

Shaman Songs

Mihály HOPPÁL
and
János SIPÓS



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and
János Sipos**

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Preface

We present here some three dozens of shamanic songs accompanied by drumming. Most of these shamanic chants have been recorded during authentic shamans' rituals. Two or three occasions can be seen as demonstrations for the sake of filming but the shamans chanted traditional melodies, songs of their own. Some of the melodies have been recorded by János Sipos, who made a musicological analysis and typology of the shamanic song of the CD. Actually he used the video tapes to make the musical transcriptions.

I started my fieldwork in Siberia among the Yakut/Sakha (1992, 2000), in South Korea (1991, 19954, 1998), among the Nanais (1993), in Xinjiang (1995, 2004), among the Manchu (1991, 1995, 2000, 2004), among the Daur, Evenki Bargu Mongols (2003, 2007), meeting with a Horchin shaman (2001) and the Kirghis *baksi* (2004), and with a Japanese *itako* (1997). On each occasion I took photos and used video to record the shamanic séances.

Of course we have more recordings, have not been analysed yet, which we decided to do in the near future. Especially since David Somfai Kara is also joined to our team, and we have conducted some fieldtrips together (2004 and 2007), and we plan to visit more shaman in those remote areas of Siberia (Altay) and in China (Inner Mongolia, Sichuan, etc.) where shamanic ritual chanting is still on practice.

Let us dedicate our first version of thes CD for the organizers and participants of the International Conference on *Shamanic Chants and Symbolic Representation* (Nov. 26-28, 2010. Taipei, Taiwan)

Mihály Hoppál DSc.
president
International Society for Shamanistic Research

Shaman Songs as Speech Acts

MIHÁLY HOPPÁL

Introduction on Terminological Problems

During his ‘ethnographical research expedition’ Vilmos Diószegi recorded some shamanic chants in Karagas language. Kokuiev’s chant for the occasion of the initiation of the shamanic garment began, as follows:

“Drum and gown mine óroj already made óroj
see at this place óroj already made óroj
see to this place óroj I came to beg óroj
see in this year óroj in the green month óroj
drum and gown mine óroj already made óroj
ejim ejim óroj ejim ejim óroj
I am charming óroj and entrancing óroj
I shall set forth óroj I shall set forth óroj
all the children óroj are in good health óroj
chanting my words óroj I am *charming* óroj
my drum it was óroj taught by people óraj
yet the sole kam óroj only I am óroj
I shall grab now óroj my own good drum óroj
I am charming óroj and entrancing óroj
before I chose óroj to become kam óroj
I began here óroj to *chant* and *charm* óroj
see at this place óroj three years ago óroj
in the green month óroj see it reborn óroj
drum and gown mine óroj are ready now óroj
this drum of mine óroj taught by people óroj
who feasted with óroj a lavish feast óroj...”
(Diószegi 1968:169)

It is quiet evident that the frequent repetition is one of the most important feature of the text, and *chanting* and *charming* are almost interchangeable and/or meaningful expression in shamanic recitals.

Recently a great number of articles have been published which dealt with different questions of shamanic songs – for instance on the Darkhad shamanic invocations (Birtalan-Sipos 2004), on Evenki ritual songs (Bulatova 1994), on muslim shamans in Turkestan (Centlivres et alii 1971), on Mongol shamans (Even 1992), on a Kirghiz shaman singing (Somfai Kara–Hoppál–Sipos 2007), on shamanic singing style among Daur shamanesses (Hoppál 2005), on Sibe (Xinjiang, China) (Harris 2004), on Nanai shamanic songs for healing and for other purposes (Bulgakova 1996, Bulgakova-Kóhalmi 1999), among the Mongol (Even 1992), on some shamanic features of the Kalevala poetry (Siikala 2002). Of course, it is impossible to enumerate all studies dealt with shamanic texts used different shamanic rituals, but one of them must be mentioned since there is an excellent selection of translated work on Siberian shamanic folklore and poetics of shamanic text collected and analyzed by Russian scholars (Balzer ed. 1997).

It is a commonplace in Old Norse literature that the Lapps were powerful sorcerers. There is a detailed account of a Lappish shamanic séance in the twelfth century from *Historia Norvegiae*.

“... Then the magician... prepared himself for impious magic *incantations*, and with arms stretched up lifted a vessel like a tambourine,... He *chanted* a long time and jumped about with this piece of equipment, but then was laid flat on the ground...”

(Tolley 1994:137)

As it can be found in the Latin original the term *incantations*, *incantando* were used which words have been translated into English as *chant*. Others call shamanic text as invocations (Basilov 1994), or simply as songs (Kenin-Lopsan 1997), or zhe Mongolian Buriats (Balogh 2007). An expert of Nepalese shamanism wrote on ‘shamanic recitals’ since shamans recite their texts or chants (Mastromattei 1978). The Yi shaman like ritual specialist (bimo) also

chants during their sacrificial rituals in Sichuan, China (Kister 2010:73). In Taiwan the Paiwan shamans during their ecstatic rituals recite and chant the text (Hu 2010:45).

In northern Eurasia, for example, among the Nenets the shaman song labeled as *'tadibye so'* (Lar 1998:39), literally 'shamanic word', which has a special magical power as a Hungarian linguist put it (Simoncsics 1978 on Nenets magic chants). Among the Ket people the minor shamans who had no drum and merely sat by the fire singing their 'spirit song' (Vajda 2010:140).

Shamans as well as ordinary people in Tuva prayed to the fire to the sky (even to the Nine Skies, Blue Sky, White Sky, Black Sky) and they called those texts as *algys* (see Kenin-Lopsan 1997:28-35). In Evenki shamanic rite *'alga'* means 'blessing, wishing well' (Bulatova 1994), as in Tuva the term *algys* means exactly the same. In the Upper Altay a Finnish researcher has found very similar genres in poetic diction which he labeled as incantation, blessing, prayer or simply song (see Harvilahti 2003:107, 115). As it can be seen there is no definite term for the shamanic songs of different kinds, however, the texts and their intentional meanings are almost the same.

On Celtic shamanic song and chant – Geo Trevarthen (2003:131) wrote: "There are indications that much Old Irish and Gaelic poetry was sung or chanted rather than simply recited... a curiously rhythmic monotone can be a feature of shamanic chant." Shamanic trance chanting has a monotonous quality which helps to facilitate trance or ecstasy.

Shamanic chanting also frequently imitates animal sounds in order to call helping spirits (for example among the Yakut/Sakha and Koryak shamans). So, shamans' songs are held to be a *sacred language*, the language of the spirits which is understandable for ordinary people, and have to be translated by the actual helper of the shaman (esp. among the Nganasan – see Gračova 1984 and Helimski 2005).

An example from the recent past at the conference in Salekhard where the Nenets scholar and painter Leonid Lar was the main star I had the chance to see also the performance of a young poetess-singer who sang songs and accompanied them with drumming as she learned them from her grandmother. There I could witness how ancient shamanistic invocations have changed into modern stage

performance still conveying traditional words and chanting tunes. Here follows a few lines of Elvira Tesida's song:

Oh, helping spirits,
Oh, spirits of my ancestors, where are you?
I am begging you to come here,
I am begging you to help me.
Oh, helping spirits, where are you?
Give me strength
To fight the evil spirits.
Yes, that is it!

Oh, helping spirits, help me!
Lady of Fire, are you here? Have you come
To inquire about my life?
Oh Lady of Fire, have you come
To tell about the changes that are waiting for us.
What changes are waiting for us?
Oh, Lady of Fire, tell us!
Yes, that is it!

Oh, Spirits of Water, are you here?
Tell us about fishing!
Spirits of Water,
When should we go fishing this year?
Spirits of Water, tell us!
Yes, that is it!

Helping spirits! Where are you?
Emissaries of magnificent?? Hebjam permja??
Tell us: will our reindeers be healthy?
Oh, magnificent?? Hebjam permja??!
Protect us from evil spirits!
Help us protect our herds from evil spirits!
Yes, that is it!

(Lar 1998:47-48).

As it can be seen that even for a recently recorded performance is still preserved some old patterns, motifs of traditional shamanic chants – namely the invocation of shaman's ancestors.

