

## Sound of condolence in Nivkh traditional music

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Nivkh is an indigenous people in Russian Far east. Their traditional territory is Amur river mouth area and Northern half of Sakhalin island. Their ethnic population is about 5,500 in Russian federation and 100-300 in Japan. This paper is an attempt of short discription of Nivkh traditional music system and its historical formation<sup>1</sup>.

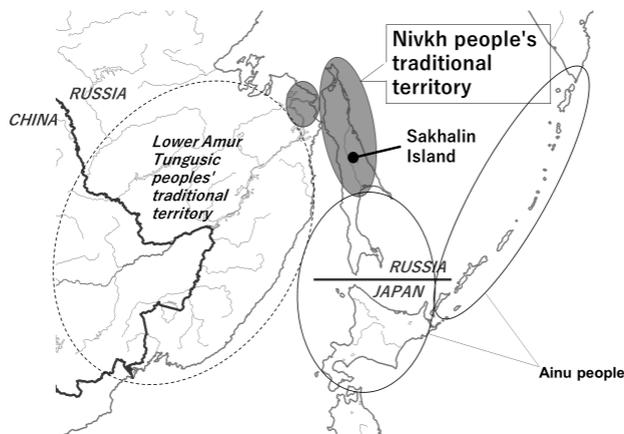


figure 1 Nivkh traditional territory

### 1. Nivkh traditional concept of music

Nivkh traditional society was based on small scale fishery and hunting for fur trade, and there were no professional musicians. Compared with neaby Chinese or Japnaese music traditons that have been practiced by professional musicians and supported by monetary economy for a long time since ancient times, Nivkh and other Northern minority music are less complicated. Nivkh language does'nt have proper word for "music" or "instrumental music". Usually *lu* "song" is used for meaning them. But the verbs used for the action of playing musical instruments are different depending on the sort of instruments.

<b>lu</b> <b>lud</b>	sing a song
<b>qoŋcoŋ tʰeud</b>	make a <b>qoŋcoŋ</b> (mouth harp) warble (cf. tʰeud<tʰied "warble")
<b>təŋrəŋ tʰeud</b>	make a <b>təŋrəŋ</b> (one-stringed instrument with a bow) warble
<b>q'as dʒad</b>	beat the <b>q'as</b> (frame drum)
<b>tʃatʃasʏaf dʒad</b>	beat the <b>tʃatʃasʏaf</b> (log drum)

<sup>1</sup> Most of data is based on fild work from 1999-2019.

The verb **lud** "sing" or derived expressions of it are never used to mean playing instruments. The verb **tleud** "make something warble" is used only mean playing the **qoŋcoŋ** or **təŋrəŋ**. **dʒad** "beat" is a general verb to mean beating something, and used for the **q'as** and the **tʃatʃasɣaf**.

## 2. Four categories in the Nivkh traditional concept of music

Nivkh traditional music is divided in two categories by the criterion of melodious/rhythmical feature. The "melodious" music is sung or played by one person for a recreation and regarded to be **lu** "song". The "rhythmical" music is sung or played by more than two persons in particular ceremonies and not regarded to be **lu** "song".

Melodious / Recreational / Individual music

### **Recreational music** and **Hunting music**

Individual songs: **alɣtud** "lyrical song", **ŋastud** "epic song"

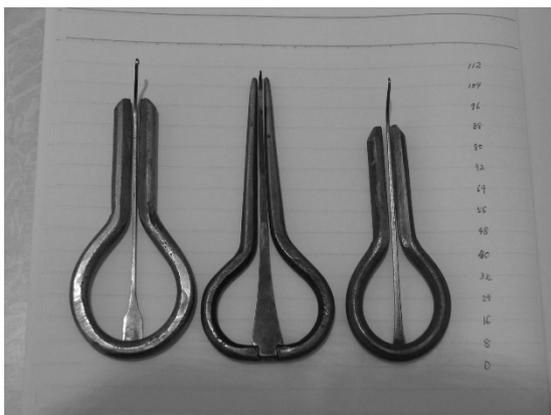
"Songs" by musical instruments: **qalŋi** "horn without reed", **təŋrəŋ** "one-stringed instrument with a bow", **qoŋcoŋ** "mouth harp", **pevs** "flute"

