





CHAPTER ONE

ORAL TRADITION

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Lulaby

Alla (lullaby) is a soothing cradlesongs, which is sung when the child is put to go to sleep in the cradle. It is through the lullaby that mothers express their emotions and love by singing them out softly and rocking the cradle gently. It is also through the *alla* that mothers express their well wishes for the future of the child and prayers of blessing for a child to grow strong and be a honorable person with profession, job and great health and wealth.

The song of *Alla* in Tajik is composed of variety pieces taken from quatrains, couplets or *masnavi*. Mothers compose their own *alla* although some are created by grandmothers of even elder sisters in the child's family. *Alla* songs are passed generation by generation and acquire folklore nature. Sometimes mother's in *alla* songs add their own child's name or change certain words to make it personalized, which gives rise to a totally new *alla* song.

Alla songs have their own specific tune and it is possible to assert that children get to know song and singing for the first time through the *alla*. The tune for *alla* is synchronized to the rocking of the cradle.

Hey alla, darling alla

Hey alla, darling alla,
My sweet-tongued alla,
O comfort of my soul alla.
May your bad fortune struck me to spare
you,
Alla, alla.

May you grow and may you be active,
May you become intelligent and wise,
May you become my support,
May you be patient and strong,
May you be my aid at the old age,
Alla, alla.



Эй, ал - ла, чо - нам, ал - ла - ё.

Ши - рин - за - бо - нам ал - ла - ё,

О - ро - ми чо - нам ал - ла - ё.

Дар - дат ба чо - нам, ал - ла - ё

Ал - ла - ё ал - ла.

Ка - лон ша - вӣ, ча - қон ша - вӣ,

Пур - ди - да - ю до - но ша - вӣ,

Дил - су - зу ғам - хо - рам ша - вӣ,

Пур - то - қа - ту ваз - нин ша - вӣ.

Оҳ дар да - ми ши - ри - и ман,

А - со - и дас - то - нам ша - вӣ.

Оҳ, дар да - ми ши - ри - и ман,

а - со - и дас - то - нам ша - вӣ.

Ал - ла - ё, ал - ла.

Эй ал - ла чо - нам ал - ла - ё,

Ши - рин - за - бо - нам ал - ла - ё,

О - ро - ми чо - нам ал - ла - ё.

Дар - дат ба чо - нам ал - ла - ё

Ал - ла - ё ал - ла.

Fairy tale

Fairy tale (*afsāna*) is one of the most loved folk genre among the Tajik people, which contains many aspects of human life, their dreams and wishes at the same time expressing ones love to the native land, natural worlds etc. Fairy tales are fictions story based on esoterical allusions of the old age attracting people's attention.

Fairy tales are based on the deep emotional expectations often unmet and it is in a fairy tale that justice always overcomes injustice, the evil is destroyed, a poor becomes rich, separated lovers join again, a kind person is rewarded and bad person receives punishment deserved. In short the fairy tales describe whatsoever dreams and desires that people seldom achieve in real life. Thus the fairy tales becomes a comforting idea for people to carry on.

Tajik fairy tales can be grouped into three categories; the first group is that of imaginary fairy tales. In these fairy tales central heroes primarily animals of all kind, natural world e.g. trees and bushes are portrayed like humans, they live together and have they own social orders and so on. For example fairy tales like such «Khari zirak» (Wise Donkey), «Ruboh va palang» (Fox and Tiger), «Kadui sayoh» (Traveling Pumpkin) and so on are such tales through which people portray their perspectives on social relationships and dynamics.

It is clear that these fairy tales have very ancient roots and is based on totemic beliefs that existed among people. Those animals portrayed in these tales behave like humans and represent various human character and nature. For example, fox represent a cunning and sly person, whereas rabbit represents a timid person and bear is representation of the big human with little knowledge and so on.



The second groups of fairy tales are those magical tales, which narrate stories involving magic and sorcery. In these tale humans are subject to the power of magic and evil magicians turn other popular into sorts of animals or objects or vice versa that is animals or objects are turned into humans. The main heroes in these tales usually portray positive character by fighting against magical animals, such as dragons or

devas and save commoners from the threats and power of these magical animals. There are cases when main hero also makes peace treaty by marrying fairy princes etc. The central figure in these tales gradually attains the super hero status through his noble heroic deeds. Among Tajik people magical fairy tales such as «Farishtamohi ziraku dono» (Wise fairy-beauty) «Eraji devafkan» (Eraj demon slayer), «Dukhtari jasur» (Brave girl) are some of the most popular tales in this category.

