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THE CENTRAL ASIAN STORYTELLING TRADITION AND *TERMA*

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The oral narrative in the Central Asian storytelling tradition is called *doston*. The word *doston* in the modern Uzbek language is used to refer both to stories transmitted orally by professional storytellers called *bakhshi* and to classical literature. The content of *doston*, just as in the case of other genres of folklore such as tales, legends or riddles, can be retold by anyone. But *doston* in their traditional form of transmission, as stories structurally composed of prose and verse and rhythmically enriched by the accompaniment of a string instrument, are performed only by professional storytellers. The major difference in *doston* is not in their content but in the specific form of transmission. The content of any legend or tale can become a part of the tradition of *bakhshi*, and any story can become a *doston* if performed by a professional storyteller.

The tradition requires a storyteller *bakhshi* to create the text during performance using traditional methods of composition. Improvisation during performance is not only allowed but, moreover, the ability to add new episodes, elaborate details and create new stories based on the traditional methods of composition is highly appreciated by the audience and other storytellers. Even though the plot of most of the stories does not change, some alterations within the general line, mainly elaborations of the episodes or small changes, are encouraged and welcomed.

To better understand the tradition of storytelling of Central Asia we must understand what *terma* are. *Terma* are verses composed by storytellers. There is no strict definition of the word; *terma* are rhymed lines on any topic and any possible situation. *Terma* can be called a basis and an essential part of the storytelling tradition. They can be comprised of only four lines or can count up to dozens of lines. It all depends on the ability of a storyteller to compose. The more skillful at handling words the storyteller is, the more elaborate and properly rhymed are his lines. Competitions or games between storytellers, when two or more *bakhshi* demonstrate their ability to improvise, composing *terma* on a given topic or situation with wit and humor, are very popular among storytellers.

Below a few examples of *terma* will be analyzed in detail in order to demonstrate some of the major characteristics of *terma* verses. These *terma* were recorded during my fieldtrip¹ to Kallamozor

¹ Today the tradition of storytelling is gradually disappearing in many regions of Central Asia, but there is still a chance to accumulate information on the tradition, its maintainers the *bakhshi*, and their repertory. Faced with the lack of information on the current state of the storytelling tradition, I organized two fieldtrips (2009, 2011) to the regions of Central Asia, famous for storytelling in the past. Unfortunately, few people today are even acquainted with the storytelling tradition, even in Central Asia. For example, in the big cities such as Tashkent, Samarkand and Bukhara the storytelling tradition today is only known as a part of the traditional culture, which can only be seen on TV or in big national concerts held a couple of times a year. This tendency is gradually reaching even the less urbanized regions of Central Asia. During the 2009 fieldtrip it became obvious that in some places famous for storytelling such as Jizzakh or Samarkand the tradition does not exist anymore. But, surprisingly, it is still flourishing in some regions such as Surkhandarya and Kashkadarya. There is no simple explanation as to why these regions have become the last to keep the tradition alive. But a lot of people here not only know about the existence of

village of Surkhandarya region (Uzbekistan) in August 2011, from performances by Shodmon-bakhshi² and Zulkhumor-bakhshi.³ Shodmon-bakhshi is one of the most renowned and respected storytellers in the Kashqadarya and Surkhandarya regions. Zulkhumor-bakhshi is one of his students, and at the moment she is the only female storyteller active in Uzbekistan. On the last day of the fieldtrip after all the planned material had been recorded, people from the neighborhood gathered to the sound of the *dombra* instrument played by Shodmon-bakhshi and Zhulhumor-bakhshi to enjoy some time with two renowned storytellers and their guests. Shodmon-bakhshi and Zulkhumor-bakhshi sat in front of each other and composed several *terma*. They both tried to make up *terma* which would not only concord with the situation and the atmosphere of the evening but would also make the audience react to the content.