Rhythmical / ritual / collective music

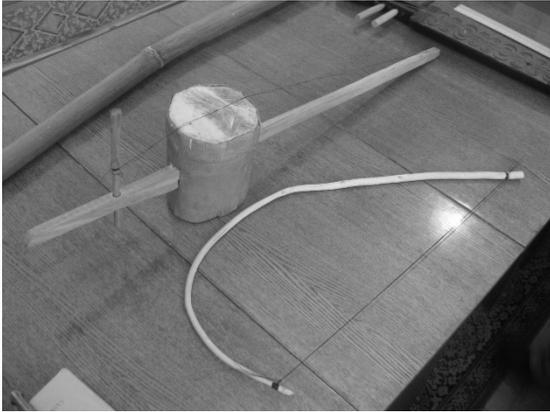
### **Bear ceremony music** and **Shamanic music**

Songs for memorizing rhythms: **tʃatʃasɣaf t'uys** (**tʃatʃasɣaf** "log drum", **t'uys** "words")

Instruments for realizing rhythms: **tʃatʃasɣaf** "log drum", **qorɣor** "rattles", **q'as** "frame drum"



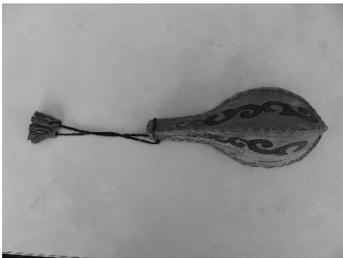
**qoŋcoŋ** "mouth harp"



**տնրն** "one-stringed instrument with a bow"



**զաղն** "horn without reed"



**զորչոր** "rattles"



**tʃatʃasχaf** "log drum"



**q'as** "frame drum"

In Nivkh tradition, **lu** "songs" are regarded to be individual properties and others can't sing without permission. These individual songs resemble but have difference each other from person to person. Individual songs are always sung in solo without accompanying instruments, and never sung in group chorus. Short songs are lyrical and simbolical poems in several four line stanzas. Longer songs are usually tragic true (non fiction) stories about lovers. They are called **alχtud**. The longest ones are fantastic epic songs called **ŋastud**. When singing these melodious songs, singers use vibrato technique called "**ʋals**" and falsetto voice called "**kəx**". The recitation of **ŋastud** are always in solo, and listeners must respond after every stanza by yelling "hoy" in order to cheer the singer. **ŋastud** is sung at hunting for driving evil spirits away.

Melodious instrumental music is included in this category and so they are always played in solo. **qalŋi** is a horn without reed. Singers sing with it in vocalise way. **təŋrəŋ** is a one-stringed instrument with a bow. Players play the melody of their songs. The player licks the string by their tongue to give vibrations just like singing in vibrato. **qoŋcoŋ** is mouth harp usually made with metal, and a player

play their own individual songs by it. **pevs** is a flute made with animal bones or plants.

Rhythmical instrumental music is played by more than two persons together. The **tʃatʃasʃaf t'uys** (song for memorizing rhythms of log drum) are not called **lu** "songs" but **t'uys** "words", and in fact, melodious elements are removed from the recitation of them. **qorʃor** is played together with **tʃatʃasʃaf**. **q'as** is played only in shamanic ceremonies.

### 3. Four major categories by three features

More precisely, Nivkh traditional music is divided into four categories by three binominal features : Melodious / rhythmical, recreational / ceremonial, and individual / collective. (table 1)

	melodious music					rhythmical music						
	recreational music			hunting music		shamanic music		bear ceremony music				
	lu	qalŋi	təŋrəŋ	qoŋgoŋ	pevs	ŋastud	č'am lud	č'am lud	q'as	tʃatʃa sʃaf	t'uys	qorʃor
	songs	horn	stringed instrument with a bow	mouth harp	flute	epic songs	hunting songs	shaman songs	frame drum	log drum	words for log drum	rattles
melodious	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	both	-	-	-	-
individual	+	+	+	+	+	both	+	both	both	-	-	-
recreational	+	+	+	+	+	both	-	-	-	-	-	-

table 1. Categories in Nivkh traditional music

- (1) Recreational music : melodious, individual and recreational
- (2) Bear ceremony music : rhythmical, collective and ceremonial
- (3) Hunting music : melodious, partly collective, recreational and partly ceremonial
- (4) Shamanic music : rhythmical, partly collective, and ceremonial

(1) and (2) are typical major categories that already seen. (3) and (4) are middle types.

