



Research Article

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE *ALMAS**

Zhugdariyn Damdin

EDITOR'S NOTE: Here is a translation of an abridged summary taken from an apparently substantial manuscript produced by Mongolian investigator Zhugdariyn Damdin, who conducted ethnographic and field research on the Mongolian *almas* over a period of several years (1962-1965). This was translated to Russian, arranged by the late Michael Trachtengerts, and posted on his webpage (alamas.ru). In his Afterword, Trachtengerts sheds some light on the manuscript's provenience, while raising questions about its impact and ultimate fate. Jim Burgtorf arranged to have Trachtengerts' on-line summary translated into English and recently brought it to my attention. I was unfamiliar with it but received further clarification from Igor Burtsev, to whom we are indebted for further historical context and editorial assistance. Burtsev came into possession of Damdin's book manuscript (in Mongolian, with photographs) in the 1970s, and had some excerpts translated into Russian. Later he conveyed the entire manuscript to Maya Bykova for translation into Russian. During 1976, Burtsev participated in an expedition to Mongolia, at which time he met Damdin. Preoccupied with other responsibilities and circumstances over the ensuing decades, Burtsev lost contact with Maya Bykova. She passed away in 1995, and the fate of her archives, including the Damdin manuscript is unknown. Therefore, we are all the more fortunate to be able to make available this early insight into the nature of an Asian relict hominoid – the Mongolian *almas*.

*Letter from Zhugdariyn Damdin [Fig. 1]
to Professor Boris F. Porshnev
on June 20, 1967.*

Dear Prof. Porshnev, warm greetings and best wishes for success in your scientific work. I, a simple hunter, gladly write this letter from faraway Mongolia. Your name is repeatedly heard, but there was no reason to contact you before now. Now the Soviet scientist Kulikov, who is in Ulaan Baatar, deliberately met me and conveyed your request from the letter. If I had the opportunity to meet with you, I could tell you many things. From an early age I sowed grain, grazed cattle, hunted, learned my native language and, in 1921, I fought in the Revolution, among the first partisans. Since then I have been in the civil service, the military, and repeatedly had the opportunity to join in

scientific work. Thus, in search of the *almas* (Snowman), which has interested me from the very beginning, I spent four years, starting in 1962. Now I have written a small book about the results of these searches. According to your wish, I am sending this book with Comrade V.V. Kulikov. It consists of 312 typewritten pages, in 4 sections with a large number of drawings and photographs of witnesses and notes by Evaline Zeligman and Maya Bykova and consisting of 6 chapters, 124 photos, and 7 drawings.

Thank you many times over for having learned about me across thousands of kilometers, and intending to print my book in a socialist country... this is a great joy in my life. The book was prepared for the Mongolian publishing house. When published in the USSR, certain repetitions may become apparent to the Soviet reader. Nevertheless, in

*АЖИМАСЫН МОР

chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are the results of my observations in the field, and I think there should be few cuts there.

Additionally, I have in my possession long coarse hair, obtained as a result of excavations in Altai, where they say a strange manlike being died, whose whole body was covered with hair. In these mountains, at a high altitude, excrement of an unknown origin was also found. Should I investigate these things? Please reply.

I did not always do this research. Only in recent years have I started searching, taking upon myself the brunt of the search for the *almas*. Nevertheless, this book, despite its small volume, is my main work.

As I have experienced a lot of hardship in my life and am already 68 years old, of course I'd be pleased if the book were printed in the USSR. Despite my old age, I, a mountaineer and hunter, hope to devote my remaining years to the search for the *almas*, and the publication of the book would be important to our future work.

Zhugdariyn Damdin

FOREWORD

When they were going to go to the mountainous areas of the Mongolian Altai Territory, I was more worried than anybody. Some time back they were going to go to Altai Khan, which is in the western outskirts of our country, known from early history, occupying an area of some 1.5 million km². The mountain stands majestically, lifting his head covered in eternal snow, and keeping the secrets and mysteries of the centuries in his sheer cliffs, which stretch like a rope. That was a few years ago. But, I always remember the warm, clear days of late spring – the beginning of the memorable summer of 1962, as if it all happened yesterday.

In that region, they talked a lot about an animal called the *almas*. These exciting reports reached me in the capital, some 2000

kilometers away, and beckoned me to Altai. Overcome with desire and curiosity, I was preparing to go with the approval of the Academy of Sciences of the MPR. Since from an early age I had heard about this unknown living creature, called the *almas*, from reports of different people in all parts of Mongolia, I was very happy to be on the way to conduct such an unusual search.

About this man-beast called the *almas*, in all Mongol families living in gers, many legends about the *almas* are passed on, and there is hardly any person in any part of Mongolia who has not heard about him.

One of the oldest revolutionary scientists, Tseven Zhamtsarano (a Soviet professor, a Buryat by ethnicity, who disappeared in 1937 during the years of repression) was very interested in this matter. Although he collected some information and facts, the materials disappeared due to his untimely death. Also, there were no people who were continuously interested in this issue. And, for some time the legends remained legends. But people didn't stop talking about this strange animal. On the contrary, the conversations became more specific, and in the sixties began to attract general attention.

In this regard, my journey met with some great difficulties. There were rumors spread by various disbelieving persons. They said that to mix this scientific search with my personal interests was as if I were chasing devils and ghosts. Such reasoning had a detrimental effect on the search, questioning its being undertaken for objective verification, without any preconceived opinion. The author experienced financial difficulties due to the reluctance of some people to request funding for such a project.

But thanks to the ardent support of the Mongolian Altai workers, I conducted a search in the Altai four times (Mongolian – note by Evaline Zeligman and Maya Bykova) in 1962-1965, and I write about these in this book.

The book tells about what I saw with my own eyes or heard with my own ears, or from the mouths of responsible people. I wrote about the facts of this matter that are receiving increasing attention.

But I passed [through] only the Kobdo and Bayan-Olgii aimags, that is, only two aimags out of 18 Mongolian aimags, and rumors about the *almas* and associated phenomena are ubiquitous in our country.

In addition, it should be noted that not only myself, but also our Academy of Sciences, especially Dr. Prof. Byamba Rinchen (later on Academician), pays great attention to this issue.

The Altai Mountains, where "hot" traces of the *almas* (human-like beast) are beginning to be discovered, and the desert stretching for thousands of kilometers, are still not fully explored, and the secret is waiting to be uncovered. I have tried my best to at least touch the outer shell of this mystery.

The Author

CHAPTER I. THE FIRST JOURNEY FROM OCTOBER 7 TO DECEMBER 3, 1962

I drove some 7000 km [specifically, the author lists dozens of localities in the Mongolian Altai and thereabouts, where he traveled. An illustration in the Russian version shows northwest Mongolia, *J.B.*]. Of the local residents, some were unanimous in asserting that the *almas* existed, at least in the past, while others just as unanimously declare that he still exists. It was necessary to thoroughly understand.