Shamans fulfil several social roles in the society within which they function. These may be the following: 1) to act as healer, 2) to conduct sacrificial rites; 3) to offer divination (regarding the future, the outcome of hunting or the whereabouts of lost objects etc.); 4) to help with childbirth, introducing the child into life; 6) to act as poet or bard; 7) to act as political leader (leading hunt and warfare); 8) to act as performing artist (shamans appear at festivals where they represent their people as preservers of ethnic folklore and identity – Hoppál 2002:17-40). Naturally, these functions overlap in practice, with each shaman or shamaness fulfilling several roles or practicing several skills simultaneously.

Predictably, the role of healer is the most important of all. This function is practically never absent among those of a shaman, while one or several of the other roles may differ partly or entirely between cultures.

Shamanic Initiation by Singing

All over Eurasia the first traumatic experience that a potential shaman had to undergo was that they were suddenly taken ill, which was a sign of having been chosen by the spirits. In most cases the illness got increasingly worse and was hard to cure. Let us quote a text collected by Vilmos Diószegi, and told by a Karagas (Tofa) person a former shaman (in the late 1950ies):

“I also became ill, when I was about to become a shaman. First my head began to ache, then my hands. Around full-moon my head was splitting pain. I had been ailing for about three years. In the meantime the spirits came to visit me. While I slept, my tongue was chanting. It chanted like the shamans do. But I did not know anything about it. When I awoke, my mother and father and my sister told me, ‘You were chanting shaman songs.’ After such occasions I always felt better for a few days. After three or four months the sickness overpowered me. My head was aching all the time and when I slept my tongue was chanting shaman songs again. It went on like this, alternating every three or four months, for three years. One keeps suffering and suffering. When you want to rest or sleep, your tongue

would be chanting. But not all the spirits chant equally well. Some chant beautifully, some chant hideously. The great spirit chants best. I was twenty-seven years old when I heard him chant. The little one, the little spirit used to come to me. He had flown into my mouth and then I used to recite shaman songs. When I had no more strength left to suffer, finally I agreed to become a shaman.”

(Diószegi 1968. 142-143)

The story of the informant, an elderly one-time shaman, reveals that he first found his helping spirit in the form of a tune or a song. To be more precise, he was found by it: he was chosen by the spirits. He was cured so that he could go on to cure.

In the process of initiation the shaman's equipment was made by the members of the community (often only by the closest relatives) and they gave power to these objects through singing (cf. Walker 2003, 46. Walker quotes data from Russian researchers). In other words, it was music that transfigured the man-made objects into shamanic devices possessed of holy power in a ritual context. Thus, for example, in Tuva, until they could get their first drum, the shamans were only given a shamanic stick with small rattles – in other words a very simple instrument for making noise. Such sticks were also used by Kirghiz shaman women (see Hoppál 2002: 139) and by Daur shaman women, as I myself was able to observe in North East China, near Hailar.

Healing by Chanting

The very first element of any healing séance is that the shaman(ess) calls on his/her healing spirits. In most cases this happens through song, and the calling tune is usually also accompanied by some instrument.

The most reliable descriptions of Siberian shamanic rituals come from researchers who are themselves members of the nation in question and, what is more important, still live among their own compatriots. Leonid Lar is a Nenets researcher who answers the above description and who has published several volumes of text collected during field work. In one of these he gives an authentic

explanation of the role of shamanic song in rituals, an indispensable part of the shamanic séance is the shamanic song. The shaman used to call his helping spirits in song and talked with them in song, accompanying the whole process on his drum. Each spirit had its own song through which the participants of the rite recognised the spirit – this was how they knew that one or other of the spirits was present. Essentially, the singing was not done by the shaman but by the spirit that had come to possess him. The songs of the various spirits differed widely in their tune and rhythm alike.

“The shaman's song (*tadybye syo*) was an indispensable part of shamanistic ritual. The shaman invoked his helping spirits using a specific language (*tadybye wada*). The ritual had its prescribed order and was accompanied by drumming. Every spirit had its own song which indicated to people present at the séance that the invoked spirit already appeared. It is understood that it was not the shaman who was singing, but the spirit himself who moved into his body. The songs of the spirits differ from each other in melody and rhythm, so their identification was not difficult. The accompanying drumming also varied from spirit to spirit. In addition to the specific song evoking a spirit we have to mention also onomatopoeia used for addressing spirits that have animal shape. The onomatopoetic screaming and shrieking of a shaman were taken as signals coming from the spirits.”
(Lar 1998: 39)

The Nenets believed that together the sound of the drum and the song of the shaman were able to invite the benevolence of the helping spirits and that on the final balance this had a positive influence on the outcome of the entire séance.

During the healing séance they had to find out the reason for the illness, which is why the shaman had to make a symbolic journey through both the ‘upper’ and the ‘lower’ worlds (Kazekevitch 2001) in order to bring back from either of these places the soul of the sick person. This journey was described in detail in the songs, and the song also included naming the helping spirits that they had invited and those that actually came. The tunes of the spirits were different from each other and were easily distinguished both on the basis of the melody structure and of rhythm. Onomatopoeia was a distinguishing

feature of these songs as they represented animal shaped helping spirits (e.g. the bear, the loon, the reindeer or the mouse) through imitating the characteristic sounds they make (Dobzhanskaya 2002: 84). Onomatopoeia is actually the beginning of music, the first appearance of the musical ability of man. According to ethnomusicologists, in this fashion the songs of shamans retain memories from the times of the original emergence of music.

An important characteristic of healing shaman music is that besides the helping spirits the individual shamans themselves also each have their own distinguishing tune, sometimes more than one, and this is the case in distant South America as well as in Eurasia.

In the course of the healing séance, the South American Indians (in the Peruvian Amazonian city of Iquitos) also considered that the tunes they had to learn for their initiation rites possessed a healing power. The first skill that the potential shaman had to practice during the *ayahuasca* séances, which cause hallucinations, was whistling.

“Most healers during their period of apprenticeship (which can last several years) seclude themselves in open jungle, learning the effect of different plants on their bodies, and how to prepare special medicines... They work closely with a teacher, and also whistled with him a series of traditional *ayahuasca* melodies. Basic melodies are learned during this period, although healers tend to improvise and innovate on these themselves...

... Since much of the music found in *ayahuasca* sessions consists of whistling incantations, it is important to mention the widespread belief in the area that whistling is the way in which the spiritual forces of nature and the guardian spirit of the vine itself, can be evoked by the healer.”

(Katz – Dobkin de Rios 1971:321).

Thus whistling is the point of departure for the healing rite as well as for the initiation, as we could also observe in the case of the Tuva shaman, simply because this was, in all probability, the earliest and most personal form of communication with the spirits, even preceding music.

“It is also from the Peruvian Amazonian region that we can gain data according to which the local shamans receive the tunes of healing power that they call *icaro* from the local, hallucinogenic ‘plant teachers’ of the area. ... by singing or whistling the *icaro* of the plant-teachers, their spirits present themselves to the shaman... *icaros* are especially effective for curing illness caused by witchcraft, or due to the action of evil spirits.. But there are also *icaros* to cure other illnesses, for example snake bite... It is believed that it is the melody itself which has curative powers.”

(Luna 1984: 7-8).

Thus it is barely surprising that the power of the individual shamans was measured by the number of songs they knew. In other words, the shaman’s power was in his songs and the power of the instruments was only an additional force. This is the impression I received when in February 2003 I saw a Daur shamaness who, after the healing séance, went on singing to the patient for a long time, giving instructions and advice to the young girl who, hearing the dramatic song, sobbed and received the healing song kneeling and bowing to the ground. My impression was that the healing power emanated from the singing voice (Hoppál 2005).

There is another important element we must mention when talking about chanting in shamanism, and this is the fact of repetition. The films about the last shamans of the Nganasan people who live far North show quite clearly that one of the most potent features of the shamanic song is repetition. Among the Nganasan, who live on the Taymir Peninsula, this was the task of the shaman’s helper (*touptusi*).

Let us quote Carlyne Humphrey’s evocative lines on this phenomenon, in connection with Dahur shamanic chants:

“The refrains, which had to be repeated by competent assistants leading the whole audience, were essential to raise the shaman’s soul energy. The shaman’s body channels were opened by means of the smoke of a sacred plant (*smaih*) to enable soul energy to travel out and spirit energy to come in. Rhythmic words, melody and vibration inspired soul energy, enabling the shaman to sing ever more loudly, dance with vigour and liveliness, and carry the heavy human sufferings loaded on mirror or drum. A shaman’s physical weakness was overcome not by wild improvisation but by constant repetition of

the plain rhythmic patterns, the beloved tunes of the refrains (*iro*) sung by the assistant. The more fluid, trembling, or improvisatory notes of the shaman were supported by the overlapping voice of the assistant, who sang – sometimes almost shouted – accented and high rhythmic short themes.”

