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WHAT DOES MAKSIM DAKPAI DO WHEN HE SINGS *SYGYT*? A PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION OF ONE THROAT SINGER'S PERSONAL STYLE

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Famous Tuvan throat singers of the twentieth century continue to receive attention by today's singers. After considering the sources from the Soviet era that are currently (un)available as recordings, the author analyses a single song with *sygyt* throat singing by Maksim Dakpai (1921–1993). “*Karalangny berem ezhim*” (Give me your Karala, my friend) was published by Melodiya in 1968 and later appeared on the website of Alan Lomax's Cultural Equity project.

The author presents evidence that Dakpai was skillfully singing text with a simultaneous overtone melody and that the singer deliberately used harmonics that are avoided by most throat singers. He also analyzes a number of melodic patterns that are common in Tuva, but interpreted in his own unique way by Dakpai.

Keywords: Throat singing; Maksim Dakpai; musical analysis; *khöömei*; Tuvan music; ethnomusicology; *sygyt*



ЧТО ДЕЛАЕТ МАКСИМ ДАКПАЙ, КОГДА ПОЕТ СЫГЫТ? ПРЕДВАРИТЕЛЬНОЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ ЛИЧНОГО СТИЛЯ ГОРЛОВОГО ПЕНИЯ

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Знаменитые тувинские певцы горлового пения XX века продолжают привлекать внимание современных певцов и исследователей. В статье представлено исследование особенностей стиля горлового пения тувинского певца Максима Дакпая (1921–1993), известного исполнителя такого жанра хоомея, как *сыгыт*. Анализ выполнен на примере одной из песен, которую исполнял Дакпай «Каралаңны берем эжим» («Дай мне твоего Воронного, друг мой»). Песня была записана фирмой «Мелодия» в 1968 г., впоследствии размещена в архиве сайта «Культурный капитал» А. Ломакса.

Автор представляет доказательства того, что Дакпай умело исполнял текст одновременно с обертоновой мелодией, и что певец сознательно использовал такую гармонику (11 обертонов), которую избегают большинство исполнителей хоомея. Автор также анализирует ряд мелодических моделей, которые являются общими в Туве, но имеют в творчестве Дакпая уникальный вид. К статье дополнительными материалами приложены фрагменты аудиозаписи песни и сонограммы записей.

Ключевые слова: горловое пение; Максим Дакпай; музыкальный анализ; хоомей; тувинская музыка; этномузыковедение; *сыгыт*

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Introduction

When I first came to Tuva in 1993, I had the good fortune to meet several senior singers, whom I interviewed, recorded or asked for advice to develop my own *khöömei* techniques. The enormous changes that began to take place in Tuvan society are well-known. Likewise, Tuvan music entered a phase of constant adaptation to influences from inside and outside of Tuva. Relatively young throat singers, from 17-year old Möngün-ool Ondar to the 40 year old musicians of the Tuva Ensemble, Huun Huur Tuu, Yatkha, took center stage. But the seniors were not forgotten. After all these years, I found many Tuvan musicians getting back to these old masters and those that had already passed away. Their music had become a sort of gold standard during the Soviet era.

Young generations are still aware of the singers of the past. This is clear from frequent referencing of older singers in contemporary discourses. At least in recent decades, but possibly much longer, Tuvan *khöömei* has been stimulated not only in purely musical terms, but in a fervent discourse surrounding the practice itself. Older singers' names and achievements are remembered and celebrated, their personae sometimes even revered. Their names are mentioned frequently, their songs performed again and again. As the most emphatic proof of the Tuvans' commitment to keep the memory and the music of older generations alive, festivals in honour of senior and deceased singers take place. Here musicians gather to sing songs in the name of the deceased musician, who is or was often an original composer. Thus, in 1993, when I first visited Tuva, a festival was organized to celebrate Ak-ool Kara-Sal (1924–1987), where *igil* players competed to play in his style, which has a wide following among *igilists*. In the year 2000, one of the most revered throat singers of the late-Soviet and post-Soviet era, Gennadii Tumat (1964–1996), was commemorated in a festival in his hometown Khandagaity. A competition for *kargyraa* singers was held in Erzin in 2016, honouring Soruktu Samdanay oglu Kyrgys (1901–1976), a throat singer who was first recorded in Moscow in 1934. This year (2017) the much-beloved throat singer and former Director of the Center of Tuvan Culture Kongar-ool Ondar (1962–2013) will be remembered during a three-day festival. And in 2014 a competition was held for the singer who is the subject of this article, Maksim Dakpai, in the village where he was born.

In addition, Tuva boasts a sizable number of researchers, who over the last 20 years have produced many papers, articles and books. It is a discourse in which academics not only rely on performers: musicians often know the materials published by academics, so that the boundaries between one and the other are rather fluid. Academic organizations, such as the International Sci-



entific Research Center *Khöömei*, are also actively organizing festivals and conferences in which many local musicians participate, thus directly affecting the music community through high-profile events. The debates surrounding throat singing, as well as other typical Tuvan music styles, are lively and passionate, sometimes even fierce. They testify to the fact that Tuva's most iconic music styles, at least in recent decades, are shaped and re-shaped, imagined and expressed both as sound and as an idea, or concept.¹

Much text has been devoted to the special timbre qualities of throat singing (Suzukei, 1993; Levin, Suzukei, 2006), to its phonetic, acoustic and physiological aspects (Zemp, Trân, 1991, Grawunder, 2009), and to many issues linking throat singing to wider questions of Tuvan musical culture, folklore, history, customs etc. (Suzukei, 2007; Kyrgys, 2002), and to the shared or unique qualities of all these aspects in the Altay-Sayan region and beyond (Utegalieva, 2013). There have been specific musical analyses of Tuvan folk music as well, dealing with scales, rhythms, song forms and overall questions of melody (Aksënov, 2005²; Mongush, 2013). However, I have not been able to find Tuvan or other sources which talk in detail about the way in which throat singers construct their improvisations, from a musical point of view. To know what makes the old singers so important, even for contemporary, young musicians, it is useful to know how they construct their improvisations, or (semi-)composed overtone melodies. In this preliminary investigation, I will look at one single song by one single throat singer to clarify how his improvisation unfolds.

One cue for this question is the recent appearance (2016) of *An Anthology of Mongolian Khöömii*, which consists of old and new recordings on two compact disks. Among many other interesting items, it contains several recordings of Tuvan throat singers from Tsengel, like Papizan Badar, recorded shortly before he passed away in Summer 2016. The compiler and recordist for many recordings, Johanni Curtet, travelled widely in Mongolia to record many lesser-known singers.³ He noted a certain disregard for older and rural singers among young urban performers working professionally in the capital of the Republic of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar. He gives several reasons for compiling the anthology, from which I quote a few relevant lines.

¹ This notion is recurring in ethnomusicology ever since Alan Merriam wrote one of the foundational books of this discipline, *The Anthropology of Music* (Merriam, 1964).

² Partial translations appeared in *Asian Music* (Aksënov, 1973: 7-18) and in Stockman and Strobach (Aksënov, 1967: 293-307).

³ Another excellent document with field recordings of non-professional singers from the 1990s was produced by Chris Johnston: *Jargalant Altai. Xöömii and other vocal and instrumental techniques from Mongolia*, 1994, Pan Records, PAN 2050.



Today, *khöömii* is particularly known in onstage performing arts form, sometimes as a folklorized heritage, at the expense of its rural expression. [...] The academic form of *khöömii* established in the capital, Ulaanbaatar, has become the dominant model, with the signs of standardization already visible in other modes of transmission. [...] There is a striking incuriosity in previous generations among young people. [...] The growing gulf between rural and urban worlds exacerbates this tendency, as do poor circulation of recordings and insufficient access to sound archives (Curtet, 2016: 10).

Is such a concern also applicable to the situation in Tuva? Are singers aware of the achievements of their peers who lived in the 1980s and earlier? Is there a lack of knowledge, or ignorance, as in Mongolia? From my previous remarks it is clear that the situation does not seem quite as dramatic as in Mongolia. The difference (and first of all, the geographical distance) between Tuva's urban and countryside populations is not as big as that in Mongolia. Singers of the past who worked professionally in Kyzyl did not necessarily live far away from their rural homes. I vividly remember finding Aldyn-ool Sevek, whose career in Kyzyl I had heard so much about, in his native town Mugur Aksy. Even though that is the southwestern corner of Tuva, it is still close to Kyzyl compared to the distance between Uvs and Ulaanbaatar. It has been easier for Tuvan musicians to maintain close contact with both rural and urban communities. Yet the pace of modernization, of turning away from ancient traditions and ways of subsistence, is equal or faster than that in Mongolia, for the exact same reasons. An important part of the discourse surrounding *khöömei* and its cultural policies is geared, as it is in Ulaanbaatar, towards market-oriented thinking and professionalization. I would not go so far as to say, paraphrasing Curtet, that there is a new, academic form of *khöömei* established in the capital, Kyzyl, as a dominant model. But I would like to reflect upon the question of the legacy of Tuva's great singers of the past through their recordings, and of a lesser-known song of one throat singer (*khöömeizhi*) in particular. As this is not about a repertoire of songs, or the whole repertoire of a single singer, I consider this a preliminary investigation into the question what constitutes this *khöömeizhi*'s unique style. To start with, let me briefly discuss Tuvan recordings produced in the Soviet era.

Older sound documents of Tuvan throat singing

There exist various sound documents of Tuvan throat singing and many other types of music making. The earliest of these, recorded in the 1930s, were



not publicly available. Those that were issued as records are long out of print and hard to get by. Among the early sound documents is a collection of recordings made in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1968 a selection of these were issued by the Russian state record company Melodiya as a record, called *Pesni i instrumental'nie Melodii Tuvy*, with annotations by Vyacheslav Shchurov.¹ Another three-LP record set was published in 1982 by Melodiya, entitled *Tuvin-skii Fol'klor*, recorded and annotated by Igor Bogdanov. Many other recordings were made during the Soviet times, in Moscow, in Kyzyl and probably also elsewhere, but these four LP records constitute the most important Tuvan sound documents published during that era.

The first LP was re-issued on CD in 2007, in the USA.² The original 1968 LP already suffered from a lack of information and some mistakes.³ Curiously, the CD annotations do not mention anywhere the original source of the recordings: listeners are left to guess when and where the pieces were recorded. This seems to justify the rumour in Tuva that the CD was issued without permission of Melodiya. The CD re-issue, though providing more information, contains many spelling errors and discusses only one of the musicians, throat-singer Oorzhak Khunashtaar-ool. None of the other musicians are even mentioned, except in the track listing. But at least the music spoke for itself and became available more easily outside the few specialized record libraries or private owners that held copies of *Pesni i instrumental'nie Melodii Tuvy*.

