of kin. Though this is not explicitly mentioned it is implied that rather than creating additional restrictions, the Islamic rules made kin marriageable that had not been so before (such as paternal parallel cousins). According to Enwer Semet Qorghan, after Islam became established in the region, the persons listed below were deemed '*muherremat*' (in standard Uyghur *mehrem*), that is, prohibited from marriage (2007: 108-111). His summary corresponds to the restrictions for marriage listed in the Hedaya, one of the central Hanafi law texts (Hamilton 1957/1870). One important difference is that Enwer Semet Qorghan does not only portray the male ego perspective, which the Hedaya keeps. He also lists the prohibitions for women, which he in a strive for more generality and gender balance seems to have derived from those for men. A male ego is prohibited to marry the following women:

1) Women counting as 'blood relatives' (*qandash tughqan*) including the mother, mother's mother, father's mother, daughter, son's daughter, daughter's daughter, younger sister, elder sister, fathers sisters, mother's sisters, brother's daughter and sister's daughter (M, MM, FM, D, SD, DD, yZ, eZ, FZ, MZ, BD, ZD).

2) Milk siblings (*emildash*), i.e. children who have been breastfed by the same woman (cf. Bellér-Hann 2008a: 219, Bellér-Hann 1999: 126). Here, Enwer Semet Qorghan explicitly mentions the rule that cousins breast fed by the same grandmother may not marry, for which the Uyghur term "*moma talaq*" has been coined. This is not explicitly stated in the Hedaya (though it may be in other law texts) and suggests that cousin marriage was widespread within the social context where this rule was formulated.

3) Blood relatives through marriage (*qudilishish arqiliq peyda bolghan qandash*), including the father's wife (stepmother, *ögey ana*), the wife's mother, the wife's daughter by another man and the son's wife (FW, WM, WD, SW). The expression *qudilishish arqiliq peyda bolghan qandash* (blood relatives made through marriage) is interesting, since it seemingly poses a contradiction for anthropological theory and Western conceptualisations of kinship alike: both define blood relatives (consanguines) through descent and filiation, excluding links through marriage. This is even the way the word *qandash* (blood relative, lit. ones who share blood) may be explicitly defined within some Uyghur discourses. Yet, it is not the way it is usually used in practice, or at

least not the most common use. As this example shows, *qanداش* is often used as meaning relative in a sense that may imply more closeness than the terms *tuغhqan* or *uruq-tuغhqan*, but it does not imply the genealogicality of 'kin' or 'consanguine'.

Enwer Semet Qorghan adds another comment that throws light on the restricted relevance of genealogy. He comments the prohibition to marry ones wife's mother, explaining that this is because she has now become the husband's mother too. This is not mentioned in the Hedaya either, but corresponds well to the rites described above, in which both groom and bride call their parents-in-law "mother" (*ana, apa*) and "father" (*دادا, ata*). These terms are used during their entire relationship, often even as a term of reference and not just as a term of address (see below). This points to the ideal of making affines close relatives as shall be discussed below. According to Enwer Semets Qorghan's derivation from the Hedaya, women are prohibited from marrying their father, grandfathers, paternal and maternal uncles and their sibling's sons as well as milk siblings (2007: 109). The author then writes that it is accepted for a man to take a Muslim wife from another ethnic group, but not for an Uyghur woman to be given in marriage to a non-Uyghur Muslim (2007: 114). Several local versions of this rule exist. The most lenient amongst them states that a Muslim, be this a man or a woman, may marry any other adherent of the three Abrahamic religions, while many state a strict religious endogamy (Fuller and Lipman 2004: 321, 332). Often ethnicity and religion are connected in this discourse. This reflects the close intertwinement of religious and ethnic Uyghur identity vis á vis an areligious Han-Chinese other.[94] Generally Uyghur parents show more leniency towards their sons than towards their daughters in these matters (cf. Zang 2008: 623).

State law

Marriage practice is no new concern to state laws in Xinjiang. The Manchu administration of Qing China forbade ethnic intermarriage throughout the 19th century (Newby 1998: 296). After the communist take-over new marriage laws attacked the institution of kin marriage all over China. In 1950, a family law was introduced which fixed the minimum age of marriage to 18 for women and 20 for men, prohibited marriage by coercion, and prohibited marriage with patrilineal relatives. This corresponded to the Han-Chinese definition of kin as those belonging to the patriline, sharing one family name. The much practiced *biao*-sibling (表),[95] marriage between cousins through women (marriage between the children of sisters or of a brother and a sister) were still permitted. This changed when the law was revised in 1980. In light of a more biologistic view on descent all other consanguine relatives up until the third generation including *biao* cousins were included into the prohibition (Engel 1984: 958, Chow 1992: 199-201, Bellér-Hann 2004a: 190). This change in the definition of kinship that now also covered the non-patrilineal relatives as 'kin' and consequently prohibited marriage between them did not only take place within government circles. Modernist and biologistic narratives of "inbreeding" are today wide spread especially among educated Uyghurs. They have been stressed in government

94 The category of 'Han-Chinese' is by Uyghurs in Kashgar generally connected to the atheism promoted by the party and the state. Even those that are Buddhists are not recognised as 'having a religion' since Buddhism is by many Uyghurs not seen as a real religion.
95 The so called *biao* relatives are genealogical kin linked over minimum one woman, i.e. not belonging to the patriline or clan. *Biaomei* (*biao*-sister) is today a common way of addressing friends amongst Chinese youths.

campaigns against kin marriage (Bellér-Hann 2004b: 18, Hoppe 1998: 139), and have also entered the local discourses from places like the Soviet Union, post-Soviet Central Asia and Turkey, all sources of modernist thinking. This discursive devaluation of kin marriage and the law itself certainly has an influence on how close marriage is talked about (Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 162, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 109). During my fieldwork, I encountered several incidents that exemplify this influence: In a local, private family pedigree the author repeatedly stressed that no cousin marriages had taken place within his family. Interestingly, I know of several cousin marriages among this man's grandchildren, though they have taken place after the pedigree was written and the old man had deceased. The fact that he further explicitly states that the family has always supported the party and the government, has never done wrong and will ("so God will," *xudayim buyrusa*) continue to do so in the future, makes it probable that these sentences were inspired by government narratives and possibly by personal caution. Similarly, some local ethnographic descriptions seem to translate the government laws into "local custom." Abdukérim Raxman et al. (2008: 110) write that marriage is prohibited within the category of direct kin (*biwaste qérindashliq katégoriyisi*), which stretches over nine generations. I have heard this nowhere else and it certainly does not apply to the view of anyone in Kashgar that I have talked to about this. Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq (2009a: 214-215) also warns against the marriage of *newre* and *chewre* (lit. grandchildren and great-grandchildren, by which he means cousins, i.e. grandchildren and great-grandchilren of one person). Both these examples seem to reflect government narratives rather than local custom. This is no surprise in official publications but calls the reader to caution.

Fig. 33 The entrance of the Kashgar City Marriage Registration Service Centre on Semen Road. The left poster presents the marriage stipulations in Chinese, the right poster in Uyghur in 14 points. (Photos by the author 2011)

Rudelson mentions the prohibition of FBD-marriage (marriage between children of two

brothers) in Turpan. According to Rudelson: "The prohibition against patrilateral parallel cousin marriage, between the children of two brothers, further aids the formation of exogamous family networks. A marriage between such cousins, although permitted by Islamic law, is considered by Turpan Uyghurs to be a form of incest because the cousins belong to the same bloodline" (1997: 109). I have heard a similar argument from a woman from Qumul. In the eastern oases like Qumul and Turpan more importance is given to patrilineality. Here, exogamous family networks may actually exist, but as we have seen above, they do not in Kashgar. Yet, here too I have been occasionally confronted with the argument that the children of brothers should not marry, since they are of the same blood and their children could be ill or handicapped. I have even been told that this is the teaching of the Qur'an, which seem almost absurd considering the background of preferential or much practiced FBD-marriage in so many Islamic contexts (cf. Holy 1989, Pfeffer 1996). To my understanding though, these arguments and explanations are the results of a line of discursive connections. Firstly the narrative corresponds to the marriage rules of Kazakhs and Kyrgyz who are patrilineal and exogamous. They have been in contact with the endogamous oasis dwellers of Kashgar for centuries. Possibly also the more patrilineally oriented oasis milieus in Xinjiang (such as Turpan and Qumul) have had an influence. Secondly, the rules also correspond to the Chinese Marriage Law of 1950. Thirdly, it corresponds to an agnatic reading of the 'in-breeding' narrative. It is a wide spread narrative that blood is inherited from the father. Though kinship more generally, and even *qandashliq* (close kinship, lit. shared blood) are not understood primarily agnatically, the rendering of blood is. This is connected to the agnatic and patrilineal concepts in the Qur'an, but is also known from both other Central Asian people and the Han-Chinese. Thus the narratives on 'in-breeding,' which are argued with reference to biology and to blood, are understood agnatically. They are understood as saying that a man and a woman of the same blood should not have children. The argument in a local reading is not concerned with a man and a woman who are defined as relatives, which would be understood consanguinally and which as a general category goes far beyond genealogy. The 'in-breeding' narrative is specifically concerned with biology, which is understood as blood, which is again understood agnatically. Therefore, in this understanding, brother's children are not allowed to marry while the marriage between sister's children or the children of a brother and a sister pose no problem. The reference to the Qur'an as legitimising such a rule may either be grounded in the fact that the Qur'an is often referred to as a legitimation for almost anything which is deemed morally good, acting as an idiom for community consensus, or it may be caused by the notion of agnatic inheritance of blood being connected discursively to the Qur'an. There is a possibility that even Rudelson's informant's view that FBD-marriage is prohibited to Uyghurs in Turpan derives from such discursive interconnections of biologistic 'in-breeding' narratives, agnatic understanding of blood, and the 1950 marriage law and its various campaigns. This is at least made probable by the fact that Hoppe identifies FBD-marriages in Turpan too. A young woman from Cheriye near Hotan told me that whereas people had for a long time argued against cousin marriage on a modernistic basis following government narratives, now more and more argued on the basis of a more informed Qur'anic view that it was only a problem for cousins to marry, if they had been breast fed by the same woman, e.g. their grandmother.

Layiq tallash

A first conclusion to summarise all this information regarding close marriage is that that social closeness is strived for and preferred in marriage, but that no explicit rules govern what kind of closeness this should be. The marriages of Uyghur families in Kashgar cannot be neatly captured in a diagram. No elementary structures and no prescription (Lévi-Strauss 1969/1949, Needham 1973) can be found here, neither do any clear marriage prohibitions structure the choice of a spouse. And yet, the marriage choice has consequences for the social organisation. What Pitt-Rivers and Berrenberg stress for the Mediterranean area and Pashtu Afghanistan counts in Kashgar as well: values and strategies must be considered (Pitt-Pivers 1977: 73, Berrenberg 2002: 76), not least the value of affinity. This is captured well in the local concept of *layiq tallash* (choosing suitingly).[96] Choosing a suitable spouse is connected to a range of reasons, values and concepts, and the local understanding of affinity is of central importance. *Layiq tallash* stresses the controlled conscious choice of a spouse and not least the participation of the parents and wider family members in the decision making process. It has a conceptual counter-piece in the expression *nikah ghayib* (unforeseen marriage; cf. Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 115). The expression derives from a saying stating that marriage comes in unexpected ways and cannot be planned or controlled (*nikah ghayibdin kelidu*). This underlines the importance of the topic and the possible frustration at the lack of control, illustrated well in a tale told in Turpan and printed in a collection of stories in Ürümchi. In this tale the king tries to evade the fate of his son marrying a poor widow's daughter by killing poor widows (Ismayil Zunun 2002: 46-53).

According to Abdurehim Hebibulla, Uyghurs when choosing a spouse for themselves or their children, tend to first search within their own *mehelle*, neighbours, friends and relatives (*el-mehelle, qolum-qoshna, yaru-burader, uruq-tughqanlar*). These are all listed together and thus again display no clear hierarchy amongst the different ways of creating closeness. After not finding anyone within this group they would look into the surrounding villages (*yat yéza-qishlaqlar*; Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 237). The most common reason given for close marriage is that one wants to know the affines well beforehand, so that one may be sure that they are good and morally acceptable people themselves and have given their daughter or son a good and moral education. Asked or unasked, this was the central reason given by almost all to whom I talked about this topic in Kashgar. As I was told several times: *ata-bowa quda-baja bolsa ongay* (it is easy when relatives become affines). But, as the quote above shows, here '*ata-bowa*' (lit. father-grandfather, those of the same grandfathers e.g. genealogical relatives) figures as the idiom for a more general closeness. "*Ana körüp qiz al, qirgha körüp boz al*" (look at the mother before you take a wife, look at the field edges before choosing your land), is cited by Abdurehim Hebibulla (2000: 237, Zaili Memettursun 2012: 4) and I have heard the proverb in several versions often referring to the father instead of the mother. It points to the importance of knowing the family into which one marries. For a marriage within existing relations, the term "*atisi körgen*" (has seen the father) is often employed. This is a concern for the parental generation, but also for the couple itself, who are not just concerned with their own relations to their in-laws, but also very much with the relations of their parents — the new *quda* (the children's respective parents-in-law), as seen in

96 Cf. Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 105, 115, Zaili Memettursun 2012: 4, Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 237-240.

the example of Abdulla and Meryem mentioned above. Sheripe, a young Kashgari woman, argued that she planned to go abroad to study and thus wanted her parents to have their *quda* (affines) near by to celebrate the religious festivals (*héyit*) with and to be close to. This was one reason for her to have accepted the marriage proposal of a young man from her own village since his parents knew her parents well. As a further reason some argue that especially mothers are reluctant to give their daughter too far away. Married daughters still remain a part of their natal family. This includes personal sentiments, but also rights and duties of the daughter. Sheripe also saw as a big advantage of her spatially close marriage that it offered the possibility for both her and her husband to return to their home village and be close to their parents, while staying together.

Endogamic tendencies

Sheripe's reason for close marriage was that it enabled her to stay close to her parents. Others mentioned that it was important to know the affines. A related argument of more structural consequence is that close marriages strengthen the community.[97] We now move up one level of abstraction to a less subjective view, but the argument corresponds to the reasons given above; it just focuses on a larger social unit. Enwer Semet Qorghan states explicitly that "the group of close relatives (*jemet*) is stabilised through close marriages."[98] He calls this unit *jemet*, while Rudelson calls it 'family,' 'kin' and 'lineage' respectively (1998: 109) and Jarring calls it 'family' (1975: 12, 35). As I shall show below, whatever it is called, it covers an understanding of closeness formulated in the idiom of kinship and defined over the most intimate relations of trust and dependency — mutuality of being (Sahlins 2013: 19, 62). Rudelson writes that close marriages "consolidate the kin upon which a daughter's kin may call for assistance" (1997: 109). This underlines the constructive potential of close marriages, the possibility to consolidate and reconfirm the existing social relations. Reluctance to let especially women marry out of the family and village is often expressed and it is linked to this consolidating potential of marriage (cf. Rudelson 1997: 108, Hoppe 1998: 137). This has to do with the importance of affinity for creating and confirming close kinship, which is discussed below. Affinal relations outside the local or kin community are even sometimes met with jealousy within the group. As we have seen above, the consent and cooperation of a wide range of relatives, neighbours and other close relations is necessary for the realisation of a marriage and a wedding. This makes the potential jealousy of one's closest relations a complicated and damaging matter since a distant marriage negates the existing social ties and thus endangers them. Marrying outside the established social relations of the own family thus weakens the community while marrying inside consolidates and strengthens it. Another argument for close marriage, structurally similar to that of strengthening one's own group is that the close marriage keeps the wealth within the family: "patrilateral parallel cousin marriage is said to be practiced in southern oases like Khotan and Kashgar when a grandfather desires to keep his wealth within his lineage" (Rudelson 1997: 109).[99] I heard this reason a few times, often in connection with a wish to "keep the family together." In Hoppe's

97 Cf. Barth 1954, Murphy and Kasdan 1959, Berrenberg 2002: 42-44.
98 "*Hazirqi zaman uyghurlirida imkan qeder yéqinraq tughqanlar ara nikah berpa qilishqa urunush, shu arqiliq jemetni mustehkemleshke tirishish ehwalliri xélila ewj alghan*" (Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 106).
99 Cf. Hoppe 1998: 135, Bellér-Hann 2008a: 237.

rendering, unwillingness to give a daughter to strangers and unwillingness to give wealth out of the family in connection with the marriage are mentioned together and indeed they very much seem to be related. The crucial point connecting them is that marriage and the exchange of money, objects and persons it entails is not done primarily for the sake of the exchange itself, but for the sake of the social relations created through it. To give persons or wealth too far away seems not worth the effort, since the potential for harvesting its fruits in the form of stable, dependable, longterm social relations of mutual obligation (relatives) is just not high enough and the risk of failure too high. Further, as described above, distant marriage also jeopardises the existing close relations in need of constant re-presentation, for which marriage is a central tool.

Both of these arguments have a similar premise that problematises the notion of close marriage. Both arguments are concerned with marriage 'within' a certain group. This is analytically very different from the understanding of closeness, which is relative and does not carry any delimitation or group border over which a within-without dichotomy could be built. This can be better understood considering two points. The first is that 'within' acts as an idiom for closeness in these discourses: those families with whom a 'mutuality of being' is created based on exchange, spatiality and use of terms are from the subjective perspective experienced as a 'within' (an egocentric unit), though from an outside view, no clear borders and hence no unit may be identified (no socio-centric unit). Secondly, and more importantly, recognising the consolidating potential of close marriage, we must give up the notion of an 'in-group' that exists beforehand. We must give up the notion of the unit within which the marriage takes place being a pre-existing and independent unit that can be defined irrespective of the marriage in question. If we recognise the structural importance of marriage in the creation of social units, the 'within' often only becomes a 'within' through the long process of individual marriages such as described above. The pre-existing 'closeness' of the relation describes the recognised potential for creating such relations through the marriage process that are experienced as and may be described as 'within'. Thus the preference for closeness on the one side, and marrying 'within' the group on the other side describe the same phenomenon from two different perspectives: The preference for closeness focusses on the individual household or family and sees it from the perspective of *layiq tallash*, i.e. from the choosing process before the marriage. On the other hand, the preference for within-marriages focuses on the wider social unit created through the marriage from the perspective of a well-advanced marriage process. Looking at the same ideal process of affines becoming central relatives, the 'closeness'-perspective is concentrated in the before hand potential, while the 'within'-perspective already anticipates the further developments and retrospectively formulates the closeness as 'within'. Marriage and affinity thus have the potential of creating social units (definitions of 'within') out of the potential given in 'closeness'.

6.2 Affinity

Genealogical conceptualisations of kinship have dominated both the Western imaginations of

kinship and early anthropological theories. Affinity and marriage were secondary to descent and filiation. The genealogical model was the main tool of kinship studies until the advent of Lévi-Strauss' alliance theory. Genealogical imaginings have also been the implicit or explicit basis of most approaches to kinship and social structure in Central Asia.[100] Dautcher makes explicit a genealogical model that figures implicit in most instances in the literature where Uyghur kinship is mentioned. In Ili (Ghulja), according to Dautcher (2009: 64) *quda* (affines) are not seen as a part of *tughqan* (relatives) but as a category of secondary importance similar to neighbours or friends. Dautcher quotes a saying concerning relatives and non-relatives in Ili (Ghulja), stating that "Meat and fat are one kin, it does no good to brown the onion" (Dautcher 2009: 64). According to Dautcher's interpretation this signifies the givenness of kin. They "remain kin no matter how poorly they treat each other, while a non-relative will never be regarded a relation no matter how much he tries to act like one" (Dautcher 2009: 65). Subsequently, Dautcher provides an example of an adopted child ("an onion") being abused because he does not really (i.e. genealogically) belong to the family. This interpretation may have to do with the social context of Ili (and other parts of northern and eastern as opposed to southwestern Xinjiang), yet I also detect an analytical bias in it. Though it is not made explicit, Dautcher's only criterion for defining kin here are those of descent and filiation. Below I will suggest a different reading of this proverb for the context of Kashgar, in which the relations of kinship are not defined solely through descent.

The genealogical bias is problematic from a theoretical perspective and is especially misleading when considering the local ethnography in Kashgar. It not only reproduces the outdated theoretical approaches of descent theory, it simply does not apply well to the empirical social setting. Since genealogy is but an idiom of speech: tribes or lineages as units in local social structure do not exist and not just marriage but also relations of affinity are eminently important. In Kashgar, in contrast to Dautcher's example, affines are almost always seen as relatives. They are often even some of the most important relatives, central to the economic and ritual undertakings of a household. Households connected through affinity make up important social units. The discourses from which the agnatic bias emanates in Kashgar are those closely associated with ethno-nationalism and with Islam (especially regarding references to stories and narratives in the Qur'an). These are not unimportant, but can be said to be particular sub-discourses in the sense that they are not central but figure on the fringes of the working of the social organisation, including transfer of wealth, mutual support, and spatial and bodily practices.

The analytical adaption of 'affinity' as a category

In a strict sense according to alliance theory and as defined by Dumont, 'affinity' does not exist in Kashgar and the term 'in-laws' denotes relatives through marriage more suitably (Dumont 1983: vii, 32). To Dumont and other alliance theorists, the use of affinity as a category implies a structural difference between consanguines (kin) and affines. These two categories figure as oppositions and divide the social world of any given group into marriageable

100 Cf. Krader 1955, 1975, Bacon 1958, Hudson 1938, Megoran 2005, Gulette 2010, Collins 2005, Schatz 2000.

(classificatory affines) and non-marriageable (classificatory consanguine kin) relatives. This division between kin and affines is kept across generations. It divides socio-centric categories (mostly agnatic groups) not egocentric ones. Egocentric categories are defined from the perspective of each individual person or household (such as any ego's 'relatives'), while socio-centric categories do not depend on any particular point of view, but are definable more generally (such as a named tribe, club members or village inhabitants). This kind of categorical division does not exist in Kashgar, as close marriage prominently includes marriages to persons categorised as consanguinal kin and as no kin-based socio centric groups exist. Cognates and affines are not structurally pre-defined as mutually exclusive categories clearly identifiable with socio-centric groups as classical alliance theory would have it. Alliance theory clearly does not apply in Kashgar – no elementary structures exist. Yet, the concept of affinity still has legitimacy and may be analytically applied, since it stresses the structural and primary importance of relatives through marriage. What I want to argue when I use 'affines' as a term and category and do not merely talk about 'in-laws,' is that affinity is a distinct local concept invested with meaning and constructive effort. The affines are imagined as a distinct and socially important category loaded with value and narratives and they are central, not just to the generation of the couple and their children, but also to the parents. I therefore adopt affinity as an analytical category, despite the lack of ethnographic preconditions to analyse the material in reference to alliance theory. The concept must accordingly be adopted into a new theoretical framework, chosen and developed out of the close reading of the ethnographic material here considered. This framework is closer to the new kinship studies than to alliance theory. In the course of this adaptation, the concept of 'affinity' loses its primary criterion: affinity in Kashgar is not a lasting relation between (or more precisely, defining) distinct exogamous trans-generational categories crystallizing into exchange units. Instead, criterion secondary within the original structuralist framework here become defining: Affinity in Kashgar is a cultural concept carrying distinct emotional significance to the actors and is the pivot and main concern of several social institutions (see Dumont 1983: vii, 76-78). Furthermore, affinity has a structural position within the construction of close kinship.

Affines are relatives

Three terms are used to name different categories of affines in Kashgar. 1) The prefix *qéyin-* … is added on to the terms that are also used for close consanguineal kin to denote the own in-laws (the close relatives of one's spouse or the spouse of a close relative). This functions much like the English '…-in-law'. 2) *Quda* describes the mutual relation of two persons or households whose children are married (ChSpPa), i.e. the in-laws of the own children. 3) *Baja* is the term for two men married to sisters. The composite term *quda-baja* functions as a generic term for all relatives through marriage much like the analytical category 'affines.' This is also sometimes expressed by the word *quda* itself. In a wider sense, *quda* can include all those who are related through marriage to someone considered a relative (*tughqan, uruqtughqan*). Since the category of *tughqan* often also includes affines[101] this means that the category can include people related over

101 Cf. Enwer Semet Qorghan 2010: 2-3,10; Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 213, 161, Abdushükür Muhemmet'imin 2002: 155.

several links of affinity. The genealogical knowledge of Uyghurs in Kashgar rarely extends beyond the own grandparents. In contrast, the knowledge of living relatives is quite extensive often including several affinal links. This is also reflected in life cycle rituals which especially women are expected to join. It is quite common for women in Kashgar, and even more so in the small towns around the city, to feel compelled to partake in such events held by affines of affines. Affines are included into the category of relatives (*tughqan*) and call each other by the same relationship terminology as they use for their parents and other close relatives. Both women and men call the parents of their spouses 'mother' (*ana, apa*) and 'father' (*дада*; cf. Bellér-Hann 2008a: 241, Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 231-232). As shown above this use of terms is officially introduced and encouraged in ceremonies connected to the wedding. The terms for mother, father, elders sister (*acha*), younger sister (*singil, uka*), elder brother (*aka*) and younger brother (*uka, ini*) are generally applied as address terminology when directly addressing a wide range of close relations including kin, affines, neighbours and friends. Often the name of the person is added and the kinship term is used as a suffix (*Memet-aka*, elder brother Memet). Among especially close relations (regardless of them being genealogical relations or not) these terms are also used as terms of reference for someone not present (*Memet-akam*, my elder brother Memet). In this sense the system functions like classical Hawaiian-type terminology: All adult relatives of the parental generation are classificatory mothers and fathers, while all relatives of ego's generation are classificatory brothers and sisters. This prominently includes the in-laws and affines in a wider sense. I have often heard the mother-in-law referred to as 'my mother' even when talking to the own parents. This applies primarily to women, but also men use these terms and may talk about their parents-in-law's house as their *chong öy* (parental house, lit. big house). A man invited me to the wedding of his sister (*singlim*), which later turned out to be his wife's sister. The standard dictionary reference terminology for relatives basically follows the Eskimo type: Lineal relatives are differentiated from collateral ones in the parental generation (father and mother from uncle (*tagha*) and aunt (*hamma*)) and accordingly siblings from cousins (*bir newre, newre*), but no difference is made between maternal and paternal relatives. When asked explicitly, many people will recur to this terminology, but in daily discourse the Hawaiian-type terminology dominates. This latter system functions less to classify kin than to integrate and constructively include relatives, re-presenting them as such. In the vast majority of cases affines are included into this. Only in some rare cases they are excluded as *yat адем* (foreign) or as not being *qandash*. In these cases, the in-group (here *qandash*) is mostly defined as exclusively the natal household including the own parents and siblings. Abdurehim Hebibulla holds that affines are not considered direct relatives in Uyghur society, but that they hold each other in high regard (*uyghur jem'iyitide quda tughqanlar biwaste tughqanlardin hesablinmisimu, lékin öz'ara qattiq hürmitlishidu* [sic], 2000: 232). In this sentence, despite disqualifying affines as 'direct relatives' (*biwaste tughqan*), he clearly classifies them as relatives more generally (*quda tughqanlar*, affine relatives). The usual inclusion of affines into the realm of relatives invites two classical readings: one from descent theory and one from alliance theory. A descent theory reading views the sibling ties as so strong that the siblings' spouses (belonging to their households and thus having become a part of their persons) are also included on these grounds. Contrarily, a reading informed by alliance theory would stress the affinal tie between, for instance, a wife's brother and his sister's

husband, seeing this as the important relation. While both positions hold some truth for the case of Kashgar, the closeness of kinship counted over several affinal links points to affinity as a value in itself (Dumont 1983) upon which important social relations may be built. The importance of the term *baja* (wife's sister's husband, WZH) supports the validity of this reading. Among men the *baja* relation often outweighs the cognatic links of their wives: Ibrahim-aka presented his wife's sister's son to me by saying that he was the son of his *baja*. The *baja* relation may in some cases even be discoursively extended to include the *baja*'s brothers.

The importance of affines

The affines are performatively re-presented as central relatives through uses of terms and other symbolic means, but they also take on central role and become central relatives more practically over the course of the marriage process. As described above, parents visit their children's parents-in-law, their own *quda,* on the second day of the *héyit* celebrations, right after the own parents and siblings group and during the Ramadan fast. These affinal visits are among the most elaborate and time consuming visits during these holidays. After the marriages of the first children, the *quda* (children's parents-in-law) also come to play important ritual roles in the marriages of the next children. They are asked for their consent in the process of match-making since these choices will affect their social networks too, and are all invited to participate in the event in which the *toyluq* (bride wealth) is handed over (*toyluq épbérish*). On all such occasions, gifts are exchanged between the households entertaining affinal relations, both in the form of food and money. The trader Bextiyar claimed a loan back from his friend with the explanation that he was going to see his mother-in-law (*qéyin'ana*). The affines visit and help each other much in daily life. It is common for brothers-in-law, sister's husbands (*baja*), father-in-law and son-in-law and other affines to be business partners and to be a central source of labour help for both ritual events, field work, the building of a house and many other tasks (c.f. Rudelson 1997: 107, 111). As the affinal relations solidify into stable close kinship relations, affines are entrusted with tasks central to the household economy and take responsibility for each other's economy. An elder man took a whole season of fieldwork upon himself for his son-in-law, who was trading in southeast costal China. Another man regularly sold sheep for his *quda* (the son's wife's parents) on the market. Neither of them was directly compensated for the tasks they were entrusted with as if they had been members of the own economic unit. An affinal relative who holds an influential position is expected to provide key access to business opportunity, jobs and government resources. In the case of less close affinal relations or relations over several affinal links, such work is paid or otherwise compensated, but such relations are still thought to entail much trustworthiness and are therefore preferred for a range of important works concerning money, but also childcare. The so-called *baja*-relation between the husbands of two sisters is by many seen as having an explicitly economical importance (c.f. Rudelson 1997: 108, 127, Dautcher 2009: 65). Especially money lending is practiced between *baja*. The affines are also important helpers at subsequent marriages. When the eldest daughter of a father of five adult children divorced and remarried, all the *quda* (the other children's spouses' parents) stayed for several days to help the family and contributed substantial amounts of money, too. One of them even flew in from Ürümchi. When the father of five was later at the hospital in Ürümchi, this

same *quda* of his came by every day to bring him whatever he desired for lunch. When he later returned from Ürümchi to Kashgar his other *quda* came by with (raw) meat in *dastixan* to welcome him back. He said that he also helps them at *toy* or in the case of illness or if they are in need of money for other reasons.

For this man, the *quda* were like close relatives (*yéqin tughqandek*) and most certainly relatives (*tughqan*). Bellér-Hann cites an example from the early 20th century in which the connection between marriage and local realms of economy and politics is made very explicit: "After his younger sister had married the chief of the county police, Amin Bakr was duly appointed director of the county APUC and, therefore, controlled the management of most of the *waqf* land possessed by the local APUC" (2008a: 319). Such connections are still part of the local imagination of affinity and are still speculated on today. A young Uyghur woman from Kashgar told me that today only stupid families want sons rather than daughters. Daughters, she said, provided a real possibility of social advance: a daughter makes you a *beg* (lower administrative title under Qing rule in Xinjiang), two daughters will make you a *hakim* (higher administrative title under Qing rule in Xinjiang; c.f. Newby 1998: 278).

The ambivalence of affinity

It is the ideal for affines to be close relatives, but not all affines are. Especially in the beginning of the marriage process this ideal can be difficult to achieve, particularly if the households were not closely related before. Yet, mutual honouring and gifting are central parts of the relationship from the start. Referring to marriages in Kashgar, Zaili Memettursun writes that the *quda* have become relatives (*barliqqa kelgen tughqanchiliq*) and must treat each other with honor and respect (*izzet ikram*), never compare wealth or standing and never see each other as competitors (2012: 6, cf. Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 232). Within this emphasis, the ambivalence of affine relations is detectable. And indeed, while affinal relations are centrally important they are also fragile and touchy (*nazuk*, *zil*, Zaili Memettursun 2012: 12) and tension between affines is a much-discussed theme in Kashgar. Affines are treated respectfully and with reverence, as guests towards whom one has to be careful in tone and generous in giving (Abdukérim Rehman et al. 2009a: 856-858, Weli Kérem 2010a: 25-33, Abdukérim Abliz 2011: 26-29). But the high expectations can be difficult to fulfil and the judgements of affines are felt as particularly harsh and damaging. Especially in the first phase of the marriage process, the communication between in-laws and affines is cautious. Within the household, the daughter-in-law (*kélin*) and her parents-in-law keep very formal and polite relations and strictly adhere to the modesty code (*perdishep, namehrem*; cf. Bellér-Hann 2008a: 241, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 100-102). At a wedding in the outskirts of Kashgar the groom's sister's father-in-law told me that he has been responsible for cooking the pilau (*polu*) for the morning *toy neziri* at the bride's place and that he had received a gift of money for it. When I asked him how much they had given him he lowered his voice to tell me that the cook is generally given a few hundred yuan. Such compensational gifts and also income and money generally are topics openly talked about in Kashgar. Yet, as a quite recent affine (*quda*) of the 'owner' of the wedding (*toyning igisi*) this was a sensitive theme since it might suggest discontent on the side of the cook. Dissatisfaction with gifts from the affines often leads to strife and sometimes even to divorce.

Dissatisfaction with the hospitality offered by the other side is often mentioned as a reason to call off a wedding during the preparation phase. Though it may be merely a pretext in some cases (or an idiom expressing a more general dissatisfaction) both gifts and hospitality are preferred ways of communicating sympathy and honour in Kashgar and are therefore serious issues. A lot of the giving and hospitality within a marriage is an effort to not upset the other side (the *quda*) or to hurt their feelings (*köngli aghirip qalmisun*), an elder man explained. If feelings come up that one side has not given enough or has said something disrespectful it might end the marriage process (*nikahni buzilidu*). A mother complained to me that her affines (*quda*, the son's parents-in-law) were so wealthy that the frequent gifting relations with them and their many relatives were becoming costly to the household economy. A much cited proverb says: *"xudadin qorqmisingiz, qudading qorq"* (If you don't fear God then at least fear the affines; Abdushükür Muhemmed'imin in Zaili Memettursun 2012: 11). It expresses both the fragility and the importance of affine relations. A variant of this proverb links the affines and God more clearly to stress these two aspects of the relation: *"quda keldi, xuda keldi"* (The affines have come: God has come). The two proverbs are often used together and the latter is explained by the former. According to Zaili Memettursun the affinal relation is so tense that "the affines sit in front of the knife" (*qudilar pichaqning béshida olturidu*) and there is a constant danger of coldness (*soghuqchiliq*) entering into the relation. Therefore she advises generosity (*qorsaqni keng tutush*) toward the affines and to refrain from pettiness (Zaili Memettursun 2012: 12). In parts of Hotan district, the two sides' closest relatives are supposed not to drink cold water during the wedding celebrations since this could cool the affinal relations (*qudilar arisida soghuqchiliq chüshidu*; Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 133). The generosity ideally even includes siding with the affines against the own daughter. I heard several times that if the own daughter comes home from her husband's place because they have fought or even because he has beaten her, she is to be brought back to him (*uni apirip kétimiz*) on the same day. Her parents should not allow her to stay long since this would force his family to humiliate themselves by coming to pick her up. In case it happens again the procedure should be repeated, possibly even a third time. Thereafter, the woman's family should demand divorce (cf. Zaili Memettursun 2013: 13). The caution not to anger the affines becomes visible in the modesty displayed during some events within the marriage process, e.g. not bringing too many guests when visiting the other side, in order not to strain their resources.

There is a tendency for gifts and displays of reverence to flow more from the groom's side to the bride's side before the wedding which is reversed after the bride is transferred to the groom's place. This is no absolute shift and gifts are continually given and respect continually expressed in both directions (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 241 fn. 91, 283), but the tradition of virilocality and other circumstances make the particular expressions of the affinal tension asymmetrical. This derives from the fact that the relation is built upon the transfer of a young woman from one family into the other, and from this being interlinked with the logic of shame and honour. Uyghur women in Kashgar are not vigorously guarded or controlled, but it is still potentially painful and shameful to let one's daughter or sister go. It is not recommended for the bride's brother to be present at the central celebrations of a marriage and he is definitely not expected to dance or display any kind of joy at the events. Very few young men from the bride's side take part in such events and

the father of the bride does not visit the groom's place till well after the wedding (Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 133).[102] The proverbs about fearing the affines were presented to me as concerning mainly the wife's parents, the bride's side (*qiz terep*). As the father of two married daughters told me: "*bizning balimiz a öyde bolghandin kéyin, biz yawash bolimiz*" (since our child is in that (their) house we stay docile). The inequality and asymmetry of affinal relations is apparent in the distinction between the two sides in *qiz terep* and *oghul terep*, which parallel the anthropological categories of wife-givers and wife-takers. It also shows in the term *qaycha quda* (scissor affines), denoting two families who have each given each other a daughter. This only becomes a special relation worthy of a distinct name through the fact that it balances the asymmetry of the affinal relation by reversing it in the second marriage.

In a local explanation, the superiority of the groom's side over the bride's side is often connected to the ideology of rendering men superior to women. To some men strong affinal relations can seem threatening to their own dominance within the household and to the affiliation of their household to their own kin. This reflects the power struggles within marriages, which are seen as struggles between husband and wife on behalf of their respective families or genders. Men talk much about the power relations within marriages. Whether one is afraid of one's wife is often asked jokingly (*xotuningizdin qorqamsiz?*) and the character Sayemaxun from the Uyghur play *qütülmigen toy* has become a popular idiom for a man fearing his wife (Dautcher 2009: 114, Bellér-Hann 2004a: 191, Caprioni 2008: 155). Ritual or symbolic fights over dominance in the marriage are described by Bellér-Hann (2008a: 243, 245), Dautcher (2009: 119) and Abdukérim Raxman et al. (2008: 129). The latter formulates explicitly that whoever wins need not fear the other (*shu terep yene bir tereptin qorqmaydighan bolarmish*, 2008: 129, cf. Dautcher 2009: 123). Today, as in the early 20th century, mostly husband and wife function as distinct legal and economic units within Islamic and customary law (Bellér-Hann 2004a 184-185). The marriage is seen as a contract which states the spouse's rights and duties towards each other. The power balance within a marriage can be closely connected to the relations to the in-laws and between the affines. One man was proud of never having spent a single night at his mother-in-law's place, while another man with similar delight proclaimed that his wife only visits her mother's place a few times a year. A third man had bought land and built a new house in the city where his wife is from, but hesitated to tell his siblings and other close relatives about it since it may arouse their discontent. They would claim, he said, that his wife was pulling him towards her natal place (*yurt*) and was aiming to weaken his ties to them.

The ideal of affines being turned into central relatives

Most times affines are described as close relatives and it is certainly the ideal for them to be treated as such. The marriage process is seen as a process of the two families becoming relatives. Especially parents-in-law and their children's spouses are to become like parents and children (Zaili Memettursun 2012: 5-6). Though it cannot always be met, it is the ideal for a marriage to make the two families one, for the affines to be made close relatives and both sides of a marriage put much effort into making this happen. Not just the bride, settling over into the household of

102 At *qiz sorash* the groom's side is said to comfort and solace the bride's side (Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 216).

the groom, is made "a child" of her parents-in-law; the same goes for the groom in respect to his parents-in-law. This seems to have been the case in the early 20th century too. At the *qiz sorash* (asking for the girl) ceremony, the groom's parents would address the bride's parents as follows: "We have come to ask you if you accept our son as your child" (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 239). Whereas the initial negotiations and visits establish the two sides vis à vis one another, this clear distinction is blurred on the night before the first wedding day when men from the groom's side prepare a rice meal in the courtyard of the bride's parents for mutual guests (*toy néziri*). When, on the day following the transferring of the bride to her new home and the wedding night, the bride's mother and her female relatives (including neighbours and friends) are invited to the grooms place, the women make efforts to break the distinction between the two sides through mildly blurring the roles of guest and host and through overruling seating arrangements, stressing that such divisions are obsolete "now that we are relatives" (*tughqan bolup qalghandin kéyin*). At restaurant weddings in Ürümchi and increasingly in Kashgar too, the wedding celebration ends with a photo session in which the groom and bride are photographed in the centre of the hall. First they are photographed with their respective families separately, but later the two families are joined on a common picture, symbolically making them one family. Several different ceremonies are held to make both bride and groom call their respective mothers-in-law "mother" (*ana, apa*). Much institutional and individual effort is invested into integrating the other side. After the wedding, both families visit each other to normalise and deepen relations. Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq mentions a *yüz échish*[103] ceremony of integration into the household of the parents-in-law, not just for the bride, but also for the groom (2009a: 227). Following the wedding, mutual *quda*-visits on religious holidays and traditions such as *öy körsetish* described above, during which relatives of the *quda* invite each other for dinner in turns, aim to strengthen the ties between affines and, equally important, to facilitate the intertwinement of the two side's social networks. The whole process of marriage can in this light be seen as an effort to make the affines close relatives. Yet, this is no easy task. As mentioned above, the affines hold great potential but also pose a great risk. Unfulfilled expectations regarding wedding prestations, payments at the birth of a child, mutual visits at life cycle events and the main religious holidays and labour help are just some of the issues over which conflicts between affines arise. A local joke captures the relation well. The mother-in-law in Uyghur is called *qéyin-ana*. Jokingly she can be referred to as *qiyin-ana* (*qiyin*: difficult) the difficult mother since "she is the mother so difficult to make a mother." But it is clearly the ideal for her to be just that: a mother. A young man living far away from his parents-in-law explained to me that he would always call them 'mother' and 'father,' but that somewhere in his heart he would always be thinking that they were not his real parents. Terms denoting in-laws carry in them an element of exclusion and are not used in the presence of these. They are rephrased in cognatically connoted terms, to downplay the affinity, as in the case of a shop owner employing his wife's brother, which he presented to me as his son's uncle: "*Enwerning taghisi*" (Enwer's uncle). In case the marriage process proceeds as hoped for, the *toy neziri* is only the first instance of the two sides acting together as hosts and many more occasions will subsequently follow (cf. Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 127, where affines are not classified among the guests). The structural opposition of the

103 'Lifting the veil'.

two sides will remain on one level; they will always stay two sides of an affinal relation (*qiz terep, oghul terep*). However, on an encompassing level this relation of the opposition is a connection that creates a community (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 244, 278, 283) as in Viveiros de Castro's view of affinity as a uniting division (2009: 245), and as in Strathern's understanding of constitution. Strathern sees mutually constituting elements of providing a base for each other while still being kept apart by the fact of them being related (1985: 191-193, 201-202). The ethnographic examples show that while the categories of 'affine' and 'kin' or 'close relatives' are opposites, on a more general and encompassing level (Dumont 1986: 227, 253) they are all relatives and the opposition created by affinity even has the potential of being so uniting that the affines 'overtake' kin beyond the sibling group in becoming the closest and most central relatives. Affinity and close kinship are in this sense mutually constituting.

The logic of close marriage fulfilling this ideal

The different examples cited above show that the centrality and ambivalence of affinity is a main incentive for close marriage. Not having good and close affinal relations is a social handicap. The marriage process is one of producing the affines as close relatives on whom one can depend in a whole range of areas including labour and financial support. As we have seen, much effort goes into this task, which is much easier to accomplish if the affines are chosen among those who are close in the first place, i.e. when they are chosen suitably (*layiq tallash*). In case no ties exist beforehand, the risk of a bad match is seen as quite high. The required effort does not seem worthwhile if one does not see the potential of making the other side close or even central relatives. Marriage is rarely the first instance of exchange between two families or households; and certainly the wedding never is. It is far too important and sensitive a matter to take such a risk. The following short dialogue from a wedding at my neighbours' illustrates this. The bride was brought in from Yerkent. *"Qizni nimeshqa Yerkenttin ekélidu?" "Tughqani bar oxshimamdu."* (Why do they bring in a bride from Yerkent? - Well, it seems like they have relatives there, doesn't it?) The expectation that marriage will be close is so pronounced that taking a bride from Yerkent automatically makes others assume that close relations exist - so close that they (regardless of their exact basis) qualify as relations of kinship (*tughqan*). Even if the connections may not have been this close previously, they will most certainly become so through the wedding. A close marriage will have a high probability of producing close relatives, especially if they are a part of the pre-existing social ties to other families within the local community or in the household network of relatives and friends. The close marriage will also have the synergy effect of strengthening just these networks and community ties, since all efforts invested into the affine relation are at the same time seen and valued by the affine's close relations and these are even explicitly targeted at life cycle events, in institutions like the *öy körsitish*, and if help is needed.

The relation between close marriage and communities may also be turned on its head: A certain match is often not motivated by independent tactical considerations concerning this marriage and its effects alone. Often a marriage will be an element within existing relations. To understand this, it is important to see marriage as an aim in itself, rather than just as a means to

achieve status or connections. It is the conviction of the majority of Uyghurs in Kashgar, that it is a central parental duty to have children married, a duty that can cause serious headaches for parents not belonging to the highest echelons. As soon as we leave the very upper strata of society, the marriage itself is often as much a goal as it is a means. Having a child married in an acceptable match is an aim for which resources and connections are mobilised and utilised just as much as the marriage is a means for producing status, strengthening connections and acquiring access to resources. Therefore, accepting a match will to many be seen as a favour and a gift in itself. And when the request comes from close relations it may very well be a gift that one dares not refuse. Close marriages are a way of participating in communal exchange cycles and marrying itself can be seen as the gift of providing a wife or a husband for the child of the other. This gift has an effect within the community, tying two families closer together, but also providing a certain security for other families by perpetuating the tradition of marrying within the community. Other families may thus expect the same from their close relations within the community. The close marriage it is thus habitually confirmed as a community matter (Holy 1989: 45, 72, Anderson 1982: 9, Berrenberg 2002: 50, 60). Unlike what is the case in systems of elementary structures or among the Maduzai described by Tapper (1991), in Kashgar these gifts of marriage and the many different marriage prestations connected to them enter into the general range of gifts and favours exchanged between close households. Marriage exchanges do not make up a closed system of brides and bride-wealth only given in exchange for each other. A bride (or a groom) is a very high ranking and important gift with the potential of turning giver and receiver households into close relatives, but it does not figure singularly in its own sphere (Gregory 1994: 919, Bohannan 1963: 246-65; Bohannan and Bohannan 1968: 227-39, Piot 1991: 206) only to be reciprocated by other marriages. Marriage relations are thus not categorically different from other close relations of persistent mutual giving, trust and dependency — relations that may be based on genealogical kinship, neighbourship, friendship or affinity, all of which are often called kinship (*tughqan*). This comes quite close to what Carsten and others have termed 'relatedness' (2000, 2004) and what Sahlins calls 'mutuality of being' (2013), based upon exchange and mutual dependency. The word for kinship (*tughqan*) literally means 'born' and is thus a metaphor derived from the imagination of filiation and descent, but its use today does not draw the lines of definition along these criterions.