(Humphrey 1996: 234).

In some ways the same idea is referred to by a Finish ethno-musicologist in an article analysing Selkup shamanic chants. ‘*Shaman songs* have somewhere an element of recurring pulse structure’ (Niemi 2001: 156). Thus it may be no accident that some people say that shamanic music talks ‘straight to the heart,’ – “The shaman sees with heart. Music speaks to the heart. It is not surprising that songs and shamanism are synergetic for healing.” (Mokelke 2004: 25 and Newman 1998).

The Shaman as Singer

It is worthwhile giving some thought to the observations made by Russian ethno-musicologist Yuriy Sheykin in connection with the shamanic songs of Paleo-Asian peoples, based on several decades of experience. As he explained at a conference, one of the distinguishing signals of shamanic song is the emphatic character of the singing which is expressed by the intonings of fear, pain, suffering and terror. This is what expresses the shamanic condition. In the languages of the Chukche and the Koryak the phonological form of the word for the shaman who was a sage and healer is connected to the words which signify song and music. In other words, among Paleo Asian peoples the shaman can actually be identified by the semantic field of a ‘person singing magical *songs*’ (Sheykin 1992, for further relevant data see Sheykin 1996 and the volume of conference proceedings Sheykin ed. 2000). These linguistic factors again go back to the prehistory of shamanism, in other words the emergence of song and of shamanic healing probably took place together in the very distant past.

This is the hypothesis that recent research on the cognitive evolution of our Paleolithic ancestors has been aiming to substantiate (Frolov 1988; Winkelman 2002). It is interesting to quote the American researcher:

“A range of evidence indicates that shamanistic elements were already part of the cultural practices of the Middle Paleolithic. This evidence includes: 1. the homonym basis of *chanting*, music and psycho-emotional group ritual activities based in mimetic capabilities, and 2. the soul of shamanic practices in meeting a number of individual and societal needs for shared identity and communication. Music’s effects include the induction of slow-wave brain wave patterns typical of other altered states of consciousness. Music’s adaptive role includes its ability to promote group cohesion and co-ordination, enhancing synchronomy and co-operation among group members.”

(Winkelman 2002: 78-79).

In other words the groups of humans who banged bones together hitting on a joint rhythm (Frolov 1988: 3) were practicing simple forms of co-operation with the leadership of their shamans. Joint chanting and dancing represented another developmental step, which led to the further development of cognitive structures, in other words when they were able to distinguish different rhythms.

The above train of thought explains why it is important that the impact of monotonous chanting and drumming on human beings has also been examined. It has long been common knowledge that the sound of the drum, as well as the noise made by other percussion instruments causes a curious, altered state of consciousness („...Percussive sound, especially the drum is used throughout the world to initiate and accompany the shamanic trance and journey, it is proposed that the drumming itself may have an effect on emotional and physiological states relevant to healing... The purpose of the studies was to explore the relation between the effects of shamanic drumming, immune responses and mood states...” Harner – Tyron 1992. 197). At any rate it has been proved by experiments that the monotonous sound of drumming activates the immune system which leads to an increased sense of well-being and a reduction of feelings

of fear or anxiety in people. The examination of endorphin activity led to a similar result (Prince 1982).

Shamanic Song as Speech Act

Mongush Borakhovich Kenin-Lopsan is a born collector of shamanic narratives in Tuva. His forebears in the extended family were shepherds, smiths, renowned singers and shamans. His maternal grandmother, Kuular Khandizhap was a famous shamaness who was imprisoned on false charges under Stalin and died in prison.

Kenin-Lopsan eventually has become a well known writer in his county. His first novel appeared in 1965 and was followed by some fifty volumes of poems, ballads, short stories, novels and translation (from Russian literature) and later he became a devote collector of Tuvan folklore, especially shamanic songs and narratives. Some years ago we published a book of his collection in which he have been translated the best and most interesting and poetic shamanic chants (Kenin-Lopsan 1997). Here we quote some translated texts, as good examples of typical shamanic narratives sung by the shamans during their ceremonies as an important part of the ritual conducted by them.

We have used the expression “Shamanic Song” in the title of Kenin-Lopsan’s book rather than “hymn” as originally intended since these are songs that are actually chanted for the whole ritual as a part of healing, cleansing and blessing. In the same way, although Kenin-Lopsan uses the term “myth” for the texts forming the second part of his book according to our concepts they are belief stories, belief legends or memorates which the collector noted down in writing on the spot or later from memory since he did not have a tape-recorder. With the help of the text one can reconstruct the shamanic model of the world, or world view and mythic pantheon, the helping spirits and the world of rituals. We can trace the respect for nature and animism arising from the shamans’ worldview. As the elderly scholar put it in a conversation in 1996: “The shamanic myths are our philosophy. The shamanic hymns (*algyshtar*) are our poetry. The shamanic rites give the frame and laws for the Tuvan way of life. The shamanic tradition is for us what the university is for the French.” He also

stressed several times that the survival of the Tuvan language is also due to a large extent to the poetic tradition preserved in the *algysh*. This is why Kenin-Lopsan's collection is of such great significance, since it serves to maintain the collective memory of his people.

The *algysh* is a song, or prayer, invocation, blessing, request or chanting to the spirits – I use all these European concepts only tentatively since none of them corresponds precisely to the type of text sung and recited by the Tuva shamans. It is, however, certain that the *algysh* is a kind of sacral communication, a “speech act” (see Austin 1962, Searle 1969) and specifically an illocutionary performative act. The characteristic of such an act is that it is not a declaration or communication of something but an action performed through chanting. Research has not paid adequate attention to this modality aspect of the shamanic songs (prayer, blessing, spell).

Algysh of a Shaman Devoted Himself

You have not drank buk and milk.
You have not drank Burgan and milk.
What place have you come to?
What place are you walking around?
One should not buy things from the people.
One should not ask for things from the people
Having burned the thing called *artysh*.
Probably I am shaman who starts to shamanize.
With the power of shamanic roots
Probably I am a shaman who starts to shamanize.
So having shamanized
I am probably a shaman who finishes shamanizing.
(Kenin-Lopsan 1997:10).

Algysh of a Shaman Who Prays to the Moon and the Sun

At Moonrise, at Sunrise,
In the beginning of our day, –
I sprinkle my sacred liquid which has become the sea,
I have laid my song which has become my taiga.
The Master-spirits of the forest have become Time,
You Master-spirits of the steep forest have become the Rock!
The one who is with orba, he has the only fate,
The path of the Universe is the only one.

The one with the drum has only one bottom,
The numerous stars have just one path.
(Kenin-Lopsan 1997: 12).

How a Shaman Concludes His Ritual

Let us finish our shamanizing.
Let us cross the nearest pass.
Let us finish the shamanizing and go home.
Let us cross the low pass.
The sun has risen.
The poor titmouse has started to sing.
Let us depart and go home.
Let us get revived and thrive.
(Kenin-Lopsan 1997:12).

***Algys*h of Shamaness Kyrgys Khurak Asking for Happiness**

Even from the loud noise of my drum
The Skies will thunder, will shake.
Jumping when I shamanize,
I am like strong windy storm in a rage.
I can even subdue the Sky
I am a very strong shaman
You are Mistress of the Universe
The Mistress of the Universe is telling me.
Upon unruly people
I can bring down lightning
Upon greedy persons, liars, scoundrels
I can swell up their stomachs.
Even forest taiga places
I am a shaman who knows.
Even the beginnings of rivers, waters
I can shamanize, I can make rituals.
Getting my power from the original source,
For living freely in peace
I was destined to be born in a light land,
I was born in a light land.
When I shamanize wearing my clothes –
They enjoy watching me, being endeared to me.
Where is the one who is stronger than I?
After looking at me, they start to pray.
(Kenin-Lopsan 1977:11).

The *algyshtar* presented above were collected between the 1950s–1990s. During my visits to Tuva I found shamans actively using *algyshtar* for introducing themselves, describing their spirit helpers, praising their shamanic paraphernalia, describing their journey to non-ordinary reality, describing the illness or problem of the patient. What I observed was when the shaman was engaged in something more than divination with stones (*khüvanak*), they used chanted song (with obvious melody) and sounds from nature. The richness, variety of these songs varied greatly. Both elderly and young shamans had prolonged singing, lasting over fifteen minutes. Phrases, both melodic and rhythmic, were often repeated with only the words changing. One thirty-eight years old female shaman in Kizil sang for almost twenty minutes using a structured melody, with repeated melodic phrases (see Hoppál 2002:75 – picture down left).