Bajbay Kadamjan (the given name stands first), aged 74 years, a Kazakh, a simple man from Kobdos somon, of Kobdos aimag, related to the author: Once (he doesn't know exactly when) his father drove the herd to a distant pasture near Lake Tolbo. In the middle of winter, he saw tracks of a bare human foot

leading to a deserted shepherd's hut. It turned out that this creature came to the hut several times and took some of the supplies left there. Surprised herdsmen lay in wait for several days and caught this animal with a lasso. Its body was completely naked except for a covering of woolly hair, very unpleasant [smelling? *J.B.*], different from an ordinary animal in its resemblance to man. It turned out that it was "exactly like a human female, but doesn't understand language at all." In the distance, another similar creature was moving uneasily, possibly a male. Seeing this the herdsmen released the trapped creature, and both quickly disappeared from view. This amazing story was told to the young Kadamdzhan by his father.

Two hunters, Karatishkhan and Kamar, once hunted in the heights of Borit at 3,830 meters above sea level, to the left of Lake Tolbo and on the Mountain Meerengiin Sala, covered in eternal snow. Despite their precautions, the game (an *argali*) was scared and ran away. The hunters were surprised, knowing that they did not frighten it. Suddenly they noticed some kind of "terrible person." This 'person' was very tall, completely naked and hair-covered. The hunters stealthily watched. "He was exactly like a man, about two meters tall with pale woolly hair, with a dark brown awn [meaning unclear, literally "bristle", possibly a beard, *J.B.*], but his head was gray. The muscles of his arms and legs were very large and strongly developed. His chest was wide and thick. Such a big scary 'person' seemed to fear nothing, walking with long strides in a certain direction." The hunters became fearful and mounted their horses. Karatishkhan offered to shoot the beast, but the other disagreed. This happened not so long ago. Rumors have spread widely. In the somon Ulmaar Tolbo somon, residents, especially schoolchildren, were so alarmed that they even set up a watch duty. But over time, it was forgotten. Both hunters are now dead.

The Brigadier of the brigade no. 2 of the agricultural association Ulaan-Tug (red flag), aged 45, an MPRP [Mongolian Peoples Revolutionary Party] member, and younger brother of the aforementioned Karatishkhan, named Umbay Beldeuvai, confirms: "It was in the fall or winter of 1936. My brother Karatishkhan and Kamar hunted at the beginning of the spur of snow-capped Meren Mount Borit, east of Lake Tolbo. Karatishkhan suddenly returned home terrified from the hunt and told the above. Newly added in Beldeuvai's story, the footprint of that creature was much longer than a human's, although the storyteller was small at that time, but Osho remembers that he was talking about his brother, whom people knew as a truthful person."

At the Mountain of Hurt voices can be heard at night, similar to human, different from those sounds that can be produced by an owl, or by other birds or animals. Many locals told the author about this.

Omar, 79 years old, a cattle breeder of the Kobdos somon: "It seems like it was in 1934 (I don't remember exactly)." He then confirms that he personally heard conversations about Karatishkhan and Kamar and passed on their contents.

Honored comrade Cholta, aged 56, then headmaster of the Tolbos somon school, now director of the secondary school of the Oygor somon of the Bayan-Olgii aimaq, and a member of the MPRP, relates he does not remember exactly, but it seems that it was in 1935. It was close to winter. It further confirms the same story, but adds: "It is definitely true that they once came up to me and the administration of the somon, alarmed, and reported their adventure, saying, 'what is this?' Further reports added to the fear consuming the residents, especially students, who were organized on [guard] duty at night. Those hunters were not the kind of people who could [not] tell the truth. I still think the story was certainly true," said the teacher.

The chairman of the Kobdo Aimaq Party Committee, Gonchisdorj, told the author: "Till now there are rumors that some unusual child fell into the trap put on the *tarbagans* (local name of marmots) by a Kazakh of the Kobdo somon of our aimaq, named Kalamjan Murdzgal."

A former soldier of division Matadi, now a resident of Kobdo somon Kobdos aimaq, a member of the agricultural associations, aged 45, Kalamdzhan Murdzgal says: "A trap was placed in an area of Harhaytyn tag, [near] the lake Tosrog-holes, and the beginning of the five spurs – Taban oysala [of the] Altai mountain range (now the territory of Delun somon of the Bayan-Olgii aimaq). Then at about noon on August 20, 1948, I went to check the trap. When I approached, I discovered that some black creature was hitting (sic) the hole, closing the entrance to the trap. When the creature pulled, it seemed to be stronger than the *tarbagan*. [I am certain] I saw a child's leg stuck by the ankle in the trap. I was surprised, thinking where could a child have come from in this wild place? But at the same time, the leg didn't look like a child's, differing in color. I was tempted to shoot it, but remembered things that could harm one's home, evil spirits and the like.

Along the way, I did not meet anyone, except for Ukhanaha Tahia, who was unable to keep up. When he arrived after 3 or 4 hours, the same leg was sticking out of the trap. The foot, five toes and other features suggested that the leg could be compared to the leg of a human child, but the skin was the color of a camel in summer, and besides, it was covered with sparse dark hair. Surprisingly, the trap weakened, and the animal pulled out its leg and went into a hole. Out of fear and suspicion, [the hunter] left the trap in the same place, at the burrow, and went to the border guards, some 10 km away. Some curious guards came to the scene of the incident, and wanted to dig a hole, but wary of them, [he] did not allow it. He took the trap and left with

the border guards. After this bad omen [he or I, unclear, *J.B.*] stopped hunting." In October 1960, the head of the department of the internal department of the Kobdo aimaq, a certain Lamjab, called Murdzgal and yelled at him, accusing him of spreading false rumors. But Murdzgal assured him that he saw with his own eyes that child-like animal.

The shepherd of the Ulaan-Tug (red flag) agricultural association, somon Tolbo of the Bayan-Olgii aimaq, also a member of the Revsomol (Revolutionary Youth Group), named Dugan-Bayin Bayanhoy, 20 years old, reports: It was in July 1959 (unsure of the exact number). He fed the sheep once at the spur Meran of mount Borit. It was quiet. There were no people or animals around. Suddenly the sheep became frightened. The shepherd ran to them and saw in front of a hill a terrible creature, manlike, but covered with thick fur. It was lying headfirst [Fig. 2]. Despite his surprise and fear, the shepherd noticed that the animal had long hair on its head, and the hair on the body was short and whitish-brown. The next day, accompanied by the old man Teleujan, he went to the same place. They saw footprints in the sand that looked like human footprints. The herder of brigade no. 3 of Tolbo somon of Bayan-Olgiy aimaq, Teleudzhan, aged 78, confirms this, adding that the youth Bayanhoy is a serious young man, and certainly did see what he reported.

The shepherd of the brigade no. 4 of the agricultural association Jargalyn Hall (the path to happiness) of Bulgan somon, Kobdosky aimaq, named Batyn Ishgen, reported that at the end of October 1945, while carrying out the border service (more than 60 Mongols and Kazakhs were on duty that day), on the ridge Tahiin ball, we drove towards Bar-Hall (Barkul). We were divided into groups of 3, 5, and 10 people. When one of the detachments was on the western edge of the semi-desert Kazakh Tour, in front of the top of a sand dune, in a thick *saxaul* grove, they saw the

impossible sight of a terrible naked man covered with woolly hair.

