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Moving Melodies: Contemporary Music Culture of Mongolian Nomads and Opportunities for Contextualization

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MOVING MELODIES:
CONTEMPORARY MUSIC CULTURE OF MONGOLIAN NOMADS AND
OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONTEXTUALIZATION

A MASTER'S THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
OF THE CENTER FOR GRADUATE AND CONTINUING STUDIES
BETHEL UNIVERSITY

BY

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FOR THE DEGREE OF

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MAY 2008

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BETHEL UNIVERSITY

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CONTEMPORARY MUSIC CULTURE OF MONGOLIAN NOMADS AND
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ABSTRACT

There are many obstacles to sharing Christ with nomadic peoples. Obstacles include distance of travel from one family group to another, the mobility of these family groups, the finances and investment to locate the families every season, the lack of fellowship and discipleship materials for those that do become Believers, and the peer pressure that these Believers face in the midst of this lack. What resources can be offered to fill this gap? How can the Gospel be communicated in a relevant and engaging way to a people group that is spread out across hundreds of miles, resistant to sedentary thinkers, and has no consistent contact with Believers? Consider the option of music. Music is intrinsically linked with society, culture, and worldview. Within its melody, rhythm, lyric, and context, it communicates, challenges, and confirms how one sees the world through a form viable and acceptable to the nomads' way of life.

The purpose of this grounded theory study is to explore the unique qualities of music making within a nomadic culture. Identity formation through musical performance and its social context is one vital part of a nomad's strategy for a continuing existence. It reflects and informs the essence of who he is as a proud and independent nomad with the ability to negotiate his existence within the changing and sometimes harsh climate in which he lives (physically, spiritually, and politically). The study will focus on the current context and process of music making within the lives of herding communities in central Mongolia with the broader purpose of exploring the common elements of identity formation and nomadic strategy through the music cultures of nomadic peoples in general. In addition, it is hoped the study will encourage and resource church leaders and mission workers to reach out to nomadic communities in their respective areas by encouraging the use of music as an effective tool for evangelism, worship, and discipleship.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem



Fig. 1. Young Mongolian nomad.

Over the centuries, nomadic peoples have ingeniously adapted to the changing world around them. A strong social identity of independence and adaptability has enabled them to survive the storms of natural disaster, political upheaval, and technological power and still be standing after the storms have passed away. The nomads have learned to thrive in the world's most unlivable landscapes. Yet, despite their resourcefulness, society at

large ignores these small groups of travelers who seem alien in the context of Western civilization.

Although they are often said to be a highly spiritual people, nomads have remained elusive to Christianity in its modern package of stationary development, and church planters have struggled to develop growing vibrant believers within nomadic cultures. Living from a completely different worldview than sedentary thinkers, nomads have gained the reputation of being “resistant” to the Gospel when, in fact, the presenters of the Gospel may be resistant to them. Of the remaining unreached people groups, the entire world population of nomads is the least reached. These 200 people groups reside on 1/3 of the earth's land mass, yet receive the least amount of attention from mission workers (Hunter 2000). It is common to hear in missiological discourse that the task of ‘every nation, tribe, tongue, and people’ hearing the Gospel is almost complete, and that we only need to jump in with both feet and push to cover the

last frontier. Nevertheless, the last frontier of nomadic people groups is the last because it is the most resistant to Western ideas of Christianity, thought, and culture, and the predominant and historical methods of reaching it are irrelevant to a people whose sole existence depends on their mobility and independence. In order to achieve a healthy, integrated, relevant, and meaningful approach to nomadic people groups, this last frontier will require some of the most concentrated and intelligent forms of dedication, thought, sacrifice, and flexibility that have ever been needed.

Need for the Study

There are many obstacles to sharing Christ with nomadic peoples. One is the lack of individuals willing to live alongside them, endure the same hardships, and see little immediate influence. Other obstacles include distance of travel from one family group to another, the mobility of these family groups, the finances and investment to locate the families every season, the lack of fellowship and discipleship materials for those that do become Believers, and the peer pressure that these Believers face in the midst of this lack.



Fig. 2. Typical Mongolian nomad's home.

What resources can be offered to fill this gap? How can the Gospel be communicated in a relevant and engaging way to a people group that is spread out across hundreds of miles,

resistant to sedentary thinkers, and has no consistent contact with Believers? Consider music as an option.

Music is intrinsically linked with society, culture, and worldview. It both reflects them and informs them. Within its melody, rhythm, lyrics, and context, it communicates, challenges, and confirms how one sees the world. Tapping into a people's music is tapping into an intricate weave that intersects all areas of culture. Music shapes and confirms identity, symbolizes ideals, communicates the nuances of morality, and assigns or reassigns power. It is a behavioral and structural reflection of mankind. Music provides a window into the complexity of human thought, and it can communicate those thoughts through a form viable and acceptable to the nomads' way of life.

Music is flexible as it conforms to and creates within the cultural boundaries given to it. It is not bound to a universal set of rules or prescribed as a universal language. Every culture offers a unique set of circumstances within which music can operate, and music has the ability to inform and reflect the unique qualities of any culture. Music, therefore, offers a viable form of communication within the structure of a nomad's migrating form of existence. When nothing else can travel, music can. It can ride the back of a camel, float the waves of a river, or camp around the fire of a traveler. It can pass along secrets, proclaim victories, or tell a simple story in any context on any territory.

Music is also oral. Most nomadic people groups rely on oral communication to receive information at the heart level. Even among literate or semi-literate groups, information is still naturally retained and given through non-literate media, be it verbally or visually. If a nomad is to understand the Gospel at this same internal level, it is absolutely necessary that it be communicated in the way he most understands. Within each nomadic people group, one must

discover the natural modes of sharing information and tap into this communication tool when sharing truths. If a nomad is going to understand something as truth, it must take the form in which truth is understood. Music is one form that most every culture uses to communicate truth. Presented in its natural setting, music can be offered as a key tool for presenting the truths of Christ and supporting discipleship, fellowship, evangelism and worship among a nomadic people group.

Few studies exist focusing specifically on church planting strategies and its specialized needs for those working among nomads. A small network of nomadic workers exists, but the mission community at large has not given energy to the issues of contextualization or the development of a radically different approach needed to reach these last of the unreached. Studies on nomadic music cultures are often intermittent and incomplete possibly due to the nature and requirements of the research. There are only a handful of examples of music evangelization among nomadic cultures, and there are no known studies that offer music and/or the arts as a common denominator and viable form of communication among nomadic cultures. How can the existing music culture be utilized as a vessel for encouraging evangelism, worship, and discipleship among nomads? In order to explore the answer to this question, one must first discover the context, forms, and values of the existing music.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this grounded theory study is to explore the unique qualities of music making within a nomadic culture. Identity formation through musical performance and its social context is one vital part of a nomad's strategy for a continuing existence. It reflects and informs the essence of who he is as a proud and independent nomad with the ability to negotiate his

existence within the changing and sometimes harsh climate in which he lives (physically, spiritually, and politically). So, what is the current context and process of music making within the lives of herding communities in Central Mongolia? This study will focus on discovering the answers to this question as well as exploring the common elements of identity formation and nomadic strategy through the music cultures of nomadic peoples in general.

The study is intended to resource and encourage both a general and specific audience. Ethnodoxologists, church planters, workers among or near nomads, educators, and mission mobilizers all stand to gain from a general understanding of the key component of music in an outreach strategy. More specifically, this study aims to resource Mongolian church leaders, mission workers, mission minded musicians, and ethnomusicologists with specific examples of contemporary music culture within the Mongolian context with the hope that they will reach out to nomadic communities in their respective areas and encourage the use of music as an effective tool for evangelism, worship, and discipleship.

Glossary of Terms

Ethnodoxology: “[T]he theological and anthropological study, and practical application, of how every cultural group might use its unique and diverse artistic expressions appropriately to worship the God of the Bible” (International Council of Ethnodoxologists).

Ethnomusicology: The study of music in and as culture.

Grounded Theory: A study “in which the researcher attempts to derive a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of participants in a study. . . . Two primary characteristics of this design are the constant comparison of data with emerging categories and theoretical sampling of different groups to maximize the similarities and the differences of information” (Creswell 2003, 14).

Mongolia: For the purposes of this study, Mongolia refers to the region of Outer Mongolia, an independent nation located south of Russia and north of China. It does not include the region of Inner Mongolia, a northern province of China.

Music Culture: A pattern of thoughts about music, the music form itself, behavior in connection with music, and information received and understood through music (Merriam 1964; Feld 1984).

Nomadic Peoples: “[A]ll societies whose culture and way of life is centered on the need to systematically travel to find a means of subsistence” (Phillips 2001, 6). Nomads include pastoralists (those who move based on available pasture for their livestock), hunters and gatherers (those who move based on available food and game), and peripatetics (those who move based on demand for their skill set, including tradesmen, craftsmen, and artisans.) Although this is the most common way of defining nomad, another definition of nomadism is “the regular and frequent movement of the home base and household” as a strategy for increased production and defense (Salzman 2002, 246, 261). As I will explain further in Chapter 2, these definitions are the result of a clarification process that developed in anthropological studies on nomadism over the past several decades.

Oral Communication: Non-literate means of passing on knowledge including stories, proverbs, drama, songs, chants, poetry and other forms of visual and aural media such as word of mouth, radio, television, and film.

Unreached People Group: A group of people bound by culture and language that has no Gospel influence. “A people group among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize this people group” (Joshua Project).

Limitations of the Study

The scope of this study is confined to interviewing and observing multiple Mongolian families within extended driving distance from an urban area into three different rural political districts. The research takes place over multiple two week trips over a four year period rather than one extended stay with one family group. Because the goal of the research was to gain a general sense of popular musical tastes within the rural regions of the country, I chose to focus more on a survey approach interviewing multiple families across a range of contexts. This provided a limitation in that I was not able to spend extended time in observing life cycle events, festivals, and other opportunities of performance within the daily lives of individuals.



Fig. 3. Camel herders in Central Mongolia wearing new coats provided by local ministry.

Globally, there are twenty-seven people groups connected by Mongolian culture. Sixteen of those people groups live within Outer Mongolia's borders (Joshua Project).¹ Each people group has its own set of cultural codes that are unique to that people. The largest of these groups is the Khalkha Mongol. All of my research was within the Khalkha people group. The narrow sampling will provide results directly applicable to the Khalkha Mongolian context and to some extent to other closely related people groups. However, one must be cautious to apply results from one cultural context to another without careful attention to the differences between those

¹ See Appendix B for a complete listing of these groups (Joshua Project 2008). Sources differ on exact group names and numbers. Other sources include anthropologist Christopher Kaplonski's listing at <http://www.chriskaplonski.com/mongolia/ethnicgroups.html>.

two contexts. Therefore, all results will not be applicable to all Mongolian people groups nor to all nomadic cultures in general. With that said, it is hoped that the analysis will, however, be a catalyst for further discussion, collaboration, and research within people groups of Mongolia and nomadic peoples in general.

A third limitation is the inadequacy of a participant observer to observe and understand everything possible. The complexity of interrelationship between the details of every day life and the pillars of cultural truths within a people group is staggering. It is inevitable that in my field observations I will have missed some things that are relevant to my topic and focused on some things that are not. I can only hope to tap into a few threads of this elaborate tapestry with the belief that they will provide one detailed angle of a larger work of art.

Finally, this study operates out of the assumption that nomadic people groups have unique qualities inherent in their need for mobility and independence that are evident in nomadic cultures worldwide. While the working out of these qualities may take on different forms and functions, it is assumed for the sake of cross-cultural comparison and analysis that nomadic peoples can be grouped into a loose collection of cultures that share ideals uncommon to sedentary thinkers. This sweeping generalization is humbly made with the knowledge that there is an exception to every rule! The aim is not to formulate a “one-size-fits-all” approach, but to respectfully offer analysis and recommendations that are considerate of the nomad’s chosen way of life and allow it to continue based on the cultural groups’ own design.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The literature review centers on works that are directly related to nomadism or a subject matter that is in close relationship to a nomadic culture. While the list is not exhaustive, it provides an overview of available works and modern research on the subject (see For Further Reading for a more complete listing).² Works have been compiled into chart form for a visual representation of the review (see Figure 5).

At the top tier are works about nomadic culture common to all nomadic peoples. Nomadic studies intersect with a wide range of topics and disciplines. Globally, nomadism runs on a continuum of varying relationships with sedentary cultures. On the one extreme are those groups who operate on a completely separate and autonomous level from surrounding societies. On the other extreme are groups who hold a nomadic worldview but live intermeshed with other people groups and adopt a sedentary means of existence for long periods of time. Examining the points of intersection along this continuum provide for a multitude of topics including evolution theories, economics, public policy and human rights, resource management, negotiating environmental and political change, and specific case studies of social life (see *Nomadic Peoples Journal* for more information on these topics).

Underlying these studies is a debate of the very definition of *nomadism*. From an etymological stance, nomadism refers specifically to pastoralism, but the definition has expanded as nomadic studies have advanced. A deeper knowledge of the complexity of nomadism has forced a clarification process that has separated the ideas of pastoralism and nomadism into two

² Limited to the English language.

distinct but interrelated categories. This transition came in part by a progression of thought that changed from viewing nomads as separatists, unaffected by society at large, to a more diversified view where a continuum of intersection between nomads and sedentary societies exists. For example, various stages of



Fig. 4. Herding camp dismantled for a seasonal move.

nomadism exist within the context of pastoralism, the polar extremes being fully sedentary or fully nomadic. So, it becomes necessary to separate pastoralism into a separate category defining a means of income that is not necessarily dependant on being mobile.