In 1994 the most famous Kazakh shaman (*baksi*) of the Bayanölgii Region (in the Altay Mountains) Batirkan Abilkasimuli's song has been recorded. Later David Somfai Kara transcribed and translated the text:

Shaman Batirkan's Song

1. It stepped with a beat,
It stepped simultaneously with four legs.
Its front hump was covered with sand,
Its rear hump was full of fat.
You are a proud magis snake,
Don't say proud, just come.
My dear great helping spirit,
When I call you, come (my spirit).
2. Isamber from the Alti-Atantay clan,
God, Creator, please help us.
Kabanbay from the Karati Kerey clan,
By the side of a fast river,
Everybody loses his mind.
Allah is our saviour, I pray to you,
My God, please help me,
The spirit of my ancestors.
Hopp

3. Allah, my God,
Merek could see the spirits.
I pray to him who gave his blessing,
to the spirit of Kuseyin.
My God, black stallion with the long mane,
run through the woods.

4. The suffering that comes to this world,
Let it disappear, my God!
Allah, Bismillah,
I speak the words of the past generations.
Support me, spirit of my ancestors.
Some people are interested in goods,
Well, these people suffer much.
Hopp (*He hits his breast with the axe*)

5. Allah, my saviour, Allh,
Do they know,
My Muslim people, oh my God,
Here in 1995,
What awaits them, my God?

6. Please listen to my wise words,
Support me,
124 thousand prophets,
33 thousand wise men of four cities. (*He falls into a trance*)

7. If you ask me, my father is Abilkasim,
My own name is Batirkan.
I am from Talbo Lake near Blue Hill,
I was born as Abilkasim's youngest son.
I have had visions,
Since I was six.
By the grace of you, my God
I was freed (by the spirits) 3-4 years ago.
Hopp!

(Somfai-Kara – Kunkovács – Sipos 2006: 121-123.)

An other interesting features of shamanic usage of linguistic codes was the code switching. In 2000 a conference was held on Musical Ethnography of the Manchu-Tunguz Peoples in Yakuts. The main organizer of this conference, Yuriy Sheykin, who did extensive fieldwork among different Siberian ethnic minorities, wrote about this particular problem: “Particularly interesting and understudied is the phenomenon of language transfers during shamanic séances, when for example, Sakha shamans chanted and in a Tungusic language. A twentieth century example is the famed and respected Konstantin Chirkov, who had Tungusic helper spirit, although his everyday knowledge of Even was inconsiderable.” (Sheykin (ed.) 2000:10)

The same phenomenon was observed during in a healing séance among the Daurs in 2003. The Daurs live North-East part of China, where in small town I had the chance to participate in a shamanic ritual where Sečengua, the main shamaness used her native Daur tongue (a very archaic Mongolian dialect) and her helper, Sünžedmaa, a Khamnigan Shaman-woman used her native Evenki (Hoppal 2007:120-126. see Plate 41-42.). It was quite natural to chant the same melody but to use two different languages, which are belong two different language families.

Some years later we have recorded Sečengua’s song in 2007, in her invocation to her shamanic ancestors (and helping spirits) were addressed, as follows:

“Dekoo, dekaa, dekaa yaa
It arrived by order of High Heaven.
It came alive at the Amban *oboo*.
It lives by Emin River.
It runs in the blue skies.
It sits in the plateau.
It drinks from the Hailar River.
The *ojuor* spirit of the Onon clan:
Laa samaan was born in the year of the Rat.
Great grandfather, I am invoking you.
He arrives by his own will
Turning into the Bor-Čooxor spirit bird.
When he arrives I incorporate him.
Sss.

In the center there is a double tree.
Nine boys are running behind him.
He has ten students.
He walks with black and white spirits.
In sixty-four roads,
He has thirty-two helping spirits.
He runs by the rivers.
He puts on his shamanic clothes.
The *ojoor* spirit of the Onon clan,
Laa samaan, my great grandfather,
I invoke and incorporate him.”

(Somfai Kara-Hoppál-Sipos 2009:161)

The first ‘line (*Dekoo, deko, deko ya* – has no specific meaning), however, it is probably a result of Manchu cultural influence, from the famous Manchu Nishan shamaness’ songs where *deyanku, deyanku* words are very similar to the recent Daur texts (translation and notes by David Somfai Kara). Again one can say that in shamanhood of North-East China it was/is quiet common to use different languages even within the same ritual.

Shamanic Techniques in Sacred Communication

In Siberian mythic chants and other sacred narratives, especially in those of the Yakuts and Buryats, shamanism and human deaths are intimately associated in their very origins. The shaman as a mediator is placed a those extremely critical points where the human and suprahuman spheres do indeed overlap. The shaman’s activity covers the liminal spheres of the world which are dangerous for ordinary human beings and for shamans as well. His or her mediating activity relies on beliefs in symbolically taking all the difficulties (pain, sickness, responsibility of decision-making, etc.) upon himself or herself. All these observations and data truly stress the utmost significance of the symbolic aspects of the mediation process. Most

recent publications agree that this mediation is a central part of shamanistic ideology. Here shamanism as an ‘ideology’ is understood not as a religion, but rather as a special system of beliefs centred around symbolic meditation. Anna-Leena Siikala however paid little attention to the symbolic aspect of shamanism, but rightly stated that:

“The shaman’s function as mediator between the normal and the supranormal worlds is based on systems of belief according to which difficulties threatening the even pace of life are caused by representatives of the spirit world, and they can be eliminated with the help of benevolent spirits” (Siikala 1978:319).

In Siikala’s opinion the main task of the shaman is to create a direct and reciprocal state of communication aimed at the spirit world, and the very structure of the shamanic séance reflects this communication.

As a mediator, the shaman is the restorer of balance. In other words, he maintains a shamanic equilibrium of power relations within his community and the outside worlds. Those who have access to the channels of communication have more power within their community. The shaman as a mediator is a specialist in ritual communication (see Sather 2003).

The sacred-kind of communication is a multichannel process, which makes the whole process a very effective one. Therefore shamans use different media during their séances. There are common features of shamanic rituals such as dancing with special gestures, drumming (or using other instruments which make noise), chanting special text (incantations, prayers, invocations). Shamans use a special language different from the common tongue during séances (Gračova 1984). For example in Himalayan shamanic practices, among the Magar shamans, one may distinguish between several kinds of shamanic speech or discourse, applied during the curative séances. “The first and most prominent kind of shamanic speech consist of narrative origin myths in metric verse, recited in the course of a séance by the leading shaman and repeated line after line by a pupil or younger shaman, who, by echoing his master’s textual sequences, will learn by repetition the entire repertoire over time. These recitals are formal constructives of a high artistic skill, rich in poetic techniques concerning metre, play of words, alliteration,

rhyme, repetition and an all pertaining parallelism” (Oppitz 1998:139). The second kind of shamanic speech is a chant, which does not tell stories, but it is a countless enumeration of geographical names and topographical features. These recitals are used during shamanic journeys.

The next kind of language employed mantric formulae, these are magical pronouncements, which give transcendental orders to spirits. Their proper use is a secret affair. An other kind of shamanic speech is used during divination in a form of a dialogue with the supernatural. The fifth form of speech is a language used to communicate with the auxiliaries. The helping spirits in animal shape of a shaman speak a kind of animal language. This is the tongue of ecstasy (or trance). There is a distinction between male and female type of cursing vocabulary (with full of four letter words and with sexual references). As Michael Oppitz simply put is “the shaman may, in the course of his/her rituals, performs absolutely normal colloquial speech act” (Oppitz 1998:141).

Let us here consider this an important point of departure since speech acts in a ritual context are quite common phenomena in shamanic and other kinds of sacred communication. Actually speech acts are not conveying messages but they are showing the performative power of language, power of words. They do not inform but they do things as name, persuade, promise, declare and curse.

According to the theory of speech acts the performative speech acts (see Finnegan 1969) can not be true or false but only successful or not successful. This means that the shamanic prayers, incantations, blessings, or course are always effective or useful (see Gill 1981 on Navajo sacred words). In the context of shamanic performances there is a “secret language” (Marazzi 1984), which is used by the shamans (and their helpers) only. So, the language of songs, chants, prayers have a kind of “invocatory” character (see Siikala 1992: 100, in Siikala–Hoppál 1992).