Recently recordings from the second, 1981 Melodiya publication, were re-issued digitally as well, in a 3-CD box and booklet entitled *Tuva. Kolleksiia muzykal'nogo fol'klora*.⁴ Some of the original tracks were left out in the CD-version, but older recordings, going back to 1958, were added. This re-issue has regrettably not been available on the market, even though many people who keenly follow what is happening in Tuvan throat singing are interested in these recordings.

In August 2013 I noticed a collection of older Tuvan musical pieces was online for listening and download. They were made available by the Cultural Equity website of Alan Lomax, one of America's most productive ethnomusicologists of the twentieth century. The website shows that Lomax had obtained them in

¹ Melodiya D 030773-4

² *Melodii Tuvi. Throat Songs and Folk Tunes from Tuva*. Dust to Digital, DTD 09. Liner notes by Pekka Gronow.

³ See below.

⁴ *Tuva. Kolleksiia muzykal'nogo fol'klora* (3-CD), 2014. Compiler and editor Ch. S. Tumat. Melodiya/Natsional'nii Fond Podderzhki Pravoobladatalei, MEL CD 3002283



an exchange with the Melodiya record company in Moscow in 1964, together with many other recordings of the peoples living in the Soviet Union.¹ Given the inaccessibility of many of the old recordings from Tuva to the general public, I will here offer an analysis of a single song by Maksim Dakpai that is available for listening and download in this article and on Lomax' Cultural Equity website ([link](#)).² This particular song was not issued on LP or re-issued anywhere, to my knowledge.

The question of musical style in the academic context

Even though many Tuvans frequently discuss the unique styles, techniques, lyrical expressions and personalities of many performers, it is less clear what constitutes their unique qualities in an academic sense. Much of the scholarship is primarily textual, and contextual, following a general trend in recent decades in cultural musicologies to move away from the music per se and explore the many ways in which music is embedded in its essentially non-musical surroundings – its social and natural environments. There has been a certain conviction, held most explicitly by Valentina Suzukei and shared by myself, that the true nature of Tuvan throat singing escapes the usual academic musical analysis; that a Euro-centric investigation using music notation does not do justice to Tuvan *khöömei*. Suzukei first put forward her ideas in a 1993 book, *The Drone-Overtone Basis of Traditional Instrumental Musicianship of the Tuvans* (Suzukei, 1993), and has since elaborated upon it in her following works (Suzukei, 2007, 2010). The richly resonant nature of Tuvan music, including the fine nuances in timbre, has been a reason for many scholars to pay less attention to, for example, melodic peculiarities. The ideas put forward by Suzukei in her early book were part of a growing interest in the Turkic-speaking world of musicians and academics to make and to think music not so much through the notes as the smallest, atomic unit, but through the complex of vibrations encompassed by a sound's timbre. During Soviet times, there had been no place for such ideas, as music practice and scholarship were firmly grounded in pre-

¹ The recordings were obtained by Lomax as part of his effort to map musical styles globally in his folk song styles/Cantometrics research project, while attending the International Anthropological and Ethnological Congress in Moscow in 1964 (Cultural Equity, 2017). He received copies of hundreds of recordings (around ten hours) from all over the former Soviet Union, some from known sources (institutes such as the Moscow Conservatory and Moscow Radio, or individual collectors) some collected by an unknown source. The Tuvan source is not known.

² The full address is <http://research.culturalequity.org/get-audio-detailed-recording.do?recordingId=25084>. This same link will re-appear in this article several times. To access other Tuvan songs that Lomax collected, go to <http://research.culturalequity.org/get-audio-ix.do?ix=recording&id=11018&idType=sessionId&sortBy=abc>



for such ideas, as music practice and scholarship were firmly grounded in pre-twentieth century European art music and musical thinking, taking the note as the foundational unit. Suzukei and others have elaborated further on these ideas.¹ For example, Saule Utegalieva, in *Sound World of the Music of Turkic Peoples. Theory, History, Practice* elaborates on ideas first made explicit by Suzukei. She provides a comprehensive theoretical discussion of Turkic musics (mainly of Central Asia and South Siberia, with Mongolian examples as well) (Utegalieva, 2013). She seeks to group these musics in concentric circles, putting the natural overtone series center-place, as a proto-musical force without any humanly-made music. From this principle emerges a first ring of man-made sounds: the Jew's harp, throat singing, the end-blown flute (*kuray*) and bowed chordophones, such as the *gidjak*, *kyl-kobyz* and *igil*. In the second ring she places different types of plucked and bowed chordophones, and in the third concentric ring are plucked chordophones played with a plectrum. The last is furthest removed from the organizing harmonic principle in the center, and least rich in resonance (Ibid.: 230–239).

These new theories and concepts of the Turko-Mongol musical world are filling important gaps in our understanding of it, and this academic discourse was long overdue. It has implications for our understanding of other musics as well.

Related to the importance of timbre and harmonics is the *khöömeizhi*'s understanding of sound and the body. It is primarily in this field that we find more explicit ideas about the musicians' point of view of the music, or the sound, itself. Studies of Mongolian throat singing revealed that the terminology used to indicate various techniques and styles are referencing the physiological mechanisms the singer experiences (Pegg, 1992). The classification set in Tuva, first made known to scholars through the work of Aksënov in 1964 (Facsimile reprint: Aksënov, 2005), makes fewer specific references to the body than its Mongolian counterpart.

A recent publication of Zoya Kyrgys gives verbatim reports of the physiological processes at work in throat singing, by some of the most successful and knowledgeable Tuvan throat singers of the last half century. With surprising precision, like that of a phonetician or academic vocal trainer, these Tuvan throat singers, mostly of rural background, give their account of the fine-tuning of their vocal apparatus when they sing. I give one example, where Marzhymal Ochurovich Ondar (1928–1996) discusses one of the most difficult techniques of throat singing, called *ezenngileer* (Kyrgys, 2013: 88).

¹ An excellent overview of Suzukei's ideas can be found in: Levin, Suzukei, 2006.



Lesson 7: Ezengileer (*sic.*)

Author: Marzhymal Ochur-oolovich Ondar, officially recognized for Excellence in the Sphere of Education; also People's *Khöömeizhi* of the Republic of Tuva.

In the movements of the vocal folds, all the muscles of the larynx are involved – some hold cartilage in place, others control the movement of mobile laryngeal cartilage, and finally, others regulate the tension of the vocal cords. It is not only the mouth and pharynx that act as resonators, but also other cavities, particularly the nose. Even though the nose does not change in size or shape, it greatly affects the timbre of the voice, and even participates in the formation of vowel and consonant sounds. This is done through the oral cavity, which regulates the degree of acoustic interaction between the nasal cavity and oropharyngeal resonator. The characteristic sound of *ezengileer* is formed as a result of air friction on the edges of the vocal cords and in the oral cavity, producing something like the sound of that stirrups make when a horse is being ridden. The imitation of the sound of stirrups lends “softness” and “roundness” to the singer's voice.¹

The general impression one gets from this chapter, *Lessons and Methodological Recommendations*, is that some Tuvan *khöömeizhi* are extremely precise and articulate about the physiological mechanisms underlying *khöömei*. It contrasts with reports by non-Tuvan speakers, including myself, where we read that singers are mainly taught by example, with some general verbal explanations (van Tongeren, 1995). While attending workshops by Tuvan throat singers abroad, I never heard them explain the vocal mechanism in such detail as in the quotation above. We might call their vocabulary ‘technical’, but in Tuva it is not borrowed from science, but from introspection and observation, or ‘folk phenomenology’ if one likes. This kind of language played and still plays an important role in the transmission of *khöömei*.

Turning to the melody now, we go from the ‘vertical’ timbre structure to the horizontal changes. These two are linked, but singers will make sure that

¹ Kyrgys writes in a footnote to this quotation: “Recorded in 1995 in Bor-Taiga, Süt-Khöl District (from the personal archives of Z. K. Kyrgys)”. It seems likely, then, that Ondar was the author in the Russian sense of the word, and the interviewee in English. The exact phrasing of Ondar may likewise have been more colloquial than this rather scholarly rendition of the interview. See van Tongeren, 1995 or my own report on verbalisations of *khöömei* practise by my teachers and advisors, based on fieldwork conducted in Russian instead of the native Tuvan tongue.



the *khöömei* melody does not cause any major inconsistencies in the overall timbre. It is vitally important for a Tuvan throat singer to learn to improvise, to understand the tacit rules for constructing a note-by-note piece, usually within the range of the 6th to 12th (sometimes up to the 16th overtone).

This analysis is based on three methods of investigation: aural immersion, my own practice as a singer and acoustic analysis through sonograms. First of all, ever since I began to be involved with throat singing around 1990, I rely on my ears and on my practice as a throat singer, rather than on detailed comments about the melody structure from singers. Essentially my listening is based on hours and hours of listening to many Tuvan throat singers, live *in situ* and recorded, using published recordings and my own fieldwork recordings. I have been going through each section of a song or phrase again and again, listening, reproducing it using my own voice for parts which are hard to get. As a third methodology, transcribing or doing computer analyses, one gets another sense of what is going on. However, presenting merely the result of this analysis, a transcription or sonogram, carries the risk that it contains tacit knowledge and silent assumptions. Informed, musically trained readers will be able to read more in it, but still there is plenty of guesswork to do. Readers lacking musical training will have to guess even more.

Analysis through transcription has mainly been done by Aksënov, whose volume with scores of music notations was published in 1964, and more recently by Z. K. Kyrgys (Aksënov, 2005; Kyrgys, 2002). Kyrgys bases her analysis of Tuvan throat singing on some 700 (or 1000) transcriptions, a few of which are reproduced in her books on *khöömei*.¹ Quite a few songs Aksënov wrote about were interpreted by musicians, and Kyrgys also provided transcriptions of old she had collected herself to the Tyva Ensemble, which she co-founded. Yet most notations of Aksënov and Kyrgys are not available as audio.² Suzukei and van Tongeren have also done musical analysis through transcription, on a smaller scale (Suzukei, 2010; van Tongeren 1994). Suzukei has frequently elaborated on the problems of music notation, and provided annotated transcriptions and melodic analysis of the *khomus* (Tuvan Jew's harp) (Suzukei, 2010: 150–216).

