

MUCHAL AGE CEREMONY

Muchal Ceremony — was the ceremony, which is celebrated once in twelve years in human life. According to the tradition, muchal age was celebrated during Navruz holiday, more specifically, after the end of twelve-year cycle (i.e. at the age of 12–13, 24–25, 36–37...). The end of the first muchal period, i.e. turning of 12 years old, was usually celebrated solemnly and with grandeur (in comparison to other muchal ages). In the past, the person who had been celebrating his muchal age, presented his clothes to his close relatives or neighbors. It was commonly believed that this helps to preserve periodicity of muchal.

The ceremony dedicated to muchal age was carried out with participation of relatives and neighbors. During the ceremony participants were offered special feast. The feast was organized differently in various places. As a rule all children, who turned 12 years old, wore white dresses, gathered in one place and congratulated each other. The white color was considered as the symbol of purity and goodness. Children were worn exactly white colored clothes, so that such pure wishes accompanied them during their life.

On Navruz boys and girls who reached muchal age came to each others' homes and congratulated each other, then, they gathered in the specified place and walked in the streets. Usually, when "youth in white" came to the place where Navruz

was being celebrated, everybody congratulated them, expressed their best wishes, younger children presented them spring flowers, whereas the elderly people blessed them. They became the heroes of the spring holiday. In the past, celebrations dedicated to muchal age were celebrated together with Navruz holiday.

After gaining independence muchal age began to be celebrated not only in family but also at schools. And over the last few years muchal age has been solemnly celebrated with participation of parents at majority of schools of Uzbekistan on the eve of Navruz holiday.