In shamanic narratives the use of language one may find a great number of repetitions. Those ritual repetitions makes even more effective, and more easy to remember the melodic-phonetic formulas and meaningful textual elements. At this point, one may say that the shamanic technique of communication is a good model for effective

communication (on the power of words – van Deusen 1997). It means that shamans used a very archaic type of communication, let say an archetype of effectiveness of sacred communication.

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Singing Shamans

PHOTOS BY MIHÁLY HOPPÁL



Manchu shamans (2001) Heilongjiang province
(Listen: track 1.)



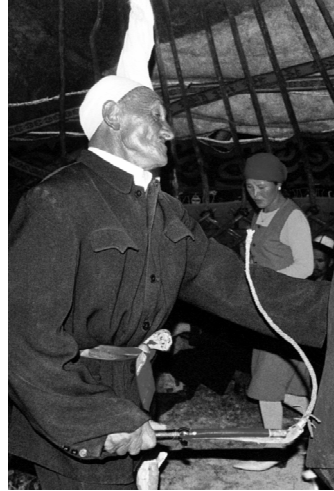
Manchu shaman (1995)
(Listen: track 8.)



Yakut healer (1992)
(Listen: track 13.)



Au Öölöt (Ojrat) Mongol
Shamaness and her helper (2001)
(Listen: track 14.)



Kirghiz *baksi*
in Xinjiang, China (2004)
(Listen: track 18.)



Horchim Mongol and his female helper (2001) (Listen: track 30-32)



Calling the spirits in Kyzyl, Tyva (1996)
(Listen: track 27.)



Korean *mudang* in Inchon (1994)
(Listen: track 36.)



Daur shamaness calls the spirits (2003)
(Listen: track 28.)



Japanese blind itako (1997)
(Listen: track 33. and 37.)



Daur healing ritual (2003)
(Listen: track 22-23.)



Nanai shamaness (1993)
(Listen: track 24.)



Purification rituals in Tyva (1996)



Purification rituals in Tyva (1996)

Musical Analysis of the Shaman Songs

JÁNOS SIPOS

The Shaman Songs on the CD

We present thirty-seven shaman songs on this CD. Of course, they do not offer a complete picture of the subject, but they do represent a good sample of shaman songs over a large area. Most of these recordings were made in the field rather than in studios, and some of them were made many years ago, so they will not be of the hi-fi quality that has come to be expected. However, the collection is unique and worth listening to.

A shaman is a mediator between people living on the Earth and spirits of the other world. However, this present study focuses on one single but important aspect of a shaman's multifaceted and complex role: the songs he-she sings and the rhythm he-she performs.

Music is perhaps the most effective of all the arts in reaching the deepest layers of the human soul. This emotional force works when mourners can feel relief through reciting and singing the musically controlled form of a lament instead of shouting and sobbing their hearts out. Shamans also employ the power of music in ceremonies.

I myself have collected melodies from Kirghiz *bakshis* and have studied Sufi *zikr*—the later Turkish offshoots of shamanistic ceremonies—in detail. Here, participants perform ritual *samah* dances and sing in reaching up toward God. From these, I learned what to expect in connection with the melodies on this CD as well: the

melodic repertoire of the ceremonies is not independent from folk music and sometimes not even from other types of music.

Besides living folksongs, there are older folksong layers that have died out from folk usage and also melodies close to composed music existing in the musical repertoire of the *Bektashis*. Of course, it seems impossible to find any traces of composed music in the repertoire of the shamans, but there are melodies similar to older and newer folk melodies as will be shown in the second part of the musical analysis. Here and there we hear very interesting recitations such as in Japanese and Korean examples.

Listening to the CD will provide an exciting musical excursion progressing from Turkic peoples through the Mongol and Manchu areas on to Japan and Korea. It is especially noteworthy that the musical relationships among the shamanistic songs do not correspond to the relationships among the languages they are sung.



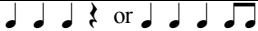


A suitable atmosphere is needed to accomplish a successful ceremony in which the shaman enters into a trance. Music helps to create it. Both melodic and rhythmic patterns have to be simple, repetitive and familiar to the participants.


The monotone rhythm of the drum helps the shaman to attain a state of ecstasy. Any extravagant or complicated rhythm is unthinkable here; the shaman repeats and varies a few basic formulas. Different types of jingles help provide the desired effect, more or less joining the rhythmic patterns of the drums. At other times, they create a sound cluster, because the shaman does not shake them with his-her hands: they are hanging on the belt and their sound usually accompanies the movements of the shaman with a shorter or longer delay.


A similar effect is noted in other circumstances as well. For instance, in the *Bargu Mongol* 1,2,3,5 and 7 (ex.5, 10, 12, 15, and 20) or the Japanese (ex.33 and 37) melodies the drum beats do not exactly follow the pulsation of the melody; sometimes they are shifted from it. Similar rhythmic shifts can be seen in various forms in the folk music of different peoples, such as among the Sioux Indians of North America.





RHYTHM

The rhythmic patterns can be classified as follows:

<i>Rhythm</i>	<i>Song</i>
No accompaniment	Yakut-2 (ex.13), Kazakh (ex.19), Buryat (ex.7), Uyghur-1ab (ex.14ab)
Steady pulsation (in quarter, dotted quarter or half notes)	Dahur-1 (ex.22), Dahur-2 (ex.23), Dahur-3 (ex.3), Dahur-4 (ex.28), Dahur-5 (ex.4), Dahur-6 (ex.), Bargu Mongol-6 (ex.21), Manju-1 (ex.), Manju-2 (ex.), Nanay-2 (ex.24), Horchin-1 (ex.26), Horchin-2 (ex.16), Horchin-3 (ex.35), Horchin-4 (ex.34), Horchin-5 (ex.29), Horchin-6 (ex.31), Horchin-7 (ex.30), Horchin-8 (ex.32)
Shifted quarters	Bargu Mongol-1 (ex.10), Bargu Mongol-2 (ex.20), Bargu Mongol-3 (ex.5), Bargu Mongol-5 (ex.15), Bargu Mongol-7 (ex.12); Japanese-1 (ex.6), Japanese-3 (ex.33) and Korean (ex.36) (not steady)
Steady quavers	Japanese (ex.37 - recitation), Uyghur (ex.14)
Shifted quavers	Tuvanian (ex.27), ¹ Bargu Mongol-4 (ex.11) ²
	Nanay-1 (ex.25), Nanay-3 (ex.17)
	Horchin-1 (ex.26), Horchin-2 (ex.16), Horchin-3 (ex.35), Horchin-4 (ex.34), Horchin-5 (ex.29), Horchin-6 (ex.31), Horchin-7 (ex.30), Horchin- 8 (ex.32) (between sections)
	Manchu-1 (ex.8), Manchu-2 (ex.9 - between sections), Manchu (ex.1)
	Yakut-1 (ex.2)
	Kirghiz (ex.18)

¹  at the ends of the sections.

²  at the end.

To sum it up, we can say that the most common rhythmic pattern is the steady pulsation in quarters, dotted quarters, eighths or half notes. The next most frequently occurring are shifted quarters and eighths. Special cases include the Yakut  and the Kirghiz . The  and the  patterns are very rare and can be heard only between melodic sections.

MELODIES

We have songs from Yakut, Soyot, Kirghiz, Kazakh, Buryat Mongol, Bargu Mongol, Horchin, Nanay, Manchu, Dahur, Japanese and Korean people. The tone-set of the melodies are quite varied, different pentatonic and sub-pentatonic scales occur frequently, and there are melodies moving on a diatonic scale or moving on only two tones as well.

The structure of the melodies are motivic in 15 cases, one-line in 3 cases, two-line in 7 cases, three-line in 1 case, four-line in 8 cases (mainly Horchin), and free recitation occurs in 3 cases. The first part of the melodies is usually descending or has a cupola shape, and rarely do we see jumping or turning melodic movements. The main cadence of the two-line melodies is usually on the 3rd degree of their scale, while the cadence-series of the four-line ones are quite diversified. Time signatures that occur more than once are as follows: 2/4 (7 cases), 4/4 (8 cases), 6/8 (3 cases), 6/8 and 9/8 (2 cases). There are also free recitation (2 cases) and rubato performance (9 cases) as well.

More important than the characteristics listed above is the melodic line.

