



Two Strings that Stopped the War

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Abstract: This article tells about the great Turkmen dutorist Shukur Bakhshi, his unique talent and his incomparable contribution to the promotion of national art.

Keywords: dutar, musicians, bakhshis, Turkmen, songs and music, Shukur bakhshi, “Competition”, Uspensky, great virtuoso master.

Music is a magical force that has given life a special meaning at all times. Music has an impact not only on the spiritual and aesthetic world of a person, but is also an inexhaustible source for the education of future generations. The fact that music occupies a large place in the life of the Turkmen people is true. That is why, to this day, musicians and bakhshis are awarded special respect among the Turkmen people. According to the research of one of the largest Russian Turkologists of the first half of the 20th century. A.N. Samoylovich: “The word “bakhshi” comes from the Sanskrit bhikshu - teacher. Mongolian Buddhists called people who knew the Uighur script that way, so in the 13th-15th centuries the word "bakhshi" was used to refer to scribes. In shamanism, bakhshis act as healers, sorcerers, who exorcised evil spirits through songs and music. In the existing system of training bakhshi, a significant place was given to poetic competitions. During the almost universal illiteracy of the population of Central Asia, the bakhshis were the keepers of the folk musical and folklore traditions, and also distributed classical works.

Bakhshi (Turkm. Bagşy / Bagshy; Uzbek. baxshi; Kazakh. Baksy; Kir. Bakshi) is a folk singer, performer of folklore among the peoples of Central Asia, usually performs at holidays.

An integral part of the bakhshi is the dutar, a stringed plucked musical instrument with a long neck, two gut or nylon strings and a pear-shaped resonator. Memories of musicians and bakhshis who lived in the past centuries, of beautiful melodies and songs performed by them, are still fresh in the memory of the people.

The brightest representative of the galaxy of Turkmen bakhshi is a singer and musician of the late 19th and early 20th centuries known as Shukur bakhshi. He still enjoys great respect and honor among the people. The modern generation is well acquainted with the name of the great virtuoso master thanks to Nurmurad Sarykhanov's story "Shukur Bakhshi" (1941) and the film based on this story.

The author took one of the versions of the “historical event” as the basis of the story “Shukur Bakhshi” — the popularly known story of the liberation of the brother of the Turkmen musician Shukur from the captivity of the Iranian Khan, recorded from the words of a resident of the village of Gindigush of the Yoloten etrap, a contemporary of Shukur-bakhshi. When his older brother is taken prisoner, everyone, as one, gathered to help him free his brother. They offered different ways to save the captive: a ransom, an armed attack. But Shukur had his own plan: - without weapons, instead of weapons - a musical instrument - a dutar.

Having gone to Iran to free his brother, love for his people, pride in him give strength to Shukur and his music. He wins the competition with the Khan's court musician Ghulam. So, in a peaceful battle,

by the power of music, Shukur Bakhshi achieves the release of his brother from captivity and takes him to his homeland.

President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov in his wonderful book “Music of Peace, Music of Brotherhood, Music of Friendship” cites his memories of the film and Shukur Bakhshi: “I remember when I saw this film for the first time in my childhood. I was just a child and this film made a strong impression on me. And the feeling of a great discovery - that it is possible, without allowing a bloody massacre, to defeat the enemy with the help of art - I have retained to this day. Since then, I have repeatedly reviewed this wonderful picture, trying to comprehend the secret of music that can not only express the innermost feelings and moods of a person, but also conquer the souls of listeners, shed light in them, awaken high impulses, convey goodness as a gift from heart to heart ... ”.

This film has gained popularity not only in Turkmenistan, but also abroad. The Kyrgyz writer Ch. Aitmatov wrote in his article “Music that forged swords into plowshares”: “The film “Competition” made me take a fresh look at many things in the cinema, made me think about many things ... I would say that this is a film of an eternal theme - a duel of good and evil, war and peace, folk art and art put at the service of those in power.

Shukur bakhshi, who inscribed his name in the history of the Turkmen people with golden letters, was engaged in daikhanism all his life. He was the youngest among the three sons of Dovat Agha. Born in 1831 in the Gokdepe etrap in the village of Khurmant Gokje, the son of Dovat spent most of his life in the village of Dushak in the Kaahka etrap. In order to perpetuate the memory and pay tribute to the famous musician, one of the daikhan (village) associations of this etrap was given the name "Shukur Bakhshi". In 1991, in honor of the 160th anniversary of the musician, a festive celebration was held here. It is known from various historical and literary sources that the famous Ali Bakhshi and the musician Karadali Gauquelin were the first mentors of Shukur.

