



21 DAYS
OF PRAYER
FOR THE BURYATS

Welcome to the 2023 edition of 21 Days of Prayer for the Buryats

We want to pray intentionally this month for the Buryats, the largest unreached people group living in Siberia. Traditionally a nomadic people, they are descendants of the Mongols who now mostly live in the Russian Federation. Most of them live in the Republic of Buryatia, the Irkutsk region, and Zabaykalsky Krai, all of which are located just north of the Mongolian border. They are proud of their history, unique culture, and their land, particularly their “pearl,” the great Lake Baikal. While most speak Russian, they also have their own Buryat language, which consists of several dialects. They follow Tibetan Buddhism, which is often mixed with Shamanist beliefs and practices. Of the over 460,000 Buryats, less than 0.1% of them are evangelical Christian. They are a beautiful people but are living in great spiritual darkness as they worship idols, live in fear of the spirit world, and have no knowledge of the One True God who loves them and gave His only Son for them. Our prayers for the Buryat can break through that darkness.

POPULATION

462,000

LOCATION IN RUSSIA

REPUBLIC OF BURYATIA

ZABAYKALSKY KRAI

IRKUTSK OBLAST

RELIGION

TIBETAN BUDDHISM

BIBLE TRANSLATION

NEW TESTAMENT

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN

LESS THAN 0.1%

Sagaalган (“White Month”), the start of the New Year according to the lunar calendar

This week is the start of the Buryat holiday *Sagaalган* (“White Month”), the start of the New Year according to the lunar calendar. *Sagaalган* symbolizes cleansing, the beginning of a new life and the union with everything that is bright and good.

The Buryats have many traditions surrounding White Month; some of them are related to family and food, but others are related to their Buddhist and Shamanist religions. It can be a spiritually dark time as many of them worship, pray to, and give offerings to Buddhist gods and the spirits of their ancestors, and as they perform various cleansing ceremonies.

The days leading up to the first day of the new year are devoted to cleansing oneself

from everything bad and evil from the past year in order to start afresh in the new year. Over the course of White Month, prayers will be recited and read by Buddhist monks in the temples — each day to a specific god or spirit.

We too want to pray over the next 21 days. But we will pray to the One True God. We will ask Him for the salvation of the Buryat people and for a work of God’s Spirit in their hearts, bringing them to the true knowledge of Jesus Christ.



Four Days Before New Year

*Sagaalga*n is an important time for everyone to speak blessings and good wishes over their family members. During this holiday season, Bulat is hopeful that his life, family and home will be blessed. He longs to experience a fresh start as he moves into the new year, with all that is good and pure, especially after the unusual difficulties and challenges he has faced this past year. On the morning of the New year, Bulat will present offerings to the gods/spirits. But these gifts will only be acceptable if, four days before the new year (the Day of Blessing), he takes them to the Temple for a *lama* (a teacher and monk in Tibetan Buddhism) to bless them. If the gods are pleased with those offerings, then perhaps Bulat and his family will have a successful and blessed year.



Prayer Requests

Pray that God will indeed bless the Buryat people and keep them, that God will shine His face upon them and be gracious to them. Pray that He will lift His countenance upon them and give them peace (Numbers 6:24-26).

Pray that the Buryat people will be blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 1:3), who alone can give them true spiritual blessings.

Pray that each Buryat family will be blessed to personally know a follower of Jesus and to hear the Good News this new year.

Three Days Before New Year

Bulat, his wife Erzhen, and their two children always have a sense of anticipation as the New Year approaches. They have much to do to prepare for this holiday. They must clean their house of all their old things, which symbolizes discarding the evil and unluck of the past year. Now that their offerings have been blessed, they will go to the Temple to hear the “*khurals*” being read and sung by the monks. On each day leading up to “New Year’s Day” the *lamas* say prayers to different gods and perform solemn rituals. They say prayers to the 10 gods who defend the teachings, prayers for all living things,

and prayers for the elimination of anything that will interfere with following the teachings of Buddha. Prayers are said to the god who helps eliminate false views, misfortune, sorrow, diseases of mind and body, and who helps overcome evil influences. Prayers are also said to the god who helps eliminate bad thoughts, evil tongues, and consequences of bad dreams. Although Bulat doesn’t understand the words of the chants sung by the *lamas*, he knows that he doesn’t want any misfortune to come to him or to his family this year!



Prayer Requests

Pray that the Buryats will come to know God as the Only One worthy of all worship and that they will offer themselves to Him as a living sacrifice.

Pray that the Buryats will hunger for the Word of God and will come to know Jesus, the true Word, and will follow His teachings that will set them free. Pray that they will hear the Word of Truth, and faith will come from hearing.

Pray that the translation of the Old Testament into the Buryat language would soon be completed.