To clarify this distinction, Salzman (2002) defines nomadism as "the regular and frequent movement of the home base and household" (246). It is a "collective activity" that involves "regular, repeated, and frequent displacement" which is purposeful and calculated rather than a wandering existence or the occasional temporary situation (246). A definition of nomadism as separate from pastoralism also allows for a greater need to relocate for an increase in production. This expansion of definition opens the way for hunter-gatherers and tradesmen such as the Gypsies to be included as nomads. Hence the most common definition as quoted from Phillips in Chapter One. However, even these categories are debated as oversimplification for the following reason: you can be a pastoralist, hunter-gatherer, or tradesman without being nomadic.

Nomads usually employ many activities of production so that they can make the most of the current situation and protect themselves against the failure of any given activity due to unforeseen circumstances. This flexibility of production modes is one of many factors creating a

complex interrelationship with sedentary societies that shifts depending on survival needs. Ultimately, Salzman distinguishes nomadism as a term for a strategy of living rather than a description of people groups. Salzman writes, "'nomads' are not a kind of people, but different kinds of people who use a particular strategy - mobility of the household - in carrying out regular productive activities and defending themselves. We may better understand the lives of these various peoples if we ask what they are trying to accomplish through this strategy, how they implement this strategy, why they do not choose apparent alternative strategies, and in what ways this strategy is tied to the environmental conditions in which live. Nomads do not live to migrate, they migrate to live" (261). Salzman addresses past studies in this area and offers a contemporary theoretical look at nomadism based on observations in Iran.

The second tier of the Literature Map is divided into elements of culture where I have identified literature that focuses on specific aspects of nomadic life, be it a particular people group or process. A major subsection of the culture branch is music. This particular branch is developed more extensively as it provides the primary source of information for this study. It is purposefully placed under the heading of culture because of my approach to music as an entity that operates within culture, influencing and being influenced by other elements within the culture.

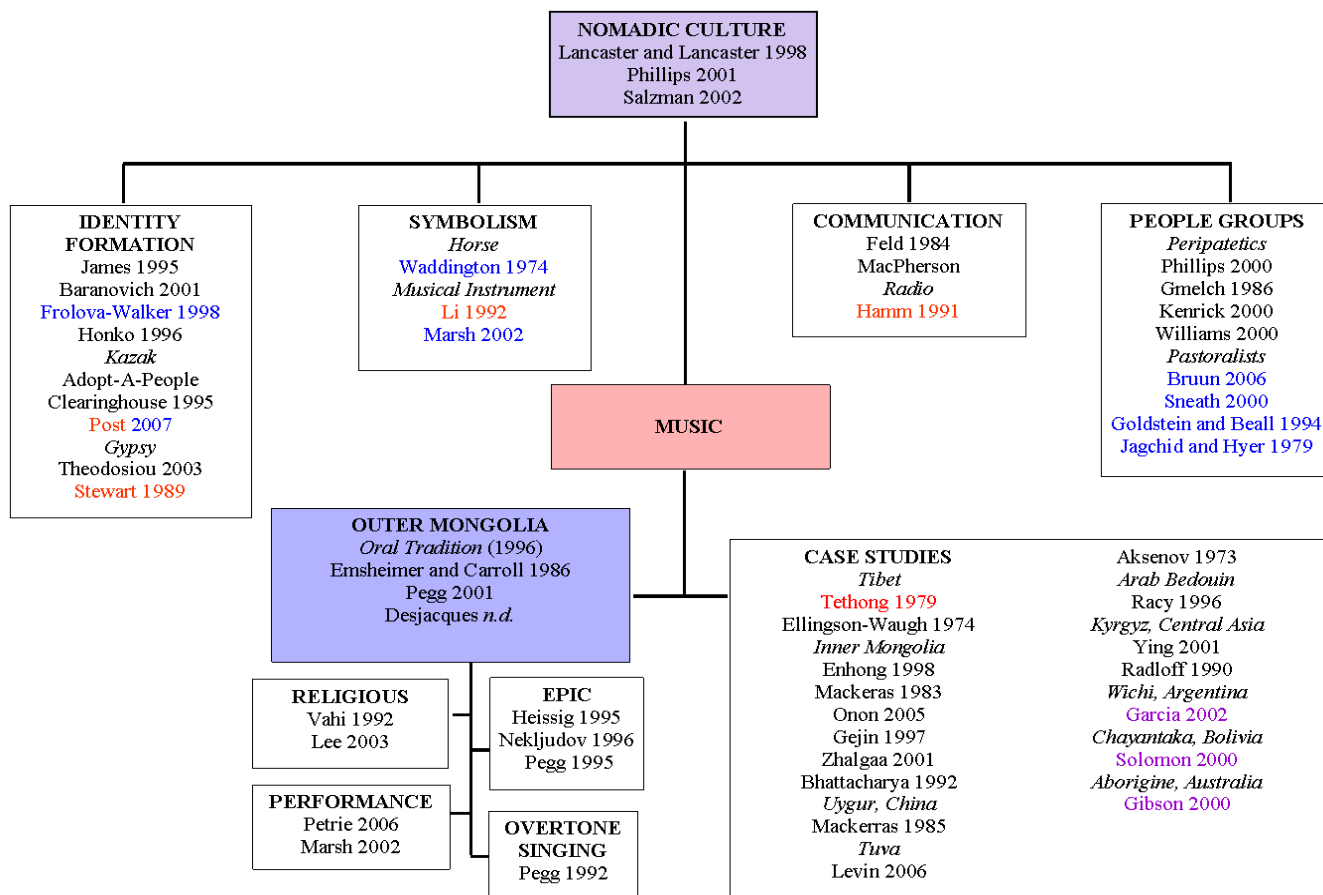


Fig. 5. Literature Map

Nomadic Culture

For the sake of this study, culture is divided into five subsets: identity formation, symbolism, communication, people groups, and music. These subsets were chosen based on available literature and common themes emerging from them.

Identity formation is a common theme among anthropological studies of culture. James (1995) covers the discussions of identity formation at a conference of the International Council for Traditional Music. Baranovich (2001) and Frolova-Walker (1998) explore the forced relationship between music, identity, and political power as governments and ethnic minorities in Central Asia seek to negotiate and identify their roles. Adopt-A-People (1995) discusses the way Kazakh identity is re-shaped by outside pressures, and Post (2007) believes mechanisms such as music are used by Kazakhs to regain solidarity within these shifting influences. Theodosiou (2008) wrestles with the identity formation of gypsies in Greece and the influence that location plays in forming this identity. Stewart (1989) investigates identity formation through the Rom's "true speech," a context of music making which solidifies a common identity among the men. In general, identity formation is an important theme for nomadic peoples as they are accustomed to survival in changing landscapes both naturally, politically, and technologically.

Symbolism provides a wonderful way of gaining insight into a culture. Waddington (1974) discusses the symbol of the horse and those associated with it in Mongolian culture. The horse is the animal of pride and not only symbolizes national identity but personal identity among the herders themselves. Another national symbol of Mongolia is the *morin huur* or horse head fiddle. Marsh (2002) follows the history of the *morin huur* and its transformation into a symbolic representation of national identity and government influence. Li (1992) investigates the way meaning is transmitted through symbolic coding within shamanistic performances of the

hand drum across Central Asia. These articles provide a backdrop for discovering similar musical symbols within Mongolian culture and the relationship of music symbolism and nomadic worldview.

Under the communication branch, Feld ties together the ideas of symbolism, process, and communication and situates music within culture when he states:

Music has a fundamentally social life. It is made to be consumed – practically, intellectually, individually, communally – and it is consumed as a symbolic identity. By ‘consumed’ I mean socially interpreted as meaningfully structured, produced, performed, and displayed by varieties of prepared, invested, or otherwise historically situated actors. How does this happen? What does it mean? How can one know about it? These questions focus on the nature of the music communication process (Feld 1984, 1)

He concludes among other things that music as a communication process conveys messages on multiple levels creating a cohesion of ideals, identity, and worldview. His argument contributes to a deeper understanding of the mechanics of this process.

A fifth subcategory of culture includes descriptions of nomadic people groups and their general cultural characteristics. These cultural surveys offer the ability to compare and contrast elements across people groups including Mongolia in order to find common elements of music culture directly influenced by nomadic lifestyles.

All of the categories mentioned are interrelated and offer the authors’ interpretation of one side of a many sided coin. When looking at methods for comparing and contrasting nomadic music cultures, these studies offer valuable angles of analysis.

Sub-Group: Nomadic Music Culture

There are no known studies in English comparing music cultures across nomadic people groups and only one in French by Jean During (1998). However, short case studies are available on specific people groups. I have chosen those listed on the literature map as a backdrop of

people groups that are similar in geography while also including the Bedouin of the Arab world, the Wichi of Argentina, the Chayantaka of Bolivia, the Aborigine of Australia and others as a representation of non-Asian peoples.

Ellingson-Waugh (1974) examines the shaman's drum as a mediator between the natural and spiritual world in central Asian cultures and specifically Tibet, while Onon (2005) presents transcriptions and lyrical translations of a shaman's songs in Inner Mongolia. Tethong (1979), Enhong (1998), Mackerras (1983, 1985), and Aksenov (1973) cover music traditions of Tibetans, Inner Mongolians, Uygurs, and Tuvins, respectively. Levin (2006) explores the Tuvan way of listening to natural and musical sound and the use of sound mimesis as a negotiation of natural and spiritual realms. The study by Racy (1996) explores the similarities and differences along a continuum of nomadic, rural, and urban contexts within the East Arab world and focuses specifically on Bedouin ideology and its relationship with the Arab music culture. Radloff (1990) and Ying (2001) focus on the Kirgiz epic as it was found in 1862 and 2001 respectively (Ying focusing on the genre through the life of an epic bard, Mamay), and Garcia (2002) looks at the way Wichi approach all areas of life with what he calls an "open agenda policy" that is also used to approach music as shown in actions surrounding events and song structures. Solomon (2000) identifies the community identities formed through place-making in song, and Gibson and Dunbar-Hall (2000) cover similar topics as Aboriginal rock and pop take the place of traditional music forms as an expression of identity with the land.

With the exception of Racy's look at East Arab music culture, all of these studies focus on specific people groups and specific genres. They provide a good starting point for making comparisons with Outer Mongolian music culture which may eventually lead to tentative conclusions applicable across cultural lines.

Sub-Group of Nomadic Music: Outer Mongolia

The Mongolian Music branch of the literature review is divided into four sub-categories: religion, performance, overtone singing, and epic. As stated earlier, these categories were chosen based on the studies available and their subject matter. Emsheimer and Carroll (1986) discuss Mongolian music culture in the thirteenth century, the time of Genghis Khan, and Pegg (2001) provides an extensive historical overview of Mongolian music forms and performance contexts. The film, *Musical Steppes of Mongolia* with Alain Desjacques, provides a visual representation of some of the rarer performances found in ethnic minority groups of Mongolia. In this film, one can see the musical differences from group to group. Within the realm of religious works, Vahi (1992) gives a basic representation of music in the Buddhist ritual context, and Lee (2003) engages in Christian contextualization theories and the Mongolian context of the long song, or *urtyin duu*. Lee's research provides an example of how the current study may be applied to a specific Christian context within a nomadic people group. Petrie (2006) and Marsh (2002) focus on the history of performance surrounding two of the most well-known performance events, the *Naadam* games and the *morin huur*. Petrie explores the history of *Ikh Bayar Naadam*, a state sponsored ceremony of games, and how the manipulation of its traditions have been a way of expressing the state's sovereignty and political legitimacy. This study is particularly important in that the *Naadam* Festival is one of the most popular and anticipated events of the year for Mongolians. Marsh (2002) describes the process of the *morin huur*'s transformation into a national symbol during the Socialist Era. Both works provide an opportunity to see symbolic cultural and musical processes in Mongolia.

The last two sections of Mongolian music cover specific genres. Pegg (1992) summarizes *xöömii*, overtone singing, within the Mongolian context including its history,

development, and current use, and the Music Epic branch begins with a volume of *Oral Tradition* (1996) which focuses on epic traditions along the Silk Road. Several of the articles deal specifically with Mongolian and Khalkha epics. Interestingly, epics were not a popular form of music performance in the areas that I visited but the articles concerning Mongolian music deal predominantly with epic traditions. Heissig (1995), Nekljudov (1996), Pegg (1995), and Zhalgaa (2001) all cover facets of Mongolian epic tradition that primarily originate in Mongolian culture outside of the political boundaries of Outer Mongolia.

Overall, the literature available on Outer Mongolian music traditions is limited with the exception of Pegg's research. Information that is available covers specific genres or contexts. In general, these studies focus on what Mongolians *do* musically, but not how often they do it or what they say about it. While all of these studies provide valuable research in terms of comparing nomadic music cultures, there is a lack in the area of current popular ideas about music among Mongolian nomads. My field work focused on this gap as I sought to learn what is performed most often and why. This, in connection with other literature already available, can provide a solid foundation in which to begin the process of nomadic music culture evaluation.

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Throughout the research process, I have employed a qualitative research strategy with a knowledge claim of social constructivism. My goal has never been to reconstruct the musical structures of songs. Mongolians are already experts at this. It is a living music culture that is already in the midst of recreating itself, and Mongolian researchers within the scientific community have already sought to analyze their own music structures. Instead, my task on the field was an investigation of popular opinion within the Mongolian community. This type of investigation needs a strategy that provides open ended investigation with the flexibility to participants' views. It is also more qualitative than empirical in perspective in that I am more interested in the behaviors and beliefs that surround a song form than the song form itself. Alan Merriam's classic model of music culture contains three levels of investigation:

“conceptualization about music, behavior in relation to music, and music sound itself” (Merriam 1964, 32). The three levels integrate in a way that provides for confirmation and the opportunity for change in the participant's mind. It is the first two levels of thought and behavior that I am primarily concerned with. While I wholeheartedly believe that analysis of song forms can lead to insights of deep meanings within a culture, it is beyond the scope of this investigation.