A Shodmon

1. *Mard yigitning avval bo'lsin hunari*
 2. *Xudo solgan ishga yigit ko'nar (-i)*
 3. *Bir ko'xlitoy bo'ylaringdan aylanay*
 4. *Bandixonni aylanayin, Zulkumor (-e)*
 5. *Do'mbirangni davralarda chalib qo'y*
 6. *(Ei) Omondagi oylar misol to'lib qo'y (-ay-ay-ey)*
 7. *Saidaxon keldi Yaponiyadan (-ay)*
 8. *Qavatida Oybachinday kulib qo'y (-ay-ay-ey)*
-
1. *A brave young man should give first priority to his work*
 2. *A young man should follow the will of God*
 3. *Your dear appearance*
 4. *My dear Zulkumor from Bandikhon*
 5. *Play your dombra*
 6. *Oh, shine as the moon in the sky*
 7. *Saida arrived here from Japan*
 8. *Smile like Oybachin sitting next to her*

The above *terma* is made up of eight lines. Six of the eight lines are comprised of eleven syllables.⁴ The second line has eleven syllables, but the last syllable can be called “artificial,” since the last vowel was added by Shodmon-bakhshi for versification purposes only. It does not bear any semantic

the tradition but also know the most famous *bakhshi* by names and take great pleasure in listening to their stories. During the 2011 fieldtrip, with the help of the Folklore Department of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and especially Shovkat Ikhlsov, the Chief of the Department, I got in touch with one of the “authorities” among *bakhshi* today, Qakhor Rakhimov (born 1957), the representative of Kashqadarya region. Owing to the cooperation of the local representatives of the Ministry of Culture and Qakhor-bakhshi the main goal of the fieldtrip was attained. I managed to establish contact with seven *bakhshi* active today. Due to the lack of time I did not have a chance to interview all of them. But it was a valuable experience for me as a researcher not only to talk to *bakhshi*, but also observe *bakhshi* in a natural environment, in the villages where they live and work, surrounded by the people they live and spend time with.

2 Shodmon Khujamberdiev (born 1967) is a representative of Surkhandarya region.

3 Zulkhumor Shenazarova (born 1971) is a representative of Surkhandarya region.

4 The Uzbek language can be written in both the Cyrillic and Latin scripts. All the recordings made during the 2011 fieldtrip were transcribed into the Latin script. The Latin script used for the Uzbek language has several specific signs such as *g'* or *o'* but can easily be read by anyone. When counting syllables for the analysis of *terma* in the current paper each vowel was counted as a syllable, and interjections were not included in the count.

meaning and is used only for creating rhythm. The vowel *(-i)* at the end of *ko'nar*, and *(-e)* added at the end of *Zulkhumor*, help the storyteller to keep the rhyme of the verse. Shodmon-bakhshi also used several interjections, such as *(Ey)* at the beginning of the sixth line or *(ay-ay-ay)* at the end of the sixth and eighth lines. These sounds have no meaning and are added by the storyteller in order to make the verse more expressive and rhythmical.

B Zulkhumor

1. *Bandixonni Kallamozor tuman (-a)*
2. *Qadr boshing bo'lsin aka omon (-a)*
3. *Qanday qilib aytishaman sizmin (-a) (ey)*
4. *Akajonim usto bilan Shodmon (-a) (ey)*
5. *Qay el oralab yuramizmi*
6. *Davru davron suramizmi (ey)*
7. *Bobaylab asta-asta aytishib ko'ramizmi (ey)*

1. *Kallamozor of Bandikhon*
2. *I wish for you, My dear brother, be always well*
3. *How can I exchange rhymes with you?*
4. *With you, my brother, the master, Shodmon*
5. *Which lands shall we walk on?*
6. *How long shall we live?*
7. *Shall we try to exchange rhymes?*

