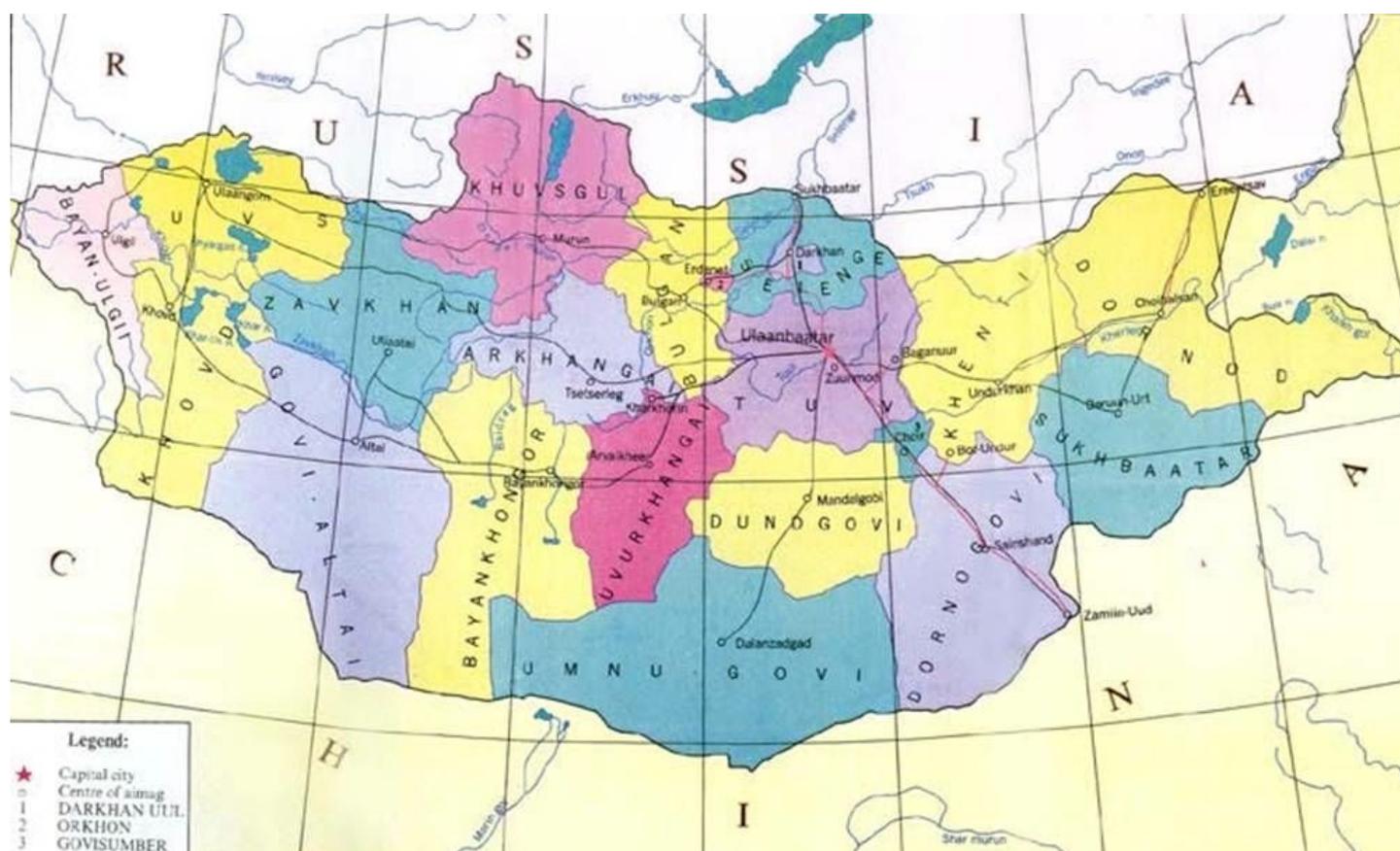


Khöömii nomination extract for UNSECO Intangible Cultural Heritage 2010

This is an abbreviated extract of the proposal. Mongolian Khöömii is now on the UNSECO Intangible Cultural Heritage list. The text raises many questions, particularly in regards to the authenticity and modernisation of Mongolian Khöömii.