### Hunting music

#### tʃam lud "Shamanic songs"

Songs sung by hunters or fishermen before the hunting or fishing. Not for recreational purposes. These songs have no relationships with shamans though they are called **tʃam lud** "Shamanic songs".

**ɲastud** "epic songs"

ɲastud "epic songs" are basically recreational songs. But they are occasionally sung when hunters were staying in a mountain hut for sable hunting in winter. By the Nivkh traditional world view, there are many evil spirits in the mountains and hunters are always in danger. The recitation of ɲastud "epic songs" were believed to make evil spirits frighten and drive them away.

### **Shamanic music**

**tʃam lud** "Shamanic songs"

Shamans summon their guardian spirits singing special songs before their ceremonies. They tell oracles during ceremonies. Those singings and tellings are also called **tʃam lud** "Shamanic songs". These **tʃam lud** are accompanied with **q'as** "frame drum". The sound of **q'as** were believed to invite and encourage guardian spirits and weaken the power of evil spirits. So not only the shamans but also their temporal assistants beat **q'as**.

### **4. Bear ceremony**

Shamanism is widely spread in Northern areas and that of Nivkh has many common features with those of other northern peoples. Bear ceremony is also widely seen in Northern areas but shows some uniqueness in Far East. In Amur mouth area, Sakhalin Island and Hokkaido, some Tungusic peoples, Nivkh and Ainu peoples had traditions of special type of bear ceremony. They nursed and raised a bear cub for 1-3 years and killed it ritually<sup>2</sup>.

**tʃɣəf luzluzd** (lit. "make a bear good") is Nivkh bear ceremony that has been practiced until around 1980's. Nivkh people raised a bear cub for 3 or 4 years and killed it in order to make its soul return to its spirit world. This ceremony is in the same time regarded to be a "memorial service ceremony" for the recent deceased. All Clan members and friends come together, eat special dishes, men and boys play sports, ladies and girls dance, and they remember the recent deceased. It was the biggest festival among Nivkh people. Although the ceremony, 6 - 7 females were beating **tʃatʃasɣaf** together in line. One of them was a lead player and was playing complicated rhythm based on old **tʃatʃasɣaf t'uys** (songs for memorizing log drum rhythm) while others were beating a basic rhythm. Some females were playing **qorɣor** next to **tʃatʃasɣaf**. One female danced alone beside them in turn. The bear cub was killed in the middle of the ceremony, and its meat was boiled and eaten by people. By being released from its body, the soul of the bear cub was believed to return to its spirit world. They had to play **tʃatʃasɣaf** so loud that the sound could be heard by bears in the spirit world that was believed to be situated somewhere in the mountains.

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<sup>2</sup> The description of process of bear ceremony in this paper is mostly based on Крейнович 2001 (1973) but about the way of playing **tʃatʃasɣaf** and participation of **qorɣor** are based on Tangiku's fieldwork data.

"Making the soul of bear cub return" and "memorial service for the recent deceased" can be explained to be closely related concepts based on Nivkh traditional world view. Bears are "Another humanbeing in mountain world" based on it. Not only the mountain world resembles to this human world but also there are many correspondence between them. Nivkh people believed that the bear society had clan system that corresponded to that of Nivkh, and every Nivkh clan had its partner bear clan. Bear hunting was not to do bad thing to the bear, but inviting the bear. It was a visit from the ambassador from the counterpart clan of bear people. A Nivkh carefully raised a bear cub and made it return to its spirit world, just like they cared the family member and sent the soul to another world. To care a bear was to care the deceased.