Social constructivism as explained by John Creswell (2003) is based on the idea that individuals actively pursue meaning within their daily lives. These meanings are subjective and form a complex pattern of thought and behavior often attached to and represented by particular objects. Creswell best explains the practical relationship of social constructivism and the researcher in the following way:

These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas. The goal of the research, then, is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied. The questions become broad and general so that the participants can construct the meaning of a situation, a meaning typically forged in discussions or interactions with other persons. The more open-ended the questioning, the better, as the researcher listens carefully to what people say or do in their life setting. Often these subjective meanings are negotiated socially and historically. In other words, they are not simply imprinted on individuals but are formed through interaction with others (hence social constructivism) and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives. Thus, constructivist researchers often address the "processes" of interaction among individuals. They also focus on the specific contexts in which people live and work in order to understand the historical and cultural settings of the participants. Researchers recognize that their own background shapes their interpretation, and they "position themselves" in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation flows from their own personal, cultural, and historical experiences. The researcher's intent, then, is to make sense of (or interpret) the meanings others have about the world. Rather than starting with a theory (as in postpositivism), inquirers generate or inductively develop a theory or pattern of meaning. (Creswell 2003, 8-9)

The point that led me to this position is the lack of focused information and the misconceptions related to nomads. In order to protect the research from the influences of my own misconceptions as a sedentary thinker, I wanted to construct a strategy which fostered understanding from an emic perspective and allowed for ideas to evolve from the collected data. The downside to this is that one often does not know what they are looking for and can feel like they are wandering in the dark at times. Because of this, I see this process as the beginning for further research once the area of discovery has been more closely defined. I am also claiming social constructivism because of its focus on discovery and understanding within a socially and historically constructed experience. Meanings are explored through social interaction. I feel that this is conducive to nomadic cultures and more specifically to Mongolian nomadic culture because they are traditionally oral societies and still operate to some extent within an oral framework of dissemination even in conjunction with sedentary development.

In selecting the practical application of a research strategy, I chose to follow the guidelines of grounded theory analysis. The background of social constructivism naturally plays well with a grounded theory approach as both point to the processes of interaction, give weight to emic perspective, and provide the flexibility of broad questioning in order to foster these ideas. Grounded theory is an inductive approach ending in the formulation of a general theory of process or action. It is founded in participants' views. The grounded theorist works through multiple levels of data collection with a variety of participants (rather than one core group) to provide for comparison and contrast. This constant reworking of the data helps to define categories and processes without losing the participants' perspective as the core value. As categories emerge from evolving comparisons, broad conclusions and generalizations can be tentatively drawn and placed within the context of existing literature offering another form of accountability and grounding (Charmaz 2006).

A grounded theory model is conducive to the current topic of nomadic music because of the lack of previous studies available and the need to base conclusions directly on the experience of the participant. Also, there is an admitted danger in applying broad conclusions over multiple culture groups often resulting in superficial observations and conclusions. Grounded theory offers a level of accountability to this tricky business as, in the end, I feel broad generalized conclusions are needed to further the discussion of thoughtfully contextualized music within nomadic cultures. These conclusions will hopefully offer easily understood suggestions for Mongolian church leaders and workers among nomads in general.

Practically speaking, the influence of a grounded theory strategy is seen in the type of interviews I conducted, the selection of a variety of sites, the importance placed on meeting with participants in their natural environment, and the method of coding during analysis. The

grounded theory structure is not the only way I chose to look at the data but was in partnership with analyzing data for basic empirical evidence as well as process.

Snapshot: A Day in the Life of a Fieldworker



Fig. 6. Mongolian kinship group.

Backward, forwards, sideways, up and down, the van (and all of us in it) rock as we careen over the invisible roads. Winding our way through riverbeds, sand traps, rocky outcrops, and roaming animals, we leave a billowing trail of dust behind us. The occasional herder is seen in the distance (much later than we were seen by him) and we make our way over to ask him for direction. “Over this mountain and around that one,” he says, pointing to what seems like an endless landscape. But our driver is keen, and he follows the subtle contour of the terrain. Eventually, we come to a grinding halt before a collection of homes, a small unassuming huddle of human life existing in the midst of this vast landscape. As we step out of our vehicle we’re surrounded by the feeling of limitless space as far as the eye can see. An instant later, it is replaced by the smell of sheep, the barking of dogs, and the weathered faces of men, women, and children emerging from their homes to greet the strangers. A few words are exchanged and we’re ushered into their home. Replacing the brightness of an empty blue sky is the dim light filtering through a small opening in the center of the ger. The sharp smells of meat, fermenting drink, and burning dung fill our senses as we are shown where to sit within the small round circle of chairs, beds, and daily tools. The hostess quickly sets out cups filled with salted milk tea and bowls of dried yogurt, curds, and candy. The formal greetings are exchanged, the snuff bottle is passed around for a sniff, and everyone settles in for a quiet reserved conversation. If the interview goes well, fermented horse milk (airag) is brought out. Everyone smiles as they watch the foreigner drink the sour milk, always filling whatever I could manage from the cup with more. The laughter begins and so does the music. Soaring melodies that seem to mirror the families and their landscape. Eventually, our bellies full and our hearts warmed, we share our gifts of gratitude, say our thanks and wave goodbye. Back in the van, we continue our journey bumping our way across the steppe toward the next group of nomads we can find.

Data Collection

The above account was a common scene during my time in Mongolia. Fieldwork was performed during visits 2003, 2005, and 2007. Data collection centered on participant observation and semi-structured interviews. The goal was to derive an understanding of contemporary music culture in rural Mongolia based on the broad research questions below:

- a. What is the existing music culture in rural Mongolia?
 1. What kinds of music do the herding communities value?
 2. What forms does it take?
 3. What are the generational differences?
 4. How strong is the oral music tradition? Are cultural values, history, and information communicated directly through music?
 5. Who/what are the performers? (radio, cassette, trained musician, general public, etc.)

The information gleaned from this study is a resource for understanding how the existing music culture be utilized as a vessel for encouraging evangelism, worship, and discipleship among Mongolian nomads. While not directly related to specific music culture, the following questions were also asked of Christian community leaders in order to gain an understanding of current issues related to outreach among nomads.

- b. What are the current and proposed church strategies presented by the Mongolian church leadership?
 1. Are they effective? To which groups?
 2. What are the benefits and challenges of nomadic lifestyle?
 3. What is the religious background/worldview of Mongolian nomads?

My first set of interviews took place in the capital city of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar in 2003. I was comparing and contrasting the likes and dislikes of various styles of music from hip-hop to Buddhist chants to Christian worship to



Fig. 7. Elderly women from Ulaanbaatar.

traditional songs. In the process of interviewing these city dwellers, it became apparent that there was an invisible line between those that lived in the city and those that lived in the countryside of Mongolia. Generalizations were consistently being made about what the “other” liked. And more than that, the details of those generalizations differed depending on who you asked. It was at that time that I planned to pursue fieldwork in the countryside itself in order to gain a more accurate picture of nomadic preferences in music. In 2007, I completed the task as I chose two general sites of investigation. I was given access through my contacts to Övörkhongai, Bulgan, and Arkhangai provinces (see map below). These areas were conducive to my research goals in that they provided a continuum of nomadicism in relation to urban proximity. In addition to information collected in the capital city, I was able to visit the homes of semi-nomadic families in the area surrounding Erdenet, a small north central city. These families still adhere to nomadic traditions, but because of their proximity to a city, have more opportunity for urban influence. In a southern region of Övörkhongai, I was able to learn by word of mouth who the known musicians were and travel to find them. These nomadic family groups are much more removed from urban settings as their only access to sedentary influence are very small towns that exist mainly during the harsh winter times. The third group of nomads I visited was the most remote of the three locations in that our search was not based from a town center but literally driving across the steppe to find those who were nowhere near town influence. These were the families of Arkhangai Province. While Mongolia is a vast country, and there are still a multitude of remote places I could have travelled, these three locations were chosen based on the access to them I received through contact organizations and the continuum they offered in terms of sedentary influence and regional dispersion (i.e. north to south).

Including Töv province, the home of Ulaanbaatar, these four locations provide a survey of central Mongolia.



Fig. 8. Provincial map of Outer Mongolia

Data collection took the form of conducting interviews, observing musical events, and participating in host organizational meetings within their natural environments or those chosen by the participant. Events included those that occurred naturally during my visit and semi-structured events encouraged by the presence of our research team. In addition to field notes, audio recordings and photographs were taken when possible.

The interview process was based upon semi-structured, open ended questions. The purpose being to encourage natural dialogue and group interaction as well as giving the participants the opportunity to point to what they deemed important by their actions and words. In theory, this was a positive strategy. In actuality, it was sometimes difficult to encourage natural flow of conversation. From family to family, the willingness to be congenial, open, and informative varied. However, it was also a telling sign of which families experienced music

personally on a day to day level and which families had little access to music other than the radio.

A second difficulty of this strategy was the dependence on translation. Often, several minutes of conversation would pass with little or no translation. The translators were not professionals but available through sponsoring organizations as proficient English speakers. Even though I worked beforehand to prepare the translators with my expectations and needs, they naturally decided for me what information was important for me to know and what was not. In addition to adding an extra filter through which the information had to pass, it also affected my ability to keep the conversation going when I did not know where the conversation was or what small detail would have been important for my research.

A third difficulty was the terminology and structuring of the questions themselves. Each of the five translators understood the questions differently and used different terminologies in both their Mongolian discussion and their English explanations to me. The interview questions went through multiple revisions over the course of the fieldwork in order to zero in on the words and questions which elicited the most response from the participants. However, no matter how vague the answers I received were, the revisions had to be limited in order to keep some continuity for the sake of comparing and contrasting the answers across regions and family groups. I've included, below, the starting set of interview questions which I drafted during the proposal stage of research, followed by the final version of questions after working through several revisions on the field. Over time, the questions addressing abstract ways



Fig. 9. Author interviewing rural veterinarian.

of thinking (which received little response from participants) were reworked into straightforward and concrete language addressing personal tastes and tangible experience (creating a more natural flow of conversation). For example, “How does music influence your life as a herder?” became “As a herder, how is music part of a normal day?”

Interview with Mongolian herders – Version A

1. Tell me about music.
2. What does music mean to you? How do you feel about music?
3. How is music a part of your life? Everyday life? Special occasions?
4. What form does it take?
5. What kind of singing and/or instruments do you use?
6. Who is involved in music-making? How are they involved?
7. How do you go about making music? What do you do?
8. Can you describe a typical situation in which there would be music?
9. Does music connect the participants to each other in any way? If so, how?
10. What can you communicate through music?
11. Is there a special style for religious topics? Historical information? Stories? What is the setting for these styles?
12. When you look back on your life, are there any times where the music stands out in your mind?
13. How has music changed in your lifetime?
14. How do you think music is important? How does it affect your life?
15. Can you tell me of a time when the music-making was particularly memorable? How did it make you feel?
16. Can you describe to me a time when the music/music-making was not good?
17. How would you describe good music/music-making?
18. How would you describe bad music/music-making?
19. What is one of your earliest memories of music/music-making?
20. What do you think about music in the cities?
21. How do you feel about music in the countryside?
22. What are the differences?
23. How does music influence your life as a herder?
24. How is music related to the spirit world?
25. What rituals or spiritual meanings are connected to music?
26. Tell me about your instruments.
27. Which instrument is most meaningful to you?
28. How common are instruments on the steppe?
29. Is there anything else you think I should know to understand music better?
30. Is there anything you would like to ask me?

Interview with Mongolian herders – Version B

1. What do you like about music?
2. What is your favorite style of music?
3. What are the different styles of music in Mongolia?
4. When do you sing (or play) these styles?
5. How does it make you feel to hear these songs?
6. As a herder, how is music part of a normal day?
7. How is music different in the countryside than in the city?
8. Do you think music is connected to the spirit world? If yes, how?
9. What is good music? How do you know it's good?
10. Is there a style of song that is good for giving advice? For telling stories? Events in the past?
11. How common are instruments?
12. When do you get to hear them?
13. Do you know anyone who can play an instrument?
14. What is your favorite instrument?

No interview was the same. The questions were not meant to be a questionnaire in which every question held equal importance and requirement for answer. The questions provided a starting point for discussion and a tool for continuing discussion. It was the participant who ultimately drove the course of the conversation. While frustrating at times to leave behind a topic I personally felt important, it was an intentional decision on my part to follow their lead in order to gain an emic perspective on popular thought about music. In the end, it was a fruitful exercise if only a scratch on the surface of deep meanings.

Once the interviewing was complete, I went through the process of transcribing each interview into written text as well as cataloging all field notes. Eventually, all of the data from transcriptions, field notes, books, and articles were combined and integrated by theme into one central location. The transcriptions were coded line by line and cross referenced with the rest of the data. For more on the steps of coding, see Charmaz (2006). The coding process provided for the comparing and contrasting that is encouraged by grounded theory strategy. As comparisons were made, categories began to emerge and connections made based on the data.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Background: Influence of Socialism

The purpose of the fieldwork in this project was to fill in the gap of contemporary rural musical thought so that it can then be placed within the broader context of literature. Within the studies available, much has been written about the forms and functions of music in Mongolia, particularly pertaining to historical accounts before the Socialist era and the influence of socialist thought in the 20th century. However, little can be found about the popularity or the frequency of these forms and functions in current rural settings. This is particularly vital considering the absence of folk voices in the Socialist era when the music culture was intentionally refashioned by urban professionals to fit socialist ideals. I felt it important to gather data pertaining to what the rural nomadic people actually think rather than what they are said to think about music and its place in their lives. Even so, a discussion of contemporary rural musical thought cannot be had without an understanding of the Socialist era and its influence in 20th century Mongolia. Today's music culture is intimately connected with the thoughts and ideas of past socialist influence, and many ideals of the socialist era are fully integrated with contemporary thought. Carole Pegg (2001) and Peter Marsh (2002) give considerable time investigating the progression and influence of socialism on Mongolia's music culture. For more in-depth reading on the subject, I suggest the perusal of their works. For the purpose of understanding the context of participant response, I will briefly describe some of the events which took place in the mid-20th century which directly and drastically affected the music culture.