The horses were frightened, but gradually the fear of horses and riders dissipated, and they gradually approached the creature and began to circle around it. Then they even stopped and began to eat. They tried to give food to the hairy man, but he did not want to eat. When spoken to, he opened his mouth, stuck out his tongue (literally, "the tongue hung") and made terrible inarticulate sounds. They aimed their weapons at him, showed their knives, but he showed no sign of fear. The hair on his body was very thick in places, of a reddish color. His eyes, nose, mouth, ears and head were manlike. It is now recalled that he had bright eyes like a large squirrel's, and his face was completely black. The jaws were longer than a man's [prognathous, *J.B.*]. The whole body was covered with hair to some extent, but there was almost no hair on the face or the armpits. The hands were completely black, with the nails on both hands and feet very long. Additionally, both hands and feet were covered with "chicks" [meaning unclear, *J.B.*]. The legs were not very long, and the penis was like that of an ordinary man [Fig. 3, 4].

After this inspection, fear again gripped people, some of whom felt that it was an evil spirit. Some wanted to shoot him, but it [i.e. gunfire, presumably] was forbidden at the border. Therefore, he escaped alive into a thick saxaul grove at sunset. Those places on the northeast side of Mount Michin are deserted. This incident is known to the shepherd of our union, Boldyn Batu, and also the carpenter Chultem from Bulgan. But Batu said: "It is true that Ishgem was always a serious and truthful man, but he probably doesn't remember well a meeting with a strange creature as [he was] mistaken [about] whom he had been with." The author (Damdin) believes that the leadership of the Kobdo aimaq did not approve of such talk, so maybe Batu just did not [want to] talk about it.

Red Mountain Almas

To the right of the Bulgan River in the Kobdo aimaq there is the Almasyn Ulan Uul (Red Mountain of the Almas). Purabjab, aged 74, said: The mountain has been called so for a long time. According to many people in this area, at night, there are different voices heard, similar to human voices. Purabjab, Amardzaya, and other old men said that, as they say here from time immemorial, these are devils and evil spirits.

Party member Amardzaya said: In our area, there is always a lot of talk associated with this mountain. At a branch of the Khokh Udzur of the Almasyn Ulan Uul, in the autumn of 1960, Mendewe, a local resident, saw four children running through, who could not [possibly] be there. A few years back, a local resident named Hemchig met an unusually scary man near the same mountain, and, having fallen ill from fear, soon died.

Party member Samchai Manday says: He mowed hay with an old man. One night there was a sudden noise. The following morning Manday began to observe where the noise was coming from, and saw four strange children. Manday wanted to go investigate, but the old man saw this and angrily forbade it. These were obviously not children, but from a distance it even seemed like they were wearing short shirts. "Although I still wonder about these unnatural children," said Manday, "I don't tell people much, thinking I could possibly have misinterpreted [what I saw]."

The news of a corpse

The author of this book has now tracked down the senior gardener of the fruiting station of the Academy of Sciences of Mongolia on the Bulgan River in Kobdo aimaq, the 56-year-old Choyjoo, about whom Ishghen spoke above.

Amarjargan Choyjoo reports: It was July 26, 1953, at about 10 a.m. Leading a camel,

[at] Ulan (at the southwestern spurs of the Bayanondor Mountain, where they used to make sacrifices), passing through a hollow in the ravine, I saw something grayish between two saxauls. Moving along the ravine, I stumbled upon the corpse of a humanlike animal, very large and covered with hair. Approaching closely, I examined it carefully, despite the fact that I was alarmed by this unexpected find. The creature was lying on its side with one arm raised, one foot and its head [visible]. The body was extremely similar to a human's, but could not be attributed to a Mongol, or a Russian, or a Chinese, or a Kazakh.

It was clear to the observer that there was some kind of human before him. His head was big, the neck was thick, the arms and legs were long. The creature seemed to have been dead a long time. The head hair was long, on other parts of the body shorter. The hair of head and body was full of fine sand. All the hair was fawn-brown, but the hair in the armpits, groin, and on the belly was sparse. The skin in the groin, armpits, and other similar places was dried and wrinkled. It was arranged in strips, like belts made from the skin of a long-dead camel. Part of the hair had fallen out and was scattered in the sand by the wind. Near the corpse there were no objects used by people. Seeing the body of a strange person, like an animal, so terrible, he remembered [stories] about devils and evil spirits, was fearful and did not tell his family about it.

[Here is something omitted, as a long period about nine years passed since that event, until Damdin visited that location in 1962 – *I. Burtsev*]

He remembered, with the fear he felt, the time he saw the body. But he was also told about the strange corpse by the then chairman of the bag, party member Lugar, a respected resident of Choyunyam and director of the fruit and vegetable station Chimitdorj.

Having heard such a report, author, having

hired three horses, went to the area where the body was found, accompanied by Choyjoo, who saw the body, and narrated about, and the mining engineer Volodya (a Russian, who was with the expedition in the Bulgan area at the base). We rode for 3 days, November 8-10, 1962, but could not locate the corpse. As quite a long time had passed since its discovery, it is not surprising that Choyjoo could not find that exact place. Choyjoo was very disappointed and out of sorts, although we knew that in those regions it was hard to find even what was in some exact spot nine days ago, much less nine years ago. After this unsuccessful search, the author returned to Ulaan Baatar.

CHAPTER II.

THE SECOND TRIP TO THE ALTAI IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER OF 1963

[This time the author traveled some 7,000 kilometers, and lists the places visited.]

"Human" skull of unknown origin

The skull was sent to the Academy of Sciences of the MPR [Fig. 4-8]. It was found in the region of the Almasyn Ulan Mountain, in the territory of the Bulgan somon of the Kobdo aimaq. A senior worker at the Budgan fruit and vegetable station named Choyjoo, the head of the station called Chimitdardj and others, decided to find the corpse described above. After the author left, they barely found this skull in the rugged terrain northeast of Mount Almasyn Ulan. The rest of the body was apparently eaten by scavengers or carried off by the stream, so only the skull remained to be found.

Together with Chimitdorje, Choyjoo and others, the author [upon his return] carefully searched for the corpse previously seen by Choyjoo. Damdin reports that they scoured the area [hoping to find additional remains, *J.B.*], proceeding 10 m. apart from each other. At three meters from where the skull was found,

along the stream, a woman named Erdnee dug out four tangled bundles of black-brown hair 18-31 cm long. Damdin and the others immediately inspected this place. Another woman, downstream, dug out another bunch of hair, whitish at the ends, 36 cm long, at a depth of about 30 cm. Altogether, over 10 bunches of brown and whitish hair were excavated.

The Ridge of Tolbo-Khuniy Nurtsu

A detailed geographical description of Tolbo-huni Nurtsu, one of the many spurs of Altai, is given. The author draws attention to the numerous toponyms associated with the animals found there: "Argalant" – with argali; "Almasyn Ulan," "Almasyn dob" – Almas Hill; "Huniy Nuruu" – the Ridge of Man, etc. He describes the peaks of the Tolbo-juniya Nuru Ridge, always snow-covered. He traveled along the ridge at an altitude of 3000-4000 meters, visited over 10 canyons with steep walls, these being sometimes 500-600 meters high, and stretching some 3 km, where, as far as Damdin knew, no one had ever been. He described the fauna he encountered.