Pray that the Buryats will know that God is the Sovereign God who alone has the power over life and death. Pray that the Buryats will have dreams that will lead them to Jesus and to seek truth in Him.



Two Days Before New Year

Bulat and his family are eagerly anticipating the new year celebrations. Even more so, they anticipate being cleansed of all evil and hope for better things to come in the next year. Each year his family participates in the *Dugzhuuba* cleansing ritual. They take a piece of bread dough, paper, or white cloth, and they rub it over their bodies. First, they rub it on their forehead to symbolize the elimination of evil thoughts. Next, they rub it around their mouths to take away their bad words, and on their chest to cleanse the conscience. Finally, they rub it on their palms, to symbolize the removal of bad deeds. Bulat's mother has had severe pain in her neck, so she also rubs that area of her body with the dough.

On the eve of the Day of Fasting, they go to the Temple, where a tall pyramid built of wood and straw will be burned in a huge bonfire. This is called the *Sor*. Everyone will bring their dough or paper or cloths containing their "evil" and throw it together into the fire. This symbolizes all the evil of the previous year being burned up. Bulat and his family will have a clean start!



Prayer Requests

Pray that the Buryats will recognize their own weakness, and the inability of the gods to cleanse and purify them.

Pray that the Buryats will know the cleansing power and redemption of Jesus through His death for them on the cross.

Pray that the Buryats can know the spiritual and physical healing power of Jesus. Pray they will know that only the living God has the power and ability to set them free from sin and evil.

Pray that they will be set free from sin and evil and be clothed in Jesus' righteousness.

New Year's Eve — The Day of Fasting

Now that the *Sor* is finished, Bulat must focus on avoiding doing anything bad in order to continue the cleansing process. Today is “New Year’s Eve”, also known as the Day of Fasting. It’s called “*Boo-tu Oodair*”, which translates as “dark”, “closed” or “deaf” day, as the old year fades into the darkness of time. Bulat and his family spend the day quietly at home. In order to physically and spiritually prepare for meeting the new year, they focus on purifying their minds from evil thoughts and past offenses, and they cleanse their bodies with a fast. On this day, alcohol is not sold in the stores, as everyone should fast from drinking. Bulat

typically doesn’t drink alcohol, so he doesn’t mind; it is fasting from meat that is more difficult for him. He makes an effort today to be kind to those around him and tries not to think any negative thoughts, which was not too difficult since he stayed home from work. Erzhenya and the children spend a lot of time making their traditional foods. After the sun sets, they put the food on the table and gather around for a meal. Before eating, they first offer tea to the gods. Then Erzhenya serves tea to Bulat, followed by the rest of the family. Bulat’s family is now ready to meet the New Year!



Prayer Requests

Pray that the Buryats will have a hunger that leads them to be filled with Jesus’ bread and a thirst that can only be quenched with the water Jesus gives.

Pray that they will be poor in spirit so that they can see the kingdom of God.

Pray that in this New Year, many Buryats will be transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light.

Pray that the Buryats’ hearts will be cleansed by the blood of Jesus and recognize that He is the only way for them to get rid of the evil in their hearts.

New Year's Day

Today is the big day! Bulat and Erzhena wake up before the sun. It's a brisk morning outside — minus 36 degrees Celsius! They get up, turn on the lights, and Bulat quickly starts a fire in their *pechka* (wood-burning stove). They don't want the god who brings luck to pass them by! They hope that their future paths will be straightened with the rising sun. Their kids complain about having to wake up so early, especially since they don't need to go to school. But Bulat reminds them that if they are sleeping when he comes, then the coming year may not go well for them. They keep busy so early in the morning by preparing food to eat together as a family. White foods such as sour cream, cottage cheese and milk are a large part of the meal. Erzhena makes a couple of

delicious salads and her famous *boovi* (fried dough). The kids are excited that their mom will show them again the skill of making *pozi* (steamed meat dumplings). The kids' dumplings don't always look beautiful, but they enjoy the process of making them and, especially, eating them! Now that everything is ready, they sit down and eat together. This is the beginning of *Sagaalgan*, or White Month — the New Year, according to the lunar calendar.



Prayer Requests

Pray that God will richly bless the Buryat people so that they in turn can bless other people by sharing His truth and light with both their own people and other unreached peoples.

Pray that God will enlighten their minds and hearts with the light of the knowledge of Him.

Pray that they would come to an understanding of eternal life in Jesus, as opposed to the endless cycle of reincarnation.

Pray that they will know the grace of Jesus who gives true, abundant life!

