

28th CIF Conference 3rd-8th August 2009
Kiljava, Finland

ABSTRACTS FOR WORKSHOPS

G. Lament workshop

Fihlman Pirkko (Finland)

Counsellor of social work, Director of day care centre (retired), Lament teacher

Lament workshop (continues on Wednesday)

Are you interested in joining a lament workshop? We guarantee it will be a new and interesting experience.

Lament is a traditional musical form of crying and expressing feelings. All over the world, women traditionally sang these crying songs together at leave-takings, from funerals and weddings to tearful goodbyes to men going off to war. The skilful lamenting of our ancient mothers helped their communities to express their sorrows and griefs together, but women also healed their individual hurts by going out into forests or fields and singing their hearts out in passionate lament.

Sadly, the tradition has all but disappeared from use. Although we too feel deeply moved at such leave-takings, we no longer voice our pain and sadness in improvised crying songs. We are often ashamed to show our feelings. And so it was in Finland, too, until 1997 when a small group of Finnish people formed the association Äänellä Itkijät (“those who cry with voices”), to spearhead a revival of the old practice. Through offering over 40 courses to over 600 participants, they have found that giving voice to their feelings in these crying songs brings relief and freedom. Such courses help participants find a voice to lament their deepest feelings. Lament course participants have included social workers, therapists, teachers, nurses, and doctors who want to learn this old tradition.

We of Äänellä Itkijät believe that the pains that often arise in personal relationships, but that go unexpressed, are at the root of many of society’s problems today, and so there is an urgent need to help others express painful feelings. This workshop will tell you about lament traditions from the Finnish region. It will give you a chance to share the experience and see how the lament process works.