FOLK MUSIC OF CHINA, VOL. 8

Folk songs of the Kazakh and Kyrgyz tribes
# FOLK SONGS OF THE KAZAKH AND KYRGYZ TRIBES

## KAZAKH TRIBE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>World (Du Ni Ye A Yi)</td>
<td>2:19</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Running Horses (Ta Yi Bu Er Deng Sha Bu Sai)</td>
<td>2:24</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>The Past Days (Kai Yi Lan Zan Man)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Love Song (A Li Kun En Er)</td>
<td>4:13</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>A Boy (Bei Lei Er Ba La)</td>
<td>2:58</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Children are our Future (Tie Er Mian)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Gray Horse (A Ha Wu Yi Dai)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>My Flower (Gu Li Dai A Yi Mu)</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Our Rich Nature (Huo A Lei)</td>
<td>3:20</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Friends (Ku Lu Bu Ma Yi)</td>
<td>3:44</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Aqtamaq (A Ke Ta Ma Ke)</td>
<td>2:22</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>A Beautiful Legend (A Si Mu Ai Ni Mu Si Er Ni Dai)</td>
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## KYRGYZ TRIBE

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<tr>
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<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Falling for You</td>
<td>1:55</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>You are Moon</td>
<td>2:27</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>A Letter for You</td>
<td>1:05</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Keep your Promises</td>
<td>1:15</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Live Happily Together</td>
<td>0:47</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Missing You</td>
<td>2:21</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>For You</td>
<td>2:10</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Music of Tuo He Ti Wu Li</td>
<td>0:46</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Do Not Regret</td>
<td>0:51</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Yue Long (National Intangible Cultural Heritage)</td>
<td>2:37</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>A Komuz Solo</td>
<td>1:19</td>
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**TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 54:31 min.**
A brief introduction to the tribes and their music
The songs in this album come from two Turkic ethnic groups who live in western and northwestern Xinjiang. Located in the hinterland of Eurasia, these areas incorporate steppes and mountains with year-round ice and snow. As well as Xinjiang, the two ethnic groups also inhabit in Central Asian countries. The Kazakhs pass on their pastoral lifestyle from generation to generation and the Kyrgyz people are herders or farmers.

There is a saying that ‘music and horses are the two wings of the Kazakhs’. In Xinjiang, an indispensable part of the Silk Road, various ethnic groups are famous for their delicate music and dance that are full of exotic musical flavours for Chinese ears. The music from Xinjiang can grab the newcomers with its unique spirit, and presents the nuances between different ethnic groups to its enthusiasts. The charming musical features of the two minorities in this album benefit by adopting both Chinese and European musical systems. The Kyrgyz music also suggests an influence from the Persian-Arabian musical system.

Musical instruments
For the audience who are not familiar with the music from Xinjiang, it is also easy to distinguish the songs between the two minorities in this album by their accompanying instruments. The tunes of Kazakh and Kyrgyz are accompanied by dombra and komuz respectively. As representative instruments for the minorities under discussion, the two are very popular among their peoples.

The dombra and komuz are wooden plucked lutes with long, thin necks. Both of them have a history dating back at least to the medieval period. The dombra has two strings, eight to thirteen frets, and a pear-shaped body. The three-stringed komuz is fretless. If you pay attention to the tone colours of the two instruments in this album, you will find that the tone colour of the dombra is mellower, and that of the komuz is brighter. Changing playing postures is a memorable character of komuz performance. The Kyrgyz komuz virtuosos play their instruments both horizontally and vertically. They even put the instrument on the head, behind the back, or hold it upside down. As we can hear in tracks 1 to 12, the dombra plays a short prelude for Kazakh tunes. The typical metric rhythmic pattern of a dombra performance presents an even, constant progression and reminds the audience of galloping horses on the endless steppe, such as in tracks 1, 2, 7, 10, 11 and 12.
Musical features and key songs