Tuvangan Serkvay from the Tolbo somon of Bayan-Olgii aimaq, the oldest member of the Party, a former administrative and party worker, aged 54, and a deputy of the Great Khural (Parliament) of the MPR, said that in late October or early November of 1923 (he doesn't remember the exact date), in a snowstorm in the country Tehtiin Hujir Conhag, in the territory of Altan somon, he fed the sheep of a certain wealthy Uranhayan. Suddenly, something scared the sheep. Looking closely, Tuvangan saw a tall man near the sheep.

This "man" approached the shepherd, who sat on a rock under an overhanging stone. Despite his fear, he saw that the man was strong, robust, with gray head hair and a beard. He was covered with gray-brown hair resembling a little camel's hair. The legs and arms were very large, immensely so, and an

extremely large and long penis dangled. Although the nose, mouth, eyes and ears were like a man's, the creature was very scary. Seeing the shepherd, it screamed, as a man would from fear (he does not remember the exact sound). This creature then walked higher up the mountain, past the shepherd. Serkvay watched it walk away; there was no tail, he walked like a man, swaying somewhat from side to side. The frightened shepherd then ran to his master, leaving the sheep. The owner took a gun and, gathering some people, drove the sheep. He explained the events as follows: "This is the owner of the mountains and the beasts."

The author, Damdin, traveling in the Altai-Tsogo somon, met with the hunter Batdordzh. During a conversation about Serkvay, Batdordzh's mother, 72-year-old Bachert, said: "This Serkvay fed our sheep 40 years ago." She furthermore confirmed that one day, a frightened boy really did run up and [said he] saw a hairy man. She continued, "Our old man then told me, this Serkvay is a man of great virtues (accumulated during previous rebirths). He personally met with the owner of Altai Khan!"

A resident of the somon Altai Tsogou of the Bayan-Olgii aimaq, Khanish Chulsin, says that when she was still small, her elder brother went to the mountains where there was pasture, but returned horseless, having seen a strange living creature. Brother and sister searched a bit and again saw this creature in a crevice. The brother hesitated, but at his sister's insistence took aim and fired. The animal ran off. The hands, feet, and gait were like a man's, the coat [of woolly hair] like a mountain goat. There was no tail, and the tracks were human.

Mount Tagt, where Hanish saw that animal, was the site of the winter camp of Bayan-Olgii, father of Batdordj. She is of the same generation as Batdordj. He should know of this event. Her father then asked Uncle Bayan-Aldziya what it could be. He replied:

"That animal will not harm man. It is the owner of the mountains." Her elder brother Musai is a shepherd in somon Tolbo. She said she could ask him.

A member of the brigade no. 11 of the somon Altanzogots, Bayan-Olgii aimaq, Bayandzini Batdordzh, 42, says that his father told him about an encounter in the Khuren region, while he was hunting for a human-like hairy creature. The anxious father put there an *obo* (a pile of stones serving as an altar) and always made sacrifices. After meeting that animal, his father became rich and gained much honor and respect from people. That being [is the] host of Altai Khan, people inhabiting this region believe, and it revealed itself to only virtuous happy people. This is the highest tengri [evidently meaning something like honor, *J.B.*]. Batdordzh's father admonished him and warned him that, if he is fortunate enough to meet this spirit, to tell no one about it.

In September 1961, Batdordj saw a strange animal at Lake Nogan Nur (3000 meters above sea level). He reported that that on first seeing the creature, it was about 250 meters from him, and then he approached more closely. The creature was broad-faced, with prominent jaws, and loose, shaggy hair on its head. It was naked, of a bluish color, the body covered with woolly hair. The neck was short and thick, the shoulders high, the thighs thick; no tail. The hands were long and dangled. All animals [there] were large and fast; some mountain goats were frightened by the creature and fled. Although Batdordj had an excellent gun, it did not even occur to him to shoot it. [A drawing made by Batdordj was originally attached here.] Following the creature further, Batdordj again saw it in the distance. He thought about the "owner" of Altai.

A member of the agricultural association "Narmandaz" (Sunrise) of Buyant somon, Bayan-Odghi aimaq, named Mietap Kodzar, 52 years old, was in late March 1962,

shepherding sheep in the hollow of Khan or Yadzgar to the west of Shar Bulag (in the territory of Buyon somon). At about 11 o'clock the sheep became alarmed and a naked "man" appeared behind them. He wanted to shoot it, but did not dare, it looked too human. On closer examination, although manlike, its body was covered with blackish-brown woolly hair. The hair on its head hung down to the eyebrows. Through binoculars, the penis was clearly visible, and Kodzar was certain it was male. Both looked at each other. When the hairy one went, the shepherd shouted. The being did two or three jumps, but suddenly turned around and stood straight up. The shepherd shook it [meaning unclear, *J.B.*] but the creature went on. The next day, with another shepherd named Muhitin, Kodzar went to the same place. Judging by the tracks, they decided that the creature's foot is narrower than a human's foot. The big digit seemed smaller than a man's. They found a place where it had lain. The handprints could not be distinguished from human ones. At this place there were also several hairs 2-3 cm in length, dark brown in color.

Muhitin's story confirms Kodzar's. They walked about a kilometer following the tracks of a "man". The step [evidently footprint length intended, *J.B.*] was about 40 cm. They found a nest. It was obvious that the hairy one lay curled up on its side, placing a hand under its head. Hair was noted. When he told his mother, she said: "Oh, he comes to our places. There used to be such a creature that was called *Hun Guresy* (man-beast). There is nothing to fear from him."

A woman named Hunsai, 64 years old, from the Ulan-Tui (Red Radiance) agricultural association, the same somon and aimaq says that around noon on August 3, 1963, on the northern side of the eastern Huren Khairkhan range, near Tolbo Lake, the sheep became frightened. On a steep southern slope, some 70-80 meters away, was a human-like creature standing naked near the sheep. It was covered

with woolly hair, which seemed bluish or reddish-brown from that distance. It moved very quickly along the steep slope of the mountain. It had an odd gait. Both hands hung down. The hands and legs were reddish, and the head hair was messy. It was big. Hunsai got scared and drove the sheep home. She told her husband, who reported it to the somon. The husband confirms her story and says that the place is deserted, and it is located in the southwestern part of the Huni Nuru (human spine). The deputy vouched for the husband's report. The deputy was a chairman of the Association of Nadzikhan somon and chairman of Kambar.

The head of the economic department of the Bayan-Olgii aimaq committee of the Party named Purev Sarig reported that he, together with others, while hunting in late August 1962, on the slope [of] Tolbo, saw the tracks of a barefoot man in the snow. After 30 meters they disappeared, as there was no more snow. People said, "This the master, the keeper of Tolbo." They say this creature is human-like. [Originally attached was a drawing of the creature made by a certain Sarig.]

The younger brother, Sariga Timur, told how he, his uncle, father, and elder brother hunted together in August 1962. He heard his older brother, who was with the horses, call out to Khar that he saw tracks of a barefoot man. Also, he heard that in the same period, on a mountain of Tolbo, a man named Dzarga personally saw a man-like creature.

