

CALENDAR FESTIVAL AND RITUALS

Flower-visit (*gulgardoni*)

Among Tajik people there are series of ceremonies and events that preceding the Navruz – a New Year. One of the first such traditions when young children would from house to house to announce that the Navruz is coming is known as *gulgardoni* (taking flower around). This takes place in one or two week before the Navruz when young children in groups will go to the hills and collect the first flowers of the spring such as winter snowdrop, crocus and netted iris and bring these to the village and towns. Afterwards they go from house to house singing merry songs to tell the household owners that the spring has arrived. In their turn the households where children take the flowers will give them sweet and savory treats. When they get to see the first spring flowers they rub them gently in their eyebrows and cheeks making wishes.

The *gulgardoni* ceremony has varied songs and in total these songs contain well wishes and congratulatory words for the new year and new spring.

Spring has come, spring has come
The spring of tulips and poppy has come
The season of work for farmer has come
May it be well with you in the new spring.

Spring has come, spring has come
The parade of flowers is in process
Fields has turned into flower gardens
May it be well with you in the new spring.

Spring has come to be your guests
You must value it
If you value you are Muslim



May it be well with you in the new spring.

Spring has come with multiple colors
Half of time is rain half is snow
Parrots are crying out in cages
May it be well with you in the new spring.

It should be noted that the *gulgardoni* custom is also widely known among Tajiks of the Central Asia. In Khatlon province winter aconite and crocus are taken from house to house. In Hisar valley a yellow netted iris blooms in this period, which people call it Navruz flower. In Sughd province and Zarafshan valley they gather blue bell (*boychechak*) and the ceremony is also called «*boychechak*» or «*boychechakgui*».

Snowdrops and crocus bloom around the 21st of January to 20 of February. Depending on the time when these flowers bloom the *gulgardoni* ceremony takes place accordingly. In majority regions the period for the *gulgardoni* ceremony



occurs in the end of February and early march.

In Bartang valley of Badakhshan *gulgardoni* ceremony is called «*gulkhkuft*» meaning «flower has bloomed» and this is usually in April. In Bartang people will cook different dishes and go to visit holy places and shrines.

It is known that in distance past the *gulgardoni* custom was celebrated by the adults. However, now this is primarily children spring ceremony.