Family ties are very important in Buryat culture. Over the course of White Month, it's tradition to visit one's older relatives and to bless them with a "Happy New Year." Of all their relatives, Bulat and his family go to visit Bulat's grandparents first, to honor them as being the oldest. As they enter the home, they say "*zolgoho*," — a special greeting and blessing given to each relative they visit during White Month. His grandfather greets him with outstretched hands, and Bulat places his arms under his grandfather's, a sign of respect and obedience to him. Since they are the eldest relatives, Bulat

and Erzhenya present a gift of money. Bulat's grandmother in turn gives them tea and a beautiful hand towel, in order to honor their guests.

Over the course of the month, Bulat and Erzhenya take turns visiting all of their older relatives who live in the area. This year, they will meet Bulat's third cousin for the first time. Erzhenya also looks forward to meeting her first cousin's newborn. The children enjoy visiting all of the relatives because they always receive gifts — usually something sweet to eat!

Prayer Requests

Pray that, as the Buryats celebrate Sagaalgan with their families, relatives and friends over the course of the next couple weeks, they would come to know the belonging that they can have in the family of God.

Pray that they would become "fellow citizens with the saints and our brothers and sisters in the household of God."

Pray that whole families of Buryats will come to know God as their loving Father and Jesus as their devoted brother; ask God to cause His family to grow and multiply in Buryatia.

Pray that the Buryats would know that God is the One who created them and that He, as their Creator, values their culture and the beauty they bring to His world.

Bulat and Erzhenya consider themselves devoted Buddhists, but they don't often go to the *Datsan* (Buddhist temple). However, during White Month, they go and perform the traditional rituals. When they enter the Temple, there is a statue of Buddha in the center. Bulat respects and values the teaching of Buddha; he bows down to him as they enter. Then they move along the wall to the left and walk clockwise. They stop and bow before each statue of other gods, praying to them. To some gods, Bulat and Erzhenya give offerings of grains, sugar, rice, milk, candy, or coins. The kids follow them and mimic the same rituals and bowing. After completing their walk around the Temple, Bulat hopes to earn a bit more merit by again bowing down before Buddha several times, face to the ground.



Prayer Requests

Pray that the Buryats will know that the Lord is great and that He is above all gods. Pray that they will see His power and sovereignty and understand that whatever the Lord pleases, He does, in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all the deeps.

Pray that they would realize that the idols of Buddhism are but silver and gold, just the work of men's hands, that they have mouths but cannot speak, that they have ears, but cannot hear, that there is no breath at all in their mouths, that those who make them will be like them. May the Buryats no longer trust in them! (Psalm 135)

Pray that the Buryats will come to worship the Most High God in spirit and in truth.

Pray that many Buryats will become "temples of the Most High God" - that the Holy Spirit would come to abide in them and give them new life in Christ.

Before Bulat and his family leave the Temple, they go to the cashier. In the past, he paid to have a monk pray for a specific need when he was in crisis. Today, they buy the appropriate prayer flags and then go outside together. They walk on a special path that leads them clockwise around the *Datsan*. As they walk past the prayer wheels along this path, they give them each a spin. While they walk, they try to free their mind of bad, negative thoughts and replace them with positive thoughts. The path leads them to a special place where they can hang their prayer flag on a pole. Bulat finds an empty spot on a post and attaches

his flag. The spinning of the prayer wheels and the blowing of prayer flags in the wind give them hope that their prayers will rise to the spirits/gods and that their karma will increase.

Prayer Requests

Pray that the Buryats will understand the meaning of prayer — having communion with a living God who hears, cares for them, and is willing to act on their behalf.

Pray that they will cast their cares on Him, at any time, at any place, knowing that He cares for them (1 Peter 5:7).

Pray that the Buryats will learn that they don't need to be anxious for anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving they can make known their requests to the living God.

Pray that they will understand that if they come to God, His peace, that surpasses all comprehension, will guard their hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6-7).

Bulat's brother, Sayan, became a believer in Jesus many years ago. Bulat and Erzhenya were shocked when this happened; they still don't understand why he will no longer participate in any of the *Sagaalgaan* traditions or rituals. Sayan has tried to explain that many of the traditions associated with the holiday are connected to Buddhism and that he can no longer worship false gods or give them offerings. He has told them that Jesus cleansed him of the sin and evil in his life. But Bulat and Erzhenya are angry that he has turned away from his people's and his family's religion. They used to ridicule him for his belief in Jesus, but they have given

up trying to persuade him. Sayan struggles to know how to celebrate White Month at all, because it is difficult to separate Buryat cultural traditions from religious traditions. Oftentimes, drunkenness is a part of family celebrations. *Sagaalgaan* can be a spiritually dark time, but Sayan believes that God can redeem all things, and he wants to learn how to use this holiday as an opportunity to share with his family that Jesus' light is greater than the darkness.