Third group of fairy tales are those dedicated to the social and realistic themes. These tales do not possess the same magical and supernatural character as the second category mentioned above. These tales portray the ordinary life of ordinary people in the same way and manner as it is. The core events in these tales are real life situation lived by people across all time and ages. It narrates about unjust people, suffering of the poor people and different sociological and economic problems. Some of the most popular representative tales in this groups are «Se barodaron» (Three

brothers), «Boyi zolim va kali zirak» (Oppressor rich man and wise bold youth), «Yatimcha va khoja» (An orphan and his master) and so on.

Through these tales the positive characters such as Kali Zirak or Orphan expose injustice, confront the evil and try to achieve justice by their wisdom. In such manner they are heroes that people always look unto for inspiration and they fulfill the oppressed people dreams.

Anecdotes

Anecdotes in Tajik called *latifa* refer to short humorous sayings that usually are exchanged and shared in cultural events and in casual conversations among people. Today it is one of the most productive humor genres and by popularity surpasses the other form of folk traditional stories or fairy tales.

Anecdotes portray almost any aspect of real life in the light of humor. It contains smallest details about various events witnessed or thought about and that is normally based on real observation of people.

The famous figures in Tajik anecdotes are Nasriddin Afandi, Mushfiki and Kali Zirak. These anecdote heroes are usually portrayed to solve, confront and discuss various moments lived. The heroes of anecdotes present situation in which they had masterfully responded to a challenge solved a difficulty faced by them or the happy life that was granted to a kind people after suffering. The anecdotes also depict negative characters in the face of unjust and mean persons and those who take advantage of the poor and disadvantaged people.

One day Afandi's wife was doing laundry and suddenly a raven comes and snatches the soap and flies away. She cries to her husband and says:

- What sort of man are you that seeing the raven taking away my soap did not do anything about it?

Afandi replies to her by saying:

-Why are you crying so loud about this? Cannot you see that raven's clothing is much darker and dirtier than ours! Let her go and wash her clothes.

Anecdotes are usually brief and contain short humorous reaction to a certain situation or silly questions. For example:

Afandi was asked why people walk to different directions?

Afandi answers: Because if everyone walked

or went to one direction that side of the earth would become heavy and would tip over.

Anecdotes are composed almost instantly and the inspiration comes from daily situations and involve humorous about famous people, such politicians, artisans and in sum represent a reaction of human mind to its sociological context.

Anecdotes are published in collections and different daily papers and in their context are much wider than being folklore genre. Some, of the anecdotes are products of prose writers or comedians. There are also television shows containing humor and anecdotes either by comedian or from folklore. For example television shows such as «Lahzahoi guvoro», «Khandinkamon», «Shakarkhand» and some on a comedy shows where anecdotes are played and demonstrated.

In addition anecdotes are also found and shared across different social media platforms that facilitate them to be widely popularized.



Riddle

Riddle is a smallest oral composition, which is widespread among the youth and children. A riddle is a statement or question or phrase having a double or veiled meaning and could include any object seen by human eyes, including the natural world, humans etc. Riddles are composed in question and answer style and the person who proposes or says the riddle expects the answer from the recipients.

We had a plot of land
We sowed black seeds
We have seen it with our own eyes
We have realized it with our own mind.

(Book)

There are riddles covering many aspects of social life of the Tajik nation. This includes the labor tools of all kind, natural occurrences the physical aspects of the human environment in short any object or notions that has place in human life.

A gold-thread embroidered curtain, that is full at night and empty in the day. (Sky with stars).

* * *

Daytime in trip, nighttime at the door.
(Shoes)

* * *

Five maidens sitting around one table. (Palm and fingers)

* * *

It flies without wings and sits but has no feet. (Snow)

* * *

There are two lines of saw and in the middle lamb. (Teeth and tongue)

Tongue-twister

A tongue-twister is a small folklore unit and is one sentence structured saying or a phrase that is designed to be difficult to articulate properly, and can be used as a type of spoken or sung word game. Tongue-twisters may rely on rapid alternation between similar but distinct phonemes (e.g., s [s] and sh [ʃ]), combining two or more different alternation patterns, including use of the loaned words or foreign words of a spoken language in order to be difficult to articulate. For example, *šastu šaš asp az man ast, or yoli aspam loyolud*.

Tongue-twisters have extremely simple meaning and are speech-activity type that elder siblings or grandparents do when young children start to talk. It is thought to help with speech development and articulation. Some produce results that are humorous when they are mispronounced, while others simply rely on the confusion and mistakes of the speaker for their amusement value. For example, *čalpak, čalabu čalab, labu lab čalačalpak* etc.