Note I have changed the spelling from Khöömei to Khöömii (from Charles Bawden Mongolian-English Dictionary 1997 ISBN 0-7103-0439-0).

The former is a version of the Tuvan Spelling of this style of singing. The Spelling can also be Xöömii as there is no exact transliteration of Mongolian to Roman alphabetic script. Spellings such as Xöömij and Khöömiich are variants of the word for the singer of this style of singing and not the actual style of singing. I have also made some small grammatical corrections and there are a few comments in square brackets. Michael Ormiston Feb 2011



Identification of the Khöömii performers and practitioners in the territory of Mongolia from ancient to present times is as follows:

In Khovd aimag (province): In Chandmani sum (county), Chuluun Dagva (1929-1978), Derem (1931-1980), transmitted Khöömii to Tsedee B. (1935-1987), Chimeddorj, Sundui D. (1938-2002), Darjaa, Namjil, Sengedorj N. (1948-), Tserendavaa D.(1955-), Ganbold T (1957-), Gereltsogt T, Davaajav P (1969-), Baatarjav, Tsogdelger Ya., and the next generation inherited from them, such as Khosbayar (living in Germany), Amartuvshin B. (living in Germany), and many others who are the successors of the well-known Khöömii masters mainly among the Khalkh ethnic group, and in other sums of Khovd aimag.

In Uvs aimag: Among the Bayad, Dörvöd and some Khalkh, Khöömii has been transmitted through the outstanding skills of masters as Toivgoo E. to Lxagva, Otgonkhoo and others.

In Bayan-Ölgii aimag: Among the Tuvinians, Khöömii is mainly transmitted by Bapizan in Tsengel sum.

In Zavkhan aimag: The son of Geser nobleman, a well-known shaman Undur Kharchuu, who lived in the Bayankhairkhan sum in the area of Lake Oigon nuur and Mogoin gol river basin, was a prominent Khöömii practitioner. One of his descendants, Renchin Yo., called as 'Flute voice' (1885-1948) inherited his skills and transmitted it to Jigmed U. (1901-1999). Jigmed U. handed down the Khöömii to his children, Khurelbaatar.J (1940-2000), Tsend-Ayush J. (1940-1995), as well as to the local fellows Danaajav.G and Gongorjav.B and his grandson Sandagjav.E, who is currently living in Ulaanbaatar. Gaanjuur.B (1908-1965), the eminent Khöömii singer from Bayantes sum transmitted his skills and knowledge of Khöömii to Tserendorj P. (1931-2007), Namjilsuren Ts., Davaa D. from Tes sum, Chimeddorj G., Gantulga S., Yavgaan B. from Aldarkhaan sum and Odsuren B. from Ulaanbaatar, respectively.

In Ulaanbaatar: More recently, since less than 40 years, some singers out of the western provinces inherited the Khöömii from Khöömii masters from the Altai Mountains region, such as Davaanyam D. from Tsagaan uul sum of Khuvsgul aimag, Ganzorig N. from Zuunkharaa in Selenge aimag, Bayarbaatar D. from Gobi-Altai aimag, Gantulga D. and Ashid N. from Ulaanbaatar and many others.

Other parts of Mongolia: Khöömii heritage has been transmitted through the outstanding skills of other masters, such as Purev (1936-1975) in Bayanbulag sum of Bayankhongor aimag, Buyandelger S. in Övörkhangai aimag, to the famous practitioners, including Bazarvaani and Zulsar S (Died 2010) who both live in Ulaanbaatar today.

Khöömii has been transmitted and developed with its original characteristics from generation to generations particularly in the provinces in Western region of Mongolia mainly in the Altai mountains, namely, Chandmani sum and Khovd city in Khovd aimag, Tes sum and Ulaangom city in Uvs aimag, Tsengel sum in Bayan-Ölgii aimag, and Bayankhairkhan, Asgat, Bayantes, Tes sums of Zavkhan aimag; among several ethnic group such as the Khalkh, Bayad, Dörvöd, Tuva, Zakhchin, and Uriankhai.