Prayer Requests

Pray that the traditions of *Sagalgaan* can be redeemed in order to be used to worship the One True God and point others to who He is.

Pray that Buryat believers will have wisdom and discernment in knowing how to worship God during this holiday and how they can use it to point their family and friends to His truth.

Pray for God's protection over those believers who are spiritually attacked, ostracized, or misunderstood for not participating in the Buddhist rituals and traditions related to this holiday.

Pray that they will have strength to stand firm, and patience and love towards their lost family and friends.

Pray for opportunities for believers in Buryatia to read the Bible together with Buryats who are seeking rest for their souls.



The Buryats, like many Asian cultures, have deep respect for their elders. Elderly people are held in high esteem in Buryatia, and children often use a reverential term of address when speaking to their parents, older relatives, or other adults. This respect is seen in everyday life. For example, on public transportation, the younger will give up their seats for the elderly. It's also seen in their cultural traditions, such as

the responsibility being placed on the youngest child to take care of his parents when they grow old. During White Month, it is customary for the younger to present gifts on a *hadak* (Buryat scarf) to their older relatives while offering them good wishes.



Prayer Requests

Pray that the Lord will make known to the Buryats the path of life, and that in His presence would be their fullness of joy. Pray that they would find pleasures forevermore at God's right hand (Psalm 16:11).

Pray that the Buryats will sing together with many other nations and peoples the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. Pray that they would know and experience that the Lord God Almighty's works are great and marvelous, that His ways are righteous and true, that He is the King of the nations!

Pray that the Buryats will fear the Lord, and glorify His name, and worship Him for His holiness. Pray that they, and all the nations, will come and worship before Him, and that His righteous acts will be revealed to them (Revelation 15:3-4).

Each year on New Year's Eve, the most respected *lamas* make a prediction for the coming year based on the zodiac sign for that year. Astrology is widely used in the Tibetan Buddhist world, and many things are connected to the year of one's birth (there are 12 Zodiac signs/animals). Each sign/animal predicts the strengths, weaknesses, fortunes and best matches for each person. Bulat was born in 1981, the year of the Rooster. According to his horoscope, he is an honest person with a strong will, and capable of doing difficult things. He is confident, but sometimes has a short fuse, which can push people away.

For the first 15 days of the New Year there are special services held at the *Datsans*. On these days they read special *khurals* that are devoted to the 15 miracles of Buddha, told in story form. This also coincides with the 12 Zodiac signs. People are encouraged to

go to the Buddhist temple, specifically on the day that corresponds to his/her Zodiac sign, in order to receive great blessings, pray, and get counsel from the *lamas* about the upcoming year.



Prayer Requests

Please pray that the Buryats will come to know and experience the Sovereign God who takes a personal interest in their lives and who works all things according to His will.

Pray that, as the Buryat people are dead in their trespasses and sins, God would have mercy on them and make them alive together with Christ and raise them up and seat them with Him in the heavenly places.

Pray that the Buddhist monks, shamans and men of prominence of their religion and culture would be given a Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, that their eyes would be enlightened, that they would know what is the hope to which He has called them (Ephesians 1:17ff).

Buryat traditional costumes are very beautiful, colorful, and specially designed. Since Buryats actually belong to different tribes, their costumes vary. However, all the costumes have some things in common. If you understand the details in a costume, you can determine whether a woman is married. A man's costume doesn't reveal whether he is married, but it does communicate what tribe he belongs to. These costumes also have a practical use; since Buryats are not allowed to marry someone closer than a 7th generation relative, their costumes would provide clues such as these.



Prayer Requests

Please pray that, as the Buryats seek to cleanse themselves during this holiday, God will “clothe the Buryats with garments of salvation, He will wrap them with a robe of Jesus’ righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with jewels.”

Pray that as the earth brings forth its sprouts in springtime, and as a garden causes things sown in it to spring up, that the Lord will cause righteousness and praise to spring up from the hearts and lips of the Buryat people (Isaiah 61:10-11).

Pray that the Buryats will see the love of Christ in the lives of Christians and that His “light would shine before men in such a way that they may see their good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

Buryats, as most Asian people, pay a lot of attention to the names they give their children. For western Buryats, names are not as important as for eastern Buryats. Many western Buryats were baptized into the Orthodox Church by force, so most of them give their children Russian names. Among the older generation, you can find Biblical or Jewish names. For the eastern Buryats, where Tibetan Buddhism is the dominant religion, there are entire families with Tibetan names. Many Buryat names come from the Tibetan or Sanskrit languages. After the birth of a baby, the head of the house goes to the *lama*, who tells them what to name the baby. He chooses the most appropriate name for the child based on Tibetan Buddhist astrology.