¹ The 700 transcriptions are mentioned on page 8 (2002) and page 8 (2008); on page 143 (2008) she mentions “1000 transcribed musical words” (not mentioned in the Russian original of 2002). See also Kyrgys, 2015 for many transcriptions of Tuvan folk songs and ritual poetry.

² The video CD added to Kyrgys' latest book (2015) is not an integral part of her publication, linking sound and scientific analysis, but seems to have been compiled separately.



For my analysis I choose to rely on a recorded audio source that is publicly available; to provide sonograms and not music notations as a visual tool; and to rely on a verbal analysis and commentary as well. It is hoped that these three elements (audio, visual, textual) and their coherence aid the reader in a process of musical immersion, as well as intellectual understanding.

About the singer: Maksim Dakpai

Maksim Chalamovich Dakpai does not hail from Khondergei, as the Cultural Equity website writes, but from Iyme, where he was born in 1921 (Suzukei, Tumat, 2015). He lived until 1999 and received multiple awards and honours as a singer, including the posthumous title Folk Throat Singer of the Republic of Tuva (Ibid.: 28). He seriously studied “the performance of different techniques of throat singing” already in his early teens, and played the *igil*, *byzaanchy* and *doshpuluur* (Ibid.). He excelled in the *sygyt* technique, for which he was especially known. I have not been able to find if Dakpai conceived of his singing as some special type of *khörekteer* or *sygyt* (Bogdanov, 1982). His most famous recording is a song with *sygyt*, published by Lomax as *Khoomeimni Kagbas-la Men (I shall not leave My Khoomei)*. It appeared on the first (1968) Melodiya LP record as track A8, mistakenly titled *Pesnya Khomeyshi (v stile “khomey”)*.¹

When I discovered the Tuvan recordings of Lomax in August 2013, there was one piece of throat singing that stood out, *Baralangny berem ezhim*. In most songs with throat singing, there is an alternation of a text set to a melody and a part with no melodic singing, but overtone melodies on a drone. This song had no melody in the part where lyrics are sung. Instead, the lyrics were sung in a guttural voice on a single pitch. Each phrase of this ‘single-pitched song’ continued in one breath and on the same pitch into the *sygyt* part.

Choduraa Tumat, who worked on the production of the CD box *Tyva. Kollektzia muzykal'nogo fol'klora*, contacted Melodiya and other owners of recordings of Tuvan music made during Soviet times. She attempted to retrieve the written comments for each recorded item, but was not granted access to the archival material herself.² Upon receiving the available information, she noted there were many mistakes regarding musicians’ backgrounds, singing styles, lyrics, etc. For Dakpai’s entry that I discuss here she notes that he, as well as

¹ The technique, given in brackets on the LP, “(v stile “khomey”)” should read “v stile sygyt”: “in sygyt style” instead of “in khomey style”.

² This is based on several conversations with Choduraa Tumat between 2015 and 2017.



other musicians and ensembles from Tuva, made many recordings for Melodiya in 1958. At that time Dakpai was working as an actor for the Tuvan National Theatre, a job he lost several years later.

Tumat also found that other recordings of Dakpai have been made by Tuvan Radio, with variations in text. The text of the song I discuss is his own. The exact same recording discussed here is reproduced in the CD anthology.¹ The titles of the Cultural Equity website and the CD differ. The website gives the title *Baralangny Berem Ezhim (Come To Me, My Black-Eyed One)*, the CD, *Karam urug, beer oram*. In the text below, neither of these phrases appear literally. Choduraa Tumat suspects, based upon comparisons with other recordings, that Dakpai may have made minor mistakes in the text in this particular version, which could explain the difference of the titles and the lyrics that are actually sung.²

Harmonics and sonograms

Like most Tuvan throat singers, Maksim Dakpai has little vibrato in his voice. The projection of his voice is clear and energetic. It is without nasalization, but with pharyngalization. Beyond such general, technical aspects, what are the stylistic traits of this short piece? How did Dakpai build a melody in *sygyt*?

Contrary to what some listeners unfamiliar with Tuvan or Mongolian throat singing believe, overtones do not appear randomly. Throat singers make conscious choices of the overtones they sing. Like a speaker who selects his vowels and consonants automatically to form the words he wants to utter, a trained

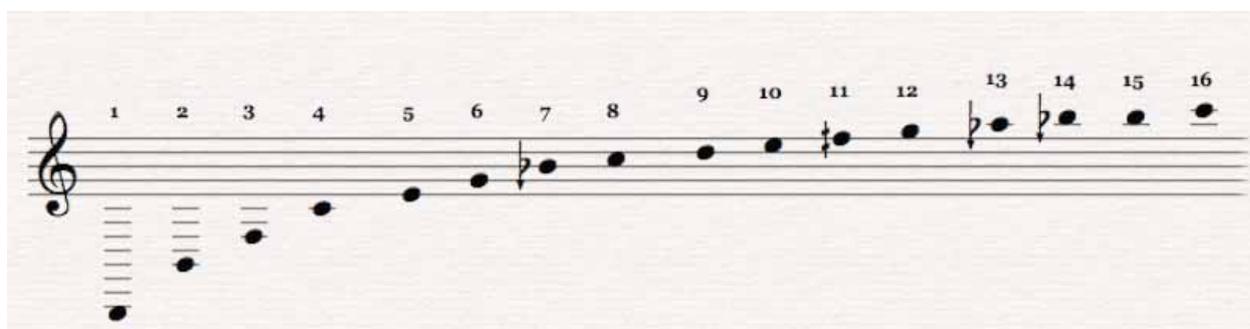


Fig. 1. The harmonic series.

Рис. 1. Гармонический ряд.

¹ Tyva. *Kollektsia muzykal'nogo fol'klora*, CD 3, track No. 3. Natsional'nyj Fond Podderzhki Pravoobladatelei, MEL CD 3002283.

² Personal communication with Choduraa Tumat, March-May 2017.



throat singer has grown accustomed to select the overtones he wishes to sing. He creates a melody just like any other singer chooses to sing certain notes. The main difference is that the throat singer is always bound by the natural laws of vibration, which dictate that each next overtone appears on a fixed distance from the lowest tone, or fundamental, according to the following scale.

The difficulties of using music notation, even if all readers could read them, are considerable. Therefore sonograms are used as visual representation of the phrases. The following figure shows:

- a) how frequencies are displayed (left, increasing from bottom to top);
- b) how white lines show more intense sound energy for each overtone against a black (no energy) background (middle);
- c) how these harmonics or overtones can be counted from lowest (no. 1) up through the range used by the singer (no. 7–12) and a little bit higher (right side).

This conscious choice obviously extends to the rhythm and tempo changes that a trained singer makes. More subtle variations are found in the colouring of the timbre and in differences in loudness, for example by applying varying degrees of pressure on the vocal chords between pieces, between phrases, or even within the course of a single breath. Changing the location of the pressure or emphasising different bodily parts of the totality of breathing and phonation mechanisms also affects the timbre and the loudness in a song.

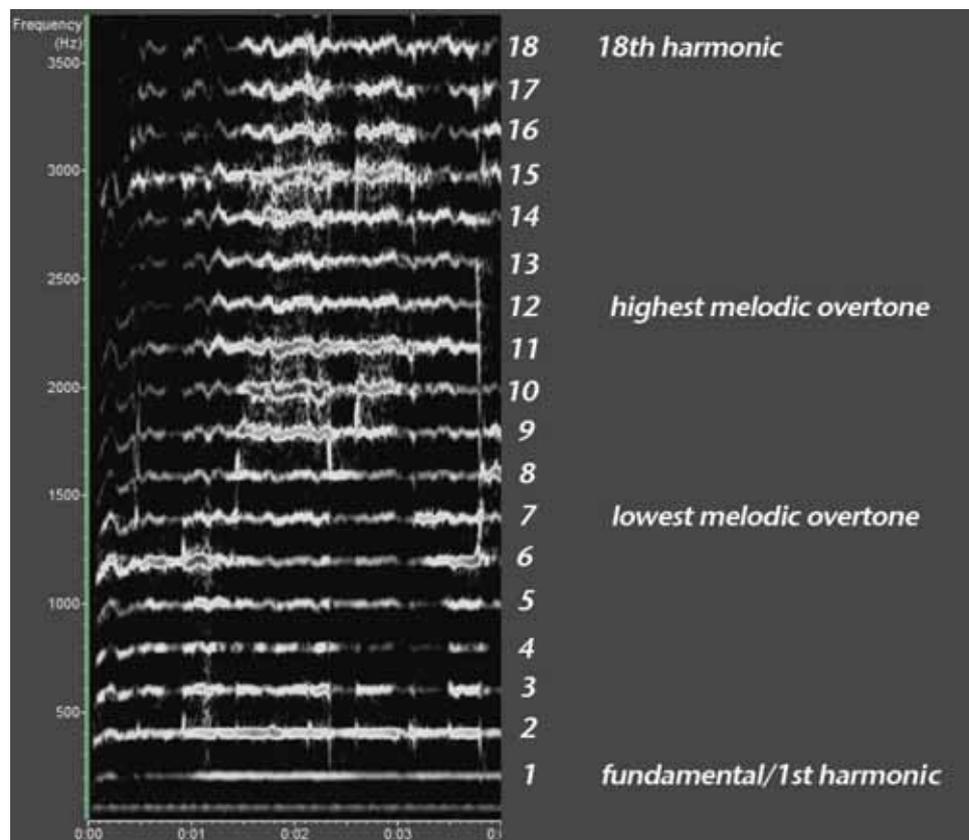


Fig. 2. Reading the sonograms. Example of phrase with text.
Рис. 2. Чтение сонограммы. Пример фразы с текстом.



For the sake of variation I will refer to the notes he sings as overtones, as harmonics, as numbers (“number 10”), or also simply “tenth” or “10”, wherever the context is clear enough to avoid confusion. In overtone singing parlance, these different terms do not imply a difference in meaning.

Song lyrics in the context of khöömei

In Tuvan throat singing there are several ways to combine text with *khöömei*. Usually singers start with singing melodic, introductory poetic strophes, followed by a *khöömei* melody. Sometimes the throat singing comes first, followed by the text.¹ For the poetic strophes a number of traditional melodic patterns exist, which the singer either uses as is, or as a basis to create his own lyrics. Many singers use existing, well-known melodic patterns, some of which are known to be composed by this or that singer in the past. Dakpai’s best-known song is such a widely imitated pattern, sung with or without his lyrics.

