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A Minhe Monguor Drinking Song

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Introduction

The Monguor, one of China's fifty-six officially recognized ethnic groups, exceeded 190,000 in number (Zhang and Zeng 1993:62) as of 1990. Residing in four separate localities in Qinghai Province and in Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous County in Gansu Province, their language has preserved many archaic Mongol lexical items. To-date, most Monguor linguistic research has focused on the Monguor of Huzhu Monguor Autonomous County in eastern Qinghai. Examples of such research include Rona-Tas (1966), Zhaonastu (1981), Chinggeltai (1988), and Üjiyediin Chuluu (1994). Stuart and Limusishiden (1994) provide a recent collection of material related to Monguor ethnography and folktales, and provide a bibliography with many references to Monguor studies, especially those undertaken in China in the last two decades.

Minhe Monguor Songs

In terms of Minhe Monguor songs, the only published examples that we are aware of appear in Zhao (1982), Ma (1990), Hu and Stuart (1992), and Stuart and Hu (1993). In each case the songs were presented in Chinese or English, without the original. The Minhe Monguor song repertoire is comprised mostly of wedding songs. Those sung by males are primarily performed in a local Chinese dialect with a number of Monguor lexical items, although if the singer's command of Chinese is limited, he may sing in Monguor. Minhe Monguor females, as a result of less contact with the non-Monguor speaking world, sing several songs in Monguor

at weddings. The song presented in this paper¹ is one of the very few songs sung by Minhe Monguor males in the Monguor language. Women almost never sing this song because it is a liquor drinking song and women drinking liquor is frowned upon by Monguor culture. This is the first time for this song to be recorded and translated. Zhu Wenhui (b. 1946), the first author's father, sang this song to Zhu Yongzhong in late November 1994 in his home in Zhujiaola Village, Zhongchuan Township, Minhe Hui and Monguor Autonomous County.

A guest is seated, offered food and tea, and then is offered liquor. After several cups of liquor, the host might sing the following song, which the guest responds to, also in song. The popularity of such songs is fading and is sung today only in the more remote Minhe Monguor regions. Although the content of the song is similar to certain Monguor wedding songs, the tune is different. Words of the song may be extemporized to a certain extent, however, the general meaning stays much the same. This song is known as a *durasi jinlakuni daola*² (liquor toast proposing song) by Monguor. Before the song is sung the singer says, "*Muni awu kholo mersa risa, diku wukuni geji yangma guang ma, du bi awudunang daolaji durasi yizhuer jinlaya*" ("Though my uncle came from far away, we do not have good food and drink to serve, now I sing a song to propose a toast to my uncle").

There are two parts to the drinking song: one is sung by the host to propose a toast and the other is sung by the guest to thank the host family.

1 At the end of this paper we have appended a list of all words used in the song. We have indicated if the words are Monguor, Modern Standard Mandarin, or words from the Qinghai Dialect, which is primarily a Chinese dialect, although containing a number of borrowed words from minority languages.

2 A Romanized form of Monguor has been utilized in Qinghai since the 1980s, e.g., Li (1988).

The Song

Durasi Jinlakuni Daola

- ¹ *Niaoduerni nige gezai shuliandu,*
- ² *Dasi jigela hangtou bayasiji saoser bang.*
- ³ *Chuguduer dasi mulasang guang ya,*
- ⁴ *Chugushulianni ya,*
- ⁵ *Jiaodongdu yege risang guang.*
- ⁶ *Niaoduer muni huitang gerdu riku,*
- ⁷ *Kholo merni awu qi chenli,*
- ⁸ *Dasi quanjianang gaoxing bang ma,*
- ⁹ *Qimai qigeku,*
- ¹⁰ *Bayernang keliji buragha dakuniang.*
- ¹¹ *Qimaidu yizhuerni durasila jielieku,*
- ¹² *Suzushige gegang bang,*
- ¹³ *Jienang dalasangni mingliuzi bang ya,*
- ¹⁴ *Gezaini puzhang ma du,*
- ¹⁵ *Dasi dajiani ge saner bang,*
- ¹⁶ *Kholo merni awu qi chenli,*
- ¹⁷ *Ni yizhuer suzu durasini qi wusa,*
- ¹⁸ *Qimai niaoduersa khonodu ya,*
- ¹⁹ *Qini shou jialaji du,³*
- ²⁰ *Nashan Wulani songbeishige nasi digeni.*
- ²¹ *Nashan Wulani songbeishige nasi digeni.*

After the host has sung this, the guest drinks one to three cups of liquor and might say, "*Muni dongjia gaga dai shinajianang ninggeji khuosen ge naola risa, dasini dangrengeba. Gaoxingra-jiang ma, bi ye daolaji taghuladu yige jinlaya.*" ("Though we came to visit my host brother and hostess sister-in-law with poor gifts, you treated us with great hospitality. We have already been pleased, now let me also sing a song to propose a toast to you").

¹ *Shitianni mieshisa bi sanaser bi,*

² *Shitianni mieshisa bi duer jila bi.*

³ *Du* emphasizes and catches the listeners' attention. It is often used before words of praise by Minhe Monguor.