The Kazakhs
The pastoral lifestyle facilitates the Kazakhs to send messages or express emotions with sonorous calling, which is embodied in their music as calling long notes. We can catch the calling long notes in most of the Kazakh tunes in this album, i.e., tracks 1-6, and 9-12. These kind of long notes not only present their aesthetic taste but also suggest a possible relation to another feature of Kazakh folk tunes: matching melodies and lyrics with staggered entries or endings. It is common in Kazakh folk songs that a musical phrase stretches to two verses, and vice versa. A melodic fourth or fifth is often essential to Kazakh folk tunes. The melodic fourth starts from the lower notes, which implies the word-final accent as a usual pattern in the Kazakh language. Based on the core melodic fourth or fifth, the starting musical phrases are developed through ‘adding flowers’, a Chinese way of melodic embellishment. For example, track 2, draws the listeners to a scene of running horses with an enhanced melodic fourth at the beginning. Track 11 also describes a sweet and lively girl with embellishments of a melodic fourth at the start.

Track 4, Love Song (A Li Kun En Er) belongs to a special category of Kazakh folk tunes: ‘Kong E Er (Kun En Er)’ literally meaning ‘melodic tunes’. The lyrics of ‘Kong E Er’ praise the beauty of the Kazakh folk music itself. There are several dozen tunes in this category.

The Kyrgyz people
The folk songs of the Kyrgyz people living in the eastern Pamir region, mainly adopt a European musical system. They also include melodic tunes similar to pastoral songs, for example in track 14, the calling of long notes here reminds the audience of a nomadic lifestyle. At the same time, it also includes rhythmic songs with well-integrated melodies and lyrics. Tracks 13, 15, 17, 18, 20 and 21 all embody this feature and quickly bring listeners to a lively dance atmosphere.

Track 22 is a tune of Yue Long, which is a group of traditional songs, as well as a literary genre that is preserved and sung at weddings. The word ‘Yue Long’ literally means ‘soft’, ‘comfortable’, or ‘mellow’. Not only the Kyrgyz people and the Kazakhs living in Pamir, but also the Uyghurs from the Hami area all keep the custom of singing Yue Long tunes at weddings. The Kazakh classic poems also appear in the Kyrgyz Yue Long lyrics. Yue Long tunes are classified according to the contents of lyrics, functions in weddings, or forms of singing.

Jasmine Zhou
KAZAKH TRIBE

1. **World** *(Du Ni Ye A Yi)*  
   **Singer, Tamboura Performer:** Baqytbek  
   **Lyrics:** In this world, time flies by, and you are the most beautiful. Your lover is so lucky and happy. Your lover is the happiest person in the world for having you.

2. **Running Horses** *(Ta Yi Bu Er Deng Sha Bu Sai)*  
   **Singer:** Ularhan Qaharman  
   **Tamboura Performer:** Baqytbek  
   **Lyrics:** Our lives are just like horses running, fast and in joyful. Songs of our times will always remain in my heart.

3. **The Past Days** *(Kai Yi Lan Zan Man)*  
   **Singer, Tamboura Performer:** Qurbanjan Zikiria  
   **Lyrics:** Time flies and the past days are gone forever. But we shall not forget them. We are nourished by learning from them, so we can go further in our lives in the future.

4. **Love Song** *(A Li Kun En Er)*  
   **Singer, Tamboura Performer:** Marziam Alibek  
   **Lyrics:** You are a born beauty, and you sing even more beautifully. On this grand prairie, we had a wonderful time together. Looking into your gorgeous eyes, I will never forget you.

5. **A Boy** *(Bei Lei Er Ba La)*  
   **Performers:** Choral song by various artists  
   **Lyrics:** Boys on the prairie are like eagles, they are strong and can do everything. Everybody admires you and you are the hero.

6. **Children are our Future** *(Tie Er Mian)*  
   **Singer, Tamboura Performer:** Baqytbek  
   **Lyrics:** Children are the most precious to mothers and they are our future as well. Everything we have ever owned in our lives belongs to our children. Raise the children well. Kids, when you are old, you will understand that this world is painful yet beautiful.

7. **Gray Horse** *(A Ha Wu Yi Dai)*  
   **Singer:** Marziam Alibek  
   **Lyrics:** The prairie is beautiful and our lives are wonderful. We live our lives happily. We shall respect each other while we are still alive.

