

The Power and Origins of Throat Singing

Lucas Patyk

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Globe Institute

Introduction: The Origins

“It is believed in Tuvan tradition that all things have a soul or are inhabited by spiritual entities...” and that sacred throat singing techniques were developed by natives dwelling in central Asia and Siberia “to establish contact with these spiritual entities and assimilate their power through the imitation of natural sounds” meaning that sound, specifically throat singing, contains the ability to act as a bridge between our 3D reality and higher dimensions of existence; as spirits and consciousnesses have the ability to operate in these upper realms while the physical body abides by the natural laws of this reality. Together, the 3D and the universal laws synergize and gift what is known as Life -- here on Earth. Before jumping right in, allow this introduction to welcome one of the stories of origin where this way of chanting came to be. “One night in 1433, the Tibetan lama Je Tzong Sherab Senge awoke from a startling dream. In it he had heard a voice unlike any voice that had ever sounded on the planet. It was a low voice, unbelievably deep, sounding more like the growl of a wild bull than anything human... In this dream, Je Tzong Sherab Senge had been instructed to take this special voice and use it for a new chanting style that would embody both the masculine and feminine aspects of divine energy. It was a tantric voice, a sound that could unite those chanting it in a web of universal consciousness. The next morning, Je Tzong Sherab Senge began to chant his daily prayers. The sounds that came out of him were the sounds he had heard in his dream — unearthly sounds, tantric sounds — and he gathered his fellow monks together to tell them of his dream... That year, more than 500 years ago, the Gyume Tantric Monastery began in Lhasa, Tibet. The monks of this monastery learned to chant in the same voice which Je Tzong Sherab Senge had heard in his dream. It was a voice that enabled each monk to chant three notes at the same time, creating 'One Voice Chords'.”

What can be inferred from this is that it's quite a compelling piece of history that portrays the link between the basic physical plane to the unbounded, limitless plane of the dream realm which can offer communication between 3D operating beings and ultimately, higher consciousness, in Je Tzong's case, he had anchored and embodied an incredibly profound, new style of singing which dramatically shifted the course of future history.

Emerging from numerous locations as one of the world's most archaic forms of singing and musical expression, throat singing, generally accompanied by overtone singing, offers an unexplainable healing capability, executed and mastered by modulating movements of the jaw, mouth, larynx and velum (soft palate), generating many notes simultaneously -- one being a fundamental pitch, another one or more notes/tones over that creating a resonance. This "supernatural phenomenon" is done by utilizing the whole entire vocal tract and one of the universe's basic principles: vibration. To me, the vibration of throat singing, in Cymatics, looks like the beginning of the universe and how fast everything expanded and evolved. As well as, the term 'overtone singing' relates to the methodology of separating one of the harmonics from the overtone series of the sung root note which is the fundamental, therefore induces a clear resonance between two pitches/notes at once. Many indigenous singers travel far and wide into the nature of the countryside looking for the perfect environment, either by the right tree, river, or even the sides of a mountain to create the ideal setting for proper throat singing to channel. The reason being because that was where the sounds of the natural world sung in beautiful orchestration without the distortion of the civilized society, so singers may interact with tootling birds, flowing streams, breezing winds, and/or the organic sounds of a horse or camel and mimic all of that with just the human voice. Not only that, the type of people that developed throat

singing were among nomadic people of central Asia who rode horses, lived in yurts, raised camels, yaks, and sheep, and generally those who were living in a harmonious, symbiotic relationship with Mother Nature. In addition, specifically, the people of Tuva incorporate various vocalizations which each have their own unique characteristics; there are three primary styles called Khoomei, Kargyraa and Sygyt.

Styles of Throat Singing: The Khoomei, Kargyraa, and Sygyt

Before jumping into the various versions of throat singing, specifically Tuvan, the foundational building block for this overtone style of singing must be understood -- Xorekteer (Hor-ke-teer). Xorekteer is the term for throat singing from the chest and is done by creating a mini bubbling constriction within the larynx through the gentle tonation of "Ahh" where the guttural sensation is the strongest. This sensation is generated by the vocal folds moving inside the larynx. So, combining the singing of "Ahh" and constricting this part of the throat known as the larynx results in the Xorekteer voice. Once the Xorekteer voice is established, the Khoomei voice can begin to be developed.

Khoomei(Hoomei) is traditionally a softer sounding style, with the drone, also known as the fundamental base note, fluctuating in the mid to low-midrange of the singer's normal voice. The Khoomei style of singing still continues to incorporate the Xorekteer, except there is an addition of changing the shape of the mouth and lips to produce a resonant chamber. The lips will be narrow and the jaws will also drop. The mouth and lips can be manipulated to shift the shape of the opening where the sound is being released by utilizing the other vowels like O, E, I, U, along with a handful of others, which all create slightly different resonances. To sum it up

shortly, this Khoomei style is the product of the Xorekteer and the precise reshaping of the mouth, often a small circular opening to generate a chamber for the sound to resonate in.