The Socialist era began with the 1921 Revolution. Party efforts to cleanse the nation of anything considered in opposition to socialism in the 1930's began a progression of change for the traditional arts. In addition to purging religious and political leaders and their institutions,

focus was also turned to instruments, their players, and any musical voice that symbolized the old order. As Pegg explains, what followed was:

a “cultural enlightenment” offensive during the 1930’s and 1940’s. The synthesis of diverse performance styles into one intellectual culture and national style related to the expectation that each *yastan* (nationality) would renounce its own identity to become part of a unified socialist *ündersten*. (Pegg 2001, 249)

In the cause of international socialism, Mongolian “tribes” were allowed to keep the forms but had to change the contents and meanings of their performance arts, in order to create a new national identity for a unified socialist nation (*ündersten*). This was to be “based on the language, literature, and culture of Khalkha, the core group (*buleg*) of the Mongol nation” (Badamhatan 1982:10). (Pegg 2001, 249)

In essence, the music culture of the central Mongolian Khalkha tribe would now represent the entire nation. Although this was combined with musical elements from other tribes, all traditions were to be stripped and refashioned, removing any word or musical device that referenced religion, ethnic identity, or past tradition (Pegg 2001, 256). Considered a “new music culture” by the Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party (MPRP), it would become the enforced norm of the following generation (Marsh 2002, 64). Marsh describes the strategy that would prevail in one form or another over the next fifty years:

From the first decades of the Revolution, the Mongolian Peoples Revolutionary Party (MPRP) sought to promote the broad-based understanding of the ideals of communism and “raise the cultural level” (*soyolyn tüwshind khögjüülekh*) of the Mongolian people. These were goals to be accomplished, in part, through the people’s involvement in the musical arts. From the 1920’s on, the Party encouraged the growth and expansion of these arts, forming amateur and later professional music ensembles, opening music schools, and establishing theatres, clubs and concert halls throughout the country. These developments included the introduction of European classical musical instruments, compositional forms, teaching methodologies, ensemble types, musical aesthetics and so on. But room was also made for the so-called national musical traditions. They drew from cultural traditional from across the nation, cleansed them of unwanted influences and brought together into a national form that was shaped by cosmopolitan (or as it was known, “internationalist”) musical forms, practices and aesthetics. (Marsh 2002, 65)

While some of the instruments and song melodies would have been familiar to the average Mongolian, the new context of music making including its instrumentation, mode of

education, and formal presentation was completely foreign to rural nomadic herders. The government exercised creative control over the influence of this new art by retaining portions of the familiar in combination with propaganda praising the new “advances.” The influence was so strong and the intentional integration so thorough, that for the present day herder in central Mongolia, history has been rewritten and truth sounds very similar to past propaganda. Many participant responses sound very similar to what was taught in the socialist initiatives rather than what was believed before the revolution. It is not to say that the central rural music culture is a stale imitation of socialist ideals sung by brain washed followers. On the contrary, it is a living culture intimately connected to and negotiated by the hearts and minds of those who are a part of it. It need only be said that within this living culture, many traditions have been lost or altered to the current form by past government influence. Now, within the context of democracy, the current music culture includes a pattern of influence including socialism, tradition, and urbanization.

Negotiating Contemporary Identity

Identity in rural Mongolia is negotiated through various means. A love of music is one of the most common identity traits attributed to rural Mongolians. Music serves a major function of confirming and establishing their view of themselves. Lauri Honko defines group identity as “a set of values, symbols, and emotions joining people, through constant negotiation, in the realization of togetherness and belonging, constituting a space for ‘us’ in the universe (as well as distinguishing ‘us’ from ‘them’)” (Honko 1996, 20). A Mongolian nomads “us” identity is negotiated through music making, formally and informally, in live performance and recorded media, as they seek to balance themselves between the natural, technological, and spiritual

worlds. To give evidence of this, I will give an overview of information gleaned through fieldwork in central rural Mongolia in 2007. It is important to note that the information expressed herein is a combination of *rural* participant views, personal observations, and scholarly references.

It is often said by a Mongolian that countryside people love to sing, and they sing all the time. It was the popularity of this statement by urban Mongols that led me to the central rural regions to find out for myself if this was true. It is also often said by these same Mongols that traditional music is from the countryside and most loved there. Initial investigation has revealed that while there is truth in these statements, it is not that simple. Even the countryside people themselves proclaim this identity, but in reality, some sing all the time, and some don't. Traditional instruments are highly spoken of but rarely found in central Mongolia. And, personal tastes range from a few well known songs to a variety of old and modern styles. It is necessary, then, to give clarity to these "truths" and further define current rural musical culture in central Mongolia.

When speaking of rural music culture, the presence of traditional music often comes up as a defining trait. But, what is meant by the phrase "traditional music"? In the urban context today, traditional music includes stage performing ensembles using various combinations of string and wind instruments such as the *morin huur*, *shanz*, *yoochin*, *yagta*, *huuchir*, and *limbe* (see Appendix C for further description and photos). The ensembles are professionally trained and supported by tourism or special holiday events. Vocally, the singers of the long song (*urtyn duu*) and throat song (*hoomei*) take the stage with elaborate costumes which visually match their vocal acrobatics. What a tourist doesn't recognize is that this is a hybrid, highly stylized form of traditional music that has become the expected norm in urban centers. Traditional music is not

for nightly family gatherings after a day of hard work. For some, it can be found in their favorite CD collection or in the memories of the elderly, but for most it is a symbolic identity that is resurrected during festivals and holidays. In the rural context, what is called “nationality” or “folk” music is adapted to a much more personal social structure and is integrated along with other modern styles into a daily life routine. However, even in the countryside, the style, form, and function have been greatly influenced by urban ideals.

The rural music culture comes into greater focus when contrasted with the urban culture for there is a significant difference. Even if some of the same styles are enjoyed, the context surrounding their performance is different. In the city, the traditional music culture is seen as irrelevant to daily life except during special holidays like *Naadam* (Festival of the Three Manly Sports) or the New Year (*Tsagaan Sar*). But in the countryside, it is a daily negotiation and confirmation of who they are in a shifting and what is perceived as declining environment. In my observation, there is a need to identify with the past and to give oneself a sense of belonging, pride, and stability.



Fig. 10. Rural herding woman's performance.



Fig. 11. Professional folk ensemble performance in Ulaanbaatar.

Negotiating Through Origins

According to participants in rural central Mongolia, the origins of nationality music are rooted in the environment. The quality of the music and the talent of those who make it are linked to the quality of environment: how good the *airag*³ is, what mountain is nearby, what altitude they are living. The idea is that music and instruments mimic the natural sounds around them. Therefore, the better the natural sounds, the better the music; the better the local *airag*, the better the context for music making. If one lives in an area of particular beauty or near a natural element such as a river, then it can be assumed that the music will reflect this. The sound of the wind howling around the mountain, the water bubbling in the brook, or the cries of birds in the sky will influence the herders' ability to produce quality music.

A reflection of this origin is found in participant discussion surrounding song types. The *ardyn duu*, commonly translated as the nationality or folk song, is one of the most popular song forms in the central countryside. It is seen as having no identified composer. Rather, it is a product and symbol of the countryside life. The *ardyn duu* does not come from a trained source as other song types do.⁴ Instead, it is considered to be birthed out of the countryside way of life. It is interesting to note that a main division made in emic song classification is between the *ardyn duu* and *zohioliin duu* which were translated to me as “folk song” and “written song.” The *zohioliin duu* (also called *niitin duu* or “public song”) is similar to a national song but has been composed recently by a known musician and uses a combination of traditional and western instruments. One urban participant explained to me that the *ardyn duu* possibly had a composer at one time (*zohioliin duu*), but through its popularity over the course of history, it became the

³ Airag is fermented horse milk.

⁴ Ardyn duu is actually a created song form initiated by the MPRP in the 1950's. Songs were “regulated and composed” from a central institute to represent the new culture and disseminated across the nation. (Pegg 2001, 273)

ardyn duu. Either way, in the mind of the Mongolian herder, the *ardyn duu* is connected to the past and carries with it the collective identity of all countryside people over that time. Singing the *ardyn duu* connects the herder to his history, his community, and his environment.

Negotiating Through Quality

Quality of music, as linked to the quality of environment, relates to technical skill and communal engagement. However, different situations dictate the level of importance of one over the other. Throughout the interviews, there was a definite sense of quality that changed its parameters depending on the context. In participant views, some singers stood out from the rest because of their talent. However, it was difficult to gain clarification on the definition of that talent. Participants seemed to easily praise those who were considered good and occasionally teased those who were not. There was particular pride in the talented singers that were from the local area. The local cultural center director, himself, was looking for the “right voice.” So, what makes one talented? I noticed an ambivalence in participant response toward personal ability. Although it is said that everyone sings, when asked, everyone also without fail said that they personally did not sing, or at least not well. Some of these very same participants sang for me the largest set of recorded samples. Even participants who were known by others in the room for their singing ability would not say so themselves. Someone else would point out their talent. Those that valued education, such as government workers or school teachers, pointed to professional training as an influence, but still, it was not the ultimate source. Training developed a talent that was already there. When singing the *urtyn duu*, talent was the ability to sing the highest pitches with strength, projection, and clarity. Sometimes talent was associated with a connection to the past and some influence that occurred there. In addition, one participant described an untalented singer as one who sounds as if they are talking while singing. This

information was only shared with me after I witnessed the participant teasing the singer, and I asked why.

The ambivalence I perceived could partly come from the separation of natural and educated performance ideals. It is also possible that the function of communal engagement in music making takes on a greater role than technical skill in certain contexts and that the quality is a reflection of the success of the function, i.e. communal engagement. A common context for music making is within a communal gathering, whether spontaneous or in connection with a life-cycle event. *Airag* is a very important part of communal gatherings and often drunk in large quantities. If the quality of the *airag* is exceptional (certain areas of the country are known for their *airag*), the group will drink more of it and therefore be more jovial in their mood, creating more opportunity for music making.

I personally witnessed this when during the middle of an interview, a group of travelers on their way to collect wood stopped for a rest. As it seemed that they had been stopping at every encampment on the way, the men had consumed large quantities of *airag* and vodka (commonly served to guests). They were a walking chorus of song eager to sing and display their camaraderie and jovial mood. I was often told that drinking and singing went together. The underlying point here is not the amount of alcohol consumed, but the context within which both music and drink occur. It is in these moments of communal engagement that quality of music is a reflection of the quality of the event. The group's merry making was a reflection of the success of their outing (that success being the relationship building between one another rather than the acquisition of wood as they had yet to gather any). In the world of nomadism, relationships become very important and the context of building those relationships equally important. It is even more so than with urban dwellers who have an extensive stable network of

support. With few neighbors and a changing landscape, kinship groups must work well together to maintain a healthy existence (Phillips 2001, 32-34).

Music serves many functions in solidifying and negotiating these relationships. In this case, the importance of talent or technical skill is situational. Music making is not reserved for the talented only. In a celebration (*nair*), for example, everyone present is required to sing. Their talent, or lack thereof, is not a factor. The *nair* or party is a special event which happens in the home in accordance with holidays and life cycle events (weddings, births, erecting a new *ger*⁵, and others). The event is marked by music, beginning and ending in song. Often, it officially begins with a particular Long Song. If no one is available who can sing it, a different selection of songs will be chosen based on what that particular family knows. The *nair* goes hand in hand with singing and drinking. The hostess will pass the bowl of *airag* to someone who must then sing a song of his or her choice for the group. Once the song is finished, the bowl is given back to the hostess who refills it to the brim and passes it on to the next participant. This continues until everyone present has sung a solo. At another point in the *nair*, the participants form two groups who alternate singing songs together. Marsh gives an example of a similar tradition which exemplifies participation over talent.

In a similar way, it was apparently common during festivities then (as it sometimes is today) to encourage everyone present to sing a song or play something on a fiddle [*morin huur*]. Those that could not or refused were often publicly, if playfully, chastised. . . . Thus, even if one could not play the fiddle well, one was expected to participate in the music making when it occurred. Musicologist Maya van Staden writes that among the Oirat, in particular, "honesty" of expression was expected over talent when people gathered for enjoyment. . . . Any gathering for Mongols was a chance to share music, jokes and stories. (Marsh 2002, 46-47)

There is a deeper meaning here than surface level performance. According participants, music making solidifies the kinship ties, establishes truth, brings order, and lessens tension. It is

⁵ *Ger* is a round portable tent made of wool, wooden lattice work, and canvas. Also known by the Russian term, *yurt*.

integrated within the social, mental, spiritual, and physical realms of life. When asked why they sing, I received a range of responses that give insight into these deeper functions of music making in rural Mongolia. The responses included entertainment, releasing tension, relaxing, bringing good luck, encouraging good emotions, honoring someone, building relationship, influencing animals, confirming identity, marking a special event, remembering the past, giving strength to work, continuing a tradition, and bringing freedom, peace and healing. All of this is done within the context of the family and their home.