Zulkhumor-bakhshi in turn composed a seven-lined *terma*. She tried to versify her *terma* by making up lines with eleven syllables in each. Zulkhumor-bakhshi started the verse with a line made up of eleven syllables. But her second line lacked two syllables. She added an *(-a)* sound at the end of the second line to make up for the lack of one syllable in the line. In other words, she created an “artificial” syllable. In the third and fourth lines she managed to create lines of eleven syllables. But in this case she also added the sound *(-a)* at the end of the line which helped her to create one “artificial” syllable. She also added an interjection *(ey)* at the end of the third, fourth, sixth and seventh lines; this has no semantic meaning and is used for versification only. Even though Zulkhumor-bakhshi was unable to make up *terma* with the same number of syllables in each line, she managed to create a rhythm through concordance of the ending sounds in the lines. For example, while the fifth, sixth and seventh lines differ in length, with the fifth line made up of nine syllables, the sixth made up of eight syllables and the seventh, or last, the longest, made up of fourteen syllables, all three lines end up with the same sound *(-mizmi)*, the ending of three verbs *yurmoq* (“to walk”), *surmoq* (“to live”), *ko'rmoq* (“to try”) that can be literally translated from the Uzbek language as “shall we.” *(-mizmi)* is a combination of *(-miz)*, a third person plural form, and of an interrogative particle *(-mi)*. Zulkhumor-bakhshi also added an injection *(ey)* at the end of the sixth and seventh lines, thus trying to connect rhythmically the third, fourth, sixth and seventh lines of the verse.

C Shodmon

1. *Moydan kirsan, bilagingni turib qo'y (-ey)*
2. *Yaxshilarman davru davron surib qo'y (-ay-ey)*

3. *Kokilingdan aylanayin Zulxumor (-ay-ey)*
4. *Vaqting bo'sa do'mbirangni chalib qo'y (-ay)*
5. *Do'mbirangni bugun oqshom chالasan*
6. *El ichida bilsin qolsin donosan (-ay-ay-ay-e)*
7. *Singiljonim, bir oy tushgan bo'yingdan (-ey)*
8. *Bu davrada endi g'ayrat qilasan*

1. *There is some oil on your sleeve. Turn it up!*
2. *Spend your lifetime with good people*
3. *Your dear braid, Zulxumor*
4. *If you have some time, play your dombra*
5. *This evening you will play your dombra*
6. *People will know that you are a wise woman*
7. *My sister, your beauty is like a shining moon*
8. *Here you will show what you can do*

The above *terma* is made up of eight lines. Each line is eleven syllables long. Shodmon-bakhshi actively uses interjections in this verse. The first, second, third, fourth, sixth and seventh lines end with interjections. All the interjections bear no semantic meaning and are used only as an additional rhythmical component. Not only did Shodmon-bakhshi manage to make up all the lines with the same number of syllables, he also created rhythm through using the same sounds at the end of each line. First four lines of the verse are versified through the use of the word *qo'y*. Shodmon-bakhshi ended the first, second and fourth lines with a word *qo'y*, which can be translated as “do.” *Qo'y* is normally the imperative mood of the verb *qilmoq* (“to do”). But in this case *qo'y* is an auxiliary verb used together with the verbs *turmoq* (“turn up”), *surmoq* (“to spend”), *chalmoq* (“to play”). In combination with other verbs it indicates an order or encouragement. The fifth, sixth and eighth lines are also versified through the use of the same ending *(-san)*. *(-san)* of the fifth and eighth lines is a verb ending, the second person future tense, which can be translated as “you will.” But in the line six *(-san)* is the ending of a different part of speech, not of a verb but of the noun *dono*, which can literally be translated as “a wise person.” In this case *(-san)* is the ending of the second person singular noun.