Whatever the case, the use of a melody to sing the lyrics prevails in all these variations. This melody can be sung in various ways. It is sometimes executed in a more or less normal singing voice, at other times with throat singing (referred to as *khörekter* or *khöömei*). The pattern of the lowest pitches, or the fundamentals carries the melodic material. Overtones may carry a considerable amount of sound energy compared to the fundamental, but the speed of the changing notes and the pronunciation of the syllables do not allow the singer to make a play of the overtones. These are still a by-product of the syllables, and not a main focus. Even when employing the *sygyt* technique, where much of the sound energy goes into the vowels, singers do not let the overtones prevail over the fundamental melody. No matter whether the lyrics are sung with or without guttural pressure, with or without the lowered fundamental of *sygyt*, text and overtone melody tend to be clearly separated in Tuvan throat singing.

Each phrase of the song I analyze begins with a text. Dakpai sings 8 or 9 syllables first and then starts his throat singing. When starting each strophe with his poetic lines, Dakpai leaves out the melody altogether. On a single pitch, he sings the following lines (refer to the link <http://research.culturalequity.org/get-audio-detailed-recording.do?recordingId=25084> again to hear the recording).

¹ Sometimes the throat singing comes first, followed by the text. Following Kyrgys, (2002: 102–114; 2008: 105–107), describing the organization of poetic strophes and *khöömei* singing, Dakpai uses scheme 4: singing 8 or 9 syllables first, followed by throat singing.



Karalangny berem ezhim
Give me your Karala¹, my friend

Kharlyg daglar ergeesh keeyin
I would like to go to the snowy mountains around

Karam urug beer olur
My beloved girl, sit next to me!

Kara baarym chydyp alyin
I want to warm my inside soul with you

Doralangny berem ezhim
Give me your Dorala², my friend

Doshtug daglar ergeesh keeyin
I would like go to the mountains where the glacier is

Dozur karam beer olur
My beloved girl Dozur-Kara, sit next to me!

Donggan baarym chydyp alyin
I want to warm my frozen soul with you

While uttering these words with rather clear articulation, or at least, a very conscious shaping of the mouth cavity, I found out that Dakpai is already aware of the harmonics. Compared to the melodic-lyrical strophes heard in most songs with *khöömei*, this is more feasible, as Dakpai chose to leave out any melodic variation. Singing the text on a drone with a *khöömei/khörekteer* delivery, he is already in *khöömei* territory (*khöömei* being the technique that is naturally close to the speaking voice, because of the proximity of vowels and overtones). Dakpai cleverly uses the syllabic structure to help his overtones stand out. The following table shows which overtones he produces with each syllable of the text.

¹ Name of a horse.

² Name of a horse.



Table 1: The eight syllables of each phrase and the overtones produced with them, above.

Таблица 1. Восемь слогов каждой фразы и обертоны, производимые с ними.

first	6	6	6	10	10	10	10	--	6	<i>sygyt</i>
phrase	ka	ra	lang	ny	be	rem	e	zhim	(-o)	
second	6	6	6	6	11	11	11	--		<i>sygyt</i>
phrase	khar	lyg	dag	lar	er	geesh	kee	yin	(nu)	
third	6	6	6	6	10	10	6	6	6	<i>sygyt</i>
phrase	ka	ram	u	rug	be -	er	o	lur	(-o)	
fourth	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	11		<i>sygyt</i>
phrase	ka	ra	baa	rym	chyl	dyp	al	yin		
fifth	6	6	6	9	10	10	10	10	6	<i>sygyt</i>
phrase	do	ra	lang	ny	be	rem	e	zhim	(-o)	
sixth	6	6	6	6	10	10	10	10	6	<i>sygyt</i>
phrase	dosh	tug	dag	lar	er	geesh	kee	yin	(no)	
seventh	6	6	6	6	9	9	6	6	6	<i>sygyt</i>
phrase	do	zur	(k)a	ram	be -	er	o	lur	(-u)	
eighth	6	6	6	6	6	9	6	10	6	<i>sygyt</i>
phrase	dong	gan	baa	rym	chyl	dyp	al	yin	(-o)	

We can see that Dakpai makes a coordinated effort to bend several vowels in a row in such a way that their loudest harmonics remain the same, producing one constant pitch above the syllables.

For example, when the words are:



‘*doralang ny ...*’

(fifth strophe), he will bend the four different vowels to ‘o’, singing

‘*dorolong no ...*’.

It demands considerable skill to ‘morph’ vowels this way, that is, to *avoid* letting them become too different. If one does not pay close attention to this, the overtones will quickly jump up and down, as they do when we speak. One has to force the harmonics to stay on one pitch, when vowels change. It requires a definite musical ear to let the harmonic structure predominate over the syllabic structure.

Further evidence that Dakpai is deliberately manipulating the overtones in these syllabic parts of the song can be gleaned from the variations in the overtones. The first four syllables of the song contain mostly the back vowels (a, o), whereas the second row of four syllables are mostly front vowels (e, i) (Anderson, Harrison, 2002). Most of the time, Dakpai morphs the first four syllables of each line around a single lower harmonic. Typically, that is the sixth harmonic, producing the interval of a musical fifth relative to the fundamental. During the second half of the line, he morphs the vowels towards a higher overtone, mostly number 10 (a major third relative to the fundamental). He thus makes good use of Tuvan poetic models, which create repetition through alliteration and which play with binary oppositions, in meaning as well as in sound.

An exception is the fourth strophe, where the vowels of the first three syllables do not change, and yet Dakpai produces another overtone, number 8 instead of 6. This shows that with this set of vowels, overtones 6 and 8 might both come up, and that the overtone between them, number 7, would also be likely to pop up, if Dakpai did not care about it. None of this randomness occurs, because Dakpai does care about the overtones. He is clearly guided by harmonics when shaping his mouth cavity. The harmonics that can be heard out provide a real melodic variation to the drone, because most of them are not the octave (no. 8) of the drone pitch (the octave can be more difficult to hear out, because it may be ‘absorbed’ as it were by the fundamental).

Within the model of dividing the text in two parts, one with a lower, one with a higher overtone, Dakpai works out certain details. He carefully avoids producing the twelfth overtone, which would easily come out with the vowel *i* that ends many of the phrases. He often cuts the *i* very short by quickly moving to *n* or *m*. He also morphs the *i* to a more muted *uh* (schwa in phonetics), which yields a lower overtone. Where one hears the eleventh overtone (or where one sees it in the table), it is apparent that Dakpai really needs to ‘force’ the overtones. The sharp front vowel *i*, which is rich in high frequencies, almost runs away with the overtones.



At this point, Dakpai adds an extra syllable *o* (or *u*) to many lines, before launching into *sygyt*. Here he follows a common rule for singing *sygyt* (at least in his days): to postpone the use of the twelfth overtone to a moment later in a song, and within the phrases where it appears, to use it after singing lower overtones first. There are thus good musical reasons to avoid the twelfth overtone when the actual *sygyt* has not yet begun.

Thus, already producing an overtone melody over the text, in a voice resembling the *khöömei* technique, Dakpai seemed to blur the distinction that is usually made between the two segments: a) text and b) melodic throat singing. Such a combination of melodic overtones in the first, textual part of a *khöömei* song, is very rare¹, but not entirely unknown. In Tuva, Aksënov writes octave harmonics (number 8) on a text performed in the *kargyraa* technique by Dimitriy Damba-Darzha (b. 1924), which is something different than the melodic variations I observed in the higher-pitched, *khöömei*-like voice of Dakpai (Aksënov, 2005: 175). A few selections of Khunashtaar-ool Oorzhak, an undisputed master of throat singing styles and techniques, seem to play with this technique as well².

Perhaps one finds the combination text/overtone more often among Mongolian performers, such as was demonstrated to me around the year 2000 by Ganzorig Nergüi. *An Anthology of Mongolian Khöömii*, mentioned above, has an example on CD2 (track 2) by Tserendavaa, to whom the invention of the technique is also attributed by the compiler Johann Curtet. However, G. Iavgaan already employed a similar technique in the 1980s, when Tserendavaa was still relatively young. He sings lyrics with overtones in the opening of the Zemp/Trân documentary *Song of Harmonics*, accompanying himself on the *tovshuur*, and also singing *khöömii*³.

¹ It does not seem to be any of the *khörekter* types Zoya Kyrgys writes about (Kyrgys 2002: 96–100; an English translation can be found in Kyrgys, 2008: 99–103). It is not clear from Kyrgys description whether Dakpai's singing could be any of these less-known styles or techniques of throat singing.

² Listen for example to the 1981 LP *Tuvinskii Fol'klor*: track 14, *sygyt*, which however brings out only the 8th harmonic, an octave of the fundamental, and track 24, *borbangnadyr-ezenggileer*, where Oorzhak almost 'swallows' the text to bring out harmonics. In Dakpai's case, however, the text remains clear, and melodic, non-octave harmonics are also clearly discernible.

³ See Zemp 1989. <http://videotheque.cnrs.fr/doc=606?langue=EN>. At 1 min 25 sec. singer G. Iavgaan starts with a low-pitched *khöömii*, then continues with lyrics combined with overtones.



A phrase-by-phrase look at a sygyt melody

Departing from the understanding I mentioned earlier, that Tuvan singers make conscious choices when singing overtones, we may ask such questions as: what makes Maksim Dakpai a virtuoso of throat singing? How does he build up a sygyt melody? What are the characteristic musical elements which we encounter in a *khöömei* song by Maksim Dakpai? I will take a close look, phrase by phrase, at how he develops his melody. In the following sonogram one can see how each phrase is composed of an introductory text (with all overtones visible), followed by overtone singing (with many overtones dampened, and the melodic ones standing out amidst a few nearby harmonics). The strongest sounding harmonics are displayed by a black line surrounded by a narrow white border. Weak harmonics are vague grey lines, or absent (showing only the black background).