The speaker must pronounce and tell the tongue-twister with clear articulation and without mistake and in occasion of confusion in saying people would laugh. So the right pronunciation and the speed of tongue-twister recital depend on the memory and spelling skills often children organize a completion among themselves on tongue-twister saying.

Boloxona, tagxona.

Angur xurdem dona-dona,

Anguri mo širindona.

* * *

Dar boghi mo yak tutča,

In tutča čitu tutča.

* * *

In či dastambū, ki dastam bu zi dastambū girift.

* * *

Dar dasti oča bača, dar dasti bača kulča.

* * *

Šastu šaš šiša doštam, šast-to šišaaš šikastam.

Proverbs

Proverbs are short traditional folk sayings and are one of the most widespread folklore genres among the Tajik people. A proverb (from Latin: proverbium) is a simple and concrete saying, popularly known and repeated, that expresses a truth based on common sense or experience. They can often be metaphorical and those that describe a basic rule of conduct may also be called as a maxim.

Proverbs reflect the historical reality and are resulted on the specific real-life social-cultural and moral experiences owning their own contexts.

For example:

The sun cannot be hidden under ones shirt.

The tree branch full of fruit bends.

Water cannot roll away the heavy rock.

Primary function of the proverbs is evidence proving someone point of view. People usually quote proverbs in their speech as a witness to their own reflections or words giving them historical grounds and proof.

Proverbs in education and training of the youth play important role thus many writers and scholars have also set proverbs and educational sayings.

For example:

Wrong goods never reach the right destination.

If you sit with the moon you become like moon, if you sit with the cauldron you become like soot.

Cow who does not give milk has a loud voice.

Some people use proverbs in their talks as a stylistic device to make their speech look elegant. Often the right use of the proverbs makes what has been said stronger and pleasant. In such manner some people can communicate much of their own thoughts and philosophies through the proverbs implying that what they say has historical grounds.

Proverbs are also metaphorical device and only in the context of the conversation or a written piece the complete meaning of them are found.

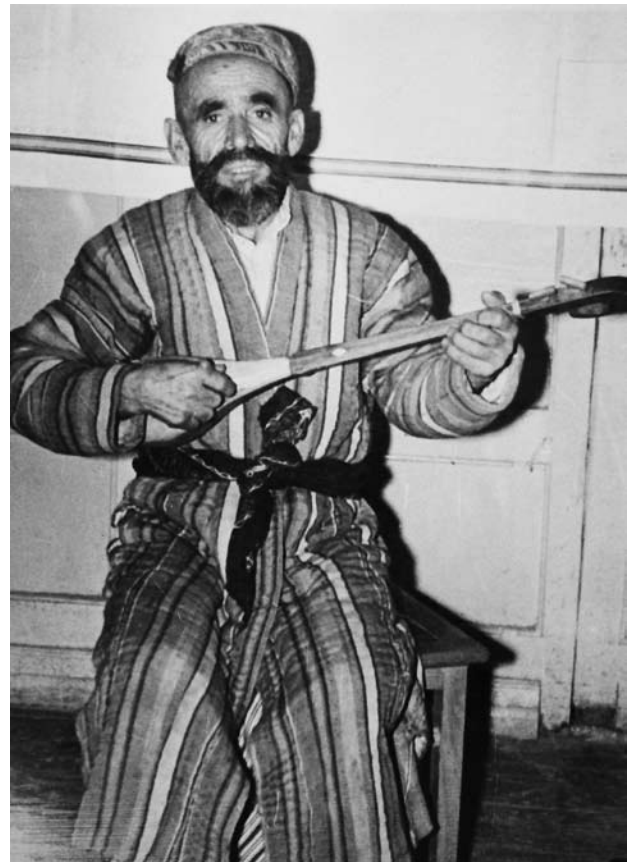


Epic story of Gurghuli

Gurghuli is one of the noble intellectual products of Tajik folklore dedicated to heroism, defending ones native land and social justice. It consists of series pieces expressing big dreams of people about a certain ‘thought country’ Jambul where justice and rule of law is practiced fairly and brotherhood of population and peaceful life is a norm.

The central hero-figure in Gurghuli is called Avaz-pahlavon, who defends his native land from the enemy’s attack and extends protection and justice to the poor and working population at the same time fighting against the injustice and lawlessness. Gurghuli in his turn is the name of a just king whose domain is called Jambuli Maston and this king shows great care to his subjects.