D Zulxumor

1. *Akajonim, kuxlilarim qush bo'ldi*
 2. *Tamara opam davramizga esh bo'ldi*
 3. *Yaponyadan singlim kepti ko'rgani (-i)*
 4. *Ikki bakhshi bir maydonga juپ bo'ldi (-i)*
 5. *Ertalabdan kechga yaqin yozdida (-ey)*
 6. *Aka bilan, juda yaxshi ish bo'ldi (-i)*
1. *Oh, my dear brother, I am so happy and excited*
 2. *My sister Tamara joined us*
 3. *My little sister came here from Japan to see*
 4. *Two storytellers meet in one place*
 5. *She has been recording from the morning till the evening*

6. *With my brother... Such a great job!*

The above *terma* is made up of six lines with eleven syllables in each line except the second line, which contains twelve vowels instead of eleven. The first, second, fourth and sixth lines are versified through the use of the word *bo'ldi*, which is the past tense of a verb *bo'lmoq*, which is literally translated from the Uzbek language as “became.” Zulkhumor-bakhshi also uses interjections in the third, fourth, fifth and sixth lines to make the verse more expressive.

This verse demonstrates an interesting pattern of versification in the fifth and sixth lines. Even though rhythmically the fifth and sixth lines are clearly divided into two, semantically the two lines are conjoined. This part of the verse can be divided into two separate sentences. The first one ends with the word *bilan* of the sixth line. That is, the first sentence is *ertalabdan kechga yaqin yozdida aka bilan*, and the second sentence is *juda yaxshi ish bo'ldi*.

E Shodmon

1. *Opajonim Tamara (-ey)*
 2. *Tilidan bol tomar (-a) (-ey)*
 3. *(Ey) Singiljonim Saida bilan kepti xumor (-a)*
 4. *Zulxumorxon bir aytsa endi bir mehri qonora (-ay-ey)*
 5. *Zulxumor, Zulxumor (-a)*
 6. *Tikka qarasang akajoning sinar (-a) (-ey)*
 7. *Zulxumorxon, birnimaga hayronman (-ay-ey)*
 8. *Qorongida ko'zing o'tday yonar (-a) (-ay-ey)*
-
1. *Oh, my sister Tamara*
 2. *Her words are sweet as honey*
 3. *With my little sister Saida came the inspiration*
 4. *And if you mention Zulkhumor, there are no limits to her kindness*
 5. *Zulkhumor, Zulkhumor*
 6. *Your look is so strong, that you could easily break me with a look like that*
 7. *Zulkhumor, there is only one thing I cannot understand*
 8. *Your eyes shine like flame in the darkness*

The above *terma* is comprised of eight lines. The first and second lines are the shortest and are made up of seven syllables. The first and second lines are versified through the same quantity of syllables. But the last syllable in the second line lacks a vowel, which is why Shodmon-bakhshi adds a sound *(-a)* at the end of the line to create an “artificial” syllable. Not only does the *(-a)* help the storyteller in this case to reach the same number of syllables in the line, but also creates a word rhyming, with the homonymic usage of the words *Tamara* and *tomar (-a)*. The first word, *Tamara*, is the name of a woman who participated in the fieldtrip and was among the guests. The second word *tomar (-a)* is a part of a phraseological unit *tildan bol tomadi*, which can literally be translated from the Uzbek language as “honey drips from the mouth.” In this verse the phraseological unit is used in the present tense, and the verb *tommoq* (“to drip”) has the ending *(-ar)*, which creates the homonymic effect. The third and fourth lines are twice as long as the first and second lines, made up of fourteen and fifteen syllables but ending with the same sound *(-ra)* as the first and the second lines. The third line lacks a final vowel to create the same

rhythmic effect with the *(-ra)* sound, which is why Shodmon-bakhshi adds *(-a)* at the end of the third line to create an “artificial” syllable. In this verse, Shodmon-bakhshi fails to keep to the same number of syllables throughout the verse but manages to versify lines through the ending sound *(-ra)*. In the fifth, sixth and eighth lines he uses words ending with a consonant *(-r)* and adds *(-a)* in all three lines, thus again creating “artificial” syllables at the end of each line. Even though the fifth, sixth and eighth lines contain different numbers of syllables, the endings of the last word in all three lines concord with each other. All three final words, *Zulxumor (-a)*, *sinar (-a)* (“breaks”) and *yonar (-a)* (“burns”), end with the same sound *(-ra)*. Additional rhythmical components used by Shodmon-bakhshi in this verse are interjections such as *(Ey)* in the third line or *(-ay-ey)* in the fourth and eighth lines.