The communities from neighbouring countries of Mongolia such as Tuva, Kalmyk, Bashkir, Khakass of Russian Federation, Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang Autonomy Regions of PR China share the Khöömii art with Mongolians, and according to the historical sources, they are the descendants of native Mongol nomads in Central Asia. The governments of Tuva, Kalmyk, Altai of the Russian Federation and of Inner Mongolia of the PR China are paying notable attention for the development of Khöömii art in variety of ways and invite Khöömii masters, teachers and practitioners from Mongolia and Tuva to learn Khöömii with its Mongolian authenticity. This shows a great importance of Khöömii for its concerned communities, not only in the territory of Mongolia, but in abroad as well. Although some teachers, performers and practitioners of Khöömii successfully spread the Khöömii training worldwide, there are distortion phenomena still in existence, such as deterioration and fragmentation on the authenticity and integrity of the tradition.

Khöömii is closely attached to the daily life of the concerned communities in the rural areas of Mongolia, featuring wide performance range, from herding the livestock to lulling the baby. In general, the art of Khöömii belongs to the domain of performing art, as defined in the Convention. It is popularly performed and practiced during the social celebrations, festive events, and official occasions. Moreover, Khöömii is in close inter-relation with the other ICH (Intangible Cultural Heritage) domains. For instance, it associates with different aspects with variety of other Mongolian folk oral and intangible heritages, such as magtaal blessing, praising, traditional short, popular and long songs, as well as the folk instruments.

The Mongolian traditional art of Khöömii is an outstanding heritage representing the Mongolians' contribution to the cultural heritage of humanity. Khöömii is a type of unique music art created, maintained and recreated by the Mongolian people from generation to generation and is one of the essential cultural identities of the Mongols.

“Khöömii” is a generic term defining the whole vocal practice of a single person who voluntarily and simultaneously overlays several sounds but mainly two sounds with his voice. It is a melody of harmonics sung above a fundamental tone called drone. The harmonics originate in the vocal drone that they are extracted from by simultaneous pressure on the pharynx and diaphragm.

[*and movement of the tongue*] Khöömii literally means “pharynx”, referring to the main body part used to produce this vocal technique [*This is mainly in relation to the compression of the sound*]. A multitude of techniques can be found in Mongolia and they are grouped within two main styles, the kharkhiraa (deep Khöömii) and isgeree Khöömii (whistled Khöömii) [*Tserendavaa has classed Kharkhiraa “non-melodic Khöömii”, meaning that a harmonic melody arising from the vocal drone is not sung, this has changed since he stated this, with singers like the late Zulsar’s combination Khöömii which combines the deep Khöömii(Kharkhiraa) with a melody of harmonics arising from the kharkhiraa drone . Isgeree Khöömii is classified as melodic Khöömii by Tserendavaa*]

The basis of Khöömii art is an imitation of sounds of the nature, from the mountains, water and breathing of the wind. The Mongolians used the human vocal organs to the high degree of level and developed the art of Khöömii as a unique musical art. The exact origin of the Khöömii is unknown, but researchers suppose that it could have been developed in connection with argil (a throat timbre) [argil means bass/bass voice, the vocal technique associated with epic singing is Khailakh] epic telling vocal technique, shamanic calling and the playing of the wooden tsuur flute.

The history of Mongolian Khöömii dates back hundreds of years. The popularity of Khöömii among Mongolians has arisen as a result of close interaction between natural environment and human culture. Ethnomusicologists studying Khöömii mark it as an integral part in the ancient pastoralism that is still practiced today. This art has developed to mimic and imitate the sounds of animals, nature, wind and water.

The wonder of the art of Khöömii is its simultaneous melodies-overtone [drone and harmonic overtone melody]. In this way the Khöömii is a phenomenon which differs from other traditional arts based on human vocal organs. [*The Dhzo of The Gyuto & Gyume Gelupka Tantric colleges and the Umngqokolo singing of Xhosa women from South Africa may use similar techniques to the Kharkhiraa style*]

This is the reason of calling the Khöömii performer as “Human-Music” (Khun khugjim [*khögjim*]) which highlights its specificity from a “normal singer”. The meaning of Khöömii for its community is enormous. As the traditional art form, Khöömii is in close cohesion with the daily life of the Mongolian nomads. They perform Khöömii in the variety of social occasions ranged widely, from grand state ceremonies to the household festive events, associated with respective rituals, and customs. Khöömii is not only performed in social events, because Khöömii performance is often found during the herding, and even when lulling the baby, as well as in the evenings in the ger (Mongolian traditional round felt tent) in domestic context. Hence, Khöömii is an essential part of the identity, pride and continuity of Mongolian society. Therefore, it provides the concerned community with sense of unity and harmony, as well as continuous creativity.

