

Echoes of Centuries: Folk Songs of the Uzbeks and Karakalpaks

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Abstract:

This article focuses on the study of folk songs of the Uzbeks and Karakalpaks, exploring their main genres, themes, and musical accompaniment, as well as their cultural significance. Special attention is given to the wedding song "Yor-yor," which is an essential part of Uzbek wedding ceremonies, as well as the Karakalpak song: "Aman bol, anam!". Through an analysis of the lyrics and melodies, the article reveals how these folk songs reflect the emotions, social realities, and cultural values of these communities. Additionally, quotes and insights from prominent figures highlight the importance of musical folklore in preserving cultural heritage.

Keywords: Folklore, folk songs, rituals, competitions, lifestyle, cultural heritage.

Folklore is verbal art, oral folk creativity that originated in deep antiquity. Folklore emerged before literature, developing before the advent of writing. Folklore preserves the historical past, where national traditions are formed.

«Folklore reflects the worldview and values of the people, passed down from generation to generation»¹. Thanks to oral folk creativity, the rich heritage of our ancestors has been preserved for us, transmitted orally from generation to generation.

Uzbek and Karakalpak folklore represents a rich and diverse tradition that has developed over centuries. These folk cultures include many genres: epics, legends, fairy tales, songs, and proverbs, transmitted orally from generation to generation. The folklore traditions of the Uzbeks and Karakalpaks date back to ancient times. The formation of these traditions was influenced by both nomadic and settled lifestyles and interaction with neighboring peoples. The Great Silk Road played

¹ Neklyudov, S.Yu., "Folklore and Mythology". Lodomir Publishing House, 2002, p. 29.

a significant role in the exchange of cultural elements between different ethnic groups. "Folklore materials allow us to trace the transformations of ethnic consciousness over the centuries"².

The main genres of Uzbek folklore are considered to be epics, legends, and fairy tales. Epic works occupy a central place in Uzbek folklore. One of the most famous is "Alpomish," which tells the exploits of the hero Alpomish and his struggle with enemies. Epics reflect ideals of heroism, honor, and justice inherent in Uzbek culture. Legends and fairy tales also occupy an important place in Uzbek folklore. They convey the wisdom of the ancestors, teach moral values, and often contain elements of fantasy. Examples of such tales include stories about cunning foxes, brave heroes, and magical creatures.

Folk songs of the Uzbeks and Karakalpaks cover various aspects of life: from religious rituals to everyday activities. The main genres include:

- **Yyrlar:** Lyric songs expressing feelings of love, longing, and joy. They are performed solo or accompanied by instruments (doira, rubab).
- **Koshuk:** Ritual songs associated with important events in a person's life, such as weddings, births, and funerals. For example, "Suvor", "Karigatlar".
- **Terma:** Historical and epic songs celebrating heroic deeds and historical events. For example, "Pahlavon Mahmud," "Temur Malik."

"Music for the heart is what water is for a fish."

Karakalpak folk music is also rich and diverse. Here are some popular genres and songs:

- **Aitys:** Poetic competitions performed in song form. They can be both lyrical and satirical. For example, "Kyz uzatuu", "Jigitter aitys".
- **Joktaw:** Lament songs performed at funerals and memorials. They express grief and longing for the departed. For example, "Ana joktawy", "Baba joktawy".
- **Maktaw:** Praise songs performed in honor of heroes and outstanding individuals. For example, "Er Edige", "Korogly".

"In every Karakalpak song, one can hear the echoes of centuries as the sound of the nomadic past"³. Folk songs of the Uzbeks and Karakalpaks, like those of other peoples, reflect the soul of the nation, its joy and sorrow, its existence and way of life.

These songs, of course, are accompanied by musical instruments. In Uzbek music, the following musical instruments can be highlighted:

- **Doira:** A percussion instrument creating a rhythmic foundation.
- **Rubab:** A stringed instrument providing melodic accompaniment.
- **Karnay and Surnay:** Wind instruments often played at celebrations and festivities.

"The music of the Uzbek people reflects its soul, its joy, and sorrow"⁴.

Karakalpak musical instruments:

- **Dombra:** A stringed instrument essential in Karakalpak music.
- **Kobyz:** A stringed bow instrument used for creating deep melodies.

² Gumilev, L. N., "Ancient Rus and the Great Steppe". Publishing House "Cooperation of Scientific Publishers KMC", 2003, p. 73.

³ Aitmatov, Ch. "Early Cranes". Moscow: Soviet Writer Publishing House, 1980, p. 88.

⁴ Mukimi, M.A., Poems. Tashkent: Gafur Gulam Publishing House, 1984, p. 112.

➤ **Jetigen:** An ancient string instrument used for performing epic songs.

"Karakalpak songs are the soul of the steppe, where every sound is imbued with wind and sun"⁵. In Karakalpak folk songs, the nomadic lifestyle and its great past are reflected in simple, accessible language.