Many Buryat names carry meanings related to spiritual and cultural characteristics and values, and they believe their names can influence the destiny of the child. Popular names (with their meanings) include:

Bulat (m) — Steel;

Erzhena (f) — Mother-of-Pearl;

Erdenie (m) — Treasure;

Tuyana (f) — Rays of the sun or Daybreak;

Aldar (m) — Glory;

Seseg (f) — Flower;

Sayan (m) or *Sayana* (f) — name of a beautiful mountain range in Buryatia.



Prayer Requests


Pray that many Buryat men will become faithful followers of Jesus and will be strong in the fear, love and worship of the Lord God.

Pray that God will raise up godly leaders amongst the Buryat men, who will courageously lead their families, their communities and their towns/cities in the grace and truth of Jesus.

Pray that the Buryats, who are weary and heavy-laden by the hopelessness of their religion of self-works and lack of an intimate relationship with a loving God, would come to Jesus, who will give them true rest.

Pray that they would take Jesus' yoke on themselves and be His disciples, learning from His gentle and humble nature (Matt. 11:28-30).

Pray that each Buryat "generation will tell its children of God's mighty acts, and proclaim His power" (Psalm 145:4).



“Shamanism is a peculiar kind of belief, the adherents of which acknowledge the existence of a supernatural realm parallel to everyday reality, inhabited by ghosts and deities capable of interfering with human souls . . . The shaman is the only person that possesses the ability to communicate with ghosts in their world.”* The shaman goes into a trance by drinking alcohol, hitting a tambourine and dancing a special dance. His/her spirit leaves their body, and evil spirits come into them, which they believe is a deceased relative who has come to speak to them.

Mongolian shamans set a goal to convert 100,000 people into practicing shamans by 2012. When they achieved their goal, shamanism started spreading more into Buryatia. People seek help and counsel from shamans for a variety of reasons, including sickness, bad dreams, and to perform rituals and offer sacrifices to appease the spirits. *Olkhon* is an island on Lake Baikal that is well known for shamanistic activity. Many of the Buryats live in fear of the spirits and the harm they can cause if they are not pleased.

* Taken from the article “*Modern Forms of Buryat Shaman Activity on Olkhon Island*” by Alexandra Wierucka.



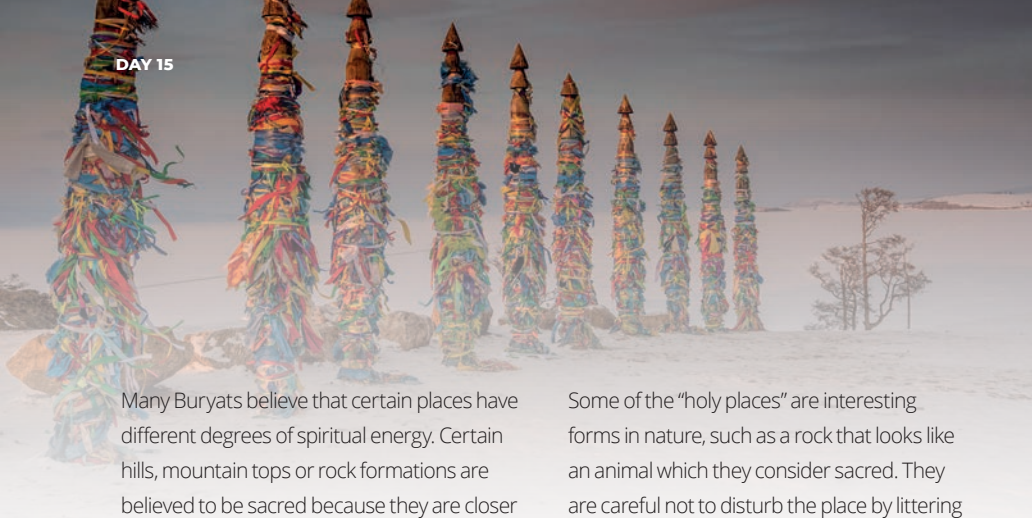
Prayer Requests

Pray that the Buryats will be set free from their fear of the spirits and that they will live in freedom and peace with the God who loves and cares for them.

Pray that God will set the shamans free from the demons that possess them and that they can be free to worship and serve God.

Pray that the shamans and Buryats would know and experience the power of Jesus Christ to heal, protect, help and save.

Pray that the places where the spirits are worshipped (like *Olkhon* Island) will be places where God's name is praised and exalted and His truth proclaimed.



Many Buryats believe that certain places have different degrees of spiritual energy. Certain hills, mountain tops or rock formations are believed to be sacred because they are closer to the spiritual realm and carry spiritual energy. Lake Baikal is a place that is full of spiritual energy for the Buryats. Many times as Buryats drive or walk past a “holy place,” they will give an offering of some kind to the spirits inhabiting that place. Usually they give coins (which drivers may throw out their window as they pass by), but it could be candy, cigarettes or rice that they place on the ground. These places are connected to shamanist beliefs; they think that the spirits are “lords” who control and guard that land, and these offerings will appease them.