The funeral has been separately done from those ceremonies. By the Nivkh world view, a funeral is a departure to another world. It takes one year from this world to another world and so the family of the deceased must sacrifice foods for one year at a small altar that was made apart from the graveyard. No song was sung and no music was played at funerals. Several years after the funeral, a bear ceremony was held but it was not an obligation.

## 5. The origin of *tʃatʃasɣaf*

Most of Nivkh musical instruments were adopted from outside. Mouth harp, horn, flute, rattle and frame drum are widely spread in Eurasian continent. One-stringed instrument with a bow was adopted from Western direction along the Amur river.

For Nivkh people, singing songs and playing musical instrumentals are basically individual, emotional, and recreational activities. So they are excluded from ceremonies.

Every year when Nivkh people began hunting or fishing, they held simple ceremonies sacrificing foods for **pal əzŋ** "the master of mountain" or **tol əzŋ** "the master of the sea". They sacrificed small foods when they enter mountain or visit far places for the first time in the year.

Music was excluded from those usual ceremonies but, two major ceremonies -- shamanic ceremony and bear ceremony are strongly related to "rhythmical music".

Nivkh shamanism is a part of North-Eastern Eurasian shamanism and the Nivkh words **tʃam** "shaman" and **q'as** "frame drum" must be borrowing words from outside. Nivkh word **q'as** and Ainu word **katʃo** "frame drum" resemble Buryat word **xese, qese, qetse** "frame drum" rather than Tungusic words **uŋtu** (Oroch, Udeghe), **uŋtuhu, uŋčuhu, untsuhu** (Naanai, Ul'ch), **uŋtuken, uŋtuwun** (Evenk, Negidal), **uŋtup** (Manchu)<sup>3</sup>, **bal, bali, balu** (Uilta)<sup>4</sup>. It indicates that Nivkh borrowed the word **q'as** before Tungusic words spreaded in Lower Amur area, or borrowed from Buryat-Mongolian languages in 13-14th century when the Mongolian Empire extended in this area.

In the Far East, the distribution of log drums is limited among Nivkh and Tungusic people of Lower

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<sup>3</sup> These words are from Шейкин 2002

<sup>4</sup> Подмаскин 2003

Amur area. Northern Chinese, Korean, Ainu, and Japanese people don't have log drums like **tʃatʃasɣaf**. But in Southern China, South Eastern Asia and India we can find many log drums. Shternberg and Smolyak assumed that **tʃatʃasɣaf** was adopted from Southern peoples<sup>5</sup>. But Kyūzō Katō wrote<sup>6</sup> "It (**tʃatʃasɣaf**) reminds me of **muyu**". Our analysis supports Katō's assumption.

## 7. Chinese wooden drum **muyu**

**Muyu** (木鱼 **mùyú**, 梆木鱼 **bāng mùyú**) is wooden drums used in Buddhist temples. Today, mostly round shaped **muyu** set on the ground or held in hands is used, but old type **muyu** was a fish shaped wooden plate dangled from a frame. It was beaten in Buddhist memorial service ceremonies to keep rhythm of recitation of ritual texts. It was used as a signal for a meal.

The shape and the playing way of the **tʃatʃasɣaf** resemble those of **muyu**. Both of them were dangled by a frame. **Muyu** is long fish shaped. One end of **tʃatʃasɣaf** is bear head shaped. Beating rhythm of both of them remain constant and monotonous throughout.

The most important common feature is their social function. Both of them are used in the memorial service ceremony. The **muyu** is an accompanying drum for the recitation of Buddhist texts, and the **tʃatʃasɣaf** is beaten based on the songs for memoizing the beating way. The functions of words are opposite but the texts are not "recreational musical songs" in both cases.

## 8. Distribution of log drums in the Far East

Distribution of log drums in the Far East is limited. It was used in all over the Nivkh territory (Northern half of Sakhalin Island and Amur river mouth coastal area) and among Tungusic peoples in Lower Amur area: Nivkh, Uilta, Ul'ch, Northern part of Naanai, Negidal and Oroch peoples. They use log drums in the bear ceremonies. Ainu, Southern part of Naanai and Udeghe people held bear ceremonies but didn't use log drums. These peoples have not been Buddhist from the past until present. Possibilities of contact with Buddhism are limited in two periods. The first is 13-14th Century when the Mongolian Empire expanded to this area and the second is the first half of 15th Century when Chinese Ming Dynasty set the Nurgan base in Amur river mouth area.