Jambuli Maston is a utopian kingdom



Well-known Gurghuli performer Hikmat Rizo



Pirnazar Haqnazarov

reflecting the sentiments of Tajik people to live in the just kingdom and have a just king. Just kingship and utopian kingdoms is of course very well recorded through the classical Tajik authors and is a prevalent topic in Tajik literature, both written and folk.

Gurghuli epic has very many ‘fairytale’ characters, such as black demon, white demon, phoenix and fairies, which are central figures in many Tajik traditional stories. Also there are great deal of narratives on divination, witchcraft, diviners and how ordinary people fought against the demonic powers and certain heroes changed to another type of character etc. This demonstrates that those stories encompassed in Gurghuli epic have a deep root in ancient Iranian folktales and stories.



Gurchuli performing Competition in Dushanbe city (1968)

Structurally Gurchuli epic is similar to “Shahnameh” of Firdawsi, a folk novel of “Samaki ayār”, “Jame’-ul-hikāyāt”, “One thousands and one night” and “Abu Muslimnāma”, which are popular folktales.

In the Folklore archive of the Rudaki Institute of Language and Literature are kept 140 Gurchuli epic *dastans* or pieces recorded from 20 reciters; these are also voice records, transcribed in text as well the recitation captured in video.

Gurchuli recital is accompanied by *dutor* a Tajik string musical instrument and several different notes are played. The tune in Gurchuli recital depends on the theme of the epic whether it is sad or joyful.

The Gurchuli reciters among people are

called as *gurchulikhon*, *gurchuliguy* that is Gurchuli singer or *guyanda*. These men who recite Gurchuli will know from 40,000 to 60,000 couplets of Gurchuli epic and usually in different traditional ceremonies would perform in presence of guests.

Most famous Gurchuli singers in Tajikistan were Hikmat Rizo, Kabudi Haknazar, Talbi Zamir, Odina Shakar, Jalili Kurbon, Boboyunus Khudoydodzoda and Sherali Mulokoni. Nowadays Awazbegi Ziyoy, Hotami Hokim, Islomi Najmiddin and some others continue this tradition performing single pieces among fan of Gurchuli.

Due to different socio-cultural factors Gurchuli today is in decline and a few people attend the Gurchuli performances.



Ruboi (Quatrains)

Quatrain (*ruboi*) is one of the popular oral poetry forms, which also has established literary standing in the book culture. It consists of four lines and is composed according to 24 *aruz* rhythmic meters. The compositional structure of the quatrains makes them easiest form of poetry to be sung and put into a melody. As such it constitutes major part of the traditional singing such as *Falak*.

Tajik quatrains are lyrical and include also variety of social and cultural themes. Traditional quatrains as such have been a mirror of the social and cultural events and depicting emotional standing and feelings of people in different period of their lives.

Quatrains were a poetic form of communication expressing different emotional and physical conditions of humans to each other. The quatrains contain images and imaginary of the real life situations and portray real humans. For example the lyrical quatrains portray an idealized lover either positive or negative. The figures

portrayed in quatrains are contextualized in their real life situations and contexts and represent a villager, a city dwelling lover and portray qualities unique to girls, boys, old and young people that can be identified and related to.

The quatrains also communicate cultural and traditional events and phenomena true to the society where it is composed. It represents events that are inherent to the culture and society of a given culture.

You are going upward there are winds.
Flowers bloom and poppy swings.
Merchant is trading his goods,
Effected soul bleeds unaffected flourish.

Symbolism and imaginary is one of the specific aspects of the quatrains. In quatrains composers and singers employ wide range of symbols taken from the natural world and real-life situations and these become embodiment of their emotions and feelings. For example, flower represent something pleasant whereas the mountain pass represents an obstacle to be overcome or the river is the separation or grief and so on.

River of Elok I hold dreams about you.
My white rose is on your tides.
On one side of the waters lives one lonely,
On the other side lives another lonely.

One can identify that the theme of separation and living afar from ones loved once takes central position. These quatrains demonstrate the situations and feelings that one who is separated and away has to go through.

I am leaving my house with wet eyes,
My eyes wet and heart burdened.
People ask what pain in on your heart?
Living afar is a storm of pain.