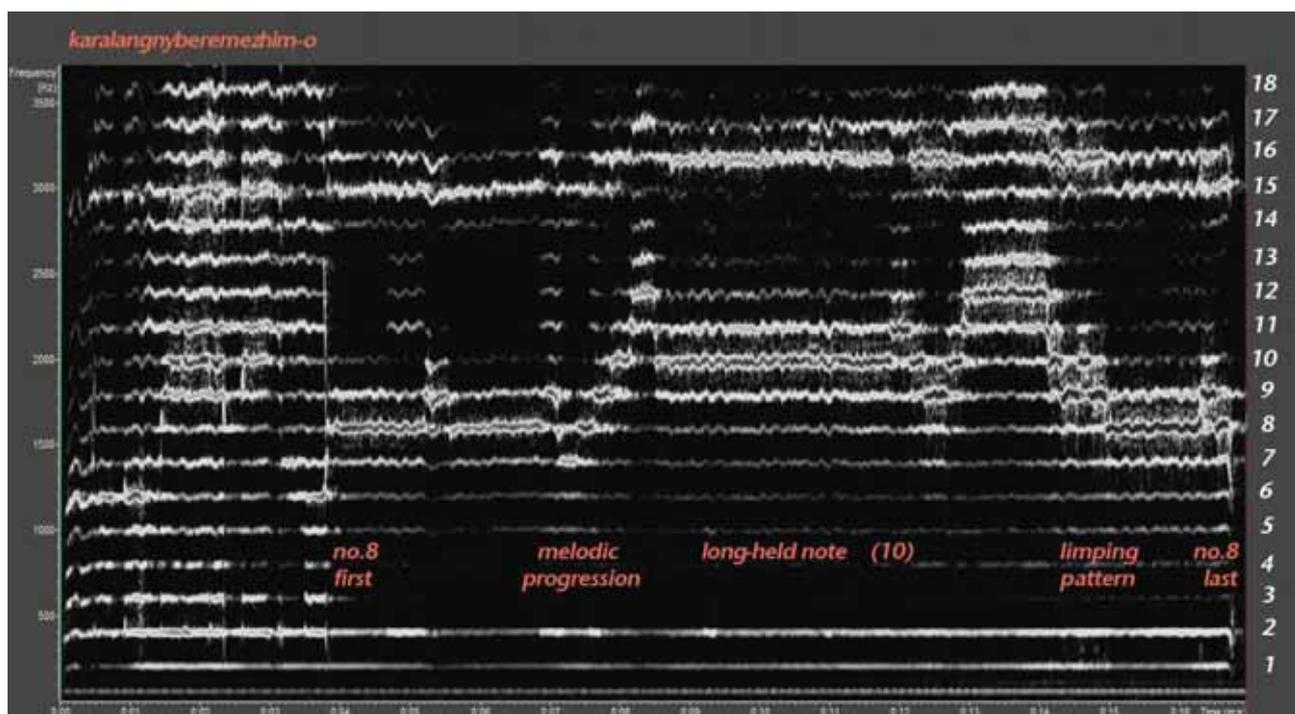


Fig. 3. Showing the different outlook of the textual (left) and the throat singing (right) parts on the sonogram, using the first phrase of Dakpai's song.

Рис. 3. Различные виды сонограмм: исполнения песни (слева) и горлового пения (справа), используемые в первой фразе пения Дакпая.

First phrase

For this phrase, refer to the image right above.



Listen from the beginning of the song, Karalangny berem ezhim, at <http://research.culturalequity.org/get-audio-detailed-recording.do?recordingId=25084> Press pause to stop playback after this phrase.



Dakpai starts, as is very often the case at the beginning of Tuvan throat singing, with a low overtone, in this case number 8, or the third octave above the fundamental. He briefly jumps to the next harmonic (number 9), then returns to the first one – a stylistic trait that is a hallmark of Tuvan throat singing.

After that he holds the 8th overtone for a while, then leaving it in order to arrive at another longer pitch, the 10th overtone, through a brief rhythmic-melodic ‘detour’ on overtones 9-7-8-9-10-12, where he more or less doubles the tempo of the first text part. In this short melodic ‘detour’ between longer pitches a Tuvan singer can show some ingenuity in improvisation. Again attention is given to number 10 for a longer time, displaying a stable breath and stretching the sense of time as it were.

Dakpai then briefly passes by number 11 and again 10, 9, 10 before hitting 12, again extended, as the high point of this phrase. He then descends to where he began (number 8) but first briefly passes through overtones 10-9-10-9, a common formula we may call ‘limping’ for its back and forth movement.

Second phrase

It starts at no. 8 again but moves on immediately, in the tempo of the text, to number 9, then back to 8. After holding the eighth overtone, he begins a very uncommon formula by jumping straight to number 11, then descending through 10-9-10-8-9-8, an ‘extended limping’. This turns the eleventh overtone into the highest position of the phrase, receiving an emphasis it rarely gets in *sygyt*. Most singers would choose the 12th overtone as their top note instead. The 8th is held once again, with a brief jump to the 9th. Short though it may be, it provides a subtle rhythmic element amidst the ‘serenity’ of the long-held overtone.

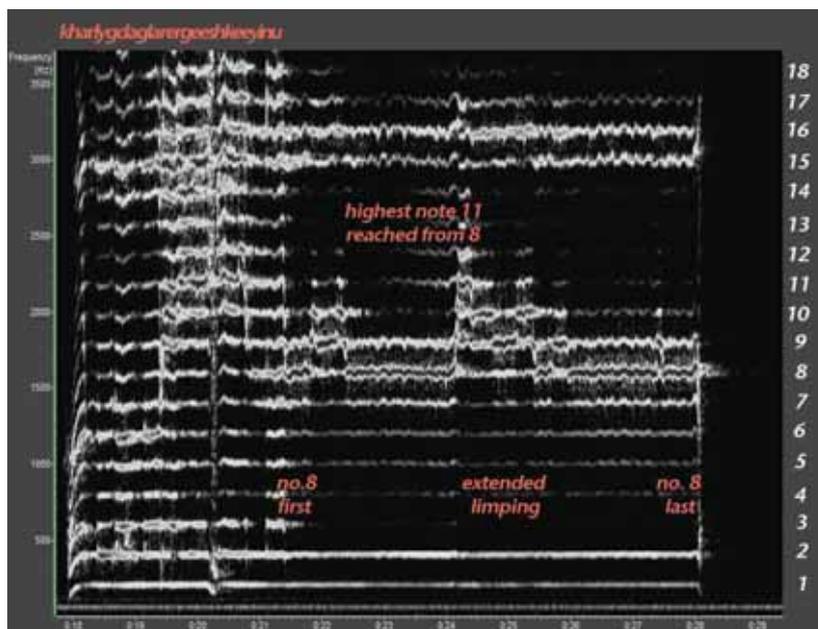


Fig. 4. Second phrase of Dakpai's song: text and *sygyt* melody.
 Рис. 4. Вторая фраза из песни Дакпая: текст и мелодия *сыгыт*.

Listen from the beginning of the song
 (LINK)
 or press play for Kharlyg daglar ergeesh keeyin.
 Press pause to stop playback after this phrase.





Third phrase

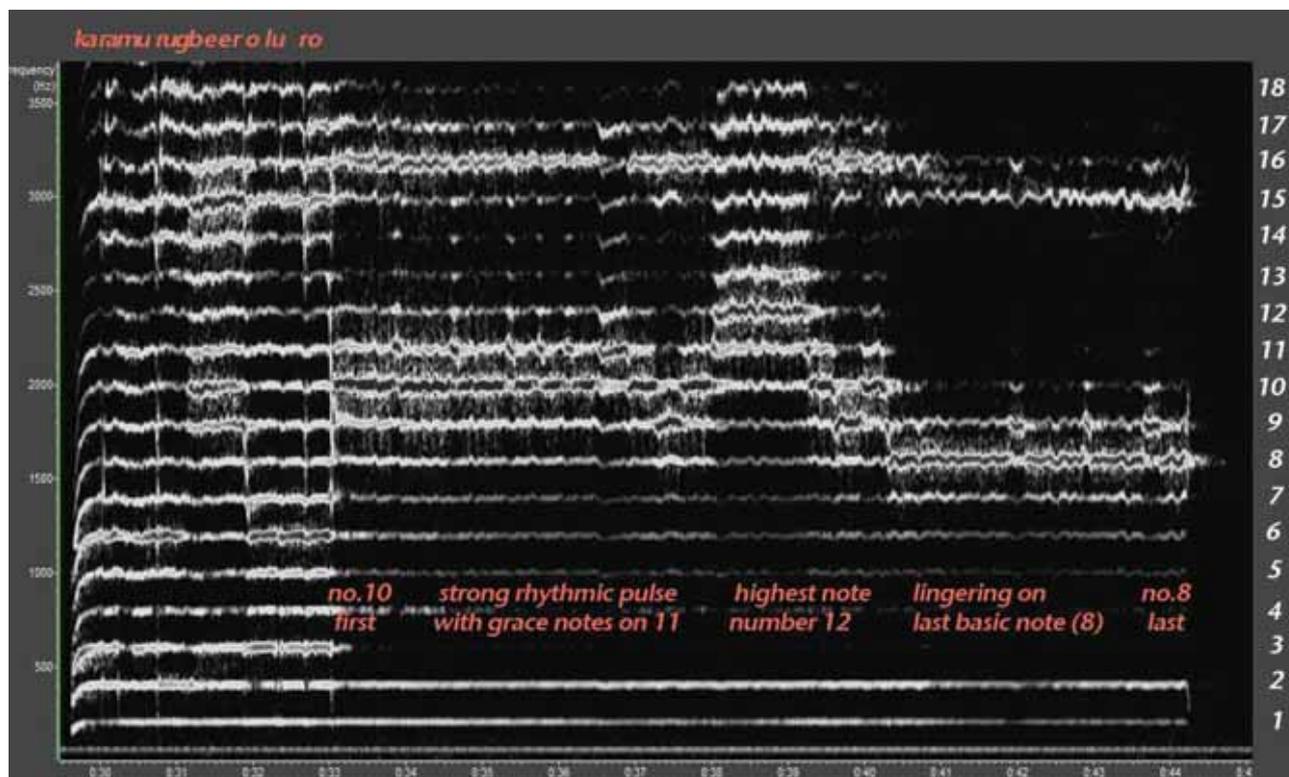


Fig. 5. Third phrase of Dakpai's song: text and sygyt melody.
 Рис. 5. Третья фраза из песни Дакпая: текст и мелодия сыгым.



*Listen from the beginning of the song ([LINK](#))
 or press play for Karam urug beer olur.
 Press pause to stop playback after this phrase.*

For the third phrase Dakpai chooses to start the melody on number 10. He builds further on the rhythmic dimension, propelling the melody forward with a more vigorous, repetitive sequence of grace notes that firmly establish the rhythm. He does not quite lose the beat, but holds back the rhythm for a moment, only to accentuate it more firmly when he returns to singing short grace notes. He then doubles their speed briefly and shifts back into the rhythm of the text. This brings him once again to number 12, passing by 11, 10, 9, 10. He does not linger on 12, but returns to 8 through the common formula 10, 9, 10, 8. Then he does, however, start to linger on 8, not hurrying to take a breath, but showing endurance by making three quiet, yet emphatic grace notes on 9.