Many of the melodies built up of one or two short bars can be characterized by a (A-C)-D-C-A descent or cupola form. The Manchu (ex.1) and Yakut-1 (ex.2) A-B-C-B (C-B) / C-B-A; the Dahur-3 (ex.3) G,-A A / C A A; the Dahur-5 (ex.4) (B)-D-D-D A, the Bargu Mongol-3 (ex.5) D-A D-A, the Korean-1 (ex.38) D D C / D-C A and the Buryat A D C / D C A melodies belong here. We may count here the Manchu-1 (ex.8), and Manchu-2 (ex.9) as well though their first half ascend only to C and the second half reaches deeper registers. Noteworthy, too, is the one with its A-A-A-D C A skeleton. The rain


supplication song from Béla Bartók's Anatolian collection also belongs here (Bartók 1976: No.49).

The other important movement in this group is the (C-D)-E-D-C descent or cupola form which can be seen in *Bargu Mongol-1* (ex.10), *Bargu Mongol-4* (ex.11), *Bargu Mongol-7* (ex.12), *Yakut-2* (ex.13), in *Uyghur-1ab* (ex.14ab) melodies. The *Bargu Mongol-5* (ex.15) moves on the G²-E-D trichord. (If the 3rd degree of the scale is uncertain then the (A-C)-D-C-A and (C-D)-E-D-C forms overlap each other, e.g. in ex.2).

There are only three melodies that repeat (and vary) one single melodic line: the *Horchin-2* (ex.16) descending on C-A-G,-E, the *Nanay-3* (ex.17) descending on the (E)-D-C-A-G, scale and the diatonic Kirghiz song (ex.18) with its mould-like form (C-D-E-F E-F-E-D C + G,).

There are five *two-line* melodies. The first shown here are the two basic lines of the Kazakh song (ex.19). The *Bargu Mongol-2* (ex.20) and *Bargu Mongol-6* (ex.21) shows pentatonic movements on the (A²)-G-E-D-C scale. The C²-A-G-E scale of the *Dahur-1* (ex.22) and *Dahur-2* (ex.23) melodic variants is very rare here. The scale with an augmented second and the melodic movement of *Nanay-1* (ex.25) are exceptional as well. The only *three-line* *Horchin-1* melody (ex.26) shows extraordinary features, as do the other *Horchin* melodies.

Not counting *Tuvanian* (ex.27), *Dahur-4* (ex.28) and the unique *Japanese-3* (ex.33) the nine *four-line* melodies come from the same ceremony *Horchin-3* (ex.35), *Horchin-4* (ex.34), *Horchin-5* (ex.29), *Horchin-6* (ex.31), *Horchin-7* (ex.30), *Horchin-8* (ex.32). Two of these melodies are *la*-pentatonic, two are *sol*-pentatonic, two are *do*-pentatonic and their melodic lines and rhythms are quite different from each other. *Horchin-5* (ex.29) and *Horchin-7* (ex.30) are similar *sol*-pentatonic melodies, and *Horchin-6* (ex.31), *Horchin-8* (ex.32) are close *do*-pentatonic melodies. *Horchin-4* (ex.34), *Horchin-5* (ex.29) and *Japanese-3* (ex.33) *la*-pentatonic melodies are very different from each other.

In conclusion, a few words will be useful concerning the reciting melodies. The Korean recitation is divided into phrases with different length. Its rhythm is built from  movements followed by quarter notes. Characteristic lines are e.g. * and ** (ex.36). The

recitation moves on the (#)C-B-A trichord, mainly on (#)C and B tones, and the melodic phrases are closing on B. This kind of turning recitation can be heard in the religious music of other peoples as well, such as in certain kinds of Koran recitations, for example.

There are also sections of different length in the Korean-2 (ex.37) recitation. In contrast to the Japanese performance style, this time the recitation happens in even quavers, which sometimes are divided into semiquavers. The recitation moves on (b)B and A tones, touching D only very rarely and shortly. The sections are ending always on A.

CONCLUSION

The overwhelming majority of these shaman melodies are very simple with motivic or one-line structure and with melodic lines forming (A-C)-D-C-A or a similar (C-D)-E-D-C descending or cupola shape. These musical forms can be considered as the most characteristic shaman songs and probably the most archaic ones as well, not counting the pre-musical humming-crackling sounds or snuffling heard in performances of them. There are only a few one-, two- or three-line melodies, and besides the very diverse Horchin melody stock there are only three four-line melodies existing in this material. The rhythm is also similarly characterized by simplicity, usually by a steady pulsation.

Please keep in mind, however, that the above analysis is valid only for the material examined here. The Mongol *Darkhad* shamanic songs, for example, show a very different picture (Birtalan-Sipos 2004: 25–62).

Musical Transcriptions of the Songs on the CD

MOTIVIC SONGS



Example 1. Manchu



Example 2. Yakut-1



Example 3. Dahur-3



Example 4. Dahur-5



Example 5. Bargu Mongol-3

Example 6. Janapese-1

Rubato

Example 7. Buryat

Example 8. Manchu -1

Example 9. Manchu -2

Rubato *Poco rubato*

Example 10. Bargu Mongol-1

Rubato

Example 11. Bargu Mongol-4

Rubato

Example 12. Bargu Mongol-7

Example 13. Yakut-2

Example 14ab. Öölöt (Oirat)-1ab



Example 15. Bargu Mongol-5

ONE-LINE MELODIES





Ey, bir suu-nun, bir suu-nun bir go ba-ši,ey, Su-lay-man, ey,

Example 18. Kirghiz

TWO-LINE MELODIES



Ker-deng, ker-deng ker ji-lan,



Ker-deng de-mey kel ji-lan.

Example 19. Kazakh



Example 20. Bargu Mongol-2



Example 21. Bargu Mongol-6



Example 22. Dahur-1



Example 23. Dahur-2



Example 24. Nanay-2



Example 25. Nanay-1

THREE-LINE MELODY



Example 26. Horchin-1

FOUR-LINE MELODIES

Rubato

Rubato

Example 27. Tuvanian, 5(b3)4, Ionian

Example 28. Dahur-4, 8(b)5, Aeolian

Example 29. Horchin-5, VII(III)4, Mixolydian

Example 30. Horchin-7, b3(VII)4, Mixolydian



Example 31. Horchin-6, 7(4)1, Ionian



Example 32. Horchin-8, 7(b3)7, Ionian



Example 33. Japanese-3, 4(VII)VII, Aeolian



Example 34. Horchin-4, 1(b3)54



Example 35. Horchin-3, 5(5)4, Aeolian

RECITATION

recitation



Example 36. Korean

recitation



Example 37. Japanese-2

After the general survey of the songs on the CD let us have a look now on a more detailed analysis of two songs.

A Musical Analysis of the Kirghiz Shaman's Song (track 18)

Ordinary people usually sing and rarely recite in prose. The same is true of minstrels or shamans, who use the power of music to get in touch with higher powers and, what is sometimes equally important, to hold the attention of their audience.

In the ritual described here, *Abdikadir* Kirghiz *bakši* repeats a single slightly varied musical line again and again. As the music does not change much during the ceremony, we can leave the relation between the music and the healing process out of consideration; it is sufficient to refer to a few musical sections to paint a quite satisfactory picture of the whole musical process (Example 38). At the same time we study the melody in more detail because it is not baseless to presume that shamanic songs belong to the older layer of music.

Let us have a closer look at the melody of the healing ceremony. After a small C–F–C mound-like movement the melodic line ascends to F, where it has a rest before descending to C through D. This is a characteristic phenomenon: the beginning of the line leaps up from G to C and the end of the line leaps down from C to G. Similar leaps of a fourth are not rare in pentatonic folk music, and this pattern occurs in the performance of the famous Kirghiz *Manas* epos as well.³ In the pentatonic layers of Hungarian folk music we sometime hear it at the end of the musical lines.⁴ This musical phenomenon occurs in non-pentatonic folk music as well; as examples I might mention the well-known French Christmas song *Eveille-toi bergère*, or several English songs with a domed structure that are similar to the so-called “new style” Hungarian melodies.⁵

3 Similar melodies can be found in my unpublished material collected from a *manasči* named Jumabay-uulu İrisbek in Darkhan village, Kirghizstan.

4 We see examples of C–G leaps and of the interchangeability of these notes in Vargyas (2005: 238, Examples 181f–g–h and a1).

