

occurring out of her family or kinsfolk, but she is at the basis of all family and calendar holidays.

The wedding is indisputably the most significant event in worldly plan, and the family – the most important element of the essence of the gypsy/ Romany groups. That is why the presentation of the gypsy woman's character and her individual life cycle begins with marriage. It changes her social status in the community. The consecutive moments, rites and rituals of the gypsy/Romany wedding party are examined by the help of typical examples from different groups, as well as the early age of marriage, choice of spouse, negotiations between the match-makers, selling of girls or the so called "father's right" /"babá hak"/. A special place is given to the central part of the wedding rituals with every group – the first matrimonial night, on which the whole of girl's subsequent life depends. The wedding party itself, whether it lasts three, four or five days, along with the traditional rites and rituals is always accompanied with much music and revelry.

By contracting a marriage the girl's statute changes – she simultaneously becomes a higher position, but her rights are limited, as is her social life.

This early matrimony places the young brides in full dependency of the adults in the new family, and mostly – of mother-in-law. If the newly married woman manages to overcome the difficulties in the beginning of her marital life and accepts the unwritten rules of her new family, she gradually acquires her authority not only among the family, but also among the community members.

The married woman gains more duties – taking care of the children, her husband and home. She is obliged to conform to her father- and mother-in-law – practically they "set the pace" of the young family's relationship.

After giving birth of her first child, the bride turns into an "old" daughter-in-law – a full and respected member of her new family. The traditional customs and rites with gypsies/ Romanies, related to the pregnancy, birth-giving and child bringing up, are closed in certain frames, by the main object and subject of the rituals are the lying-in woman and the baby.