In the seventies of the 19th century, a meeting of Turkmen bakhshis and musicians was held in Gokdepe in the village of Yangala near Ashgabat. Shukur bakhshi was also invited to this meeting among the distinguished guests. Shukur bakhshi was not only a talented musician himself, but was also an ardent admirer of the masters of musical art. He was always on the lookout for musical talent. Shukur bakhshi traveled around and traveled to many corners of the world, speaking to the public, as well as carefully studying the performance features of his colleagues.

The famous Russian scientist V. A. Uspensky met with Shukur Bakhshi in August 1925 in the city of Mary, at the very beginning of his work on collecting and studying samples of Turkmen musical works. Here is what he says about this in the first part of the book “Turkmen Music”, written in collaboration with V. M. Belyaev: “During my visit to Merv, I met Shukur Bakhshi, the oldest of the musicians. Due to his age, the bakhshi was already 94 years old at that time, I could not ask the musician to play the dutar again and again in order to transfer his music to sheet music. But listening to his game, I was convinced of the memory and performance skills of the bakhshi. He told me that at the age of fourteen, together with his mentor Ali Bakhshi, he visited Khiva and Iran. From him I also heard legends about the creation of the dutar by Plato and Babagambar. This meeting gave me a lot of valuable information...”. In a valuable work from a scientific and musical-ethnographic point of view, V. Uspensky posted a unique photograph of Shukur bakhshi. The available facts and materials that we possess give us the right to assert that Shukur Bakhshi was a virtuoso performer, had a phenomenal memory, showed creative skill in all endeavors, knew the life experience of his mentors well, was familiar with the history of the emergence of individual songs and melodies. This is evidenced by numerous facts given in the above-mentioned book “Turkmen Music”, memoirs of performers and musicians, contemporaries of Shukur son Dovat, as well as fans of his music. Being popular among the people, Shukur bakhshi often went to distant corners (villages), where he was invited to wedding (holiday). One day, returning on horseback from a wedding where he was invited as a bakhshi, Shukur drove into the village of Sakarchagi near the city of Mary. Tired from the long journey, and approaching the door of one of the yurts, he asked if he would be received as a guest. He was accepted, despite the fact that the owner was not at home. Passing and sitting deep into the yurt, his gaze fell on the uncovered dutar, unable to restrain himself, the bakhshi took the dutar in his

hands and noticed that its frets were made of silver. Shukur bakhshi hit the dutar strings several times. At that moment, the daughter-in-law of this house entered the yurt. She had a teapot in her hand. Putting it in front of the guest, she asked: “Take it, then they took it, but can you play on it? This is a very honorable occupation in our house.” A little offended by the words of the young daughter-in-law, the bakhshi hastily tuned the dutar and played it so much that he forgot about everything in the world. Dutar turned out to be a real treasure. Carried away by the game, Shukur bakhshi did not notice that the owner of the house had come. The host sat down with surprise and delight, spellbound by the magical melody and virtuoso performance of the guest. As soon as the bakhshi stopped playing, the young owner jumped up, hugged the bakhshi and said: “I don’t know who you are, but this dutar belongs to you from now on.” Having said these words, he handed over the dutar with silver frets to the guest. Since then, Shukur bakhshi has never parted with this dutar. This dutar helped him to release the brother of their captivity, the khan. He defeated Ghulam bakhshi playing exactly this dutar.

Having devoted his life, his talent, his desire to the development of Turkmen national music, Shukur bakhshi lived for a hundred years and died in 1931. Shukur bakhshi left an indelible mark on the history of Turkmen music and world culture. He became a symbol of peace, serving the interests of his people and true patriotism.

This great personality, who proved to the whole world that evil, cruelty, enmity can be overcome with love and music. Shukur bakhshi is a symbol and the brightest example, with his life and his work refuting the well-known expression: ““When guns speak, the muses are silent.” “Humanity has again approached a turning point, a point of overcoming. It’s time to give the old adage a more relevant, vital redirection: When the Muses speak, the cannons are silent!

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