F Zulxumor

1. *Jaranglaydi bir maydonga ovozim*
2. *Tamara-opa, sayrasin so'zim bir so'zim*
3. *Bahonacha mayli bir gap aytayin*
4. *Shodmon akam dong'i ketgan ustozim*
5. *Sozimdan (-a), Ustoz, qarang so'z keldi*
6. *Yozlar o'tib, qaraversam, kuz keldi*
7. *Chertib-chertib aytmasam bo'lmaydi*
8. *Yapon eldan Saidadey qiz keldi*
9. *Men ko'rmadim bu kunlarni bo'libdi*
10. *Ko'rdim bu davrada qolgan mardlikni*
11. *Tamara-opam bilan Saida mehmon bo'ldida*
12. *Aka, bir pas qilg'aiqqa qiziqdi*

1. *My voice echoes through the space*
2. *Sister Tamara, let my words flow*
3. *I shall take this chance and tell a story*
4. *My brother Shodmon is a renowned master*
5. *Look, My master, words are coming out of my instrument*
6. *The summer is over, and the autumn has come as I can see*
7. *I have to tell something pulling the strings*
8. *A girl like Saida came from Japan*
9. *I have never seen anything like this*
10. *There are still brave people in this world*
11. *My sister Tamara and Saida were our guests*
12. *My brother enjoyed all this for a while*

The above *terma* is made up of twelve lines. Nine out of twelve lines are eleven syllables long. Only three, the second, seventh and eleventh lines contain a different number of syllables. The second line has two extra syllables, but has the same ending sound *(-zim)* as the first and fourth lines. This sound *(-zim)* is a combination of the last consonant of the words *ovoz* (“voice”), *so'z* (“word”), and *ustoz* (“master”) with the first person personal ending *(-im)*. The fifth line lacks one syllable, but the lack of the syllable is compensated for by the additional sound *(-a)* at the end of the first word in the line *sozimdan* (“out of my instrument”). Grammatically, the word *sozimdan* does not require a vowel at the end; *(-a)* is only added to

make up for the lack of a vowel in the line. The seventh line lacks one syllable but has the same ending (-di) as the fifth, sixth, eighth, ninth and twelfth lines. (-di) is the third person past tense ending in all the lines except the seventh line, where (-di) is a part of a negative affix (-maydi), which can literally be translated from the Uzbek language as “should not” or “must not.” Zulkhumor-bakhshi used the same verb *keldi* in different contexts in the fifth, sixth and eighth lines, which helped her to create rhyme not only through the same quantity of syllables in the line, but also through concordance of the last words in the lines. In all three lines besides the last word *keldi* we can see the concordance of ending consonants in the previous words *so'z* (“word”), *kuz* (“autumn”) and *qiz* (“girl”). Even though Zulkhumor-bakhshi managed to keep to the same number of syllables almost through the whole verse, she failed to keep the same rhythm till the end. The lines after the ninth line are not versified even though the ninth, tenth and twelfth lines are made up of eleven syllables each and end with the same sound (-i). Furthermore, the eleventh line is fifteen syllables long and has an affix (-da) at the end of the word *bo'ldida*, which is not only grammatically unnecessary but also prevents her from versifying the eleventh and twelfth lines.