Fourth phrase

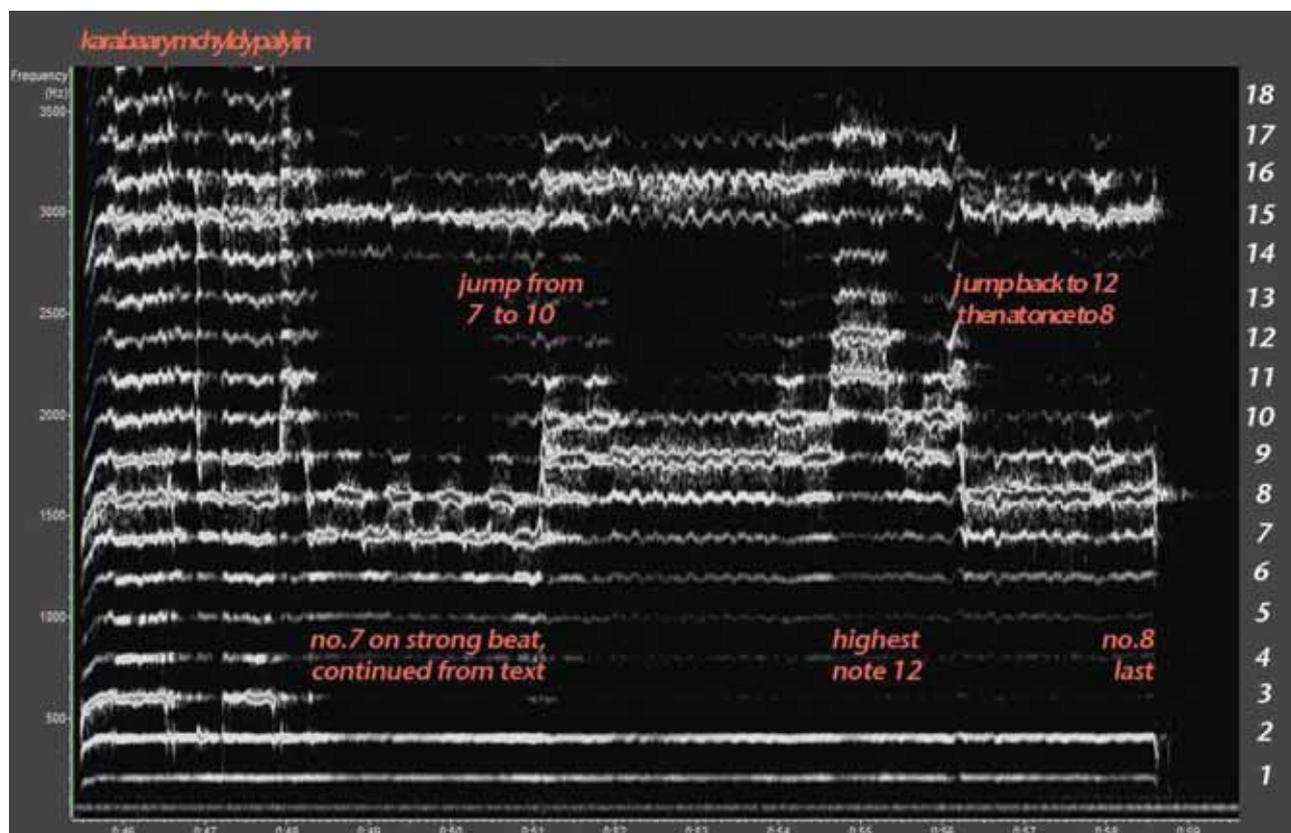


Fig. 6. Fourth phrase of Dakpai's song: text and sygyt melody.
 Рис. 6. Четвертая фраза из песни Дакпая: текст и мелодия сыгит.

*Listen from the beginning of the song ([LINK](#))
 or press play for Kara baarym chyl'dyp alyin.
 Press pause to stop playback after this phrase.*

The fourth phrase has the lyrics delivered in a slightly more staccato voice. The rhythm continues, unbroken, into the melodic part, where Dakpai juxtaposes two adjacent overtones, 7 and 8. He starts with number 7, thus giving it more emphasis than number 8. The same steady rhythm is kept for number 10, 9 and 10, arriving at the first long-held note now, number 9. This is again followed by the 10-9 pattern which leads once more to number 12, held only slightly longer than a single beat. Instead of the common limping pattern (10-9-10-9-8) he makes one jump back up to 12 (10-9-10-12), an extended limping. From number 12 he returns at once to 8, an unusual, hence surprising big step. Number 8 is held longer again, going up to 9 for one beat.



Fifth phrase

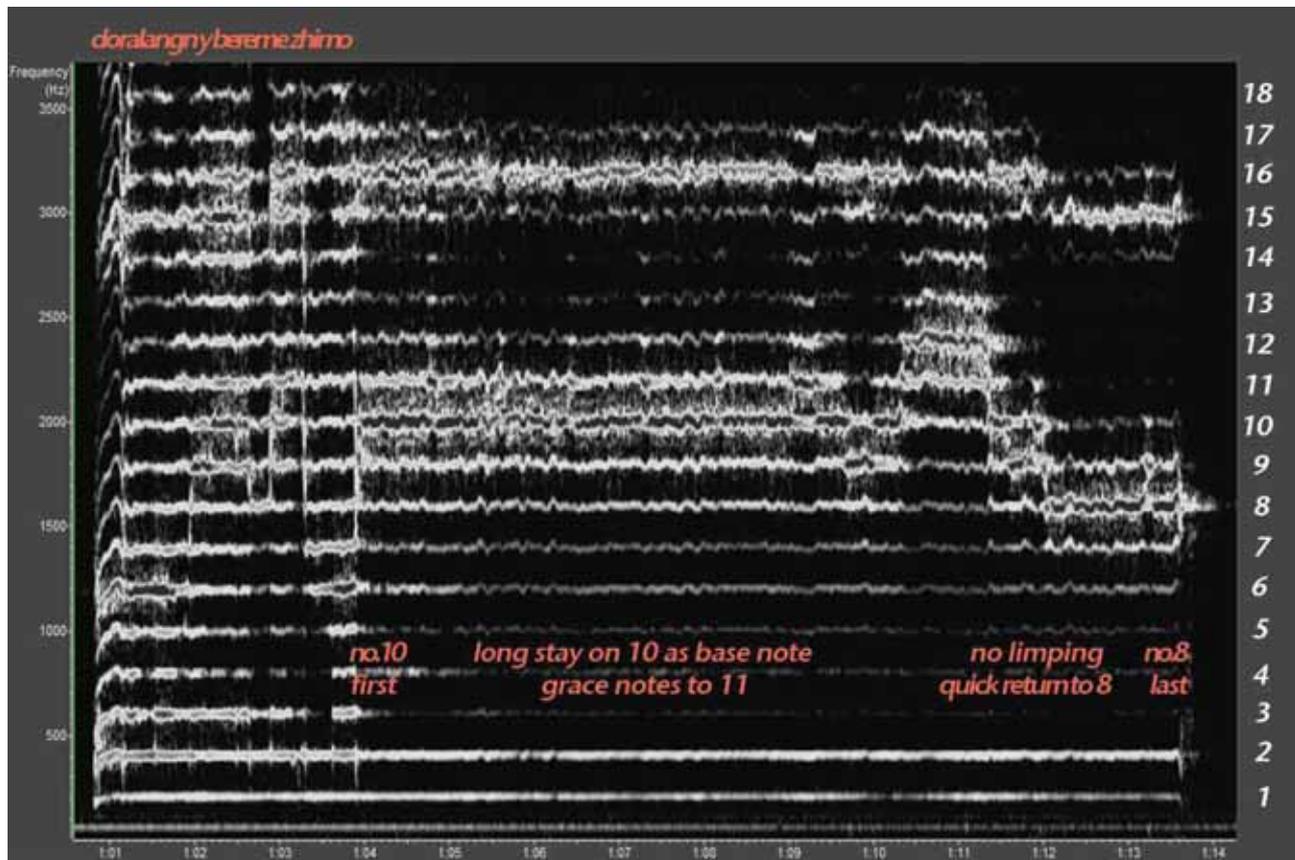


Fig. 7. Fifth phrase of Dakpai's song: text and sygyt melody.

Рис. 7. Пятая фраза из песни Дакпая: текст и мелодия сыгит.



*Listen from the beginning of the song [\(LINK\)](#)
or press play for *Doralangny berem ezhim*.
Press pause to stop playback after this phrase.*

The fifth phrase is again different in that Dakpai returns again and again to number 10 with which he starts the melody. For the grace notes he goes up to 11 instead of 12. But it is really the rhythmic, not the melodic accent, that counts here. Holding number 11 for a whole beat, he shifts from a syncopated rhythm to overtones on the underlying rhythm, making a typical stepwise progression with an untypical stop at the 11th harmonic (11-10-9-10-12), to reach number 12, which he holds for a brief moment. He starts the descent to 8 but instead of repeating the stepwise progression through several instances of 10-9 (perhaps visiting 12 again) he immediately jumps back from 10 to 8, where one grace note is added.