Traversing up the ladder of throat singing, Sygyt comes into play, and is the term that literally means “whistle.” The sounds and functionality of Sygyt is similar to that of a flute. While incorporating the Khoomei method and singing with a half-open mouth alongside the tip of the tongue placed directly behind the top, front teeth like pronouncing the letter “L.” The tongue remains in the same location, while the body of the tongue switches positions to select other harmonics. In order for one to achieve the ideal sound, one must develop the ability to filter out lower, unwanted harmonic sounds, which can be done by bringing the tongue to the top of the jaw, filtering the sound out through a small opening wherever it feels comfortable. One will know the Sygyt is mastered when high, piercing harmonics are heard, and the sound is released effortlessly with the least amount of tension in the body.

The final step in this throat singing progression is the Kargyraa which is this low and deep growling sound almost like a continuous note of one clearing their throat. The physical anatomy behind this technique is described as the squeezing of the larynx beside the vibration/oscillation of the ventricular folds within the throat, and is somewhat seen as an extension of the voice since these specific muscles/areas of the throat are rarely used, let alone activated. This grumbling tone comes from the ventricular folds vibrating on top of the vocal folds, easier done with a closed mouth for back pressure, generating this rich sounding bass frequency known as the Kargyraa. The Kargyraa can be understood by mimicking the idea of purring like a big cat, or a roaring lion, or perhaps a croaking frog. Mixing the Kargyraa and the other vowels used for overtones, as explained in the Khoomei style, creates an unexplainable,

unique resonance done by multiple throat manipulations. One will truly feel the power of the Kargyraa as the entire throat vibrates cleanly and resonates throughout the chest, throat, mouth, and even a little in the cranium, to the point where after the sound escapes, the harmonic healing vibration is felt throughout every cell in the vessel of the being.

Benefits of Throat Singing: The Whole, Complete and Utter Absolute

Moving along, it's practically impossible to articulate the feeling, the effect, the impact of throat singing that connects one to the whole, complete, and utter absolute -- that void.

Furthermore, throat singing has countless benefits revolving around personal body effects to the connection of different regions across the world from where this way of singing sprouted.

Allegedly, throat singing was around before the human language, so everytime this style is sung in this way, there is an automatic tuning, like switching the radio station, back to this indigenous, antiquated frequency of, for lack of better terms, the essence of the beginning of human-kind.

Another great benefit that might seem obvious is that one is able to learn the manipulations of the voice, throat, mouth, and lips, further developing polyphonic singing, on a more experiential, integrated level. Third, throat singing has a massive benefit for vibrating the vagus nerve on a more intense level than normal singing that actually stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system in which natural neurotransmitters, also known as "feel-good" hormones, like dopamine, serotonin and oxytocin are released into the body. At the same time, throat singing benefits the development of a much stronger vocal resonance. Needless to say, throat singing absolutely connects one to source, completion, and all that ever was, is, and ever will be; no words could ever do the justice to try and articulate the magnitude of force that throat singing contains.

Moreover, besides its cosmic, alien-like, otherworldly effects, throat singing is considered quite sacred and holy, so when tuning into this energy field of overtones and deep vibrations, it is an opportunity to connect to all of the cultures from where the roots all originate -- such as Tuva, Mongolia, Tibet, Inuit, Xhosa, -- and acknowledge them with personal respects. Lastly, the harmonic ratios created in vocal overtone singing allows vibrational shift and change to occur, aligning the energy centers, etheric fields, and overall well being.

In essence, the power and origins of throat singing leaves many in awe as it encapsulates pieces from our history, which remains in the cellular memory of each one of our voices, anatomical health benefits and that of divine harmony. Throat singing is one of the few phenomena that instantly sends one to source and automatic healing when in the presence of it; at the same time, offering multiple styles to go about the direction of throat singing in ways like: Khoomei, Kargyraa, Sygyt, and other unmentioned sub groups (Borbangnadyr and Ezengileer). In conclusion, this method of musical expression may differ from region to region, in styles, in rituals, and/or possibly significance, but all of them somehow intertwine, connecting one to something bigger and greater -- Source. Whether it was a way to celebrate, connect, dance, or express, it all contributed as eternal treasures to a mere fragment of the beautiful facets in this human experience that got to be combined with the soul. Something so surreal should be cherished and appreciated, perhaps even integrated into daily practice/ritual. (wink wink)

What the Paper's About: Summary

My final paper revolved around the power and origins of throat singing. I go into a bit of the history within the introduction, and dive further into the various styles of Tuvan Throat Singing: Khoomei, Kargyraa, and Sygyt. Each of the styles are explained in detail in regards to physical anatomy of the throat, and goes into exactly how they are executed. After moving on from each of the primary chanting styles, I specifically talk about the benefits that throat singing provides like connecting to the roots which were sung before the human language, understanding polyphonic singing, vibrating the vagus nerve, and a couple of other interesting benefits. Then, I sum it all up and suggest throat singing as something to perhaps incorporate in daily routine/ritual, as I do every morning.

References

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