G Shodmon

1. *Singiljonim Saida (-ey)*
2. *Yaponda qanday qoida (-ey)*
3. *Saidaxon, Saida*
4. *Javob berar joyida (-ey)*
5. *Qavatida opajonim Tamara*
6. *Qahrlansa tilidan bol tomar (-a) (-ey)*
7. *Shoperinga uhlash bo'ldi hunar (-a) (ay-ey)*
8. *Opajonim, aylanayin, Tamara (-hay-ya-hay)*
9. *Qovoq so'lsa yulduzlar ham so'nar (-a)*
10. *Shoper-aka, nasiyangiz naqd bo'sin*
11. *Tamara-opam, Saida ko'ngli chog bo'sin (-ay)*
12. *Sheralijon, ne bo'ldi o'zgaranga (-ehei)*
13. *Va'da bergan narsalaring besh bo'lsin*
14. *(Hay) Sherka (-ya), Sherka (-ya), endi elkalarining tirka (-ya)*
15. *Opajonim, Saida, shunday bo'lar qoida (-ay-ey)*
16. *Senga aytay, Opajon, Kallamozor joyida (-ay-ey)*
17. *Zulxumor ham aytyapti akasining uyida (-ay-ey)*
18. *Tilla mo'nchoq taqib (-a)*
19. *Qilig'i elga yoqib (-a) (-ay)*
20. *Tuz (u)-tuz (u) ko'ylasin*
21. *El xalqiga boqib (-a) (-ay-ey)*
22. *Tamara-opa, shoperingiz*
23. *Ketmasin-a bizni so'kib (-a) (-ay-ey)*

1. *My sweet little sister, Saida*
2. *What customs do you have in Japan?*
3. *Dear Saida, Saida*
4. *She replies right away*
5. *Right beside her sits my dear sister Tamara*

6. *When she gets angry, her words are sweet as honey*
7. *It seems your driver's work is sleeping*
8. *My dear sister Tamara*
9. *When she makes an angry face, even stars start fainting*
10. *Driver, may all your debts be paid off*
11. *Sister Tamara, let Saida be satisfied with everything*
12. *Dear Sherali, why has your face changed its color?*
13. *May all your promises be accomplished*
14. *Hey, Sherka, Sherka, raise your shoulders and cheer up!*
15. *My dear sister, Saida, this is our custom*
16. *Let me say these words here in Kallamozor*
17. *Zulkhumor is also telling things here in her brother's house*
18. *With a golden necklace around her neck*
19. *Everyone likes what she is doing*
20. *May her words be meaningful*
21. *Seeing her people*
22. *Sister Tamara, hope your driver*
23. *Does not leave scolding us*

The above *terma* was the longest among those composed by Shodmon-bakhshi and Zulkhumor-bakhshi on that evening. It was the last *terma*, which is probably why Shodmon-bakhshi made it longer and tried to mention as many people as he could. He brought up the names not only of Zulkhumor-bakhshi, who he addressed constantly during the little competition between teacher (Shodmon-bakhshi) and student (Zulkhumor-bakhshi), and the researcher and those who accompanied the researcher on the fieldtrip (Tamara and the driver), but also of some villagers who gathered there to listen to the *terma*, such as Sherali and Sherka.