- ³ *Niaoshulianni huangdao duerdu,*
⁴ *Hushensini daghada yaoba,*
⁵ *Khosen bielatang ruoji riba.*
- ⁶ *Wuguerni duersi kuitian bang,*
⁷ *Dasini gagani ger ma zou khalen bang,*
⁸ *Muni dongjia gaga qi chenli,*
⁹ *Dasini gezai dangrengeba,*
¹⁰ *Dasinang bayertai ge'erni daolaya.*
- ¹¹ *Durasi wuji dasi gaoxingrajiang,*
¹² *Tasini kuitiandu cihoulaghajiang,*
¹³ *Ni qini gezai durasi bang,*
¹⁴ *Muni gher bang ma,*
¹⁵ *Qimaidu bi chenxinnang yige jinlaya.*
- ¹⁶ *Qi ni yizhuerni ge qinglaku,*
¹⁷ *Qimai niaoduersa khonodu,*
¹⁸ *Yang mulaku yang puduni,*
¹⁹ *Yang sanasa yang rini ya,*
²⁰ *Qini gongzuo lishun shenti jiankanggeku barni.*
²¹ *Qini gongzuo lishun shenti jiankanggeku barni yao.*

Translation

Liquor Toast Proposing Song

- ¹ In this very good evening,
² Several of us sit together pleasantly,
³ Yesterday we didn't think it,
⁴ During last night,
⁵ It didn't come into our dreams.
- ⁶ Today you come to my poor house,
⁷ My uncle from a long distance, you listen,
⁸ All of my family are happy,
⁹ As we see you,
¹⁰ We cannot adequately express our joy.
- ¹¹ We welcome you with just a cup of liquor,
¹² It is as clear as water,

- ¹³ It is just liquor made by ourselves,
¹⁴ It is not something good but,
¹⁵ It is a token of our regard.
- ¹⁶ Uncle from a long distance, you listen,
¹⁷ If you drink this cup of watery liquor,
¹⁸ From today on, for you,
¹⁹ You will add more to your long-life till,
²⁰ You will attain the age of South Mount's pine.
²¹ You will attain the age of South Mount's pine.

Guest's response:

- ¹ I was anticipating this ten days before,
² I was anticipating this very day ten days before,
³ During this night of this glorious day,
⁴ I followed the happiness gods,
⁵ I came into your house with only my body.⁴
- ⁶ It is cold during winter days,
⁷ But our brother's house is warm,
⁸ My host brother, you listen,
⁹ We are treated with great hospitality,
¹⁰ We'll be pleased to sing songs.
- ¹¹ We have drunk a lot,
¹² You take care of us in cold weather,
¹³ This is your exquisite liquor,
¹⁴ This is my hand,
¹⁵ I propose a toast from my heart.
- ¹⁶ As you drink this cup of liquor,
¹⁷ From today on, for you,
¹⁸ Everything you wish will become true,
¹⁹ All you long for will come to you,
²⁰ Your work will go on smoothly with good health.
²¹ Your work will go on smoothly with good health.

4 That is, "I didn't bring any gifts." However, guests often bring gifts to the host when visiting.

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Appendix

Abbreviations

M = Monguor
MSM = Modern Standard Mandarin
QH = Qinghai Dialect
SW = Sound Word

awu: M
bang: M
barni: M
bayertai: M
bayasiji: M
bayernang: M
bi: M
bielanang: M
buragha: M
chenli: M
chenxinnang: MSM
chuguduer: M
chugushulianni: M
cihoulaghaji: MSM: cihou; M:
-laghaji
daghada: M

dai: M
dajiani: MSM: dajia; M: -ni
dakuniang: M
dalasangni: M
dangren: QH: dangren
daola: M
daolaji: M
daolaya: M
dasi: M
dasini: M
dasinang: M
digeni: M
diku: M
dongjia: MSM
du: M
duer: M
duerdu: M
duersi: M
durasi: M
durasila: M
durasini: M
gaga: M

gaoxing: MSM
gaoxingrajiang: MSM: gaoxing;
M: -rajiang
ge: MSM: yige
geba: M
ge'erni: MSM: ge'er; M: -ni
gegan: M
geji: M
ger: M
gerdu: M
gezai: M
gezaini: M
gher: M
gongzuo: MSM
guang: M
hangtou: M
Hushensini: MSM: Fushen; M: -sini
huangdao: MSM
huitang: M
jialaji: MSM: jia; M: -laji
jiankang: MSM
jiaodongdu: M
jielieku: MSM: jie; M: jielieku
jienang: M
jigela: MSM: jige; M: -la
jila: M
jinlaya: MSM: jing; M: -laya
khalen: M
keliji: M
kholo: M
khonodu: M
khosen: M
kuitian: M
kuitiandu: M
lishun: QH; MSM: shunli
ma: M
merni: M
mersa: M
mieshisa: M
mingliuzi: QH
mulasang: MSM: mu; M: -la
mulaku: MSM: mu; M: -laku
muni: M
nanshan: MSM
naola: M
nasi: M
ni: M
niaoduer: M
niaoduerni: M
niaoduersa: M
niaoshulianni: M
nige: M
puduni: M
puzhang: M
qi: M
qigeku: M
qimai: M
qimaidu: M
qinglaku: QH: qing; M: -laku
qini: M
quanjianang: MSM: quanjia; M: -nang
riku: M
riba: M
rini: M
risa: M
risang: M
ruoji: M
saner: M
sanasa: M
sanaser: M
saoser: M
shenti: MSM
shinajia: M
shitianni: MSM
shou: MSM
shulian: M
songbeishige: MSM: songbai;
M: -shige
suzu: M
suzushige: M
tasini: M
taghuladu: M
wuguerni: M
wuji: M
wukuni: M
wulani: M
wusa: M
ya: SW
yang: M
yangma: M
yao: M
yaoba: M
yege: QH
yige: MSM
yizhuer: MSM: yizhong'er
yizhuerni: M: ni
zou: M