I will illustrate this difference in imagining kinship by suggesting a new and stronger affinal reading of the aforementioned proverb cited by Dautcher: "Meat and fat are one kin, it does no good to brown the onion" (Dautcher 2009: 64). Dautcher's interpretation of this proverb is that kin stays kin (meat and fat) no matter what and that it is useless trying to make others (onion) kin (meat), since they just are not. This reading is surely relevant for the social context Dautcher met in Ghulja, which seems to have a more genealogically based understanding of kinship and affines were not percieved *tughqan*. In Ghulja, Dautcher translates the word as 'kin' excluding affines (2009: 64-65), while in Kashgar it is more precise to translate it as 'relatives' including affines. Thus, in Kashgar the proverb could be read in a different manner that focuses less on genealogy and more on affinity: It only makes sense to invest effort (fry or marry) into a relation which has the potential of becoming one of close kinship (meat or fat) but not into one which

does not have this potential (onion). This offers the imperative: Marry where relations exist, marry close, not far, use the firewood you have to fry meat, not onion. If we accept kinship as an idiom for close social relations, and less as primarily defined through descent, close marriage is a way of choosing and confirming kinship. Even those who are not seen as relatives before hand become so in the course of the marriage process – often retroactively. Enwer Semet Qorghan states that today's Uyghurs, having no lineages, tribes or descent groups (*qebilichiliq halitini aliqachan yoqatqan yaki uningdin waz kechken*) strive to marry as close as possible (*imkanqeder yéqinraq tughqanlar ara nikah berpa qilishqa urunush*) to satisfy the need to strengthen the family or kinship group (*shu arqiliq jemetni mustehkemlesh…*; 2007: 106). Enwer Semet Qorghan uses the word *jemet* for family or kinship group. This word may also mean descent group and may be defined agnatically or cognatically. How to interpret *jemet* in this case is not clear. Two possibilities exist: 1) to see it as a descent group, defined genealogically (agnatically or cognatically) or 2) to see the *jemet* as an extended family based upon the criterions for non-genealogical kinship elaborated above and not just including but also being centrally structured by affines. I support the second reading. This effort invested is invested not least through gift giving. Therefore, we will now turn to some of the most important gifts in the marriage process.

6.3 Marriage prestations

Within the marriage process gift giving is a central tool of communication: by giving and receiving gifts the two families performatively include each other into their respective communities (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 251, 2008b), show respect and reverence and 'give face' (*yüz bérish*). At the same time wealth is transferred (Madan 1989: 218-224, Goody and Tambiah 1973, Bell 2006, 2009, Tambiah 1989, Kuper 1982, Comaroff 1980), yet in most cases people will stress the communicative aspect of giving and downplay its material aspect (cf. Bourdieu 1996: 163-165). Gifts given across the two sides of a marriage (*oghul terep* and *qiz terep*) are mainly channelled through exchange between the couple's parents. They include gifts pooled from households within the social relations of each side. As described above, gifts of food (*dastixan*) are pooled at the one side and transferred to the other side between the households of groom's and bride's parents. The same thing happens with money. The closest within-relations explicitly contribute sums to the large gifts given across the sides. Two large gifts, that are at the same time wealth transfers, are offered, one by each side, mainly ending up in the new household. The groom's side gives the so-called *toyluq* (in anthropological terms, the bride wealth). This is a sum of money intended to provide the bride with gold and clothes, to provide gifts to her closest relatives and to cover some of the bride's side's wedding expenses. The bride's side for their part gives *qiz méli* (trousseau or dowry in classical anthropological terms). This often consists of equipment for the house provided to the new conjugal couple which often lives at the groom's parents place. A part of the *qiz méli* may be bought with the money received as *toyluq*. The relation between *toyluq* (bride wealth) and *qiz méli* (dowry) varies from case to case and between the villages and the city (cf. Rudelson 1997: 87, Bellér-Hann 2008a: 248-249). In Kashgar city,

the *qiz méli* tends to be relatively low and the *toyluq* high, this corresponds to a relatively higher status of the wife takers (groom's side) after the marriage. In each individual case the relative amount of *toyluq* and *qiz méli* influences the relative status of the two parts. Besides these main marriage prestations a whole range of other gifts and transfers also take place. They include gifts and hospitality exchanged between the two sides before and after the wedding. In the course of the marriage process these exchange relations widen as the relationship between the two sides is being established. They become less formalised and come to involve the communities and networks of the two sides. Thus the flow of gifts becomes more complex and includes a larger number of nodes as the marriage process progresses. Whereas in the beginning the exchange was very focussed on the couple's parents exchanging narrowly across the sides, this pattern is broken up in the course of the process of the two households slowly becoming central nodes in closely intertwined networks and parts of the same community. Thus the across exchanges gradually turn into within exchanges. In the case of close marriage they may already be elements in existing relations which function much like exchanges within the community. But even here the structural dynamic of the two sides pooling and exchanging is at least symbolically marked and leads to a further deepening of relations.

In the negotiation phase of the marriage process gifts of food (*∂astixan*), clothes (*kiyim-kichek*) and cloth (*rext*) are given mainly from the groom's side to the bride's side. They are reciprocated with hospitality, but this is discursively played down. This phase culminates in the giving of *toyluq* (bride's wealth) which is given a week to a month before the wedding. After this the *ashüyi* (ingredients for the big communal meal *toy neziri*) is brought by the groom's side to the bride's side on the day before the wedding. It isn't until the second day of the marriage, after the transfer of the bride to the groom's place that gifts start flowing in the opposite direction - towards the groom's side. Gifts of clothes are given to the groom and his close relatives and large amounts of *∂astixan* are brought. Now also in most cases the *qiz méli* is given and other big gifts may be given at the visits at *onbeshkünlük* some days later (see above). On a larger scale then we have a weighted (though by no means unilateral, cf. Madan 1989: 218) flow of gifts from the groom's side to the bride's side up until the wedding and the transfer of the bride (with the exception of the *qiz méli* (dowry) that is sometimes being transferred before the wedding, see below). Thereafter, the flow is temporarily reversed and on a long term established as reciprocal exchange between the two sides moving towards becoming one. Within the dynamics of the marriage itself, we may thus see two primary types of giving across the two sides: 1) The gifts reciprocally exchanged between the two sides to establish and deepen their relations. This form of giving establishes the relationship and the status balance between the families, including a tilt in balance around the transfer of the bride. 2) The gifts that flow from the parents' generation to the children's generation, or more precisely from the parental households to the new conjugal couple. They are what Goody and Tambiah have called 'pre-mortem inheritage' (1973), a transfer of wealth to the next descending generation. In light of this aspect, the *toyluq* could technically be called indirect dowry instead of bride wealth since most of it is specifically given to the bride in the form of gold and clothes. These generational gifts follow the bride. Whatever social unit she is in, that is where the gifts are given. Before her transfer the *toyluq* and most other

gifts flow to her parent's household. After the transfer of the bride it is now the groom's side that primarily receives.

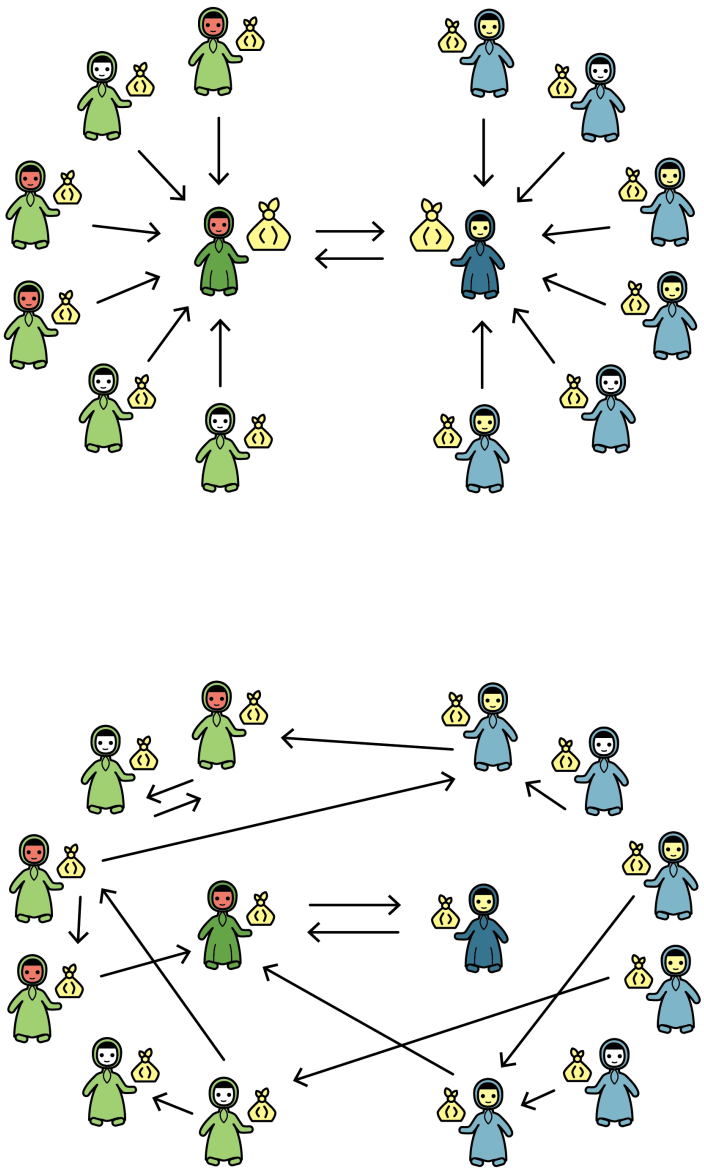


Fig. 34 An idealised illustration of the change of exchange relations between the two sides as the marriage process progresses, exemplified in the women's exchange of *ɔastixan*. A similar development, though less obvious, can be observed in other exchanges between the two sides as well. On the upper picture the situation around the *toy* is shown: gifts are given centripetally to the two households entering into marriage (i.e. here, to the mothers of bride and groom respectively). These two households pool the gifts and exchange them. The lower picture show the situation at a more advanced stage of the marriage process: gifts are still exchanged between the two households at the centre of the marriage, but other households increasingly exchange across the two sides. In the case of a close marriage the latter situation exists before that around the *toy* and is structurally strengthened by the interim of the *toy* and the according exchanges as shown in the upper picture. (Design by Steenberg and Zheng)

Toyluq

The literal translation of *toyluq* is 'that for the *toy*' (wedding, life-cycle celebration). It is a very flexible and encompassing concept (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 250-252). It can, in its widest sense, be taken to mean all gifts exchanged between the sides around the wedding celebrations, according to Bellér-Hann, "a local concept which was an important device in creating mutuality between groups of people" (2008a: 251). This is the first aspect mentioned above, that of constructing relations between the families. Some local authors include both *qiz méli* and *ashüyi* in the *toyluq* (Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 254, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 128). On a more narrow level though and in the sense used mostly in Kashgar, *toyluq* denotes money given by the groom's parents to the bride's parents (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 246). Here it also importantly carries the second aspect of wealth transfer to the younger generation. *Toyluq* used to include a wide range of objects such as clothing for all four seasons, knotted carpets and felt, cloth, hats, jewelry and sheep (Bellér-Hann 1998: 708, 2004: 187, Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 247). Sometimes[104] the objects are written down on a sheet of paper and their prices are added up to determine the amount of *toyluq* to be given (Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 242, Abdukérim Rehman et al. 2009a: 346). Today, mainly money is given and the amount is not calculated in such minute detail. The amount asked for and given depends on several factors: The economic situation of the two households, the usual standard (*ölchem*) within their respective communities, the education and reputation of the bride and her family and the market price of especially gold and meat (Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 243). In times where the gold or meat prices are high fewer weddings are conducted, several wedding photographers told me. This was the case in the summer of 2013 when bird flu in inner China made the price of mutton sky rocket. The amount of *toyluq* is higher in the city than in the country side. Depending on these factors the *toyluq* may vary between 5,000 and 50,000 yuan (cf. Zaili Memettursun 2012: 6). Between 10,000 and 20,000 is a normal amount among the lower middle class households in Kashgar and the surrounding areas.

It is very important to point out that the *toyluq* is not a price; no-one is sold or bought, though some of the local idioms (*qiz almaq*) may suggest this (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 246-247, cf. Bentler 2007: 13-17). As a matter of fact, the marriage by purchase which is said to have existed in earlier times (more than 1000 years ago) is by Abdurehim Hebibulla explicitly contrasted with the *toyluq*-marriage as a completely different system (2000: 254). The bride is never completely settled over into the groom's family (see below and above). This counters the sales metaphor on a more structural level. Instead, the *toyluq* serves three distinct purposes, besides its more general role in creating and deepening the affinal relations: 1) Providing for the bride's financial security and providing for the new household; 2) compensating the bride's family for their economic and emotional loss; 3) compensating the bride's side for its expenses connected to the wedding celebrations. Abdurehim Hebibilla divides the *toyluq* into the following three categories: *xas toyluq* (just for the bride), *qoyumche* (for the bride's relatives) and *ashüyi* (ingredients for the *toy neziri*; 2000: 242, cf. Clark 1999: 160). These categories reflect the three purposes of the *toyluq*. Yet the division must be somewhat qualified for the case of Kashgar.

104 Possibly this signifies an interim period between the two extremes of *toyluq* given in kind and the contemporary *toyluq* given in money, without any precise listing of the objects to be bought.

1) The vastest part of the *toyluq* is used to buy gold for the bride (Light 2006: 343). Frequently even all of it is spent this way. This is the function of the *toyluq* most often explicitly stressed and the one considered the morally most correct. The gold is the bride's personal property, not accessible by her husband, though in times of economic hardship she can choose to sell parts of it to sustain the household. Husband and bride in Kashgar most often have separate economies. The husband has financial duties towards his wife, while she can have a substantial amount of her own money, which he has no control over. Her *toyluq* gold is a central part of this. As the bride will eventually be a central member of her new household, the money is seen as well invested by the groom's family and even as returning to their own family with the bride. Furthermore, sometimes the *toyluq* is used to buy the *qiz méli* (dowry and trousseau) and many men explicitly state that their *toyluq* returns in the form of furniture, electrical equipment, carpets and other household items.

2) Some see the *toyluq* as a compensation for the loss of the bride's side. Firstly, a girl's parents have worked hard and struggled to bring her up and must be compensated for this. This is a logic better expressed in the name *süt puli* (milk money) as a part of the *toyluq* is called in some parts of Xinjiang. Secondly, the bride's parents' household loses an important labour force, for which it needs to be compensated, too (cf. Bellér-Hann 2008a: 246-249). Though the bride visits and helps her own parents frequently, her main duties and daily work now lie within her new household. In case the bride is employed, a higher *toyluq* symbolically compensates her parents for their loss of income. Thirdly, compensation is also thought to be needed for the emotional loss of losing a daughter. These reasons all imply that a part of the *toyluq* may stay with the bride's parents. This may be so in some cases, but I have only heard it expressed as an allegation against others. I have heard nobody admit to having kept any of their children's *toyluq*. It is morally frowned upon as a sale and has been campaigned against by religious authorities that argue that the Qur'an says nothing about such a custom, but only about providing for the financial security of the bride. The Arabic *mahr* is mentioned in the Qur'an as a security payment to the woman in the case of divorce, a part of which may be given at marriage, while the rest is given in the case of divorce. It was negotiated during the *nikah* ceremony in Kashgar in the early 20th century (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 253). In some areas of Turpan and Qumul, it still exists as a separate payment though the amount is negligible and merely symbolic being set at an odd number between 200 and 800 yuan (Wang 2004: 197-198; cf. Clark 1999:127, Rudelson 1997: 93). Here it is called *méhri heqqi* (lit. affection payment), which phonetically recalls *mahr*. To most people in Kashgar today the requirement of the *mahr* payment mentioned in the Qur'an (Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 214) is equivalent to the *toyluq* and many *molla* will not mention *mahr* or *mehr heqqi* during the *nikah* ceremony, but instead ask if the *toyluq* has been settled (cf. Bellér-Hann 2004a: 187-188). A high-school teacher even told me that *toyluq* was colloquial for *mehr heqqi* in the more literary language, clearly stating that the two were to him synonymous (cf. Bellér-Hann 2004a: 189; 2008a: 253).

3) The *toyluq* is also a way for the groom's side to ease the economic burden of the marriage for the bride's side, following the logic that the groom's side is the part gaining through the marriage. An elder woman pointed out to me that the name was after all *toyluq* (that for the *toy* - wedding, life cycle celebration) and not *qizliq* (that for the bride). This aspect of the *toyluq* is best

expressed in the institution of *ashüyi* which some include into the *toyluq* (Clark 1999: 160, Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 242). To most people in Kashgar city (unlike in some rural areas like Üstün Atush), the *ashüyi* is a separate payment distinct from the *toyluq* . This may be a strategy to legitimise its use by the bride's parents and not just for the bride. *Ashüyi* are the ingredients for the big communal meal (*toy neziri*) prepared by the groom's side at the bride's place for both sides' male guests. They are brought by the groom's side a day before the first day of the wedding. At some weddings the *ashüyi* may be given in money and can be up to half of the amount of *toyluq* (eg. 10,000 yuan *toyluq*, 5000 yuan *ashüyi*).[105] The *ashüyi* makes the groom's side co-hosts at the *toy neziri* and also beneficiaries of the religious merits earned in it. In case the *toy neziri* is held in a restaurant, the bride's side will still act as hosts to welcome and wait on the guests, but the groom's side will pay.

Among the wealthier parts of society, often no amount of *toyluq* will be named by the bride's side. A father of three daughters proudly declared that he did not know how much he had received at their weddings, since he had never bothered to count it. A high *toyluq* is here not necessarily wished for by the bride's side, since it creates a lot of obligation. The *toyluq* is thus not just something given in exchange (or as compensation) for the bride, but is an important element in the more lasting relations of the two sides. Giving a high *toyluq* can be seen as showing off and may destabilise the affinal relations, in addition to being wasteful (*israpchiliq;* cf. Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 128). Some say that a father who claims much *toyluq* makes his daughter poor. In one case, a rich husband many years elder than his future wife was explicitly forced to lower the *toyluq* he offered, since her mother felt that it would be a disgrace for the family and fuel rumours of them having sold their daughter to an elder man. The communicative play of *toyluq* and the other marriage prestations is pronounced. They are often more of a means of communication than they are institutions of wealth transfer. Depending on the circumstances, close marriage can therefore either lead to the *toyluq* being lowered or even obliterated (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 250) or to a regular or even higher *toyluq* being given. An important connection people emphasised over

105 The practice of *ashüyi* is primarily found in Kashgar city. In many surrounding areas it is unknown. A similar practice exists in Ghulja (Ili), but it is not called *ashüyi*. A similar custom is mentioned by Forsyth in the 19th century (Forsyth 1875: 85 in Bellér-Hann 2008a: 246) and in a Turpan source from 1956 (2008a: 250). The logic of taking food to one's host is found in other customs too. It is inherent in the custom of the *dastixan*. Even the logic of taking the ingredients elsewhere to cook it there (or have it cooked) in order to achieve a desired exchange is not unknown from other situations. It is then repeated at the birth of the first child where again something is desired and asked for and is a part of a special custom of giving, surrounding purchase, in the early 20th century, as Bellér-Hann describes:

"In pre-socialist Xinjiang it was customary practice that, when a group of men wished to sample new melons, they took some sheep fat, meat and rice to a melon field, where they were offered melons by the proprietor. After eating the melons, they returned to his house, where a meal was cooked for them from the ingredients the guests had brought. After they had consumed the food, each visitor received a melon to take home, and each paid the melon planter one *sär*." (2008b: 146)

The basic transaction in many ways recalls the *ashüyi* and *toyluq* transactions around a wedding. If we take the bride to be the desired melons (which in a local metaphoric understanding, according to which eating and various fruits may symbolise sexual intercourse, makes sense) then the ingredients brought are the *ashüyi* and the one *sär* offered in the end resembles the *toyluq*. Whereas the *sär* given for the melon may be viewed as payment, and the *toyluq* definitely is not, the *sär* could also be seen as a compensation to the farmer for the trouble of growing the melons, like part of the *toyluq* is seen as a compensation for the trouble of having brought up the girl. The common meal softens the commercial connotations of the exchange, and just like in the case of the *ashüyi* lessens the trouble that the provider of the desired object has in the process of the transaction.

and over again is that between the *toyluq* amount and the willingness of the parties. "*Eger ikki terep rast quɟalishishni xalisa, toyluq bihajet bolidu*," (if the two sides really want to become affines, the *toyluq* doesn't matter) I was told both by poor and rich. As mentioned above, claiming a high *toyluq* is a common way of rejecting a marriage proposal (Schwarz 1992: 209, Bellér-Hann 2008a: 246). In one case where the reluctant bride's parents kept raising the *toyluq* a friend of the groom pointed out that to a "real Muslim" anything over 151 yuan (the lowest *méhri heqqi*) is a sale and sinful. On the other hand, a low *toyluq* often reflects urgency on the bride's side e.g. in the case of an elder or unattractive bride. Yet for poorer families the *toyluq* is still a huge obstacle for having their sons married early and may delay marriage for years. Accordingly, the *toyluq* at wealthy people's weddings is usually not discussed and most regular guests will not know it, while at poorer families' weddings and in the villages, it is a public matter.

Qiz méli

The *toyluq* is bound to the market prices (Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 243), especially those of meat and gold since it is intended to be used to purchase the dowry (mainly gold) and the trousseau (*qiz méli*) for the bride and to pay for the expenses of the wedding celebrations. The gold bought for the bride for the *toyluq* is discursively excluded from the *qiz méli*. The rest of gifts given from the bride's parents to the new household (the explicit *qiz méli*) are mainly bought by the bride's parents with their own money. In Kashgar it consists of two parts. The first part is a huge bundle of bedding which is transported together with the bride when she is transferred to the groom's place on the evening of the first wedding day. The number of mattresses, covers and pillows used to be given in odd numbers, which is locally attributed to odd numbers being of importance in Islam. Today they are usually given in pairs (cf. Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 132). This signifies a metaphorical shift from Islamic symbolism to that of the romantic couple. The second part varies in size and expense. It may include carpets, closets, a sofa, a refrigerator, a television, a washing machine, chests, kitchen utensils, clothes, a motorbike and much more.[106] In Kashgar the *qiz méli* is often relatively modest, while Atush is known for a large and impressive *qiz méli* that may surpass the cost of the *toyluq*. In Kashgar the *qiz méli* is said to be rising. In Atush the *qiz méli* is transported on a small truck driving behind the wedding car when the bride is transferred from her parent's place to that of the groom. In Kashgar this is frowned upon as showing off (*köz-köz qilish*). Instead it will be transported a few days before or after the wedding in more secrecy. At some marriages it is given at the *chillaq* or *onbeshkünlük* when the bride visits her parents for the first time after the wedding (Zaili Memettursun 2012: 11) or even not until the couple moves out of the groom's parents' house, which can be months or even years later (cf. Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 129-130).[107] This shows that the *qiz méli* is here not necessarily a part of the wedding exchanges, but balances out the *toyluq* only on a longer time scale. The *qiz méli* thus has the same two central qualities of transferring wealth to the new household one generation below and to help establish and negotiate the affinal relations. It is like the *toyluq* a tool in the mutual integration of the two sides into each other.

106 Cf. Zaili Memettursun 2012: 11, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 222, cf. Rudelson 1997: 87.
107 "*Yigit terep chillaq ötküzgende qizning ata-anisi, acha-singilliri qizning hujrisinialahide petileydu. Ular ekelgen nersiliri bilen hujrisining kem nersilirini toluqlap béridu*" (Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 130).

6.4 Marriage Produces Social Units

"In our hearts, we hope that this wedding will be pretty (*chirayliq*), will be good, that it will be very uniting." (Dautcher 2009: 117-118)

"The materialist view of cousin marriage - that it 'keeps the wealth in the family' - is too simple." (Kuper 2008: 728)

"The structural implications of cousin marriage become evident on a smaller scale, at the level of a social network." (Kuper 2008: 732)

Marriage and weddings are locally seen as a productive force creating both community and social units. A government worker on the brink of retirement told me that weddings strengthen kinship (*tughqandarchiliq*) and neighbourly relations (*qoshundarchiliq*; cf. Zaili Memettursun 2012: 11-12). Enwer Semet Qorghan and Abdukérim Raxman both explicitly formulate it: "*Nikah bolsa a'ilening qurulushi we üzlüksiz tereqqiy qilishning, uruq-tughqanlar arisidiki ijtima'iy munasiwetning tiklinishi we kéngiyishining menbesidur*" (Marriage is the source of the establishment and the development of the family as well as of the creation and extension of kinship relations; Enver Semet Qorghan 2007: 104, Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 127). That the household or nuclear family (*a'ile*) is created through marriage is obvious. But beyond this, other close connections functioning as social units are also created through marriage and through affinity. To show this connection in a more detailed manner, I return to one argument mentioned above, stating that close marriage is conducted "to keep the wealth within the family." Hoppe mentions this reasoning connected to cousin marriages in Turpan in the 1990s (Hoppe 1998: 135), as does Rudelson for Kashgar (1997: 108-109) and I occasionally heard it mentioned in Kashgar. The argument shows up in much anthropological writing on endogamous marriages.[108] As mentioned above, this argument of 'marriage within' entails an important contrast to the concept of 'close marriage'. 'Social closeness' is a relative term while 'within' carries the connotation of distinct social borders. Which marriage is 'close' and which is 'within'? They have structurally different implications. While many marriages in contemporary Kashgar draw much more on the concept of closeness than on any clear cut conception of 'within the family,' the argument that endogamous marriages keep the wealth within the family, clearly implies a notion of 'within'. We have to do with something (family) within which the wealth is to be kept. This begs the question of what this entity consists of. How is this wealth holding unit defined? To Holy, discussing patrilineal parallel cousin marriages (or FBD marriages), this 'family' is clearly the patrilineage and the actors' reasoning is an expression of agnatic solidarity beyond mere economic consideration (Holy 1989: 113-116). Initially this seems plausible for Kashgar, too. Since the bulk of land and immovables is transferred from father to son, economic units seem to be mainly defined agnatically. Following this logic, the families within which wealth is to be kept must be brothers and their male descendants. In this case, marrying 'close' could be any close relative,

108 Cf. Khuri 1970: 598, Holy 1989: 112, Kuper 2008: 728.

agnatic or not, genealogical or not, while marrying someone from 'within the family' would mean to marry a close agnatic cousin — the FBD or FBS, genealogical or classificatory. To be 'within' she must be part of the own wealth-owning unit. Yet, this is not how it works in Kashgar. An old account written by the Swedish missionary, Gustav Raquette, based on his decades long experiences in Kashgar and published by Jarring provides an example of a marriage said to be within the family and intended to keep the wealth within it (Jarring 1975: 12, 35). Yet, this is not a FBD marriage, but a MBD marriage. Thus the wealth holding economic unit within which the marriage was to take place cannot have been an agnatically defined unit, since it included ego's father and his mother's brother. This illustrates what is true for Kashgar today, too: The units within which the wealth is to be kept through close marriages may be units defined not agnatically but affinally. This demonstrates that wealth holding social units beyond the household have in Kashgar for a long time been produced by marriage and affinity and their underlying exchange.

EXCURSUS: Social units

Before I elaborate on this argument, it is necessary to explain more clearly what I mean by the term 'social unit.' Social units are condensations of certain social relations and draw social borders between a perceived 'within' and a 'without.' They are often but not always named. Such units vary in stability and presence from socio-centric groups sharing a common economy, like households and houses (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995) to communities entertaining relations of balanced reciprocity (Sahlins 1972: 194-195) and only meeting at special occasions, like Huphrey and Sneath's 'ritual family' (Humphrey and Sneath 1999: 140). They do not include "focused gatherings" (Geertz 2000: 218), but deal exclusively with "units of a more regular nature" (Barnard and Good 1984: 71). They can be locally defined drawing upon a wide range of criteria, including descent, spatiality, exchange, identity, legal membership and many more. They can be analytically approached by looking at the concrete drawing up of social boundaries in practice. The situational creation and marking of us/them divisions indicate existing social boundaries and thus potential social units. That is: who calls whom what in what situations, who talks about whom in which way with whom? What words are used to denote units larger than the individual person? Which words are used to describe a relationship between the speaker and another person or between two other persons, between two households, between two villages, between several villages, or even between nations? In all these cases we must take into consideration who is talking, who is present, what situation we are in and so on and so forth. But these relations are not made purely by speaking about them, people create relations in other ways. Social relations and the social means for creating them become visible for social scientists in other areas than terminology. Further important areas of the drawing up of social borders are: 1) exchange and 2) spatial practices, and 3) bodily practices.

1) Exchange concerns the question of who gives what to whom? When does he give it? How is it received? Is anything given back? Is it given in the name of a person or maybe representatively for a household? Which expectations are connected to the giving? Some such practices can be understood with recurrence to models of modes of reciprocity (Sahlins 1972: 193-200).

2) Spatial practices concern who lives where, how are the borders drawn? How are rooms and spaces arranged? Who uses what spaces for what and when? Where do people sit and stand in relation to one another, e.g. when eating or at ceremonies? Where are certain objects placed?

3) Bodily practices deal with how people place themselves in relation to one another, how they stand, bend sit, and what it all means: are groups separated by gender, are they separated by age and in which contexts? Does the sequence of seating have to do with the status of those present, and in which contexts? Who dances, gives and takes things, and greets whom in which way? Who eats what, how much, when, where ... and so on.

I use the notion of social units to conveniently escape from the individualistic analytical perspective. Social units are conglomerates of social relations and also themselves have social relations to other units. The person is a social unit which has relations to other persons, but besides persons, other social units can also have relations to one another as well, have life cycles and change status. A person does not belong to a social unit as one belongs to the university or a football club that we can join or leave at will. The members in a very concrete and basic sense are the units and the units are part of the essential of what it means to be a person in Kashgar. These units, more than individually formulated ambitions, are what many people live for, relate their most important decisions to and what makes them persons. The person acquires her personal goals in relation to these units. This does not mean that no individual agency exists (Mahmood 2005). It means that the agency of individuals is led by values that do not center on the individual and that it is often utilised to reach goals that do not concentrate primarily on the individual. The agency of a person is framed (and enabled, as much as restricted) by the imperatives of the larger social units of which the particular person is part of, but also by wider social imperatives of religion and moral. The person chooses and acts freely within her or his conditions of possibility, according to her or his practical logic (Bourdieu 1976: 164-172, 1990: 130-134, Mc Nay 2004: 183-185), but not always as an individual. Western ideology, according to Dumont, vests value in the individual and recognises the empirical physical body as a person, whereas societies with non-individualistic ideologies see a person first and foremost as constituted by her relations to others, not viewing the individual as a value in itself (Dumont 1980, 1986, Strathern 1988a).

Re-present

To analytically grasp the nature of the constitution or construction of social relations and social units, I find it useful to employ de Coppet's concept of re-presentation (1992a). To re-present in de Coppet's sense here means 'making something present (again)' rather than merely 'standing for something' (1992a: 64-66). He thereby avoids dividing 'representation' as in 'standing for and symbolising something' from the 'concrete effects of practice,' a division de Coppet sees as characteristic for the Western tradition of thought. As I have pointed out above, I find this division inappropriate to describe the interdependence of social units and marriage in Kashgar. I therefore use de Coppet's concept of 're-presentation' to better grasp the constructive relation between practices and social units. Yet, to qualify the concept to better suit the present purpose, I want to pay additional attention to the dynamic aspect of the construction: The existing is not just made present again, it is actively and dynamically constructed and thus

changed and altered. To adequately grasp this we can add the notion of iteration and *différence*, as formulated by Derrida (Stegmaier 2000: 344, 353-354 Loizidou 2007: 34). In their view, a repetition is not static but dynamic. Each repetition leaves a mark on the word employed (Light 2007: 50), that slightly alters the totality of meanings this word potentially entails in total and from which its understanding derives. Each such slight alteration has to do with the relations this word or concept has to other words and concepts, and thus potentially alters their meaning. Re-presenting a relation in this sense thus always entails its alteration and is an element in a dynamic process. The dynamic aspect is important to keep in mind now that we return to the narrative of close marriage, preserving the wealth within the family, and my argument of marriage creating social units beyond the household. The family 'within' which wealth is to be kept, may not be preexistent, but may instead be constructed by this very effort.

Affines within

Above I made the point that closeness is not the same as the notion of 'within'. Thus close marriage and marriage within the group or family (endogamy) are distinct phenomena. But the moment marriage becomes an important resource for creating social units beyond the household, the moment affinity potentially creates and defines 'family', this distinction starts dissolving. If a marriage is conducted with the intention and realistic goal of turning the affines into close relatives with whom economic corporation and lasting trust and dependency is institutionalised, then this marriage has the potential of creating a social unit. In this case, closeness and 'within' become merely two sequential steps in the same process. Giving wealth to such affines (with the potential of becoming close relatives) then effectively keeps the wealth within the family because it constructs and defines the borders of the 'family.' The word 'within' (the family) implicates a social unit, but it is not a static notion of such a unit. The wealth transferred to affines has in itself the power of constructing them as 'within' in the course of the marriage process if the potential is given before hand. This potential may be formulated as 'closeness' or it may be formulated as 'within' the family - just another idiom for closeness. 'Within' is stronger or closer than closeness generally and it may be formulated from a future perspective, but it is not categorically different from closeness.

From this consideration a new reading of 'keeping the wealth within the family' emerges: The wealth shared through marriage helps to create and define the family as a social unit beyond the household, as long as one chooses someone with the potential of becoming family, in the sense that they can fulfill the high expectations and become close enough and economically intertwined enough to be included into "the own" or "within the family" in the course of the marriage process. Making affines close relatives is the intended aim of this process. This goal becomes more achievable when the affines are chosen among households socially close in the first place, a closeness formulated in the idiom of kinship (*tughqan*), closeness (*yéqin*) or 'within.' The marriage prestations given are important gifts in producing kinship. They (re-)define the borders of the family. The receivers of this gift per definition are (re-)produced as family or close relatives. Keeping the wealth within the family is thus not a question of marrying into a predefined kinship category based upon descent, but is about carefully choosing affines with the right potential — in

local words *layiq tallash*. This allows us to acknowledge in its full relevance Bellér-Hann's insight cited above, that it is indeed not the membership of any certain category but "trust which underpinned the desirability of this type of marriage" (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 256, cf. Ibid. 278, Rudelson 1997: 109). Considering this, it makes local sense for the initial search and negotiation of marriages to be a painstaking and long-stretched process. Some of the most important social units beyond the household are created through close marriage and care must be taken in choosing stable and trustworthy connections — for the failure to create the right kind of relatives may sever this process of marriage, effecting divorce.

Non-agnatic units

Marriage thus creates new categories, which offer the potential for constituting corporate and wealth holding groups, social units. One family I knew well in Kashgar is based in a group of seven siblings aged between 29-52 years. They are descendants of a rich man who had owned a lodging along one of the main roads leading into Kashgar. Today, each of the siblings (male and female) have their own plot of land and a house around their *chong öy* (lit. big house - the house of the deceased parents). Three of the siblings live on adjacent plots in this *mehelle*, while the rest live in apartments in the city of Kashgar. On holidays and other occasions, the siblings meet in the *chong öy* to cook and eat together. For this, all brothers and sisters bring their spouses, some of which are so close to the other siblings that they are clearly counted in the family and consulted for important decisions. Each nuclear family has its own separate economy regarding the daily household and mostly cooks separately, though food is regularly exchanged between the households living on the parent's land. For big events and purchases, the group acts as one economic unit, each sibling's household contributing as they can. This was, for instance, done to enable the second youngest brother to start trading across the border to Kyrgyzstan and also at the second marriage of the youngest brother. In these undertakings, the savings and income of sisters and their husbands are included as well as that of brothers and their wives. Within the extended family of the seven siblings there is a preference for and practice of marriage between cousins and other close relatives. Such families who strongly include the affines into the sibling group unit are not uncommon in Kashgar today. More agnatically-oriented constellations are found as well, and some families will have their central exchange and dependency amongst the neighbours. But since there is a tendency to marry within the closest category, however defined, and since the gift of marriage has such a high status and the affinal relations call for so much exchange, effort and expectations, the affines are often central. They are named in the usual idiom for kinship as *a'ile, uruq-tughqan, öydikiler, yéqin tughqan* (family, relatives, those at home, close kin) and to people in Kashgar they are not conceptually different from other units so named. Even when they are, it would be devaluing them to make this explicit in the naming, since these words carry important positive values.

The question of sibling groups and of the status of married women within them takes us to another important point: the structural nature of the transfer of the bride.

***Kélin* as connecting, not transferred**

As seen in the example above, married sisters are often as closely integrated within their natal

sibling groups as their brothers. Thus their husbands often act as a part of and on behalf of their wife's household within her sibling group. If we view male bias as a part of the local ideology and do not adapt it into our analytical models, *baja* relations can be accounted for in the sense of siblingship between sisters being the basis of broad cooperation between the households. The term *baja* expresses the male perspective of this connection between the households of two sisters. This takes us to a crucial point in understanding Uyghur marriage in Kashgar: The bride is never totally settled over into her new family, she is never disconnected from her natal family. To a large extent she remains a part of her own sibling group centred around the house of their parents, the so called 'big house' (*chong öy*; cf. Bellér-Hann 2008a: 282). If possible she visits them often (Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 134, Bellér-Hann 2004a: 191), officially once a week. Not even the rights in her reproductive services are completely settled over to the family of her new husband. When giving birth to her first children she returns to her mother's home and is later fetched together with the child by her husband and his family.[109] In the beginning of the *kélin's* stay with her parents-in-law they keep a very formalised relation, keeping proper distance (*perdishep;* Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 133-134), but over time the bride becomes more and more involved in her husband's family. As described above, some decades back a bride was upon arrival placed on a throne of seating mats on which had been laid a big stone. This stone signified the wish for her "head to be a head and her feet to be a stone" (*béshi bash, ayighi tash bolsun;* Zaili Memettursun 2012: 10, cf. Dautcher 2009: 119). This expresses the wish that she may stay within the family and not return to her parents. Daucher quotes another saying used by Uyghurs in Ghulja (Ili) stating to the groom's side when transferring the bride that "her flesh is yours, but her bones are ours" (2009: 119). This is connected to the patrilines relevant in Ghuldja, but Dautcher also interprets it as expressing a more general belonging of the woman to her native household, who revenges her if she is treated badly. Another ritual concerning the integration and binding of the bride to her new household is the willow leaf, described in Chapter 5. It symbolises the wish for her to follow her mother-in-law as the leaf sticks to its branch (Zaili Memettursun 2012: 9). The marriage process also entails times of seclusion when the bride is not allowed to visit her parents. Her first visit is strictly formalised.[110] It takes place 3-9 days after the wedding ceremony and is later repeated. She should avoid staying the night at her parent's house (Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 135). After the birth of the first children and as she takes over more responsibility in their new household, having her own hearth on which to cook food that will be eaten, given and exchanged in her name, she comes to identify more strongly with her own household which is most often spatially near her parents-in-law. But though it may be situated within her husband's natal *mehelle* and be a more entrenched part of his family network (which is far from always the case), it is still her household and her children will often call it '*apamning öyi*' (my mother's house). She also keeps her father's name and she can choose to have close relations to her own siblings and to be buried on the cemetery of her natal *mehelle* if she wants to. Tapper has drawn a distinction between contexts in which the bride is settled completely over into her husband's family at marriage (which she calls model A) and contexts in which she remains a member of her own family (which she calls model B; 1991: 16-17,

109 Cf. Bellér-Hann 2008a: 221, 230-31, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 39-40, Bellér-Hann 2004a: 191.
110 C.f. Bellér-Hann 2008a: 245, Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 130.

Berrenberg 2002: 55). Kashgar clearly offers an example of a Model B context. Tapper remarks that model A contexts (of total over-settling) usually display much more stable marriages than model B contexts where the bride stays a part of her own parental family (Tapper 1991 17-18). Indeed, Kashgar has a high divorce rate (cf. Benson 1993, Zhou and Wang 2009) and it is the custom for a divorced or widowed woman to return to her parental house (Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 252). This seems to have been the case in 19th and early 20th century too (Newby 2007: 24). "During Yaqub Beg's rule, in principle a woman could not be taken by her husband from one city to another without her consent. Mobility was conceived as a customary right, but at this time it had to be explicitly agreed upon by the bride's father and the groom" (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 241, drawing on Forsyth 1875: 85).

Bellér-Hann provides the actor's perspective when stating that "[g]iven the instability of the institution of marriage, it was essential for a woman to maintain close ties with her natal household" (2008a: 282). From a more structural perspective, we can reverse the relation to say that the close ties of a bride to her parental home is a factor making marriages less stable. Yet, the bride in Kashgar does not just stay a part of her own family. As we have seen above, she also at the same time becomes integrated into that of her husband's acting as a joining link between the two families. A married daughter in important ways bridges the gap between the two families or households. She is not primarily transferred from one to the other, she connects them, she combines them and contributes to them becoming close relatives (*yeqin tughqan*).

7 The Social Implications of Close Marriage

This chapter discusses three topics in their relation to the logic of close marriages, the meaning of affinity and marriage constituting social units. Firstly, the meanings of kinship terms and terms for kinship and their use are discussed. Here, once again the local de-emphasis of genealogy and the performativity of kinship become clear. Then the logic of close marriage and affinity is described as providing important conditions of possibility for divorce and serial monogamy. Lastly, some less ideal marriages in Kashgar shall be mentioned that do not meet the ideal of making the affines close relatives and may not even strive for it. Other marriages differ from the ideal in other ways but retain a relation to this ideal, which is central for the local conceptualisation of marriage.

7.1 Kinship terms and "relatives"

A striking feature of the kinship terms used by the people in Kashgar is the difference between their linguistic etymology and the meaning established by their use. The literal idioms for kinship are descent oriented, but neither is the kinship practice nor the actual use of these metaphors. The words which literally translate into 'relatives' (*tughqan, qérindash* and *qandash*) are only rarely used to mean exclusively consanguines, but mostly include affines, close neighbours and other close relations. When used in a more restricted sense these words signify a much smaller group (such as exclusively siblings), likewise not compatible with the category of 'consanguines' of either alliance theory (those not marriageable on grounds of kinship) nor with that of descent theory (genealogically related kin: cognates or agnates). Even in the restricted sense the terms may include affines and other non-genealogical connections. The common expressions for kinship or relatedness in Uyghur have their metaphorical basis in filiation, descent and birth. Yet, the way they are used today is not defined over these criteria, except in special cases.

Tughqan

The most common Uyghur term for kinship is *tughqandarchiliq*, accordingly a relative is called *tughqan*. The words are etymologically connected to the verb *tughmaq* meaning 'to give birth' (Bellér-Hann 1999: 226). But only in special cases is the term used to mean exclusively genealogical connections of cognatic or agnatic descent (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 220). In most other contexts, the term is used for agnatic, uterine, affine relations, relations of spatial proximity, exchange and trust, and stands for close social relations in general. *Tughqan*, is the most common idiom for lasting close social relations entailing trust and dependency. This is also the most common meaning of the word and the one which carries most significance for the phenomenon of close marriage. It is defined not through descent, but through giving, trust and dependency and thus comes close to Carsten's concept of relatedness (2000, 2004) and Sahlin's understanding of kinship as 'mutuality of being' (2013). Different forms of giving make up

important aspects herein, but also spatial and bodily practices, living quarters, seating and greetings are instrumental in creating *tughqan* (relatives). The neighbours of an elder man whose children lived far away told me that they were his only real *tughqan* since they were taking care of him, helping on his field, regularly inviting him for meals and eventually would be the ones to lay him in his grave. I experienced how even in a legal sense 'relatives' came to include non-genealogical *tughqan* when the headmaster at a school, according to the rules, required a relative to sign the student out for some days leave. This was done by a close friend of his elder brother, who was clearly considered a *tughqan* both by the student and the headmaster. Another young man earnestly considered applying for a Turkish family visa (for visiting relatives) in order to go and see a very good friend, with whom he had lived in Beijing, but to whom clearly no genealogical connection existed. These examples illustrate that it is not genealogy which defines who is a relative and who is not. The affines, too, are included in almost all uses of the terms for kinship and are generally seen as close relatives, increasingly so as the marriage process proceeds. The frequent exchange and high expectations between affines defines them as close relatives in the performative sense, which is relevant in most contexts. With the exception of the own sibling group, affines are often more important and closer related than consanguines. Abdurehim Hebibulla calls the affines relatives, but not 'direct relatives' (*quda tughqanlar biwaste tughqanlardin hesablinmisimu…*; 2000: 232, cf. Mut'ellip Hüseyn 2002: 149), while Enwer Semet Qorghan even shows how affines can become *qandash* (lit. of one blood, close relatives): "*qudilishish arqiliq peyda bolghan qandashlar*" (blood relations created through affinity; 2007: 109). The different words for relatives (e.g. *uruq-tughqan, qérindash, qandash, bir-tughqan*)overlap in use and meaning. Though all authors and people I discussed these words with in Kashgar agree that they have different etymologies and often quite clearly defined literal meanings, this is not how they are used, and most Uyghurs I asked reflected this discrepancy.[111] Many of these words are generally used synonymously with only slight variations of meaning. They are classificatory terms (Barnard and Good 1984: 60-61), but their use can be better described as inclusive rather than classifying. Differentiation is made in relative terms, e.g. by using attributes like *yéqin* (close) and *yiraq* (far; see Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 230).

Terms and terminology

Kinship terms have been one of the central areas of study and theory within kinship studies (Fox 1967: 240-262, Barnard and Good 1984: 37-66 Haller 2005: 213-215). Kinship terms are quite easy to access and provide valuable insights into local categorisations (cf. Fischer 1996: 5-8, Barnard and Good 1984: 26-29). In classical kinship theories, kinship terms were often treated as a system, i.e. as terminology. This system could then be analysed for its formal properties (componential analysis, cf. Barnard and Good 1984: 51-57, Goodenough 1956) and for its classificatory qualities (cf. Dumont 1953, Trautmann 1981). In structural analyses kinship terminology is often seen a more or less direct access to local categories (Needham 1973). As

111 A whole range of terms for kinship and for relatives exist in Uyghur that are not treated separately here: *uruq-tughqan, qérindash, qandash, bir-tughqan,* (and *bir-newre and ikki-tughqan*). A more throughout study of these different terms their etymology, literal definition and actual quotidian use will be the focus of a separate article.

