

THE BURYAT OF RUSSIA

“Do you want to go in and pay homage to the Khambo Lama Dashi-Dorzho Itigilov?” asked Balzhinima to his girlfriend Ulagan. The two **Buryat** young adults were among the crowds observing the Birthday of the Lord Buddha at the Ivolginsky Datsan temple. Ulagan shook her head, answering: “No, I’d rather not. It’s rather macabre paying homage to the exhumed body of the Khambo Lama. Though I must say it’s a miracle that the body has been preserved without embalming. When did the Lama die?” “In 1927,” answered Balzhinima. “They exhumed the body in 2002. The body is in a glass case now and exhibited twice a year to the public.” Ulagan shuddered. “It sounds rather morbid. You go ahead. I’ll sit outside the temple and wait.”

The **Buryat** (population: 453,000) live in northeast Russia’s Siberian region. Closely related to the Mongols, the **Buryat** came under Russian rule during the 17th century A.D. Repressive Soviet communist rule resulted in a **Buryat** rebellion in 1929 which was brutally suppressed at the cost of thousands of **Buryat** lives. In 1937, the **Buryat** suffered another blow when thousands of their political leaders, intellectuals and religious leaders were executed by orders of the Soviet dictator Josef Stalin. The fall of communism in 1991 has resulted in improved conditions for the **Buryat**, who have reclaimed their cultural identity.

Vajrayana Tibetan Buddhism remains influential among the **Buryat** today. A large number are non-religious as a result of former communist rule while some practice folk beliefs centred round spirit-worship. The few Christians (14.0%) are mostly from the traditional Russian Orthodox Church.

- Pray for a people movement to Christ among the **Buryat**. Pray that the strongholds of Buddhism, shamanism, the occult and unbelief may be broken.
- Pray for missionaries working among the **Buryat**. Pray that their ministries may be used by God to address both social and spiritual issues.
- Pray for the **Buryat** Christians, that there may be an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that will revive those bound in traditions and nominalism. Pray that believers may actively share their faith with the people in their community.

This is a series of useful prayer profile compilations to pray for people groups collated from various online sources. Please click on the links below for more info:

<https://joshuaproject.net/>, <http://www.globalprayerdigest.org/>,
<http://asiaharvest.org/people-group-profiles/>