One of Khöömii’s social functions is that, it is used as a traditional pedagogic instrument in the social and art education and upbringing. This is because during the Khöömii transmission, a comprehensive knowledge, philosophy and wisdom on the correlation of human life and nature are transmitted at the same time. As an art form created and developed by the Mongolians, Tuvinians and other ethnic groups, and regarded as the classic art of nomadic civilization, Khöömii is one of the core performing arts that shape the Mongolian national arts in today’s Mongolia. Thus, it shows great influence on ensuring the visibility and enhancement of the living art of Mongolia.

Khöömii is born by variety of ethnic groups as Khalkh, Bayad, Dörvöd, Uriankhai, Zakhchin, Tuva, Tsaatan in different locations, therefore there are a number of sub-classifications of Khöömii styles, reflecting the special features and local flavours. This diversity is what constitutes the richness of Khöömii composition, and thus, each community concerned are proud of their own unique styles and techniques while expressing themselves with such diversity.

The governments of Mongolia, Russian Federation and PR China have been undertaking variety of measures for the effective enhancement and spread of Khöömii tradition, such as holding international meetings, workshops, competitions and performances on Khöömii. This shows the significance of Khöömii for the bearers and their will to safeguard, transmit and develop it in multinational level, which also promotes international interaction, mutual respect and intercultural dialogue.

Researchers classify Khöömii's vocalization into 2 styles:

-The Kharkhiraа (deep Khöömii) [*Tserendavaa "non-melodic Khöömii"*] vocal emission: The singer sings a drone in a normal voice, then he inhales deeply and, simultaneously pressing on his pharynx and abdomen, he produces a deep harmonic sound which vibrates one octave lower than the fundamental note produced. What you hear is in a very low-pitched register. The singer actually vibrates not only his vocal cords but also his arytenoid cartilage. It is this deep harmonic sound that is heard in the foreground and that characterizes the kharkhiraа style, although in some variants a melody of high-pitched harmonics can be heard above the fundamental sound.

-The Isgeree Khöömii (whistled Khöömii) [*Tserendavaa "Melodic Khöömii"*] emission: Also called Nariin [*fine/thin/exact*] Khöömii, Uyangiin[?????] Khöömii, Altain shingen [*liquid/watery???*] Khöömii. The singer sings a drone in a normal voice, then inhales deeply and still pressing [*pressing may be the wrong word. I was taught to constrict my pharynx, the word used was Shakhalt, or with Shakhaltai meaning, with compression/constriction. The Superior pharyngeal constrictor muscles are most probably used. The pressure from the abdomen is for the immense support the throat needs and in particular for the protection of the larynx of this highly compressed voice*] simultaneously on his pharynx and abdomen he (*can be a woman as well*) produces a harmonic sound, which vibrates several octaves above the fundamental sound. A melody of harmonics with a very high-pitched whistle [*sounding like a high pitched whistle*] can then be heard.

In both cases, the harmonic melody is sung in the same fashion. The singer modulates his mouth cavity by opening and closing his lips or by moving his tongue backwards, sticking its tip on his palate, or else by moving the central part of his tongue from front to back, its tip against his bottom teeth. To this are added techniques aiming to enrich the tone colour and others of ornamental character. Moreover, all these techniques can be combined. Inside more than 20 techniques, we can find the Bagalzuuriin Khöömii (throat Khöömii) Tsuurai Khöömii (echo Khöömii) Khamriin Khöömii (nasal Khöömii) or Dangildakh Khöömii (syllabial Khöömii) [*I am not sure what the word Dangildakh means, it is not in Bawden Dictionary. I was taught a warming up practise Dandailakh, which means "to check repeatedly". The exercise was to sing with the Shakhaltai voice, various vowels with a repeated loose tongue "L" quickly placed on and off the hard palate. It was not a Khöömii technique just a strengthening and flexibility practise*]. The singers use the Shakhaа [?????] [*this is probably Shakhagdakh which means "to be pressed or squeezed" the vocal technique associated with epic/praise singing is Khailakh*] vocal emission to sing the Magtaal praise songs with a throat timbre as well.