The head of the department of agricultural associations herding brigade somon Altantsogts, Bayan-Olgii aimaq, Nyama, told that in a field in 1962, [he] was at work in the Ku-ui (Yamato, "goat") in the area [of] Dayan territory brigade no. 1 Sachsay somon of Bayan-Olgiyskogo aimaq. He said that the shepherd of that brigade, named Hosoyt, saw among the sheep a strange "man", almost naked, [but] with a hat on his head, at least it seemed to the shepherd. His face was hairy and frightful looking, and [he] was in the

mountains among the rocks. When the shepherd retrieved other people, the creature was no longer there. In 1963, when Nyama was in the brigade no. 4 of the Delun somon, a man named Oroihon told him that about 30 years ago, Oroihon's elder brother, an excellent hunter, caught an *almas* woman and kept her at home for two days, but not being able to get her to eat or drink, he finally released her. She was covered with woolly hair, all the time saggy

The head of the Udzhin Rest House, a former resident of the somon Tolbo of the Bayan-Olgii aimaq, named Orazboy, described how in 1934, the hunters Karatishkhan and Kamar saw a human-like creature near Borit (see p. 4). In the somonmer of 1962, around July, as Duguenbay and Bayanha related, they saw a naked "person" [while shepherding]. It is also said that the woman Hunsai, in the summer of 1963, while working in the somon Tolbo brigade no. 2, saw a naked man climbing a mountain.

The head of the trans-shipment base Tsagan-nor of Bayan-Olgii aimaq, Colonel Sosorbaran, reported that in 1960, in the area of mount Tsegelkhairhan, local residents saw tracks of a barefoot person in the snow.

In conclusion, the author writes that the former chairman of the great Khural (Parliament) Nogoy, the bank manager of the Bayan-Olgii aimaq, Jeniskhan, the head of the rest house, Orazboy, the head of the road department Magauya and others believe, based on legends and facts, in the existence of *almas* in the Mongolian Altai. There used to be information that *almas* came [to that region] from Xinjiang.

CHAPTER III. SEARCHES IN THE ALTAI FROM JUNE 17 TO DECEMBER 3, 1964

The author stayed in the most promising places for a longer time. Accompanying him this time were the teacher of the Moscow

High School geographer B. Rantsen, an employee of the Ministry of Agriculture, the famous hunter A. Lubsandorz, and an employee of the Ministry of State Security, Major Shadabtsodol. Their visit [was] sped up [by] a message from the Altai that several reports had been received about encounters with an *almas*.

A commission of 16 people was organized on site. The chairman of the Executive Committee (Administration) of the Bayan-Olgii aimaq appointed Aran to survey the area where *almas* had been seen. The author gives an act of commission, which states:

1) At 11-12:00 am on May 10, 1964, a 2nd grade student of Dulunjab, aged 9, a 2nd grade student of Darsuen, 11, and a 6-year-old girl, saw a human-like creature near some brushwood. They described it as having woolly hair like a brown camel. The children's story was confirmed by their parents.

2) At about 10:00, on May 17-18, 1964, a 2nd grade schoolgirl, Lisa, spent the night at a relative of the Bagds, and on the way back she saw an *almas* with a brownish-gray coat of hair.

In both cases, the frightened children fled; it seemed to them that the creature was waving to them.

3) At 8-9:00 on June 2, 1964, Bataa, 71, saw a reddish *almas*. It ran across the road and disappeared into a willow grove.

4) Around 4-6:00 *p.m.* on June 5, 1964, Avzi, 11 years old, and Oloksho, 5, walking with a humped camel in a willow grove, saw an *almas* of a reddish color, sitting down.

5) At about 6:00 *p.m.*, on June 6, 1964, a pupil in the 4th grade, Tovsh, 11, saw a human-like creature at a distance of 15 meters in the forest while grazing livestock.

The commission visited all these places located in the Bug area on the territory of the Nogo-nur somon, Bayan-Olgii aimaq. [Photos were attached.] The commission, based on the foregoing, believes that the *almas* was obviously located about 3 km west of the Bug

river. The commission, due to the summer proliferation of midges, found it impossible to conduct further searches. It is further reported that on June 9, 1964, Boshoi, during his migration to a willow grove, saw a human-like creature of red and gray color, with disheveled hair. He was frightened and ran away. He told everything to the drivers from the construction office, and was ridiculed. Signatures of members of the commission and the chairman are given. The author and his companions drove to the same places. Attached [were] photos of the area and maps of the 3rd trip. [The text lists numerous places that were visited.]

Reports of *almas* seen

1) By the shepherd of the brigade no. 2 of the somon union of Tolbo, Bayan-Olgii aimaq, Tuselbai, aged 58. A detailed account of the circumstances of his *almas* encounter and its description is recorded. He sketched the *almas*.

2) A member of the brigade no. 4 of the Bulgan somon of Kobdo aimaq named Lamaa, 40 years old, saw a small *almas* with a 3 year-old child, covered in woolly hair, etc. The detailed description is similar to the previous one. The terrain was completely uninhabited, no people there.

3) Darsuren, 11 years old, from the brigade no. 3 of the Bulgan somon, Bayan-Olgii aimaq, gave a detailed story. She noted the red color, unpleasant eyes, and clearly saw red eyebrows. The *almas* squinted at her. Her sketch is attached.

4) Liza, 13 years old, daughter of Gomba from the brigade no. 2 of the Nogon-nur somon, Bayan-Olgish aimaq, attached her sketch.

5) Tovsh, aged 14, daughter of Sese from brigade no. 2 of Nogon-nur somon, also attached her sketch.

6) Nyam, 12 years old, daughter of Chochna of brigade no. 2 of Nogon-nur somon of the Bayan-Olgii aimaq, likewise

attached her sketch.

7) Dulamzhab, aged 9, daughter of Erhbilega from the brigade no. 2 of the above somon, attached her sketch.

8) Togtong, 21 years old, from the town of Olgii, the aimaq center, reported in great detail.

9) Khobilkhan, aged 14, son of Jalbai of the brigade no. 2 of Nogon-nur somon of the Bayan-Olgii aimaq [reported].

Attached [originally, *J.B.*] are photographs of places where traces were found. The pictures were taken by the head of the aimaq. There are detailed descriptions of the measurements, according to the author, of fresh tracks.

[Following were given the names and locations of seven more persons aged 6 to 30 years, one a veterinarian, who reported sightings in 1964; most originally provided sketches or drawings of the creatures. *J.B.*]

CHAPTER IV.

THE FOURTH EXPEDITION IN SEARCH OF A "SNOWMAN" TO THE MOGOLIAN ALTAI, FROM SEPT. 14 TO FEB. 18, 1965, 65 DAYS IN ALL

Kobdo aimaq, Bulgan somon

Concerning this mountain-Gobi region, many legends about the snowman are associated with the Mongolian Altai. There are names of the mountains that are derived from the creature, for example "Red Mountain *Almas*". There are many caves in the region.

The author tells of one anxious night spent in one of the gorges. Late in the evening, when people were preparing to bed down, there was a terrible cry, like the rumbling of a beast - from time to time, it could be taken for a mournful, bitter sob. An incomprehensible "crying" then came closer, then calmed down, as if whatever responsible was going away. This humanlike "cry" only subsided around morning. But in the vicinity no traces of

people or animals were found. The author writes that the night of the incident is still mysterious.