Dumont puts it: "I hold that kinship terms, being the terms in which the people actually think their kinship relationships, are more important than the terms in which (they tell us that) they think they are thinking" (Dumont 1983: 155, cf. Needham 1973). Yet, while in systems of elementary structures the kinship terminology may very well provide an almost direct access to the level of local conceptualisations, in the case of Kashgar many terminological traits must be approached with more caution since they are not fixed categories clearly divided off from each other, but rather communicative tools used to express closeness, inclusion, honour and respect. Kinship terms do not only have structural relations, but also provide a performative aspect as terms of use. This aspect is more difficult to access, since it requires situational and oral discursive analysis, which is only possible during longterm fieldwork (Barnard and Good 1984: 40). Newer kinship theories have been more concerned with the performative and less with the systemic aspect of kinship terms (Sahlins 2013: 22, Carsten 2004: 18, 76, 187). This is also the aspect of predominant relevance to Uyghur Kashgar and to the present argument. Nevertheless, I will still to some extent treat the kinship terms in their structural relations to each other as constituting a 'terminology,' since precisely these systemic relations give them their performative force.

Between address and reference terminology

Classical kinship theory draws a distinction between terms of address (used when addressing a person directly) and terms of reference (used when referring to someone in third person; cf. Haller 2005: 213, Barnard and Good 1984: 40). Traditionally, the analysis of terminology has been predominantly concerned with terms of reference, while terms of address have been analysed for their performative aspects. Yet, in Kashgar we find a third area of the usage of kinship terms between these two, which I call the area of practical reference terminology. This practical reference terminology must be differentiated from the strictly descriptive reference terminology in that it has much more of a performative element and is used much more than the strictly descriptive terms.

A) The address terminology keeps to the so-called 'Hawaiian system'[112] in ego's generation (G 0) and to a qualified so-called 'Eskimo system'[113] in the parents' generation (G+1). All men of the same generation are addressed as brother (*aka, ini, ika*, depending on relative age) and all women as sister (*acha, ɔingil*, depending on relative age). All men of the parents' generation are addressed as elder brother (*aka*) or uncle (*tagha*) if they are younger than the own father or have children younger than oneself. In case their children are elder than ego or if they are themselves elder than ego's father they are addressed as father (*ɔaɔa*), mostly adding their name (e.g. Memet-*ɔaɔa*). Women of the parent's generation are in the same way addressed as mother (*ana, apa*), aunt (*hamma, apa*) or elder sister (*acha*).[114] To address someone close in other terms would sound insulting and distancing. A lot of play is given to use these terms in communicative

112 In a 'Hawaiian system' terminology all relatives in one's own generation are classificatory brothers and sisters, all relatives of the parents' generation are classified as mothers and fathers.
113 In an 'Eskimo system' parents are terminologically distinguished from aunts and uncles, and siblings from cousins.
114 The terms for 'mother' and 'father' are generally applied for close relatives — again not just for genealogical relatives, but for relatives defined over closeness, dependency and exchange.

strategies, e.g. as honorifics in certain situations.

B) The strictly descriptive reference terminology adheres to the Eskimo system in the parental generation (G+1) and a qualified Eskimo system in the generation of ego (G 0). When defined according to the standard dictionary usage, which is strictly genealogical and which is known to people in Kashgar as the way it 'really' is or should be in an abstract sense, parents (*ðaða, ana*) and their siblings are clearly distinguished, but no difference is made between paternal and maternal uncles (*taghа*) or aunts (*hamma, apa*; cf. Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 231). In ego's generation, siblings and cousins are distinguished, but only by a prefix (*newre-…*) added to the usual terms for siblings (cf. Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 232-233). One further important local qualification of the generational systems here referred to must be added: Generations are not always the deciding criteria for the use of terms. Instead, relative age plays in. Younger brothers (*ini, uka*) are differentiated from elder brothers (*aka*) and the same goes for sisters (elder: *achа*; younger: *ʊingil, uka*) and in some areas even for parent's siblings, who are differentiated by their relative age seen from the parent's perspective. Furthermore, the address terminology displays an element of vertical generations (Grønbech 1953: 26-28, Chen 2012: 64). All relatives elder than the own parents or who have children elder than ego are called by the terms of generation +1 (*ðaða, taghа, apa, hamma …*), while those younger than the own parents or with children younger than ego are called by the names of generation 0 (*aka, achа …*).

C) Of most interest is the area in-between reference and address terminology, the area that I call 'practical reference terminology'. This consists of the most commonly used terms for reference purposes (when talking about someone). People in Kashgar do not usually employ the standard genealogically rendered reference vocabulary that is found in a language learning book or a dictionary, or that informants will list (albeit often with some uncertainty) when asked abstractly out of context. Such strictly descriptive reference terminology is rarely used to refer to relatives in practice. Instead, the terms of address are used for reference, too, in a modified or deviated form. The modification consists in a metaphorical limitation of the terms whose use is concentrated around a smaller core of people than when using them as terms of address. For example, while ego addresses many people as *aka* (elder brother), he refers to some of them as '*akam*' (my elder brother) when talking about them in third person. The practical reference terminology describes a closer circle than the address terminology, but it is still a circle that includes many non-genealogical connections. This area of practical reference terminology is created when the terms and the logic of address terminology, are taken over into the realm of reference terminology. As mentioned above, the address terminology is often used to communicate inclusion and respect towards those addressed, while reference terminology is more about categorisation. This is why the latter has been particularly important to classical kinship theories, while the former, the more performative address terminology, has been of more interest to theories of practical construction of relatedness (the newer kinship theories, Carsten 2004: 18, 76, 187). The practical reference terminology in Kashgar is used much like address terminology to communicate inclusion and respect - and to constructively perform or to re-present (de Coppet 1992a: 64-66) this inclusion. The terms are almost identical to those used as terms of address, i.e. they constitute something akin to a Hawaiian terminological system extending the designation of classificatory 'brothers' and 'sisters' to all relatives.

Keeping in mind the local words for relatives and their meanings elaborated on above, we recall that being a relative in this sense means being tied to each other by obligation, trust and dependency i.e. by different degrees of mutuality of being. Calling someone a relative reconfirms this connection and also creates and deepens it. So, being related and having this relation explicitly named is 1) something relative, that may change with the context and the circumstances depending on the discourse and situation); and 2) something gradual, with a centre and a periphery, but without clear cut borders between degrees of closeness. Kinship and its terms mark the highest degree of social closeness and it is used beyond genealogical connections, despite its genealogical root metaphors and etymology. Therefore, the kinship terminological practice is not characterised by classification, by the function of dividing relatives into different categories. Rather, it is characterised by speech acts (Searle 1969) of inclusion and its function of performatively creating closeness and kinship. Kinship terms in Kashgar do not, as in alliance theory, primarily sketch out a linguistic map of the categorisation of relatives. They are employed as tools for creating social relations through linguistic inclusion and expressions of closeness.

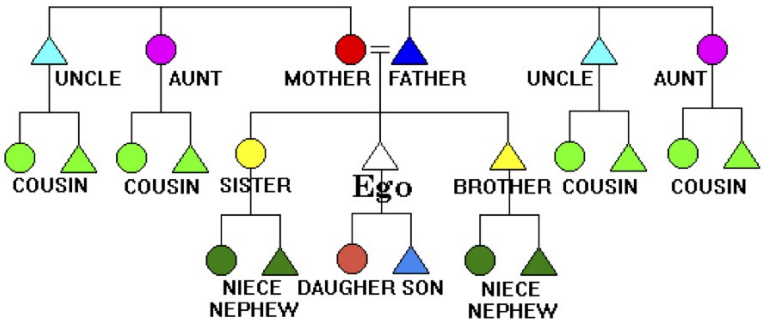


Fig. 35 The structure of an 'Eskimo'-type kinship terminology. In Kashgar this is relevant for understanding the official standard reference terminology. Disclaimer: This chart depicts stereotypical systems modeled purely on descent. It is merely a heuristic tool to better understand the structure of the terminology and does in no way do justice to the use of kinship terms in Kashgar.
(Source: http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/anthropology/tutor/kinterms/termsys.html#top)

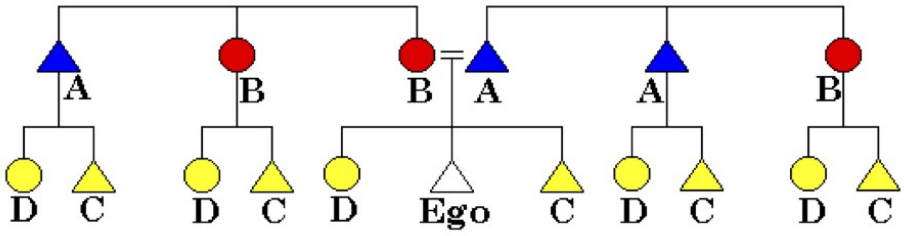


Fig. 36 The structure of a 'Hawaiian' type kinship terminology. In Kashgar this is relevant for understanding the address-terminology and the practically used reference terminology. Disclaimer: This chart depicts stereotypical systems modeled purely on descent. It is merely a heuristic tool to better understand the structure of the terminology and does in no way do justice to the use of kinship terms in Kashgar.
(Source: http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/anthropology/tutor/kinterms/termsys.html#top)

Metaphorical and non-metaphorical uses

In light of a performative and non-descent oriented conceptualisation of kinship and use of kinship terms, Chen's observation that Uyghur students at a boarding school in mainland China were calling each other "brother" though they were not (genealogical) brothers, becomes more understandable. The students actually did not, as Chen suggests, "imitate family and kinship style networks" being far from home (2008: 162-163), they performatively created closeness. Kinship is the central idiom for closeness and therefore a natural communicative strategy to enter into, construct and express close social relations including friendships. The example opens up the more general question of metaphorical and non-metaphorical uses of kinship terms. There is no doubt that some usages of kinship terms (*aka, acha, uka, apa*) or of terms for kinship are used in a sense that we could call metaphorical. The waitress in a restaurant is addressed as "*ukam*" (my younger sister), strangers on the street are addressed as "*aka*" (cf. Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 233), all Muslims are called *qérindash* (relative, lit. of one womb) and someone from the same oasis is called *tughqan* (relative). These discursive uses of the terms do clearly not imply the same as they do when they are used within one household, family or community. They do not imply mutuality of being or long-term trust and dependency. But they invoke these connotations in a communicative strategy. I would like to make two qualifications for the trope of the metaphor as applied in this context: Firstly, the division between non-metaphorical and metaphorical use of terms does not run along the lines of genealogy. Secondly, there is no clear cut border between metaphorical use and non-metaphorical use, but rather a 'certain principle of gradation or hierarchy' (cf. Foucault 1999/1972: 18-19) between the meanings invoked in different contexts through using the same term. The common Western reader assumes the metaphorical use of kinship terms to start where she would draw the line between kin from non-kin — i.e. differentiating based on whether genealogical connections exist or not. Yet, as we have seen above, kinship in Kashgar is not primarily defined genealogically. Therefore, the border between metaphorical and non-metaphorical use of kinship terms rather runs along the lines of mutual trust and longterm dependency. As these are relative terms, a clear line of differentiation is difficult to mark. Instead of a clear border it is more useful to see the shift from literal to metaphorical usage as a gradual change from a periphery to a centre of meaning, a 'principle of gradation or hierarchy.' Which use is in the centre and periphery is situationally determined and is also subject to historical change.

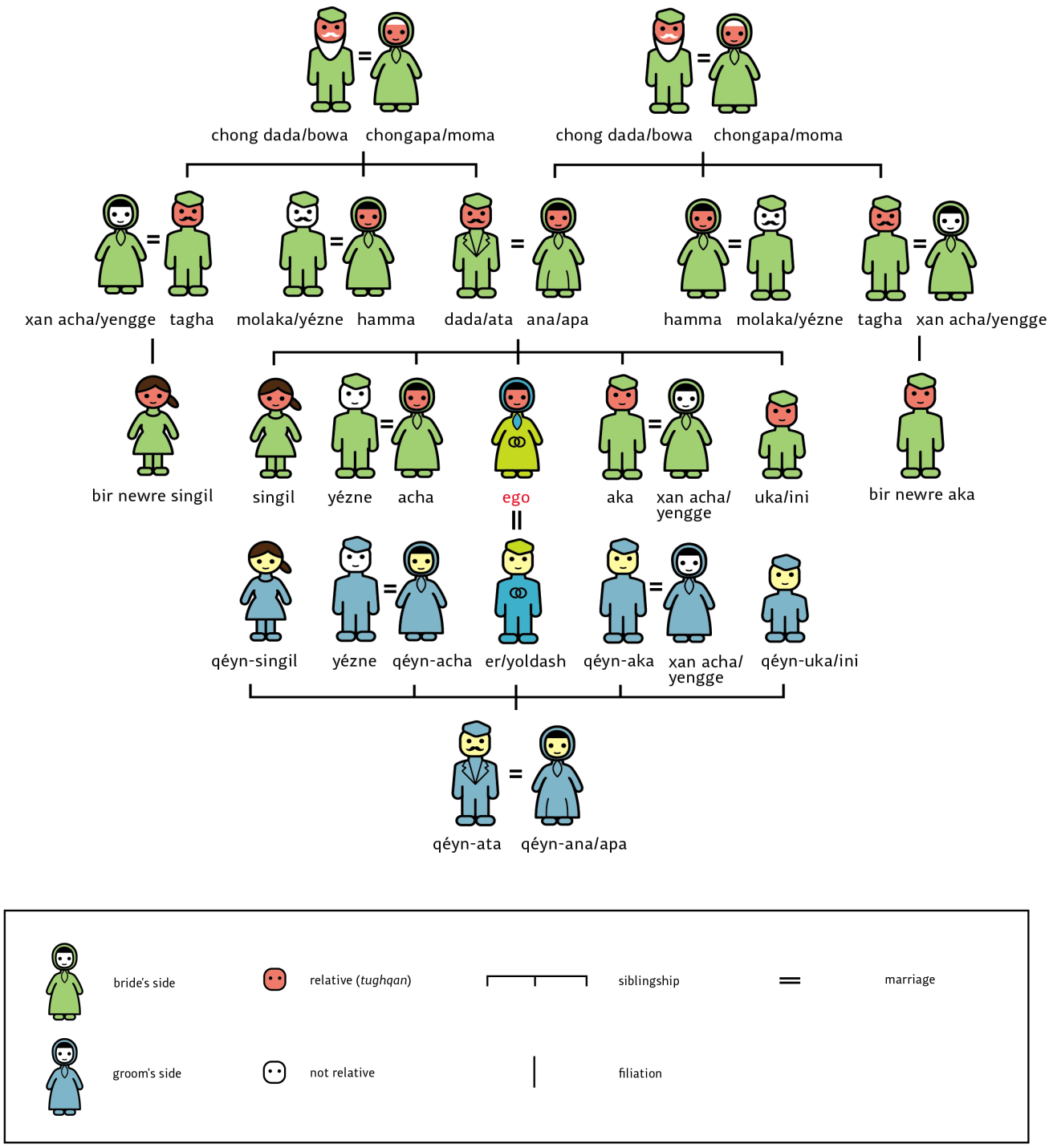


Fig. 37 The official standard genealogically rendered kinship reference terminology and genealogical definition of relatives as kin in a genealogical chart. This corresponds to the dictionary definitions, but is not how the terms are mostly employed in quotidian discourse. (Design by Steenberg and Zheng)

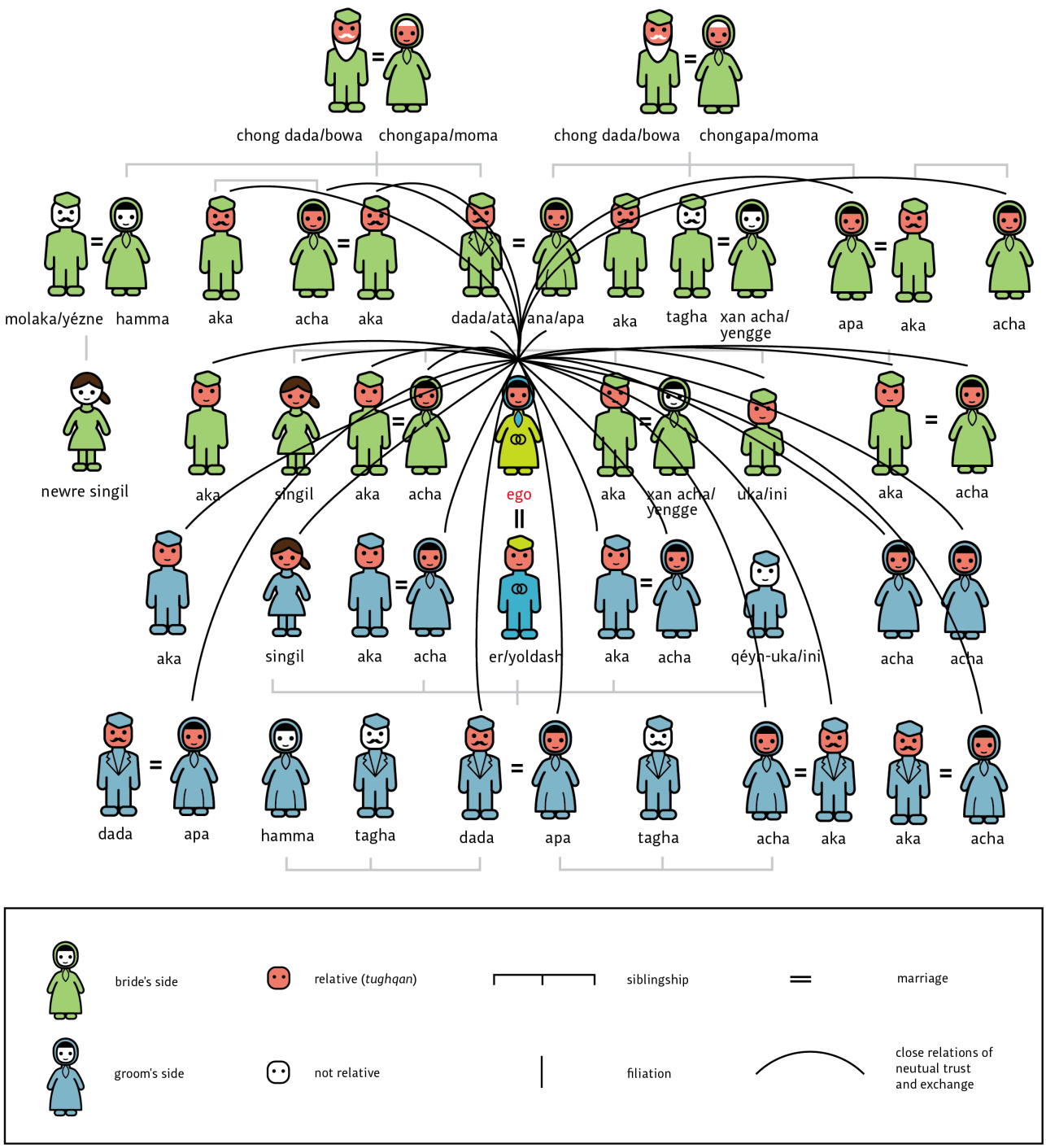


Fig. 38 The practical kinship reference terminology as used most in Kashgar. The genealogical connections neither determine the inclusion as relative (*tughqan*) nor the exact use of kinship terms. This depends on gender, relative age and on relations of mutual trust and dependency including intensive exchange. (Design by Steenberg and Zheng)

The uncle (*tagha*) within terminological phenomena

Recognising the performative kinship conceptualisation and the according use of kinship terms for inclusion, instead of for categorisation makes a lot of seemingly random properties of Uyghur kinship terminologies better understandable. All these properties of kinship terminology in Kashgar can be demonstrated in the use of the term *tagha* (uncle) and its use and non-use.

While denoting only the mother's brother (MB) in most Central Asian contexts including some Uyghur groups in Aqsu, Ghulja (Ili) and Qumul, the term *tagha* in Kashgar is used for both maternal and paternal uncles (MB and FB), like in standard Uyghur.[115] This shows the generally cognatic conceptualisation of genealogical kinship, and also hints at the inclusive and non-categorising use of kinship terms. The terminological differentiation of the two types of uncles is found among the Kyrgyz, Tajik and Han in Kashgar, as well as among Uzbeks in the Ferghana Valley and Uyghurs as close by as Aqsu and is known to Uyghurs in Kashgar. The practical distinction of the two is even relevant in some contexts such as the explicit rendering of genealogies, inheritance and imaginaries of blood-descent, but not in others such as the close marriage and exchange, and it would be potentially insulting to draw up the distinction too clearly. Thus the difference is terminologically negated.[116]

Reduction of terms, compound terms

In some villages in Beshkérem and in others near Hotan, no separate terms exist for uncles and aunts. Instead, they are called by the terms for siblings (*aka, ini, uka, acha, singil*) and parents (*dada, ata, ana, apa*) depending on their and their children's relative age.[117] This can be attributed to the fact that the usage of terms from beyond the closest circle expresses a relative distance, which is avoided. Though this distance exists and can be detected in e.g. exchange relation, bodily conduct and spatial practices it is not expressed explicitly in the use of terms, since these terms are primarily used to express inclusion and honour. Thus in these villages, terms implying relative distance are not used and a Hawaiian terminology system becomes more fully established. Urges to refrain from expressions that imply a relative distance may more generally explain why so few of the existing kinship terms are actively used in daily communication and why so many different terms have been adopted seemingly unsystematically and sometimes quite locally. Even within the social contexts where the term *tagha* is known and used, it hardly ever figures as a term of address and is consequently also used very little as a practical term of reference. Instead, the term *aka* or a compound expression like *dadamning akisi* (my father's elder

115 Cf. Friederich and Yaqub 2002: 153, Engesaeth et al. 2009: 122-123, Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 109-110.
116 At this point I can only speculate why the dominant term has become that for mother's brother (MB, *tagha*) instead of the former term for father's brother (FB), as e.g. in German language where the old term for MB *Oheim* was replaced with the term for FB *Onkel* (cf. Pfeffer 1987: 120-123). It may be connected to the shrinking of the family and the weakened agnatic ties. Thereby the function which the father's brother once had disappeared and he became in some ways a stranger like the mother's brother by 'moving out of the family'. Thus he was called *tagha* which was more suitable for a more distant relative. It may also be connected to the change in marriage strategies from exogamous matrilaterl cross cousin marriage (MBD-marriage) to close or endogamic strategies including patrilateral parallel cousin marriage (FBD-marriage). In this case the term for mother's brother (*tagha*) may have meant at the same time 'a (potential) wife's father' (like in the Dravidian and other 'prescriptive' terminology, Trautman 1981, Dumont 1953, cf. Needham 1973). The moment the father's brother's daughter became marriageable (*namehrem*) her father also became a *tagha*. This shift in marriage strategies may have been due to Islamic, Arabic and Persian influences. This remains to be researched.
117 An uncle or an elder cousin are also often referred to as *akam* (my elder brother). An uncle elder than ego's parents and with children elder than ego will mostly be addressed and sometimes referred to as *dada* (father), adding his name (e.g. *Memet-dada*, 'father Memet'). The same is true for the denominations *acha* (elder sister) and *apa* (mother) for close women. The more intimate terms *ata* (father) and *ana* (mother) are usually not used like this in Kashgar. Here these two words are used in accordance with a 'Hawaii system' terminology while in some villages near Hotan these terms are also used following an 'Eskimo system' terminology.

brother) or *chong apamning balisi* (my grandmother's child) are used. Similarly, the terms *newre aka* and *newre ini* (elder and younger cousin) are likewise often circumscribed as *taghamning balisi* (my uncle's child) or *apamning singlisining balisi* (my mother's younger sister's child). The term *jiyen* (nephew, niece) is much used in literary publications and in some parts of Xinjiang, but it is hardly ever used in quotidian practice in Kashgar and some people are not even familiar with it. In its place, compound terms are used, like *akamning balisi* (my elder brother's child). Another rarely used term is *yezne* (elder brother-in-law), which can mean both elder sister's husband (eZH) and wife's elder brother (WeB), but is most often called *aka* (elder brother) or circumscribed with compound terms.[118] Compound terms describe connections rather than establishing categories that connote relative distance and are therefore seen as less offensive.

Local variations

A lot of local variations can be found in the kinship terminology. This is not surprising, if we do not view it as a terminology used to categorise, but as terms of use communicating inclusion and honour. The use of each term is free to change following local peculiarities and new influences, by not being bound into a terminological system as tightly as in contexts where kinship terms are used primarily to classify relatives into distinct categories. In some locations, different neologisms following similar patterns are in use. In rural Atush, the eldest uncle can be called *uz dada* (lit. beautiful father), while in parts of Kashgar an uncle can be called *tatliq dada* (lit. sweet father), an aunt can be called *umaq ana* (lit. cute mother) and the grandmother *ulugh ana* (lit. great mother) instead of *chong ana* (lit. big or grand mother). These terms figure between nicknames and kinship terms. They clearly communicate affection rather than categorise. In some parts of Aqsu, Qumul and Ghulja and probably in several other places in Xinjiang, only the mother's brother is called *tagha*, while the father's brothers are called *kichik dada* (lit. small father, father's younger brother) and *chong dada* (lit. big father, father's elder brother) respectively. In most of these cases, the standard term for aunt (*hamma*), used for both maternal and paternal aunts in Kashgar, is only applied for the father's sisters. The mother's sisters are called *kichik apa* (lit. small mother, mothers younger sister) and *chong apa* (lit. big mother, mother's elder sister). This creates a differentiation reflecting parallel- and cross- relatives and resembles an Iroquois type terminological system in the parental generation (+1). But it is not continued into ego's generation, that of cousins.[119] Also the terms *dada* and *ata* for father vary from place to place. In Turpan *dada* can mean grandfather (Wang 2004: 118), while in Kashgar it means father (cf. Friederich and Yaqub 2002: 153). Likewise, variations exist in the terms for grandparents, both *chong dada, chong apa* (grandfather, grandmother) and *bowa, moma* (grandfather, grandmother) are used. In some places, the latter pair denotes the great-grandparents. Similarly, *apa* in most places means mother, while in Üstün Atush and some other places (and contexts) it means elder sister

118 Additional terms have existed in the past but have since disappeared, such as *yuyuq* (wife's younger brother) *iqi* (husband's younger brother), *baldiz* (younger sister of a male ego) and *aga* (wife's sister; Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 110).

119 In other places it is the father's sisters that are differentiated (see. Abdukérim Raxman 2008: 109-110). These interesting variations could be fruitfully approached in a separate study. Differentiating between maternal and paternal aunts and uncles seems to be connected to the strength of agnatic solidarity and the importance of descent groups — both very weakly developed in Kashgar.

(sometimes pronounced *papa*). The two words for mother to most people in Kashgar carry different connotations of affection, *ana* being more affectionate than *apa*, but the difference in use is here more dependent on social groups: *ana* is associated with tradition, while *apa* is more in use among 'modern' oriented and government cadre families.

Flexible pairs

According to the structuralist approach to terminologies, terms are to be collected and presented in pairs (Barnard and Good 1984: 50). Since kinship terms denote relations and relations offer at least two perspectives (the two outer points connected by the relation), the terms used by each person in the relation respectively should complement each other. A table of such pairs of terms naming kinship relations is easy to draw up in Kashgar applying the standard terms as used in abstract discourse on the topic.

Yet, when looking at the terms in practical usage within address terminology or within practical reference terminology, this pattern no longer applies: Often *tagha* (uncle) is not opposed to *jiyen* (nephew, niece), but to *singil* (younger sister) or *qiz* (daughter). The same is true of *aka* (elder brother) or *acha* (elder sister), which are both opposed to *uka*, *singil* or *ini* (younger sibling, younger sister or younger brother) in a standard terminology, but may practically also be opposed to *qiz, oghul* or *bala* (daughter, son or child). Here, the generations play a subordinated role, while the main clear structural constant is relative age and gender. Gender is especially important in the older part of the pair and may be omitted for the younger part: both boys and girls, men and women can in Kashgar be called *uka* (younger sibling), *balla* (child), or *jiyen* (nephew/niece), all of which may or may not be qualified by *oghul* (boy, son) or *qiz* (girl, daughter). Lastly the central pairs are *dada/ana//bala* (father/mother//child) and *aka/acha//uka* (elder sibling//younger sibling). All other pairs are derivatives. The exact choice of terms is motivated by the communicative intention and carries the nuances of the context, and often terms beyond these words for siblingship and filiation (such as *tagha*) carry connotations of distance. In rare cases even the criterion of relative age may be used manipulatively. A friend of mine kept referring to his younger cousin as *akam* (my elder brother) because he was religiously learned. In other cases it can be used ironically, rebuking a younger person not displaying the adequate humility by addressing him or her with a honorific term connoting a higher age and importance.

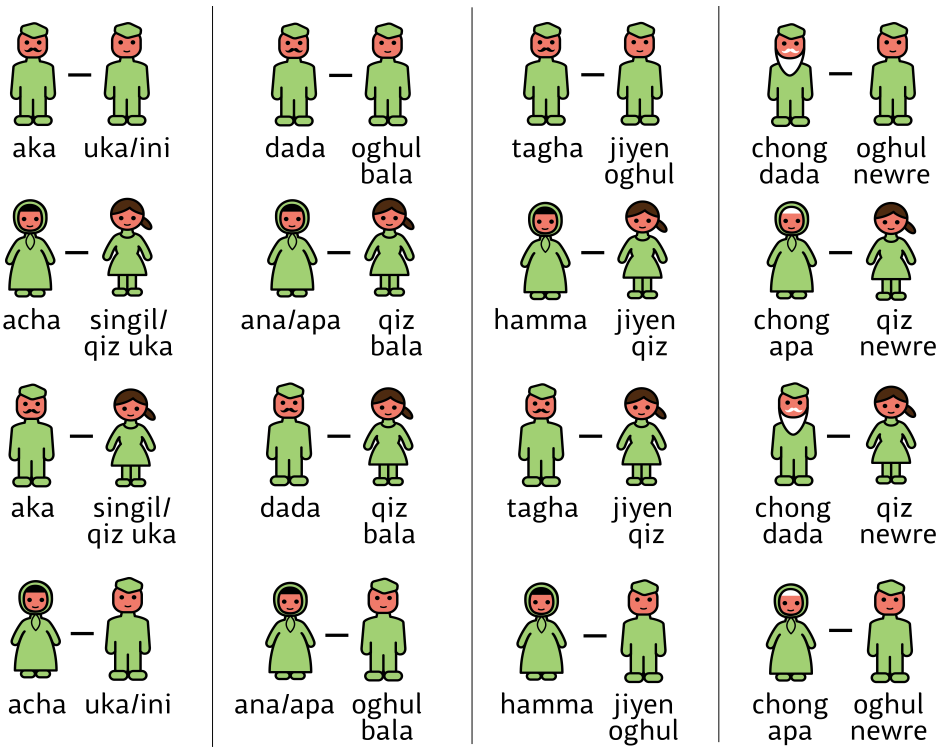


Fig. 39 Important pairs of kinship terms as given in the official standard reference terminology in Kashgar. (Design by Steenberg and Zheng)

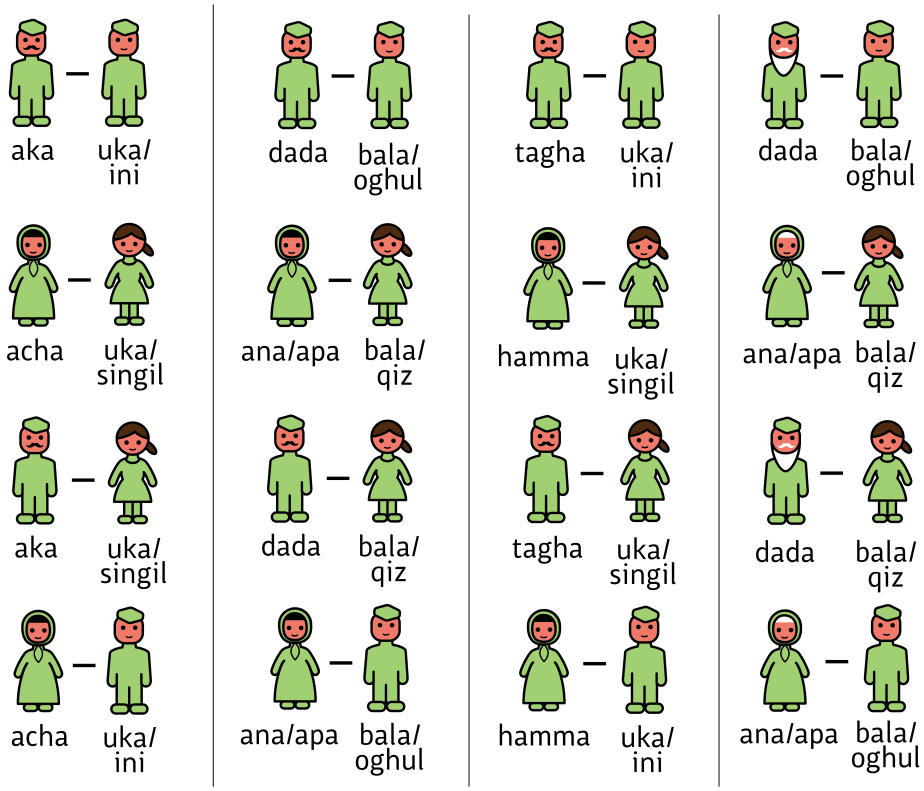


Fig. 40 Important pairs of kinship terms as mostly used in the practical reference terminology in Kashgar. These pairs in this figure match the pairs of the official standard reference terminology provided in figure 39 above. The pais in the third column, featuring *tagha* and *hamma* are relatively rarely employed; instead people will usually use the terms of the first column, featuring *aka* and *acha*. (Design by Steenberg and Zheng)

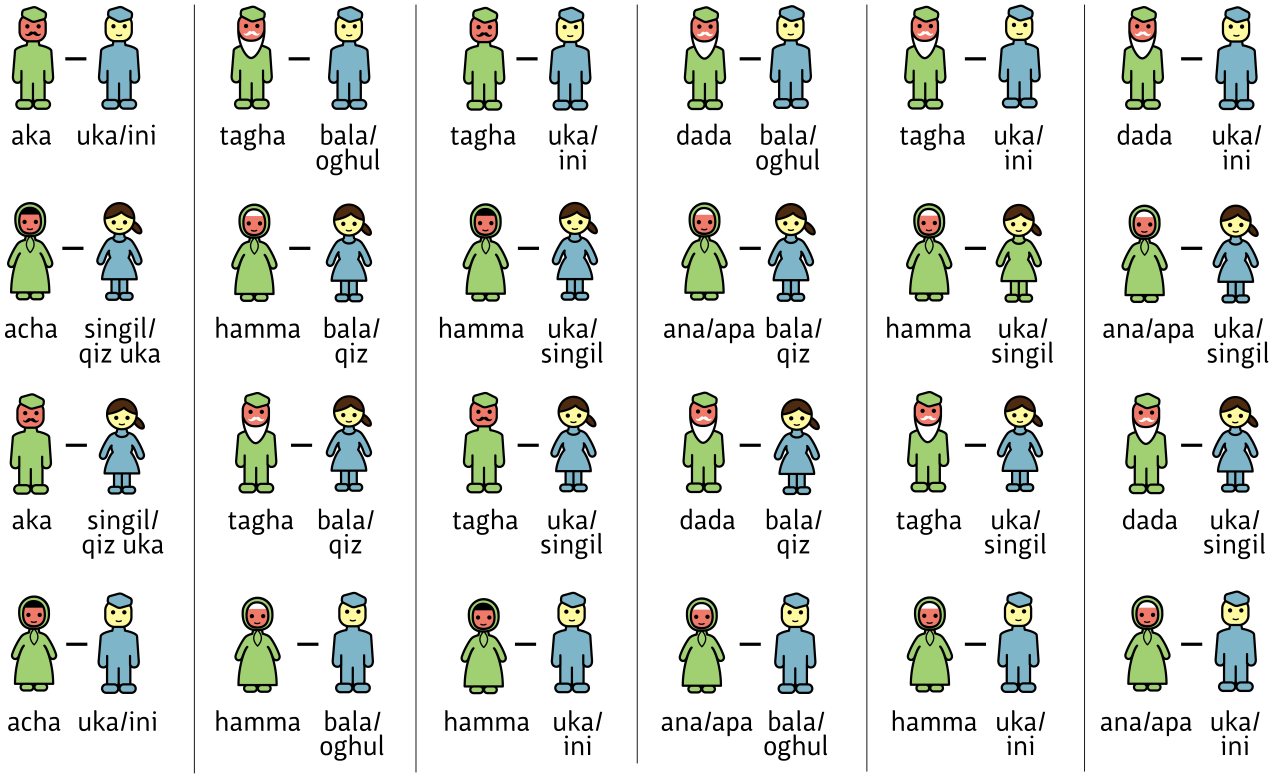


Fig. 41 Variations of pairs of kinship terms applied in address and practical reference terminology among distant relatives and non-relatives. All pairs reflect relative age and the gender of the elder part. The gender of the younger part is mostly reflected, too. The exact choice of terms depends on the context and the closeness of the relation as defined by exchange trust and mutual dependency. (Design by Steenberg and Zheng)

Titles and kinship terms

Often kinship terms are used as honorifics. This can be a metaphorical use, but the terms carry this aspect in their most ordinary use as well, as age is connoted with honour, and kinship with respect and affection. Kinship terms like *aka* (elder brother) are used to address superiors and people of high status. Other terms have entered into kinship terminology from more political uses expressing honour and submission. *Tagha* is most likely a Mongolian word introduced into the area during the Mongol conquest and rule as a title or honorific way to address a Mongolian lord or official.[120] *Xan acha* (elder brother's wife) is another example. The term includes the title *xan* (king, emperor) and is likely to have been used as a honorific for a high official's wife, and a general honorific for women before being adopted more generally as a kinship term (cf. Bellér-Hann 2008a: 227, Sulayman 2007: 113). The same goes for the term *mollaka* (cf. Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 232), which is a honorific for religiously learned men and today means elder sister's husband (eZH). He is called *yezne* in standard Uyghur, but this term is hardly used at all and is unknown to many people in Kashgar. The standard term for elder brother's wife is *yengge* (Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 232). We came across this word above, where it denoted the women that accompany the bride to the groom's place on the evening of the wedding, prepare

120 Cf. Rybatzki 2009: 217-218, cf. Clauson 1972: 474, Zieme 1985: 231, Cleaves 1949: 109, 73, Yamada 1993: 285.

the nuptial bed and bring the first morning meal (*nashtiliq*) on the following morning. To many people in Kashgar, *yengge* denotes just this function and not any durable kinship relation. Whoever is *yengge* at the wedding will cease to be it afterwards: *"A'ilidin teyilengen, turmushqa pishqan, tejribilik bir ayalni yengge qilip ewetidu"* (the family appoints a mature and experienced woman to be made *yengge* and send her; Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 222). Here, a kinship term becomes a role instead of a title becoming a kinship term. Generally, the border between honorifics and kinship terms is blurred since they in many ways are used similarly and fulfil the same functions, and the hierarchy of these term's different meanings is often tilted in favour of the honorific meaning rather than to the genealogical one.[121]

7.2 The social conditions for serial monogamy

Divorce and remarriage - or as Bellér-Hann has suitably dubbed it, serial monogamy - are a wide spread and important phenomenon in Kashgar. Divorcees are not stigmatised and re-marriage is relatively easy. Though each case offers different personal motivations and goals, I assert that there is a close connection between the wide acceptance of divorce and the logic of close marriage, as described above. To put it briefly: It is the ideal for affines to be central relatives. This is achieved through choosing spouses from families that have the potential for becoming such — preferably close social relations. In case the affines cannot be made into close relatives, one of the most essential functions of the marriage is not fulfilled and the marriage process is not completed. It is not reversed, but merely disrupted, never to be concluded. Instead, the vacant position must be filled by a new spouse from another family with whom affinal relations can be entered into. This fits well with the strong connection of married women to their natal home (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 282) and to their sibling group. It is also related to the ideal of the two families becoming one and the tensions connected hereto. Certainly, many divorces exist that do not follow this basic logic, but the general tolerance and acceptance of divorce, its cultural conditions of possibility, derive in part from it.

Divorce in early 20th century

A high frequency of divorce and remarriage among Uyghurs in the southern Oasis towns of Xinjiang is well documented reaching at least a century back.[122] These sources show that divorce and re-marriage were accepted practices in early 20th century Kashgar making marriage "an enduring institution, which did not rely on particular individuals for its rationale; rather, it successfully survived shifts in 'personnel'" (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 259). A divorced wife was compensated way beyond her *mahr* and children were shared between the two divorcees, mostly

121 Besides the Mongolic, old Turkic, Arabic and Persian influences, similarities to the Punjabi context can also be found: *Kudam* in Punjabi means the father of a child's spouse (ChSpF; Das 1994: 216) and thus comes very close to the Uyghur term *quda* (ChSpPa). *Dhian* is an affinal gift in the Punjab (Alvi 2007: 668-676), which resembles the term for nephew in Uyghur: *jiyen*. These connections can be further explored in a separate analysis.

122 Newby 2007: 24, Högberg 1917: 111-113, Cable and French 1927, Dunmore 1983, Macartney 1931, Skrine 1926: 202, Benson 1993, Hoppe 1998: 132-133, Rudelson 1997: 88, Högbjerg 1917, Wang 2010, Albert von Le Coq 1985/1928: 37, Warikoo: 1985, Forsyth 1875: 90, Iskhakov 1975: 43, Dunmore 1993: 337; Grenard 1898: 118-9, see Bellér-Hann 2008a: 262, 273, 282.

by gender (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 264). A crucial point is that marriage is a desired state of life for adult men and women, so that re-marriage is always strived for. Benson (1993) demonstrates both extreme and more modest cases of serial monogamy. Especially beautiful women were said to marry often to gain wealth and social standing (Rudelson 1997: 88, Benson 1993: 233, Skrine 1926: 202). Though divorce was relatively easy and unproblematic (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 261-262, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 135, 139, Adburehim Hebibulla 2000: 250) and had no stigma attached, it was still seen as a misfortune and frequent divorcees were looked down upon, as the following old rhyme attests to: "*Birge tegken yaxshi, ikkige tegken baxshi. Üchge tegken ayaldin texeylik éshek yaxshi*" (a woman who has married once is good, a woman who has married twice is a witch, and a pregnant donkey is better than a woman who has married thrice; Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 139). In Kashgar today divorce is regrettable, as are many other things in life, but it is no anomaly: it is a common social institution.

Divorce in contemporary Kashgar

"According to Uyghur informants who work at the Family Planning Office, the divorce rate among Uyghurs in Turpan is low, though it is extremely high in the south of Xinjiang," Rudelson wrote about the 1990s (1997: 88), a view echoed by Clark (1999: 134). Xinjiang has by far the highest rate of officially registered divorces in China and the Uyghur part of the population has an even higher rate (cf. Wang and Zhou 2010: 6, Yaqup 2009). Furthermore, an equally remarkably high rate of remarriages is identified in Xinjiang by Wang and Zhou (2010). During my year in the city, I acquired information about around fifty cases of divorce. More than half of my acquaintances have been married more than once, some of them even several times. The highest number I came across was a man who had been married seven times, but three times is not unusual (cf. Hoppe 1998: 133). "*Nechchelik öylengen?*" (how often have you been married?) and "*nächchilik öy tutung? Kanchiliq boldi?*" (how often have you married? How long did they last?) are common questions among adult men. The word *boytagh* which means unmarried or bachelor is also used for the interim period between divorce and re-marriage (Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 252, Abdukérim Abliz 2011: 49).

The process of divorce is simple. No religious ceremony is needed, though some say that it needs to be witnessed by a *molla*. While it was always easy for a man to divorce, women's right to initiate divorce has been strengthened during the communist period and today many divorces are initiated by women. The official divorce papers are easy to acquire. The household wealth is divided or a high compensation paid to the wife. When dividing the household wealth the woman's gold does not enter into the equation, since it is her personal property. Some say that women who keep their son with them must be given land, while those who keep a daughter should be given money. The children can stay with either side (Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 251). Young children are likely to stay with the mother (till age seven), while many will practically stay with grandparents to allow the woman to remarry (Bellér-Hann 2004a: 183-185). The compensation to be paid to a divorced woman, by state law, is seen by many men as a heavy economic burden and some separated couples stay married because of this (cf. Bellér-Hann 2004b: 18, 2008a: 263-264). Such matters are often settled by the communities' elders and rarely go before the state courts, but the women's strong stand in these courts has an effect on how the

matters are settled outside the courts, since the threat of going to court lingers in the background. Divorce is called *ajriship ketmek*. The auxiliary verb *ketmek,* used in this expression carries the implication of suddenness and unintendedness. To divorce someone can also be called *uni qoymaq* (to drop her or him) or *xetni bermek* (to give the marriage document back). The last idiom feeds into a narrative of divorce being a modern phenomenon connected to the state administration and not a traditional or Muslim custom. This is a widespread view today, but one that does not hold historically (cf. Benson 1993, Rapoport 2005). It makes up an element in grander narratives attributing 'moral decay' to 'modern influences.' These narratives are closely tied up with neo-traditional and religious ethno-national sentiments and counter strongly modernistic narratives of positive development in all areas of society that are also very present in Xinjiang.

Enwer Semet Qorghan (2007: 138) offers a more differentiated view on these connections: "*En'eniwi uyghur jem'iyitide nikahtin ajrashqan ayallarning jem'iyet teripidin yaman köülmeslik yaxshi bir adettur, biraq, bu öz nöitide ajrishishning köiyip kétishini keltürüp chiqarghan amillarning biridur*" (traditionally divorce has been accepted, or at least not sanctioned against, which in itself is a good thing, but it has been a factor facilitating divorce to become as frequent as it has). The latter development is certainly seen as a bad thing (cf. Abdushükür Muhemmet-imin 2002: 113). A book by the public health publishing house in Ürümchi informs about "*ajrishish we uning ziyani*" (divorce and its harmfulness), as the title reads (Memtimin Yaqup 2009). This illustrates that today, as in the early 20th century, the lasting monogamous marriage is the ideal strived for and divorce connotes shame and failure (cf. Bellér-Hann 2004a: 188; 2008a: 249, 260-262, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 135, Zaili Memettursun 2012: 7). The much quoted expression that "Uyghurs see marriage as a lifetime trade," illustrates this well (*Uyghurlar toy ishi 'ömür sodisi' dep hesaplaydu*; Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 237, cf. Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 126, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 214). Several local customs within the marriage process are explicitly said to counter the probability of divorce: Unmarried men are in some places excluded from the *nikah* ceremony,[123] the best man (*qoldash*) should not be someone who has been married more than once, and the same goes for the woman responsible for the ceremony of *sanduq échish*,[124] which is rarely held in Kashgar city any more. If she has been married more than once, it is inauspicious for the lasting of the marriage (Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 123, 125, 130, 133). These practices show both the undesirability and the relative commonness of divorce.