The last *terma* is made up of twenty-three lines with a different number of syllables in its lines. The first, third and fourth lines are made up of seven syllables each. The second line has one extra syllable, but all four lines are versified through the usage of the sound *(-da)* at the end of the line. The first and third lines end with a personal noun, the name *Saida*. *(-da)* in the second line is a part of the word *qoida* ("rule" or "custom"). The fourth line ends with *(-da)*, which is the ending of the word *joy* ("place") in the locative case. In the part of the *terma* starting from the fifth line Shodmon-bakhshi tried to make up lines of eleven syllables. The fifth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, twelfth and thirteenth lines are made of eleven syllables. Shodmon-bakhshi failed to create eleven syllables in the sixth and eleventh lines. The sixth, seventh and ninth lines lacked one vowel, which is why the sound *(-a)* was added in the end of the line. From lines six to nine Shodmon-bakhshi versified lines not only through the number of syllables in the line but also through the use of interjections such as *(-ey)*, *(-ay-ey)* and *(-hay-ya-hay)* and concordance of the last sounds in the line. As we can see all these lines end with the sound *(-ra)*. In the fifth and sixth lines Shodmon-bakhshi used the same word rhyme as he used earlier, the personal noun *Tamara* and the phraseological unit *tildan bol tomadi* in the present tense. He tried to versify two lines through the concordance of *(-ra)* in the end, but this time he made a mistake that affected the correct meaning of the sixth line. The literal translation of *qahrlansa tilidan bol tomar (-a)* is "when she gets angry, her words are sweet as honey." This contradicts the meaning of the phraseological unit *tildan bol tomadi*, which is used only in positive contexts. An additional word, such as the adverb *xam* ("also" or "even") could be added appropriately after *qahrlansa*. This would change the meaning into "even when she gets angry" and make

the meaning of the line semantically correct. In this case Shodmon-bakhshi must have failed to put in the adverb under the pressure of performance. From line ten Shodmon-bakhshi changed the rhythm. The tenth, eleventh and thirteenth lines are versified through the usage of the same word *bo'lsin* at the end of the line, the future tense of the verb *bo'lmoq* ("to become") in all three cases. Lines fifteen, sixteen and seventeen are not only made of the same number of syllables but also versified through concordance of the ending sound (-*da*) in the words *qoida* ("rule" or "custom"), *joyida* ("in the place") and *uyida* ("in the house"). In the case of *qoida* (-*da*) is a part of the root, while in *joyida* and *uyida* (-*da*) is an affix of the locative case in the Uzbek language. Line fourteen stands separately in this case. It is not versified either with line thirteen or fifteen but has an "inner" rhythm. It can be divided into two parts: the first is (*hay*) *Sherka* (-*ya*), *Sherka* (-*ya*) and the second is *endi elkalarining tirka* (-*ya*). *Sherka* is a personal pronoun, the name of a man. *Endi elkalarining tirka* can literally be translated as "raise your shoulders." (*Hay*) and (-*ya*) are interjections used in the line to attain a rhythmical effect and make it more expressive. Shodmon-bakhshi started composing the ending of the *terma* in seven syllables but could not sustain it. Lines twenty-two and twenty-three are nine-syllables long. Shodmon-bakhshi tried to versify lines eighteen, nineteen, twenty-one and twenty-three through the concordance of the ending sounds at the end of the line. In all four cases the last sound (-*iba*) is "artificially" made through combination of an affix (-*ib*) of the gerund form of *taqmoq* ("to wear"), *yoqmoq* ("to be liked"), *boqmoq* ("to be meaningful") and *so'kmoq* ("to scold"), and the sound (-*a*), which has no meaning, in this case is only used for versification. It is interesting to note that lines twenty-two and twenty-three are semantically mixed. Both lines are made up of nine syllables, but the word *shoperingiz* ("your driver") of line twenty-two is semantically a part of line twenty-three, since it is the subject who performs the action *ketmasin* ("does not leave").

As we can see from the analysis above, *terma* are groups of versified lines of any number. The number of lines in a *terma* is unlimited and, depending on the ability and mood of the storyteller, they can be only two or dozens of lines long. All *terma* are completely improvised and can have any content, and there are no limitations in *terma*. However, *terma* should be able to affect the audience with its content, and as to its formal characteristics it should be versified and rhythmical. The most common way is versification through the same number of syllables in lines. But it is not a requirement. Storytellers use different versification techniques: they versify lines in *terma* through the usage of the same words or sounds in the middle or at the end of lines, or different interjections are often used to create a specific rhythm. However, as the examples introduced in the current paper showed, storytellers might fail sometimes in creating the rhythm or even make semantic mistakes in the process of rapid composition during performance.