Sixth phrase

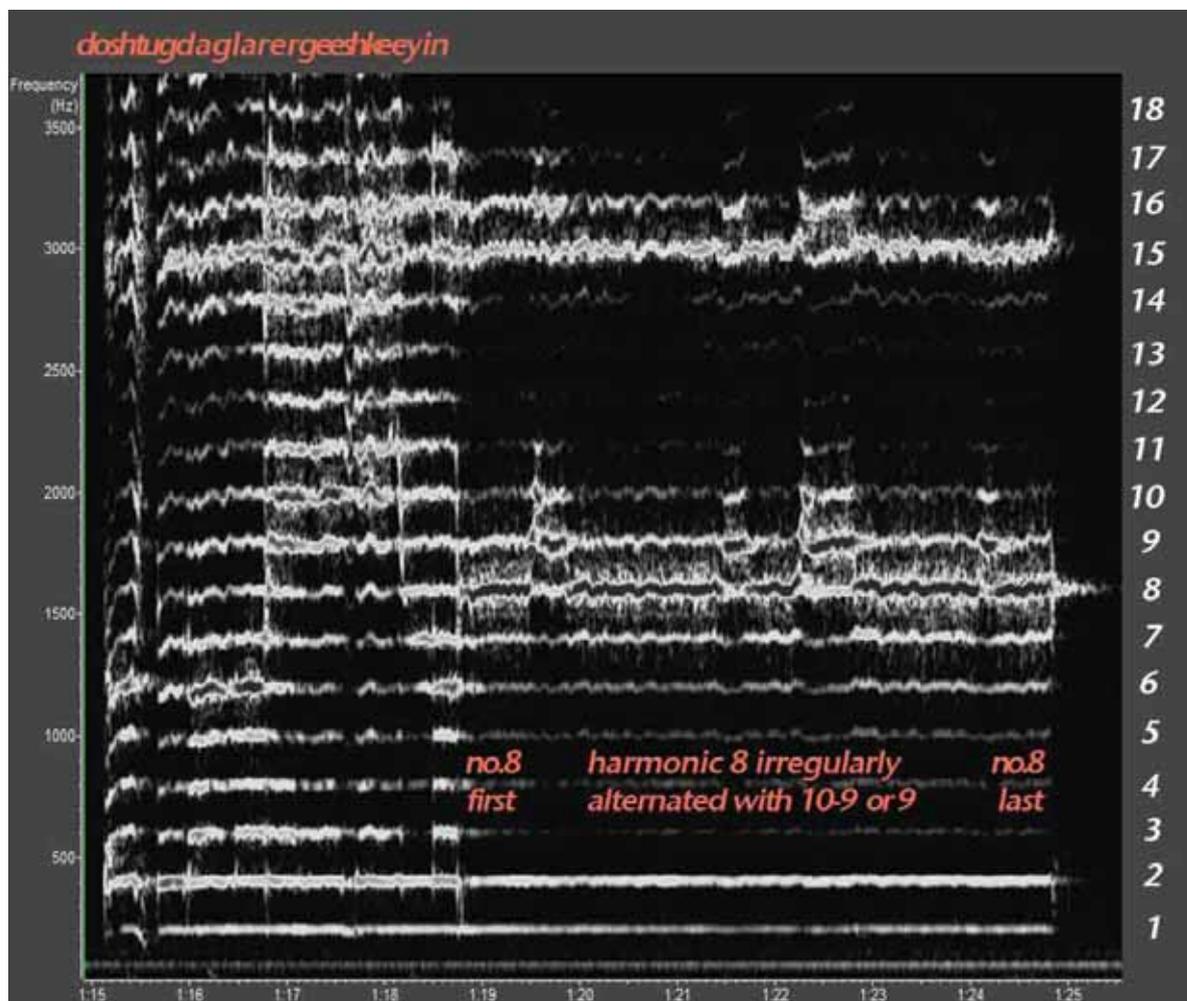


Fig. 8. Sixth phrase of Dakpai's song: text and sygyt melody.

Рис. 8. Шестая фраза из песни Дакпая: текст и мелодия сыгыт.

*Listen from the beginning of the song ([LINK](#))
or press play for *Doshtug daglar ergeesh keeyin*.
Press pause to stop playback after this phrase.*



Yet a different phrase because he uses only three harmonics, and they are centered on number 8. We hear two variations on the stepwise pattern: 10-9-8 and 9-8, with the 9 sometimes held slightly longer, in between the length of a grace note and a quaver.



Seventh phrase

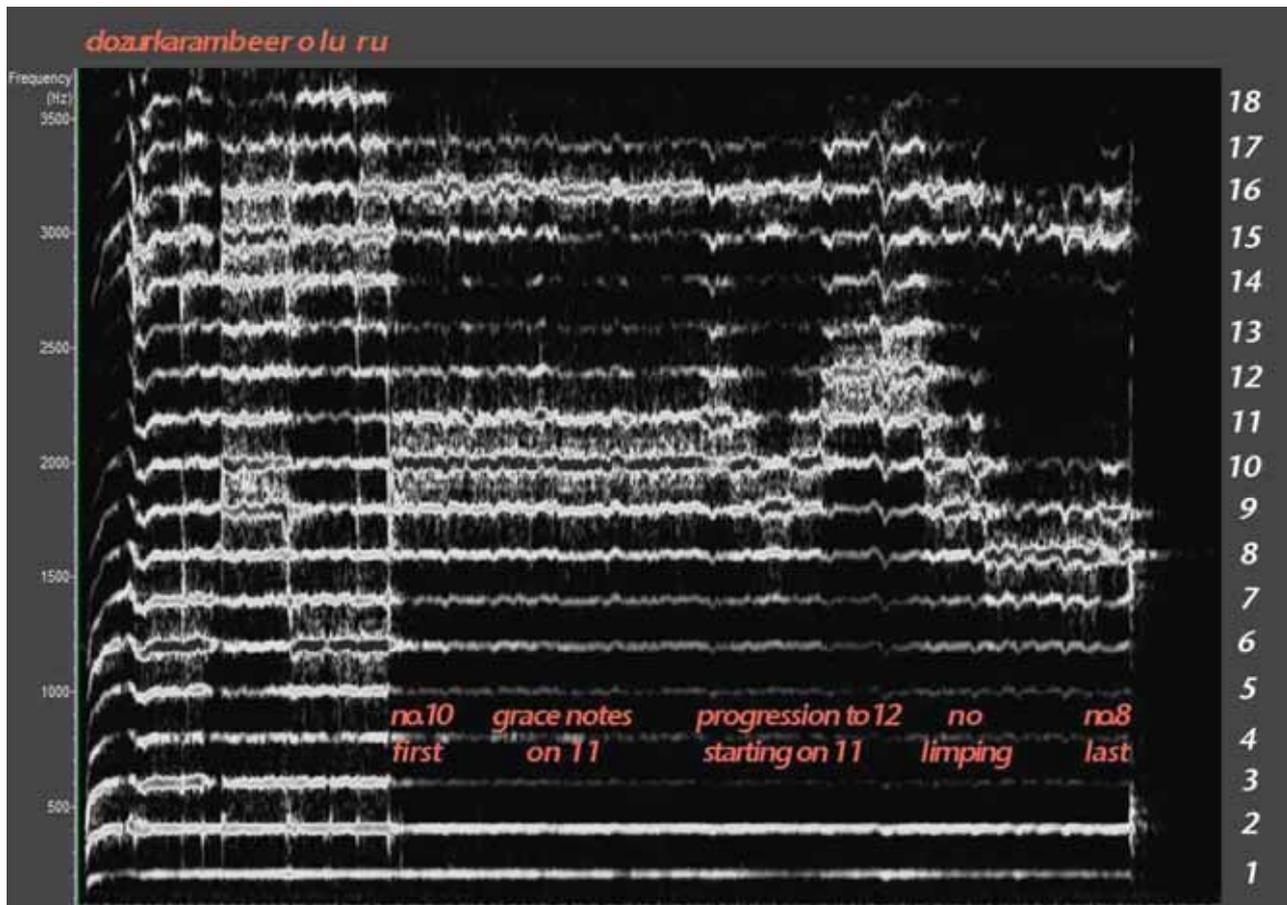


Fig. 9. Seventh phrase of Dakpai's song: text and sygyt melody.

Рис. 9. Седьмая фраза из песни Дакпая: текст и мелодия сыгыт.



*Listen from the beginning of the song ([LINK](#))
or press play for Dozur karam beer olur.
Press pause to stop playback after this phrase.*

The melody of phrase number seven plays subtly with our expectation of a rhythmic element. Dakpai begins the melody on a prolonged tenth overtone, producing the grace note (number 11) lightly, sometimes almost imperceptibly, or leaving it out where it could occur according to our expectation of a rhythmic element. Again it is through the same pattern as in the third phrase, (11-10-9-10-12) that Dakpai arrives at the high note (12) which he holds. He finishes through the quick descend to 8 from number 10, adding one grace note.



Eighth phrase

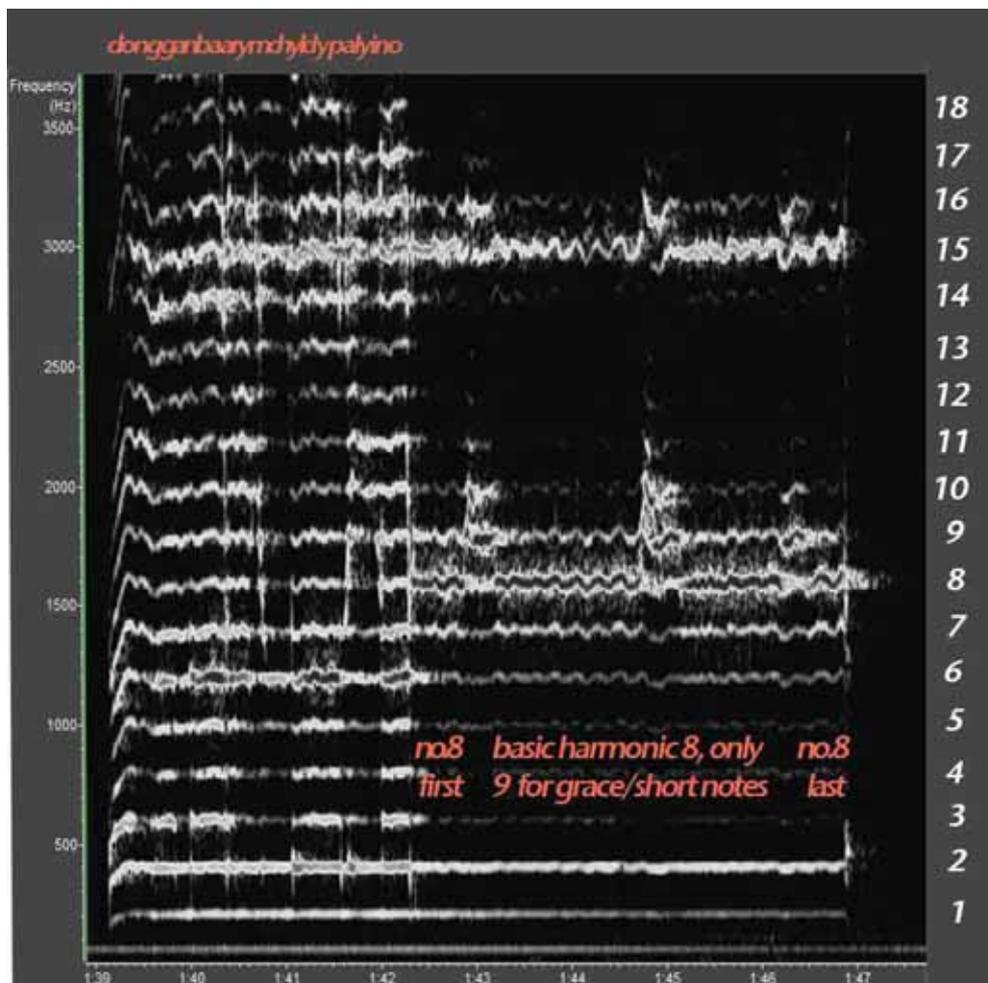


Fig. 10. Eighth phrase of Dakpai's song: text and sygyt melody.

