

## Po Dikim Stepyam Zabaikalya (By the wild steppes of the Transbaikalia)

Written by bluelover

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### Po Dikim Stepyam Zabaikalya (By the wild steppes of the Transbaikalia)

The song “Po Dikim Stepyam Zabaikalya” was composed by convicts in Siberia. Siberia is an extensive geographical region, by the broadest definition is also known as North Asia. Siberia has been historically part of Russia since the 17th century. The territory of Siberia extends eastwards from the Ural Mountains to the watershed between the Pacific and Arctic drainage basins. Transbaikalia, or Dauria is a mountainous region to the east of or "beyond" Lake Baikal in Russia. Dauria, is derived from the ethnonym of the Daur people. It stretches for almost 1,000 km from north to south from the Patomskoye Plateau and North Baikal Plateau to the Russian border. The Transbaikal region covers more than 1,000 km from west to east from Baikal to the meridian of the confluence of the Shilka and Argun Rivers.

### Po Dikim Stepyam Zabaikalya (Brodyaga)

“**Po Dikim Stepyam Zabaikalya**” is a Russian folk song. The song was known since 1880s, when it appeared and proliferated among prisoners of Siberian penitentiaries. In 1908 it was published under the title of **"Brodyaga"** (The Tramp), by the Swedish composer Wilhelm Hartevelde, who had collected it in 1906, during a trip to Siberia.



**Wilhelm Hartevelde**

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The words author was printed to be I. K. Kondratiev, an expert on songs and a Russian Empire writer, who published several studies on Russian songs. There are few data about his biography. Ivan Belousov states that Kondratyev was a member of Vasily Surikov's circle. Both Belousov and Korney Chukovsky were highly critical of Kondratyev's work. Kondratyev wrote a novel Saltychikha, stories, plays, poetry, translations. He also wrote the lyrics for the best known of these being "Charming Eyes." He is also credited with the lyrics of the song "On the wild steppes of Transbaikalya". His authorship can't be proven though, because the poem is not included in his last published volume of poems "Under the noise of the Oak Groves" (1898).



### I. K. Kondratiev

Siberia is and was rich in its nature and its natural resources. But the temperatures that can reach in winters to  $-60^{\circ}\text{C}$  made the living conditions almost unbearable. The first Russian prison camp in Siberia arose at the end of the 17th century as the two double tsars, Ivan V and Peter I who reigned between 1682 en 1696, made a proclamation in which was captured that some death sentences could be put into community service. This prison labour would take place in a so-called Katorga, a remote penal camp with minimum facilities. Over the next 130 years about 1.2 million prisoners were sent to Siberia, where they were put to work in the mining, but also in agriculture, because during summers the temperature in Siberia can raise up to  $+30^{\circ}\text{C}$ , or in logging. Others were required to help with the construction of new infrastructure, including the 2000 km-long Amur Cart Road and the Trans-Siberian Railway.

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Байгал нууцлагавч По диким степям Забайкалья