It is necessary to intensify and deepen the Khöömii research and studies particularly on the originality and authenticity of the heritage in order to identify and reveal the deeper form, techniques and specifications furthermore.

Current mode of transmission of the Khöömii is as follows:

Apprenticeship training - Traditionally, Khöömii has been handed down from the bearer to the learner, or master-to-apprentice way. It has still been practiced especially in the rural areas of Western Mongolia. Key practitioners maintaining the diversity of apprenticeship training by oral way, include state honoured artists, such as Tserendavaa, Sengedorj, Davaajav, Toivgoo, Ganbold and Bapizan. The Khöömii practitioners engaged to the apprenticeship training often find themselves in a family chain and broadened relatives, as well as neighbourhood area.

Classroom training – This type of training was started in 1992 by the concerned practitioners, bearers and the researchers of Khöömii. It has been developed with various types of courses, and even integrated to the formal educational system such as the University of Culture and Arts, National University of Mongolia, Music and Dance College and also through theatres in rural areas in the city of Khovd, Ulaangom in Uvs aimag and the school of Tsengel sum in Bayan Ölgii aimag. A number of institutes, public organizations and NGOs, such as "Association of Mongol Khöömii", "Foundation for the Studies on the Throat Singing Art and Heritage", "Blue spot" Khöömii training centre, "Khöömii and Morin khuur training centre", and "Khuurchiinkhan" are engaged in transmitting the Khöömii art with classroom training in cooperation with the State Morin Khuur Ensemble, and other public and private ensembles. More recently the Cultural Centre of Chandmani

sum is becoming a Khöömii international centre to teach Khöömii to its residents and foreigners.

Inscription of the Mongolian Traditional art of Khöömii on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity will make a great contribution for the safeguarding of this folk heritage which reflects exceptional talent of human creating music in close interaction with nature. As one of the mainspring heritage elements expressing the national identity of Mongolians, the Khöömii tradition and its emerging tendencies contribute promoting cultural diversity while manifesting human creativity and capability. So the inscription will support strengthening the national cultural pride of the Mongolians in and out of Mongolia, thus will promote understanding the insight of Khöömii in a deep and broad range.

The inscription will promote the concerned communities to maintaining this tradition in the ever changing modern world and inheriting the heritage to the next generation and also spreading it to the other cultures all around the world. Also, it will greatly encourage the bearers and practitioners, and strengthen their enthusiasm, which will lead to more effective activities aiming to safeguard and maintain this heritage.

Moreover, as it will raise the national awareness and pride on Khöömii, its sequent outcome will be vary. For instance, the multilateral cooperation among the relevant governmental and nongovernmental organizations, research institutions, private persons, heritage bearers, practitioners, masters and apprentices could be strengthened on the overall safeguarding efforts.

Until today, some communities and singers disagree on historical aspects and questions related to the vocal technique. Globalization, urbanization and modernization are the common major factors impacting the intangible heritage of most of the countries and cultures around the world. Other than the aforementioned agents, there are myriad factors threatening the intangible cultural heritage of Mongolia. These include, negative consequences of Communist ideology and the Great Repression, which caused Mongolian society to neglect their national identity, cultural heritage and tradition; socio-economic and culturally negative phenomena incurred during the transition to modern society; urban migration caused by both socio-economic difficulties and environmental disasters; over-integration and the prevalence of modern popular culture and etc.

Therefore, to some extent, Khöömii is a vulnerable heritage in terms of the transmission and maintenance with its authentic Mongolian characteristics. In these circumstances, the inscription of Khöömii on the List will offer noteworthy contribution to revival of Khöömii and ensuring its vibrant visibility and increasing public awareness, particularly that of young generations on the significance and value of it. Consequently, the dissemination of the Mongolian folk authentic characteristics of Khöömii tradition will be further strengthened and promoted not only among the concerned communities, but also among the diverse cultural fields, demonstrating the badge of Mongolia on the world arena. In this way, Khöömii related activities show considerable influence on promoting intercultural understanding and thus ensure mutual respect among diverse cultures.