Negotiating Through Education

Alongside the definition of quality is the negotiation of talent and education. Out of the environment, the folk talent is born. A musician can have two backgrounds, traditional or formal. Formal education as understood by the Mongolian participant means travelling in a concert or competition circuit, possibly being coached by a cultural center director, or moving to a city to study in a music school. There is actually another traditional form of education from parent to child based on learning by ear, but it is not categorized as education from an emic perspective. Herders aurally learn and memorize songs from their parents, guests at parties, occasional concerts, or radio. These are the common songs they sing for life. If a parent sings a lot or plays an instrument, they are credited for the talent of the adult child who now plays or sings. Lifestyle and the needs of family restrict those with natural talent from developing their skills through formalized training, coaching, or performing experience. Therefore, displays of talent and performance often stay within the family network never reaching a broader audience. On one particular drive in Bulgan province, I met a family who was originally from Uvs (Western Mongolia) but had lived in the current area for fifteen years. The mother played the *morin huur* and shared many melodies for the traditional *biy* dance with me. She spoke of the

ikil, a variation of the *huur* in the Western provinces, and talked of her musical experiences as a child. Now, her son and grandson are learning from her. Not thirty minutes away, those in the next herding encampment said they knew of no one in the area who played an instrument nor did they have the opportunity to hear an instrument live. These kinds of musical experiences varied greatly from camp to camp.

When natural talent⁶ is recognized in children, they then receive more focused attention on the matter from the playing/singing parent. They begin to sing for their family at local special events such as wedding and holiday celebrations. In some cases, the child may be discovered and/or encouraged by a cultural center director to move to the county center where they can be coached and trained at the cultural center and possibly placed in the competition circuit.

Learning from parents and relatives in the home was actually prohibited by the MPRP during the Socialist era. “Performers of traditional Mongolian music, dance, and song were said to be part of an ‘illicit continuation of feudal traditions’ (Bawden 1989:377), and even within the home, such performances were forbidden. Traditional instruments, vocal and instrumental styles, and contents were all affected. The aim of the process was to ‘neutralize’ (*saarmagjih*) the traditions” (Pegg 2001, 256). It is possible that the influence of this initiative curtailed the popularity of traditional education methods and performances. While there were only a few herders who considered themselves



Fig. 12. Herdsmen brothers

⁶ Natural talent refers to the talent perceived by rural Mongolians as an ability that some have to sing or perform well. The talent is “natural” in that it is birthed from the countryside environment rather than Western forms of formalized training.

musicians among the corpus of participants I interviewed, there was some evidence of this traditional style of education in many of the homes I visited. Even more so, there was a love of the *idea* of traditional education from the natural environment even if few experienced it to its full extent.

This traditional form of education is becoming rare as formalized training is seen as ideal by some but unattainable, and professional performance is so readily available through television and radio. With the advancement of formalized music education in the Socialist era, a distinction between amateur and professional musicians developed where it had not existed before (as well as a separation of urban and rural). Marsh describes the progression:

While the activities at the *aimag* level Clubs and Theatres throughout Mongolia generally employed the best-trained and most talented performers, the rural Clubs and Red Corners featured mostly local amateur musicians and ensembles. The Party defined amateur musicians as those without advanced training in the musical arts, i.e., those who did not go to music schools or did not train with music teachers. (Marsh 2002, 101)

At the time, both kinds of musicianship were seen as essential. The goal was to create a locally centered place for cultural advancement and leisure (Marsh 2002, 101). However, the training was very different from one to the other. While the amateur rural musician was still involved in the local music culture singing and playing in homes or gathering for a small community concerts, young professionals were being groomed for stage performance using European methods of education. They were taught to read music, “sing solfège, memorize scales and arpeggios, and follow the directions of a conductor” (Marsh 2002, 102). The musicians were encouraged to incorporate European classical music and its ideals into their skill set as a sign of advancement in the international arts.

One of the consequences of these developments was the deepening distinction that was made between the professional and amateur performer. The Party put a great deal of effort into developing professionalism in the musical arts, particularly through the training of performers, expansion of the music schools, building of new buildings and

concert halls, and development of the musical instruments and national composers. As professionally trained performers returned to their homelands in the countryside, they began to displace the talented amateur performers (those without professional training) from the positions they had held in the cultural organizations at a faster pace than before. The presence of these professionally trained performers, with their modern instruments and advanced technical abilities, also raised the stakes for those seeking to participate in the national music culture and further widened the gap between the professional and amateur performers. (Marsh 2002, 108)

In Ulziit, Övörkhongai province, the locals are very proud of the many talented musicians in and from the area. Dulmaa is a seventy five year old herding woman who is known nationally for her rendition of the “Dumun” long song (*urtyn duu*). She is said to be the highest pitched singer of Dumun in the nation and is highly respected as someone who has excelled in perfecting her natural talent. She currently has no one interested in learning the tradition from her. She and the local cultural center director are searching for a student with the right voice who can sing this



Fig. 13. From left: myself, Tamira (translator), Dulmaa (long song singer), Erdene-Ochir (cultural center director)

song, but her age is threatening the loss of this legacy. In the same trip, the local school principal asked me to stay and teach music to her students. She is looking for a music teacher to formally train her students, yet Dulmaa cannot find a student. The disparity between formalized and natural traditional music was evident in every

interview. Today, the common singer in the countryside does not consider himself a musician. Musician is a title reserved for those who have received formal training or have developed their natural talent. There is much pride in local natural talent, and in Övörkhongai, participants were quick to claim locally well-known long song singers or musicians from that area that were now nationally known. Those who have developed their natural talent on their own receive the most

respect, but even these are usually among the elderly who grew up in a system of moving from their homes as children to travel and perform in concerts or competitions sponsored by the government. Most herders with natural talent do not have the option of leaving their homes to pursue training, whether it be through the competition circuit or music school setting. Among the professional singers heard through the radio and TV, the ones most loved are those who have a countryside background or identity. These famous musicians are seen as having talent produced by the countryside even if they received formal training in the city and currently live there. Even with the adaptation of socialist forms, the significance of natural talent has remained. It is not the training that makes someone good. Training is for those that are already recognized as having natural talent and have the ability to receive that training.

Negotiating Through Instruments

Traditional instruments, in particular, are a strong symbol of rural identity. Instrumental musicians are most commonly trained in the cities, but the instruments themselves, such as the *shudraga*, *yoochin*, *yagta*, or *huuchir*, still hold an identity of the countryside without actually being commonly found there. The subject of traditional instruments brings up an interesting dichotomy. In the conversation, a participant will say that traditional instruments are part of countryside music and represent countryside life (particularly the *morin huur*) but that he never sees or hears one except on television or radio. While most music making occurs as singing without instruments, it is said instruments can be found in concerts or at special events (making them markers for a special place and time). Instruments are most often remembered in childhood. Childhood is where one would learn to play from a parent by listening and repeating if given the opportunity.

Instruments are also said to have a close connection with nature. They are inspired by nature, and they influence the natural elements. They are in a sense a medium between man and nature (often in connection with the spiritual world) and are welcomed when they are available as they are said to bring good luck.

The perception of declination in the quality of nature and the countryside life mentioned earlier affects instruments as well. While many participants said they knew local players, they stated that instruments and the variety of them were becoming rare and not seen as much as in the past. Even so, the participants recognize them, judge their quality, and revere them. Ultimately, instruments and specifically the *morin huur* have a very close connection with identity. Symbolic in nature, instruments physically carry symbols as well as mentally imply them.⁷

Negotiating Identity and Change

I often heard that countryside life is simple compared to “variety” in the city. This does not seem to be seen as a negative trait by most of the countryside Mongolians. For many of the participants, it came across as a proud symbol of identity. When describing music culture, the simpler it was the better. What is valued are known song forms, familiar melodies, easy to understand lyrics, simple arrangement in instrumentation, easy to reproduce, and familiar topics about cherished ideals (mothers, parents, animals, homeland, love).⁸ Some participants, particularly in the field of education, find the simplicity of the music culture a hindrance to progress. They struggle to negotiate the two worlds in their own lives and work, even while saying that the countryside music easily touches their heart the most. In reality, the music scene

⁷ See Peter Marsh’s work, “Moving the World Through Two Strings” (2002), for an in depth view of the cultural change in tradition and symbolism associated with the *morin huur* throughout the 20th century.

⁸ Simplicity in this context is from an emic perspective. These are musical devices that are simple and easy to understand for a Mongolian, not necessarily a foreigner.

is not as simple as it is described. Variations, experimentations, and new ideas automatically emerge in the music scene as musicians are exposed to and embrace urban life and foreign influence. This, also, is not viewed as negative but just different by most. Many participants enjoyed a combination of folk genres and newly composed songs. The disconnect happens when the “truth” of the song is veiled by difficult rhythms, unclear words, and unfamiliar topics. It then becomes irrelevant for they cannot understand the meaning, it is not practical for the countryside life, and it does not *reflect* that lifestyle. According to participants, it holds less truth. One mother describes how she loves the *true* stories of folk song, but in hip hop, they are speaking too fast for her to understand. It does not have the power to convey a clear message to her. When another herder was asked why he sang the *ardyn duu* while riding, he jokingly responded that he could not get the hip-hop’s rhythm to match his horse!

In the middle of all of this is the Cultural Center Director, a government employee stationed in province centers as an advocate of Art and Culture. Cultural Center Directors are the mediators of sedentary and nomadic music cultures. Originally appointed to disseminate and educate according to the socialist agenda, they have always negotiated change. In the Socialist era, “[p]erformances within the local theater looked both to the steppe and to Ulaanbaatar, which controlled forms of artistic expression. Having been trained in the capital, the theater's artistic director, drawing on the traditions of the area, created a synthesis of the styles of different groups there" (Pegg 2001, 275). In many ways they still perform this role without the propaganda attached. The Cultural Center Director has a desire to preserve tradition and a desire to see education. They organize professional concerts which honor tradition and nomadic identity. They solidify the gap between educated performance contexts which can only occur in sedentary venues and informal music making which can happen anywhere. They stay flexible, offering the

new as well as the old. And, they seek the young and talented for training and competitions. While these cultural leaders can feel caught between the urban “nationalized” and rural nomadic music cultures, they work to make both traditions more relevant to the community by combining the new and the old (Marsh 2002, 256-8). They have a job supported by sedentary culture that serves nomads.

The new and the old traditions often polarize generations, but I honestly did not witness a major difference between the likes and dislikes of the older and younger Mongols. Every family was different. A newly married couple enjoyed hip hop and dancing. A small boy enjoyed *ardyn duu*. An elderly woman was open to all kinds of styles. It would be safe to say that the oldest generation enjoyed the most traditional styles, while the middle generation enjoyed a mix of traditional and newly written songs, and some of the youngest enjoyed hip hop. But quintessential traditional music had an important place for all of them, if not for personal taste, then for identity. What I did observe was a lack of consistent informal music education between the elderly and the young. With such easy access to radio or television, the young are perhaps less reliant on this traditional mode of music education.

Radio and television are strong influences on today's nomads. Without access to print media and the long distances from urban centers, radio and television becomes a main conduit of information. Ninety percent of Mongolians have access to radio programming of some kind. Although television is becoming more popular, it is not as cost friendly for low-income herders. There are State owned stations such Mongolian Central Radio and Mongolteleviz that broadcast nationally, but most radio and television stations broadcast on a local level in the urban centers. However, there is a small growing presence of local private stations broadcasting across their respective provinces as well. According to Distelhorst for *Radio World*, “rural community radio

stations are gaining a reputation for being independent sources of community, national and international news” (2006). These smaller stations rely heavily on music programs because of the low cost of production. As more funding becomes available they are able to produce scheduled weekly programs that become a linker for the local nomadic community. In one report, a Kazak woman in Bayan Ulgii province relies on a daily hour long program with news, music, and discussion from the local province capital. As an ethnic minority, this hour is especially important as it is the only broadcast given in her local language. For her, this program once a day connects her to her surrounding community as she learns, for example, the recent births and deaths of individuals in her area. In the Gobi, the Gobi Wave station in Dalanzadgad broadcasts daily to 16,000 people in the province capital area. However, three times a week, they are able to use a government transmitter that reaches most of the Gobi dessert as an independent source of international, national, and local news including greetings from herders to their families.⁹

Charlie Mayer, a senior producer for NPR’s *All*



Fig. 14. Makeshift radio antenna.

Things Considered, has been an advocate for the rural community stations in Mongolia. From his time there, he makes the observation, “With no telephones, no Internet, and no transportation infrastructure to speak of, radio is community in many parts of rural Mongolia” (Mayer 2005).

⁹ For these and other accounts of Mongolian media, see the following online sources:

- a. www.swarthmore.edu/bulletin/index.php?id=500
- b. www.ub-mongolia.mn/facts-for-the-visitors/media-journalism-mongolia
- c. www.pressreference.com/Ma-No/Mongolia.html
- d. www.eurasianet.org/resource/mongolia/links/media.shtml

In the central regions I visited, the primary mode of informal music consumption happens through radio. The radio is turned on in the mornings to start the day and is tuned into programs of interest to the family members throughout the day as a backdrop to daily activities. When asked what they listen to on the radio, a common response was, "Whatever it is playing!" Since the choices are limited in these remote regions, the radio stations have the power of deciding what media will be most consumed and, therefore, become a gateway for processing information. The stations become a primary source for new songs and artists as well as a continuation of what is deemed popular by the program developers. Live concerts are hard to come by, so countryside people are given access to their music heroes through concerts on television and radio. This is where they learn new songs and identify with the old. The number one source of music for my participants was the radio and television. In this way, the television and the radio have become major mediators of music culture in rural Mongolia.

