

## **Janko (Yanka)**

Je ste li vidili moga sina Janka?

Nismo ga vidili, alismo culi glasa

Da su ga napali, tri turcina mlada

Prvi mu kaze: "Skoci u vodu, Janko."

"Nisam vam zaba, da u vodu skocem."

Drugi mu kaze: "Kleknaj nam se, Janko."

"Nisam vam sluga, da vam se poklanjem."

Treci mu kaze: "Predaj nam se Janko."

"Nisam vam bab, da vam se predajem."

Jedan mu kaze: "Bez(i) u goru, Janko."

"Nisam vam jelin, da u goru skocem."

*"Have you seen my son Yanka?"*

*"No, but we heard his voice..."*

*"...that he was captured (attacked) by three Turkish young men."*

*The first one said "Jump in the water, Yanka."*

*"I am not a frog to jump on the water for you."*

*The second one said "Kneel to us, Yanka."*

*"I am not your servant, to kneel to you."*

*The third one said "Give yourself up, Yanka."*

*(We don't want to fight you.)*

*"I am not an old woman (coward) to give myself up."*

*One of them said "Okay, go away."*

*"I am not a deer to run away from you."*

*(You see, they didn't want to hurt him. They knew who he was and respected him, even though he was an enemy they were supposed to kill. N.S.)*

*"Have you seen my son Yanka?"*

*"No, but we heard his voice."*

*Gordon says:* Working in Philadelphia in the 60s, I met Sara Stepkin Goripov and Nadja Stepkin Budschalow, two Khalmyk Mongolian sisters from Serbia, who gave me and taught me many songs in Khalmyk, Russian, Serbian, Tibetan – and even a couple from Germany, where they had lived in the D.P. camps.

They sang hundreds of songs and chants in many styles; Cindy and I sing Yanka the way they did, in what Sara calls the "Western style." Once, when I asked them if I should be singing their songs without the ballast of the sound or the people behind me, they said: "Better the songs survive with you than they die in purity."

The three Turkish young men (soldiers) honored Yanka, their enemy. They gave him every way out, and his pride wouldn't let him take those ways, and it is his mother who must ask the question.

GB: 12-string            C: steel 6-string

Traditional, Serbian  
Recorded on *Neighbors*  
Timberhead Music THD CD008  
Gordon Bok and Cindy Kallet  
[www.cindykallet.com](http://www.cindykallet.com)