The Nganasans live in the arctic tundra of Taimyr Peninsula in the Northern part of the Eurasia continent. Nganasans are a very small Uralic people: they amount 847 persons. They are hunters and fishermen.

The Nganasan musical culture is the relic phenomenon. In 1980s–1990s they became an object of interest in ethnomusicology (I. Brodsky, T. Ojamaa, O. Dobzhanska, Ju. Shejkin). The folklore texts were recorded and collected by N. Kosterkina, E. Helimsky, K. Labanauskas, B. Wagner-Nagy, V. Gusev and M. Brykina.

This paper is based on numerous field materials gathered in 1990–2000-th by authors in the villages Ust–Avam and Volochanka where Nganasans live nowadays. Some nganasan songs with musicological and philological analysis will be included in our talk.

The Nganasan songs are subdivided into the two groups: 1) kajngejrsja (a singing allegoric dialogue) and 2) baly (song itself). All kinds of songs are performed without any instruments.

The singing allegoric dialogues (kajngejrsja or kajngarjuo ‘singing to each other’, ‘singing competition’) are a unique genre of Nganasan folklore. Its specific feature defines the use of an encryption in plot, lexical–morphological and syllabic–phonetic levels of the text structure. The musical composition of kajngejrsja is defined by the function of improvised singing dialogue. The question and the answer are sung like different melodies because they are performed on the behalf of different people.

The song genres are called baly ("a song"). They have the following versions: ngonana balyma ‘a personal song’, hoangkutuo baly ‘a drunk person’s song’, njuo baly ‘a children's song’. Each Nganasan person has his/her own melody for singing.

The rhythmical basis of the songs (baly and kajngejrsja) is the six–syllable verse structure, with plug–in non–semantic syllables. The tunes have developed melody line with initial and/or final melody formulas.