Some of the “holy places” are interesting forms in nature, such as a rock that looks like an animal which they consider sacred. They are careful not to disturb the place by littering or damaging it in any way. Buryats also hang prayer flags, or colored ribbons, on trees that are located by the sacred place. Many Buryats live in fear of displeasing the spirits and try to do what is needed to appease them.



Prayer Requests

Pray that the Pray that they would know that God is the Almighty Creator who reigns over nature and performs miracles through His creation.

Pray that His light and truth would lead them and bring them to His holy hill and to His dwelling place — to His presence.

Pray that the Buryats will have a healthy fear of God and know that “clouds and thick darkness surround the Lord, that righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne...the earth saw and trembled, the mountains melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.

Pray that they would know that the heavens declare His righteousness and that all peoples will see His glory.” (Psalm 97:1-6)

Many Buddhists have altars in their homes for the gods who protect their family, placing small offerings of milk, candy and other food before them. The center of the altar has a statue or picture of Buddha or of a famous Buddhist *lama* and teacher. Usually, they have seven small cups on the altar that they fill with fresh water each day as an offering to the gods. As they place the offerings of food and water or tea on the altar, they say a mantra that will cleanse and consecrate the food, lest they be taken over by evil spirits. On New Year's Eve, during *Sagaalga*, most Buddhists take time to clean their altars and place on them offerings of meat, white foods, and fruit. They also make a *dalga*, which is a pillar of cookies and candy that is set before the

gods. It must have an odd number of layers (3,5,7 or 9) and is made of fresh bread, cakes, cookies and candy. The top layer is made of white foods, typically *zephir* (a Russian sweet candy), with a chunk of butter on top. The fuller the *dalga*, the more blessed the family will be materially and spiritually in the coming year. When the *dalga* is set before the gods, it cleanses the food so that it can be eaten the next day.



Prayer Requests

Pray that the Buryats will go to the altar of God, and that He will be their exceeding joy, which will cause them to give offerings of praise to the Lord (Psalm 43:3-4).

Pray that God will send out His light and His truth to the Buryat people so they will know Him as the only God worthy of receiving worship.

Pray that the Buryats will present themselves as an offering to God, and that they will be holy and pleasing to God, which is true and proper worship (Romans 12:1).

Pray that the Buryats will be "sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10).



Many Buryats love athletics; their national sports are archery, wrestling and horseback riding. In the summer, they have local and state competitions for these three sports, in which young and old from all over Buryatia participate. These competitions are called “*Suhar-baan*.” They also have a popular competition called “*haer shalga*,” where a man tries to break the backbone of a cow or bull with one strike of his fist.

Children also are taught various table games that involve tossing sheep bones like dice. In addition to sports, many Buryats also love to hike, bike, and engage in fitness activities. They also really enjoy being out in nature.

Prayer Requests

Pray that the Buryats would labor and strive (like in wrestling) and make it their aim (as in archery) to fix their hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men.

Pray that they would discipline themselves, not just physically, but spiritually, for the purpose of godliness, believing that it is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come (1 Timothy 4:7-8).

Pray that their striving would be no longer after “enlightenment” (to have good karma, or to appease the spirits), but that they would strive for Jesus Himself, the pearl of great price. Pray that they would desire the godliness of becoming like Him.



In general, Buryat people love learning and are very cultured. There are many talented musicians, singers, artists, and dancers in Buryatia. “Theater Baikal” is a group of musicians and dancers who perform concerts in Ulan-Ude, in other parts of Russia, and in countries all over the world. They sing in Buryat (some even “throat sing”) and play unique instruments like the *chanza* and *morin khur*. One famous traditional dance is called the *yohur*, which is a group

dance usually done at celebrations like birthdays and weddings. This dance brings everyone together in a big circle. They hold hands with the people next to them and pump their hands up and down, in and out, as the music plays, moving their feet around the circle. Buryat music and dances reflect the values and beauty of their culture, such as their love of nature, honor for their ancestors, and their value of community.



Prayer Requests

Pray that the Buryats and “Theater Baikal” will sing for joy to the Lord, and that their praise would be becoming to them, as they live in Jesus’ righteousness.

Pray that Buryats would give thanks to the Lord with their flutes and drums, and that they would sing praises to Him with their national stringed instruments.

Pray that they would sing to Him a new song (in Buryat language) and play and dance skillfully with a shout of joy.

Pray that the Buryats, and the well-known artists and musicians, would know that the word of the Lord is upright, that all His work is done in faithfulness, and that He loves righteousness and justice.

