



MELODIES TO CAUSE A MOTHER-ANIMAL TO ACCEPT ITS YOUNG

Traditions and rituals related to animal husbandry hold a major position in the Mongolian traditional practices and customs. One of the most important is the singing meant to cause a mother-animal to accept its young. This special practice relies upon a unique form of psychological relationship between humans and their domesticated animals. The practice calms animals with harmonious singing and lyrical music, which is meant to form or strengthen the bond between the mother and its offspring (or an unrelated orphan offspring). This practice is used for the following contexts:

- When making reconciliation between an offspring and a mother-animal which has rejected her offspring;
- When building a relationship between a mother-animal and an orphaned offspring;
- When building a relationship between a mother-animal which lost its offspring and another offspring animal.

In the process of causing the mother-animal to accept its young, traditional instruments, such as *morin khuur* (horse-headed fiddle), *limbe* (horizontal flute) and *tsuur* (vertical flute), are used together with the lyrical recitations of poems, phrases, and song, such as *urtiin duu* (long song). It is believed that the harmonic melodies and pleasing phrases touches the animals' psychology and stimulates the animals' natural instinct for loving the offspring. This is an interesting connection between animal herding and Mongolian folklore.

The need to cause a mother-animal to accept its young is relatively simple for domesticated animals (*bog mal*). The herder melodically and lyrically recites poems and sayings to the mother-animal with the aim of influencing her through the magical power of words and melodies. Such poems usually relate the indispensability of feeding the offspring to the natural flow of the seasons and time. For instance:

*My pure-white ewe,
Why do you reject your lamb?
The smell of your milk is
In his tail!
Hos! Hos! Hos! Hos!*



*Spring time will arrive
Snow of the mountainside will melt away
Strong wind will blow
Who will be next to you?
Toig! Toig! Toig! Toig!*

*Summer-time will arrive
The mountain will be verdant
Your udder will be caked
Who will welcome you?
Toig! Toig! Toig! Toig!*

*Prosperous summer will arrive
The world will be verdant
Your nipples will be caked
Who will suck them?
Toig! Toig! Toig! Toig!*

Various local dialects are used for this practice, which includes *toiglokh* (to call an ewe to accept its young) and *tüshgerekh* (to smear the lips of an ewe), for sheep, *cheeglekh* and *tseelekh* (to call a nanny-goat to accept its young) for goat. There are even certain occasions when herders can bring about a mother-animal relationship is between different species of animals, such as a lamb and a calf. When we cause a cow to accept its young (calf), the herder traditionally uses an improvised melodic song similar to a *besreg urtiin duu* (a mini long song) to get the animals used to each other.

The most difficult animals to work with are the mare-camels. When performing this practice with a mare-camel, musical instruments, such as the *tsuur*, horse-headed fiddle, or flute, are used with the help of *hööslökh* (to sing to a mare-camel) and other melodies.

The main way to soothe a mare-camel is to utter *hööslökh* in melodious ways; and if this doesn't work, the herder will sing songs and play melodies that aim to touch the feelings of the mare-camel. This practice requires the involvement of a singer or musician who bears the traditional performing arts. If there is no such a person in the area, the herder can bring such a person from a different place. In such occasions, the herder and singer or musician is engaged in causing the mare-camel to accept its young.

*Why do you reject
Your small and cute baby,
Which tastes and drinks
Your milk?
After getting up in the morning
Your baby stands, puckering its lips.
Let it suckle your thick milk
Höös höös höös höös
höös höös höös höös
Your small baby can grow up
By sucking your milk, but
Why do you reject the baby
By hurting your baby?
She is bleating in complaint all afternoon!
Please let it suckle your milk
Höös höös höös höös
höös höös höös höös
Why do you leave your baby alone?
Why do you make your tiny baby an orphan?
Let it suckle your milk
And grow up.
Its eyes are searching for you,
Your baby is weeping in the dark
Please let it suckle your
Warm milk
Höös höös höös*