Divorce is an accepted practice in Kashgar. Many even see it as the best solution to severe problems between spouses or their families. Especially when quarrels have involved the wider families, when honour has been hurt or one side feels publicly disgraced, it is almost impossible to continue the marriage. As a young man put it: broken bowls cannot be repaired. If it is not a good match (*layiq talash*) divorce is the logical solution, followed by the next marriage: "… *ajriship kétishi hayatning tügillinishidin dérek bermeydu. Shunga, hemme kishi ajrashqandin kéyin yene layiq kélidighan jora izdeydu*" (divorce is not the end of life, therefore all people will search for a

123 As we have seen above, this is certainly not the case in Kashgar today, where *nikah* readings are used as spaces for religious education of young men.
124 Here wedding gifts are publicly shown. This still takes place in Üstün Atush and other rural areas around Kashgar, but I never saw it in Kashgar.

new fitting spouse after getting divorced).[125] In order to remarry, the blessing of the family including the own parents and grown children is required (Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 252). Children may even be expected to help search for a new spouse for their parent in the case of the death of the other (Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 138).

Possibilities of divorce

While some people hold the view that divorce destroys families and individual lives, others see it as a necessary course of action if the marriage is not a happy one, i.e. if the partners do not suit one another or if the families do not get along. Divorce is regrettable to all, but very few dismiss it categorically. Divorce cases and plans to divorce are discussed among men and women; pros and contras are weighed against one another. Divorce and re-marriage can even become self-chosen elements in complex marriage strategies. Young men and women mention divorce as a strategy to escape the pressure of their families, being good kids and "giving their parents face" without giving up their own personal agenda. The parents' wishes are adhered to at the first marriage, on which a relatively quick divorce follows, after which they can more freely pursue their own personal goals. In one case I heard of, a young couple in love that could not get their parents' blessings, each followed their parents wishes and married other people only to divorce and be free to marry each other later. Especially for women, a divorce can grant an unprecedented amount of personal freedom. A young woman told me that she intended to study in Ürümchi, the provincial capital, but her parents would not let her go fearing her corruption in the big city out of reach of the family. She had made a plan to marry the man suggested by her father and subsequently divorce him if this man would not let her go off to study.[126] A late marriage or the pre-marital loss of virginity is to many families a much greater scandal and disgrace than divorce. Clark has made a similar point for intellectuals in Ürümchi in the 1990s among which divorce was much preferred over not being married (Clark 1999: 147-148). The shortest marriage I have heard of in recent times was between maternal cousins in their teens that lasted a mere 15 days. Benson highlights the strategies of privileged 'much married women' using divorce and re-marriage for their own striving for wealth and status (1993: 233, cf. Rudelson 1997: 88, Bellér-Hann 2004a: 183). Similar stories can be found in Kashgar today. In his comedic sketch '*kona ayagh*' (old shoes) Abdukérim Abliz depicts a modern 'much married woman' obviously in control of marriage and divorce, seducing men into marriage to rip them off and leave them (2011: 49-56). While nothing points to women generally being the beneficiaries of divorce on any large scale neither today nor in the 19th century (Benson 1993: 234-36), the communist marriage laws have given women a large number of rights and divorce cases before a judge are dreaded by men in Kashgar, fearing severe economic losses. In general, women seem to have quite a bit of agency in such cases as is expressed in a humorous saying in Kashgar today: "*ajriship keting anilar, konap ketti ata, balilar*" (mothers, get divorced, the fathers and children have become old and boring).

125 Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 138, cf. Bellér-Hann 2008a: 236, Memtimin Yaqup 2009: 149.
126 Since she would no longer be a virgin after the first marriage her parents would be less concerned, she told me. This goes well with the above description of the meaning of virginity at marriage as concerning the religiously lawful (*halal*) transfer of a girl to the state of a woman.

Reasons for divorce

The most often expressed reason for divorce is a lack of offspring. Infertility is by many Uyghurs in Kashgar ascribed to the partners not being fit for one another (Bellér-Hann 1999: 127-128). The cognatic model of genealogical kinship is clearly reflected in the local procreation beliefs, as is the ideal of marriage as "an enduring institution, which did not rely on particular individuals for its rationale" (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 259), an institution aimed at, among other things, producing offspring.[127] The local understanding of marriage as a process comes into play here: The birth of children is an important step in the process. If it is not reached, the marriage is incomplete and the process not fulfilled. Thus the marriage becomes void and invalid, divorce being the logical consequence. Divorces rarely happen after the birth of several children, when the families are drawn closer together. In Abdukérim Abliz's sketch '*besh milyionluq xiyal*' (the 'five million' imagination) a woman imagining that she has won the big prize in lotto tells her husband: "*balaning dadisi bolup qaldingizghu bolmisa birinchi almashturidighan nersi siz de!*" (you happened to become the father of our children, if not, the first thing to renew would surely have been you!; Abdukérim Abliz 2011). These examples illustrate the local conception of marriage as a process and the meaning of divorce that is tied to it: it changes gradually within this process. There is no clear conceptual difference between a marriage breaking apart before or after the wedding *toy* and the religious ceremony *nikah*. The birth of a child most certainly makes a much more important difference. A similar logic may be observed in cases where the ideal of the marriage, to turn the affines into central close relatives, cannot be met. Abdurehim Hebibulla mentions childlessness as the first reason for divorce, then follow emotional problems between the spouses, unfaithfulness, and lastly, strife between the two sides (2000: 250, cf. Clark 1999: 187). Zaili Memettursun even places the quarrel between affines (*quda*) in the first position, as the most frequent reason for divorce (2012: 19). Such fights evolve between either spouse and their parents-in-law, concerning discussions over whether or not the wife may work outside the home and prominently rows over gifts given and not given (cf. Bellér-Hann 2004a: 190-191), especially in the initial phase. This is the reason why many elders do not believe in love-matches. If the families do not know each other and do not get along, the marriage will most likely be short-lived, they say. As has been elaborated on above, affinal relations are loaded with high expectations, lingering disappointment, fragility (*nazuk*) and fear of the affine's dissatisfaction. It is not uncommon that quarrels over the *toyluq*, the *ashsüyi*, the expenses and gifts at child birth or inadequate hospitality lead to divorce.[128] One woman chose to halt the marriage process of her daughter after the engagement, because she was worried that neither of the two sides would be able to satisfy the gifting needs of the other, since one family was from the village and would require labour help, while the other was from the city and would expect other kinds of gifts.

Though personal reasons for divorce are common as well, many marriages are dissolved over disputes between the families. Like marriage, divorce is certainly not a purely individual affair. Just like relatives and friends influence marriage choices, they also have a strong influence on a

127 A much quoted saying states: "A house without children is like a grave, while a house with children is joyful and lively like a market place" (*baliliq öy bazar, balisiz ö mazar*; Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 245). This saying is often quoted to discredit the one-child policy on the basis of Uyghur traditions.
128 Cf. Zaili Memettursun 2012: 7, Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 243, Bellér-Hann 2008a: 265.

decision to divorce. This is very different from some other Central Asian contexts in which divorce is not an established social institution, but rather figures as an exception. Anderson describes divorce among Pashtuns as the triumph of the right of the individual over that of the group (Anderson 1982: 21-25, Berrenberg 2002: 61). Among Uyghurs in Kashgar, divorce may very well also be the triumph of the group over the individual.

Divorcing over gifts may seem ridiculous at first, and this is also the light it is put in by those dominating the public discourse: Government campaigns, modernistic oriented authors and intellectuals and religious leaders all speak out against such divorces in particular and against the high importance of gifts more generally. Yet, in a local logic that focusses on the exchange community and considering the centrality of affinity, it is not that ridiculous after all. Consider the following premises: 1) Your household is dependent upon social relations to acquire jobs, business contacts, and even government resources (such as a passport or credits for house building). 2) Descent connections beyond the sibling group are weak and not to be depended on (and following the one child policy there are not that many siblings). 3) Affinal relations are a sure thing (every child must marry!) - in a way 'given' as Viveiros de Castro puts it for Amazonia (2009: 252-259). They are not given in the sense that they are predetermined within a certain genealogical category (as in alliance theory), but in the sense that they are expected to be made into close relatives, i.e. trusted and lasting exchange relations to be depended on. The affines are expected to provide key social relations. 4) Gift giving is an indication of what can be expected from a family, of its generosity and of its positive sentiments towards oneself. Furthermore, verbal communication in Kashgar is highly formalised and extremely polite, many things being said indirectly and many indeed being communicated through giving.[129] Thus not giving enough can be a subtle way of communicating disinterest and a hint that not much should be expected in the future. Bearing in mind the potential of affinity, this may be too great a loss for a given family who will then (on top of the hurt feelings connected hereto) decide to stop the relations on a very rational ground.

Differing divorces

The divorce rate in and around Kashgar varies much from area to area and community to community. Beshkérim is known for very high divorce rates and easy re-marriage. A friend from Kashgar city told me how men in Beshkérim were even willing to take the ex-wives of their friends and relatives. He found this shameless. In Beshkérim, he said, one wrong word or a missing gift from the relatives could lead directly to divorce. Similar things are said about Maralbéshi. Though such labelling should always be viewed with suspicion, in the case of Beshkérim it very much fits my own observations. On the contrary, places like Peyzawat and Yerkent are said to have comparably low divorce rates and a relatively stronger stigmatisation of divorcees. The reasons for this are yet to be studied more closely.

129 The indirectness or implicitness of this way of communication is of course only such to the outside observer not familiar with the idiom. This is even the case for many non-Kashgarian Uyghurs coming to Kashgar, who are not used to looking for the hidden meaning. "Gepning *tegide gep bar*" (there is a word at the bottom of what was said) is a common way to express this multilayered communication. By those accustomed to the idiom it can be felt as extremely direct.

A quite common occurrence in Kashgar city is the re-marriage of a divorced couple (Abdushükür Muhammetimin 2002: 113, Aburehim Hebibulla 2000: 250). Children are most often mentioned as motives for this. The aborted marriage process is taken up again and continued. This fits well with seeing divorce as an interruption of the ongoing marriage process and not as its reversal. I experienced several such cases during my time in Kashgar and Högberg's (1917) wedding description likewise features repeated re-marriage of the same couple. Both in Uyghur texts and in the Hedaya (Hamilton 1957/1870), this theme is discussed and was of relevance in pre-socialist Xinjiang too (Adburehim Hebibulla 2000: 250-251, Bellér-Hann 2008a). The kind of re-marriage depends on the kind of divorce: In cases where only "*talaq*" has been spoken (the Islamic code for a man divorcing his wife) a new reading of *nikah* suffices to re-marry the couple. In other cases, it involves the payment of a new *toyluq* even if, as in most cases, none of the first *toyluq* was returned at divorce. Further, a new wedding is often held. Sometimes the spouses may have been married to others in the meantime. A proverb cited in this connection says that the horse will always find its way back to its trough.

In her article "A Much Married Woman," Linda Benson (1993) explicitly takes up the issue of divorce in Kashgar to discuss the life and position of women in Uyghur society in late 19th and early 20th century. She poses the question of why divorce was so widespread, and how it could come to be, that some people married a modest number of three or five times, while others seemingly reached numbers of 30-40 (Benson 1993: 233). Benson suggests a connection with the Shia institution of *mut'a*[130] marriage (temporary marriage; Benson 1993: 236, 244). The material quoted in her article suggests the existence of different kinds of marriages that imply different kinds of divorce (cf. Bellér-Hann 2008a: 278). In Kashgar there is a tradition for, and a recognition of, some kind of marriage on time, that exists up until today. The 40 divorces mentioned by Benson are likely to be related to this kind of marriage. But other cases of women of wealthy and well situated families which have been married three to five times (Benson 1993: 232) cannot possibly be explained by marriage on time, since it would completely contradict so many other aspects of religious and emotional culture in Kashgar. Today, certainly no ordinary woman in Kashgar would enter into a marriage on time, neither would her family allow her to do so. Of the many divorces I encountered during my time in Kashgar none were marriages terminated at a certain time, agreed on at marriage. All of them seemed the unfortunate outcome of emotional distress and structural conflicts. But the phenomena are not without a connection. The cultural acceptance of divorce provides the conditions of possibility for utilitarian divorce strategies, the tolerance of temporary marriage and repeated re-marriages — but it doesn't grow out of any of these practices. The conditions of possibility (Bourdieu 1976: 147) for these social

130 *Mut'a* marriage is a Shi'ite custom whereas almost all Uyghurs in Kashgar follow Sunni (mainly Hanafi) traditions. The word is not used in Kashgar today and is hardly mentioned in older sources. That does not mean though that a similar practice cannot exist. If we view Islam as a discursive tradition (Asad 1996: 14-15) being defined not through rigid border delineation but through family resemblance of its various parts and branches, then it should not surprise us to find this kind of conflation. Locally even orthopraxis is negotiated and is dependent on the distribution of definatory powers (Schrode 2009: 396, 417). At the same time this practice might not be one brought in by Islam, but one arising out of local conditions and conceptions. Actually what Benson sees as *mut'a* may actually be a local custom distinct from this Shi'a custom and based in the acceptability of divorce more generally. The phrase '*mut'a*' hardly shows up in any of the old sources (Bellér-Hann: personal communication).

phenomena are unlikely to have emerged through individuals using or abusing the opportunity of divorce. To believe this would be a functionalist fallacy of inverting cause and effect. Both marriage on time, the strategic utilisation of divorce and re-marriage require an environment that does not sanction remarriage of divorced persons, where divorcees are not stigmatized and where divorce and "serial monogamy" (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 219) are common and accepted practices, where, under certain circumstances, divorce is seen as a reasonable choice or the proper way out of a bad situation. This acceptability of divorce is, I suggest, connected to the ideal of affines having to become close relatives and to procreation beliefs. If for some reason the fulfillment of the marriage cannot be achieved (be this the birth of children or the creation of central relatives through affinity), the marriage process is aborted. The divorce itself is then merely a formal consequence of the failure of the marriage process to produce close relatives through marriage (making the affines close relatives) or children. Sometimes the process is taken up again (re-marriage), sometimes it is attempted in a new constellation. The importance of affines and their ambivalent status make marriage choices very crucial for any household, expectations are high, the situation is tense and disappointment lingers. The honour of the household is at stake, as are the relations to the local community involved in the process. Therefore, not only does the process break down easily; in certain situations, it is even seen as a sensible choice to opt for divorce. Seeing marriage as a process of producing central relatives allows an understanding of the important social conditions of possibility for the phenomenon of frequent divorce and serial monogamy in Kashgar. The logic of close marriage historically lays the base for the social acceptance of divorce in Kashgar. The fragility of marriage makes close relatives marriage even more of a sensible choice, since it removes some of the central risk factors of the marriage. But it also makes marriage with too close relatives risky because of the disturbances in family relations a divorce would effect (Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 236). Besides the importance of affines and the ideal of them becoming central relatives, several factors further help to facilitate divorce. As seen above, the fact that the bride is not completely transferred into her new family makes the marriages less stable (Tapper 1991: 16-18, Berrenberg 2002: 55). Generally, cognatic systems like the one in Kashgar feature more unstable marriages than stronger agnatically ordered social systems (Barnard & Good 1984: 119). Also the lenient Hanafi view on marriage as a contract that can be cancelled facilitates divorces in general. The domain of marriage prestations contributes to comparatively easy divorces: No land is given as dowry, that could complicate matters and mostly husbands and wives keep their property separated within their household and wedlock. In Kashgar, the comparably low and balanced wedding prestations are by some said to likewise facilitate divorce, especially in the early phases of the marriage process (Rudelson 1997: 88). Yet, as the above has shown, this relative ease of divorce and remarriage is closely structurally tied to the ideal of making the affines central close relatives.

7.3 Marriage ideals and less ideal marriages

Not all marriage processes are like the one described above! Further, the connection drawn up above between close marriage, a performative kinship conceptualisation, the importance of affinity, the creation of social units and frequent divorce, is not to be misunderstood as a mechanical model. Neither does each element depend on the others in any given particular instance, nor do the connections between them always follow the patterns laid out above. Other types of marriages exist that follow other logics. The ideal of making affines close relatives is not always achieved and not even strived for in every concrete case, but it is reflected in the fabric of the wedding procedure, as the events of *toy neziri, way béshim, tartishmaq, öy körsitish* etc. bear witness to. Affines become (or are reconfirmed as) close relatives over the course of the extended marriage process. This stretches over several life cycle events and the birth of children, but also includes mutual visiting at religious holidays and help with everyday chores and at feasts. All these are important steps to make affines a part of the family (cf. Bellér-Hann 2008a: 278). The context of Kashgar features not just a high frequency of close marriages, but also a conceptualisation (an ideology in Dumont's terms) of marriage and affinity that is centrally based upon associating marriage with social closeness. Thus the connections described above are central and important because they contribute to shaping the more permanent values, conceptualisations and practices to which all practice relates and against which it is measured. The logic of making affines close relatives is not guiding in all marriages, but it figures as a point of reference in all of them — even when this ideal is not strived for. Other strategical goals can be pursued in marriage and through marriage choices and a close marriage can be explicitly denied in order to display autonomy ('our household is not dependent on the community to find spouses'), that one is well established ('our standing within the community is not dependent on marriage alliances') or may be a question of necessity if no match is found within the closest realm.

The marriage process described here and the logic of close marriage is of a certain type, which is not representative of all Uyghur marriages in Kashgar. The logic inherent in this type of marriage is especially relevant for families deeply embedded into a closely knit local community and especially with regard to the marriage of the first children. What gives this kind of marriage its special significance is not foremost its frequency (I estimate that a good 40% of all marriages in Kashgar basically follow the logics and outlines described above), but the fact that it comes very close to a local ideal of what a marriage is supposed to be. This ideal is present at every marriage and strongly influences both the way the process is carried out and the way it is evaluated by the participants. A look at the local literature on customs and marriage (often inspired by ethnic ideologies of the nationality policies of the communist party and indifferent to local variations) and into sporadic descriptions in Western scientific publications, give pretty much the same picture of this certain kind of marriage. This is a marriage with a big wedding held by a relatively wealthy man with a big house in an established neighbourhood (*mehelle*) for his first son. This is the ideal wedding, and it clearly has a male bias as it is seen from the groom's side and presupposes virilocal post-marital residence of the new couple. This local ideal has been accepted and adopted, copied and reproduced by people writing on the subject, scientific and

non-scientific, local and foreign. This is not surprising. These are the weddings that Uyghurs are proud to tell and write about and that a foreign guest is most likely to be invited to since people are proud of them and like to show them off. Yet marriages like this do not account for even half of the conducted marriages in Kashgar. Circumstances lead to other kinds of marriages that lack different aspects or elements and different individual and household strategies can be followed. This is especially true for second and third marriages and for late marriages or marriages of elders. All non-ideal marriages in various ways relate to the ideal marriage and the logic of close marriage connected to them, as described above. Still, in a scientific discourse, this ideal cannot be made to represent marriage per se. Looking at non-ideal marriages gives us insights into the workings of the different elements. I suggest to look at these variations not from the centre of the ideal, but as transformations of each other relying on a common conceptual framework, responding to variations in the conditions of possibility.

Less ideal marriages

The high frequency of divorce results in a large amount of second, third and fourth marriages (Wang and Zhou 2010). These have different ceremonial elements and somewhat different functions than first marriages. In such marriages, the *toyluq*[131] is reduced and often no *qiz méli* is given beyond the nuptial bedding and some rituals are left out (Manvlanjan Memettursun 2012: 19, Bellér-Hann 2008a: 249). The concern is often more with creating a functioning household unit than with the forging of wider kinship links. Especially women have a lot more influence on their partner selection in subsequent marriages (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 260). One crucial aspect missing at second and third marriages is the life cycle celebration (cf. Dumont 1980: 114-116). Strictly speaking, only the marriage ceremony of the first marriage of a person qualifies as '*oghul toyi*' or '*qiz toyi.*' Neither of the celebration's objects nor the household of the parents undergo any significant status change through such a wedding. This reduces the size of the celebration and the involvement of the wider community. At such weddings the groom is not carried by his peers and the bride is not accompanied by more than two female relatives when going to the groom's place. Also the role of *qoldash* (best man) is often omitted. At one wedding, which was not the first one for either, the groom's side lived quite far away, so a relative of the bride pragmatically offered to cook the pilau for the early morning communal meal (*toy neziri*). A similar reduction of the life cycle aspects of a marriage often takes place when a second or third son marries, since only the groom's status is affected and not that of his parents. This also reduces the importance of such marriages within the neighbourhood. Likewise, first marriages at an advanced age (often delayed because of an inability on the grooms side to pay the *toyluq*), can be held on a very small scale reducing large events like the communal morning meal, since in these contexts, they carry an element of shamefulness. For similar reasons the most festive and youthful elements as well as those stressing the person of the groom are mostly omitted, such as the afternoon dancing, the *yigit eshi* and *yigit chéyi* (big portions of pilau and tea for the groom) and the throne for the groom. Even the elements central in constructing the affinal relations may be compromised in marriages

131 In case it is the bride's first marriage, the full *toyluq* is given regardless of the number of marriages of the groom. In such a case, the *toy* is a life cycle ritual for her and is likely to be held as elaborately as any big wedding, only excluding some of the young men's parts (*yigit*).

where the necessity of creating a new functional household around the conjugal unit is very prominent. This is often the case at marriages of elders. Many elder men and some women who have lost their spouse marry again, though mostly with minimal ceremony and without formal registration. The weddings of elders are usually celebrated within very close circles without any public events and involving only a few elders from the neighbourhood. The religious ceremony and commensality make up the core of such small weddings. The same is true for some polygamous marriages held in secrecy. The relation between the ideal and less ideal marriages is, in local discourse, expressed mainly as one of deficit. Parts are omitted and the scale of the celebration and the marriage prestations is reduced. But in a more structural view, these marriages stress other aspects and facilitate other strategies than the more ideal ones.

Couples who are not living in the community that they marry in tend to emphasise the participation of the relatives rather than that of the local community. In rural Atush Patigül and Enwer's families agreed to omit the events *chong chay* and *sewze qelemchemu"* and other visits before and after the wedding itself. They could afford to do this because the couple would not be living in the community, but near Ürümchi, and because their siblings had already married and the households of their parents did not owe the community a large feast. In the case the couple not holding the wedding where they live, but in their parents' community, this becomes a celebration primarily for the parents. The events involving youths are reduced, as is the dancing, and the size of the event depends much on the standing of the parents within the community. Weddings of the last children in a sibling group mostly do not influence the status of the parental household and can be kept relatively small. Often additional celebrations are held for friends and colleagues in the town of residence of the couple. In less tightly knit local communities, events before and after the wedding, such as the *onbeshkünlük* are often reduced in size and held only for the closest members of the two families, who also meet on other more informal and intimate occasions. Here the two sides get to know each other, which is important, but the neighbourhood is given no role. This is happening on a massive scale in Kashgar city as an effect of the spatial fragmentation of the city caused by modernisation, increased mobility and the demolition of the old city. In the case of a marriage between very close social relations or of a couple that has dated (*muhebetleshmek*) for a long time the meeting of the two families in the initial phase and the negotiation phase of the marriage can be reduced to one meeting to save resources, since less need to be discussed and decided.

Minimal marriages

Some circumstances, such as the marriage of elders, polygamy or poverty, call for very small or minimal marriages that are basically stripped of all ornaments and extras. They fulfill only the absolute necessary conditions of a marriage. These events make up what could be called the essence of what defines a marriage in a local understanding. If one asks about such a definition, almost all will assert that the *nikah* ceremony suffices. But the practice clearly shows that the *nikah* does not exist as an isolated event. It is only the religious sanctioning of a process involving other crucial factors. Furthermore, *nikah* ceremonies vary much too. In an article on weddings in

Tajikistan, Roche and Hohmann have drawn attention to the practices of *nikah* showing much more consistency than the *toy*, which varies widely from region to region and over time (Roche and Hohmann 2011: 119). While this points to an important local distinction (that between *toy* and *nikah*), it does not agree with my perception of variations and constants in Kashgar or more generally Central Asian marriages. Certainly, basic elements of the *nikah* ceremony laid down in the Qur'an and central texts of the Hanafi legal school give certain unquestionable constants, but the practice of the *nikah* ceremony varies quite widely: the *nikah* may be held in the morning or evening, at the bride's place or the groom's place, at a neighbours house or at a public wedding hall; the bride may be present or not, listening in or not; bread and salt may be used in the ceremony or not and, a long speech may be held by the *molla* or not. Who is present, who receives gifts or money, which side provides for and pays the *molla*, what is said, what is stressed and so on varies much. Reading the accounts of *nikah* ceremonies in earlier times or from adjacent regions, I find as much variation as within the *toy*-parts.[132] Taken to a certain level of abstraction, the *toy* likewise contains many constants. Rather, the variations and relative constants correspond to a different analytical distinction: the distinction of elements concerned with creating a proper and acceptable marriage in a local understanding on the one hand, from elements concerned mainly with constituting social relations on the other hand. Looking at minimal marriages in Kashgar that I have witnessed or heard about during my stay, the following elements constitute the basis of the process, being essential and non-omittable: 1) A visit of representatives from the groom's side to the bride's side (mostly women) including commensality, 2) the *nikah* ceremony, 3) the transfer of the bride as an event, 4) hospitality offered by the groom's side to the bride's side, 5) presents for the bride from the groom's side (cf. Bellér-Hann 2008a: 248). Initial visits, mutual hospitality, the religious sanctioning and gifts for the bride make up the essentials of the marriage. These essentials allow for the two persons to live together within their community, and also provide the basis for building up affinal relations. This does not seem to have changed much over the past 100 years (cf. Bellér-Hann 2008a: 248-249, Forsyth 1875: 84, Högberg 1917, Clark 1999). This minimal structure features the main elements of an ideal or big wedding. The crucial difference between 'small' and 'big' weddings is whether it is about 'just conducting the marriage' or to what extent the wedding also aims at satisfying the demands of local community for reciprocity or status claims (ambitions) of the two households and how much effort is put into making the affines close relatives.

Local variations - Dialects of social relations

The elements that are central in re-presenting and constituting social relations are subject to great local variation (Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 140). In one village in rural Atush, cloth is given to all neighbours on the wedding day, while in the neighbouring village it is only given to close relatives . On the other side, hospitality is more lavish in this neighbouring village. The *yüz échish* may be held in the evening or in the morning, as may the *nikah* and practices like *ashüyi*, *ishik taqiwaldi* and *tartishmaq* (see above) are completely unknown in many rural areas. The

132 Cf. Hoppe 1998: 124-128, 134-135, Wang 2004: 184, 199, Schrode 2007: 47, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 129-130, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 219-220, Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 129, Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 255.

amount and kind of dancing and music likewise varies greatly and while the carrots for the big communal meal are cut by the female neighbours and relatives in Kashgar city, in rural Atush this is done by elder men. These are all elements of the marriage concerned with constituting social relations, subject to great variation and to creative inventions. They are a flexible form of communication and as such liable to change. The extent of local variation seems closely connected to endogamic tendencies, which create quasi-closed marriage systems and relatively closed exchange circles formed as exchange communities around life cycle rituals. The systemic and relatively closed nature of the exchange cycles allows different communities to develop in different directions and puts pressure on all involved households within the community: everybody has to follow suit when one (mostly wealthy) family innovates manners in the community. The closed-ness of the system means not only that the same households will visit each others life cycle celebrations, but also that what is given through one such celebration can only be returned in a similar one, not through other favours and gifts in other contexts. This guarantees a high degree of adaption within local communities, since innovation is favoured by the competitiveness in the community and also quickly copied in the name of reciprocity. Whoever does not follow suit loses face. Much as linguistic dialects these 'local dialects of giving' are influenced by time, place and class. Tendencies of close marriage or endogamy of whatever kind support these crystallisations of local variations. The marriage process, being fragile, it is certainly much more prone to breakdown when the involved parties speak different ceremonial dialects — especially those concerning exchange over which, as we have seen, many divorces are instigated. This is supported by the fact that it is a highly sensitive communicative process laden with sentiments of honour and pride, at least as much as with strategic considerations. Further, in this process much is indicated and little is stated explicitly. As we have seen above, the form of many of these ritual or condensed formalised customs is much less important than the content communicated in them. This contrasts them to 'ritual proper' as defined by Connerton (1989). Therefore, variations in name and form of the events do not necessarily alter their basic function much. Their variation of elements in the marriage process concerned with creating social relationships over time and location, does not make them less important. They underlie transformations, but on a larger scale prove quite resilient to various forms of social engineering. Neither stately nor religious attempts to reduce the cost and complexity of marriage celebrations or of *toyluq* have achieved any great success. This surely must be attested to the social relations negotiated in the *toy* being of the utmost importance to the people and the *toy* being equally important to the relationships. As shown above, good social networks and communities are essential for managing daily life and are the backbone of social security for a majority of people in Kashgar. They are often preconditions for access to markets and to the services of state institutions.

Structure, ideal and practice

The logic of close marriage producing affines as close relatives (turning them into or confirming them as such) is a local ideal that figures centrally in the structure of Uyghur social practice in Kashgar. The term 'structure' here serves as a convenient shorthand for two areas

which reflect my interest in relations on two levels:

1) Social structure, as the British School of Social Anthropology was interested in - the social relations between persons and other social units, their institutions and rights and duties

2) Structure, in the structuralist sense, meaning the cultural relations of concepts and values

These two 'structures' are related, though they are not the same, and their relation is not straightforward, but a rather complex one. It is my proposition, that they should not be viewed in isolation of one another. It is an aim of this thesis to bring them together. This includes analytically dealing with the very complex relations between ideal and practice in this particular setting. Differentiating between ideal and practice does not just concern people saying one thing (that can be constructed as a model or system) and doing another (that is chaotic, unsystematic and in which each pursues his or her own profit maximising interests). Even where social actions do not follow the explicitly uttered ideals, they are still regular ('*regelmäßig*'), though not rule-guided ('*der Regel gemäß*'; Wittgenstein, Bourdieu 1976: 162-164). The regularity is not identical to the patterns found when analysing the explicit rules and not even to those found in explicit verbal categorisation (cf. Needham 1973). Instead, this regularity is inherent in all social action, which is in complex ways oriented towards the same cultural ideals and values as both rules and verbal categories (cf. Holy 1989: 111, Berrenberg 2002: 50). The relation between ideal and practice is not merely one of reversal: in neighbourhood communities where mutual support is the explicit ideal, it is not enough to concentrate purely on mutual support, nor to focus primarily on the underlying conflicts and status competition. Aspects not underlined by local ideals are not to be neglected, but neither should other aspects just because they have a tilted correspondence with this ideology. Local ideals should neither be ignored nor adopted as adequate analysis, but instead treated analytically, while paying attention to the epistemological status of the information acquired. Two mistakes are to be avoided: Firstly, through sticking to pre-given analytical models, local views and local definitions may be overlooked, and the models may end up distorting the analysis rather than shedding light on the phenomenon approached, arriving at a reality of the model, rather than a model of reality (Bourdieu 1976: 62). This has often been the case with dogmatic implementations of lineage theory or alliance theory, but the danger even lingers in such seemingly straightforward concepts as religion (Asad 1993) or indeed kinship (Needham 1971, Schneider 1984, Sahlins 2013). As Appadurai points out, many regions have their theoretical 'gate keeping concepts' (Appadurai 1986: 358, cf. Strathern 1988b: 90) that are often applied more or less reflected in academic analysis. For both Central Asia and China surely patrilinearity and the genealogical rendering of social groups have been such 'gate-keepers.' In looking at Kashgar these logics do play a role, but they distort more than they explain if they are applied as main models to make sense of social structure or social relations more generally. Critically questioning these gate keeping concepts enables us to recognise the central importance of affinity in not only allying but also in creating social units and communities. The second mistake to be avoided is that of merely re-producing dominant local ideals or local idioms for expressing the phenomenon looked at. The most obvious danger is to adopt the model of a certain group in a social context, thus universalising one view while ignoring others. But even taking many views and conceptualisations into account, local ideals and explanations that are explicitly stated or inherent in words, have a place in practice. Their function is not primarily to

make the workings of society transparent in order for these workings to be best accessible and describable to a social scientist within academic discourses. Rather, different ideologies are permeated by power relations and serve a much more pragmatic function: they offer orientation within social complexity from the respective perspective of embedded actors. This is what Bourdieu has called 'social sense,' which is concerned with an insiders perspective and not with the structures and the conditions of possibility enabling this (Bourdieu 1976: 47, cf. Bloch 1992: 127). Feminist and postcolonial writers have repeatedly shown the need to go beyond the explicit ideology and draw up a more complex picture. To achieve this we have to look closer at social practice, including the values that stand behind this practice and behind the explicit ideals. These values can be seen as an important part of the conditions of possibility, though these conditions also include so called 'objective structures,' as the economic, political and physical environment and the embodied dispositions of the actors (Alvi 1999: 176-179, Bourdieu 1996: 160, Platz 2006: 53-77, Thrift 1997). To approach these different kinds of data, it is useful to consider the differentiation of epistemological levels of data as phrased by Needham.

Value, ideology and narrative

Needham (1973) criticised Lévi-Strauss' use of the term 'prescription' and pointed to a deeper lying epistemological weakness within alliance theory. According to Needham, Lévi-Strauss used the term 'prescription' for a range of different phenomena with very different social implications. 1) A certain kind of cousin marriage may be prevalent statistically and empirically. This may have several different reasons and, according to Needham, says nothing about elementary structures or 'prescription'. 2) Explicit rules encouraging such marriages may be formulated, which could be adhered to or not. Needham suggested calling the existence of such rules 'preference.' 3) The only phenomenon, according to Needham, which truly deserved the designation of 'prescription' were the cases in which a certain kind of cousin marriage was inherently given in the structures of the kinship terminology. This takes Needham to a differentiation of three levels of data that should be treated differently: the empirical, the representational, and the categorical levels, i.e. what people do, what they say they do, and the words in which they express it showing the categories in which they think.[133] The categorical realm adds a third level to the common known division between "what people say they do and what they do." On this third level, which is neither that of pure action nor that of explicit ideals, but which is one beyond these two and informing both, the data from the two other areas may be brought together, dissolving their dichotomy. I choose to call it the level of conceptualisation, to

133 Cf. Hardenberg 2009: 64, Needham 1973: 174, Barnard and Good 1984: 9-14, Berrenberg 2002: 32-35. Holy has made a somewhat similar differentiation dealing with patrilateral parallel cousin marriages or 'FBD-marriages' (father's brother's daughter). Holy (1989), looking specifically at the phenomenon of FBD-marriage, particularly in societies in and around the Middle East, differentiates the following four phenomenon connected to what he calls "systems of FBD-marriage:" 1) The empirical phenomenon of FBD-marriage as it may show up in a higher or lower percentage in any given society, 2) the local permissiveness of this kind of union, 3) the expressed right of a man to his father's brother's daughter's hand, and 4) the explicitly uttered cultural preference for FBD-marriage (Holy 1989: 6-9). To him the latter point, the one of explicit preference, is the point of interest. While the first level clearly corresponds to Needham's empirical level and the fourth point to which Holy pays the most attention seems to correspond to Needham's representational level of 'preference,' point two and three display elements of local structures and categories, i.e. Needham's third, categorical, level.

divide it off from the local verbal categories, which are often polyseme and quite laden with explicit ideology. Taking up Needham's point of different levels of data, the data so far presented must be reflected on from an epistemological point of view. What is it we are gaining information about when looking at the ideal of marriages and at how this is expressed in ideal and less ideal marriages? It is, first of all, a local practice and a local ideal of marriage and weddings, but it is also a deeper structure of conceptualisation and practice, a hierarchy and order of social values, that we are provided an insight into. We are, in other words, dealing with all three levels of Needham's distinction (empirical, representational, and categorical), but we must decipher which is which and further elaborate on how they are to be analytically treated respectively. The categorical level is the highest level of abstraction, it is the most artificial level, but also the one that may take us beyond mere empiricism to insights not deriving from our own common sense or our own social logic when interpreting the facts we come across in the empiry. In other words: analysing what is said and what is done to arrive at local conceptualisations and their abstract relations to one another is a tool necessary to reach a deeper and more thorough understanding of just what is said and done. It is a way to access the local connotations of certain symbols, words and actions, and to come closer to their attributed meanings. For this, it is important to analytically grasp local hierarchies of values and the interconnections of important concepts.

To approach this, Dumont's notion of ideology is useful. This is not concerned with explicit political ideologies or '-isms' but rather more general, shared orders of concepts and values. Dumont defines ideology as a "[s]ocial set of representations; the set of ideas and values that are common in a society" (1986: 279). As this thesis does not aim at any definition of an Uyghur or Kashgar 'society,' we may substitute the term 'society' with 'social context'. For Dumont, these ideas and values are always hierarchically ordered: "To adopt value is to introduce hierarchy, and a certain consensus of values, a certain hierarchy of ideas, things and people is indispensable in social life" (1980: 20, cf. 1986: 9). But certainly the hierarchy is not stable, it can be contested. Within certain discourses or on certain "levels," the order can be reversed (1986: 227, 253). Still Dumont's notion of ideology is not quite flexible enough for our purpose and has (like much structuralist writing) been thoroughly criticised for its disregard of power and historical change (cf. Khare 2006). We shall thus adopt merely the notion of ideas and values ordered hierarchically and informing both explicitly uttered ideals, actions, strategies and terminology. Practice in the sense we use it here, consists of all of these. These hierarchical orders of ideas and values can be analytically grasped as smaller and bigger scale structures (in the second sense used above). They may vary depending on the context and are historically changeable. Furthermore, the relations between concepts, values and ideas are not just related by an ordered hierarchy. They are related in specific ways within larger semantic fields. The relation of one concept or value to another (such as nationalism to religion or kinship to genealogy) is complex and may involve several other elements. Such relations can be captured in the analytical term 'narrative.' A narrative in this sense formulates one specific socially feasible relation between a number of concepts (Hinchman und Hinchman 1994, Bruner 1997: 264, Ricoeur 1978: 90). Several different narratives relevant in different contexts, within different discourses may to different people express different possible relations between the same concepts and values. Ricoeur has called narrative "what is left of the situation when the situation is gone," (Ricoeur

1978: 87) but it is also at the same time what pre-figures the situation before it appears (Hinchman und Hinchman 1997: xvi) and gives meaning to it while it plays out (Bruner 1997: 264). Thus, narratives can be said to function as links between structures (parts of ideologies) and situations. In this way also narratives found in sketches, proverbs and fairy tales deliver semantic connections between values and concepts important to people's lives and are thus of analytical interest.

I have applied the more formalistic analyses, to access such relations on an abstract level beyond any concrete situation or expression. No post-structuralist analysis can bypass such basic structuralist analyses. Analysis often becomes interesting where the models do not fit; where the models 'bleed' off new insights (cf. de Certeau 1984). Following this metaphor, we need the models — or we will have nothing to bleed. For example, the function of kinship terms in Kashgar as mainly communicating inclusion and respect does not stand out clearly unless it is contrasted with the other possible aspect of categorisation of close social relations, more classically attested to in studies of kinship terminology. While this latter aspect is more prominent in models of the classical kinship theories, it plays a secondary role in my analysis of kinship terms in Kashgar. Similarly, the application of both alliance and descent theory have provided valuable insights despite the fact that they do not deliver models that match the data. This is similarly true for the concept of relatedness (new kinship theories) which, despite neglecting the affinal relations crucial to Uyghurs in Kashgar, functions well as an analytical tool for grasping non-genealogical conceptualisations of close social relations in Kashgar. The identification of conceptualisations and abstract relations is an analytical tool; it is not primarily a goal in itself. It is an important step on the way to a more complex understanding of the social context and phenomena, neither based on our own prejudices nor on explicit local rules or ideals. Abstractions by definition can never offer an adequate description of the entire complexity of reality, but always merely of an aspect of this, disregarding other aspects. These aspects must subsequently be brought back together in discussing concrete social phenomena on the basis of the insights of formal analysis. Abstraction and the according reduction of complexity are aids to understand complex phenomena. They are not meant to turn reality into a model (Bourdieu 1976: 162).

Formal or structural analysis offers clarity and a different way of abstraction following a certain kind of simplification. This comprises traps and problems, but it often provides valuable insights, especially when put "back" into practice. It informs and enables a close reading as that of the marriage process provided above. In the following two chapters we shall therefore return to the more empirical level of practice in discussing two current phenomena in weddings and marriages in Kashgar: 'restaurant weddings' and 'piously oriented weddings'.

IV. Current Developments of Weddings in Kashgar

"Nikah her qaysi tarixiy basquchlarda oxshimighan shekillerge ige bolup kelgen we jem'iyet tereqqiyatigha egiship uning shekilliride melum özgirishler yüz bergen."

(Marriage has taken on different shapes in the different historical periods and as it has followed the development of the society there have been certain changes.; Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 104)

"[Anthropology] possesses, thirdly, a lively sense of the importance of life as lived in small groups and ordered in narrow social networks, and a recognition, that life in such social microcosms persists in a powerful dialectic with the engulfing social macrocosm." (Wolf 1969: x)

I was struck by an interesting difference between weddings in Kashgar and those in rural Atush. In rural Atush the groom will take the bride to a place to have her hair and make-up done in the morning. At this time the *nikah* has not yet been read. He pays for all the expenses, sometimes has lunch with her in a restaurant and then takes her back to her parent's house in a friend's car or a taxi. This is completely inconceivable in Kashgar, where the *perdishep* (sense of propriety, avoidance between men and women or elder and younger) has to be upheld between the two until the wedding night and even on the following day until her veil is lifted in the *yüz échish* ceremony.

We see here the reflection of two themes that has followed us throughout the analysis and will become the focus of this chapter: the influence of so-called modernity and of so-called reform Islam, both concepts being highly problematic and loaded with very different connotation and value. Having the hair done and make-up made in a salon or by a professional who is called to the house (as is common in Kashgar city) is a new development of the past twenty years (cf. Zaile Muhammettursun 2012: 9, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 221) and is locally understood as a modern element, as articulated in Möminjan's song *güzellik sende*[134] (lit. beauty with you, your beauty) and the corresponding video where artificial, foreign, modern make-up is contrasted with 'traditional,' 'ethnic Uyghur,' 'natural' beauty. Likewise it is a fairly recent development that bride and groom are not transported together in the same vehicle or even at the same time when the bride is transferred (*qizni yötkesh*). This is attributed to the new religious influences called 'reform Islam' by foreign observers (Waite 2007), 'real Islam' by its adherents (cf. Schrode 2008) and derogatorily 'Wahabi' by some of its local opponents. The wedding traditions (and to some extent marriage practices) have been influenced and shaped by these two tendencies both to a certain degree coming from the "outside," and have been incorporated into

134 Möminjan's song and video "*güzellik sende*" can be found on http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4tNrwwvKFI (last opened 12.09.13).

the existing practice in ways very much deriving from the "inner" functions of the communities involved. Both of these trends introduce new ideas and concepts and a new hierarchical order of values. They show in various forms in the weddings, for instance in flowery wedding gates on the one side and the absence of music at weddings on the other. In a manner similar to that of the dialects of giving discussed above, these new practices are copied and disseminated in a strive for status, but also out of a duty to reciprocate and match the weddings given by others within one's own social network and community. Government workers and cadre elites adopt Chinese, Russian and Western customs seen as 'modern'. Modern practices are embedded into the Xinjiang and Chinese form of the global discourse of 'development' (*tereqqiyat,* 发展 *fazhan*) that adds positive connotations to them and makes them desirous to the large parts of the population adhering to such narratives of development. The religious practices on the other hand are embedded in a similarly global discourse of reform Islam and a new more textually oriented strive for piety (Mahmood 2005), which has developed in Xinjiang since the late 1980s (Waite 2007, Fuller and Lipman 2004). On the one hand, the reform policies of Deng Xiaopeng revived the place of religion in Uyghur social contexts by being more permissive towards religious activities. On the other hand, importance of religion was later strengthened and strongly politicised by the oppressive state politics of the 1990s and the Uyghur reaction to them, as well as by the widely accessible religious material to be found on the internet. Islam became first a revived part of Uyghur identity and daily practice and later a core element in defining Uyghurness and local culture vis á vis the Han-Chinese and the Chinese state. 'Reform Islamic' ideas are central to these developments, though often difficult to differentiate from the general religious awakening they are a part of. 'Reform Islamic'[135] ideals and modern influences are detectable in the marriage practices of contemporary Kashgar. They lead to severe changes in the ways certain groups conduct their weddings. But, they also have a more long-term effect on weddings and marriage practices more generally, and earlier influences are detectable in today's wedding practices.

This chapter puts back together Needham's levels of data (empirical, representational and categorical) in a historically informed discussion of two contemporary social phenomenon in weddings: weddings oriented towards a new Islamic piety and weddings of which parts are held in restaurants, to discuss them before the background of the above analysis. These two phenomena represent the more constant modern and piously religious influences respectively and may be seen as instances of the ongoing historical process of constructing and negotiating weddings, marriage, kinship and community in Kashgar.

Transformation

As the conditions change so do the practices, concepts and values - or rather: they transform. Building upon the given outset the elements change in relation to the other elements of the complexities they are parts of. These changes do not follow simultaneously on all levels of

135 I choose to use this designation for the new more textually oriented religious ideas entering Kashgar over the past two decades and ongoing. The term is a convenient short-hand for a very heterogeneous and complex phenomenon.

interest (behavior, rules/representation, concepts/categories) and they are neither neatly ordered nor predictable. The word 'transformation' has been used extensively in describing the societal changes taking part in the former Soviet states or CIS states after the collapse of the Soviet Union, though this has by far not been either the only nor arguably the gravest transformation in Central Asia in recent history (cf. Bregel 2002, Humphrey 2002, Hilgers 2009, Rasanayagam 2012, Nazpary 2001). In its crudest and most simple understanding, transformation has meant the gradual change of one system into another, especially politically and economically.[136] To say the least this has been proven wrong by history. The process of change is a much more complex and complicated one than most had assumed and the direction and steps of this change are far from clear.

The notion of transformation that I intend to apply analytically here is inspired by anthropology and by structuralist thinking. Structuralist views have it that a changed element potentially changes the meaning of other elements within a given structure, since the different elements gain their meaning only from their relation to one another. But this does not necessarily distort or even seriously affect the structure of the relations as such, though, of course, it may. The view of historically oriented anthropology has it, that social constellations and structures change within the frame of existing cultural and societal dispositions. Thus every social change entails something constant as well, something that is re-presented in altered form. Thus transformation is a continuous, gradual rearrangement or shift of the relations of elements to each other, relations that give meaning to the elements themselves (Sahlins 1985).