Рис. 10. Восьмая фраза из песни Дакпая: текст и мелодия сыгит.

Listen from the beginning of the song ([LINK](#)) or press play for Donggan baarym chyl dyp alyin. Press pause to stop playback after this phrase.



The eighth phrase follows the model of the sixth phrase, with the base note of the overtone melody. It is much shorter than previous phrases.



Ninth phrase

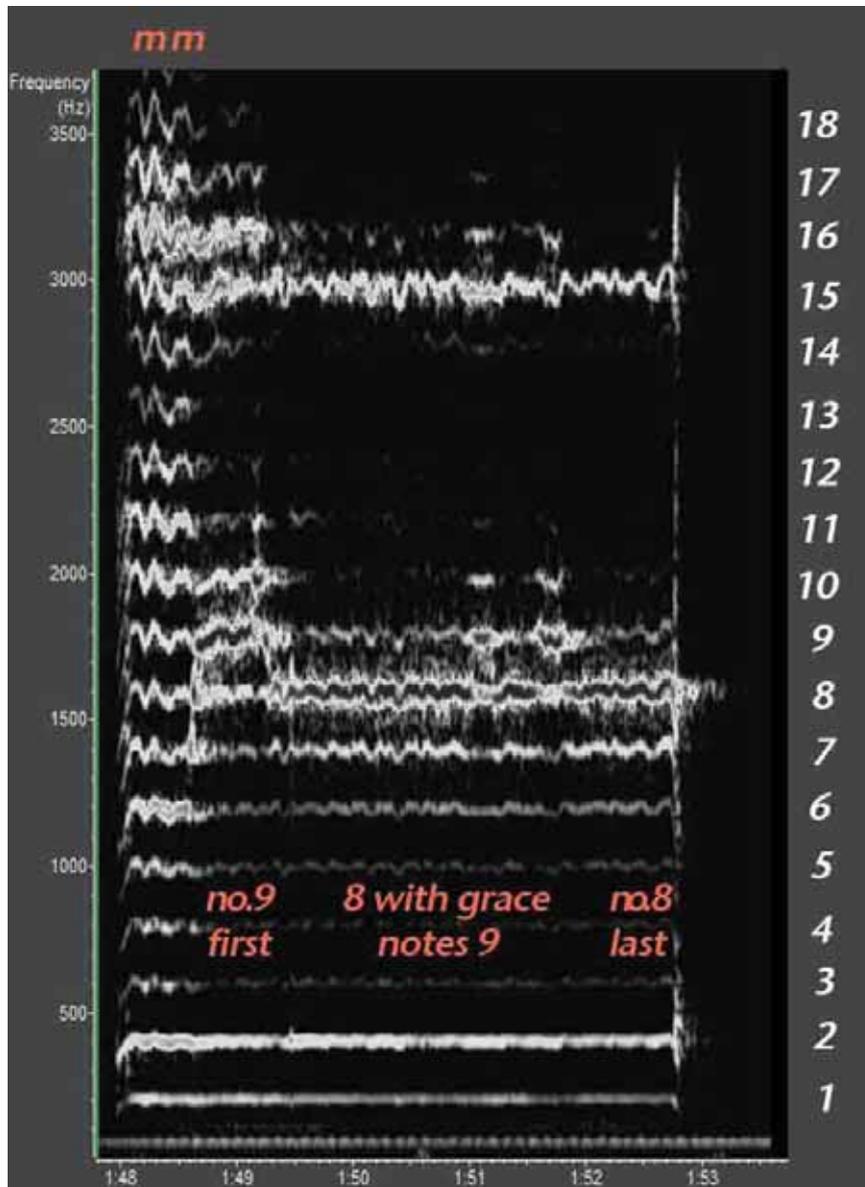


Fig. 11. Ninth phrase of Dakpai's song: sygyt melody only.

Рис. 11. Девятая фраза из песни Дакпая: мелодия сыгит.



*Listen from the beginning of the song ([LINK](#))
or press play for the last phrase.*

The quatrains are now finished: this phrase starts not with words but with Dakpai's closed mouth. The M gives way to the first melodic note, which, as a last deviation from expected patterns, is neither 8 nor 10 but 9. Again it is through 10 that Dakpai finally settles on number 8 to end the song.



Melodic-structural elements of Dakpai's sygyt

We thus see that Maksim Dakpai uses a number of melodic and rhythmic variations, which I summarize here. Most of these elements are recurring again and again in the performances of other singers, yet many singers treat them in a standard way, handed down over the generations. A few singers make changes to them.

Grace note

- A brief jump to another harmonic, followed by a return to the original pitch.
- Always going up, then down, usually one step.
- Varies in intensity from a strong accent to an almost inaudible embellishment.
- Subtle signal of an underlying pulse amidst the serenity of a long-held note (at least one beat).
- Emphasizes rhythm more than melody.
- A hallmark of Tuvan throat singing, in particular in *khöömei* and *sygyt*.
- If we use a dash (-) to indicate note length, an example looks thus: 8-----9-8-----9-8-----9-8-.

Limping pattern

- Adjacent overtones are alternated
- Usually when on the move to another longer tone

For example, 10-12-10-12-10-12-9.

Enlarged limping pattern

Combination of a common limping pattern (10-9-10-9-8) with one or more larger steps, skipping several overtones. For example, 10-9-10-12-8.

Lingering notes or long-held notes

- Long-held notes hold our attention on a single pitch, displaying a stable breath and stretching the sense of time as it were.



- Like jugglers keeping balls in the air, this one may get audiences clapping in Tuva as it lasts longer.
- Not hurrying to take a breath, but showing endurance by making three quiet, yet emphatic grace notes on 9.

Repetitive sequence of short rhythmic notes

- Repetition of the same two notes of more or less equal duration.
- The notes are held longer than grace notes, and shorter than long-held notes.
- They firmly establish a rhythmic pulse.

Melodic progressions

- Various ways to use larger melodic intervals, not using (or mostly avoiding) adjacent notes and repeated combinations.
- These may include variations of the limping pattern.
- Here a Tuvan singer can show some ingenuity in improvisation.
- Singers who can, may use some uncommon melodic overtones: the seventh, eleventh, thirteenth and (since the 1990s, as far as I know) the sixteenth harmonic.

I leave further considerations of rhythmic peculiarities aside now.

About using the seventh and eleventh harmonic

Regarding the overtones Dakpai uses, it is unusual to find the emphasis he places on the 11th overtone among most other *sygyt* singers' repertoire. Aksënov, a source that is particularly relevant for the epoch (the 1950s and 1960s) when Dakpai made his name, notated the eleventh harmonic only as short, passing notes, and mainly in techniques (*ezenggileer*, *borbangnadyr*) where melody is not as important as in *sygyt*.¹ He discussed the eleventh harmonic as a melodic characteristic only in connection with *ezenggileer* (together with the thirteenth

¹ Aksënov, 2005. See No. 66, 67 (*sygyt*), No. 72 (*sygyt*) and a little more prominently No. 73, the second part (*ezenggileer*) for occurrences of the eleventh harmonic as non-emphasized grace notes.



harmonic).¹ For *sygyt* Aksënov mentions only 8, 9, 10 and 12.² In the transcriptions of Kyrgys' book *Tuvinskoe Gorlovoe Penie* we do find a few rare occurrences of harmonics 7 and 11 (Kyrgys, 2002: 144–174), but only as short grace notes in what I called a limping pattern. Kyrgys mentions them briefly after her fifth music notation, of Maksim Dakpai's *sygyt*, without any further comments.

The commonly held view in the descriptions of Tuvan throat singing is that *khöömeizhi* prefer only certain overtones, and number 11 is certainly not one of them. As far as number seven goes, Ted Levin writes (Levin, Suzukei, 2006: 53):

Note that the seventh harmonic, which produces a flatted seventh interval relative to the fundamental pitch (C-Bb), does not figure in the melody of "Artyy-Saiyr" (nor does the non-diatonic eleventh harmonic). The absence of the seventh harmonic in all Tuvan and Mongolian throat-singing that I have ever heard suggests that the harmonic series is not used naturalistically, in its raw form, but selectively, within a tonal system rooted in cultural preferences. (The flatted seventh scale degree does turn up in Tuvan songs that are not performed with throat-singing, for example, the well-known "Orphan's lament").

Few singers or scholars would disagree with Levin. Overall, singers do avoid the seventh and eleventh harmonic. Yet Aksënov already included the seventh for *borbangnadyr* (and only for that technique, not for *sygyt*) in 1964, and one can hear it more often nowadays. Yet, to hear the seventh harmonic as prominently as in Dakpai's recording (in the fourth phrase) is rare. Combined with his use of the eleventh harmonic, which is even rarer to encounter, we could say that Maksim Dakpai did use the overtones naturalistically. There is no chance he might have been mistaken. He may have consciously sought to expand on the formats of scale and melody known at the time. It is not unthinkable either that he was influenced by singers from rural Tuva, who occasionally used these harmonics. However, it is also true that his example, though widely respected and frequently copied by singers, is not followed in this particular matter.

Conclusion

Summarizing, it is significant that the throat singer Maksim Dakpai chose to include the seventh and eleventh overtones, giving them a relatively promi-

¹ Ibid.: 61.

² Ibid.: 60.



ment place in the rhythmic-melodic patterning of his *sygyt*. It is one element within his melodic inventions that sets this tune (and this throat singer) apart from much of the other famous throat singers recorded in this period, and afterwards. I have also analyzed which other melodic elements and patterns occur in his singing. We saw that there are several standard procedures for performing Tuvan *sygyt*, handed down over the generations, and that he uses original ways to re-create them. Another unusual aspect of Dakpai's song is the reduction of the melodic, lyrical introduction to a single pitch, with several harmonics from the common melodic range clearly audible. I provided some evidence for my hypothesis that Maksim Dakpai made a deliberate effort to combine poetic phrases with overtone singing. He alters vowel qualities so they group around a central resonance, and thus brings out clear harmonics that follow definite musical patterns.

It must be emphasized, finally, that to my knowledge throat singers do not talk about, or teach, these musical elements in such an analytical way as I present them here. Learners and professionals use these elements in context. They create their own versions from known examples; they compose songs, not technical exercises. They choose harmonics not according to their number but to a certain feeling they wish to express with them. The best singers eventually find their own way to balance elements of inspired, traditional singing with their own unique vocal abilities. Certainly Maksim Dakpai succeeded in shifting that balance, gently pushing the limits of *khöömei*.

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