In 13 Century, Nivkh people had tradal relationship with Mongolian Empire. Ainu attacked Nivkh people maybe because they also wanted to have trade with the Mongolian Empire. The conflicts escalated into the intermittent war between Sakhalin Ainu and Mongolian military from 1264 until 1308. As a result, both Nivkh and Ainu had tradal relationships with Mongolian Empire until 1368 when Mongolian power was driven away by Ming Dynasty from this area. Mongolian epic songs and four line stanza, aliterations and rhyming verse must have adopted by Nivkh and Ainu peoples during this period. If the log drums were adopted during this period, both of Nivkh and Ainu must have them.

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<sup>5</sup> Штернберг 1933, p581. and Смоляк 1961, 339-342

<sup>6</sup> Katō 1986, p333-334

But we can't find any trace of log drum in Ainu culture<sup>7</sup>.

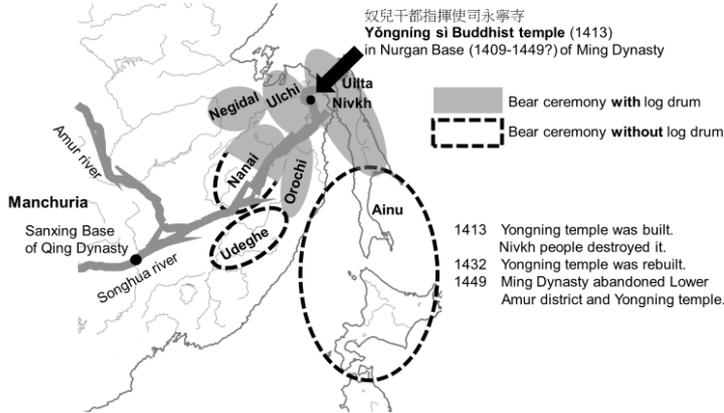


figure 2. distribution of log drums in the Far East

The 15th Century is more important because Ming Dynasty constructed Yongning Buddhist temple at that time. The temple was built near Tyr in 1413 but Nivkh people destroyed it. It was rebuilt in 1432 but the international situation was changed and Ming Dynasty abandoned Lower Amur area. Peoples in this area, especially those who lived near the river mouth had direct contact with Buddhism for 36 years intermittently from 1413 until 1449. Yongming temple was situated just in the center of the distribution of log drums. If the log drums in this area were adopted step by step from Southern direction along the Amur river, log drums would have been found among Southern Naanai and Udeghe people and among more Southern peoples. But the distribution indicates that the log drums were spread from somewhere in the Amur river mouth area.

## 9. Conclusion

The reconstructed history of Nivkh music is like this.

1. Nivkh people had only **lu** "song" at first. The first musical instrument must have been **q'as** "frame drum" adopted with shamanism from North. And simple binary system of "melodious, recreational" and "rhythmical, ceremonial" was formed based on the binary opposition of **lu** "song" and **q'as** "frame drum".
2. Lower Amur area type bear ceremony was formed. "Melodious music" was excluded from it by the binary system. Shamanic ceremony and bear ceremony were independent each other.
3. In 13-14th Century, Nivkh and Ainu had direct contact with Mongolian Empire. Nivkh people

<sup>7</sup> Some Japanese historians think that bear ceremony was formed among Hokkaido Ainu people in around 17-18 Century. But based on our hypothesis about Nivkh music history, the period of establishment of Ainu bear ceremony is assumed to be before 15th century.

adopted Mongolian epic songs and continental verse into "melodical, recreational music".

4. 1413-1449, Nivkh people had direct contact with Yongming temple and adopted muyu Bear ceremony had an aspect of memorial service already. Muyu changed into **tʃatʃasɣaf** and the "sound of condolence" was formed just like today in Nivkh traditional music.

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