There are number of foreign countries interested in Khöömii studies, namely France, USA, Japan, UK, Netherlands and etc., and the interest on Khöömii from different cultures are increasing dramatically over the time. The researchers and scholars of those countries have been studying Khöömii on variety of aspects, and considerable amount of research materials have been produced. Yet, it should be further noted that the original Mongolian authenticity on Khöömii should be further studied and disseminated appropriately throughout the world. In regard with this, cooperation and collaboration between the foreign and domestic entities should be further ensured and strengthened.

With the socio-economic development and evolution, Khöömii and other intangible heritages are in gradual change. This change has both negative and positive aspects on the heritage, so it is high of importance to maintain the positive side, such as enhancement and enrichment of Khöömii repertoire and composition, dissemination to worldwide thereof, and etc., while eliminating the risks and dangers to the heritage and its authenticity, including distortion, fragmentation, and deterioration and so on.

As a result of the negative effects of modern era, such as over centralization of urban population and technological waves, humankind loses some rooting and native skills on interaction

with the natural world and hearing and sensing the voice and echo of the mountain, river, forest and their spirits.

However, one of the new forms of communication might become traditional music to promote help humanity to live in harmony with nature and with each other. And Mongolia has its Khöömii. This is one of the importances [important reasons] to spread the art of Khöömii.

The inscription of the Khöömii art to the World Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity will promote ensuring the safeguarding of this outstanding heritage by engaging the Mongolian nation throughout the world and other nations bearing the heritage to strengthen their cooperation, as well as drive worldwide attention on further destiny of this unique cultural heritage.

The Constitution of Mongolia (1992), State Strategy on Culture (1996), Law on Culture (1996), and Law on the Protection of the Cultural Heritage (2001) are the major legal instruments constituting the initial favourable condition for the safeguarding of ICH. Mongolia ratified the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2005 and the Parliament of Mongolia amended 'Law on the protection of cultural heritage' with the articles concerning the ICH, which became the fundamental base for the establishment of legal background for the safeguarding of ICH. The Mongolian Presidential Decree on the Promotion and Development of Khöömii Art (2006) RL10 – No. 00396 – page 9 and the National Program 'Mongol Khöömii' (2007) demonstrate the national-level effort for keeping the Mongolian folk art of Khöömii under the state patronage, improving the dissemination and promotion of Khöömii as well as strengthening the Khöömii studies and researches.

Within the framework of the implementation of the National Program on the promotion of Traditional Folklore (1999-2006), and National Program 'Mongol Khöömii' (2008-2014) a number of decisive actions and activities for the promotion and enhancement of the Khöömii have been taken, including the international and national symposiums, seminars, meetings, festivals, variety of contests, workshops and etc.

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences of Mongolia organizes biannual Khöömii Festival aims to spread the Khöömii knowledge and skills to children and youth, and expand the Khöömii heritage scope furthermore. The collaboration with UNESCO in this field results with successful consequences. For instance, the International Academic Conference under the theme of "Traditional Khöömii Art and Modern time" was held in 2003. Series of "Khöömii Festival of the World Mongolians" were organized along with the Khöömii competitions in 2003, 2006 and 2008 respectively, engaging and networking over 120 bearers and transmitters of the Khöömii. The International Festival on Khöömii was held in Ulaanbaatar for the first time in 2009 in which the Khöömii researchers, scholars from around 10 countries, local Khöömii bearers, practitioners and other relevant stakeholders took part.

In the recent years, the Khöömii studies and research, and promotional activities have been broadened up in variety of ways. A number of NGOs, associations and centres have been set up on the Khöömii studies, transmission and cooperation and undertaking diverse activities, working hand in hand with the key stakeholders. "Foundation for the Studies on the Throat Singing Art and Heritage" and "Association of Mongol Khöömii" are one of these NGOs keeping close collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences of Mongolia to promote developing and safeguarding the traditional art of Khöömii both in Mongolia and worldwide. Several research papers and abstracts have been produced in Mongolia by the musicologists and ethnomusicologists such as Badraa J., Enebish J., Kherlen L., Tsenden-Ish A. and SandagjavE. Also, there are number of foreign ethnomusicologists focused on Khöömii such as, Zoya Kirghiz in Tuva, Theodore Levin in USA, Carole Pegg in the UK, as well as Trâm Quang Hai, Alain Desjacques and Johanni Curtet in France.