Changing weddings and marriage

Looking at marriages gives insights into historical and current social dynamics and transformations, into social change and constancy. Yalcin-Heckmann (2001) amongst others has shown how studies of marriage can give access to more general social changes. Following Sahlins (1985) it can be added, that marriages are also an active part of social practice, being instrumental in instigating such change as well. Here we see clearly the intertwining of marriage and wider social issues. De Coppet recognises the proactive role of rituals when pointing out that they "are not just expressive of abstract ideas but do things, have effects on the world" (de Coppet 1992b: 4). This can be said of weddings and marriages in Kashgar regardless whether we agree on calling them rituals or not. Rituals (or weddings and marriages) "illustrate, challenge and attempt, above all, to order hierarchically" the values of certain social contexts (de Coppet 1992b: 9). Even the status of ritual itself within this hierarchy must be constantly re-negotiated. In de Coppet's words, to negotiate "the position accorded to rituals in the value hierarchy is itself part of rituals' ongoing task" (1992b: 9).

In Kashgar the wedding still holds a very central position and thus has much influence on the hierarchy of values (Dumont 1980: 20, 1986: 9). Weddings and other events in the marriage process provide important platforms for negotiating values. But the wedding as any ritual can only keep this position if it is adapted to and reflects the surrounding social developments. This dialectic shall be demonstrated below. Parts of weddings are moved into restaurants and thus participate in a new mode of giving and producing social relations, rather based on a balanced

136 The transformation of plan economical authoritarian communism into that of liberal capitalist democracy.

reciprocity within networks than on a tendentially generalised reciprocity within local communities. This new way of conducting weddings at the same time affect the modes of social relations more generally, weakening the communal relations further and strengthening the network relations based on monetary support (money lending and gifts of money). As discussed above ritual context (weddings and marriages) are not set apart from daily conduct, but are very much an integrated part of it. Ritual in Kashgar can be understood as a condensation and amplification of regular social formality. This makes the dialectic between marriage and more general social change in Kashgar very immediate and dynamic.

8 Restaurant Weddings

It is currently becoming increasingly popular among government workers and other wealthy families in Kashgar to hold parts of the wedding in restaurants. Mostly the communal morning meal (*toy neziri*) and the lifting of the veil (the women's *yüz échish*) are held in restaurants. Of the upper middle class members and government workers in Kashgar city roughly half hold their weddings partly in restaurants, while it is much rarer among lower middle class and poor families, especially as long as they live in ground-floor houses (*pingpang öy*) with many rooms and a large courtyard, or have access to these through their family. Often their weddings are held in the *chong öy*, e.g. the grandparent's house in the outskirts of the city. In case the early morning communal meal (*toy neziri*) is held in a restaurant (*ashxana*) the bride's father, brothers and uncles act as hosts. They receive the guests at the entrance and go to their tables to say a prayer with them before they leave. But it is the groom's family who pays the bill. This mirrors the *toy neziri* usually being held at the bride's parents' place and the *ashüyi* (ingredients of the meal) being brought by the groom's side respectively. Holding parts of the wedding at restaurants does not much alter the sequence of the marriage process. The central elements remain relatively unaltered. The elements subjected to change are primarily the ones concerned with creating social relations. Recently some government worker families are beginning to mirror the model popular in Ürümchi, where both sides celebrate together in a restaurant spanning over the whole afternoon and evening (cf. Zaili Memettursun 2012: 9-11). Many of the customs otherwise separated in time and space, such as the *bel baghlash, yüz échish, tartishmaq, sanduq échish* and lastly *qiz yötkesh* are performed in a condensed form within this time span. Even at these weddings the basic form is kept: a morning *toy néziri* is still held at home or in a different restaurant, and the female relatives of the bride's side are invited to the groom's side on the following day. Such weddings also involve dancing in the restaurant and until ten years ago often featured alcohol. This is still the case in Ürümchi, but I never saw or heard of it in Kashgar during my stay in the city. Also some of the meetings before the wedding, such as the *toyluq epbérish* (giving *toyluq*) can be held in restaurants. At some small weddings where the main goal is the re-establishment of a functioning household unit and no wider community is involved, all the communal meals take place in restaurants on a very small scale of only 10-15 participants.

It is important to differentiate between the two types of restaurants called *ashxana* and *réstoran* respectively. *Asxana* also means kitchen and is the name for all kinds of places where food is served, ranging from small kitchens to large restaurants with extensive decoration and uniformly dressed waiters. A *réstoran* is specifically defined as a restaurant with a dance floor and where alcohol can be bought. Unlike in Ürümchi and other parts of Central Asia these are not purely wedding halls, but also function as regular restaurants. Many elder men refuse to set their foot in a *réstoran* and a *nezir* can never be held here, but must be held in an *ashxana*, since *réstoran* are not seen as religiously pure.

Metaphoric shift

Various changes and shifts take place in connection with restaurant weddings and their modern narratives. One example is the verbal and performed metaphor of tying a string or a belt as a symbol of dependency and stability. In the pre-socialist period it was not uncommon for parents to engage their children years before they were old enough to marry (8-15 years of age; Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 238-240). This does not happen so often anymore, but it still exists. It is called "*yip baghlash*" (tie the string) or "*bel baghlash*" (to tie the waist). The latter is also used to refer to other events during the marriage process, while the former is used to name the engagement (Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 216-217). Many rituals or events are not called by proper names as much as they are categorised according to one of the important aspects in them in the same synecdochical manner, as we saw above concerning idioms for marriage in general. Today in some areas an engagement party called *lata baghlash* (tie the cloth) is held, which is only attended by the parents of the bridal couple and some close relatives and neighbours. This is said to strengthen the kinship ties between the two families prior to the wedding (*tughqandarchiliq kücheytish üchün*). This event is comparable to the *chay epbérish* or *kichi chay* mentioned in the sequence above. At the wedding day itself another tying takes place.

When the groom arrives at the bride's parents' place to transfer the bride, the bride's siblings or parents tie a long red cloth around his waist (or neck, cf. Bellér-Hann 2008a: 243). It is said to express the wish that the couple remains together (*ayrilmanglar!* Lit. 'don't separate!'). Furthermore, it alludes to manners of speech in which *bel baghlash* (tying the waist), as the custom is called, means to be earnest about something or to do something with decidedness. This custom is practiced much in Yupurgha and Qaghaliq and has lately also achieved some popularity in Kashgar. A young man told me that the cloth should be left on till the groom reaches his own house, but that most find it embarrassing and remove it once they are out of sight of their parents-in-law.[137] Within the frame of the restaurant weddings a new custom bearing the same name and symbolism has become popular. In this new setting *bel baghlash* takes place when the couple dances the wedding Waltz (*tansa oynash*) on the restaurant's dance floor after the groom has arrived with his friends. While they dance a long red cloth is tied around the two of them and sometimes pulled tightly by their friends. The friends also make noise and spray foam and confetti on the dancing couple. This custom is detested by many elders and people seeing themselves as especially pious Muslims, since they deem it improper by Muslim standards. It further meets opposition, because the element of deliberately embarrassing the couple is seen as deriving from Han-Chinese tradition.[138]

Besides many other changes inherent in this shift in metaphorical practice the increased centrality of the couple is apparent. In the old custom the bride's relatives tied the cloth around

137 The embarrassment derives from two sources. The first is, that the cloth does not match the grooms general outfit - it is not part of the aesthetic or optical ideal strived for in many wedding pictures and widely found in commercials all over Kashgar. The second and more structurally relevant source of embarrassment is that the cloth is from his parents-in-law and signifies his marriage to their daughter (including cohabitation) and his obligations towards their family - and thus a certain loss of autonomy.

138 Embarrassing the bridal couple at their wedding is widespread among Han-Chinese and has to some extent been adopted by Uyghurs. Another custom that I witnessed once in Üstün Atush and heard about several times similarly embarrasses the groom before his friends: Here a big handful of pilau (*polu*) is pressed into his face by one of his friends, causing much amusement before transferring the bride on the afternoon of the wedding.

the groom while in the new version the couple is at the centre and the elder generation plays no role. This complements what has been described above as an increased focus on the groom, which can be witnessed in the above mentioned *yigit éshi, yigit chéyi* (groom's meal, groom's tea) and the throne he is placed on. Also the switch in dramaturgy in wedding videos bears witness to the groom being attributed a more central role, but also to his friends becoming more important. The groom's own personal networks of friends created and upheld at his wedding relatively increase in importance vis à vis his parent's networks and the local community. This centrality can be read in connection with an increased concentration on the unit of the nuclear family, as is stressed in government campaigns and in modernistic narratives. A similar point can possibly be made for the bride, but I have little evidence for this, as I rarely had the chance to partake in any of the events relevant for the bride's creation of social networks at the wedding. More generally the respective networks of the different protagonists in the wedding through these customs are given more consideration than the idea of a collective (local) community, which thus loses some of its visibility and centrality in the wedding.

Photographs

Whereas the photograph taken for the *toyxet* used to be the only one taken before, in recent years the custom of taking elaborate wedding photos has become popular. Several thousand Yuan may be spent on this and often the closest relatives of both sides are invited to partake. The custom is attributed to the Western world, but it is surely more directly derived from Chinese custom, where much money is spent on these photos that are subsequently hung around the couples chambers, often enlarged to live size. At the end of restaurant weddings in Kashgar, before the parting of the bride from her parents is acted out and the bride is taken to the groom's place, a large photo session is held on the dance floor. For these, decorated wedding gates in the style of American weddings seen in movies and TV-series have become increasingly popular. A whole series of photos in different constellations is taken. First the groom's parents, then also his siblings and lastly his entire family are photographed together with the bridal couple, then the same is repeated with the bride's family and relatives before in the end - almost as a photographic enactment of the ideal of the two families being brought together and made one - both families including all close relatives are photographed together standing around the bridal couple and their parents in the centre of the picture. This is a performative enactment of this very core of relatives not to be found in the same defining and visible manner at weddings held at home. This performance stresses and in some ways contributes to constructing the conceptual divide close, often genealogically (cognatically) defined relatives and the guests of the wedding which the division of labour at restaurant weddings also strengthens.

Labour and relations

"It's complicated to hold a wedding - unless you have money, then it's easy," an elder man told me and went on to explain that all the labour help at a traditional wedding came from neighbours and relatives the particular relations to whom always had to be considered. Dissatisfaction and jealousies would arise regarding who was entrusted with what task or put to

what work and the reliability and timeliness of the helpers was not always to be depended on. With money on the other hand side, this labour can be bought, and much of the organising pressure is eased. This is one important aspect that changes when parts of weddings are held in restaurants. Relatives and neighbours are no longer needed for the tasks of preparing and serving food and drinks. The relativity of guest and host roles, as described above, dissolves. In 'traditional' weddings held at home the role of guests and hosts are somewhat relative, almost all guests taking on the role of host at one point or another. The local community fulfills important tasks in such celebrations: Neighbours offer their houses as rooms for the celebrations, help with cooking and take on functions as hosts. The exchange of gifts, labour and access to space is complex. At celebrations held in restaurants, the designation of guest and host roles is much more clear-cut and the contributions are much less varied. All but the very closest relatives and friends are merely guests, without being attributed any special or integrating role. Their contributions are now given in the form of money (and sometimes cloth) which has become the central resource needed to arrange a wedding. Labour help and gifts of food (*∂ɑʃtixan*) are no longer appropriate (cf. Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 212). A well liked *molla* in Kashgar who performs up to three *nikah* ceremonies a day in the high season said in one such ceremony that guests should not take *zelle* or gifts back from a *toy* and should not bring *rext* or *∂ɑʃtixan* either, but instead should contribute money, since it is difficult and expensive to give a *toy* and this is the best way to help. In the words of Zaili Memettursun, "the help of friends, neighbours and relatives and the role they play at weddings weaken more and more (*∂oʃt-buraδer, qolum-qoʃna, uruq-tughqanlarning toyδiki roli we yarδimi barghanséri ajizliʃhiʃhqa qarap mangmaqta*; 2012: 9, 14). The whole atmosphere of the guesting also changes since the guests no longer enter the host's house, cross the threshold of his house and sit at his tablecloth - all strong symbolic means of inclusion, re-presenting membership in the community. In restaurants, the house and the intimacy it carries are absent, and thus the guests are made guests in a material sense through being fed and often receiving small gifts, but they are not temporarily made parts of the family (cf. Bellér-Hann: 2008b: 149), as guests of the house are at weddings. In traditional Uyghur houses the guesting room (*méhmanxana*) is a central room in the house and must always be in the own courtyard, i.e. a part of the own living quarters (ibid.: 148, cf. Alimjan Mexsut et al. 2004). Celebrations held in restaurants are no longer events for transgressing the spatial boundaries of family and community and for spatial integration. From a spatial perspective the wedding has become a much more anonymised affair. There are attempts to compensate this through conspicuous consumption, but this creates a different kind of social relation: one that is less based on temporary integration and more on the structurally opposite roles of host and guest. Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq mentions as an important change that the host no longer pours water to wash the hands of the guests at a restaurant wedding (*qolgha ʃu berilmeyδu*; 2009a: 212). This as a matter of fact happens relatively rarely at regular weddings too, but we may take it as expressing the more general point of the guests not being cared for personally by someone from the host side, but by hired service personnel instead. Much of the communicative detail important for creating social relations in the wedding is thus lost. In Bourdieu's terms, social capital is substituted (labour help and access to neighbour's rooms) by economic capital (hired service and space; Bourdieu 1986). This contributes to changing social relations between

neighbours and relatives more generally. The hosting side is reduced in its possibilities to include the guests and to strengthen its ties. Therefore, conspicuous consumption comes to play a greater role, being one way of giving and thus establishing relations and status. But the conspicuous consumption is countered by religious and other moral arguments in Kashgar critisising how food is wasted. The consumption in Kashgar has already gone back over the last five years, I was told (cf. Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 210-213). Some parts of the ceremonies cannot be carried out by professionals, and thus the closest family members carrying out these retain their role. This close kinship is even strengthened in comparison to all the others whose contributions have become quite limited.

The following two tables depict the different steps of a wedding seen from the groom's sides perspective first as a wedding held at home and secondly as one held partially in a restaurant. The second table shows the changes occurring in blue ink and the parts being completely omitted in red ink (elements) and red marking (entire steps).

Tab. 1 A 'regular' wedding in Kashgar: Schematic simplified overview of an 'ideal' marriage process in Kashgar held at the homes of the two sides, with focus on the '*oghul toyi*' (the wedding celebrations of the grooms side - '*oghul terep*') including the social categories involved.

Several months before the *toy* (wedding)

Event (Uyghur name)	Brief description	Event objects[139]	Event subjects
Elchi éwetish	Sending of representative from the groom's parents to the future bride's house	The future bride, her parents	Close elder relative or neighbour of the groom's side, bride's mother, bride's household
Qiz körüsh	Seeing and evaluating the future bride by elder women from the grooms side	The future bride	Close elder relative or neighbour of the groom's side, bride's mother, bride's household
Qiz sorash	Official asking for the bride on behalf of the groom's parents	The future bride and her parents; of the groom's parents	Close elder relative or neighbour of the groom's side, bride's mother, bride's household

One month before the *toy*

Kichik chay	Agreement on the conditions of the marriage: marriage prestations and time of wedding	Parents of bride and groom	The household of the bride, close relatives and neighbours of groom and bride respectively

One week before the *toy*

Chong chay	Giving of the *toyluq* (bride welath) at a visit of relatives of the groom to the house of the bride	The *toyluq* (bride wealth), either parent of the groom and bride respectively	The household of the bride, close relatives and neighbours of groom and bride respectively

139 I have freely adapted the distinction of event objects from event subjects as respectively those 'for whom' the event is held and 'those who do the task' from Baldaufs distinction of '*toy* object' and '*toy* subject' as the groom or bride and their parents respectively having their status effected by the *toy* in different ways.

One day before the *toy*

Ashüyi	Gifts of a calf, rice, oil, carrots and other ingredients for the pilau the following morning from the groom's side to the bride's side. Slaughtering done by groom's side. Hosting by the groom's party at the bride's house	The gifts	Close male relatives of the groom, the, relatives and neighbours of the brides side

First day of the *toy* from the perspective of the *oghul terep* (grooms side)

Toy neziri (5-8 o'clock)	Early morning communal meal (pilau) at the bride's house, cooked by the groom's side.	*Jama'et* (elders of mosque community) of both sides, male guests of both sides (200-1000)	Relatives of groom's side, women of the bride's neighbourhood, bride's close relatives and close neighbours
Nikah oqush (9-10 o'clock)	Religious wedding ceremony in bride's house.	Groom, brides close male relative, groom's and bride's male agnates, groom's friends and brothers, (bride with friends and sisters; 20-30)	*Molla* from the brides *mehelle*, bride's close relatives and close neighbours
Ayallarni kütüwélish (12-15 o'clock)	Hosting of this sides women in the groom's house, gifts of money and cloth to the bride's mother, contribution of foodstuffs by the guests (*dastixan*)	Women of the groom's side (cognates, affines, neighbours, friends) (50-100)	Mother of the groom, relatives and neighbours of the groom's side
Yash yigitlerni kütüwélish (14-16 o'clock)	Hosting of the friends and young male relatives of the groom in the groom's house, dance, sharing of food among the friends (*yigit éshi/yigit chéyi*)	The groom, the groom's friends and young male relatives (20-30)	Father of the groom, relatives and neighbours of the groom's side
Bazarni chögilesh (16-17 o'clock)	Circling of the city by young men in cars with music on the way to the brides house	The groom, the groom's friends and young male relatives (20-30)	Groom's friends, groom's close male relatives
Qizni yötkesh (*yigitler*) (18 o'clock)	Entry of the groom and his friends into the house of the bride, dance, quick exit	The groom, the groom's friends and young male relatives (30-50)	The groom's friends and male relatives and neighbours
Qizni yötkesh (*ayallar*) (16-19 o'clock)	Hosting of the women of the groom's side at the house of the bride.	The bride, bride's mother and close female relatives, core female relatives from the groom's party (20-30)	Close female relatives and neighbours of the groom's side, female friends of the groom's mother. Bride's mother, neighbours and relatives of the bride's side (mainly women)
Ishik taqiwaldi	The door remains closed to the bride arriving at the groom's house until a gift from her companions is passed to the groom's younger sister at the door.	Bride, groom's younger Sister	Bride's female relatives, groom's close relatives, neighbours

Qéyin-anisi chaqirish	Pretended ill-fit of the mother of the groom, whereupon the bride has to cry out to her: preferably *ana* (mother)	The bride, the groom's mother	Close female relatives of the groom, companions of the bride (mostly her elder sisters and sisters-in-law)
Harduq éshi (19-20 o'clock)	Meal for the bride and her companions and for the hosts of the '*oghul toyi*' at the grooms house	Bride, her companions (close female relatives), groom's parents and close relatives	Members of groom's household, closest neighbours
Nikah kechisi	The wedding night	Bride and groom	Bride's companions, groom's close female relatives, groom's closest friends

Second day of the *toy*

Nastiliq ('*qandaq qopti?*')	Visit by relatives of the bride to see the bride at the groom's house	The bride, close female relatives of the bride (sometimes her mother)	Neighbour women, close female relatives of the groom
Ayallarni kütüwélish	Visit by the female relatives, neighbours and friends of the brides side at the grooms house. Gifts given from groom's to bride's side	Brides mother and close female relatives, all women on the bride's side (100 +)	Parents, relatives and neighbours of the groom (mostly women)
Yüz échish	The official lifting of the vail of the bride, making her a part of the household of the groom's mother	Bride, groom's younger sister, brides mother, groom's mother	Groom's female relatives and neighbours, bride's female relatives and neighbours
Tartishmaq	Exchange of gifts between groom and bride's mother over the threshold	Groom, bride's mother	Grooms friends and close male relatives, bride's mother's female relatives and friends

Two to three days after the *toy*

Qéyini körüshüsh	Visit by the groom and a few close friends at the bride's parents house	The groom, the bride's parents	The bride's parents household, the groom's close friends (2-3)
Quda körüshüsh	Visit by the parents of the groom to the house of the parents of the bride	Parents of the groom, parents of the bride	Household and close neighbours of the parents of the bride, close relatives of either side

One to two weeks after the *toy*

15-künlük	Visit by the bride and the mother of the groom and his female relatives and neighbours at the house of the parents of the bride. Gifts given from bride's to groom's side	Bride (gifts to the bride), groom's mother, groom's female relatives and neighbours. (30-40)	Household of bride's parents and their female neighbours; female relatives and neighbours of groom's parents.

Please compare Tab. 1 with Tab. 2 to see the typical differences in events and participants in

detail, that occur when parts of the wedding celebrations are held in a restaurant. The changes are marked with colours in Tab. 2.

Tab. 2 A restaurant wedding in Kashgar: Schematic simplified overview of a marriage process partially held in restaurants in Kashgar, with focus on the '*oghul toyi*' (the wedding celebrations of the grooms side - '*oghul terep*') including the social categories involved. Marked in blue letters are the parts of the marriage held in restaurants. Red signifies the elements missing in comparison with more 'traditional' *toy* as figures in the table above; red letters signify the missing of singular elements while red highlighting signify the omission of an entire part. Yellow highlighting marks additional or moved elements.

Several months before the *toy* (wedding)

Event (Uyghur name)	Brief description	Event objects	Event subjects
Elchi éwetish	Sending of representative from the groom's parents to the future bride's house	The future bride, her parents	Close elder relative or neighbour of the groom's side, bride's mother, bride's household
Qiz körüsh	Seeing and evaluating the future bride by elder women from the groom's side	The future bride	Close elder relative or neighbour of the groom's side, bride's mother, bride's household
Qiz sorash	Official asking for the bride on behalf of the parents of the groom	The future bride and her parents; parents of the groom	Close elder relative or neighbour of the groom's side, bride's mother, bride's household

One month before the *toy*

Kichik chay	Agreement on the conditions of the marriage: marriage prestations and time of wedding	Parents of bride and groom	The household of the bride, close relatives and neighbours of groom and bride respectively

One week before the *toy*

Chong chay	Giving of the *toyluq* (bride wealth) at a visit of relatives of the groom to the house of the bride	The *toyluq* (bride wealth), either parent of the groom and bride respectively	The household of the bride, close relatives and neighbours of groom and bride respectively

One day before the *toy*

Ashtiyi	Gifts of a calf, rice, oil, carrots and other ingredients for the pilau the following morning from the groom's side to the brides side. Slaughtering done by groom's side. Hosting by the groom's party at bride's house	The gifts	Close male relatives of the groom, the, relatives and neighbours of the bride's side

First day of the *toy* from the perspective of the *oghul terep* (groom's side)

Toy neziri (5-8 o'clock)	Early morning communal meal (pilau) at the brides	*Jama'et* (elders of mosque community) of both sides,	Relatives of groom's side, women of the bride's

	house, cooked by the groom's side.	male guests of both sides (200-1000), bride's close relatives and close neighbours	neighbourhood, bride's close relatives and close neighbours
Nikah oqush (9-10 o'clock)	Religious wedding ceremony in brides house.	Groom, brides close male relative, groom's and bride's male agnates, groom's friends and brothers, (bride with friends and sisters; 20-30)	*Molla* of the bride's *mehelle*, bride's close relatives and close neighbours
Ayallarni kütüwélish (12-15 o'clock)	Hosting of this sides women in the groom's house, gifts of money and cloth to the bride's mother, contribution of foodstuffs by the guests (*∂astixan*)	Women of the groom's side (cognates, affines, neighbours, friends) (50-100)	Mother of the groom, relatives and neighbours of the groom's side
Yash yigitlerni kütüwélish (14-16 o'clock)	Hosting of the groom's friends and young male relatives in the groom's house; dance, commensality (*yigit éshi/yigit chéyi*)	The groom, the groom's friends and young male relatives (20-30)	Father of the groom, relatives and neighbours of the groom's side
Bazarni chögilesh (16-17 o'clock)	Circling of the city by young men in cars with music on the way to the brides house	The groom, the groom's friends and young male relatives (20-30)	Grooms friends, groom's close male relatives
Qizni yötkesh (*yigitler*) (18 o'clock)	Entry of the groom and his friends into the house of the bride, dance, quick exit	The groom, the groom's friends and young male relatives (30-50)	The groom's friends and male relatives and close neighbours
Qizni yötkesh (*ayallar*) (16-19 o'clock)	Hosting of the women of the groom's side at the house of the bride.	The bride, bride's mother and close female relatives, core female relatives from the groom's party (20-30)	Close female relatives and neighbours of the groom's side, female friends of the groom's mother. Bride's mother, neighbours and relatives of the bride's side (mainly women)
Ishik taqiwal∂i	The door remains closed to the bride arriving at the groom's house until a gift from her companions is passed to the groom's younger sister at the door.	Bride, groom's younger Sister	Brides female relatives, groom's close relatives, neighbours
Qéyin-anisi chaqirish	Pretended ill-fit of the mother of the groom, whereupon the bride has to cry out to her: preferably 'ana' (mother)	The bride, the groom's mother	Close female relatives of the groom, companions of the bride (mostly her elder sisters and sisters-in-law)
Har∂uq éshi (19-20 o'clock)	Meal for the bride and her companions and for the hosts of the *oghul toyi* at the groom's house	Bride, her companions (close female relatives), groom's parents and close relatives	Members of groom's household, closest neighbours or relatives
Nikah kechisi	The wedding night	Bride and groom	Bride's companions, groom's close female relatives, groom's closest friends

Second day of the *toy*

Nastiliq ('qandaq qopti?')	Visit by relatives of the bride to see the bride at the groom's house	The bride, close female relatives of the bride (sometimes her mother)	Neighbour women, close female relatives of the groom
Ayallarni kütüwélish	Visit by the female relatives, neighbours and freinds of the brides side at the grooms house. Gifts given from grooms to brides side	Brides mother and close female relatives, all women on the brides side (100 +); relatives and neighbours of the groom (mostly women)	Parents, relatives and neighbours of the groom (mostly women)
Yüz échish	The official lifting of the vail of the bride, making her a part of the household of the groom's mother	Bride, groom's younger sister, bride's mother, groom's mother	Groom's female relatives and neighbours, bride's female relatives and neighbours
Tartishmaq	Exchange of gifts between groom and bride's mother over the threshold	Groom, bride's mother	Groom's friends and close male relatives, bride's mothers female relatives and friends

Two to three days after the *toy*

Tazim	Visit by the groom and a few close friends at the brides parents house	The groom, the brides parents	The brides parents household, the grooms close friends (2-3)
Quda körüshüsh	Visit by the parents of the groom to the house of the parents of the bride	Parents of the groom, parents of the bride, close relatives of either side	Household and close neighbours of the parents of the bride,

One to two weeks after the *toy*

15-künlük	Visit by the bride and the mother of the groom and his female relatives and neighbours at the house of the parents of the bride. Gifts given from brides to groom's side	Bride (gifts to the bride), groom's mother, groom's female relatives and neighbours (30-40); CLOSE female relatives and neighbours of the bride	Household of bride's parents and their female neighbours; female relatives and neighbours of groom's parents.

Dissolved neighbourhoods

A similar though less voluntary shift from social capital to economic capital, can be observed as the old city of Kashgar is being torn down in the effort to modernise and families are forced to move to the city outskirts. The restructuring of Kashgar city has the effect of dissolving many old neighbourhoods - and thereby neighbourhood communities. Sometimes whole communities attempt to move collectively, but often they are instead scattered around town. The relations between old neighbours persist but are altered in the process. Instead of being a community of households relying on each other's help on a daily basis these households now have much more restricted or balanced exchange-relation centered upon guesting and hosting connected to life cycle celebrations and upon private visiting and hosting. This even leads to a certain degree of avoidance amongst them (see below). Thus when these households are to hold celebrations they lack the helping basis of neighbours and depend on purchasing goods and services on the

market. Since such families often move into small apartments that are not spacious enough to host a wedding party in the city outskirts. Lacking a community to draw on, they are forced to hold the celebrations in restaurants. A community held together by a high degree of generalised exchange cannot be created within a few years' time and the wedding procedure is so complex and entails so much work that a large group of well-coordinated neighbours or relatives is required. People who lose their local resource of labour based in the daily exchange and support of neighbours are forced to turn to money as a compensatory resource to achieve the same. To many lending money on a big scale is the only way to ensure a proper wedding. Connected to greater access to markets and to this trend of holding parts of marriage celebrations in restaurants a monetisation of marriages is taking place in some parts of contemporary Kashgar. A proper wedding depends on either a good community or on money. The wealthy groups move from one resource (community) to another (money) as a matter of convenience. The poor resettled groups on the contrary are deprived of the resource of a neighbourhood community without any real substitution other than debt. Hence the surging importance of contributing money at a wedding stressed by the *molla* mentioned above.

A general monetisation

Weddings have increasingly become a booming business. Besides the restaurants various other trades make much of their profit on weddings and marriages. Some of the most obvious are the many offices for designing and printing invitations. They are found all over the inner city of Kashgar and often offer help for organising the wedding as well. For this they co-operate with professional wedding photographers and musical groups. Car rentals, the cloth market close to *Taxta Köwrük* (a large cloth market in the east of the city) and some tailors make a large part of their business around weddings. These changes are part of a more general monetisation of daily life in Kashgar, which emphasises social connections that give access to money. This decreases the importance of spatial proximity and the local neighbourhood community. Instead close relatives, often including the affines and networks of friends offering access to funds become more centrally important.

The institution of *onbesh-künlük*, a celebration that takes place several days after the wedding and that involves the wider community is being reduced or even cancelled in many marriages. It is argued that relations between the affines should be sought on a more personal and intimate level through small-scale mutual visiting. Large visits involving many neighbours and relatives are by such people deemed an unnecessary waste (*ئىسراپچىلىق*). The narrative of something being superfluous and therefore a waste and morally bad is used by many parties and in many contexts[140]. The value of thriftiness and modesty thereby upheld is widely shared. It is a central argument used by religious authorities against many customs and government infomercials against food waste are shown on TV. Yet, for such an argument to apply to any given event or custom in the marriage process there must be an incentive to deeming it obsolete. Within new and less traditional neighbourhoods in Kashgar the *onbeshkünlük* seems to have lost its

140 This is said of many of the mutual visits before and after a wedding. Also the *sünnet toyi* (circumsicion celebration) is by some said to be unnecessary wastefulness *ئىسراپچىلىق* by some. Likewise, the *nezir,* according to some influenced by new religious ideas, should not be held for people who have enough to eat already (the own social relations) but to poor people (cf. Bellér-Hann 2008b).

importance for creating relations. This perceived obsoleteness of the *onbeshkünlük* clearly demonstrates the de-emphasis of the local community. But as described above this is a dialectic process and holding the celebrations in restaurants as well as omitting the *onbeshkünlük* contribute to weaken the role of neighbourhood communities and strengthening close kinship and friendship links providing access to money. This leads to a relatively rapid build-up of new networks of neighbours and friends, amongst whom the financial contributions to such events come to play an outstanding role. Many such relations only meet at these celebrations.

Models for social relations

Relations kept with former neighbours often take on social forms otherwise associated with distant relatives. They thus retain relations within extended exchange cycles, but leave the realm of daily dependency, mutuality of being or kinship in its performative sense. I experienced this in the neighbourhood I lived in which despite being relatively new (build and expanded in the 1960s and 1970s) had a tightly knit neighbour community and the neighbours depended on each other for daily chores. Around 70% of the community moved into the same apartment building when their former neighbourhood was evacuated and demolished in 2012. Some of the neighbours that did not join them, told me that they tried to avoid going to this new building. This was not to stir jealousies connected with visiting some but not other families, and because visiting had now become much more difficult. Since they are no longer neighbours, all visits have become more formal and always involves gift giving. Because each visit therefore ideally requires visits to all other households of the same category including formality and gift giving the frequency and variety of their contacts is reduced to mainly formal visits at life cycle events.

This connects to a general tendency of a different kind of social relations taking in more room. Flexible social networks based on balanced reciprocity and formal guesting come to take up more of daily life at the expense of communities based on mutual help and participation. Latter relations become more strongly confined to close kinship centered around the sibling group of a '*chong öy*' and the affines (cf. Bellér-Hann 1998: 709). Beyond these are relatively closed circles of friends and relatives giving access to monetary lending and wider loose networks of distant relatives, friends and business contacts. All relations beyond the closest kinship are based on a balanced kind of reciprocity, unlike the more generalised one of the old neighbourhoods. A money-based gifting and guesting (e.g. inviting to restaurants) is required to build and uphold these networks. The role of individual guesting (*méhman qilish, méhman bolush*) is generally increasing as it becomes a central way to manage social relations. Among young and middle aged men, as well as well-to-do women it is common conduct to invite each other out to eat. Restaurants are thus integrated into daily life even of the lower classes, though also guesting at home plays some role. This mode of giving and creating relations entails a shift from locally based communities based upon daily contact, generalised giving and labour support to networks based on more balanced forms of exchange. Many people say that the guesting room is made bigger and more elaborately decorated in newer houses, whereas the own living room decreases in size. This may (with caution) be read as indicating the decreased size of the group frequenting

the house on a daily base (family members, extended parts of the household, close neighbours) and the increased importance of individual guesting as a means to create social networks instead of investing in local community. Networks and groups that provide the possibility of lending money on short notice become much more important than communities securing wide-scale labour support. This too is mirrored in the marriage celebrations, where money contributions become by far the most important gift and in the increasing popularity of money lending institutions.

Close friends and relatives lend each other large sums of money on a regular basis and rotating saving and credit funds enjoy much popularity in different forms in all age and gender categories. For these rotating funds around ten to fifteen people take turns hosting the others at home or in a restaurant once a month. All guests contribute a sum of money to the host (usually 100-300 yuan). These institutions are called *pul chay* (money tea or money celebration; cf. Dautcher 2009: 138).[141] They exist in a number of variants, some being concerned with enabling the households to make big purchases, some being more concerned with the creation of social relations. Whatever their superficial aim, all these circles provide a basis for further money lending and credit raising way beyond the sums given in the *pul chay* itself. The logic behind these closed circles of lending is also found in the exchanges at the *toy*. The giving of money at weddings is by some likened to a banking system and local idioms describe these obligatory givings as debt or as "my money that is with him" (*mening pulum uningda bar*). This is only one aspect of the giving there (cf. Yan 1996, Yang 1994). The *toy* also entails more generalised, less balanced and much more obligatory and enduring exchange. But this logic of balanced lending plays an increasing role in the exchanges around *toy* and elsewhere among Uyghurs in Kashgar. I was often told that the amount to be given at a *toy* should match the amount received from this person or household at a similar event more or less exactly. This does not correspond to conventional gift theory on such exchange cycles, which would expect the amount to have to be increased at each event (Gregory 1994, Yan 1996, Yang 1994, Werner 1999), but in Kashgar the idiom for lending and even the metaphor of the bank is often used for money gifts and reciprocity at life cycle celebrations. As described above the really important gift is not so much the money itself as it is the access to funds more generally. Through the increasing monetisation of social life in Kashgar and the shift from community based generalised reciprocity to network based balanced reciprocity this aspect is currently gaining in importance.

Does community still matter?

We have seen that neighbourhood relations grow weaker or are transformed into relations that are like distant kinship relations. As a grander consequence this weakens the social meaning and function of the neighbourhood community. This development widens the social gap between rich and poor. It drives a wedge between those able to contribute significantly economically and those not able to. The latter cannot partake in the exchange circles of the former since what they have to offer (labour) is not asked for, while they do not have what is required (money). In some instances the links are even broken off when for instance rich families retrieve from relations of

141 In the English lessons of Molinsky and Bliss (*ingliz tili yengi dersliki* 2006: 265) the translation for the English "party" is "*chay*".

reciprocity with poorer families through holding their wedding parties at restaurants and not accepting gifts, while the very possibility of holding a wedding party for many poor depends on gifts and contributions of labour and services. Close neighbourhood communities become less important and networks of friends, workmates and distant relatives are build less on dependence than on convenience and entail a very different kind of practice of reciprocity, that is much less obligatory than the one within neighbourhoods. The former is based on a logic of giving that is better re-presented in the roles guest and host in punctual guesting than on one of mutual participation in each others lives, i.e. in the conception of kinship of relatedness (Carsten 2000, 2004, Sahlins 2013). The obligatory communal exchange and relations are thus confined to much smaller circles of close relatives and close friends or neighbours - often centered around the sibling group and the siblings' affines. Closeness and kinship become less community based and are confined to a smaller group of people. Both Zaili Memettursun (2012: 9), Abdurehim Hebibulla (2000: 254) and Abdukérim Rehman (2009b: 662) write of the weakening of kinship ties, much like Delille did for Europe between 1600-1900 (cf. Mathieu 2007: 212). However, with Sabean (1998) and Mathieu (2007) we can suggest that kinship is not weakening, but rather the conceptualisation of kinship and closeness is changing and that certain parts of kinship are actually gaining in importance. This stresses a genealogical conceptualisation of kinship including the distinction of 'kin' from 'non-kin,' in which neighbours are classified on the side of the 'out-group,' the non-kin. In contrast, in many old *mehelle* and rural communities the neighbours remain relatives, the kinship conceptualisation is predominantly non-genealogical and thus the distinction of kin vs. non-kin is of little relevance. Genealogical kin connections seem to become increasingly important in social networks while the local community loses out. In a local terminology, this can be seen as a gradual shift from *jama'et* (community, often neighbourhood or mosque community) to *jemet* (extended cognatic family, descent category). Such a shift is supported by the increasing interest in genealogies (*neseb name*) over the last twenty years, both privately and as a topic of study (Enwer Semet Qorghan 2010, Abdushükür Muhemmet'imin 2002, Yarmuhammet Tahir Tughluq 2009b). This has been fuelled by ethno-national narratives stressing origin and descent.

One aspect of the family is that it is an economic unit defined through exchange. Thus as the type and objects of this exchange transforms from generalised labour support to balanced money lending, so does the institution of family. Monetisation of marriages can be seen as contributing (and connected) to more services and goods becoming available on the markets and to the household (nuclear family) being promoted as the central social unit, not least through government programs making this the unit for administration and for receiving poverty support. As the apartments are mostly built for the state-propagated nuclear one-child family, they are much smaller than the traditional ground floor houses. Therefore, the extended families are often spatially separated and become multi-local. This does not mean that they cease to exist. In many ways their exchange and interaction mirrors that of families living in separated rooms of ground floor court yard houses. The court yard has been spatially spread out (cf. Bray 2005). This development stresses the genealogical connections over the spatial ones.

Beware of neo-evolutionism

It seems we have here two models of organising social relations in Kashgar: one represented by the neighbourhood community and another one better described through the concept of household-centered social networks of friends and kin. The social phenomena we have looked at in this chapter seem to be part of a general shift from the first towards the second model. This to some might suggest a neo-evolutionary or modernisation theoretical reading of current developments in Kashgar. I would like to challenge this. We are not witnessing the transition from a pre-modern to a modern society. The two basic logics of social relations drawn up here appear in quite close social realities - merely set apart by marginal shifts in conditions. They are closely related on a cultural basis - sharing basic values. The network model of social relations in Kashgar while structurally similar to some other modern societies stands not for any universal modernity, but for a very specific way of organising social relations, now found in a specific Kashgarian modernity. Monetisation is no new thing in Kashgar (see Newby 1998: 290), but it has increased in scale since the beginning of the reform era (1979) and especially since the massive inflow of money into the city and region fueled by the state development programs implemented from the year 2000. Even more importantly the community structures carrying other forms of organisation have been severely damaged in the city by restructuring policies. There is no evidence to suggest that the community model will cease to be important - especially in the rural areas. Neither is the advent of the network model of social relations a novel development. Relations along both of these models have been practiced in Kashgar for centuries and have probably meandered in importance over the shifting political periods. It is not an irreversible development either, unlike what modernisation theory would suggest. Historical conditions that could strengthen the community model are completely conceivable to develop in the future. Part of such developments are in fact already being enacted in the responses to what is by some seen as a discriminating and amoral Han-Chinese modernity to be countered by 'traditional' Uyghur values, much like certain forms of state modernity have been met by counter narratives all over Asia (cf. Scott 2009, Graeber 2004: 24, 35). As neighbourhood communities have become a marker for Uyghur tradition in some discourses, it is not inconcievable that they will experience a strengthening on an ethno-nationalist and religious basis in some cases and locations. Social change is taking place in Xinjiang as it has many times within the one-thousand five hundred years, since the first groups of Mongol-Turkic speaking people entered the region from the northern grasslands of what is today Altai and western Mongolia. But the changing of economic patterns does not automatically imply an easy-to-predict change of social order and values in any clear direction (cf. Kiel and Elliot 1996, Eve et al. 1997, Kolding-Jørgensen 1998). For both social order and the hierarchy of values, which both have such a central place in the life of people, have their own intertwined dynamics and are not just the superstructure of the economic systems.

9 Piously Oriented Weddings (*islamche toy, sünniy toy*)

Music and dance

On the 26 hour bus ride from Ürümchi to Kashgar a young man from Peyzawat told me the story of his wedding, where the family of the bride walked out when he and his friends started to dance. A long discussion ensued among the new affines, but things were quieted down and sorted out. The bride's side still wanted the marriage and the wedding proceeded. The bride was fatherless and it was a good match for her family. They just did not want to have any part in the dancing, since to them this was no part of a proper Muslim wedding. Back then the groom himself had been convinced that dancing and music were essential components in a 'real Uyghur' (*milliy*, ethnic) wedding and had not wanted to miss them. Later he had come to understand his affine's points better and was now undecided on the topic. When we met on the bus he was on his way to his wife's brother's wedding, which was to be held without dancing and music and in which he, as the brother-in-law was to play a major role. He called this kind of wedding an *islamche toy* (Islamic wedding) or a *sünniy toy* (a toy according to the Sunna).[142] A discussion ensued in the bus on whether a wedding was to be held with or without music and dance. This is hotly debated in Kashgar among almost all social groups, save government workers. The discussion is connected to a more textual Islam, a more literal reading of the Qur'an. This religiosity is by some called reform Islam (Waite 2007) because its propagators do challenge and seek to reform existing practices. It is inspired by Salafi, Wahabi and more generally Hanbali interpretations of Islam and the Qur'an, but as a broad phenomenon does not follow them in any systematic way. These new ideas and the so-called reform they introduce, span over a wide range of topics and has no clear common agenda. As far as I experienced these influences in Kashgar, they cannot be defined by any shared essentials, but rather as a weighted reaction to the existing religious conduct. It entails the attempt to redefine the realm of orthodoxy or 'real Islam' (Schrode 2008: 397-411, 427) and to create a new religious mainstream. For this reformers draw on a range of different points, many of whom are connected to *halal* and *haram* foods and some of which concern wedding traditions. This, as Schrode has aptly demonstrated, is no new debate. What is seen 'real Islam,' 'orthodox' and 'pious' varies from group to group and even context to context in Kashgar — and has varied and changed much historically (Schrode 2008). In the following chapter we look closely at the phenomenon of piously oriented weddings (*islamche toy*) and the conceptualisations of community connected to them, before turning to some more general elements and changes in wedding practices, which can be attributed to earlier religious influences. Religious influences only make up a small, but interesting, part of the total historical conditions having formed the marriage practices of contemporary Kashgar.

142 Also the circumsicion party can be called *sünnet toy*. The etymology is the same — a *toy* according to the Sunna — but they are different celebrations. Another word for circumsicion celebration is *xetne toy*.

9.1 Imagining community

The new form of "*islamche toy*"

Piously oriented weddings (*islamche toy, sünniy toy*) have become increasingly popular over the past five to ten years in Kashgar. This is also true of Khuldja and Hotan. They are supposed to be simple, sober gatherings in which the religious ceremonies are central and guesting and gift giving is kept to a minimum. Dancing and music are either absent or very limited and so is decoration. The bride's dresses are not modeled on the Western white bridal gown, or if they are, they do not show much skin, but are closed around the neck, shoulders and arms. Also the guests are expected to wear long sleeves and loose fitting clothes. Cars and other symbols of affluence and status are likewise not valued or paid attention to in the same way as at regular weddings. The parading through the centre of the city in a car cortege featuring the decorated wedding car, music and the camera car is mostly omitted all-together and harshly criticised as unnecessary showing-off. Gender segregation is paid more attention to within the different events of the wedding and headwear is proscribed, which means that all women will wear headscarves and all men will wear a *doppa* of one sort or the other. This last element likens the weddings to funerals, where headwear is also proscribed and indeed one of the criticisms voiced against these weddings is that they turn joyful weddings into something more like a funeral. One development of these weddings that all can agree to support (at least in discourse) is that less food is cooked and served in a conscious attempt to avoid waste. Furthermore, less gifts are given and the *zelle* given to the retiring guests at the end of the celebration is reduced or omitted. It often consists in religious books instead of the usual food, snacks and household utensils. These then do not count as gifts creating social obligation for reciprocity. The logic of reciprocal obligation is generally challenged by these new weddings and the ideology behind them. If an *islamche toy* is held in a restaurant it will not be a *réstoran* but an *ashxana*. In Ürümchi such weddings are often held in the cafeteria of a mosque. I choose to call these weddings 'piously oriented,' because striving for piety is a main motivating factor in choosing to hold such weddings and in the discourses around them. This does not mean, that Muslims not following these trends are not pious. But the weddings are generally locally viewed as being more pious than other weddings and the motivation behind choosing such a wedding is locally recognised as the strive for piety, as opposed to a range of other motives mentioned for not conducting an *islamche toy* or *sünniy toy* including considerations of exchange, economy and the display of Uyghur identity. Arguments brought against these kinds of weddings were never that they were not really pious or proper Islamic, but rather that they were neglecting important national traditions.

Muslims inspired by reform Islamic teachings urge to reduce the wedding celebrations to an absolute minimum, excluding all that is not specifically mentioned in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. A category of superfluous elements that should be avoided is constructed. These superfluous elements of local custom are attributed to either illegitimate innovation (Uygh. *Bidet,* Ar: *bid'ah*; cf. Schrode 2008: 410, 417-418) or pre-Islamic 'ethnic' traditions (*xurapiy*). But these views are not undisputed. Weddings are one important stage on which 'orthopraxis' is being negotiated (cf.

Hilgers 2007, Rasanayagam 2011), but at the same time are also very much an arena for the ongoing construction and negotiation of Uyghurness and ethno-national sentiment vis à vis an experienced Han-Chinese cultural pressure. Those strongly focussed on strengthening 'ethnic traditions' (*milliy örp-adet*) explicitly promote many of the elements that adherents of more pious variants of the wedding would like to extinguish. Dancing and music but also 'ethnic' (*milliy*) decoration are essential parts of the local understanding of Uyghurness.