5 Songs with a domed structure have low-lying first and closing sections and higher middle sections. A more special structure is typical of the melodies of the Hungarian “new style,” where the middle sections are five tones higher than the first or last (see Vargyas 2005: 0330, 0339a,

The most surprising thing, however, is that the melody we are examining is identical to the most typical form of the Kirghiz lament *košok*, as my recordings of 2002 and 2004 made in *Narın*, *İsik Köl* and *Talas* demonstrate.⁶ Not only does the scheme of the melodic line seem identical, but the fourths at the beginning and end of the sections and the rendering of the song does too. The only minor difference is that here the singer starts with a small mound, while the melodic line of the most typical laments does not descend to C in the middle of the sections—and especially it does not have a rest there.⁷ The uncertain intonation of the third degree (*E–Es*) is frequent in Kirghiz laments; this creates ambiguity between major and minor modes—a phenomenon that occurs in the folk music of many different people of the world. And another characteristic phenomenon: the singer sings the longest notes on the meaningless syllable *ey*. Though the first note of the laments is usually sung on the first syllable of a meaningful word, the culminating point in the middle of the sections and the last note are usually sung on the same *ey* syllable.⁸

I examined the relation between the laments of several Turkic people and it turned out that this type of the Kirghiz lament—which includes the melody examined here—is not similar to the laments of the Karachays, Tatars, Bashkirs, Chuvash, Mongolian and Aday Kazaks, Anatolian and Bulgarian Turks or that of the Hungarians.⁹

0334). The same structure can be seen in many English folksongs (Lloyd 1967: 80). At the end of the Hungarian and English melodies we often see the C–G closing formula.

6 The Kirghiz lament (e.g. Diushaliev and Luzanova 1999: No.8) has a rare form that is identical to the small form of the Hungarian lament.

7 At the same time, in some sections of the present lament we see this mound-shaped initial.

8 The use of important notes of the melody on meaningless syllables is not exceptional; see Sipos (1994: No.174, 175, 180, 190, etc.) Anatolian *uzun hava* melodies.

9 See Sipos (2004b: 238–243).

a)

Ey, bir suu-nun, bir suu-nun bir go ba - ši, ey, Su - lay - man, ey,

b)

A - dır - da ga - na jıl - king, ay, a - la baş, ey, a,

Ey, ey, suun a - ya - gı, ey, Türk - üs - ta - an, ey - e,

Ar - gı-mak ka-na kü - lük t'oy a - ra-laş.

Ey, ey, Beş-to-ruk, Beş-to-ruk ko a-tam, ey, ow - lu - ya hn, ey,

Ar - tıng-da kal-gan ba - lang jaş, A - la jat ka-na, 'o-rom-d'oy, a - la jat.

Ey, ey, ö-züng-dön, ö-züng-dön go me - det, ey, ti - ley - mi - hn, ey,

Kü-dür - dö ga - na jıl - king, ay, a - la baş, ey, a,

*Example 38: (a) Kirghiz shamanic song, (b) Kirghiz lament
(Sipos Kirghiz collection: At-Başı 9–36).*

In Example 38a we see the melody in question and beneath it a Kirghiz lament (Example 38b). The significant similarity of the two melodies must be evident even for those who cannot read a score.

But why does the shaman sing a lament melody during the ceremony? In many cultures the melody of the laments is similar to the farewell songs of brides, which is understandable because the bride—at least symbolically—dies to her parents when she leaves their house.¹⁰ Anyhow, in the Kirghiz culture the examined musical form has a strong connection with the deeper layers of the soul, which can explain why the shaman used this melody to reach a state of trance and to maintain his connection with the other world.¹¹

*Ethnomusicological Notes on Batırkan Shaman's Song (track 19)*¹²

A real teamwork made it possible that the respected reader may have a closer look at this melody-series. Photographer László Kunkovác recorded it in Mongolia, linguist Dávid Somfai Kara transcribed and translated the text, and I, János Sipos as an ethnomusicologist transcribed and analyzed the melody, and compared it to musical styles of some other peoples.

According to the principles of the ethnomusicology (Merriam 1964, Nettl 1983) instead of examining only the abstract musical structures we should also explore the social context of the musical performance. However this time I will devote these few pages only to the musical examinations.

Though there have been several efforts, the music of a number of Turkic peoples is unfortunately not very well explored. This is also

10 In some areas, e.g. in Anatolia, lullabies are also similar to laments, a phenomenon that is more difficult to explain.

11 At the same time shamans often sing simple twin-bar melodies built up from motifs, e.g. Le Coq (1911: 5051) from East Turkestan or Birtalan and Sipos (2004) from Mongolia.

12 For a detailed report see Somfai–Torma–Sipos 2005: 181–187.

true of the music of the Kazakhs living in *Bayan Ölgii*, but here we can mention one useful book: *Mongoliya Kazaktarının Khalık Jırları* which contains numerous transcriptions but no information about the performers or any analysis. It should be noted here that the music of Kazakh people living in Bayan Ölgii county (West Mongolia) has previously been studied and compared to Kazakh folksongs recorded in Mangishlak (West Kazakhstan) (Sipos 2001).

In illiterate societies, perhaps one of the most important and frequent use of music is to assist in religious rituals. Examples include the music and dance of the Bektashi order, the songs of the Dakota singers and Navajo medicine man or that of Mongolian shamans.¹³ The musical material of these people is different, but a link usually exists between the songs of the shaman sings and other songs of the community of which the shaman is a part.

Even today there are numerous peoples with no system of reading and writing. Their music is referred to as „primitive” though it is often quite complex and developed.¹⁴ At first sight our melodies also appear to be simple too. A layman may feel that the singer is repeating the same melody again and again. In reality, however every rendering is different. They are not merely simple personal variations; here we can admire the continuous remolding of a basic musical idea. In this aspect the performance is similar to that of the Kazakh *terme* songs, but the act of variation happens on different musical foundations.¹⁵

Before comparing the melodies in question with melodies of other peoples, let us take a closer look at some musical attributes, and then let us examine the series of melodies.

13 On the dance and songs of the Bektashi, Dakota and Navajo people, see Koca and Onaran 1998; Birge 1937; Powers 1990; Jurrens 1965; McAllester 1949, 1973. On Mongolian shaman songs, see Birtalan and Sipos 2004: 51-59.

14 For more details, see Nettl 1972.

15 I write more about the Kazakh *terme* melodies in Sipos 2001, otherwise see Alekseev 1947; Beliaev 1962, 1975; Dernova 1967; Erzakovich 1955, 1957, 1966; Zataevich 1925, 1931, 1935, 1963, 1971; Zhanuzakuv 1964.

♩ = 75

1. 
Mang - mang, mang bas - kan,


2. 
Tört a - ya - gín teng bas - kan.

3. 
Al - dǎng - gǐ ör - ke - šin šang bas - kan,

4. 
Artk' ör - ke - šin may kǐs - kan.

5. 
Ker - deng, ker - deng ker jǐ - lan,


6. 
Ker - deng de - mey kel jǐ - lan.

7. 
Ay - na - la - yǐn dǎw pe - rim,

8. 
Ša - kǐr - gan - da kel phu - un.


9.  Al - tī A - tan - tay I - sām - bet,

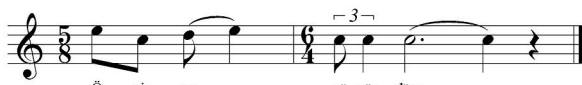
10.  Ja - rat - kan Al - la, jār - dem et.

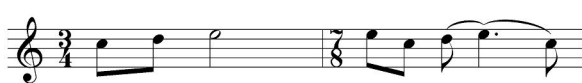
11.  Ka - ra - tī Ke - rey Ka - ban - bay...

12.  Šaw - kin suw bo - yin - ga,

13.  A - kī - lī ār kim' ta - gī - līm.

14.  Sū - yen - ši bir Al - da,

15.  Ö - zin - ge sī - yin - dīm.

16.  Ku - da - yīm jār - dem kīl,

17.  A - ta - ba - bam ar', hop.

18. 
Al - da, Ku - da - yīm,

19. 
Me - rek kōr' al - dī ar - wa - gīn,

20. 
Sī - yīn - dīm ba - ta ber - gen.

21. 
A - tam Ku - se - yīn ar - wa - gī - na.

22. 
Ku - da - yīm,

23. 
To - kak jal - dī tor' ay - gīr.

24. 
To - gay bir ōr - dey šap - sang - šī, oy,

25. 
O - sī dūn' - ye - ge

26. 
kel - gen bā - le - ket,

27. 
A - las - ta - sīm Ku - da - yīm.

28. Al - la bis - i - mil - la,

29. Söz söy - ley - min za - man a - tam,

30. Kol - day kör, a - ta - ba - ba ar - wa - gı.

31. Key pen - de mal kör - se son - day pı - sık,

32. Oy - la - sam son - day a - dam sar - gay', hop.

33. Al - lam, ja - rım, Al - lam, jar,

34. oy - la - sam, bi - ler me - ken,

35. mu - sıl - ma - nım, ku - day, aw.