8. **My Flower** *(Gu Li Dai A Yi Mu)*  
   **Performers:** Choral song by various artists  
   **Lyrics:** Woman: Your sweet voice, just like a river, and I can hear you even from afar. I want to fly to you, but I don't have wings. Man: You and I, we both live in happiness. I miss you more and more each day.
Our Rich Nature *(Huo A Lei)*  
**Singer:** Ularhan Qaharman  
**Tamboura Performer:** Baqytbek  
**Lyrics:** The land in which I have lived, is fertile and gorgeous. The grand prairie expands endlessly with breath-taking views. There are no other places in the world that can compare to it.

Friends *(Ku Lu Bu Ma Yi)*  
**Singer, Tamboura Performer:** Qurbanjan Zikiria  
**Lyrics:** Our friendship goes on and on. We won’t forget the time we have spent together. I miss you. Our days are full of joy. Let’s have fun and fill ourselves with happiness.

Aqtamaq *(A Ke Ta Ma Ke)*  
**Singer, Tamboura Performer:** Baqytbek  
**Lyrics:** Beautiful girl, you are sweet, diligent and excellent. You set an example for all the girls in our hometown.

A Beautiful Legend *(A Si Mu Ai Ni Mu Si Er Ni Dai)*  
**Singer:** Marziam Alibek  
**Lyrics:** You are mesmerizing, and your eyes are dreamy. We sing beautiful songs together. We sing for the water and mountains, for you and me and for the magical prairie. This beautiful song is for you.

KYRGYZ TRIBE

Falling for You  
**Singer:** Dolkun Ruzahun  
**Lyrics:** Your black eyes, clear as spring water, made me fall for you. I want to be with you…

You are Moon  
**Singer:** Nurazak Turdu  
**Lyrics:** I’m in love with you, please accept my love. If you do, I will always be waiting for you. I don’t ever want us to be apart, not even for one minute. You are as beautiful as the moon.

A Letter for You  
**Singer:** Abdysalam  
**Lyrics:** I wrote a letter for you, and it’s my love song for you. I have made up my mind that I want to spend my lifetime with you. Please have faith in me, I will make you happy…

Keep Your Promises  
**Singer:** Jamila Trusunay  
**Lyrics:** Do you remember your promises to me? If you don’t, everything I have done for you is going to be meaningless. I live for you and hope you keep your promises.

Live Happily Together  
**Performers:** Choral song by various artists  
**Lyrics:** This is a letter for you, and I want to give my heart to you as well. Please accept it and we will live happily together.
18  **Missing You**  
**Singer:** Dolkun Ruzahun  
**Lyrics:** I want to ask a girl out for a date, but I’m afraid she won’t accept it. I hope someone gives me a photo of her so that I can see her all the time.

19  **For You**  
**Singer:** Nurazak Turdu  
**Lyrics:** I wrote a poem for you and I want to read it for you when we go on a date. If you would please accept me I will spend my lifetime adoring you.

20  **Music of Tuo He Ti Wu Li**  
**Singer:** Abdysalam  
**Lyrics:** Music of Tuo He Ti Wu Li is like a running horse, exciting people.

21  **Do Not Regret**  
**Singer:** Abdywayit  
**Lyrics:** Don’t regret now. I treated you well before but you didn’t marry me. I will not accept you. Please live your life well.

22  **Yue Long**  
**(National Intangible Cultural Heritage)**  
**Performers:** Choral song by various artists  
**Lyrics:** This is a song about men and women picking on each other.  
Woman: Men nowadays are different from the past. They drink every day, don’t work, nor do they take care of their families.  
Man: Women nowadays don’t cook or do chores, nor do they take good care of their husbands.

23  **A Komuz Solo**  
**Performer:** Dolkun Ruzahun  
**Lyrics:** Once upon a time, the Kyrgyz people were defeated, the enemies assimilated them and forbid them from playing the komuz. However, there was an old man who played the komuz b himself. The enemies found out and he was sentenced to death. Before he was executed his death wish was to play the komuz again. The leader of the enemies agreed, so the old man played this song. The old man wanted the Kyrgyz people to remember the language and culture and never forget the heroes and history. Do not let the enemies beat your spirit and faith.

Recording date: May, 2012  
Recording location: Bulunkou County, Aketao County, Kizilsu Kyrgyz Autonomous Prefecture, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region