The broader Chinese ethnic policies and public approach to ethnicity includes a so called 'folklorisation' of ethnicity (2001: 10, cf. Gladney 2004b: 99, 104-109) according to which the ethnic groups are primarily defined through their most colourful customs while political or philosophical aspects are de-emphasised. Weddings are seen as one such custom where different ethnic groups display their own special identity (cf. Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 213, cf. Lou 2006). Music and dance have been very much in focus concerning Uyghurs who are known as 'people who can dance and sing' — but little else. This positive element defining Uyghurness has been worked into the construction of this category and is valued among Uyghurs themselves (cf. Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 130-132). Many Uyghurs are proud of their ethnic traditions and even see them as an important part of their efforts to retain a strong ethnic identity as a political means of opposing Han-Chinese dominance. A loss of these traditions — be it to materialistic or to pious influences — is experienced as a loss of ethnic identity, as a loss of Uyghurness. Many criticise the use of keyboards and other 'modern' instruments as being opposed to the 'ethnic' (*milliy*) Uyghur ones, and in recent years some have returned to horse carriages instead of cars to transfer the bride and decorative elements seen as ethnic (such as *etles* cloth) are much used. These 'ethnic' elements are some of the main elements classified as superfluous by people promoting piously oriented weddings (*islamche toy*). Others who oppose this custom argue that such weddings are of foreign origin and are based on a misunderstanding of the Qur'an, which according to their view does allow for ethnic traditions and neither bans nor opposes the so called superfluous elements.

These discussions pose a dilemma to many families negotiating the particulars of being (as they are) "real Uyghurs" and "real Muslims" at the same time. Religion and ethno-national sentiment seem to make up the polar positions in this (*sünniy toy* vs. *milliy toy,* wedding according to the Sunnah or 'ethnic' wedding). This is a well known pattern from other parts of Central Asia (Hilgers 2009: 95-110). In most social groups in Kashgar piety is today increasing in importance — but so is the ethnic category of 'Uyghur'. The dilemma becomes the more pressing and complicated since Islam has arguably become the number one positive ethnic identification factor of most Uyghurs in Kashgar vis à vis the Han-Chinese. The reform Islamic influences are by many in Kashgar seen as a religious truth to which they have long been denied access by the censorship and oppression by the state authorities presenting their own version of Islam has too. The difficult accessibility of these viewpoints make them the more valuable and in itself dramatically increases their perceived trustworthiness.

Islam and its Kashgar variants

It seems like an imposition of mismatching categories to try to part local Uyghur traditions

from Islam (cf. Bellér-Hann 1997: 105; 2001: 10; 2004a: 174, 179, 193). Several different approaches to Islam as a religion and as a way of life and of shaping society exist in South Xinjiang. However, no or only very limited, peripheral concepts of sociality and morality exist without the notion of Islam (cf. Rasanayagam 2011: 47). All ceremonials and rites are saturated with Islamic terms and symbols and almost all moral arguments or opinions are based upon reference to Islam and the Qur'an. Much new Uyghur literature and critical commentary focusses on morals (*exleq*; Eziz Atawulla Sartékin 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2006d, Weli Kérem 2010a, 2010b, Xoja Abdulla Ibrahim 2005, Rozimuhemmet Mutellip 2010) and all of them argue religiously. Almost all normative phenomena are religiously constituted: Islam and the Qur'an count as the central point of moral legitimacy for the vast majority of people in Kashgar, save some secularly educated elite cadres. Also practical and moral duties within the family are religiously legitimated. Most *mehelle* have other religious specialists besides the mosque's imam. These can be elder men or women who know much about the Qur'an and teach the younger ones or they can be healers, spirit specialists or guardians of shrines. All of them explicitly refer to Islam, use Islamic symbols and base their legitimation upon the Qur'an. The abstract idea of Islam in this way acts as a framing medium through which various moral sentiments, religious ideals and political messages are channelled (Wang 2004: 31, cf. Bellér-Hann 2001: 10). The group of respected elders of a local community (*jama'et*) is itself religiously connoted. To many elders something being Uyghur means per definition that it is Islamic. It is this unity which is increasingly questioned (cf. Schrode 2008). Religious sentiments are increasing in recent years. People in Kashgar often discuss how despite government campaigns against certain religious practices, more people than earlier fast and pray more regularly. Praying five times a day has become a label defining a good person. It is often mentioned when talking good of others. To some people it has even become a marker for deciding who is a 'real Muslim' (cf. Dautcher 2009: 260). But besides strengthening religious sentiments this is also a re-negotiation of religiosity more generally. This is surely no historical novelty. Many phases before have witnessed similar discourses and negotiations, such as the time of Yaqub Beg's Islamic Khanate *Kashgaria* (1867-1877) and the Jadid movement in the early 20th century (cf. Baldauf 2001) which both left traces in the religious landscape of Kashgar (Wang, unpublished paper), which has a long history of Islamic influences.

A brief history of Islam in Xinjiang

Islam was introduced to southern Xinjiang in the 10th century by a blend of trade and conquest. It outlasted the Mongolian conquest and Sufi brotherhoods ruled large parts of the region from the 16th till the 18th century when the region was conquered by the Chinese troops of the Manchu Qing dynasty (Wang 2004: 11). From this time on many rebellions against the Manchu and Chinese masters drew on Islamic ideologies and idioms. In 1867 the Qoqandi general Yaqub Beg from the Ferghana valley of present day Uzbekistan succeeded in establishing an Islamic khanate around Kashgar and based his rule on Shari'a law. It lasted until 1877. He introduced a range of new religious practices including mandatory wearing of headscarf, turban and regular mosques visits (Newby 2007: 19). Beginning in the late 19th century various forms of reformist or revivalist Islam were brought into the region from then

Russian and later Soviet West Turkistan. Religious elites were incorporated into the Qing administration (Newby 2007) and during the Republican era (1911-1949) Muslim elites were in turn supported and suppressed (Wang 2004: 11, Waite 2004: 166-167).

After a short period of religious tolerance following the so called liberation of Xinjiang at the hands of the Communist Liberation Army religion was either oppressed or strongly controlled by the Communist Party of the Peoples Republic of China from the 1950s-1970s. During periods like the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, religion and many non-religious traditional practices were restricted and dismissed as 'feudal practices'. Written Islamic material was hardly accessible including editions of the Qur'an in the Arabic original and in local translations (Waite 2007: 165, Wang 2004: 12-13).[143] This rapidly changed in the 1980s in the reform era of Deng Xiaopeng. State institutions were created to monitor and guide Muslim practices rather than to restrict them and there was a general tolerance of religious matters (Waite 2007: 167). Wang writes of religious scholars educated before 1949 that only began to practice and use their knowledge after 1980 (2004: 32). "Islamic leaders resumed their roles as social organizers and local educators" (2004: 13). But firstly the close co-operation of religious and state authorities was looked upon with suspicion by some, and secondly new influences and many Islamic texts became accessible in Uyghur and Uzbek (generally comprehensible to people in Kashgar). This inspired new religious thoughts and movements, such as the reformist and pious tendencies. Many *molla* started to question the old oral traditions and to redefine a 'real Islam' or local orthodoxy (Waite 2007: 166, Schrode 2008: 427-428). Drinking and ballroom dancing were some of the first practices to be strongly dismissed by these new religious authorities (cf. Rudelson 1997: 80). In Kashgar neither is to be found at weddings today, though they were still quite common fifteen years ago. Furthermore, after a relatively peaceful phase in the 1980s, the 1990s saw a rise in protests and restrictive government action. Amongst these were the so called 'strike hard' campaigns (Bellér-Hann 2007: 132, Waite 2007: 167). Government clamp downs upon what was deemed 'crime and separatism' also targeted so called 'illegal religious activities' (*feifa zongjiao huodong;* Harris and Dawut 2002: 113). A large number of small mosques and religious schools was closed and religious activities once again came under stricter surveillance of the state (cf. Dautcher 2009: 260). This in turn had an impact on village communities, who were built around mosques or shrines that were closed and thus often have resorted to continuing these practices behind closed doors. The tightening of these politics in the late 1990s and throughout the 2000s have rather led to politicising Islam than to curbing its increase in importance to peoples daily lives in south-western Xinjiang (cf. Schrode 2008: 429).

Since 2001 the Chinese Government has introduced further sharp measures against what it called 'Islamic terrorism'. The state has further stressed the division of legal and illegal religious practices, trying to control Islam as a political tool. Imams are educated at state controlled religious schools and must acquire state certificates to be able to practice. All sermons are overheard and controlled by the authorities and the access to mosques is limited. People under

143 In a German TV documentary *Chinas Wilder Westen* (1981), Peter Scholl-Latour practically mocks the Uyghurs of Xinjiang for their lacking religousity. He shows empty mosques to suggest the unimportance of Islam to the Uyghurs, but fails to reflect on the marked difference between publicly lived religion and the importance of it to people's daily lives.

the age of 18 are banned from visiting mosques as are employees of the state at the risk of loosing their job. At the same time the government heavily invests in the upkeep and renovation of old historical mosques turning many of them into tourist attractions but at the same time keeping them open for worship. Even new mosques are built with government funds. The Chinese government building up good political and economic relations to many Muslim countries (Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, the newly independent Central Asian republics), has invested in being seen as supportive of Islam – as long as it is an Islam within the limitations defined by the state (Schrode 2008: 413, Waite 2007). Since then and since the gradual opening of the country further new religious influences have entered the country from Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and the new Central Asian republics. Reform Islamic influences have entered the area through Hajis returning from Mekka and through traders and intellectuals returning from Uzbekistan. After returning, some of them give strictly forbidden classes on new religious thinking and various video and audio formats are disseminated over the internet. As described above religious 'lectures' are also often given during *nikah* ceremonies. Shrine pilgrimage, dealing with spirits and various other practices still play a role in some parts of the population, densely interwoven with the doctrines of the Hanafi school of Islamic law (Dawut 2009, Schrode 2008: 402, 413?, Schrode 2007). But such customs are under massive attack both from government side as 'illegal religious activities' and by religious reformers. Local customs vary widely as do the definition of what is real Islam or legitimate and even 'orthodox' religious praxis (Schrode 2008). The more textually oriented Islamic tradition focusses on certain practices such as gender segregation, dressing, eating and praying (Waite 2007: 170-172) and its proponents attack certain existing practices like veneration of the dead (2007: 177, Bellér-Hann 2007: 135, cf. Rasanayagam 2011: 175). Yet, these ideas have on a broader level increased the interest in religiousity more generally. One indicator of this is that explicitly Muslim names have become increasingly popular in southwestern Xinjiang over the past decades (cf. Sulayman 2007: 113-114). In Kashgar many men and women born in the 1980s change their name from a non-Islamic to an Islamic name. Wearing a beard has likewise become more positively connoted and is discussed as a right that government workers do not have and as something that will unjustly stigmatise people as Islamists before the government.

Ironically certain narratives of government propaganda contribute to increase the importance of Islam and to promote a more textual Islam that its adherents view as being 'purer' Islam. State propaganda and much Chinese scholarship stress the division of religion (*∂in*) and custom (*örp-a∂et, qa'ï∂e*) to denounce much of the former and support the latter (Bellér-Hann 2001: 9, cf. Dautcher 2009: 252). This conceptual division of religion and custom is shared by government propaganda and the stricter religious narratives. The valuing of the two is of course reversed. To those propagating reform Islam custom is not in itself necessary and can even be a malice that must be divided off from the religious core of life cycle rituals and other important ceremonies. The same division is also propagated by the government who sees custom as the legitimate basis for ethnic minorities (more so, it seems than language) and religion as something to be controlled and limited. Yet, within the framework of the official Chinese concept of ethnicity (*minzu*) Islam requires the position of a civilisational basis for Uyghur identity. Islam to many Uyghurs in Kashgar is essential in taking Uyghurness beyond dancing and singing to a "real" value based

ethnic traditions. Islam is constructed as an imagined core of Uyghur civilisation which evolutionarily figures above the more primitive left-overs of other religions and traditions (Wang 2004: xv, 6, Bellér-Hann 2004a: 189, Fuller and Lipman 2004: 344). Islam is an important part of what to many Uyghurs in Kashgar, including housewives, charcoal producers, students and intellectuals, puts Uyghur identity on equal terms with the great civilisational achievements of the Han-Chinese nation (cf. Gladney 2004b).[144] Even many of the national Uyghur literary heroes like Mahmud Kashgari, Yusuf Has Hajib and Elshir Navay central to the construction of nationalism in well educated elite circles (Rudelson 1997: 132, 153-155, Schrode 2008: 413-414) are by many people in Kashgar primarily seen as Islamic scholars. Accordingly the question of whether to stress ethnic or religious symbols at the wedding is an extremely complex and highly charged question. It is also one which has implications beyond the wedding itself and concerns social relations more generally, especially the role of giving versus the role of piety in creating relations and community.

Piety or resistance

Islam has been a continuous reference point for various actors' resistance against the state within the history of both Xinjiang and Central Asia more generally. In contemporary Xinjiang this is closely related to the role of Islam being important for defining Uyghurness. But to most people in Kashgar these are not the central points in discourses on piety or religiosity. Two other aspects figure much more prominently: 1) standing within local community and 2) personal interest in living a good and righteous life — both concerning its consequences in this life and the afterlife. For most people arranging *islamche toy* (piously oriented weddings) or engaging in religious events and teachings prohibited by the state the personal strive for piety is the main motivational factor, rather than resistance against the state or a struggle for ethnic resistance (cf. Mahmood 2005). Some practices may be contrary to state politics, but they are not well grasped as primarily acts of resistance (cf. Thrift 1997), since the state is exactly not the crucial factor to most of the practitioners. In these discourses the political is subordinated under the logics and imperatives of religion. Religion is given the highest place in the value hierarchy and piety is strived for and judged within this frame.

But however personal this choice may be, it is hardly individual. The standing within the

144 Besides "*örp-adet*" (custom) the almost synonymous "*qa'ide*" (custom) is an important concept for intellectual Uyghurs. Some elements in the marriage process which are seen as optional or as new influences are often categorised as "*qa'ide emes*" (not custom), and thus stripped of their significance. These elements are in their eyes no longer worth writing about when describing marriage and weddings. This suggests a "core of customs" that make up the *toy* onto which further small detail can be added or substracted without changing the important content or functions. This matches what many intellectuals say about the basic customs (*asas yosunliri*) not changing and the "core" thus staying the same. This is connected to a second level on which those parts and details deemed "*qa'ide emes*" (which are not the same as all those who do not enter into "*asas qa'ide*") are deprived significance. As not "*qa'ide*" they are also not important for 'ethnic identity' or more precisely for what it means to be Uyghur, and can thus disappear or change without doing any damage to the image of a continuous Uyghur culture and its close connectedness to customs like the *toy*. This is on many levels an internilasation of the official and politically pushed conceptualisation of *minzu* (nationality, ethnicity), a nationality defined over continuity throughout history; minorities (*shaoshu minzu*) defined through their colourful customs and dances, but it does not follow the state dictates concerning the content of the category. Islamic customs are to many the main way to divide real *qa'ide* from *qa'ide emes*.

community, the approval or disapproval of family and neighbours is important for the choice of how to hold a wedding and how to practice religion more generally. The demand for reciprocity makes it difficult to adhere to the modest imperatives of these new weddings if they are not generally accepted and followed within the own social circles. Conflicts arise, as in the story of my bus acquaintance mentioned above. As demonstrated above, social relations are constructed through various means of which giving, reciprocity and commensality make up central elements. In the *islamche toy* (piously oriented weddings) the role and meaning of giving is changed, it is even reduced significantly as no *zelle* is given, less money is spent on food and decoration and thus on the guests, less and smaller cars are hired and the wedding gifts are reduced. Furthermore, since less food is cooked commensality is also reduced in quality and quantity. This entails a different logic of giving than that stressed at most other weddings and as that important in both the construction of affine relations, networks and community.

Logics of giving

At regular weddings the principle of a more or less balanced reciprocity is central to the relations being constituted or re-presented during the celebration. They are obligatory givings. A local folktale illustrates this well:

Two Uyghur farmers become friends. One of them invites the other to his home for a rice meal into which he puts the meat of a sparrow he has just caught. As the other little later stumbles upon a bird's nest with three eggs in it he uses the opportunity to return the invitation and invites his friend in turn to a rice meal with eggs. Eggs being inferior to meat the first host drags his friend to court and the latter is sentenced to pay the difference in value between the two prestations. To avoid this he fakes his own death and ends up scaring visitors of the graveyard into giving him money with which he finally settles his debt (Abduraxman Ebey and Exmet Imin 2007: 38-44).

People laugh at this story. They laugh at the pettyness of the friends, who should not think about who has given what. But the logic is understandable and everyone can relate to it: In Xinjiang, too, gifts create debt (cf. Bellér-Hann 2008b: 158, cf. Graeber 2011). This is well demonstrated in the Uyghur expression for "not at all" as an answer to an expressed thanks: *erzimeyдu* (lit. it doesn't create debt). As described above this is a central logic in weddings and social networks in Kashgar which is even increasing in importance as local communities give way to more reciprocally balanced networks of kin and friends. Another institution in which this logic is very obvious is the so called *tuz sélish* (adding salt) held in rural Atush. For this one gathers the neighbours and close relatives for a communal meal explicitly in order to keep up the social relations. This is often done by young men working, trading or studying outside the village for extended periods of time. When returning to the village they will arrange for a *tuz sélish*.

The institution of *nezir* takes on a similar form to that of the *tuz sélish* but entails a different logic of giving - one central to the *islamche toy* (piously oriented weddings). A *nezir* should be a free meal without expectations of reciprocity to needy for which the giver is rewarded by God in the form of religious merit (*sawab*; cf. Bellér-Hann 2001: 15; 2008a: 225; 2008b: 156, cf. Dautcher 2009: 135). The prayers (*дu'a*) of each person at the end of the meal add on to the *sawab* of the host and of those for whom the *nezir* is held. This can be a deceased person, as in the case of

nezir-chiraq or the bridal couple and their parents as in the early morning *toy neziri* in Kashgar. *Nezir* meals have been criticised by pious Muslims for having been corrupted. Many reformers today reject the death rites of *nezir-chiraq* as something un-Islamic or decline to eat at these happenings, since they corrupt the proper charital meaning of "*nezir*" and instead strengthen the hosts status and standing within the community and society through his giving to those who have enough already (*qursaq toq*, lit. full stomach). Instead the money should be given to a charitable cause, they argue (cf. Waite 2007: 175-177). This corresponds to the original logic of giving in the institution of *nezir* as free gifts (Parry 1986) aimed at creating religious merits (*sawab*). *Sawab* is believed to be kept track of in a heavenly personal note book (*dépter*) kept by two angels sitting one on each shoulder of every person (cf. Bellér-Hann 1997: 106-107). They record the good and bad deeds respectively, which each person will have to account for at her or his transfer from this world (*bu duniya*) to the next (*u duniya*; cf. Wang 2004: 201-202). Praying, fasting, but match-making are believed to add on to the merits. So does the giving of a *nezir* as well as the giving of *zakat* (obligatory religious alms) and other forms of charity. *Zakat* should be given to needy and it should always be given secretly. The logic behind this is that the display of generosity of any charity given publicly will raise the status of the giver. He has thus received something for his good deed more directly in this world and this will destroy the religious merits of it meant for 'that world'. A similar logic can be observed among those *molla* who choose not to take money for their religious services such as performing the *nikah* ceremony. All *molla* are offered money for their services (Wang 2004: 190, Bellér-Hann 2008a: 242) but not all take it, arguing that this would dissolve the religious merits of the deed. The *imam* of a small rural mosque in Beshkérem proudly told me that both he and his father had performed the daily prayers and religious rituals at weddings, circumcisions and funerals in their community all of their lives without ever taking money for it. In this community the *imam* has a very high standing and actually does receive a certain kind of reciprocity through free labour help on his fields and gifts in kind. In a different community of suburban Kashgar I several times witnessed the local *imam* receiving commercial goods and services for free. When I asked about it, this was justified by his not taking anything for his religious services either. On the other side, giving much to a *molla* reciting the Qur'an at ones celebration creates merits for the giver. There is thus a sort of 'moral economy' aiming at the production of religious merits through giving a 'free gift' (cf. Parry 1986) that is not reciprocated in this world and thus creates *sawab* (cf. Wang 2004: 187). The giver does not give out of social obligation but out of his fear of God (cf. Bellér-Hann 2008b: 157). In this logic everyone that contributes to a charitable event or gives a free gift will receive such a reward. This also includes the mosque providing the big cooking pot and the father of four daughters lending out his large decorated ladle for communal meals, as described above. The moral economy of *sawab* functions parallel to the other moral economy of balanced reciprocal relations of mutual obligation within the community. In many *islamche toy* (piously oriented weddings) the religious obligations are stressed and some make marked attempts to curb the communal ones. To many people in Kashgar all communal meals at weddings are or should be *nezir* meals. This logic of charitable giving seems to have been present in several institutions at life cycle rituals in the early 20th century (Bellér-Hann 2001: 12-13; 2008b: 150-153, cf. Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 132-133). Bellér-Hann describes charity as a way to

expand but also to constitute a community. Subsequently this logic was somewhat ousted from life cycle rituals and concentrated around religious holidays (Bellér-Hann 2008b: 146, 150). Now adherents of piously oriented weddings are trying to bring the logic of charity back into life cycle rituals. Generally charity is much talked about in Kashgar and charity organisations like *méhriban atilar* (merciful fathers), *ɔahawetchi atilar*[145] (generous fathers), *mériban anilar* (merciful mothers) and even *méhriban yaɔhlar* (merciful youths) are rapidly gaining in popularity.

Both the Chinese state and many Central Asian states campaign against excessive gift giving and the rising cost of marriages (Bellér-Hann 2001: 19; 2004a: 191, Waite 2007: 175, Clark 1999: 158-159). Behind such campaigns stand a concern for poverty eradication that is (at least in the statistics) jeopardized by groups in danger of counting as poor slipping over this line when lending money for a big wedding. In the discourses of state propaganda large expensive toys stress social stratification, and the thus emerging social pressure to hold these entail an irrational economic logic that is damaging for economic stability and poverty reduction. The rationale of big weddings seem irrational when viewing a household as an isolated unit in anonymous markets, labour markets and state institution. The concern for the single household and its economic management at a certain stage of its development cycle is in the foreground. Within statistics these households count as failed households. In practice this must not necessarily be the case if its networks function properly - not only is it much like lending money in a bank, also the investment made in giving an elaborate *toy* often does pay off, since the wedding celebration is not unconnected to job opportunities and business partnerships in the future - they are often a prerequisite of these, making all members of the family real persons qualified to participate in community life and business life on equal terms with others. Thus when looking at it within the often more important social networks and communities, excessive gift giving and big weddings become very rational indeed. For many elements of the marriage are aimed specifically at representing certain social relationships or are in a local logic seen as logical consequences of these. Effectively these social relations could be damaged by leaving out the element in question. Furthermore, since giving and the obligations created through this giving are ongoing and lasting phenomena, any wedding is also the obligatory reciprocation of many other celebrations before it and entails a range of obligations towards the own social contacts.

Piety or reciprocity

The creation of social relations and social obligations through giving is de-emphasised in *ɔlamche toy* (piously oriented weddings). Instead the sort of giving promoted is one aimed at producing religious merits. Accordingly, following the logic of *ɔlamche toy* social relations should not be created gifting and dependency, but rather through a common strive for piety. Put simply, we can draw up parallels between the two ways of conducting a wedding, two different religiosities, two modes of giving, and based on these, two ways of creating social relations and of constituting community:

145 The *ɔahawetchi atilar* in 2013 was said to consist of around 200 men that each give 5000 per month. The money is used to fund the education of orphans and other poor young people.

1) The regular big wedding featuring excessive gift giving and conspicuous consumption imply a religiosity in which Islam is the main idiom through which morality is expressed, but in which religion is integrated into the normal social conduct and generally no differentiation is made between local custom and Muslim custom. In this logic doing good socially, being generous and observing the right social forms are primary traits of a moral person and a good Muslim. At such weddings approximately balanced reciprocity of gifts and labour is the main form of exchange and every gift creates social obligations between the giver and the receiver (cf. Bellér-Hann 2008a: 209). This logic of giving is also at the heart of the creation of community and social relations more generally: giving creates personal bonds and obligations. The community is united in an 'organic solidarity' (Durkheim 1997/1893, Barnard and Spencer 2002: 920) of mutual dependence.

2) On the other hand *islamche toy* (piously oriented weddings) with reduced gift giving and commensality. This kind of wedding implies a religiosity in which religious custom is explicitly differentiated from local custom and elevated above it, as found in 'reform Islamic' ideas. Here religiosity encompasses and subordinates the daily social conduct. A moral person, according to this logic, is one who observes God's commands, e.g. prays five times a day and gives freely without creating obligation. The ideal mode of giving is one modeled on the *nezir* in its original meaning: gifts are freely given by those who can afford it to the needy, without creating any bonds of obligation. Instead this giving creates religious merits (*sawab*) and is rewarded by God in the afterworld. The only responsibility, obligation and debt is to God. Community is not based upon mutual obligation or dependency, but, more like a Durkheimian 'mechanic solidarity' (Durkheim 1997/1893, Barnard and Spencer 2002: 916), i.e. on all members being in the same way committed to God's commands and rules. Following this logic people are seen as being connected primarily as individuals before God through their common moral beliefs and practices, rather than being connected by mutual bonds of obligation (and striving for status) as members of households.

The negotiation of how to celebrate weddings also entails an implicit question concerning which mode of giving and what kind of community and solidarity to legitimise and emphasise. It is a discussion not just about ethnic and religious identity, but also about modes of social relations. It is important to keep in mind that these are merely aspects of a complex reality, which in all cases I have so far seen entails both logics. In the case of some communities and in the case of *islamche toy* (piously oriented weddings) the latter logic of non-obligatory giving and of moral mechanical solidarity is stressed. In other contexts the obligations of reciprocity are more in the foreground.

9.2 Religious influences change the wedding ceremony

The discussions around *islamche toy* (piously oriented weddings) and the new religious ideas have not only influenced those explicitly striving for more piety, as defined in reform Islamic

discourses. They have a much wider range of influence. Not only Muslims fully accepting these new religious approaches or holding their weddings the way described above have been influenced. The semantic significance and value given to the different elements of the wedding process is transforming more generally, partly due to this new religious emphasis. As we have seen modern and modernist ideas have also played their part. A good example of a powerful shift in emphasis carried by both state and religious discourses is the dismissal of wastefulness (*israpchiliq*) which as a narrative and value asserts pressure to cut expenditure and especially to serve less food at weddings, but also is the explicit motivation behind omitting or minimising certain parts of the marriage process, such as the *toyluq apirish* (bringing of the bride wealth) and the *onbeshkünlük* (a visit after the wedding). Today it is a main argument of many religious authorities in Kashgar for omitting or reducing the circumcision celebration (*böshük toyi*). The ongoing religiously motivated transformation of wedding practices has certainly not been the only one. Kashgar has been a religious centre for decades and an entry point of many new influences into the region, especially coming from the Ferghana Valley. Today weddings in Kashgar look much more like the contemporary weddings in the Ferghana Valley than they look like weddings held in early 20th century Kashgar (cf. Bellér-Hann 2008a, Högberg 1917). Contemporary weddings in rural Atush and other places surrounding areas at the same time look much more like the early 20th century weddings in Kashgar. The marriage and wedding traditions we find in Kashgar today are in other words the products of long running historical influences, and of different phases of religious influences in particular. One example of a custom having changed recently in Kashgar and which is still in the course of changing in the rural surroundings due to the influence of new religious ideas is the custom of using bread and salt at the heart of the *nikah* ceremony. It is a telling example, since it also demonstrates the susceptibility to change of this institution portrayed as stabile and almost static by many Muslims (cf. Hohmann and Roche 2011: 119).

Bread and Salt

Bread and salt have for a long time been important elements in the *nikah* ceremony in Kashgar, as in many places in Central Asia. This has changed within the last ten years during which the custom has disappeared from the ceremony (cf. Schrode 2007: 48-49). The reason most often brought forth by informants is that the Qur'an says nothing about it and the disappearance can thus with some caution be contributed to the reform Islamic influences, but has become mainstream in Kashgar and is now spreading to the surrounding rural areas. Interestingly though, unlike in the case of dancing and music, there does not seem to have been much discussion about it. The custom was important in early 20th century Kashgar:

"The religious ceremony (*nika*) constituted the legal backbone of the wedding celebrations. Its central elements conformed to practices elsewhere in the Islamic world. In preparation, a stack of flat bread was placed on the tablecloth with a bowl of salt. The imam performing the ceremony took a piece of bread, dipped it in salt and put a piece into the mouths of the groom and the bride. In Kashgar, 'water and salt were produced, and the salt was dissolved in a small cup. The parents of the contracting parties then dipped the bread into the salty water'." (Bellér-

Hann 2008a: 242, italics removed, cf. Högberg 1917: 113)

The custom was seen as a central part of the ceremony and it is so up until today in other parts of the region (Ismaelbekova 2012: 24-25). In some places it had a game attached to it in which the best man and the bride's maid competed to dip their bread into the salty water first. Whichever side proved to be quickest would "not have to fear the other" (*qayɣi baldur éliwalsa shu terep yene bir tereptin qorqmaydighan bolarmish*; Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 129, cf. Bellér-Hann 2008a: 242, Dautcher 2009: 119). The exact procedures vary much locally, but bread and salt are constants. Much symbolic meaning is tied to this custom besides the symbolic struggle for dominance in the marriage. Abdukérim Raxman sees it as strengthening the love of the couple (2008: 129) and for Wang it symbolises the parents which the bride may not forget (2004: 199). Both Rudelson and Dautcher describe the bread as the important element in this custom (Rudelson 1997: 94, Dautcher 2009: 118-119), but Abdukérim Raxman points to the salt, as did all Uyghurs I discussed this custom with in Kashgar. The focus in this custom was on the greatness of salt. Bread and water were merely its media. The importance of salt in this ceremony is connected to salt traditionally being honoured as great or even holy (*ulugh, muqemmel*), I was told. It is the product of good, pure work (*halal emgek*) and it is in all food to make it tasty. Traditionally and still today it is seen as bad (*yaman bolidu*) to throw a piece of bread onto the ground or to step on one. This is called "to step on salt" (*tuzgha desish*) and is used to swear with: One steps on a piece of bread and declares "if this or that … may the salt beat me" (*tuz meni ursun*). In a similar way eating the same salt symbolises a promise to stay together and to be eating the same salt, that is, out of the same pot (*bir qazandin*) in the future (Zaili Memettursun 2012: 8). It is also believed to strengthen the couple's love and keep them from separating or getting divorced. The salt acts as witness to the matrimony in the ceremony (*tuz guwah-dur*). The symbolism of salt, as standing for commensality in connecting people is also met in the custom of "*tuz sélish*" (adding salt) mentioned above.

Abdukérim Raxman describes the custom in his book on Uyghur traditions and customs (*örp-adet*) but dismisses the custom from the *nikah* ceremony as such, stating that it takes place after the ceremony itself. Schrode who was working primarily in Kashgar and rural Atush, describes the difference in this region as a historical change: Here, a new version of the *nikah* included the presence and explicit consent of both groom and bride and the absence of the bread and salt custom (2007: 47). This is the model found at most weddings in Kashgar today. The bride sits with her female relatives in an adjacent room and answers for herself. The other version of the *nikah* ceremony is to be found in the rural areas around Kashgar and other parts of Xinjiang. It includes the salt custom and a male representative of the family answers for the bride who is often in a different house or at least across the courtyard in another room during most of the ceremony, but this is contemporarily changing. Rudelson remarked that the bride and groom were said to be present at the *nikah* in southwest Xinjiang in the 1990s, whereas they were not in Turpan where he worked (1997: 91). A story from this time of a *molla* in Ghulja who insisted on asking the consent of the bride personally though she was kept in the house of relatives elsewhere, tells that he mounted his bike in the middle of the ceremony to go to ask her and return for the final recitation and prayer. The new form of *nikah* is what is required by the

Qur'an, the argument goes. It stems from the more literal approach to Islam and is thus connected to and has been promoted by reformist narratives. The bread and salt custom not being mentioned in the Qur'an is seen as having derived from another religion. In this aspect it is likened to the custom of crossing fire and of the bride being carried on a carpet (often across fire), which has all but disappeared for the same reason. I was told that the salt custom had been replaced by the oral consent of bride and groom, according to the word of the Qur'an. The witness function (*guwah bolush*) of the salt has thus been taken over by explicit consent. Besides being more textually focussed this shift also entails a shift that locally is felt as more 'modern' — away from representation and symbolism towards a more individual and verbal explicitness.

Unlike other customs, like the custom of carrying the bride on a carpet, the custom of using fire to block the road or the question of whether to allow music and dance at weddings, the custom of bread and salt has seemingly not been discussed publicly. Several elder men I talked to were very surprised to hear that the custom had disappeared and still considered it essential to the *nikah* ceremony. As one retired teacher expressed it, to him it was something that could not be left out (*bolmisa, zadi bolmaydighan ish*). Furthermore, I never heard any argument in favour of this custom which has been so central in the marriage ceremony for such a long time. This clearly shows the variability of the *nikah* ceremony itself and the strong incentive of religious influences like the reform Islamic movements to leave their imprint on the marriage practices beyond a short lived phenomenon and beyond the relatively limited number of families accepting the full new program, e.g. hold *islamche toy* (piously oriented weddings). Similar broad influences are detectable as effects of the 'modern' changes too. The current changes once again do not necessarily be entirely new, but are much more likely to entail an element of historical meandering. Actually the custom of having groom and bride present at the *nikah* ceremony is recorded in sources from Kashgar in the early 20th century (Bellér-Hann 2008a, Högberg 1917).[146] The marriage process is an important and closely integrated part of daily life. Therefore it is very susceptible to the effects of more general social change. Yet, as became visible in the minimal marriages treated above, very little has changed in the very essence of marriage and the shifts can be viewed as transformations of elements in a structure that remains quite continuous. A similar thing can be said about kinship practice in Kashgar more generally, which is most certainly related to the continuity of marriage practice — especially before the background of the pronounced importance of affinity.

Traces of religious ideas

It is always difficult to determine where a certain influence has come from or by what certain changes were implemented. Yet, when comparing the marriages and weddings of contemporary Kashgar with those of the past and of the contemporary surroundings some further differences and developments become apparent that can be attributed to religious influences which have engraved a new and more textual oriented religiosity into the marriage process. These differences are found in various areas and on various levels. The first hand superficial religious

146 The same does not seem true of the bread and salt custom, though this remains to be explored further. Especially the time of Yaqub Beg would be interesting concerning this question.

symbolism is in some points stronger in Kashgar, than in the surroundings. When leaving for the brides place for the transfer the groom is carried on the shoulders of his friends both out of his own courtyard and into that of the bride, while they loudly yell *"allahu eqber!"* (God is great). I have seen young men from Kashgar trying to do this at weddings of their friend in Üstün Atush, but he and his peers perceived it as embarrassing.

An element that has been widely adopted and is currently changing in the surroundings of Kashgar is that the couple is no longer allowed to ride the same car. This has been the established norm in Kashgar for many years and I never saw it done differently here. In the villages and towns of Peyzawat, Atush and Üstün Atush it is still usual for groom and bride to both ride the decorated wedding car (*toy mashinisi*) together and for the cars to drive around the bazar after the bride has been picked up. In Kashgar this is seen as parading the bride and is never done. Instead the bride is taken straight back to the groom's place in a separate car filled with her female relatives (the *yengge*). The argument in Kashgar is that the *namehrem* (modesty code, especially concerning gender segregation) must be upheld and that it forbids the couple to ride together in one car. According to Bellér-Hann the concept of *namehrem* was "fully integrated into customary ideals" by mid 20th century (Bellér-Hann 2004a: 185). This demonstrates another phase of religious influence, since the concept is one derived from and locally connected to Islam. The concept has been used to argue against having groom and bride in the same room, even after the *nikah* ceremony has rendered them *halal* (religiously lawful) to each other.

Institutionalised affine sensitivities

I was told that during the 1980s and 1990s many young men held a *wichirka* before or after the wedding. It was a party including dance and often alcoholic drinks. Friends would take turns arranging it for each other. It was supposed to be a very festive evening with a joyful atmosphere (*köngül achidighan*, lit. heart opening). The word *wichirka* is Russian and has reached Kashgar as the name for the restaurant wedding celebrations held in the evening in Ürümchi and the cities of northern Xinjiang, where the Russian influence was strongest. Yet the custom of celebrating a wedding excessively was not new to the region. Still today long evening celebrations with much dancing are a part of rural weddings, not least in the area around Atush. Both during the night where the invitations are written one or two days before the wedding and during the wedding night itself after transferring the bride the young men dance joyfully (*shox*) for hours. In Kashgar the *wichirka* celebrations are said to have been stopped by religious authorities and arguments. They have become rare and alcohol is no longer served. In Kashgar today the wedding celebration ends after the bride has been transferred and no joy is displayed either at the transfer nor afterwards. This is to respect the felt loss of the wife givers (*qiz terep*, the bride's side). Displaying joy would resemble a mockery and strain the difficult affinal relations. I interpret this as the effect of yet another part of the value complex connected to *namehrem* and the religious believes connected to it, which is more deeply entrenched into social custom and conduct in Kashgar than in most of the surrounding areas. This is the logic of shame and honour, i.e. of the honour of the family (including prominently its male members) being vulnerably tied to the shame of the family's women. Thus the loss of a daughter or sister to someone who will on top of all take her virginity, is a highly sensitive and difficult process for the bride's side. The first joyful

festive event taking place after the transfer of the bride in Kashgar is the *tartishmaq* which involves the bride's mother who has at this point just taken part in the *yüz échish* (lifting of the veil) of the bride, and has thus officially given her consent to the integration of her daughter into the groom's family. Yet, this event is also currently being shortened in order not to hurt the feelings of the bride's relatives, I was told. Above I described this as a solemnisation of the wedding. One aim and purpose of this solemnisation of the wedding is to treat with care the honour and sensibilities of the bride's side. In Kashgar regard for this sensibility seems to have been institutionalised to a much higher degree than is the case in the surrounding areas. This has much to do with the centrality of the concept of *namahrem* and the according value hierarchy.

This connection shows in several parts of the marriage process. In rural Atush and most other surrounding townships the groom and his friends receive hospitality upon arrival at the bride's side when coming to transfer the bride. This is not the case in Kashgar city, where the groom and his friends merely dance for a few minutes, neither greeting anyone nor accepting any form of hospitality to then simply leave the courtyard. I initially interpreted this as a display of the dominance of the groom's side, maybe even symbolically acting out a wedding by elopement, which has been practiced in the region (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 250-252) and is still much practiced in Atush. Later I was introduced to the local interpretation of the shortness of the process being a way to be considerate towards the bride's side, and that the inobservance of proper conduct on the side of the groom is a display of shame, proper for the situation. Informants told me that the young men do not stay at the bride's place for longer, mainly because there is no space for them. This explanation is not to be understood in purely physical terms. It is not yet their turn, this part of the wedding does not belong to the groom and his friends. Others, the women, are on centre stage. The bride's side's house is at this point in time full of the groom's side's female relatives (in an extended sense encompassing neighbours and close friends) who are the ones responsible for actually transferring the bride and to a large extent for creating important social relations. Thus not staying to eat is considerate and modest, as is the silence displayed in not greeting the parents of the bride, since it shows the deeply felt shame appropriate for the groom "who is soon to sleep with their daughter," as one middle aged man present at such an event bluntly put it.[147] This display of modesty and shame is made possible by the fact that the groom has been a guest and received hospitality at the bride's parents place earlier in the day, just prior to the *nikah ceremony* as the last guests of the *toy neziri* in the morning. Thereby the groom has already been guest at their house once in the process of the wedding and no general denial of hospitality by either part takes place.

Religiously coloured giving

Giving the communal meal for the men (*toy neziri*) at a very early hour is special to Kashgar and can be fitted into the pattern of a wedding with a stronger religious focus. In most of the surrounding towns and villages like Yopurgha, Toqquzaq, Peyzawat, Üstün Atush and the villages around Atush the celebrations do not start this early and are held separately in the two side's houses respectively.[148] It resembles the gathering of the women at noon to *toy chéyi* (see

147 Thanks to Ingeborg Baldauf at Humboldt University Berlin for turning me towards this interpretation of the events.

148 The early morning *nezir* is also held in some villages and some families. An elder man in a village close to Atush

below) and is often held parallel to this, men and women arriving within the same time frame, couples arriving together but being seated in different rooms. It is also not called *nezir*. Many informants pointed out that the early morning event is convenient in the city since most men work during the daytime and are busy. Another and maybe more important reason often mentioned is that the *jama'et* (mosque community) is gathered for morning prayers and that they are still religiously pure (*teret bar*) from the ablutions and prayer, which will greatly benefit the religious merits produced by the *nezir*. The event being a *nezir* and not simply a *chay* therefore makes it more meaningful for it to take place in the morning after ablution and prayer.[149] This arrangement also carries a stricter segregation of the celebrations of men and women and allows for more (especially male) guests. Men and women are not just spatially segregated, but also in terms of time which has the effect that they do not even meet in the courtyard or out on the street. This is an issue in piously oriented weddings (Uzb. *islomiy to'y*) in Qoqand in the Feghana Valley (Hilgers 2009: 96-97) and also to some degree in Kashgar.

Calling to mind the resistance towards gift giving within the logic of piously oriented weddings another development may likewise be attributed to these religious influences. The display of gifts is frowned upon and avoided. This implicates a shift in tendency from the obligatory gift which has to be witnessed and sanctioned by the neighbourhood community towards a gift ideally not creating obligations and not bound up in mutual reciprocity, a 'free gift' in the sense of Parry (1984) and in the sense of charity, for which religious merits are to be gained - especially if it is given unseen and therefore without aiming at social status gains. Whereas some generations ago the custom of *sanduq échish* (Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 226) was practiced in Kashgar it has today completely disappeared and is only to be occasionally found in some of the surrounding rural communities. At the *sanduq échish* the gifts that the bride's side had bought for the *toyluq* and were now giving back to the groom's side were publicly displayed and announced by a woman with a particularly strong voice. Similarly the public display of the *qiz méli* (trousseau, but also dowry) transported on an open truck at the transfer of the bride as it is practiced in Atush is disregarded as showing off (*közköz qilish*) by people in Kashgar. Generally public display of giving is seen with skepticism even in the cases where it is not explicitly about creating religious merits. This is also part of the logic inherent in disregard of a large bride wealth offered by the groom's side; they are said to flaunt their wealth.

Religiously coloured kinship

In Kashgar it has become common among wealthy pious families to pay for the birth expenses of their sons' children which, at least for the first children, has traditionally been the duty of the bride's side. This change is likewise attributed to the arguments of certain religious authorities who stress the wording of the Qur'an, which according to them calls for the husband's family to pay. This expresses a more agnatically focussed kinship conceptualisation,

said that some families will do it this way, mostly those having moved here from Kashgar, but that they were very few. Furthermore only a very limited amount of people would participate in these events in the village. All of them would come as part of the *jama'et* straight from the mosque and it would not take place collectively at the bride's parent's place, but separately. Most men would still go at noon with their wives.

149 This is also mentioned as a reason for holding the religious ceremony (*nikah*) in the morning in Kashgar, unlike in the countryside and around Atush where it is usually performed in the afternoon, when the groom's party comes to pick up the bride (c.f. Abdukérim Rehman 2009a: 346, Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 129).

found in the Qur'an, in which the child clearly belongs to the groom's side and the bride being more completely transferred from one family to the other at the wedding in terms of rights and duties (cf. Tapper 1991: 16-17). Thus the bride's side loses influence and status and the bride wealth becomes more of a compensatory prestation, than in the traditional logic, where it was one element in a reciprocal exchange around a wedding uniting two families, not transferring the member of one into the other. This is an understanding not unknown to people in Kashgar, but restricted to certain areas of social life. The stronger religious context of *islamche toy* (piously oriented weddings), as a tendency, inspire a more agnatic idiom, but also a conceptualisation that includes a stronger sense of transfer and a lower status of the bride's side after the marriage. This tendency is more pronounced (though still not dominant) in Kashgar than in Atush and other surrounding towns. This may explain why in Kashgar relatively little *qiz méli* (dowry and trousseau) is given to reciprocate the *toyluq* (bride wealth) given by the groom's side and why the wife givers (bride's side) are attributed a relatively lower status. This has a connection to the religious influences, the values around the concept of *namehrem* and the agnatic kinship conceptualisations they carry and stress when they become more integrated into social custom and conduct. The logic of descent found in Islamic texts is a patrilineal one and the agnatic kin stands out as especially important in a political and economic sense in most Mediterranean and Middle Eastern societies, from where much Islamic influence has reached Central Asia. Generally a stronger agnatically based conceptualisation of kinship is employed in discourses centering around the Qur'an and Islam or in contexts strongly religiously connoted. For instance, the invitations written for the *toy neziri* (which is seen as a stronger religious event that other parts of the marriage process) inviting the distinguished elders of the mosque community (*jama'et*) mention both the fathers and father's fathers or groom and bride, while such an attention to agnatic descent is rare in most other discourses.

These examples of change in the marriage process which can be attributed to religious influences take us to the more general point of seeing the conceptualisations of marriage and kinship existent in contemporary Kashgar as historical products. In the following concluding chapters I will draw up a sketch of the different conceptualisations of kinship in Kashgar and look at these from a historical perspective.

V. Kinship in Kashgar

"The most popular folksongs are love songs and lyric songs about home and family." (Light 2006: 341)

" 'Situations are to be distinguished by value,' opposing the modern tendency to let 'facts be considered independently of values'." (Dumont 1980: 244 in de Coppet 1992b: 3)

This last concluding part of the thesis reaches some preliminary conclusions on kinship among Uyghurs in Kashgar. Chapter 10 draws up the main local conceptualisations of kinship and some of their areas of relevance. While genealogical conceptualisations of kinship do exists, they are only important in special discourses and peripheral to large parts of social organisation beyond the sibling group. Descent plays almost no structural role, while filiation is of great importance. Non-genealogical conceptualisations of kinship are central to social networks and to close marriage as described above. Chapter 11 takes up the theoretical input from Chapters 2 and 9 to view kinship practice as a historical product and identifies some historical transformations and shifts in the conditions that have contributed to shaping contemporary kinship practice in Kashgar. Chapter 12 sums up the main points of the thesis.

10 Conceptualisations of Kinship

"[F]ar from being the defining feature of primitive society, kinship is uniquely civilized. Americans happen to believe that certain relationships are biologically given, and that they are peculiarly important. This is their ideology. It is shared by many Europeans. However, there is no reason to think that any other peoples have developed the same set of ideas."