Negotiating Spirituality

"Religion is a fundamental motivating influence in the life of nomads - in their culture and morality" (Phillips 2001, 36). In the everyday world of the Mongolian countryside, spirituality is a world of negotiation between heaven (the sky), earth (the land), and everything that resides in-between. Offerings are given, libations are made, and rituals are performed to appease the local spirits and bring good luck. When at the mercy of nature (and the spirits that reside there), these appeasements must be made to ensure survival. The fervency and regularity of these acts seem to vary from family to family. For most, it seems a matter of maintenance. Whether or not other possibilities of spiritual or physical explanation are available, it is best to negotiate with the spirits to the extent necessary for personal assurance. There are a few who feel that these negotiations are not needed, but for many it is a strong guiding force. In my



Fig. 15. Example of elaborate Buddhist shrine.

observations of central Mongolia, I saw one in four families who had elaborate shrines and/or performed ritual offerings to the Buddhist idols or local deities, one in four families who had only family pictures and their nicest things where the shrine would go, and the rest were somewhere in between with a mixture of Buddhist statues, pictures

of Genghis Khan, and family memorabilia. Those with the most elaborate shrines were usually in small town settings, with the most elaborate personal shrine being in a town where a Buddhist temple is located. Herders outside of the rural towns usually had the mixture.

According to Phillips:

The Mongols . . . understand the universe as an integral system, supervised by *tenger*, or Heaven, in an overall harmony. Each creature, including human beings, has the right to take what it needs to exist, but not to abuse or waste resources. In the case of domestic animals, human beings must guide them, so that harmony is maintained. The Mongols believe that nature suffers if they mismanage their herds. All natural objects are believed to have their spiritual 'owners,' which defend their part of nature by afflicting the offending humans. Heaven is like a *ger* (tent) roof that opens to send sunshine, rain, or disasters. When this happens, a nomad may pray with appropriate ritual for benefits. (Phillips 2001, 36-37)

It is into this relationship with the spiritual world that music enters as a form of communication and mediation between the two. Reminiscent of the way herders spoke to me about the natural origins music and folk talent, Pegg describes spirituality in the countryside as a relationship between man and nature exemplified in musical performance:

Contemporary folk-religious practices are dialogic and mutually influencing reciprocal exchanges between human beings, nature-spirits, and gods of the universe, achieved by mimesis in performance. Myths link to spirits the origins of songs, music, instruments, and the ability to play. Instruments and instrumental sounds are believed to

have magical properties, created by traditions of instrument making. Topographical images are mapped in contours of melodies and dances; the body used to produce sounds and shapes in imitation of the environment. Such mimesis is an integral aspect of a sociospiritual process of exchange. Reciprocity is necessary, for, whether it is vocal reproduction of sounds heard in nature or using materials from nature in order to produce those sounds, something has been given that must be returned. Having returned the gift in performance, there is an expectation that the relationship of exchange will continue: the forces of nature will grant the favors asked of them, whether it be giving animals in the hunt or exorcising evil spirits from the body or home. (Pegg 2001. 97)

I used the term maintenance in the beginning of this section as a reference to how much decisions are made in response to superstition or negotiating luck. Many things are said to bring good luck or bad luck. Music is one of those vehicles of good luck. Speech about negative things such as hardship can be seen as a vehicle for bad luck. When the *morin huur* is played, the bad spirits will leave. When music making happens in the home for a wedding or holiday, good luck will be the result. It is not based on the professionalism of the playing or even the song selection, but merely that it happens. Marsh, for example, was asked to play at a New Year celebration in the apartment of urban Mongols even though he did not have great technical skill. The sound of the *morin huur* itself was enough to solidify a sense of protection and well being (Marsh 2002, 216-217). Good luck is always associated with positive emotions and positive emotions are always the number one result of music making (from radio listening to the *nair*).

Within each family, individual members prescribed to spiritual belief systems in varying degrees of intensity. It was not uncommon to have two spouses with drastically different levels of sincerity on the subject, one saying of the other, “He doesn’t really believe these things like I do,” or “They believe very strongly but I don’t really know.” However, everyone seemed to hope that music making would secure them good luck at least by making them feel better, if not more.

Throughout discourse, when asked for more detail, the subject of spirituality easily turned to vague non-responsive and noncommittal answers making it difficult to ascertain the deeper spiritual meanings and associations attached to music. When speaking in musical terms, most participants said they knew there were songs about spiritual things but that they either did not know them or they were not common. When most of the literature has said that religious thought is prominent in the countryside, I have to question the simplicity of these answers and entertain other possibilities. Possibilities could include my role in and influence on the situation as an outsider, including inaccurate representation in the translation process (both directions), unseen barriers of cross cultural communication, or unknown rules of discourse (i.e. what you can and cannot talk about). Indeed other researchers have run into similar situations in the Mongol context as well (Bruun 2006; Levin 2006).

Whatever the reason, it is made obvious that the deeper complex of music and spirituality is a topic for further research. Thus far, I have only scratched the surface of discourse about spirituality in the Mongolian countryside. There are many factors affecting how a participant will talk about spiritual things as well as (and sometimes in contrast to) how spiritual belief systems are actually worked out in daily activities. Although it became impossible for me to gain a clear understanding without more time in the field, what I did find was that spirituality is evident. While I observed actions that had direct ties with spiritual belief systems, the mechanics of this spiritual system did not have a natural place in surface level communication. Therefore, it will take additional research with a much narrower focus to investigate the true extent of how much the spiritual complex is integrated within the music culture.

CHAPTER V

NOMADIC IDENTITY

The current study began with the broader purpose of exploring common elements of music culture among nomadic peoples in general. Making comparisons across cultural divides can be a tricky business. Generalizations can be reached too quickly from evidence that is incomplete and etic¹⁰ attempts at understanding emic¹¹ complexes. Knowing this is somewhat inevitable in the current project as I am a cultural “outsider” and have limited time with participants, I am attempting a narrow focus of identity formation grounded in emic perspectives. In the following section, I will cross-examine my personal study in central Mongolia with studies from other scholars offering a continuum of examples from around the globe. In most cases, the comparisons are short and direct. Again this is intentional so as not drift into speech about ideas that have no real basis on the actual material.

A lifestyle of nomadism ties particular people groups together into a common pool even though they may live across the planet from one another. There are several common characteristics. While the following characteristics take on different cultural forms in each people group, the deeper meanings underlying them are often the same. Phillips summarizes them in the following way¹²:

- A nomadic people is
1. a social group conscious of its own distinct identity,
 2. whose social structure, way of life and values are formed by a method of subsistence
 3. that involves the whole or part of them traveling systematically....
 4. They travel in order to bring their main asset
 - a) Livestock in the case of the pastoralists...

¹⁰ Etic refers to an understanding of structure as unrelated raw data.

¹¹ Emic refers to an understanding of structure as interrelated parts.

¹² A similar list based on Arab nomads can be found in Lancaster and Lancaster (1998). The characteristics listed focus more on the methods of subsistence rather than the generalized cultural implications provided by Phillips (2001).

- b) Skills...in the case of the peripatetics
- 5. to benefit from marginal renewable resources....
- 6. Such a society is usually organized on tribal lines,
 - a) some with but most without, strong central leadership,
 - b) all living and working as decentralized groups as families, extended families or clans according to the demands of 4 and 5, above.
- 7. Their goal by this lifestyle is to maintain their distinctive identity and values, including a measure of self-sufficiency. (Phillips 2001, 13-14)

The concept of identity is the overarching element. If a nomad's lifestyle is the preferred one, then it is vital to his existence that he remain distinct from the sedentary "other". It is the element of unique identity that helps him to continue his chosen way. This identity is shaped by his way of life and in turn perpetuates it as the right course. As Phillips explains, there are various reasons why nomadism exists in these cultures:

- 1. It is the preferred means of subsistence;
- 2. It maintains ethnic-cultural independence;
- 3. It resists outside interference;
- 4. It is a way to avoid war or ethnic hostility;
- 5. It is the only lifestyle known and compatible with their view of themselves;
- 6. No one area provides resources all year round. (Phillips 2001, 10)

Each of these motivations encourages a distinct identity. Identity formation is often a deeper meaning underlying various cultural forms. For the nomad whose existence involves change and flexibility, identity is knowing *who* you are in relation to *where* you are and *who* you are related to. It is not to say that similar identity formations do not exist in non-nomadic cultures. They do. But it *is* saying that for a nomad, identity issues are particularly important as an integral part of negotiating their existence. This can be seen partly in the amount of the participants' verbal discourse on the subject in the arena of music. Music offers a cultural form that can contribute to the continuation of a distinct identity across time, space, and change.

The herders of Central Mongolia are particularly proud of their way of life. Countryside people have a unique identity from urban Mongols in their mind. They are proud of their ability



Fig. 16. Nomad with his herd.

to live there and proud of the things that come from the land. “This is the *real* herder’s life” was a common phrase. In my observation, there is a distinction between the verbal discourse of an ideal life and the reality of the hardships and negotiations they face. But it is in those moments of communal sharing and singing that things are put back in order. During a celebration, ‘things are as they should be.’¹³ Regardless of the variances of details, one overarching response that was in the discourse of every participant was the identity of countryside people as a music loving and music making group who connect on a heart level with song of the countryside. It is hard to say what is real and what is imagined, as every family had a slightly different experience. But whether the instruments or musicians actually exist in a given context or they exist in verbal description only, traditional music originates from the countryside, is a medium of social negotiation with people and nature, and sets things in order. It *is* who they are. The *morin huur* is their instrument and the *ardyn duu* is their anthem (even if they rarely see a *morin huur* performed live or personally prefer written songs over the national song.)

In comparison, threads of identity formation were found in every article of nomadic culture I reviewed and many were connected to music performance. When reading through

¹³ The perspective of music “putting things in order” may be connected to spiritual beliefs involving music as a source of good luck and a way to negotiate with the spiritual realm. Further research is needed to confirm.

literature on peripatetic people groups, music is often mentioned, if only in fragments, as a significant element of peripatetic culture. Peripatetic people groups often include the instrument makers and travelling musicians of the society. For example, among their other modes of subsistence, the Inadan of Mali and Niger are minstrels; the Ghorbati of Iran are drum makers; the Kangkali are itinerant musicians (Philips 2001). “In some countries such as Iraq, donkey and camel caravans of Gypsy entertainers still move about the country featuring dancers, fortune-tellers, musicians, jugglers and acrobats” (Williams 2000, 16). While the articles do not directly tie these music connections to identity formation, I propose the possibility that it is in this context of music and music making that the distinct identities they desire are formed. In her article on the similarities of peripatetic peoples, Gmelch describes the significance many groups place on times of communal gathering as an opportunity to “demonstrate and reinforce a common identity” (Gmelch 1986, 318). Specific to the element of music making among Andalusian Gitanos, she points out, “There is an emotional intensity and fervor to the assemblies and social interaction I have described that is not always apparent in the literature on these groups, although numerous authors have described aspects of it: the emotionality and total absorption of *buleria* performances (142) and of the flamenco and ‘deep song’ performed by Andalusian Gitanos . . .” (Gmelch 1986, 319). This seems similar to the descriptions of the *nair* (life-cycle or holiday celebration) I received in central Mongolia where the quality of music is a reflection of the quality of the event. Music making will last until the guests are ready to go home, and the particularly memorable events are those that involve singing long into the night.

Another common element that surfaces in nomadic studies is the idea of place-making. Place-making can become an important part of identity for nomads because their worldview can be different from sedentary peoples. A sedentary thinker exists in one place with the world

moving about him. An itinerant thinker moves with the world on a journey between one place and another. This can be taken literally as pastoralists who move on a seasonal basis or mentally for semi-nomadic peoples who have physically settled but still hold a nomadic worldview. It is in this context that having and defining a place to belong becomes a significant issue. The difference is that this place of belonging has more to do with kinship and community in connection *with* the land than the land itself. Solomon introduces his article on the Chayantaka of Bolivia¹⁴ with an overview of scholars' views of the connections between music, place, and identity. He writes:

[M]usical performance serves as a practice for place-making. This follows the understanding that music does not simply 'reflect' pre-existing cultural structure, but rather musical performance is a social activity through which culture is created, negotiated, and performed (Seeger 1987). The presentational aspect of much musical performance makes it particularly useful for the public construction of identities; musical performance events, as bounded entities in time, serve to focus group consciousness on the issues they raise, including relationships between selves and places. (Solomon 2000, 257)

For the Chayantaka, place based identities are embodied in the songs of the Carnival where bands of young musicians travel to different communities for performance and social interaction. Songs are embedded with community names that have powerful associations with the land and the people who live there. "[T]o sing the community landscape descriptions in the nicknames . . . is to call the social body of the community into being, embodied not just in the people themselves, but in the landscape of the settlement and surrounding land: to be from Irupta is to *be* the grassy plain; to be from Muramaya is to *be* that place where the river passes by the weeping willow tree" (Solomon 2000, 272). In central Mongolia, I spoke with Dulmaa, the matriarch of a herding family and nationally known singer of Long Song. It is not enough to say that she sings about a powerful horse or a high flying eagle. When describing to me her feelings

¹⁴ The Chayantaka subsist on a combination of pastoralism and agriculture.

when singing, she explains that she must become like the horse or bird so that she is the one galloping across the plain or soaring the sky. Other Mongols spoke of their childhoods and the emotions connected with them as if hearing traditional songs invoked a moment in time (and a collective identity) that was still living when the music played. In Tuva, just north of Mongolia, a musician relates, “Music makes listeners remember their own feelings – of childhood and family, and of being in a particular place. For example, when I played that piece, I was creating an image of a summer pasturing area where I’d herded as a child, and I put myself there. . . . The point is not simply to bring back memories, but actually to travel back to that place and experience it again so that it comes alive” (Levin 2006, 33).