Stories of informants

The author emphasized that he chose these persons on the advice of the local authorities, namely people honored and respected.

1) Luvsan, the shepherd of the brigade no. 4 of somon Bulgan, a member of the MPRP, the hero of the labor of the MPR, relates: "Even in childhood, I heard the stories of old men about the *almas*. I myself did not see him, so it is hard to say how true this is. Since people talk about it, they cannot be lying, of course, there is some kind of animal. People say that the skin of a 'snowman' does not tan in the sun, it's very tough."

2) X. Dash, a member of a field brigade, member of the MPRP, a deputy of the Great People's Hural of the MPR, says that according to the stories of people, it can be assumed that an animal resembling a human being has long been found in our area. If one organizes a good search, you can get results.

3) Choyrog, 60, shepherd of brigade no. 4, and a member of the MPRP, says: I think that there is a snowman. It is true. I have seen a similar creature myself. Also, there is a thing I heard. First, I will tell you how it was.

"Twenty years ago, in the area of Hoh Uzuur, I was walking alone. It was warm, and the sun was setting. Suddenly I heard someone talking, and I was surprised to see two frolicking little children. Where could [these] children [have] come from? Nobody lives nearby in these places. I began to listen. At first, it seemed that the children were in white shirts, but it turned out to be their breasts [probably chests intended, *J.B.*]. The buttocks were grayish. They were generally naked. The body had a brownish color. They were more hairy than ordinary children.

I observed this at a distance of 50-60 meters. The children were about 4-5 years old.

These two 'kids' quickly ran away from me. I somehow felt uneasy. I began to look for nearby dwellings, but there was nothing anywhere around. Thoughts of ghosts came to mind. I did not tell anyone what I saw, back then. Now I think that these were, perhaps, the children of the 'Bigfoot' - *almas*."

An informant tells about one interesting case that occurred in 1925, in Xinjiang, China. A young Khan (prince), 15 years old, and the Torgut in Khar Shary, Xinjiang, served as an orderly [to a] handsome and intelligent young man of about 20 years named Purve. Suddenly, one day this young man disappeared without a trace. After a long search, about a month later, they said that he was found unconscious in a mountain cave.

The informant reports that at that time he was in these places at the Torgut as an accompanying lama, and was interested in what happened to Purve. He seemed very much changed. There was nothing left of the formerly intelligent man. Nevertheless, he managed to get information from him. One evening, Purve, after putting the young prince to sleep, went out into the street. In the darkness suddenly appeared the figure of a tall, large, human-like subject, who wordlessly and with one blow knocked Purve down. After that, he could not come to his senses for a long time – his head was clouded. It seemed that someone carried him far away. Then it was as if he was in a cave... he remembered nothing more. "From this we can conclude that in these parts there must truly be a man-animal, *almas*," Choyrog finished his story.

4) Bavlay, shepherd of the brigade no. 3 of the Bulgan somon: "In 1956-57, in the spring in the Bai Chumuun area (south of the Red Mountain of Almas) I was looking, with a camel, for another, lost camel. In these places, jumps [meaning unclear, *J.B.*] were usually performed. In one of the hollows, I saw some creatures that looked like camels through binoculars, so I headed in that direction. But when I got close I saw that these were not

camels at all, but very scary, unusual people. They wore no clothes, and their bodies were hairy. Very unpleasant creatures. I was very frightened and quickly turned my horse around. One of them was fat, with gray hair. The other one, sitting down, looked like a woman. The fat one seemed to go sit down. I was so scared that I do not remember anything else. Suddenly [I came to my senses] on the bank of the Bulgan river. Because of this experience, I lay sick for a whole year."

From these brief interviews, it is clear that there is a reason for such stories in these places. By decision of the Executive Committee of the Kobdo aimaq dated September 17, 1965, no. 2/2348 and by the decision of the Bulgan somon Executive Committee dated October 12, 1965, a permanent commission, consisting of three people, was established to collect materials about the "snowman." The representative of the commission was [the] elected head teacher of the secondary school, T. Yadamsuren. The creation of this commission immediately interested the local people. They began to come to the commission with various kinds of reports from the field.

5) For example, the duty officer of the quarantine fasting against FMD [meaning unclear, J.B.] in Bulgan somon, comrade D. Bataa, said: "On January 29, 1965, I was alone at the Alag-Tolgoyt fasting station in the evening. After dinner, I left the tent for a smoke. Just at that time the horse tethered nearby snorted, apparently afraid. Suddenly a very strange creature appeared before me, unlike a dog or any other animal. It seemed to have a head, but neither eyes nor a mouth was visible. But there was something red on the face, a tongue sticking out. I threw a stone at him, and he instantly disappeared. When I came to my senses, everyone was in a sweat. In the morning I wanted to look for traces of the creature, but I didn't find anything."

6) The message received from citizen G. Shileg, member of the brigade no. 1 of somon

Bulgan, goes as follows. A group of brigade workers was traveling by car on February 22. On the way, they noticed a very strange trail. At first, one might have thought that a barefoot person had passed here. But who would go barefoot in the winter in snow? They became very interested, and all got out of the car and examined the tracks closely. It turned out that they were a little different from human footprints, but at the same time very similar. In the front [of the foot], the tracks seemed to be enveloped [possibly meaning the toes were webbed, J.B.]. Since the stride length was about one meter, it could be concluded that the animal was bipedal. About ten of the tracks were very clear [a picture was originally attached].

7) A statement received in the name of the President of the Academy of Sciences of the MPR, Academician B. Shirendyb, dated October 4, 1965, from A. Choyjoo, a member of the brigade no. 4 of the Bulgan somon of the Kobod aimaq: "On June 26, 1953, at about 10 in the morning, I saw at the foot of Mount Bayan the corpse of some creature, an animal very similar to man. Since the corpse had lain there a long time, half of it was buried; the half above the surface was hairy, with a yellow tinge. The body was not human, yet it was human-like. Nine years later (1962), after repeated searches, I came to the place where the corpse had been. In 1963, the skull [Fig. 4-8] and hair of that creature were sent, with a scientist, were sent to the Academy of Sciences of the MPR. Usually, no one buries people in the place where the corpse lay. The skull was not human." Signed by Choyjoo. Collected by a member of the Damsuren Commission. Bayan-Ulgii.

The author spent about a month on an expedition in the Nogon-nur, Bugat, Algan, Tsogu, Tolbo, and Buyant (Bayan-Ulgii Kazakh aimaq, MPR). Stories of informants:

1) Shikibas, a member of the brigade no. 4 of the Bugat somon: "It was at the beginning of November, 1964. I, along with my daughter

Khirmzy, 19 years old, my son Sandalkhan, 15, and my neighbor boy, J. Huangbai, 8, were collecting firewood. Duanby suddenly ran up with a shout: 'There's a terrible animal there!' All three children went in that direction and saw in a grove, on an island in the Kobdo River, a furry creature similar to a man lying there. Sensing the approach of people, it quickly jumped over one of the branches of the river, stopped, and stood on the other side. The children came back, and the adults (Kenzelib, 70, Aymen, 59, A. Kuliken, 25, and I) decided to check him out. 'Where is this animal?' We said, 'There he is!' The children all shouted together. And we saw on the other side of the river, standing in a grove, a creature that looked like a man. But he was poorly visible, as it was about 5 o'clock. Then where the human-like creature stood, I saw tracks similar to those of a barefoot person. After that, we heard many times that this creature repeatedly appeared in the vicinity. They said it was a human animal. That creature was more like a human being than any known animal. The skin was grayish-yellow."