Pray that Buryatia and all the earth would be full of the lovingkindness of the Lord (Psalm 33:1-5).



Buryat culture is displayed in various forms of art. The Buryat people love the arts and are proud to talk about their culture, their values, their history and their religion. They also like to portray the beautiful countryside of Buryatia through their folk songs, poems, stories, legends, paintings, sculptures and, more recently, through films.

Traditionally a nomadic culture, Buryat artists often portray those values from their past, when they lived in yurts out in the steppe, herded sheep, rode horses and lived in tight-knit communities.

Prayer Requests

Pray that the Buryats will use the arts in Buryat style to worship God and make His name known.

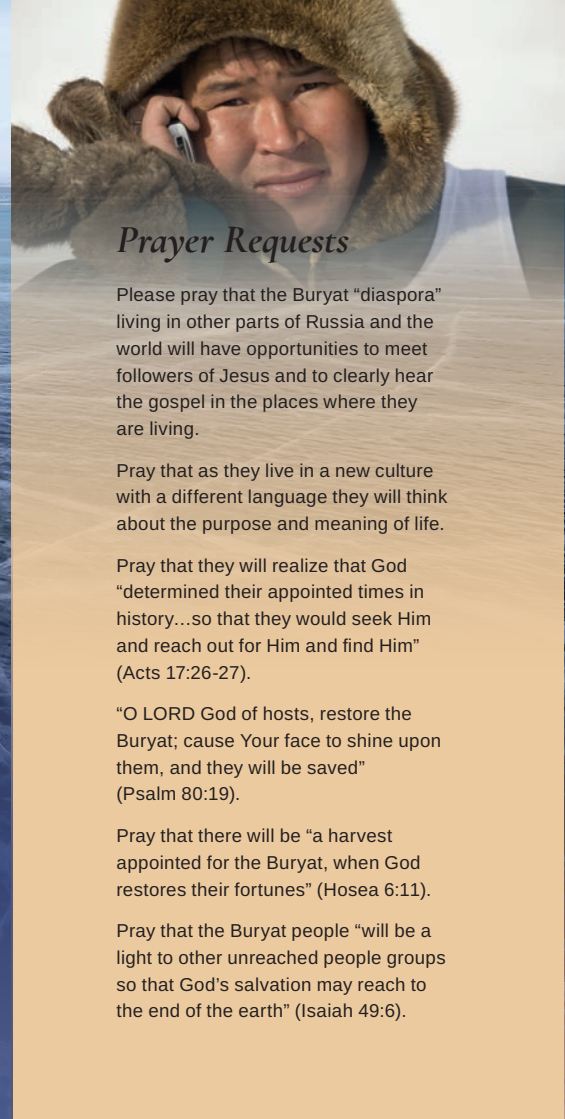
Pray that the Buryat language will be preserved and that more Christian resources will be made available in the Buryat language.

Pray that the Buryats will seek the Lord while He may be found and that they will call upon Him while He is near.

Pray that they will forsake their wicked ways and their unrighteous thoughts and that they will turn to the Lord so that He will have compassion on them. Pray that they may know and experience the one True God, whose thoughts are not our thoughts, and whose ways are not our ways.

Pray Isaiah 55:10-11 for the Buryat people. God says: *As the rain and snow come down from heaven (onto Buryatia), and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my Word that goes out from my mouth (throughout Buryatia): it will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire . . .*

Especially over the past several years, more and more Buryats are moving out of Buryatia in search of better jobs, more opportunities for travel, and a better life for themselves and their children. Many of them have moved out of Russia to places all over the world. Our desire is that God would use this Buryat "diaspora" to further His kingdom by giving them opportunities to hear and receive the Good News of Jesus where they are living, and to be an instrument of bringing God's peace to other places in the world. May God use the Buryat people to carry the gospel to other unreached Buddhist people groups!



Prayer Requests

Please pray that the Buryat "diaspora" living in other parts of Russia and the world will have opportunities to meet followers of Jesus and to clearly hear the gospel in the places where they are living.

Pray that as they live in a new culture with a different language they will think about the purpose and meaning of life.

Pray that they will realize that God "determined their appointed times in history...so that they would seek Him and reach out for Him and find Him" (Acts 17:26-27).

"O LORD God of hosts, restore the Buryat; cause Your face to shine upon them, and they will be saved" (Psalm 80:19).

Pray that there will be "a harvest appointed for the Buryat, when God restores their fortunes" (Hosea 6:11).

Pray that the Buryat people "will be a light to other unreached people groups so that God's salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (Isaiah 49:6).