Naqš and naqšxonī

Naqš is a type of wedding song that is performed by the groom's friends during the wedding procession. *Naqšxonī* that is performing a *naqš* singing is popular in Sughd region of Tajikistan and consist of three types: big *naqš*, middle *naqš* and small *naqš*. The *naqš* singing is current in Isfara, Konibodom, Khujand, Istaravshan and Mastčoh regions of the Sughd province. *Naqš* singing is also performed during the spring festivals in *Navruz* and *Sayri Lola* festivals. The *naqš* singing performed in the weddings is called *naqši šam'* (candle *naqš*) and is sung during the wedding by a lead singer and the group back-singers. The core of this *naqš* is based on the traditional folklore quatrains and couplets on the wedding, happiness and love themes.

For example:

Lead singer: We are going to far road.

Back singers: Yor-yor-yore.

Lead singer: We brought a flower.

Back singers : Yor-yor-yore.

Lead singer: Where should we plant this flower?

Back singers: Yor-yor-yore.

Lead singer: In the Mirzogul garden.

Back singers: Yor-yor-yore.

Other form of this song is *Naqši mullo* that is has very jolly tune and is sung during the wedding celebrations.

No flower garden, no flower no garden.

Who can pluck a flower from the garden?

There is news that just was announced,

Don't you know about it?

During the wedding celebration *naqš* is performed in the yard of the groom by his friends and may last for some hours before, during or after the wedding.

The term *naqš* was first used in the treatise of the musicologists of the 14th century Abdul Qadir Maroghai and later in Kavkabi Bukhori in the 16th century. There is however another form of the singing also known as *naqš* which is structures primarily by the folk quatrains.



Traditional songs

Song (*surūd*) is one of the ancient folk genre of the Tajik people and popularly it is known as *she'ri*; *ašūlā*, *tarona*, *badēhā*, *ghazāl*, *naqš*, *ruboī*, *muxammas*, *bayt* and so on. On the genesis of Tajik songs scholars believe it to have roots in the Avestian Gathas.

Traditional songs are accompanied by the melody and are composed on basis of literary genres like *ruboī*, *dubaiti*, *ghazāl*, *mukhammas*, *masnavī*, *qit'a* and so on. Central functional purpose of the traditional singing is expressing individual aesthetics and emotions; social relations and ones love to his native land etc. Thus, the songs cover wide array of themes including love, humor, laments and complaints, mourning and other aspects of human life. And this very characteristic of songs i.e. being expression of social emotions makes them prevalent and popular and are sung continually.

On the basis of their themes scholars have identified the following categories in Tajik traditional songs:



Lyrical songs

Historical songs

Religious songs

Festive and happy songs

Mourning and lament songs

Humor songs

Children songs

Songs dedicated to the nature

Songs devoted to specific profession and type of craft.

Lyrical songs are composed on themes of love, uniting of two lovers. This kind of songs are sung in festive and traditional ceremonies and are accompanied by lively musical tunes.

Historical songs narrate specific historical events or historical heroes such as «Šuriši Vose'» (Vose's revolt), «Šuriši Qalandaršo» (Qalandarsho's Revolt), «Šuriši Usmōn» (Usman's Revolt), «Niyoz-Konchi» etc.

Happy songs are usually performed in festive events and have lively, dance music. These songs are often performed in weddings including 'circumcision parties', which is a type of 'wedding'. Within this category however according to the scholars there are songs specifically called 'wedding songs', which are devoted to the theme of wedding, bride and groom etc. For example, some popular representative of this group are «Sartarošon», «Ustoi langi sartaroš», «Šah meoyad», «Saršuyoni arūs», «Buror-buror xušruša» etc. Despite being very old and historical these songs are still current and performed in the wedding ceremonies.

Another group of folk songs are mourning and lament songs, where the main themes are complaint of separation, being away from native places, forced marriage etc. The larger group in this genre is known as «marsiya», which is mourning songs. There are mourning songs in Tajik that have come from old days in specific



musical and thematic format. To this category the main ones are «Yo mavlon», «Dodaram», «Usmonjonume», «Abdulgʻajidjonam balam», which are sung by people to this day.

The humor (comedy) songs are performed by the comedy singers and are performed in funny tunes. These songs are accompanied by gestures and body movements expressing various aspects of the comedy. Some of well known in this groups are «Ušturbacha mond dar balandī», «Yalali bobo» and «Bale murghak». The humor

songs are also expression of social discords and condition by medium of comedy.

Religious songs are dedicated to the praise of God, the deeds of the prophets and other religious events and topics. Among the populace these types of songs are also called «naʼtxoni».

Children songs include very broad topics and are sung in multiple contexts and events. For example, «alla» (lullaby) songs of comfort, songs dedicated to natural world and songs dedicated to different children plays and games.

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