2) Kuliken: "At the beginning of November last year, having heard reports of an incomprehensible creature, I joined the group of people who wanted to look for it. I managed to see a strange creature running across the river. The distance between it and us was about 70-80 meters. His skin was grayish-yellow; the height was average. It seemed to emit some kind of birdlike cry. We watched it for 20-30 minutes. It was about 6 o'clock."

3) T. Khirmzy: "In November 1964, my brother Sandalkhan and a boy of about 8, Juanbay, sought firewood. It was then that they saw, on an island not far from us, some animal lying in the bushes. Huangbai said it was very scary. When I replied that this was probably a ram, Huangbai began to shout that it was not a ram. In the meantime, the creature rose and started to flee. The animal was light

gray in color, approximately, [according to] Zhamikhan, 12 years old. The unknown creature fled with its arms folded across its chest. The feet were like a human's feet. There was no tail. The head was bright (sic), and big. It ran and jumped over the water, like a man would. I, having run some distance, stopped and began to look around. We first saw it from a distance of about 20 meters. It twice made some kind of sound, like a crow's cry."

4) Huangbai, a boy of 8 years old, repeats the story of Khirmzy.

5) T. Zhanat, driver of the agricultural association "Partisan" of the somon Nogon-nur somon, reports: "On November 28, 1964, I went to Ulgii with a load of wood. With me was the chairman of the association, comrade Magir. The time was late evening. At about 10 *p.m.* Magir thought someone had shouted. I stopped the car, opened the door, then heard an unusual, sort of inhuman cry. Then I saw this human-like creature coming out of the forest. The moon was shining and everything was clearly visible. At first, one could think that this was a stooped over, dark-black man. But it turned out that this was not a man at all, but some kind of human-like animal. I quickly stepped on the gas. This animal made a terrible inhuman sound, like 'google-goog'."

6) Chairman Magir says: "I really rode in a car on November 28, 1964, on official business to Ulgii. In the Tavaltaï area, opening the car window, I heard someone screaming and asked the driver to stop. The driver, opening the car door and hearing a scream, said: 'Someone is coming.' I was smoking at the time. But suddenly the driver abruptly shut the door and quickly accelerated the car. 'What happened to you?' I said, all my tobacco scattered. 'Where is this person?' 'This isn't a man at all!' The driver said, and increased his speed. 'How is this not a man?' I replied. 'Some kind of human-like animal ran at us. If this is a man, then he is crazy. Who would walk naked in this cold? We've got to get away from him.'

So we reached the town of Ulgii without stopping. I only heard the sound made by the creature. It was sort of manlike, but kind of scary and unusual."

The author emphasizes that everything seen and heard by informants is centered on the same territory during one winter [originally attached was a photo of the area where they saw a "Snowman"].

7) R. Saviygaazh, chauffeur of the carpool no. 21 reported: "It was at the end of February 1965. I was driving from the city of Ulgii [towards the Hotgor mine. It was about 21 hours. Two women and my assistant intern traveled with me. Suddenly a human-like animal jumped out into the road and headed straight for us. His body was hairy and his head was big. He ran on two legs with his arms hanging towards us. A very scary creature! Thinking it might climb onto the car, I picked up speed. After a while, I looked back. It ran after us at a distance of 4-5 km (sic)."

8) Z. Urtnasin, a member of the brigade no. 2 of the Nogon-nur somon, said that one of the women riding in the car confirmed the chauffeur's story: "In the area approximately opposite Uataan Tunes, at the Kobdo river, I really saw a 'man' walking toward Bakhlata. 'Like [having] a white scarf tied around your neck?' I said to my neighboring passenger. But she replied that it was probably just a rock (she had no time to observe, as she was carrying a sick child). The driver, Saviygaazh, seeing him, said: 'Yes, this is a man on foot. His hands hang a little in front and he's coming straight at us.' The driver opened the car door, then abruptly closed it again, so hard that the handle came off, then quickly stepped on the accelerator. 'He's running for us', the driver said. I first saw this animal from a distance of about 30 m. It was as if the distance between its legs was great, the legs were bowed. It was of average height, with a big head and hairy body. Surely, this is not a man."

9) Elubay Soltakbek, shepherd of the brigade no. 2 of the somon Algan Tsogu: "It was before sunset on May 23, 1965. Having herded my sheep to the salt marsh, I climbed a hill in the Alag Uzuur area. Suddenly, my horse began to snort, and turned in fear towards the north. There I saw a 'man' at a great distance. When I looked through binoculars, I realized that it was not a human being it seemed, but some extraordinary animal. It walked on two legs, very smoothly, and kept its hands on its chest. The neck was thick and the head big. It was slightly stooped, no clothes, light brownish in color. It seemed like the head was moving all the time. In profile, it was clear that there was something white on the head. I shouted once, but the animal paid no attention. Soon it disappeared from sight, turning and going over the mountain. The picture [once attached] shows a large place where the animal was walking. It was neither an animal nor a man, but some kind of human-like creature."

Taking into account this kind of information, on November 15, 1965, the aimaq Executive Committee (Administration) of Bayan-Ulgii decided to establish a commission on this issue. Comrade Ayatkhaan, head of the military department of the aimaq committee, was tasked with leading this effort.

[The author, in his brief conclusions, advocates the need for further searches for the "Snowman" in the places reported by the informants.]

[In chapters 5 and 6, the author brought together compilations of literary materials about the "snowman". The reports provided by travelers, starting with Plano Karpini, Johann Schiltberger, Przhevalsky, etc., is given in the book by M.K. Rosenfeld.]

AFTERWORD

The book by Zhugdariyn Damdin makes a deep impression on the reader who is familiar with the history of the search for the "Snowman". In fact, which of the well-known organized or amateur expeditions can present as their achievement the discovery of the skull of an unknown hominid? We still only know of one other case: Igor Burtsev excavated the skull of an alleged descendant of the Caucasian hominid Zana. The selfless devotion of the author of this book to his idea, and the awareness of its importance to science, is admirable. The results of his expeditions, still almost unknown and underestimated, are still waiting for their acknowledgement.

The fate of this book is interesting and mysterious. The history of its creation is clear from the letter from Zugdariyn Damdin to Prof. B.F. Porshnev, who received the manuscript, apparently in Mongolian, in 1967. And then there are numerous questions, and above all:

-How did B.F. Porshnev respond to the manuscript? Did he attempt to make a translation and publish it [in the USSR] as requested by the author?

I turned with these questions to veterans of relict hominoid research who worked with Prof. Porshnev directly:

M.J. Koffmann: "For me, the news of the existence of this book is new and surprising. For decades, Boris Fedorovich and I have maintained friendly and professional contact. When I was not on an expedition, we called each other almost daily. He never told me about [this manuscript], and I can't now explain why."