Let's analyze the Uzbek song "Yor-yor." This is one of the most famous and popular folk songs performed at weddings. The song "Yor-yor" is a wedding song—a congratulation performed by the bride's friends and close relatives. The lyrics of the song "Yor-yor":⁶

Ёр-ёр, ёр-ёр,

Ёр-ёр айлар ким бўлди, ёр-ёр, ёр-ёр,

Ота уйин ким кўргай, ёр-ёр, ёр-ёр,

Ёр-ёр айлар келин бўлди, ёр-ёр, ёр-ёр,

Она уйин ким кўргай, ёр-ёр, ёр-ёр.

Song Analysis. Theme and Content. The song "Yor-yor" is sung during wedding ceremonies and is part of the ritual of the bride's farewell to her parental home. The main theme of "Yor-Yor" is the bride's farewell to her home and her entry into a new life. The first lines mention how the bride leaves her father's house, and then it talks about the difficulty and bitterness of parting with her mother's house.

Emotional Content. The emotional richness of the song is conveyed through the repetition of the word "Yor-yor," which means "beloved." This expression emphasizes the tenderness and deep feelings toward the bride. The song is full of deep emotions and conveys the duality of the moment: the joy of getting married and the sadness of parting with the family.

Musical Accompaniment. The musical accompaniment of the song "Yor-yor" usually includes traditional Uzbek instruments such as doira and rubab. The rhythmic structure of the song is simple and easily recognizable, allowing performers to easily follow the melody and rhythm. The music creates a festive atmosphere, despite the notes of sadness associated with the farewell.

Cultural Significance. The song "Yor-yor" has deep roots in Uzbek culture and traditions. It is performed not only at weddings but also at various family celebrations. Through this song, cultural values such as respect for family, the importance of marriage, and the connection of generations are conveyed. The song is part of a ritual that helps unite the old and the new, passing traditions and customs from generation to generation.

The song "Yor-yor" is a vivid example of Uzbek musical folklore. It reflects not only the traditions and customs of the Uzbek people but also conveys deep emotional and cultural meanings. An analysis of this song shows how important life moments and feelings can be conveyed through simple yet meaningful words and melodies.

One of the Karakalpak folk songs is called "Aman bol, anam!" ("Be healthy, my mother!")⁷. This song genre often expresses deep feelings of longing for native places and loved ones, especially for the mother, which is a characteristic feature of many songs of nomadic peoples.

⁵ Akhmet Baitursynov, "The Book of Wisdom", Alma-Ata: Kazakhstan Publishing House, 1975, p. 134.

⁶ Singer – Melibaeva Bakhriniso, 85 years old, residing in Ak-Tam village, Ala-Buka District, Jalal-Abad Region, Kyrgyz Republic; Writer – Hasanbaeva Dilobar, residing at 6 Orosbay Ata Street, Ak-Tam village, Ala-Buka District, Jalal-Abad Region, Kyrgyzstan.

⁷ Sang by Altybaeva Umukan, 84 years old, lives at the address: Kyrgyz Republic, Jalal-Abad region, Aksy district, Kosh-Dobo village; recorded by Khasanbaeva Dilobar, lives at the address: 6, Orosbay ata str., Ak-Tam village, Ala-Buka district, Jalal-Abad region, Kyrgyz Republic.

Аман бол, анам!

Мен турли юртларда юртим,

Коз яшим куп тукдим анам,

Кулларим учиб кетти,

Сени зикр килдим анам.

Бир ятим согынам, анам,

Мен учун кунлеринг кашкар.

Сени ойлаб, куп тукдим,

Бир ёшни калачар анам.

The song "Aman bol, anam!" conveys strong emotions of longing for home and mother. In the first line, the hero talks about how he traveled a lot to different countries, but found no solace anywhere except in thoughts of his mother. The image of the mother here acts as a symbol of home, the roots to which a person strives to return. The second line emphasizes how important the connection with the mother is for the hero, who admits that he experiences loneliness and longing, despite all the trials. The words "Bir yatim sogynam" (which means "lonely I miss") emphasize the feeling of abandonment and isolation, which is softened only by thoughts of the mother.

Thus, the song reflects the traditional values of Karakalpak society, where family ties and connection with the homeland play a key role. The image of the mother here is not only a symbol of love and care, but also the embodiment of spiritual support that helps to overcome difficulties.

Modern Uzbek and Karakalpak musicians continue the traditions of their ancestors by creating new works inspired by folk songs. These songs are adapted and performed in a contemporary style, contributing to the preservation and popularization of cultural heritage.

Popular folk songs of the Uzbeks and Karakalpaks play an important role in the cultural life of these peoples. They continue to live and be passed down to new generations, preserving the uniqueness and richness of these traditions.

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