Khöömii performers, practitioners and bearers take great endeavour for the maintenance and enhancement of the Khöömii while concerning to keep the balance of its traditional authenticity with the modern ways of development.

Mongolia passed over 200 years under the Manchu colonisation, which showed negative influence on the Mongolian national culture, folklore, oral and intangible heritages. Moreover, due to

some aspects of communist ideology, under which Mongolia was about 70 years, the traditional Mongolian culture and intangible heritage had been suppressed and regarded as primitive and backward, which led to the ignorance, dereliction, disrespect and forgetting of the traditional culture and folklore, and even to the extinction and disappearance of the invaluable elements of the intangible cultural heritage. For example, Morin khuur (horsehead fiddle), Urtiin Duu (Long song), Tuuli (Heroic epics) and Khöömii were treated as savage these intangible cultural heritages. Although the national pride of Mongolians has revived since the 1990s, triggering considerable efforts to be taken for the overall safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage, traditional culture and folklore are still under the threat of gradual disappearance, distortion and deviation due to the globalization, urbanization and modernization. In addition, it should be noted that incorrect training methods and techniques are existing particularly in foreign countries, which dimming the traditional authenticity of Khöömii.

Moreover, one of the factors that deteriorating the traditional characteristics of Khöömii is that, it is under increasing manufacture for commercial purpose.

It is important to broaden public awareness and understanding on Khöömii through various ways and means and increase the number of the heritage bearers and practitioners, especially in the areas of Central, Eastern and Southern regions of Mongolia. Furthermore, it is necessary to take appropriate measures for increasing financial sources and budget allocation for the research, propagation and dissemination of outstanding and exceptional intangible cultural heritage.

Since the heritage bearers, practitioners, researchers and scholars, local communities and administrations, as well as relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations are willing to safeguard, enhance and disseminate the Khöömii art in their respective ways, it is a high time for supporting and encouraging their efforts and activities in the following ways:

- To strengthen the method of the traditional apprenticeship training of Khöömii performance and to establish training centres like the existing ones such as “Blue Spot” centres in Ulaanbaatar, the new Khöömii center in Chandmani sum of Khovd aimag, or the Khöömii class in Tsengel sum of Bayan-Ölgii aimag, make the arrangements for the relevant provisions such as, administrative, financial and managerial provisions thereof both in the rural areas and in the capital city.

- To inform about Khöömii as a knowledge of heritage in the general educational schools.

- To ensure the integration of the Khöömii safeguarding activities and efforts for supporting the bearers of Khöömii art to the measures taken through the UNESCO Program ‘Living Human Treasures System’, which launched in Mongolia in 2008.

- To hold annual events on Khöömii, including meetings, seminars, various festivals, performances, concerts, workshops and other promotional activities in international, national and local levels, in order to strengthen the relations between the foreign and domestic singers and scholars.

- To promote and support initiatives on the development and enhancement of the art of Khöömii and to build favourable conditions for enriching its repertoire with the modern music genres and world music elements so as to improve the world attraction on Khöömii art and ensure the living flow of Khöömii art in its authentic characteristics.

- To enhance researches and support the extensive survey on Khöömii by officially appointing special research team focusing thoroughly on the Khöömii forms and techniques which have been forgotten or studied incompletely so as to identify and reveal the hidden techniques, manners, and related customs. A comparative study between researchers from abroad, Tuva, Mongolia, and Inner Mongolia is needed.