As we conclude this 21-day prayer marathon, please continue to pray regularly for the Buryat people. Although they have unique traditions and a unique culture, they are just like everyone else; they all are seeking love, happiness and satisfaction, and often experience deep pain, suffering, hurt, discouragement, and emptiness. Many of them seek consultations from lamas or shamans to get help and advice for their everyday problems, questions and concerns. They don't know where else to go. Many don't know that there is a personal God who takes a personal interest in their lives and is ready to help them in their time of need, if only they would call on the name of the Lord.



Prayer Requests

Pray that, as Buryats experience hardship and troubles in life, instead of seeking consultation from Buddhist monks and lamas, they would call out to the Lord God. And pray that He would answer them and show them great and mighty things which they have never seen from Buddha or the other gods/spirits (Jeremiah 33:3).

Pray that many Buryats would find great unrest and discontentment from the teachings and practices of Tibetan Buddhism & shamanism, which would ultimately lead them to seek the truth that can only be found in Jesus.

Pray that the wrong stereotypes they have about Jesus would be broken, and that many Buryats will develop an interest in learning about who Jesus is and what He taught.



Keep Praying!

You can use this guide to pray for the Buryat people every year during *Sagaalga*n, beginning four days before the New Year according to the lunar calendar. These dates are listed in the table on the right for several years into the future.

God's light is stronger than darkness. May the Lord hear our prayers and we will witness his Spirit accomplishing great things among the Buryats and all other peoples, tribes and languages.

YEAR	LUNAR NEW YEAR	BEGINNING OF A PRAYER MARATHON
2023	FEBRUARY 21	FEBRUARY 17
2024	FEBRUARY 10	FEBRUARY 6
2025	JANUARY 29	JANUARY 25
2026	FEBRUARY 17	FEBRUARY 13



Sing to the Lord, bless His name; Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all peoples.

For the Lord is great and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the Lord made the heavens. Honor and majesty are before Him; Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.

Give to the Lord, o families of the peoples, give to the Lord glory and strength. Give to the Lord the glory due His name; bring an offering, and come into His courts. Oh, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before Him, all the earth.

Say among the nations, "The Lord reigns; the world also is firmly established, it shall not be moved; He shall judge the peoples righteously."

Psalm 96:2-10, NKJV

MORE WAYS TO PRAY FOR THE BURYAT AND OTHER TIBETAN BUDDHIST PEOPLE GROUPS

Praise God in advance that “Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb” will be established among every unreached Buddhist nation, and all tribes, peoples and tongues. (Rev 7:9–10)

Bind the forces of darkness, resisting all demonic rulers and spiritual powers, which, in heavenly places, influence Buddhist countries among others. (Eph 6:12–13; Dan 10:13, 20)

Break down spiritual strongholds and human philosophies or arguments against God, which produce barriers of resistance among Buddhists. (2 Cor 10:4–5)

Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest. (Matt 9:38)

Intercede for lasting fruit for those working among Buddhists. (John 12:24)

Plead with our Lord for the opening of Buddhists’ eyes to the revelation of the true and living God and His Christ, the unique Savior. (Eph 1:17–23)

“What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops.” (Matt 10:27)

Ask God to enlighten the minds of Buddhists about the folly of making images and practicing idolatry. (Ps 115:4–8)

Ask God to help Christians discern the biblical difference between Buddhist terms and the gospel so they can intelligently, articulately and compassionately communicate the gospel. (Prov 2:2–3; 2 Tim 2:7)

Pray for the hearts of Buddhists to understand the gospel, especially the doctrines of Christ’s substitution and redemption. (Gal 3:13; 1 Pet 1:18–29, 2:24)

Intercede for Buddhists and their families to come to faith in Christ, repenting from their total dependence on their own good works. (Eph 2:8–9)

Pray that believers will share the gospel as bold witnesses to their Buddhist families, friends and neighbors. (Acts 4:29–31)

Ask God to multiply disciples and churches and begin church-planting movements among each Buddhist people group worldwide. (Matt 16:18; 1 Pet 2:9–10)

Intercede for the raising up of national church leaders to train and care for God’s flocks and to extend the Church into each Buddhist group and family. (Acts 20:27–32; 1 Pet 5:1–4)

Ask God to open minds, hearts and eyes spiritually. Pray that the Lord will give discernment and wisdom, and will bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. (2 Cor 10:5)

Praise God for what He is doing and will do in the lives of Buddhists, their families and their communities around the world.

**TAKEN FROM THE BUDDHIST PRAYER BOOKLET
BY SEANET**

21 DAYS OF PRAYER FOR THE BURYATS

Thank you for participating in the 21 days of prayer for the Buryat people and for holding fast to God's bright promises together with us.

Learn more about the Prayer Guides by visiting the following websites:

www.pray30days.org

www.prayforeurasia.com