(Kuper 2008: 727; quote changed from past tense into present tense, RSR)

Problems with Qasim Akhun

Let us for a brief moment return to the story of Qasim Akhun. Qasim Akhun's family in Kashgar in the early 20th century included both his father and his maternal uncles, living door by door and figuring as one economic unit: This was the unit within which he was to marry in order to "keep the wealth in the family" (Jarring 1975: 12, 35). This means that in this case non-agnates (the mother's brothers) and, since the unit included both Qasim Akhun's father and his maternal uncles, even affines were potentially conceived of as belonging to one "family" functioning as an economic unit within which the wealth could be kept. This is not an uncommon constellation in Kashgar and surroundings today. This particular instance gives insight into one important conceptualisation of kinship in Kashgar: the conceptualisation of kinship being non-genealogical and performative. This conceptualisation is connected to the logic of close marriage and the ideal of affines being or becoming close relatives and to the central importance of community in daily life (Bellér-Hann 2008a). But this is not the only categorisation of relatives and not the only conceptualisation of kinship to be found in Qasim Akhun's letters (Jarring 1975), nor is it the only one found in Kashgar today. In his description of a *juwan toyi* (female fertility celebration) Qasim Akhun differentiates between 1) "our kin," 2) his deceased mother's kin and 3) his sister's husband's kin (Jarring 1975: 47). This is a categorisation which draws a distinction between 'us' and 'them' along agnatic lines, since the mother's kin is not included within "our kin" but opposed to it and which excludes affines from the category of the 'own'. This conceptualisation of kinship is also found in Kashgar today.

Different conceptualizations of kinship

Kinship is the core idiom for social closeness in Kashgar. It is a polysemous category which is conceptualised differently in different contexts and used differently in different situations. These differences are inherent in the various uses of words denoting kinship relations, like *tughqan, uruq-tughqan, qérindash, qandash* etc. These words take on different meanings within different contexts and discourses, as they are tied into different narratives — i.e. made to stand in different relations to other concepts and values. The local conceptualisations of kinship contain two major strands: The one that is more familiar to foreign observers of the region is a descent based imagination of kinship along agnatic and cognatic lines. The other and lesser known is a conceptualisation of kinship as close social relations based on mutual dependency and trust. These relations are re-presented (de Coppet 1992: 64-66) in gift exchange, verbal categorisation

and other kinds of semantic performance. The latter, non-descent oriented understanding of kinship is crucial to understanding the local practice and logic of close marriage and the way it produces important conditions of possibility for the phenomenon of frequent divorce and serial monogamy in Kashgar. On the basis of the formal analyses and the thick description of the marriage process, I in this chapter venture to demonstrate the primary local conceptualisations of kinship and their different areas of relevance. Although one can differentiate between the more genealogically (cognatically and agnatically) based conceptualisations on the one hand and the more performatively based conceptualisations of the other hand side, they do not contradict, but rather supplement each other.

Areas of relevance

The genealogical[150] conceptualisations of kinship are particularly present on the level of explicit ideals and explicit ideology, especially in discourses pertaining to gender, Islam and ethno-nationalism. But they also have influences on a structural level. They are of importance to inheritance, post-marital residence and the sibling group as a social unit. In these areas filiation is more important than descent. Descent is transitive, it reaches generations back, while filiation is intransitive, it is concerned with the direct parent-child relation (Barnard and Spencer 2002: 472, Fortes 1970). Of the two, filiation clearly has the greatest importance for social structure in Kashgar, and what may look like descent in some cases may be merely a sort of extended filiation. Generally descent is mainly thought of in terms of agnatic descent, while filiation is clearly cognatic (Bellér-Hann 1999). Many other parts of daily social practice or social structure like marriage choice, labour help and the formation of social units beyond the household and sibling group are more directly connected to the non-genealogical, performative modes of rendering kinship, of which affinity is a central element. The conceptualisation of kinship and social closeness that is central to the logic of close marriage is not mainly based upon descent. This is reflected in the use of kinship terms and in gift giving. Affinity is hereby one central type of non-descent kinship. A similar importance can be attributed to neighbourhood relations in the villages and the surviving old *mehelle* of Kashgar, though several recent developments, including monetisation and the re-structuring of the city-scape weaken neighbourhood links. This strengthens network connections including genealogical kin, but also affines and friends, at the cost of community relations. When looking at kinship practice more generally, the non-genealogical and performatively based conceptualisations of kinship can be said to frame the conceptualisations based on genealogy, which in turn delivers most of the important idioms.

10.1 Genealogical kinship (kin)

Agnatic conceptualisations

An agnatic conceptualisation of kinship exists, and even a verbal agnatic bias, can be detected in contemporary Kashgar (*ataliq qandashliq munasiwet*, Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008:

150 It must be stressed that these are not biological relations. "Genealogically" designates the locally and culturally recognised connections of filiation and descent, regardless of 'actual' biological links.

109; *ata qan sistémisi,* Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 227-228). But as Barnes points out, societies are not just agnatic or cognatic (1962: 5-9). Instead certain parts and certain traits of social organisation and of public discourse are coloured by different kinship conceptualisations. In Kashgar post-marital residence is predominately virilocal[151] and inheritance, especially of land and other immovable property has a strong male bias. In the 19th century both land and titles were usually inherited agnatically (cf. Newby 2007: 26; 1998: 285, 289), and also today immovables go mostly but not exclusively to sons (cf. Bellér-Hann 2004a: 182, 190). The youngest son is supposed to take over the parental house, or as Enwer Semet Qorghan puts it: "to light the lantern of his fathers" (*atiliri yaqqan chiraqni öchürmeslik*; 2007: 134). According to Abdurehim Hebibulla children of the same father and different mothers count as full siblings, while such by one mother but different fathers do not. Yet, this view is not shared by all, especially in Kashgar where 'full siblings' are generally seen as only those who share both mother and father (cf. Bellér-Hann 2008a: 219). Social ownership of children officially belongs to the father's side and they take over his first name as their surname (cf. Bellér-Hann 2008a: 219-220, Sulayman 2007). In a survey of 1600 Uyghurs from Ghuldja, Ürümchi and Korghas who had adopted inheritable, steady surnames 82% of the asked had chosen their father's or grandfather's name or that of another male ascendant (Sulayman 2007: 124). Another area in which agnatic conceptualisation plays a role are the written invitations to early morning wedding meals (*toy neziri*) that takes place at the bride's parents' place. They often carry the names of the paternal grandfathers and paternal great grandfathers of both bride and groom. These events are strongly religiously connoted, which may explain why here the agnatic kinship conceptualisation is adopted: It is found in Islamic scriptures and in many of the Central Asian, Arabic and Middle Eastern social contexts from which the religious influences are and have been particularly strong.

An agnatic bias is also found in idioms, such as in the expression *ata-bowilirimiz* (our forefathers) which literally means our 'fathers-grandfathers'. Furthermore, Enwer Semet Qorghan uses the most common words for descent communities (*uruq, jemet*) to explain the concept of endogamy and exogamy (2007: 106), concepts which are explicitly agnatically defined. It is common knowledge among Uyghur intellectuals that Uyghurs in the past used to be organised in such agnatic tribes (*uruq*) and clans (*jemet*; Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 253, Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008 : 109-110), and when explicitly talking about blood agnatic affiliation is adhered to. Biological traits, like body size and beauty are by many seen to be inherited agnatically, while this is not the case for personality or social competences. In the villages and suburban neighbourhoods of Kashgar sometimes nicknames (*leqem*) are inherited agnatically and households, families and houses are known under the pet name of its patriarch. Especially in wealthy, established families who for generations hold a high status within their communities the concept of *jemet* (descent group, cf. Sulayman 2007: 125) has some importance for identity today. These are also the types of families mentioned above which conduct a higher percentage of their marriages among kin, i.e. explicitly genealogically defined close marriages. Yet, these marriages more often take place among uterine kin than among agnates. The own *jemet* is agnatically recognised, but in Kashgar (unlike in other parts of Xinjiang, like Qumul and

151 After the marriage the new couple lives with the husband's parents.

Ghulja) it does not translate into a corporative group of any sort, and has no official membership or clearly defined group boundary. Households belonging to one *jemet* most often have more important social and economic connections outside the *jemet* than within it, if we look beyond the sibling group.

Ethnicity and kinship

As Adil, an elder man in Kashgar, told me the idea of "*uruqداshliq*" (being of one agnatic group, lit. sharing seeds) exists among the Uyghurs but no groups or real meaningful categories arise from it ("*idيyisi bar emma rسmiy uruq yoq*"). *Jemet* and *uruq* were synonyms to him. In his family they sometimes talk about his grandfather's decendents (*tahirning ewlaدi*) as a category which by now numbers a good 200 people. But no social action or institution is connected to this imagination, not even family reunions. They also have no pedigree (*nesebname*). Very few people used to have family pedigrees, Adil explained, in accord with others. This was reserved for the religious elites, especially Sufi families. Pedigrees then became of interest to well educated people with a sense for the importance of history, he told. Today, many have become interested in the topic. They are inspired by historical intellectual heroes like Mexmud Qeshqeri, Yusup Hach Hajib and by foreigners, Adil continued.

I have collected a few *nesebname* (written pedigrees) in Kashgar. They are all written in the early 2000s and follow basic agnatic descent structures, though often women's lines as well as subsequent marriage partners and their parents are remarked in the pedigree. In the 1990s there was a wide discourse on the topic of pedigrees and genealogies with a historical outlook. This was partly motivated by the spreading of ethno-national sentiments and the mostly cognatic descent focus inherent in these ethnic discourses. In this sense the expression *ata-bowilirimiz* (our forefathers) is often used in an ethnic connotation shedding the agnatic bias and being meant cognatically. During this time many Uyghurs felt the need to pay more attention to their own history (including each family's personal history) and to keep track of it, in order to preserve social memory and to document the past. This inspired people to start writing up their own family *nesebname*. A range of popular historical novels[152] describing individual family histories in a wider historical perspective have surely contributed to popularising these ideas. In recent years several books have been published in Xinjiang which deal explicitly with pedigrees and genealogies (*nesebname*). One of them is a guide book on how to write an own pedigree (Enwer Semet Qorghan 2010, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009b). These are all generally cognatically designed, with an equal amount of space given to paternal and maternal relatives, though the paternal side is mentioned first. Besides these, may we say, politically motivated pedigrees the genealogical knowledge of most people in Kashgar does not extend beyond the knowledge of the own grandparents. The pedigrees are more important for preserving historical memory (and thus politically) than for the organisation of families or communities on a micro-scale level. Agnatically linked people are viewed as belonging to one *jemet*, but this has little consequence for social life. An interesting polysemous notion of the term *qanداsh* (lit. of one blood) further demonstrates the shallowness of the agnatic bias. *Qanداsh* are basically defined as people sharing

152 Abdurehim Ötkür's *Iz* (traces; 2000/1985) and Zordun Sabir's trilogy *Ana Yurt* (motherland; 2006) are amongst the most well known Uyghur historical novels (cf. Rudelson 1997: 163-165).

blood. It is often used to designate siblings of one father, but some say that it can also mean the grandchildren of one grandfather cognatically defined. Furthermore, the term can be used to designate an ethnic group (*millet*; cf. Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 113). The ethnic designation of the term is generally understood cognatically, as is ethnicity more generally (cf. Friederich 2007: 97). As we have seen above *qanداsh* can in some contexts even be taken to mean relatives through marriage (Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 109-110). This shows that even the term *qanداsh*, that refers explicitly to blood-relations, can be understood both agnatically and cognatically depending on its use and context.

Cognatic conceptualisation

Many idioms and basic metaphors concerning kinship in Kashgar are based on procreation. The most common Uyghur idioms for relatives and kinship are cognatically focussed rather than agnatically. The term *tughqan* (from the verb *tughmaq*, to give birth) focusses on maternal connections, and *uruq-tughqan* (*uruq* means seed) combines a female attribute (birth) with a male one (seed). A second set of idioms for relatives likewise reflects the bilaterality. *Qanداsh* (lit. blood mates) and *qérinداsh* (lit. from one womb) can be used separately or in the combination *qan-qérinداsh* to mean close relative or sibling (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 219). Bellér-Hann points out that the folk theory of field and seed, the woman being the field and the man the seed which determines the outcome of the crop, as known from India and Turkey (Meeker 1970: 54, Delaney 1991) does not exist in southwestern Xinjiang (1999: 124-126). Procreation and birth are embedded within local conceptualisations of kinship and is prefigured by it — not the other way around (Sahlins 2013: 72-77). Bellér-Hann shows that the conceptualisation of procreation among Uyghurs in southwest Xinjiang is strongly bilateral (1999: 128, 133, 2008a: 219-220). Mother and father are seen as equally important contributors and both may be responsible in the case of childlessness which is often contributed to the ill-fit of the two partners rather than to a biological deficit with either one of them (Bellér-Hann 1999: 127-129). This supports my argument that in Kashgar the married woman functions as a bridge between two families rather than being an object of transfer from one side to the other. Children as the goal and product of marriage are seen as the result of a good match (*layiq tallash*) to which both sides must contribute.

As described above matrilateral and patrilateral relatives are not terminologically differentiated (Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 109-110). Generally maternal relatives, known as 'the mother's side' (*ana terep*), are of great importance. To many households the wife's kin is more important than the husband's for money lending, labour support and childcare. This is often said to depend on the person who lives closest by and to whom one has the most contact. The heightened spatial mobility of households in Kashgar city therefore contributes to lessening the agnatic bias, since virilocality is less frequent and the mother's relatives will more often be as close by as the father's. This fits well into the practice of affinal relations creating larger social units around sibling groups as described above. But affines can be excluded from the definition of relatives (or in this case kin) when the parent's siblings' spouses are not counted as *tughqan*. This is a special use of the word, which shows a cognatic definition. A young man told me that he

had earlier been married to his mother's brother's daughter at a very young age. The son of another mother's brother of his had married her sister (being to him the father's brother's daughter). This had made the two of them *baja* besides also being *uruq-tughqan*, he explained. Both couples had divorced within a year and they thus lost their relation as *baja*, but stayed *uruq-tughqan*, he explained. Here the use of *uruq-tughqan* is clearly cognatic, including both mother's and father's kin, but excluding affines. At divorce children are often split between the parents or may be brought up with either set of grandparents. Thus the actual practically claimed social ownership of the children is often much less agnatic than the discourse has it. *Qérinداsh* (lit. of one womb, children of the same mother) to many designates closer relatives than *qanداsh* (lit. of the same blood, children of the same father). The synechdoche *qérinداsh* (of one womb), which has an uterine focus, is also much more often used to talk about relatives more generally than the agnatically focussed counterpart *qanداsh* (of one blood). People will also often emphasise that siblings have come out of the same womb and the parental house (*chong öy*) is often called "*apamning öyi*" (my mother's house).

As described above sometimes the invitations to the early morning communal meal of a wedding (*toy neziri*) feature the names of groom and bride's respective paternal grandfathers (FF) and paternal great grandfathers (FFF), but in most cases the names of the couple's respective paternal and maternal grandfathers (FF, MF) are printed onto the invitation. This is because the maternal side is practically as important as the paternal side and might be insulted by not being mentioned. To avoid this risk is mostly judged as being more important than to keep to the more Islamic connoted conduct of stressing the patrilineage. A similar cognatic emphasis is made in other parts of the wedding. For instance the two-to-four *yengge* who accompany the bride to her husband's place in the evening of the wedding day are often said to have to be from the bride's mother's and the father's side respectively.

Filiation and siblings

Within genealogical connections generally descent plays a much lesser role than filiation. The relations between parents and their children are much discussed, many local books offer advice on this relation and an unpublished analysis of short stories in the popular literary journal Tarim by Memet Hushur shows that this relation is by far the most written about. As Clark points out the relation between parents and children is by many Uyghurs understood as a relation of reciprocal giving, moral duty or obligation (*perz*; such as the obligation to have one's children married), dependency and even debt (*kerz*; 1999: 80). One children's tale describes a very hardworking middle aged man, who is asked by an elder man why he works so hard. The middle aged man answers that he works for three pots: Besides working for himself and his wife, he is paying off debt to his parents while building up debt with his children at the same time. The importance of filiation over descent may also be observed in the local customs of veneration of the dead. Here predominately the parents and at most the grandparents are venerated while "unknown ancestors of a distant past" (Bellér-Hann 2007: 140) are neither venerated nor known. Around Kashgar this veneration mainly takes place around the religious holidays (cf. Dawut 2009: 61). Furthermore, poems about father and mother often figure in wedding videos, while no ancestors beyond the grandparents are ever shown. According to Wang the custom of

using bread and salt in the *nikah* ceremony in Turpan symbolises the importance of always remembering ones parents (Wang 2004: 199-200). Another example of filiation being stressed over descent is that in some parts of Kashgar the standard Uyghur word for cousin *bir newre* (lit. one grandchild; grandchildren of one grandfather) is not used. Instead the phrase *ikki tughqan* (lit. two born) is applied, which is a derivation of the much used word for siblings *bir tughqan* (one born) and stresses the double link of filiation. A more usual way to denominate siblings is *bir tughqanning baliliri* (sibling's children), which also stresses filiation and sibling connections or the sibling group. The parents and the parent's house are the central symbols for the very important social unit of the sibling group.[153]

The term *qanداش* also has a reading which stresses filiation rather than descent, since it can be used to mean exclusively siblings and the parents. In this usage cousins, affines and other relatives are excluded from the category. The strength of the sibling group is, as mentioned above, also connected to the bride not being fully transferred into her husband's family at marriage, but rather connecting the two sides by staying closely integrated in her own sibling group. After divorce or in widowhood women often return to their natal home or to the home of their brother (cf. Bellér-Hann 1997: 94, Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 252). Also adoption which is quite common in Kashgar mostly takes place between siblings, especially in the case of childlessness. It is also widely practiced in the case of births exceeding the limit set by the national one-child policy.

10.2 Non-genealogical kinship (relatives)

"[T]he growing wheat […] is always surrounded by similar plants, thereby emphasizing the inherently social and communal nature of humans: they are surrounded by relatives from the moment they are born." (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 218)

"[M]ost people had kinship ties with their neighbours […] they may have been connected through the patriline, fictive kinship or through marriage." (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 193-194)

"My suggestion will be that actually neither [kinship or friendship] 'give rise' to favors […] In fact, favor can be a vital initiating spark that changes the status of the recipient, turning them into kin or friends." (Humphrey 2012: 23)

Kinship and exchange

Despite idioms and practices stressing genealogical aspects of kinship, the main criterion for defining kinship in social practice is not genealogy. In fact many very important areas of kinship

153 The parent's house (*chong öy*, lit big house) is an important concept, as is *öy* (house) generally, as seen above in the expressions *öylenmek* and *öy-uchaqliq bolmaq* for marrying. A closer look at this concept as a factor in social structure could be fruitfully approached in a future study drawing on the theoretical basis of studies of 'house societies' (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995) and on theoretical approaches to space (Bray 2005, Graham and Marvin 2001, Le Febvre 1991, Bourdieu 1989, Bertuzzo 2009).

practice draw rather on a non-genealogical and more performatively oriented conceptualisation of kinship. Exchange plays a central role in these. Rudelson recognises the significance of kinship for economic undertakings (1997: 109) and, drawing upon Meillasoux, also manages to turn the equation on its head: He also recognises that kinship is influenced and even formed by exchange and cooperation: "Uyghur peasants determine their social networks and relationships through kinship ties influenced by relations of production" (ibid.: 107). This insight suggests a performative, non-descent rendering of kinship, which is particularly useful for approaching kinship practice in Kashgar. Here gift (and other) giving is a basic element in performatively confirming and creating kinship. Sahlins provides an good illustration of such conceptualisations from Fiji:

"[C]onsider the Fijian's response to the naive question of the ethnographer: 'Suppose two men, one a relative of yours and one not, had something you needed, which would you go to […]?' The reply was to this effect: 'I would go to my relative of course. If he didn't give it to me, and the other man did, I would know that the other man was really my relative.' (Sahlins 1962: 204)" (Sahlins 2013: 63-64)

Here we are faced with a very performative conceptualisation of kinship:[154] Kinship is defined through mutual dependency and support performed in daily practice. When exchange is introduced as a possible defining element into the analysis of kinship and not just as its dependent variable attribute, other structures connected to exchange on different levels can be seen to likewise effect practices of kinship. In daily life relatives often provide access to the resources of ideally anonymised systems such as the state and the market. At the same time social networks and kinship relations are influenced by just such access. It is thus not only the social networks that operate within markets and state institutions, but actually the market and state structures also operate within the social networks and communities, including kinship. A strict dichotomous division of kinship and economy or kinship and politics (state) is therefore not feasible in Kashgar. The systems constitute each other in a double sense, as Strathern has drawn up (Strathern 1985): Firstly they constitute each other in the sense that they are each other, being not neatly dividable. At the same time they constitute each other in the sense that they provide a basis for each other and are related in various ways. Their very relation and the fact that such a relation can be imagined and discussed makes them two and not one entity, since it takes two elements to have a relation (Strathern 1985).[155]

A similar double constituting relation as that just postulated for kinship and economy can be provided for the relation between state institutions and the power and status relations within inner communities or for the official administrative units (*mehelle, shödi,* 小队, *xiaodui*) and the on-the-ground local communities (*mehelle, jama'et*), that is, between the structures of the state, on the

154 Marcel Mauss has famously called the gift a part of the giver (Mauss 1990/1925: 35, 52). Hardly any metaphor demonstrates this intimate connection of giver and gift better than the Uyhgur *köglüm* (my heart), meaning a gift offered. The suggestion is that taking the gift will create lasting bonds between giver and taker, while turning it down will be like turning that person down. The gift is a part of the person, here quite literally his heart.

155 The relation between kinship and economy is central to the argument of this thesis. My use of the term 'economy' here is but a convenient shorthand for giving, exchange and livelyhood more generally. This metaphor, as Viveiros de Castro has pointed out, may not be the most well suited for the purpose (Viveiros de Castro 2009, Strathern 1992). Besides local ties of social obligation, market access and state structures are all parts of this wider "economy".

one side, and social relations, including kinship, on the other. In an understanding of kinship not centrally focused on genealogy and descent economic and political support are not secondary but essential areas defining kinship.[156] Loyalties in the local community and the family structure are influenced by the persons' positions in other structures, including state and market structures. In Kashgar this is a double edged sword, since high positions in the local administration give the power to allocate resources but at the same time may be condemned as collaboration with the Chinese authorities. Local community is as heavily influenced by state institutions as the state institutions are pervaded by social networks. This is not a new phenomenon, but one that has been documented in the region since at least the 19th century. Laura Newby writes about the local elites under Qing rule in the first half of the 19th century: "Their relationship with the Qing was symbiotic; these neo-traditional administrators served their conquerors, but they were also empowered by them both directly and indirectly" (Newby 1997: 278).

Performative conceptualisation of kinship

Taking these considerations into account we arrive at a non-biological definition of kinship being quite close to newer and more popular concepts like "relatedness" (Carsten 2000, 2004). Marriage (affinity), filiation, descend but also spatial vicinity, exchange, trust and labour all contribute to producing a local notion of lasting relations of social closeness and lasting obligations, i.e. kinship (*tughqanɔarchiliq*). Blood and birth are important metaphors for kinship, but kinship entails many non-descent links and has little significance if it is not lived out actively. Kinship must be performed to be valid and the ways of performing it are various. On the level of practice all kinship is performative in one way or the other. If it were not it would cease to be important. But not in all conceptualisations of kinship does performativity figure as a centrally defining factor, as it does in Kashgar. Here, in central areas like the formation of social networks and close marriage the conceptualisation of kinship is determined by exchange, trust and dependency and as something to be produced and confirmed, something to be practiced and performed. Though it rarely takes place in practice the discursive possibility of severing kinship is recognised and much used as a threat or to express dismay. "*Senɔek ukam yoq*" (lit. I have no younger brother like you; you are no longer my younger brother) is a commonly heard curse. This invokes the understanding of the continuity of kinship being preconditioned on the fulfilment of certain expectations and depending on a certain performance which is necessary to re-present and re-confirm the kinship.

This is done, among other ways, by employing kinship terminology. Kinship terminology is mainly used to express and perform inclusion. The group to be included is defined using criteria of trust and dependency rather than genealogical connections. Marriage is one important way to produce close relatives, but others exist, such as neighbourhood and close friendship. All of them include intensive exchange and mutual dependency, in the sense that central functions of daily and ritual life are secured by these people on whom the family can rely for various kinds of help

156 The ideal of anonymous political bureaucracy and anonymous markets cleared of the influences of kinship ties and social relations of trust and obligation fit well with the division of culture and nature in questions of social relations. This makes kinship a thing based on biology, or at least descend closely associated with biology, i.e. nature (cf. Sahlins 1976, 2013).

and for quick access to resources including financial means (cf. Bellér-Hann 1998: 709). Relations of kinship also entail a range of bodily and spatial practices besides the terminology and the exchange. They all signal and produce (re-present) kinship between the involved persons. Neither in the case of terminology, nor from the perspective of marriage rules or exchange, nor for the constitution of social units, is genealogy the primary defining criterion.

The connections and obligations of this kind of performative kinship may be grasped as in Mauss' sense as a 'total' form of participation in each other's lives (Mauss 1990/1925: 17-31, cf. Schneider 1984: 101).[157] Marshal Sahlins discusses Lévy-Bruhl's notion of participation to move from "participation" to "bi-presence":

"… Maurice Leenhardt said that if 'participation' seems irreconcilable with the norms of our intelligence, it is because we take it for granted that beings are given beforehand and afterward participate in this or that relation; whereas, for Levi-Bruhl, participations are already necessary for beings to be given and exist. 'Participation is not a fusion of beings who lose or retain their identity at the same time,' said Lévy-Bruhl; 'it enters into the very constitution of these beings. It is immanent in the individual, a condition of existence' (in Leenhardt 1949, xvi)" (Sahlins 2013: 34)

This recalls debates on the concept of the person and discussions about the concepts of individuals and dividuals (Strathern 1988a: 13, 1989 Dumont 1980, 1986). The mutual participation is not external to the persons taking part in it, but constitute these, as relations in Marilyn Strathern's understanding constitute persons at Mount Hagen in Papua New Guinea (Strathern 1988a), or indeed as relations to other categories define and constitute any given category in the structuralist perspective. This participation constituting the person can be seen as a kind of "mutuality of being" (Sahlins 2013: 19-23, 62) shared between those conceptualised as relatives, or as a plural "kinship I" (Sahlins 2013: 35, Johannsen 1954: 149) comprising many living and dead individuals. Sahlins cites Wilson (1951: 226) for having defined kinsmen as "members of one another" and kinship terms as "categories of belonging" (Sahlins 2013: 22). This is an important conceptualisation of kinship, which plays a big role in many areas of kinship practice in Kashgar. The notion of 'categories of belonging' can be well applied to local kinship terms in Kashgar. Since most kinship in Kashgar is basically 'mutuality of being' based on intensive exchange, mutual trusts and dependency, some persons with whom genealogical relations are recognised may not practically enter into the categories of 'relatives' or 'close relatives' and some non-genealogical relatives may.[158] Recognised genealogical connections do give a strong potential for developing the practices that re-present or create kinship and closeness — as do marriage and neighbourhood.

157 Total in a Maussian sense means a phenomenon that touches all areas of social life: politics, economy, kinship, religion, legal matters, morality … (Mauss 1990: 17-31) This poses the question if these categories are at all meaningful devices to carve up and differentiate the social context here looked at (Uyghur Kashgar).

158 Socialisation is generally seen as more important than blood for the personality of a child (Bellér-Hann 2004a: 192-193) and there is a clear idea that one becomes like those who surround one, like expressed in the quote about the wheat at the beginning of the sub-chapter. This is also seen in cases of inter-ethnic adoption or pertaining to the so-called *minkaohan*, Uyghurs educated within the Chinese educational system, of whom is said that they in many aspects are like Han-Chinese (cf. Cesaro 2007).

Spatial kinship

Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq writes about the ideal relations between neighbours that they entrust themselves, their possessions and secrets to each other (*qoshna qoshnigha amanet*; 2009a: 43) and that they need each other (*hajetmen bolidu*) for lending all from onions to money and not least for labour support.[159] According to Abdukérim Raxman the intensity of labour at certain times within the agricultural circle makes it necessary for Uyghur villagers to depend on free labour support from their neighbours (*lapqut*; 2008: 111-112) Also Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq stresses that unpaid labour help is provided for agrarian production (2009a: 44-45). This includes subsistence production, but also cash crops sold on the market. These relations of trust and dependency are exactly what is practically understood as kinship in Kashgar. The same is true of another very important part of neighbourhood mentioned by several authors and much practiced in Kashgar: the sharing of food (*ash sunushush*; Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 44-45, see also Berger 2007, Bellér-Hann 2008b, and Cesaro 2002, 2007 on the symbolism and importance of commensality). Neighbours are in many expressions and proverbs likened to relatives. Zaili Memettursun quotes a manner of speech saying that no person is without family and no family without neighbours and that neighbours share their lives. Neighbourhood, she says, "creates the same kind of ties of affection as among relatives" (*tughqangha oxshash méhri rishte peyda qilidu*; 2012: 13-14). Abdukérim Raxman also makes this explicit comparison pointing at the importance of neighbours "living as closely together as relatives" (*tughaqndek inaq ötüsh*; 2008: 111).

Community relations in Kashgar are often described as kinship. Only in some situations and discourses genealogical connections are explicitly differentiated from spatial ones (cf. Bellér-Hann 2008a: 217). In such cases neighbours (*qoshna*) and relatives (*uruq-tughqan*) are discursively separated. This is much more common in written language than in quotidian discourse. This works similar to what we observed in the kinship terminology: In standard dictionary language the differentiation between genealogical and non-genealogical kinship is expressed, but in daily speech it is neither recognised nor important. It would even be an affront to those not included, since genealogy delivers the idiom for closeness, but closeness is not practically created mainly through genealogical links. The concept of social closeness (*yéqin*) frames this differentiation. This framing can be demonstrated in the proverb "*yiraqtiki tughqandin, yéqindiki qoshna yaxshi*" (A close neighbour is better than a far off relative; Zaili Memettursun 2012: 14, cf. Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 111). In Wang's rendering the proverb is even clearer: "*yiraq toqandin* (sic) *khoshna yeqin*" (a neighbour is closer than a far off relative; 2004: 120, Yarmuhemmet Tahir Tughluq 2009a: 227). Here the differentiation between neighbours and relatives is made verbally but the differentiation is framed by the concept of closeness. The main way to express this closeness in in the verbal and practical (exchange, spatial and bodily practices) idioms of kinship.

159 Interestingly, the most used quotidian Uyghur term for 'lending' in *bérip turmaq* (lit. to keep giving), which classifies lending as a gift.

Givenness and affinity

This non-genealogical and performative conceptualisation of kinship comes close to the new kinship approach. Yet in these approaches the structural significance of affinity is not recognised, whereas it is central to understanding kinship in Kashgar. Viveiros de Castro asserts that an area of close social relations usually exists that is locally viewed as given. While descent theory drawing on European modern kinship imaginaries declared descent the 'given' realm of kinship, alliance studies added affinity as a possible given notion. The new kinship approach, which Viveiros de Castro terms the "constructivist model" deconstructed the notion of 'given-ness' in kinship, claiming constructiveness for all areas, but almost completely neglecting affinity. According to Viveiros de Castro this was because they implicitly accepted the decent theoretical model, according to which affinity was secondary and constructed anyway and therefore needed no explication.

Calling for a more holistic analysis of notions of gift giving, kinship and magic Viveiros de Castro presents what he calls the 'Amazonian kinship model' in which affinity is (locally seen as) a given and consanguinity is (locally seen as) constructed (Viveiros de Castro 2009). He combines alliance theory and the constructivist view in a new analytical approach. In Kashgar affinity per se is certainly seen as a given and unavoidable, though the position is not tied to any pre-given kinship category in the sense of positive marriage rules or elementary structures. Within the logic of close marriage in Kashgar the 'given' category into which marriage is preferred is that of relations close enough to be made central relatives. Following this logic, kinship is inherent in the conceptualisation of affinity itself. Yet, not all marriages follow this logic. Some genealogical categories of consanguinity are also seen as given, but certainly not all. While the analytical distinction of given-ness and constructed-ness, as viewed locally, is useful, it cannot be directly extrapolated onto the categorical distinction of affines and consanguines. Rather marriage (and the resulting affinity) as well as filiation and spacial vicinity often come to define a core of relatives per se, that is, be seen as given, those in whose lives one participates, with whom one shares a "mutuality of being" and with whom one constitutes a "kinship I".

In de Coppets (1992) sense marriages re-present close relations, they make close relationships 'present again'. This is connected to exchange, verbal, spatial and bodily practices. Affines are almost always classified as relatives and it is the ideal for them to be or become close relatives. Relations of affinity may even constitute social units. Much is expected of affines and affinal relations are potentially laden with tension. Possibly the central role of affines contributes to taking emphasis off genealogical definitions. Thus affinity is, even in the case of close marriage, designed as a relation built upon performativity and a relation which may even easily fall apart if it is not properly performed.

Thus, though genealogical concepts of kinship focussed on descend and birth deliver the linguistic idioms for kinship in Kashgar, genealogical notions of kinship are framed and on a higher level encompassed by performative notions of kinship and social closeness. Within these affinity delivers one leg for the basic model of non-genealogical, exchange based kinship in Kashgar, while neighbourhood relations deliver the other.

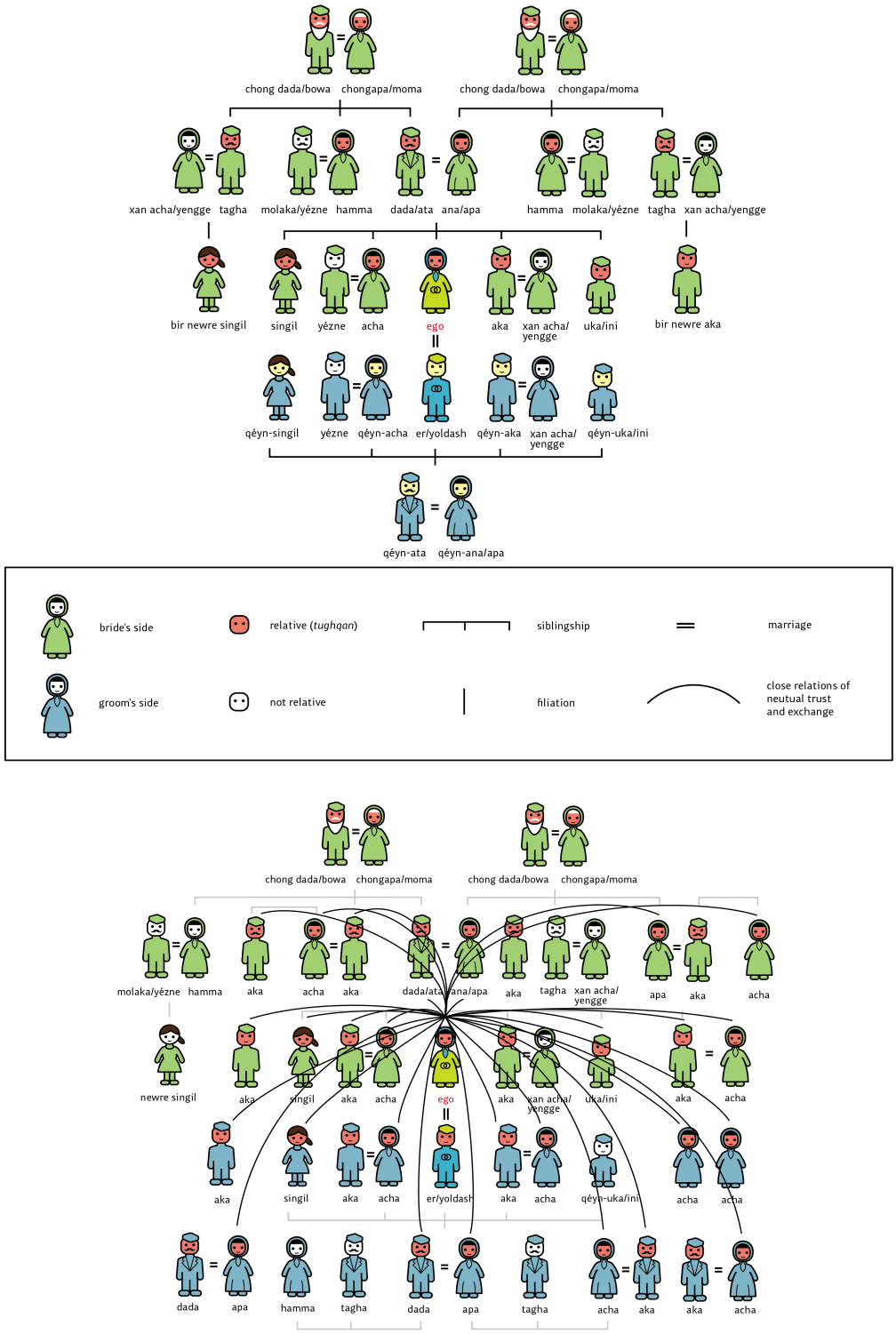


Fig. 42 Two conceptualisations of kinship in Kashgar. The upper depiction shows the genealogical consanguine conceptualisation inherent in the standard dictionary reference kinship terminology and in much explicit abstract discourse on the topic. The lower depiction illustrates the non-genealogical performative conceptualisation of kinship defined by mutual dependency, trust and exchange relations. This latter conceptualisation is inherent in the usual use of practical kinship reference terminology. It is relevant for much daily kinship practice and for understanding the logic of close marriage in Kashgar. (Design by Steenberg and Zheng)

11 Kinship as a Historical Product

The story of Qasim Akhun and his maternal uncles and much of the material used by Bellér-Hann (2008a) are roughly 100 years older than my field data from Kashgar. The conditions of kinship practice have been altered profoundly throughout this period. Political and economic changes have been severe and since kinship in Kashgar interacts with economy and politics in mutually constituting ways (c.f. Strathern 1985: 192-194, Barnard and Good 1984: 125), kinship practices have been strongly altered as well. Furthermore, new ethnic concepts have entered a dialectically constructive exchange with local models of descent, the very different phases of modernisation, including collectivisation and recent massive market reforms, have likewise altered the social fabric (cf. Millward 2007: 285-301, Clark 1999). The way of talking about close marriage has also changed in response to the Chinese Family Laws of 1950 and 1980 sharply restricting close kin marriage (Engel 1984: 958). Also elements in the weddings have changed. This is coloured by Kashgar's traditional role as entrance point for various influences from western Central Asia. Today's weddings in Kashgar closely resemble descriptions of weddings in contemporary Uzbekistan (Hilgers 2009: 95-109, Kehl-Bodrogi 2008: 105-113), while weddings in early 20th century Kashgar, as described by Bellér-Hann are closer to what I found in the villages around Atush (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 235-250).

As defined above historical transformations are based on structural constants. The practices I witnessed in Kashgar are no result of purely recent developments, and Qasim Akhun's case has not lost its relevance. My ethnographic material, the historical sources Jarring and others provide, as well as Bellér-Hann's work, suggest that the ideals and phenomena of close marriage and affinity, the practice of serial monogamy and the non-stigmatisation of divorce connected hereto, as well as the general conceptualisation of marriage and its essential elements have remained relatively constant over the last 100 years, despite many details having been altered and despite modernisation and religious reformism currently introducing further changes. At least on the level of abstraction and generality, on which I have here described the value of affinity and the structural importance of marriage, these elements remain central, but not unaltered, since the early 20th century. This can also be said of the relation between performative kinship, affinity and agnatic and cognatic conceptualisations of kinship, each of special relevance to different parts of the practice. Yet, the current kinship practice and conceptualisations have been subject to many changes within the last 100 years, and even more before that. They are historical products of very long production phases.

The following sub-chapter is an amalgamation of ideas and possible connections concerning the historical production of kinship and marriage practice in contemporary Kashgar. The historical traces of kinship practice are undeniable. The connections and ideas presented below are what a kinship anthropological reading of the most obvious evidence suggests may have been contributing factors in producing the current situation, seen from todays perspective. All of the points made and ideas wavered should further be explored and tested much more carefully

against existing historical evidence.

Early sources and the position of the *kélin*

Several local authors draw on the classical literary sources of Mahmud Kashgari (1005-1102) and Yüsüp Xas Hajib (1019-1085; e.g. Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 253, Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008 : 109-110). According to these authors already by this time the Uyghur tribes, clans and big agnatic families had started to dissolve, several kinship terms were disappearing (Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 230, 254, Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 110) and the former custom of 'marriage-by-purchase' (*ɔoda xaraktérlik nikahlinish*) had transformed to *toyluq*-based marriages (*toyluq asasdiki nikahlinish*). According to Abdurehim Hebibulla, before the time of Mahmud Kashgari (1054-1113) women were traded for livestock (*charwa-mal*) and a married woman neither had any hereditary rights nor the right to return to her parents after the death of her husband, but was completely under the dominance of her husband's family (*er terep a'ilisi*; 2000: 254). Enwer Semet Qorghan calls this system 'marriage-by-purchase' (*ɔoda xaraktérlik nikahlinish*; 2007: 115). These changes seem likely to be the first important steps from an agnatically based system with clan exogamy and full transfer of the bride at marriage (Tappers model A, Tapper 1991: 16-17) towards the more cognatic, performative system with endogamous tendencies in which the bride is a combining force and affines become central. Äsäd Sulayman attributes such changes to a later point in time. According to him, "[f]rom the fourteenth century AD and owing to the prevalence of Islam the notion of tribe-clan relationship gradually faded among the Uyghurs, and there remained only the obscure concept of *jemet* (clan) and a strong sense of belonging to oasis hometown" (Sulayman 2007: 112). He also writes that the patrilineal structures partially were upheld in aristocratic families. This corresponds well to my observations that in present day Kashgar, families who have belonged to the local elites for several generations pay more attention to genealogical and particularly agnatic connections.

The shift in the status of the *kélin* (bride, daughter-in-law) within Uyghur kinship is likely to have developed gradually. It can be illustrated by the interpretation of a proverb by Enwer Semet Qorghan that hints at late steps of such a gradual shift having taken place quite recently. The proverbs "*qiz balining yurti yoq*" (a girl has no home) and "*qiz dégen talaning adimi*" (a girl is an outside person) are known in various variants from all over Central Asia and beyond. They are especially well-known from strongly patrilineal contexts in which the bride is completely settled over into her husband's family (Tapper's model A; Tapper 1991: 16-17). In such contexts the proverbs express that a girl will not stay in her natal family and is thus quasi brought up on behalf of someone else — her future husband's family. As she will leave her parent's household, she is structurally a stranger not belonging to their home. Quite to the contrary, in Enwer Semet Qorghan's reading these proverbs have arisen out of the concrete circumstances of poor married daughters missing their *yurt* (home, home town) and relatives (*uruq-tughqan*) for their entire life because they were married too far off (2007: 114-115). Thus to him, there is no doubt that a married woman will always stay a part of her natal family and he sees this as an incentive to marry close relations. Keeping the daughters close by is a much mentioned reason for close marriage in contemporary Kashgar. This interpretation is telling since it shows that the idea of a married woman not belonging to her own natal family does not seem plausible to an intellectual

Uyghur from Peyzawat in his early forties, who has received his academic training and now works in Ürümchi. Abdukérim Raxman offers a different reading that is closer to Tapper's model A (1991: 16-17). According to him, the fact that a daughter is *talaning adimi* (lit. an outside person, someone belonging elsewhere) means that she will be living in another family (*a'ile*) and therefore especially her mother has to be very careful with her education (Abdukérim Raxman et al. 2008: 111). The logic behind this is that she will be the family's representative in another family (the affines) and should perform well. Further, she will be at the mercy of this family and is well helped if she knows her tasks. The different interpretations of these proverbs may mark historical shifts in kinship practice between the time of the adaptation of these proverbs into Uyghur and today. In earlier times, the proverbs have probably meant what they do in model A contexts, but have experienced a reinterpretation as the circumstances changed. The sayings have surely concerned the status of unmarried girls (*qiz, qiz bala*) in general and not the unfortunate destiny of some woman (*kélin, choqan, juwan, ayal*) married too far off. Yet, it is difficult to assess when the proverbs have entered the Uyghur context and how they were then perceived. The two models underlying the different interpretations of the proverbs and the historical shift from one to the other also seems to lie behind Abdurehim Hebibulla's distinction between marriage-by-purchase (*soda xaraqtérdiki nikahlinish*) and bride wealth marriage (*toyluq asasidiki nikahlinish*). I render it most probable that the logic of a bride being completely settled over into her husband's family has in many ways lingered on till today, but has become weaker and weaker within a long and still ongoing transformation process. The sayings in their 'model A'-sense express the one extreme of this span of meaning while Enwer Semet Qorghan's reading of them expresses the other, and Abdukérim Raxman's reading lingers in between the two.

Qing policies and changing kinship

Between 1759 and 1911, the Qing administration (1759-1911) implemented several different policies to counter the strength of families (Newby 1998, 2007). These policies may very well have contributed to a decrease in the importance of descent for social organisation more generally. The Qing 'avoidance law' was meant to limit the power of families through prohibiting the direct inheritance of titles from father to son (Newby 2007: 25). According to Newby, these policies "did not break family power, it simply became less localized, spreading horizontally rather than vertically across the region" and "there was no provision to prevent several members of one family serving as begs of various rank in one place, either simultaneously, or consecutively" (Newby 1998: 290). It seems that the Manchu policies targeted mainly the sharing of power over agnatic lines, which corresponded to the kinship conceptualisation and social organisation of the Manchu. Thus as agnatic lines were targeted to curb "family power" (ibid.: 288) other kinds of kinship became more profitable and therefore over time more salient in social organisation. These surely included matrilateral kin, affinal relatives and possibly other types of spatially defined relatives (close neighbours) who were already of great economic significance because of their role in agriculture. These types of kinship are all of great relevance today. Sugawara delivers another hint at the decreased importance of agnatic lines during the Qing period. Before the Provincial Period (1884-1955) land sales documents carried the seller's father's and (paternal) grandfather's name, while this was not the case in the Provincial Period

(Sugawara 2010: 124-126).

Seating and hierarchy

The importance of the seat of honour (*tör*) has been described above. The exact role of this seat and the social meaning of the seating order have changed over the last centuries and these changes imply more general social transformations. Newby's account of a Qing survey from 1758 on local administration and social structure demonstrates the role of the seating order in constructing local hierarchy:

"as the cities of the Tarim Basin surrendered one by one to the advancing army, [...] the Qing generals duly carried out investigations of population, grain, livestock, tax and the vestiges of the local administrative system. [...] The administrative picture was consistent throughout the south. In total, Manchu officials identified some 30 offices ranging in a loose hierarchy from the hakim and his assistant, the *ئىخىكاغا*, to those responsible for roads, schools and orchards. These officials wore no indication of rank, and only the seating order at public feasts and ceremonies would apprise the uninitiated observer of their relative power and wealth" (Newby 1998: 282).

The connection between rank and seating order is still important in the early 20th century. Here, "the seating order at weddings carried so much weight that when A asked for B's daughter to marry his son, B's decision could depend on where A's place during the wedding feasts was, rather than how much money or property he possessed. [... And] dissatisfaction with the place accorded to [invited guests] around the ceremonial tablecloth could prompt them to refuse the invitation." (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 255).