I. Burtsev: "I was assisting Boris Fedorovich in his work. Especially I arranged to translate for him some letters to foreign correspondents as I had contacts with many interpreters. But we never mentioned the

subject of this book. I saw the manuscript after the death of Porshnev (I don't remember from whom I received it) and even used some of the pictures from it (the posture of a sleeping hominid, the general outlook of a creature, its face smiling) in my publications. I tried to translate the excerpts from it with the help of interpreters to whom I had contacts while being a teacher of some foreign students including Mongolian ones. Then I passed it on to either Eveline Zeligman, or Maya Bykova on their request."

Dmitri Bayanov: "I know that such a book existed, but I didn't work with it."

Alexandra Burtseva: "I didn't have this manuscript."

Eveline Zeligman and Maya Bykova are both deceased. Whether the original manuscript has been preserved and where it might be, I could not determine.

In essence, what is presented above to the reader is the translation-extended abstract of the book of Z. Damdin. Moreover, in order to expedite this summary, in a number of cases important details of the appearance and behavior of hominids, not to mention drawings and photographs, have been omitted. So it remains unknown who ordered this work to the translator N. Munkuyev and when it was done. It's also unknown to me whether Munkuyev was one of the hominid researchers at that time who knew the Mongolian language, or whether he was a professional translator. [Likely not a researcher, just a professional translator, as I can judge on the terms he used. – *I. Burtsev*]. Was this translation known to Porshnev and did he ignore it, or was it done after his death? [I suppose Porshnev was not much well in last five years of his life and was busy with writing his big book "On the Beginning of the Human History" that is why he could not pay much attention to this subject. – *I. Burtsev*].

The last question is especially important, because we know from the story "In Defense of the Troglodytes," how actively Porshnev

was looking for material objects associated with the creatures, for example, mummified hands allegedly in the possession of a central Asian family. And there was a speech about the skull in Mongolia, a friendly country where it would not be difficult for him to go.

In recent years, I have been trying to find by correspondence where this skull may be. The son of Prof. Rinchen, the paleontologist Academician Barsbold Rinchen told me in a letter that he had heard from his father that this skull had been sent to Poland. The skull's fate is unknown to him. M.-J. Koffmann indirectly confirmed this story, saying that Prof. Rinchen often went to Poland for rest and medical treatment, and had scientific colleagues and friends there. Perhaps the skull is still there, as part of a collection. The fate of the dead hominid hair found is completely unclear. [The skull was studied by Wenczislav Plawinskiy in Poland. Afterward sent back to Rinchen through the Soviet Union. It was underway some five years, and finally reached

Mongolia fully destroyed into small pieces. In fact, it was altogether lost. – *I. Burtsev*]

However, whatever happened afterwards with the findings of the expeditions does not detract in the least from the merits of Zugdariyn Damdin himself, who not only obtained brilliant expeditionary results, but also wrote a book about his travels. Unfortunately, it did not find its way to either the scientific or the wider community. It was not published in the USSR, and my internet searches did not show that it was ever published in Mongolia, either.

This abridged translation of the book is intended to fill this gap to some extent. At the same time, I have tried to minimize editorial changes so that the reader could feel the author's special style of speech, as conveyed by the translator.

Michael Trachtengerts
January 2007

APPENDIX

Some abbreviations used:

MPR - Mongolian People's Republic

MPRP - Mongolian People's Revolutionary (Communist) Party

Some definitions:

Aimac - an administrative subdivision of Mongolia, roughly equivalent to a province

Somon - a further administrative subdivision of an aimac, roughly "district"

Bag - a still smaller division

Argali - a large wild sheep, somewhat like the North American Bighorn, but larger

Saxaul - a kind of small tree or bush of arid areas of central Asia

Ger - a round, felt-covered, portable dwelling; a yurt



Figure 1. Zhugdariyn Damdin.



Figure 2. The sleeping posture of the *almas*, as described by eyewitness.



Figure 3. Appearance of the *almas* based on eyewitness description.

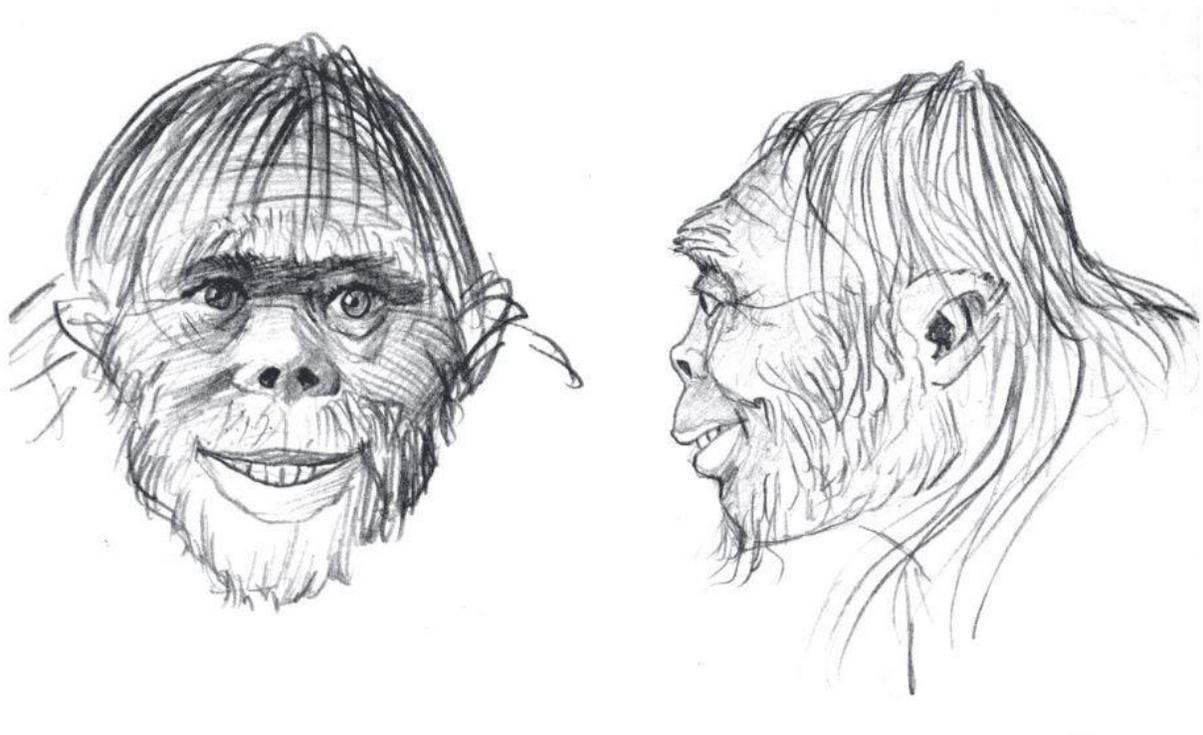


Figure 4. Details of the head of the *almas*, based on eyewitness descriptions.



Figure 5. The skull found northeast of Mount Almasyn Ulan, attributed to the *almas*.



Figure 6. Forensic reconstruction of the face of the *almas* (by Wencislaw Plawinskiy).



Figure 7. Professor Wencislav Plawinskiy (Poland) with his reconstruction of the *almas*.



Figure 8. Detail of Professor W. Plawinskiy's reconstruction of the *almas*.