36. Mın - da to - kuz düz tok - san be - sin - ši jı - lı,

37.  Bir nār-se bo-la me-ken, ku-da-yīm.


38.  A-kil-dī os' ayl-kan nār-sem-di ka-bil a-lip,

39.  Kol-day kör düz jī-yir-ma tört ming

40.  pay-gam-bar o-tiz üšming sa-ba-ka tört ša-har.

41.  phuu, brrr, hop, hop.

42.  Su-ra-sang me-ning

43.  ä-kem a-tī A-bil-ka-sīm,

44.  öz-ö a-tīm Ba-tır-kan.

45.  Ke-lip-pin Tol-ba kö-li,

46.  Kók - tó - be ja - ga - sîn - da,

47.  A - bîl - ka - sîm, ey, ken - je u - lî

48.  dîn' - ye - ge ke - lip - pin.

49.  E - les - te - di bu dî - ni - yem,

50.  Al - tî ja - sîm - nan bat - sap, aw.

51.  Ku - da - yîm,

52.  aw, Kur - me - tin' ar - ka - sîn - da,

53.  Ka - šîp šîk - tîm ũš - tórt jîl bol - dî.

Example 39 The Kazakh song series


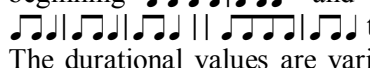
The melody moves on the three tones of the E-D-C trichord, with an intonation of pitches familiar to a Western ear. The three tones are not insufficient: the entire folk music of some peoples is founded on these tones, and they dominate musical styles of others.

Melodic movement may be ascending, descending or undulating: the melodies in question are undulating with a descending trend. Despite the undulating movement we have a descending

feeling because the first line is dominated by higher tones and ends on E or D, while in the second line the C occurs more often and C is the closing tone. The characteristic movement has a C-D-E-D-C-D-E-D... character; that is, the melody advances on neighbouring tones between the two edges of the C-E interval. Interval jumps can be seen only at the beginning of lines or between the end of a line and the beginning of the next line.

The shaman sings at a comfortable pitch level with a somewhat pressed timbre. Notes with short durational values are sung in a natural way, but we often hear a quick vibrato on the longer ones. There is another interesting phenomenon: the pitch of the long notes ascends slightly. The base sound of the melody thus becomes a whole step higher during the four minutes of the performance. The singer sings the two-line musical units without any break.

There is a special tonal organization in the melody. E has a strained relation with the C closing tone. We might say that D has the subdominant, E the dominant one and C the tonic one. The total duration of the E, D and C tones are equal. Not counting the continuous descent in pitch, the C tonic does not change during the performance; that is, there is no modulation. The tempo accelerates steadily and moderately from the beginning to the end.

The rhythm patterns are quite varied. This may be the aspect of the performance that is most difficult to grasp and describe. At the beginning  and its variants dominate, but we hear  too in the first half of the performance. The durational values are varied too. Besides dotted rhythm we see eights, quarters, whole notes and breves, with the whole notes and breves usually found at the end of the lines.

Under the *parlando-rubato*-like performance there pulsates a rhythmic pattern, as is also common among *parlando-rubato* songs of many peoples. The lengthening of final notes—and thus the last bar of the lines—is also a common phenomenon. Importantly, the duration of the lines is very similar, independent of the number of syllables in each line. It is usually the durational value of the final notes that makes the difference: longer lines end with a whole note or a breve followed by a pause, while shorter ones end with a quarter. Some extended lines also last one and half times longer as the usual

duration too: lines 30, 31 and 32 (10 syllables), line 36 (12 syllables) and line 40 (13 syllables).

The skeleton of the two sections of the basic melody is as follows:¹⁶

A = CDEE / ED E¹⁷

B = ECDD / CC C

Shamans and bards are specialists in the community; they are semiprofessional musicians. They must possess the gift of singing long series of song, improvising, and arousing and maintaining the audience's attention. A drum or another instrument (e.g. a lute with two or three strings among Turkic peoples) helps them to fall into trance. In this case we hear solo singing.

The process of the performance has four sections.

(a) Similarly to the great performers, the singer first presents the theme in the most simple 5-syllabic form (lines 1–2), and then follows a 9-syllabic extended variation (lines 3–4). After this for a relatively long time he varies the most typical 7-syllabic form. The musical form elastically adjusts itself to the lengthening or shortening of the text.

(b) Before the repetition becomes too monotonous, the singer begins to sing longer lines, thus allowing for more extended variations of the basic musical idea and from time to time to tripartite rhythmic forms (e.g. lines 30, 32 and 38).

(c) The most complex form, the climax of the performance, can be found in lines 38–40. Here it is not very easy to recognize the basic melody form. This part ends by a closing cadence (line 41).

(d) The last part is composed of somewhat simple lines, but the musical structures are more complex than those at the beginning of the series of songs. In lines 42–44 we see an AAkB three-line structure, followed by a four-line form (lines 45–48). The series is closed by two short melodies with a *Kudayım!* „My God!”

16 It has several variants, e.g. CD E / ED E / DCDD / CC C or CE ED / DC E // ECDE / CC C etc.

17 The first line typically ends on E, rarely on D, or shows uncertainty between the two notes.

exclamation between them (lines 49-51). After presenting the theme and then varying on different structures, the shaman returned to the basic form at the end (lines 52-53).

The scheme of the process of the performance is as follows:

- (a) AB / AB / AB / AB / AB / AB / A... AkB / AB / AB /
- (b) *Kudayım!* A + AB + *Kudayım!* AB / A + B / AAk + B + / A
+ B+ / AAB / A + B + / A + A + B + closing cadence
- (c) AAkB / AkAAB /
- (d) AB *Kudayım!* AB

Examining the folk songs in Bayan Ölgii, we realize that the present *zikir* series has certain features similar to the lament of the area. However, the laments in Bayan Ölgii always use the G'-E-D-C tetraton instead of the E-D-C trichord and their melodic movement is always definitely descending in contrast to the undulating melodic lines of the shaman's songs that have a narrower range. Though there are folk songs in Bayan Ölgii with undulating movement, they always have a much wider range.

In conclusion, we may think that this simple musical form is common and can be found in the folk music of various people. As a matter of fact, it is not so easy to find parallels. What makes this melody unique is that here the improvisation happens exclusively on the C-D-E trichord with an undulating movement and a descending trend. Despite the small trichord range we see a complex musical world with diversified and genuine musical forms.

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Track list

Motivic songs

- Track - example 1. Manchu*
- Track - example 2. Yakut*
- Track - example 3. Dahur*
- Track - example 4. Dahur*
- Track - example 5. Bargu Mongol*
- Track - example 6. Japanese*
- Track - example 7. Buryat*
- Track - example 8. Manchu*
- Track - example 9. Manchu*
- Track - example 10. Bargu Mongol*
- Track - example 11. Bargu Mongol*
- Track - example 12. Bargu Mongol*
- Track - example 13. Yakut*
- Track - example 14. Öölöt*
(Ojrat Mongol)
- Track - example 15. Bargu Mongol*

One-line melodies

- Track - example 16. Horchin*
- Track - example 17. Nanay*
- Track - example 18. Kirghiz*

Two-line melodies

- Track - example 19. Kazakh*
- Track - example 20. Bargu Mongol*
- Track - example 21. Bargu Mongol*
- Track - example 22. Dahur*
- Track - example 23. Dahur*
- Track - example 24. Nanay*
- Track - example 25. Nanay*

Three-line melody

- Track - example 26. Horchin*

Four-line melodies

- Track - example 27. Tuvanian*
- Track - example 28. Dahur*
- Track - example 29. Horchin*
- Track - example 30. Horchin*
- Track - example 31. Horchin*
- Track - example 32. Horchin*
- Track - example 33. Japanese*
- Track - example 34. Horchin*

Recitation

- Track - example 36. Korean*
- Track - example 37. Japanese*