Urban Mongols affectionately talked of the countryside as a place of childhood and good memories. I personally witnessed their countenance change from business as usual to one of freedom and joy as they left the gray cities for wide open spaces. The radio was switched from urban pop to national songs. It was an atmosphere of “going home.” Urban participants also described the importance traditional songs play to Mongols living in other areas of the world. The *urtyn duu* becomes the symbol of home and a longing to be there. Solomon describes a similar scenario for his Chayantaka friend:

My companion’s pride and affection for the landscape of his community was typical of the way people talked about their places. . . . [T]he sight of home, a place that embodied years of accumulated experiences, aroused intense emotion in him. The plain’s greenness signaled the presence of life – not just the growing plants, but the people that planted them. The beauty of the place evoked the complex of social relationships that sustained the community there. (Solomon 2000, 273)

On one occasion, I stopped to talk with a herder who was out on the steppe with his animals in Bulgan province. When asked to sing his favorite song, he described his own countryside through the song lyrics, later saying that he was from another province 1200 km away. He missed home and could remember it by singing. It is important to note that remembering is more

than a nostalgic high of a good time. For nomads, a physical place can represent the community that inhabits it and the events that take place there, past and present; for kinship circles and their shared experiences provide explicit boundaries of identity.

In Australia, the Aboriginal country-western song has replaced most secular indigenous songs. Although the cultural form has changed, the deeper meanings of identity formation remain. Aboriginal rock/country songs retain place-based identity as they focus on the issues of land, their love for it, and the history surrounding it often including the struggle to keep it (Gibson and Dunbar-Hall 2000).

The use of named places and the concept of place in Aboriginal rock songs can be seen as a contemporary expression of Aboriginal relationships to land, one of the defining factors of Aboriginal identity. This contemporary song topic mirrors one found in traditional music, and descriptions of the role of song in the expression of land ownership, and therefore of group and individual identity, appear regularly in the literature on Aboriginal traditional cultures. (Gibson and Dunbar-Hall 2000, 50)

Again, the identity associated with the land includes the community, past and present.

Naming a site is metonymically¹⁵ naming related sites and the beings associated with them.... The recitation of the names of beings and place names in song in the language/s associated with a site is a significant role of Aboriginal song; . . . In these ways the physical world is combined with the spiritual world, and the past with the present, to present group and individual identity in a symbiotic relationship. (Gibson and Dunbar-Hall 2000, 51-52)

As in other examples I've given, Gibson explains that the singing of place brings to the present a living creation of past events and solidifies the collective identity of the Aboriginal experience. A comparison can be made with the Public Song of Mongolia, a contemporary song of known origin with a combination of western pop rhythms and instrumentation integrated with Mongolian style melodies and traditional instruments. The lyrics, melodies, and instrumentation

¹⁵ Metonymy is a figure of speech in which one word or phrase is substituted for another with which it is closely associated, as in the use of *Washington* for *the United States government* or of *the sword* for *military power* (Dictionary.com Unabridged).

retain the themes of the countryside and therefore its identity. The song form was a popular choice in the rural areas I visited.

A final example of place-based identity is the Kazakhs of Western Mongolia. Although they are geographically found within the borders of Outer Mongolia, they are considered a distinct people group by Mongols and Kazakhs alike. Similar to the symbolic role of the *morin huur* in central Mongolia, the *dombra* embodies local identity by the meanings attached to it through performance and physical craftsmanship. Post explains:

[T]he instrument and its music carry historical, geographic and social memories that encompass their local landscape. They mark their place in Mongolia with tunes and songs that reinforce these links to locality, using repertoires, playing styles and stories associated with their tunes and lyrics connected to their songs. This situates musicians and audience members – helping them to make imagined connections. . . .

Performers construct scenes with their music – and in telling and retelling their stories, they emplace themselves and their community of listeners in the Mongolian landscape. They engage and re-engage in a relationship with place, inscribing their identities through family and community memories and shared practices. (Post 2007, 55, 57)

Similar to participant response in central Mongolia, the Kazakhs express with pride the simplicity of their music compared to Kazakhstan. Yet like the other examples listed, it is not simple at all. Rather, it is a complex pattern of identity enacted through song and its social context that is necessary for maintaining a distinct, separate, view of themselves. For all of these groups, social solidarity and an independent identity are a defining factor expressed through music.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

So what makes a nomad a nomad? Common characteristics are: the need to travel based on a mode of existence dependent on animals, personal skills, or natural resources; a flexibility to respond to circumstances that are defined not by what you own but what relationship you are in with nature, kinship, and country; and an independent identity. Any of these traits alone do not make a nomad a nomad. But the combination of them does. However, from people group to people group, these characteristics vary in intensity and in the way that they are employed. In turn, identifying global similarities between them becomes a complex process. Perhaps the better question is why they are employed. Salzman (2002) is one author who attempts to address the complexity of comparisons between nomadic groups and seeks to find a deeper common connection between them. He proposes that underlying the various traits of nomads is a strategy of existence that allows for production and defense. In my observation of Mongolia, nomadism is a way of finding one's place in society, however shifting that place may be. And, in light of Salzman's definition, it is a strategy that permeates through to the very details of a Mongolian nomad's daily life. To reflect this, I have consistently used the term 'negotiating' as a way to describe the nomads shifting relationship with the world around him as reflected through music.

How is a nomadic strategy reflected and informed by music? In Mongolia, many special performances are seasonal and based on events related to changes in weather (ex. moving a camp), lunar cycles (ex. New Year holiday), and labor (ex. the first milking). Furthermore, a majority of musical performances are found within the context of negotiating relationships with kin, animals, the spirit realm, and the State. In the *nair*, for example, kin are given a chance to interact and solidify their relationships as they go through the rituals of the celebration. The

young and the old, the parent and the child, the man and the woman, all find their respected place in the social organization of the group as each is given the opportunity to sing. Relationships are negotiated with animals as phrases and melodies are sung to placate, influence, and imitate them. Relationships with the spirit realm are negotiated through rituals of performance with the hopes of bringing a good fortune, good feelings, and dispelling any negative spirit or influence. Relationships with the State are negotiated through song lyrics that change depending on the political climate, the performance of anthems at special events, and through concerts and competitions organized through the cultural centers. Even when looking at the subjects of the most popular songs, the topics of parents, animals, love, and homeland are the most consistently performed lyrics. All of these music events further the goal of establishing truth, bringing order, and lessening tension in the mind of the nomad. These are necessary as strategic ways of ensuring a prosperous existence.

The next step in continuing the exploration of music as a nomadic strategy is for the research to go deeper and broader in scope. The details of *informal* as well as formal music-making events should be explored in *contemporary* Mongolia with more precise examination of the similarities and differences between the different ethnic groups. The scope can then be broadened to compare the findings with other groups in the same geographical region who employ a nomadic lifestyle such as the Tuvans and other ethnic groups in Russia, the Eurasian groups west of Mongolia, and the ethnic minorities in Northern China. As a parallel activity, a compilation of music studies on other continents (as well as ongoing studies seeking to define and delineate nomadology as a whole) should be made and brought into the circle of investigation. If Salzman's definition of nomadism as a strategy rings true as research continues to develop, it will prove difficult to create any one list of defining musical traits on a global

scale; however, the focus can change to examine *why* the musical processes of nomads are employed even if those employments are through an endless variety of musical traits.

I began this study with a desire to encourage thoughtfully contextualized music within nomadic communities. With little background research available on the topic, I have focused on central Mongolia as a case study and sought to establish contemporary rural perspectives on music in the countryside. Exploring rural nomadic perspective can give a solid platform for encouraging relevant ethnic music that can easily intersect with the lives of Mongolian nomads bringing with it the opportunity for discipleship. One successful model I've seen is a Mongolian



Fig. 17. Dugermāa (left) performing original composition.

pastor's use of music as a natural way of sharing with rural Mongols. Dugermāa is an urbanized, educated, respected Mongolian pastor in Ulaanbaatar. He is also well known as a performer and composer of traditional music. When he travels in the countryside, Dugermāa carries with him a *morin huur*. It is natural for a Mongolian to stop at a

stranger's *ger* for a rest and a visit before continuing his journey. In this context, news and information are exchanged over milk tea. Dugermāa asks if the family would like to hear the *morin huur* played for them. As the presence of a *morin huur* in your home brings good luck, he receives an eager agreement. Intermittently, during natural breaks in conversation, Dugermāa plays a variety of songs ranging from folk songs to urban worship songs to his own compositions (scriptural lyrics set to a folk style). The very presence of his music-making opens the doors for

a natural context of communal sharing as the conversations lead to issues of life and Dugermāa's personal testimony. In this way, Dugermāa has not replaced countryside culture with a foreign form of sharing, but he has integrated his faith into his music performance as a fully acceptable and expected form of sharing truth for the Mongolian nomad. Dugermāa's background gives prestige to the event, and the traditional rural context of sharing through a music that is recognizable to the nomad's ear gives weight to his words.

In Summary

During the course of the project, the following generalizations have been established:

1. Music is strategic.
 - a. Music is intrinsically linked with society, culture, and worldview. Music provides a means for negotiating a nomad's existence through a form viable and acceptable to his way of life.
 - b. Music is flexible in that it can travel where people cannot.
 - c. Music is oral in that it is a natural form of communication for oral learners.
2. Music is part of the Mongolian nomads' identity as a music loving and music making group who connect on a heart level with songs of the countryside.
 - a. Mongolian nomads have a distinct identity from that of urban Mongols as a people who rely heavily on relationships between kin, nature, and the spiritual realm for a productive life.
 - b. There are strong lines between ethnic identities in Mongolia. A Mongol is not just a Mongol, but a specific kind of Mongol. Ethnic identity is reflected and confirmed by specific musical traits.
 - c. Music making in the countryside solidifies kinship ties, establishes truth, brings order to the spiritual realm, and lessens tension.
3. The quality of music is linked to the quality of environment and communal engagement.
 - a. While radio and television have a major presence in the music culture, there is a different and deeper value place on the communal activity of music performance.

- b. Events involving music performance are a combination of formal (ex. *urtyн duu*) and informal (ex. *ardyn duu*) music making with a value placed on both.
- 4. Music is used to mediate the spiritual world.¹⁶
- 5. Music offers a cultural form that can contribute to the continuation of a distinct identity across time, space, and change.
 - a. The overarching element in all nomadic cultures reviewed is the concept of identity formation through music including concepts of place-making involving kinship and community ties with the land. Identity formation through music is necessary for maintaining a distinct, separate view of themselves.
 - b. For all of these groups, social solidarity and independence is a defining factor expressed through music.
- 6. Music holds an important place in the cohesion of the Mongolian countryside.

In this study, I have proposed that identity formation through musical performance and its social context is one vital part of a nomad's continuing existence. Even though an individual may actually practice little music performance himself, music is still an idealized part of his identity and one component of a strategy for existence. It reflects and informs the essence of who he is as a proud and independent nomad with the ability to negotiate his existence within the changing and sometimes harsh climate in which he lives (physically, spiritually, and politically). For effective witness, it is crucial that we step into this world rather than expecting the nomad to step into ours. One way of doing so is through a nomad's preferred music culture.¹⁷

Thoughtfully contextualized music has the potential to effectively integrate Christ into every aspect of daily life and particularly into the very identity of the nomad himself.¹⁸

¹⁶ For a visual example of music as spiritual and natural mediator, see *The Story of the Weeping Camel* (2003), DVD.

¹⁷ Appendix A contains an overview of current outreach strategies and suggestions for integrating music within them.

¹⁸ For a study of Christ as Nomad, see Phillips (2001).

APPENDIX A

CURRENT MINISTRY STATUS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR CONTEXTUALIZATION IN RURAL MONGOLIA

Current methods of evangelism by Christian Believers in Mongolia run the continuum of traditional church planting strategies with everything from mission stations to vocational and community development ministries and on to a few groups seeking grass roots movements birthed out of the home church model. Ministries are based in one of three cities with small outposts in county centers where herders may occasionally visit for supplies. Although a handful of ministries direct their workers to visit various rural camps at least once a year, outside of these town centers, few opportunities for contact exist. The prominent issues facing growth in the countryside is lack of local leadership, lack of discipleship, syncretism, and spiritual bondage. The circumstances of nomadic life also force another group of issues in traditional models of church planting including lack of fellowship, encouragement, and resources as a Believer may be the only one around for hundreds of kilometers, have no more than one visit a year from a travelling pastor, no resources for discipleship, and no ability to leave the herds to pursue these things in the city.

With all of this in mind, the question that begs to be asked is, “what about the rest of the year?” How can the nomadic believers be encouraged in the months between? How can the church be truly nomadic and not relegated to an urban understanding of place? With limited understanding due to their circumstances, it can be hard for a new believer to stand alone on the freedom he has through Christ when the hardships of life settle in. The natural way, the way known and understood, is the world of negotiations spoken of earlier. How can Christ become the natural and understood source of peace? I have established the importance of a full integration of music within the nomadic culture of the countryside and its role of sustaining,

solidifying, and negotiating relationships within this world. It can, therefore, play a powerful role in discipleship as it continues to hold its natural place in the countryside. *Yet, music was not included as a component of any rural ministry I came in contact with.* One of the ways to recognize a contextualized church is through its expression of faith. Hayward writes:

Western worship patterns, translations of Western hymns and monologic preaching are the standard fare in churches all around the globe. A contextualized Gospel on the other hand requires that worship be performed in a manner that truly excites and elicits adoration, praise, submission and obedience to Almighty God. Contextualized worship, therefore, may have to move outside the confines of a church building, spend more time in singing and dancing than in preaching, incorporate new liturgies or rituals that speak to the needs of a people that evoke prayer times and confessionals and would speak to the deepest needs of the human spirit. (Hayward 1995, 135)

I have included, below, important points to consider when developing music for countryside believers and their families. I personally see this as a vital step for encouraging and sustaining a thriving and self-propagating church of nomads who can connect their own identity with that of their Creator.