- To take a decisive measure for creating appropriate socio-psychological environment to introduce the Khöömii art to the worldwide and within the scope of the measure, implement diverse awareness-raising activities, including publish books on historical facts related to Khöömii, disseminate the Khöömii through the newspapers and periodicals, produce a documentary movies, CD and DVD as well as broadcast TV programs and etc.,

- To strengthen human resource capacity in terms of improving the overall management and coordination on the safeguarding of the art of Khöömii. Workplan for Safeguarding and Maintaining the Mongolian Traditional Art of Khöömii and Promoting its Bearers`

Khöömii trainings, conferences, traditional art festivals and Khöömii shows organized by

the relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations in Chandmani sum of Khovd aimag, city of Khovd; Bayankhairkhan and Asgat sums of Zavkhan aimag; the city of Ulaangom, and Tes sum in Uvs aimag; and Tsengel sum in Bayan-Ölgii aimag and etc., are showing positive influences for the safeguarding of Khöömii art in a wide range. There are a number of Khöömii practitioners who are making notable effort on the effective transmission of the Khöömii by training local youths and children, such as Tserendavaa D., Davaajav R., Bapizan, Toivgoos E., Sengedorj E., Ganbold T., Odsuren B., Ulanbayar M., and Jamiyan Ts, and so on.

The participants from various administrative and professional affiliations, all concerned Khöömii heritage, such as Cultural Centers and well-known practitioners from aforementioned aimags, NGOs, training centres including “Foundation for the Studies on the Throat Singing Art and Heritage”, “Association of Mongol Khöömii”, “Blue Spot”, and “Khuurchiinkhan” participated in the Great Assembly of the Mongolian Khöömii performers in 2009 and unanimously agreed the decision to nominate Mongol Khöömii to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This Assembly directed its activity for reviving and safeguarding this heritage before losing its native and original characters.

Dogsom G., the governor of Chandmani sum, Khovd aimag initiated to establish the Khöömii centre in Chandmani sum together with the concerned individuals and taking considerable efforts for the transmission, dissemination and maintenance of the Khöömii art in local level. This is a good practice engaging and encouraging the heritage bearers, concerned communities, researchers and relevant officials for the effective safeguarding of the Khöömii. List we met with bearers and transmitters of the Khöömii art tradition such as, Ulambayar M., Jamiyan Ts., Davaajav R., Tserendavaa D., and Sengedorj E. and delegations from Community Centres of Culture of the Bayantes, Bayankhairkhan, Asgat and Tes sums of Zavkhan aimag;

Ulaan-Uul and Rinchenlkhumbe sums of Khuvsgul aimag; as well as practitioners from Khovd, Uvs and Bayan-Ölgii aimags and conducted interviews with them on Khöömii art development.

During this expedition, photos, audio and video records on Khöömii have been produced. Aforementioned persons voluntarily helped us for collecting information resources and rare photos on Khöömii art performance. Their participation and efforts possess great role on the preparation of the nomination materials for the Representative List. Director of the NGO “Foundation for the Studies on the Throat Singing Art and Heritage” and bearer of the Khöömii art tradition Sandagjav E. has been engaged in the process of the preparation of the nomination dossier with direct involvement. The submission has been elaborated by specialists and performers of Khöömii art communities and associations through a series of meetings and consultative processes at all levels. There has been universal and unanimous responding support on the development of the nomination dossier from the Khöömii-bearing communities and concerned individuals.

The art of Khöömii has been performed in the customs of the worshipping the sacred sites, Naadam Festival and other ceremonies as the inseparable part of the national mentality and tradition. The customary practices of Khöömii performance have been developed in interaction with traditional arts and created a harmonizing art of the Humankind and Natural world. There are several specific aspects of Khöömii art to be followed in terms of transmission and performance. Khöömii is in fact, one of the most difficult genres of the performing arts. Following are the methodological and specific characteristics to bear in mind when possessing and performing the Khöömii art:

- The Khöömii practitioner must be examined and selected by detailed and strict criteria
- The Khöömii teacher should be a specialist on Khöömii and who has no less than 10 years experience on the training method of the art of Khöömii
- When transmitting Khöömii, one should fully understand the social function and meaning of Khöömii, as well as the associated customs thereof.
- The Khöömii teacher and student shall have background knowledge on human organs and anatomy.
- When transmitting and maintaining the Khöömii art, it is high of importance to keep the balance of the tradition and modernization on the heritage.

- The Khöömii student shall learn the Khöömii in its original and authentic technique and methods, which provides fundamental background for the learner to possess Khöömii art perfectly.

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