Furthermore, in the beginning of the 20th century, the guests were expected to contribute a certain amount of money to the host depending on where they were seated.

" ...a respected man representing the mosque community went up to each guest and, in accordance with their position in the ceremonial seating order, fixed for each individual a certain amount of money to be paid as contribution to the wedding. For example, if he asked for twenty *ئار* from the person occupying the seat of honour, then he charged the person sitting next to him nineteen *ئار*. Those in the least prestigious places were asked to contribute the least." (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 256)

This not only bestows more importance upon seating order than found today, but also implies a more closed social hierarchy in which the relations between individual households and thus the contributions to any wedding primarily followed the communal status hierarchy. The seating order not just reflected, but, in the sense of de Coppet-ian, re-presented (de Coppet 1992) and actively shaped the social status hierarchy within a community. Today, such a hierarchy can no longer be made out so clearly. It has received severe historical blows dealt by communist ideology and policies, religious ideologies and several phases of "modern" values, all aiming at deconstructing hierarchy as "feudal," "backward" or "unjust" (Cf. Abdukérim Abliz 2011: 1-8, Abdushükür Muhemmet'imin 2002: 168-169). Contemporary discourses on these topics are saturated with class-related arguments. The early communist persecutions of rich farmers and *pomchiklar* as well as the Cultural Revolution are sure to have been important factors in bringing forth this shift (cf. Millward and Tursun 2004: 95, Millward 2007: 254-271). This does not at all mean that social hierarchy has disappeared, but it does mean that it is no longer so clearly stated

or obviously institutionalised as in early 20th century:

"Although the rhetoric of hospitality […] suggests an ethic of equality, hospitality was definitely socially 'graded': more deferential treatment was due to visitors of high social standing and wealth than to poor and less prestigious guests. A highly respected visitor was offered the place of honour *(tör)* facing the entrance, while persons of lower prestige were seated farther away. A man of rank was offered a pitcher and a basin in which to wash his hands; a poor man was given a ewer. The respected visitor was offered all kinds of food, and upon leaving he was accompanied by his host seven steps away from the house, while the less respected guest was treated to a more modest meal and seen no further than the entrance." (Bellér-Hann 2008b: 149)

In the case of the social context described by Bellér-Hann (in which the logic of Newby's account is still much more present, than in contemporary Kashgar) the seating position at a certain wedding was of utmost importance for the standing within the community, and determined the expected contribution of money followed this standing. This focusses on the community as a closed hierarchically ordered microcosm, whereas I experienced a different understanding of community during my fieldwork.

In contemporary Kashgar, the wedding gifts and financial contributions no longer depend upon the seating or upon the guest's position within the general status hierarchy. They instead depend upon the social closeness to the household of the host and upon their financial means. In contemporary Kashgar, status is to a lesser degree something to be directly and generally compared in a hierarchical pattern than it seemingly has been. Instead, it is increasingly something that is personally attributed to someone situationally and that is strived for through displaying modesty and piety (cf. Mahmood 2005). Thus, seating oneself lower may in some situations give more status. Both relations and status have become more individually or unit focused. The central unit concerned is as often the household and sibling group as it is the individual person, but the relation to the whole no longer seems as important, as in the early 20th century. Relations have become more organised as conglomerates of individual connections that can be described as networks: hubs of bi-lateral relations between units (households) being connected directly with each other, balanced reciprocity. The model of community has lost in relevance: A collective relation between all the units (households) through their relation to the whole, less focus on the individual connections than on the belonging to a whole and the duties towards the community, is still important, but less central than it used to be. The shift is not categorical, but rather one in tendency, a reversible slippage from the one end of the continuum towards the other. Network type relations become more central, while the community institutions decrease in importance. Status is less clear within the community, but is closely tied to situational display of virtues. This supports the above description of a current development towards more network oriented modes of social relations and an increasing importance of piety.

Smaller economic units and new relations of exchange

Bellér-Hann writes of cases in pre-socialist times where the bride wealth (*toyluq*) was reduced or even eliminated altogether in close-kin marriages. She attributes this to the fact that community did not have to be created in the marriage, making elaborate exchanges obsolete and

that the households marrying may have actually shared a common economy (2008a: 250).[160] Asking specifically about this topic in contemporary Kashgar, I was told that today the *toyluq* is not affected by the closeness of the marriage, but rather by the willingness of the bride's side to enter into the marriage. A groom's father, I was told, may actually give a higher *toyluq* to close relations. This latter point fits well with an idea that the money stays within the family (which would not be of concern if no *toyluq* was given) and points to a shrinking of the economic unit throughout the 20th century. It also points to a possible change in the relation of kinship and exchange (or kinship and economy, Strathern 1985) and the role of marriage herein. In pre-socialist times, larger economic units and the lesser role of money may have made gift relations of a delayed balanced type of reciprocity obsolete in the case of close marriage, which may have been why no or little *toyluq* was given. In contrast however, in contemporary Kashgar, the economic unit of the household and the raised importance of money make such gifts as the *toyluq* central tools for consolidating and reconfirming close kinship relations. Today, even brothers whose children marry pay much attention to balanced giving between their households. Though they may give to each other and help each other so much that their household's economies are practically interdependent, they are imagined separately and have a separate basis, which seems not to have been the case at the time Bellér-Hann refers to.

Communist policies

The state policies introduced heavy changes in the first decades of communist rule (cf. Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 140). Elaborate modernising programs were designed to restructure not just the economy, but also the social structure. In the 1950s, communes were introduced for some years during which all cooking at home was forbidden. Also, family law was taken into state hand in 1950. This brought new rights for women, like the guaranteed right to divorce her husband, and ventured to guarantee a free choice of marriage partners. Marriages and divorces were now regulated by state administration (Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 257). Rural and urban areas in Xinjiang have both experienced heavy influences through changing state policies and the encounter with material developments and expanding state bureaucracy. The period of collectivisation in the 1950s and of cultural and religious oppression during the Cultural Revolution had strong effects on social structure. Religious authorities lost their central role in the social fabric (cf. Wang 2004: 12-13) and many local institutions were directly countered by state institutions aiming to control social matters at a very fine-grained level. The organisation of local communities and family strategies was heavily influenced by these institutions and policies (Clark 1999). The new marriage laws (1950, 1980) forbade close kin marriage and arranged marriages, raised the legal marriage age considerably and in 1980 even strongly restricted the giving of marriage prestations (Engel 1984: 956, Bellér-Hann 2004b: 18). Further, family planning, advance of the nuclear family in state propaganda but also public health care, sanitation, electricity, TV and obligatory schooling contributed to changing the circumstances.

In the 1980s, the state backed down from its heavy involvement in family politics and many older institutions came back into relevance. In his dissertation Clark (1999) looks at family and

160 For a similar phenomenon in Afghanistan see Berrenberg 2002: 43, Murphy and Kasdan 1959.

marriage strategies among upper middle class Uyghurs in Ürümchi in the 1990s. Clark's theoretical basis is that of sociological convergence theory (Goode 1963), which supposes that a modernising social context on a political and economical level produces certain social structures. Put simply: industrialisation brings about the nuclear family at the cost of compound family structures and community, while marriage choice shifts from families to individuals. The latter is the main indicator Clark chooses in his ethnographically well-researched work. His conclusion is that the "modernisation" of the Uyghur family structure in Ürümchi, as it became evident over the course of the communist period, owed much to state politics and state laws that targeted these areas specifically. Thus according to Clark it did not, or not just, develop as a result of industrialisation or modernising economic structures, but also as the result of massive state pressure. Accordingly, when the pressure was lifted during the reform period (after 1979) many specific developments were (from a modernistic perspective) "reversed" (Clark 1999 179-188). According to Clark: "Extended families ties have become even more important in this era due to the state's retreat from many of the issues that concern families. These would include health insurance, housing costs, school fees, wedding finances, and career options for young people" (1999: 1). As Zang points out, drawing heavily on Clark's studies: "market reforms and the state retreat from its intense involvement in people's lives have reinforced family coherence and parental authority because children may need parental assistance and social connections in labor market competition" (Zang 2008: 621), as "social benefits such as free or heavily subsidised health care and education characteristic of the past have partially broken down, such that considerable expenses now have to be met by individuals" (Bellér-Hann 1997: 92) — and thus by families and groups of relatives.

One child policy

A state policy that has had a great and lasting impact on community life is the one-child-policy. It has been implemented for minorities in Xinjiang since 1989, starting out as a guideline followed by awareness campaigns (Rudelson 1997: 106, Bellér-Hann 1997: 101-102). Later the policy became stricter and only in recent years its implementation has been slightly less rigorous in the country-side around Kashgar. Like Han-Chinese, Uyghurs employed by the state are only allowed to have one child. Other urban Uyghurs can have two children and rural Uyghurs are generally allowed three children. Heavy fines can be imposed if a child is born without the needed permission certificate (cf. Rudelson 1997: 107). The child will have difficulties being allowed to enter school and other state institutions later in life. In addition to these fines, parents themselves have to pay for the entire education of children 'born outside the plan'. This policy has been influential in changing the size of Uyghur families. Two generations ago families of ten or more children were quite normal and big families are still wished for in the rural areas. Due to the low age of marriage, the eldest children could be nearer in age to their parents than to their youngest siblings. The policy also has a connection to a limited change in marriage choices, as many city residents choose to marry someone who is officially registered in the country-side to be allowed to have more children. Still many children are born illegally – they are often registered with childless relatives or adopted. In dealing with the one child policy, the traditionally practiced institution of adoption finds a new use (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 232). It also

often leads to later children being born secretly at the wife's parent's house, since the couple resides at or near the husband's parent's place (Caprioni 2008: 154, Bellér-Hann 2004a: 192). This can strengthen the position of the wife's relatives for a household. Traditionally, only the first or first two children are born at the wife's parent's place (Bellér-Hann 2004b: 18). Out of fear of fines and of sterilisation many of these children are born at home without medical assistance (Bellér-Hann 1997: 101). The sibling group is a social unit of significant importance. Because these group become ever smaller as a result of family planning both affinal relations and genealogical relations (cousins) potentially fill in the void. Less children also may lead to each of them becoming more important and the heightened centrality of the groom in wedding celebrations, as indicated by several customs and by the dramaturgical shift in wedding videos focussing more on the groom.

A history of close kin marriage

Close marriage is widespread and has been so in Kashgar for at least two centuries and probably much longer (cf. Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 106-108). Yet, several elements of this close marriage have most likely changed and varied over this range of time. Firstly, the idiom in which the closeness is formulated seems to have changed in the last fifty years (and possibly several times before this). New state laws prohibiting marriage between kin and biologistic narratives of inbreeding have certainly contributed to the dominant idiom when talking about these marriages shifting away from explicitly genealogical terms, such as *"newre bilen newre chétish"* (to marry cousins), and towards more general idioms for closeness, such as *yéqin* (close), *yurtdash* (from one place) or *tughqan* (relative - but as described above not necessarily kin). These laws have in no way eradicated cousin marriage or close kin marriage, but are quite likely to have also changed the frequency of the different types of close marriage.[161] Furthermore, the kind of closeness central in close marriage has also most likely changed. As we saw above, the previously existing agnatic structures have deteriorated over the centuries and connected to this change other categories of relatives have come to be seen as close and particularly attractive to marry into. If the ideal of affines becoming central relatives is seen as the main logic of close marriage in Kashgar, then who is deemed suitable for fulfilling this role depends of the contemporary categorisations and classifications of social relations. Those belonging to the right categories have the potential of fulfilling the ideal, and these categories change historically. In Turpan and among some families in Kashgar, paternal parallel cousin marriage (FBD-marriage) is condemned. I argued above that this may be connected to an agnatic reading of the biologistic elements of the inbreeding narrative and to the state law of 1950 prohibiting marriages with agnatic kin. Today in some parts of Kashgar and Hotan another shift occurs in close marriage, which can be attributed to the strengthened Islamic influence and more literal reading of the Qur'an. I was told that whereas people had for a long time argued against cousin marriage on a modernistic basis following government narratives, now people increasingly argue on the basis of

161 This is difficult to access because of the lack of statistical material. This could be collected in broad scale biographic interviews across several generations.

a Qur'anic view. They argue, that it is only a problem for cousins to marriage, if they had been breast fed by the same woman, e.g. their grandmother (cf. Enwer Semet Qorghan 2007: 110). Looking at the risks and profits connected to close kin marriage within the conceptual and material framework of Uyghur Kashgar, it should be possible to make out historical phases where one or the other type of close marriage has been prevalent and connect this to political and economical shifts. This history most surely owes much to Islamic influences. The change from clan exogamic matrilateral cross cousin marriage (MBD-marriage) to family endogamic marriage patterns including the possibility of patrilateral parallel cousin marriage (FBD-marriage) may have been caused by the Islamic influences, making it legally possible and bringing in the custom of actually conducting FBD-marriage from Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, Persian and other Central Asian contexts (cf. Holy 1989, Rapoport 2005, Pfeffer 1996). This may have been one incentive to adopt the term for mother's brother (*taghа*) to apply to all uncles, since his daughter had always been marriageable which previously had not been the case for the father's brother's daughter.

The historical basis of ethnic endogamy

Ethnic endogamy is a much mentioned issue between both internal and external observers of social life in Xinjiang today. Most often these observers specifically mean the avoidance of intermarriages between Uyghurs and Han-Chinese. Indeed, I only heard of one case of marriage across this ethnic divide during my year in Kashgar, and though marriages between local Kyrgyz, Uzbeks and Uyghurs do take place they are not particularly frequent. Ethnic endogamy does not seem to have been pronounced in the past. Both Newby (2007: 17-19), Enwer Semet Qorghan (2007: 114) and Bellér-Hann (2008a: 268-269, 273-274) mention interethnic marriages in the past. Also, it seems that in the period between 1960 and 1980 more marriages across ethnic boundaries including those between Uyghur and Han-Chinese took place. Several Uyghur intellectuals reportedly married Han-Chinese women, but most of these couples divorced subsequently. The logic of close marriage entails an imperative to marry among those who can possibly become close relatives. This means basically that marriage mainly takes place within categories of the 'own'. As the concept of ethnicity steadily increased in importance during the entire span of the 20th century it also increasingly became a defining factor for who is marriageable. When nationalist ideology was introduced into Central Asia in early 20th century by Soviet and Jadid ideologists and practices, it fit well into the genealogical ideology of the tribal areas (Kyrgyz, Kazakh). The oasis cultures of Central Asia knew this ideology, but it failed to play any great role in their social structure. Here, spatial belonging (oases, villages and *mehelle*) as well as affinity were much more pronounced and of more structural importance. Endogamy in many ways defined the group in the oasis context as genealogy did in the context of the steppe. Thus the concept of 'ethnicity,' one of the primary products of nationalist ideology, was likewise interpreted locally through an endogamous practice: ethnic (i.e. religious, linguistic, cultural, historical and spatial) endogamy.

This has varied historically depending on the political atmosphere and the importance attributed to ethnicity. The interethnic marriages between Uyghurs and Han-Chinese in the

1960s and 1970s took place in an atmosphere where ethnicity was explicitly de-emphasised politically, while from the 1980s up until today the concept has surged in importance and accordingly interethnic marriages have become rarer. Today, the ethnic category has become more important for social life generally. Therefore, in this context, in which social borders are marked by endogamy, ethnic endogamy has become more prominent in making this distinction as well. A similar dynamic has recently been demonstrated by Aksana Ismaelbekova in southern Kyrgyzstan. She shows how Uzbeks in Osh turned to more ethnically oriented marriage strategies in the aftermath of the ethnically laden violence in the city in 2010 (Ismaelbekova 2012).

Some general lines have become visible: The de-emphasis of agnatic groups and the centrality of affinity are shown to have been furthered by various state policies in the area. Furthermore, recent changes have promoted cognatic conceptualisations of kinship at the cost of local community. It is important to disconnect such findings from the grand meta-narratives of modernisation, and instead look more closely into the small-scale conditions for change and to recognise the meandering between variants of different social models (such as 'network' and 'community or model A and model B), of which none is completely new, nor bound to disappear in any near future.

12 Main Points of the Thesis

Relations and marriage

This thesis analyses close social relations among Uyghurs in Kashgar. It discusses and analyses some of the most important practices and concepts pertaining to the constitution of close social relations in lower to higher middle-class urban and semi urban Kashgar. Central to these are kinship (*tughqanداrchiliq*) and marriage (*toy qilish, nikahlinish, öylinish* …). Kinship provides the central idiom for expressing and re-presenting close social relations, both in linguistic terms and pertaining to exchange and bodily and spatial practices. Marriage is a central part of kinship practices and has a structural relevance for social organisation. It is the ideal for affines to be produced as close relatives through the marriage process and lastly unite into one social unit. Thus marriage is not a secondary relation created between genealogically predefined social units, but is primary and central to constructing these units. A bride is not transferred from one unit to the other, as much as she, over the long marriage process involving much visiting and gift giving, combines and unites the two sides into one family. This is an important incentive to marry close, since the affines need to have the potential of becoming such close relatives. Although this logic is not always adhered to, and many other strategies exist, this logic of close marriage is central to the local understanding of marriage and kinship and is clearly visible in many elements of the marriage process, such as the *toy neziri*, *quda körüshüsh* and *öy körsitish*. The importance and ambivalence of the affines are also a structurally important element contributing to the relative ease of divorce, since a marriage that does not produce close relatives through affinity can be seen as a failed marriage of which divorce is only a necessary, though painful, logical consequence.

On the other hand marriages are also life cycle events celebrated in the local community and contribute to constituting this community through a continuous exchange of gifts including labour help. Both affinity and close neighbourly relations are close social relations based upon exchange, trust and mutual dependency. They are formulated in the idioms of kinship (they are kinship!) and are performed in a number of practices including weddings and other marriage related events. They make up a centre-piece in what kinship, i.e. mutuality of being, means in Kashgar.

Kinship

Relatives are of utmost importance to the management of daily life, and kinship is central to economics and politics in Kashgar. Kinship is in Kashgar conceptualised both genealogically and non-genealogically. The genealogically conceptualisations, centre much more on filiation than on descent and are especially important to heritage, post-marital residence and the sibling group as a social unit. Descent imaginaries exist both in a cognatic and in an agnatic model. The agnatic model is predominantly invoked in discourses with a strong religious focus and in dealing with the idiom of 'blood' and in explicit pedigrees. Neither of these areas are of any great importance for the practical organisation of social life. Pedigrees are a new and predominantly written phenomenon in Kashgar. They have become popular only in recent years due to an ethno-

national awakening stressing the importance of documenting history, and play no role in organising communities and families. Ethno-national discourses is one of the most important areas stressing genealogical conceptualisation of kinship and can arguably be said to be one of the factors strengthening genealogical conceptualisations of kinship. These are predominantly cognatically imagined, and the maternal relatives are of great importance in Kashgar. It is not rare for a household to be more engaged with the wife's relatives than with those of the husband. Especially both side's sibling groups are of great significance in matters of labour help and access to funds.

Other recent developments likewise have strengthened genealogical ties: both state policies promoting the nuclear family household over the local community and the state led modenisation and restructuring of Kashgar city which leaves many neighbourhood communities destroyed, have the effect of strengthening cognatic ties within families to the expense of non-genealogical kinship ties based in the neighbourhood community. These ties are also currently being weakened by the trend to hold parts of the wedding celebrations in restaurants, whereby all guests but the closest core of relatives are deprived their usual possibility of active support of and participation in the event. They are no longer an active and needed part of the hosting 'side', but are merely guests and their only substantial contribution is that of money. This changes and weakens the neighbourly ties.

But these developments, if anything, rather strengthen the importance of another central non-genealogical kinship connection: affinity. Affines are close relatives based on the performance and exchange connected to a marriage. As mentioned, it is the ideal for this marriage to unite the two sides, and often some connections exist on beforehand. Affines are central relatives and affinity as a concept is central to non-genealogical conceptualisations of kinship in Kashgar. Affinity and neighbourhood relations provide the foundations for performative and exchange-focussed kinship in Kashgar, which frames and encompasses the genealogical notions of kinship. Genealogical connection is in this sense provide only one special access point to the potential of creating kinship, while affinity and community provide others. Neither genealogical nor on-genealogical relations count as 'real kinship' (*rەsmiy tughqan*) unless the relations are performed in exchange, trust and mutual dependency — mutual being. This also becomes clear when looking at the terms for expressing kinship and at the kinship terminology. Kinship terms are used performatively in a way that is inclusive rather than classifying, and genealogy is neither the decisive factor for which term is used for a certain relation nor for drawing a border between metaphorical and non-metaphorical ('real') uses of the terms. Performative kinship is central to social organisation in Kashgar and to the creation of social units.

So far much work dealing with kinship and social organisation in Central Asia, including most work on the Uyghurs, adheres to an implicit theoretical model of defining kinship genealogically and of taking for granted that agnatic descent is central social organisation. This bias draws on Western models of kinship and on descent theory. This thesis, and the data from Kashgar, suggest that a different approach to kinship can be of analytical utility when vieweing

social organisation in Central Asia, especially in the long settled oasis context with irrigation agriculture and a long tradition of trade. The approaches I suggest must complement and challenge the established descent theoretical models pay more attention to the structural significance of affinity (drawing on alliance theory) and to the performative construction of kinship and its non-genealogical conceptualisation (drawing on newer theories of relatedness).

Transformation

The current kinship practice in Kashgar is the product of historical transformations and developments. Some of them are detectable in parts of the wedding events, others can be inferred from historical sources.

The early settlement and labour intensive irrigation agriculture, but also the intensive traditions of trade across the region, have provided important conditions of possibility for an agnatically biased system to develop into a cognatically based one and even one in which the genealogical connections are subordinated to performative relations of exchange and trust (centrally institutionalised in affinity and community).

Agnatic connections were dealt further blows by Qing administrative policies aimed at dissolving 'family power'. The families, as Newby has aptly pointed out, did not weaken, but rather transformed (Newby 1998, 2007). This process of transformation of kinship practices and conceptualisations is very long and on-going. The status of the bride vis à vis her natal family and that of her husband has in this process been altered towards a model in which the bride for a long time stays closely connected to her natal family and combines the two families, rather than transfers from one to the other.

The introduction of the concept of ethnicity during the course of the 20th century has arguably strengthened cognatic kinship conceptualisations and in combination with the importance of affinity and close marriage inspired ethnic endogamy as a structural factor in identity politics. In the early communist era community connections and affinal relations have possibly strengthened. They were kinship relations not recognised as such by the state (as in the Marriage Laws of 1950 and 1980) and the local community was given an institutional frame and new resources to thrive on in the stately defined and sponsored communes (*shödi*).

In the three decades of radical communist policies (1949-1979) the state interfered heavily with daily life, while this was eased in Deng Xiaoping's reform period after 1979. While the first phase caused the dissolution or weakening of many existing institutions, the second phase saw a resurge of family institutions. Yet, these were not the same as they had been before 1949. Arguably cognatic kinship and affinity now play a more prominent role, while community and agnatic kinship have lost some of their importance for social organisation. This is visible in the phenomenon of restaurant weddings.

In the 1990s tightened political and religious control by the government contributed producing "family" and kinship as spaces of moral and religious expressions both despite the state and beyond the state. This is illustrated both by the *nikah* ceremony becoming a space for religious education (included in the local concept of 'family education', *a'ile terbilesh*) and in the strive for a new form of piety inherent in many current religious activities in Kashgar. It is also

visible in the phenomenon of *islamche toy* (piously oriented weddings). Such influences effect more than just the most radical adherents of new trends and can be detected in contemporary custom. This is visible in some current developments, including the disappearance of the 'bread and salt'-custom from the *nikah*-ceremony and the custom of bride and groom riding in separate cars. Yet, it also includes older phenomenon like the early hour of the *toy neziri* and the name of this very event and a range of other practices not identified in this thesis, since Kashgar has a century-long history of changes inducted through new religious ideas.

Neither of these historical developments are unilateral or irreversible, but since they are all closely intertwined short term meandering is much more flexible than long term movements.

This thesis is meant to contribute to ongoing discussions of the concepts and practices central to daily social conduct of Uyghurs in Xinijang. It takes up the construction of close social relations from the analytical point of view of kinship theory and anthropology. It analyses kinship practice, prominently focussed around the marriage process, and reflects the results historically. It is my hope that the ideas and analyses brought forth in the thesis will provoke a further critical discussion on both the concrete ethnographic and the broader theoretical issues addressed, which goes beyond the borders of disciplines.

Glossary

Abbreviations
Ar. Arabic
Lit. = literally, literal meaning of a word
Sw. = Swedish
Uygh. = Uyghur
Ch. = Chinese

Uyghur words
Acha = elder sister
- *acha-singil* = sisters
Addiy-saddiyliq = modesty
A'ile = family
Ajrashmaq = divorce, separate
Aka = elder brother
- *aka-ini, aka-uka* = brothers
Amanet = safe, entrusted
Ana = mother
Apa = mother, aunt, elder sister
Ashsüyi = ingredients for the early morning wedding meal (of pilau) brought to the bride's side by the groom's side before the wedding
Ashxana = restaurant, kitchen
Ash sunushush = sharing of food, bringing cooked meals to the neighbours
Ata, dada = father
- *atisi körgen* = lit. having seen the father; knowing the family with which one is about to enter into marriage relations
- *ata-bowiliri* = ancestors; lit. fathers and grandfathers
Ayal, xotun, yoldash = woman, wife
Azna, aznilig = leave, weekly visit of a married woman to her natal parents
- *aznagha bérish* = to go on leave, to visit one's parents (for a woman)
Baghaq, teklip name = written invitation
Baja = wife's sister's husband
- *quda-baja* = affines
Bamdat = early morning prayer, first of the five daily prayers
Bash = head
- *bashliq* = leader, boss
- *béshini ongshash* = to marry; lit. to straighten her or his head
- *bashlimaq* = to lead

Bazarni chögilesh = to drive around the bazar on the wedding day
Beg = lower administrative title under Qing rule in Xinjiang
Bel baghlash = lit. tie the waist; two different customs at the wedding, one in which the bride's relatives tie cloth around the groom's waist, and one in which the bridal couple is tied in closely while dancing
Bext = fortune
Boytaq = unmarried (before marriage or after divorce)
Bölgünchilik = separatism
Chasa qurup olturush = to sit cross-legged
Chay = celebration, tea
- *chay epbérish, kichik chay* = visit of the relatives of the groom's side at the bride's parents' place for celebration of the union and negotiation of the conditions before the wedding
- *chong chay, toyluq apirish* = taking the bride wealth to the bride's parents
Chillaq = lit. invitation; the first visit of the groom's relatives at the bride's place after the wedding in Atush and other areas
Chirayliq = beautiful, proper, right)
Chong = large, big
- *chong ana, moma* = grandmother
- *chong ∂a∂a, bowa* = grandfather
Chokan = married woman without children
Da∂a, ata = father
Dastixan = lit. tablecloth; gift of food brought by guests, laid tablecloth with food on it
Dellal = specialised matchmakers
Derwaza = gate, large door
Din = religion
Doppa = traditional Central Asian hat
Dost = friend
- *∂ost-bura∂er* = friend
- *∂ostluq* = friendship, affection
Du'a = prayer
Duniya = the world
- *bu ∂uniya* = this world
- *u ∂uniya* = the next world, the afterworld
Elchi = representative
Emgek = manual labour
- *emgekchi* manual labourer
Emil∂ash = milk siblings, persons breastfed by the same woman
Er = man
- *erge tegmek* = to marry (for a woman); lit. to touch a man, to stick onto a man
Etles = local cloth patterns, ikat cloth
Exlaq = morals, morality, virtue
- *exlaq sinaqi* = moral test

- *exleq buzulghan* = broken morality, unmoral
Exwal sorash = ask to someone's health
Fatihe = Al'Fatiha, first surah in the Qur'an
Gijme romal = full body veil as worn by the bride at her transfer to the groom's home
Guwah = witness
Hajim = someone who has been on the Haj; a religiously learned person
Hakim = higher administrative title under Qing rule in Xinjiang
Halal = religiously lawful
Hamma = aunt
Haram = religiously unlawful
Heq = right
Héyit = religious celebration
- *Qurban Héyit* = Īd al-'Aḍḥá, Festival of the Sacrifice
- *Roza Héyit* = 'Īd al-Fiṭr Breaking of the Fast (at the End of Rhamadan)
Hünerwen = artisan
Ige = owner, host
Imam = imam, responsible for daily prayers in a mosque
Inaq = intimate, harmonious
Ish = work, matter
- *ishchi* = worker
Ishik taqiwaldi = custom of blocking the door
Israpchiliq = unnecessary waste
Jama'et = mosque community, group of elders
Jemet = descent category, descent group
Jeryan = process
Jiyen = nephew, niece
- *nikah jeryani* = marriage process
Kadir = cadre, government worker
Kapalet puli = *security deposit*
Kélin = bride, daughter-in-law
Kimlik, shempenjeng = ID-card
Kiyim-kichek = clothes
Köngül = lit. heart; gift, contribution
- *köngül achidighan* = joyful
Köz = eye
- *közköz qilish* = showing off
Küy'oghul = son-in-law
Lapqut = circular system of free labour support among neighbours
Layiq tallash = to choose a suitable spouse
- *layiq tépish* = to find a suitable spouse
Leqem = nickname
Mehelle = neighbourhood, local community, smallest local administrative unit

- *mehellelik* = a person from the local community
- *heqemsaye* = people from one *mehelle*

Méhman = guest
- *méhman bolush* = being guest
- *méhman qilish* = making someone a guest, inviting
- *eziz méhman* = honored guest

mehrem = prohibited from marriage
Mejburiy = as a duty (to their parents, e.g. when reluctantly entering a marriage)
Merhum = deceased
Méhri-muhebbet = affection, love
- *méhri heqqi* = marriage prestation paid from the groom's side to the bride at the *nikah*, possibly the Uygh. version of the Ar. *mahr*

Millet = nation, ethnic nation
- *milliy* = national, ethnic
- *milliy saz* = traditional instruments
- *milliy kiyim* = traditional clothes
- *millätchilik* = nationalism, ethno-nationalism, preferring one's own 'ethnic group'

Molla = religiously learned man
Mozduz = shoemaker
Muezzin = person calling to prayer and working at the mosque
Mubarek bolsun! = congratulations!
Muhebbetlishish = being in love, dating
- *muhebetliship toy qilmaq* = to arrange one's own marriage

Murasim = ceremony
Mustahab = religiously recommended
Nashtiliq = breakfast for the couple, early morning meal (before real breakfast)
Namehrem = not proper, to be kept separated (mostly pertaining to the interaction of men and women), marriageable
Namaz = prayer
Nazuk = fragile
Nesebname = pedigree, genealogy
Newre = grandchild
- *newre acha/singil/aka/ini* = elder/younger female/male cousins

Nezir = meal given for no returns to earn religious merits
- *toy neziri* = early morning communal wedding meal

Nikah = religious wedding ceremony
- *nikahlinsh* = to marry; lit. hold the religious wedding ceremony together
- *nikah oqush* = perform the religious wedding ceremony

Nomus = shame
Ochaq = stove, fireplace
Omen = 'amen,' short prayer
Onbesh-künlük = lit. 'that on the 15th day,' visit of groom's relatives at the bride's parents some

days after the wedding
Orunlashturush = to place (someone in a job)
Örp-adet = costum
Öy = house, household, family
- *chong öy,* parental home
- *bina öy* = apartment building
- *pingpang öy* = groundfloor house
- *öylenmek* = to be married, lit. to be 'housed'
- *öy tutmaq* = lit. to touch a house; to marry, for a couple to move out of the groom's parents' place into own quarters
- *öy-uchaqliq bolmaq* = lit. to become with house and hearth; to marry
- *öy körsetish* = lit. showing the house; custom of inviting the relatives of new affines to one's home
- *öydikiler* = lit. those in the house; family, parents
- *öyning igisi, sahibjan* = host, organiser
Pak = pure, lawful and religiously sanctioned, clean
Payandaz = narrow piece of cloth or carpet for the bride to walk on when arriving at the groom's home
Pegah = status lowest point of a table cloth or seating arrangement, not on the *supa*
- *pegahda, peste* = at the low end
Perz = obligation, religious obligation
Perdishep = segregation (according to age and gender), sense of propriety
Peshaywan = roofed seating platform in the courtyard
Petilesh = formal visit, including citing the first surah of the Qur'an
Petnus = tray
Polu = pilau
Qa'ide, adet = custom
Qandash = blood relative, of one blood, relative
Qanunsiz diniy pa'aliyetler = 'illegal religious activities' (as deemed by the Chinese state)
Qarem = someone who knows the Qur'an by heart
Qassap = butcher
Qerz = debt
Qérindash = sibling, relative; lit. 'of one womb'
Qéyn'ana = mother-in-law
Qéyn'ata = father-in-law
Qiz = bride, girl, virgin
- *qiz almaq, hotun almaq* = to take a wife
- *qiz méli* = dowry, trousseau
- *qizni yötkesh* = transfering the bride
- *qiz körüsh* = lit. seeing the girl; inquiring about a future bride
- *qiz sorash* = lit. to ask for a girl; to ask the parents of a future bride for their blessing
Qoshna = neighbour
- *qolum-qoshna* = neighbour

Qobul qilmaq = agree, accept (someone as a spouse)
qoldash = best man, bride's maid
Quda = child's in-laws, affines
- *quda-baja* = affines
- *qaycha quda* = lit. scissor affines; families who are both wife-takers and wife-givers for each other
Rext = cloth
Réstoran = restaurant with a dance floor and serving of alcohol
Sama = a sufi dance now a local symbol for Kashgar
Sawab = religious merits
Sediqa = religious alms
Set bolidu = it "is ugly", something agains the rules of conduct
Sheher = city, town
- *alte sheher* = 'Six Cities,' old name for the Tarim region (today's southwest Xinjiang)
Shox = merry, energetic, lively
Soghuqchiliq = coolness, bad atmosphere, bad relations
Sowgha-salam = gifts, gift brought by guests
Sowghat = gift, present
Supa = seating platform, elevation in a room
Sünnet = the way of the prophet
Tagha = uncle
Talaq = the Islamic code for a man divorcing his wife
Tartishmaq = lit. pulling each other; gift exchange between groom and bride's mother on the second day of the wedding
- *tartmaq* = lit. to pull; to urge someone, to insist
- *tartinmaq* = lit. to let oneself being pulled; to play coy
Tazim = a bow, visit to displayed honour towards a groom's parents-in-law (his 'new parents')
Terep = side (of a marriage)
- *oghul terep* = groom's side, groom's relatives and neighbours
- *qiz terep* = bride's side, bride's relatives and neighbours
Tereqqiyat = development
Tégi = lit. bottom; root, origin, background
Tijaretchi = tradesperson, businessperson
Tizlinip olturush = to sit straight on ones knees, as in prayer
Toy = wedding, life cycle celebration
- *böshük toyi = cradle ceremony*
- *qiz toy* = a woman's first wedding at which her status changes from girl (*qiz*) to woman (*choqan, juwan, ayal*), the wedding celebrations at the bride's parents' place
- *oghul toy* = a man's first wedding at which his status changes from that of a boy to that of a man, the wedding celebrations at the groom's parents' place
- *chong toy* = wedding
- *sünnet toy* = circumcision celebration, piously oriented weddings following reform Islamic

impulses
- *islamche toy* = piously oriented weddings following reform Islamic impulses
- *nikah toy* = wedding
- *juwan toyi* = female fertility celebration; today also: a woman's re-marriage after divorce or widowhood
- *toy mashinisi* = wedding car
- *toy qilish* = lit. to make wedding; to marry
- *toy xet* = official state marriage documents
- *toy sanduqi* = wedding chest
- *xetne toy* = circumcision celebration

Toymaq = to be full
- *bir-biridin toymaq* = to be fed up with each other
- *qursaq toq* = lit. full stomach; those who have enough, the rich

Toyluq = wedding prestations, bride wealth
- *toyluq apirish, chong chay* = to bring the bride wealth from the groom's side to the bride's side

Tör = seat of honour
- *törde, töpide* = on the seat of honour, at the high end

Tughqan = relative
- *uruq-tughqan* =relatives
- *yeqin tughqan* = close relatives
- *tughqandarchiliq* = kinship

Turmush = life
- *turmush qurmaq* = to marry; lit. to construct or establish a life

Tuz = salt
- *tuz sélish* = lit. to add salt; a communal meal given for the neighbours and relatives to explicitly enhance the social relations

Uka, ini = younger brother

Ulugh, mukemmel = holy, grand

Uruq = seed, clan, tribe
- *uruq-tughqan* = relatives

Ussul = traditional dance

Wichirka = evening celebration for the young in connection with a wedding, often including dance and serving of alcohol

Xijil = shameful, embarrassing

Xizmet = salary work, employment
- *muqumluq xizmet* = stabile, steady work, government work
- *xizmetchi* = salary worker

Yaman bolidu = bad, inauspicious

Yat = foreign, outside, non-relative

Yaxshi ötüsh = get along well, good relations

Yengge = elder brother's wife, elder relative's wife, companions of the wife when transferred to the groom's house on the wedding day

Yerlik = local
Yézne = elder brother-in-law
Yéza, ɕehra = village, country side
Yéqin = close
Yigit = young man, groom
- *yigitler, yaɕh bala* = yong men, the groom's friends
- *yigit eɕhi* and *yigit chéyi* = large portions of pilau and tea for the groom
Yiraq = far
Yol toɕwɕh = to block the road (when transferring the bride)
Yurt = home region, natal place, home town
- *yurtdaɕh* = people from one *yurt*
Yüz = lit. face; reputation
- *yüz-abroy* = reputation
- *abroyperez* = someone overly concerned with status
- *yüz échiɕh* = lit. to open the face; custom of lifting the veil of the bride on the second day of the wedding
Yükünuep olturuɕh = to sit on the knees and hip with the feet tugged away to one side
Zakat = religious tax, religious alms, one of the five pillars of Islam
Zelle = gift of food given to leaving guests to take home

<u>Chinese words</u>
表 (*biao*)relatives = relatives through female links, non-agnatic cognates
大队 (*daɕui*) = second smallest local unit of administration (Uygh. *yéza, daɕi*)
发展 (*fazhan*) = development
结婚 (*jiehun*) = marriage, to marry
- 结 (*jie*) = to connect
- 结婚证 (*jiehunzheng*) = marriage certificate
民族 (*minzu*) = nation, ethnic nation
身份证 (*ɕhenfenzheng*) = ID-card (Uygh. *kimlik, ɕhempenjeng*)
小队 (*xiaoɕui*) = smallest local unit of administration (Uygh.: *mehelle, ɕhödi*)
西部大开发 (*xibu da kaifa*) = development program for the western regions of China implemented by the Chinese government in 2000
新疆维族自治区 (*xinjiangweizuzizhiqu*) = Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region

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Deutsche Zusammenfassung der Arbeit

Heirat ist unter uigurischen Familien der unteren Mittelschicht im semi-urbanen Kashgar (Xinjiang, China) eine Institution, in der sich nicht nur Individuen verbinden, sondern auch Groß-Familien geschaffen und Nachbarschaftsgemeinschaften konsolidiert werden. Es ist eine Institution in der Verwandtschaft konstruiert wird. Während in vielen Teilen Zentralasiens das Konzept der Abstammung als zentral für die soziale Ordnung hervorgehoben wird, liefert Kashgar ein deutliches Beispiel für die strukturelle Wichtigkeit von Heirat und Affinität in der Region. Ausgehend von einer dichten Beschreibung des Heiratsprozesses und einer eingehenden Behandlung der lokalen Phänomene der nahen Heirat und der hohen Scheidungsraten, analysiert die vorliegende Arbeit die Besonderheiten von Verwandtschaft in Kashgar. Diese werden im letzten Teil der Arbeit als historische Produkte verortet und rezente Entwicklungen der Hochzeitskultur in Kashgar werden mit Sicht auf ihren Einfluss auf die Möglichkeitsbedingungen für die Konstruktion von nahen sozialen Beziehungen in Kashgar behandelt.

Nahe soziale Beziehungen sind in Kashgar für das tägliche, politische und wirtschaftliche Leben von großer Bedeutung. Sie bilden wichtige Voraussetzungen für Existenzsicherung, Zugang Ressourcen und für die Umgehung staatlicher Kontrollen. Außerdem gelten soziale Beziehungen lokal als Wert an sich. Die engsten dieser Beziehungen werden im Idiom der Verwandtschaft (*tughqandarchiliq*) ausgedrückt und anhand der zugehörigen Symbolsprache konstruiert und verhandelt. Tausch, Ansprache, Benennungen sowie räumliche und körperliche Praxen sind wichtige performative Elemente um Verwandtschaft zu konstruieren, denn es dreht sich hierbei nicht primär um genealogische Verbindungen. Die Etymologie der gebräuchlichen Begriffe für Verwandtschaft ist zwar genealogisch konnotiert, und Genealogie (Filiation mehr als Abstammung) spielt eine wesentliche Rolle in der expliziten lokalen Konzeptualisierung von Verwandtschaft, doch sie liefert weder das zentrale definierende Merkmal für Verwandtschaft noch für soziale Einheiten in der Praxis. Verwandtschaft wird in der Praxis primär durch gegenseitige Abhängigkeit, Langfristigkeit der Beziehungen und Vertrauen definiert. Viele Verwandte sind solche, ohne genealogisch verbunden zu sein und die symbolische Unterscheidung zwischen den verschiedenen genealogischen Positionen ist wenig ausgeprägt. Verwandtschaftstermini werden primär einschließend und weniger kategorisierend genutzt.

Heirat ist ein wichtiger Prozess, sowohl um Verwandtschaft zu konstruieren, als auch um soziale Einheiten zu schaffen. Diese Konstruktion verläuft auf zwei Ebenen, die beide durch bestimmte Gaben und Logiken des Gebens gekennzeichnet sind. Auf der einen Ebene werden während des Heiratsprozesses innerhalb jeder Seite die existierenden Beziehungen gestärkt und bestätigt, indem Verwandte, Freunde und Nachbarn an der Hochzeit teilnehmen, performativ als zur Familie zugehörig dargestellt werden und finanziell und arbeitstechnisch beitragen. Dies stärkt und definiert die Familien und lokalen Gemeinschaften. Auf der anderen Ebene werden zwischen den heiratenden Parteien Beziehungen von Affinität geschaffen, die erwartungsgemäß zu engen Verwandtschaftsbeziehungen werden und häufig die Grundlage neuer, größerer sozialer Einheiten bilden. In dieser Arbeit wird vor allem die zweite Ebene der affinen

Beziehungen behandelt. Doch da nahe Heirat in Kashgar sehr verbreitet ist und räumliche Nähe ebenso einschließt, wie genealogische, solange sich beide in Tauschbeziehungen und gegenseitigem Vertrauen äußern, sind diese affinen Beziehungen häufig dynamische Elemente innerhalb längerfristiger Konstruktionen von Gemeinschaften und Groß-Familien. Somit geht die zweite Ebene in der ersten auf, bildet aber gleichzeitig einen wichtigen Kern dieser. Ebenso ist auch die Beziehung zwischen Verwandtschaft und Affinität in Kashgar: Affinität ist eine Unterkategorie von Verwandtschaft, die aber eine zentrale Position in der generellen Konstruktion von Verwandtschaft einnimmt und genealogischer Verwandtschaft hierin mindestens gleichgestellt ist.

Die Logik der nahen Heirat in Kashgar ist nicht an genealogisch definierten Kategorien festgemacht, sondern bezieht sich auf das lokale Ideal von Affinität: Affine sind zentrale und wichtige Verwandte; in vielerlei Hinsicht sogar die wichtigsten nach der eigenen Geschwistergruppe. Daher ist es wichtig Affine zu wählen, die diese Rolle und die Erwartungen, die an an sie gebunden sind, erfüllen können. Außerdem sind Heiraten ebenso häufig Ziele für die soziale Ressourcen eingesetzt werden, wie Gelegenheiten solche Ressourcen zu schaffen. Daher fühlen nahe Verwandte sich häufig dazu verpflichtet miteinander Heiraten zu schließen. Die Braut zieht meistens in die Familie ihres Ehemannes um, bleibt aber in vielerlei Hinsicht Mitglied ihrer Herkunftsfamilie und überbrückt die beiden Familien, die in manchen Fällen zu einer neuen sozialen Einheit verschmelzen.

Wegen dieser Wichtigkeit von Affinen gilt eine Heirat auch erst dann als gänzlich vollbracht, wenn solch enge Tauschbeziehungen zwischen den Familien etabliert worden sind. Der Heiratsprozess beinhaltet viele Institutionen des affinen Tausches, die ebendiese Verbindung voranbringen sollen. Passiert dies nicht, wird die Heirat als teils gescheitert betrachtet und für viele ist Scheidung hieraus die logische Konsequenz. Scheidung und Neu-Heirat kommen in Kashgar häufig vor. Obwohl Scheidung lokal als ein Scheitern gesehen wird, ist sie mit keinem Stigma behängt und gilt nicht als Anomalie, sondern wird in vielen Fällen sogar als eine, zwar beklagenswerte, aber logische und vernünftige Konsequenz einer unglücklichen Vermählung betrachtet.

Nicht alle Heiraten sind nah und nicht alle Affinen werden zu zentralen Verwandten, doch strukturelle Logik ihrer Beziehung befindet sich im Kern der lokalen Konzeptualisierung von Heirat und Verwandtschaft und liefert die Grundlage, die hinter vielen der elaborierten Heiratsgebräuche in Kashgar stehen. Diese sind historische Produkte und befinden sich auch heute im Wandel. Sowohl modernistische als auch reformislamische Einflüsse prägen zur Zeit die Hochzeitspraxis. Das äußert sich in Hochzeiten, die teils in Restaurants gehalten werden und in Hochzeiten, die strenger am Wortlaut des Korans ausgerichtet sind. Da Heirat und Verwandtschaft so eng an Lokalpolitik und Wirtschaft geknüpft sind, haben die großen gesellschaftlichen Umwälzungen, die das Gebiet um Kashgar (als Teil von Xinjiang und damit der Volksrepublik China) in den letzten 150 Jahren erlebt hat, tiefe Spuren gesetzt. Diese können, wie der letzte Teil der Arbeit zeigt, an manchen Punkten identifiziert werden.

Diese Arbeit behandelt die strukturelle Signifikanz von Heirat und Affinität bei der Schaffung von Verwandtschaft und sozialen Einheiten unter Uiguren im heutigen Kashgar und setzt die Ergebnisse in einen historischen und kontemporär politischen Rahmen.

Ehrenwörtliche Erklärung

Hiermit erkläre ich, dass ich die vorliegende Dissertation selbstständig angefertigt und keine anderen als die von mir angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel verwendet habe. Ich erkläre weiterhin, dass die Dissertation bisher nicht in dieser oder anderer Form in einem anderen Prüfungsverfahren vorgelegen hat.

Berlin, den 25.11.2013