Things to consider when developing outreaches for the countryside:

- A. Consider the identity of settled nomads, particularly those living in *ger* districts on the outskirts of the city, as distinct from Mongols who have spent the majority of their lives in the urban context. Although they live in the city, they are still experiencing a transition from a full nomadic to a semi-nomadic strategy of survival. Offer encouragement to them as they negotiate the changes they are experiencing and use music to confirm their identity as a countryside people.
- B. Quality of music is seen as a direct reflection of the quality of the event. They are intrinsically linked as markers for one another. Therefore, to have a successful event in the countryside, consider the inclusion of music-making as a way of involving the participants and giving a deeper credibility to the activity.
- C. Capitalize on the pride of local talent and the desire to learn new songs by creating a natural context for the development of hymnody.
 - a. Encourage the creation of new songs that reflect the life of a countryside Believer rather than prescribing urban worship songs that often originate from an

internationally influenced and Khalkha dominated society. Discover the ways in which new songs are naturally created and learned in the countryside, and consider following suit. This may be through a local competition that encourages new songs for a recording, a seasonal festival for performing the community's expression of faith, or seeking out a local who naturally composes new lyrics already.

- D. New songs should be disseminated in a form that is viable to the nomadic lifestyle. Word of mouth, cassette tapes, and radio are the most common.
 - a. Two possibilities to consider are a greater focus on developing local radio programs for stations in the county centers and the distribution of free cassette tapes players containing strategic compilations of scripture, testimony, and songs from a Christian worldview in musical styles of the countryside. These programs can stand alone or be a supplement to a ministry's existing material.
- E. Encourage the local talent and the community music making event. Having a professional event with professional musicians is not as important as the opportunity for nomads to share a common identity through musical expression.
 - a. Opportunities can include singing during the informal gathering of a home group or during a *nair* celebrating the special occasions within a Believer's life. The natural expectation is that each participant takes the traditional turn of singing their song of choice when the *airag* is passed his way. Even if it is only one Believer in a family of non-Believers, there is an opportunity to share one's faith through song in an acceptable way. In both examples, the locals are the music makers in a way that is comfortable and natural to their usual way of expression.
- F. Offer opportunities for music-making void of urban instruments (ex. keyboard, drums, electric guitar). Give the opportunity for the local talent to come forward.
 - a. If only urban western instruments are suitable for worship songs, then the Gospel is not suited for the countryside. This is simply not true. Consider what instruments are already suitable for countryside life. These are the ones that are already found there, and in many cases this may only be the voice. However, if having no instruments is not an excuse for a music-less *nair* (which would be unheard of), then it is not an excuse for a music-less worship service or home group meeting. Instruments do mark a meeting as a special event, so use them when possible but do not depend on them as necessary.
- G. Have respect for generational differences. Give all generations the opportunity to share musically in ways that are meaningful for them. This already happens naturally in the *nair* context.
- H. Have respect for regional differences. Allow for regional differences to emerge as each ethnic group is encouraged to find its own identity in Christ through song. Some songs may carry an overriding national Mongolian identity that can be appreciated by all regions while others songs may have a distinct flair that speaks of the region in which it

was created. This is a beautiful thing as Believers across the nation can celebrate both their unity and diversity as Mongolian Christians with distinct identities.

- a. Honoring the different ethnic groups within Mongolia's borders may be particularly important considering the history of the socialist era when Khalkha identity was disseminated from the major urban areas as the highest cultural form. It is hoped that the urban church will not repeat this "one size fits all" approach.
 - b. Christian radio stations can consider developing regional programs which take this into consideration. Partnerships with local ministries and rural radio stations can be maximized to develop intentional programming for all ethnic groups in Mongolia.
 - i. Currently, Wind FM 104.5 and Eagle TV are the two media companies offering a Christian perspective in its programming. Both have gained favor with the government and hold a high reputation for quality programming. Although broadcasts are mainly limited to the Ulaanbaatar area, Wind FM's programs are also broadcast by the Far East Broadcasting Company in Saipain (with the potential of reaching the rural areas of Outer and Inner Mongolia), and Eagle TV has developed a partnership with a local station in Erdenet as well as a video based Bible-telling strategy taken by teams to the countryside.¹⁹
- I. Recognize the herder's limitations and meet them where they're at. They are often unable to leave their herds to pursue meetings, concerts, or training seminars (i.e. seminars for religion or music). The Gospel must come to them and be practical for discipleship within the context of the *ail* (herding camps).
 - J. For Mongolian leaders, evaluate the functions of music within the culture and seek to include these in your programs in the same ways.
 - K. Change is accepted during times of mutual sharing in the natural context of the home. It is in this context that a new idea can be expressed and evaluated by everyone. Having an individual opinion is acceptable. Changes are absorbed through the natural mode of sharing conversation, drink, and music. This is a good place to start.
 - L. Oral communication strategies should be considered. Although Mongolia has a reportedly high literacy rate, it is still an oral culture with oral communication being the preferred method. Mongols have a strong capacity to memorize songs and they learn by listening, conversing, and interacting. Consider incorporating songs and singing into your program as an aid for learning new truths.
 - M. When distributing songs, determine what media is most practical: word of mouth, radio, and cassette are the most common. There is also a possibility of a MP3 program where

¹⁹ For more on these ministries, see the following online sources:

- a. Eagle TV – "<http://across.co.nz/MongoliaChristianTV.html>" or "<http://thomasterry.com>"
- b. Wind FM – "<http://wind.reuhkala.com/index.php>"

MP3 players can be preprogrammed with intentional song, scripture and testimony choices. These can be distributed to herders who can then listen during the long hours while they are alone with their herds.

- N. Recognize the importance of the local Cultural Center Director. He is the one that negotiates change in the rural music culture with himself being a representation of tradition and advancement. With his support, he may be able to help spread, promote, and legitimize new music. He is the only full time “artist” in the community.
- O. The relationship that is built and the kinship that is confirmed while singing is important. Fellowship is a strong need in the countryside. Help to solidify and celebrate this *new* family of God’s children through communal music making.
- P. Competitions are a natural mode of interaction among herders. This may be a good way to encourage rural talent and songwriting as well as dissemination.
- Q. Understandable song lyrics carry the weight of conveying truth. This makes a good vehicle for communicating scripture. The subjects of these songs can naturally lead to discussions within the participating group.
 - a. It is not so much THE song you’re playing/singing but that you ARE playing/singing at all (serving the functions of relationship, identity, social process of sharing, and bringing good luck). Therefore, consider also the possibility of choosing already known songs (even those that are not specifically Christian such as *ardyn duu*) and using the lyrics as a way to start discussion.
- R. Consider an integration of styles. Herders have individual tastes and many enjoy both traditional and modern styles. There is a place for both in the countryside. The most popular song styles are *ardyn duu* (folk song) *zohioliin duu* (written song), and *niitin duu* (public song). The popularity of *urtyn duu* (long song) is regional. Consider a combination of these song types as templates for song selection or birthing new songs.
- S. Possible contexts for performance – songs while working, singing with children, sharing *airag*, celebrating *nair*, and for concerts or special performances.
 - a. The herder is not a concert performer, but he will sing a solo in a *nair*. While extremely shy in other contexts, the *nair* is where it is safe to share musically.
 - b. Sharing musically involves both solos and group singing often in the same song using a refrain.
- T. Music making is already a natural mode of spiritual negotiation in the culture. While this makes it conducive for offering praise to God, one should also be watchful of its use as a manipulation of God rather than a response to Him. Investigate further the connection of peace and “good feelings” with luck and religious thought. This information is important for correcting old thinking patterns and avoiding syncretism.

- U. Consider “Chronological Storytelling” as a way of sharing the entire context of the Bible in an oral fashion. Considering the nomadic strategy of negotiating existence as proposed in this paper, it may be important to invest in a long term witness of sharing the whole story of the Gospel rather than excerpts of Scripture pointing to moral issues. Focusing only on the moral issues may create ritualistic behaviors that a nomad may feel free to follow or discard as they are deemed useful at the time rather than encouraging a morality that is in response to a deeper understanding of the Gospel.
- V. Musicians have a special opportunity for witness because of the specialty of their trade and the honor it holds within the natural context of sharing relationship. Take advantage of this position by offering your gifts and talents to the countryside people.
- W. It is particularly important for Mongolians believers, rather than foreigners, to be the facilitators in these moments of sharing as this directly affects the level of sincerity and openness to new ideas among those present.

APPENDIX B

PEOPLES RELATED BY MONGOLIAN CULTURE
(Joshua Project 2008)

<u>PEOPLE NAMES</u>	<u>PRIMARY RELIGION</u>	<u>TOTAL POPULATION</u>	<u># OF COUNTRIES</u>	<u>PERCENT UNREACHED</u>
Bayad	Non-Religious	55,275	1	100
Bogol	Ethnic Religions	1,285	1	100
Bonan	Islam	11,185	1	100
Bonan, Tongren	Buddhism	6,591	1	100
Buriat, Chinese	Buddhism	152,762	1	100
Buriat, Mongolia	Buddhism	71,410	1	100
Buriat, Russian	Buddhism	440,872	4	75
Dariganga	Buddhism	44,747	1	100
Darkhad	Ethnic Religions	21,423	1	100
Daur	Ethnic Religions	179,388	1	100
Daur, Western	Ethnic Religions	6,785	1	100
Dongxiang	Islam	577,741	1	100
Durbet	Ethnic Religions	76,332	1	100
Dzakhchin, Zahchin	Non-Religious	34,244	1	100
Kalmyk-Oirat	Buddhism	539,910	8	87.5
Katso	Ethnic Religions	7,556	1	100
Mongol, Alxa	Islam	26,214	1	100
Mongol, Khalka	Buddhism	1,841,695	6	100
Mongol, Khamnigan	Ethnic Religions	2,364	1	100
Mongol, Sichuan	Buddhism	32,896	1	100
Mongol, Yunnan	Ethnic Religions	8,962	1	0
Mongolian, Peripheral	Buddhism	7,021,747	7	100
Mongour	Buddhism	46,395	1	100
Olot	Ethnic Religions	2,878	1	100
Sogwo Arig	Buddhism	44,718	1	100
Tu	Buddhism	235,414	1	100
Tusa	Ethnic Religions	38,036	1	100

PEOPLES RELATED BY CULTURE WITHIN OUTER MONGOLIA
(Joshua Project 2008)

<u>PEOPLE NAMES</u>	<u>PRIMARY RELIGION</u>	<u>POPULATION</u>	<u>PRIMARY LANGUAGE</u>
Bayad	Non-Religious	55,275	Kalmyk-Oirat
Buriat, Mongolia	Buddhism	71,410	Buriat, Mongolia
Dariganga	Buddhism	44,747	Mongolian, Halh
Darkhad	Ethnic Religions	21,423	Darkhat
Deaf	Buddhism	Unknown	Mongolian Sign Lng.
Dungan, Khoton	Islam	4,907	Dungan
Durbet, Dorwot	Ethnic Religions	76,332	Mongolian, Halh
Dzakhchin, Zahchin	Non-Religious	34,244	Mongolian, Halh
Ewenki, Tungus	Ethnic Religions	1,100	Evenki
Han Chinese, Mandarin	Non-Religious	39,482	Chinese, Mandarin
Kalmyk-Oirat, Western Mongul	Buddhism	184,505	Kalmyk-Oirat
Kazakh, Qazaq	Islam	141,323	Kazakh
Mongol, Khalka	Buddhism	1,761,632	Mongolian, Halh
Mongolian, Northern	Buddhism	131,607	Mongolian, Peripheral
Tuvinian, Tannu-Tuva	Buddhism	30,406	Tuvin
Uyghur	Islam	1,501	Uyghur

APPENDIX C

MONGOLIAN INSTRUMENTS COMMONLY FOUND IN PROFESSIONAL ENSEMBLES



morin huur

The body and the neck are carved from wood. The end of the neck has the form of a horse-head and the sound is similar to that of a violin or a cello. The strings are made of dried deer or mountain sheep sinews. It is played with a bow made of willow, strunged with horsetail hair and coated with larch or cedar wood resin.



shanz

The shudraga or shanz is a long-necked spiked lute with an oval wooden frame with snake skin covering stretched over both faces. The three strings are fixed to a bar, which is inserted in the body. The instrument is struck or plucked with a plectrum made of horn or with the fingers.



yoochin

Box zither - dulcimer with 13 double-wire strings. The strings are struck with two wooden beaters. It has a black wooden soundboard richly decorated with ornaments.



yatga

A half-tube zither with a movable bridge. It is constructed as a box with a convex surface and an end bent towards the ground. The strings are plucked



huuchir

A small, cylindrical, square or cup-like resonator made of bamboo, wood or copper, covered with a snake skin and open at the bottom. The neck is inserted in the body of the instrument. It usually has four silk strings, of which the first and the third are accorded in unison, whereas the second and fourth are tuned in the upper fifth. The bow is coated with horsetail hair and inseparably interlaced with the string-pairs



limbe

The instrument is frequently used in accompaniment, occasionally also as a solo instrument. In former times it was made of bamboo or wood, nowadays mostly of plastic, particularly those imported from China. The length of this instrument is approx. 64 cm, with nine holes, whereof one is the blowhole and two others are reserved for the tuning. It is often played with circular breathing.

For a complete detailed listing of Mongolian instruments and their performance contexts, see Carole Pegg's *Mongolian Music, Dance, and Oral Narrative*, 2001.

Photographs of *morin huur*, *yoochin*, *yatga* taken by the author in 2003; *limbe* and *shanz* from Heart Sounds International, 2003, <http://www.worldofworship.org/Articles/Mongolia/spgm-1.3.5/index.php> ; *huuchir* and all instrument descriptions taken from the website: http://www.face-music.ch/instrum/mongolia_instrum.html.

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