



Altai Trek 2010

Drama: this trip was full of it from beginning to end. The endings were mostly happy, even for the thief now sitting in jail for stealing my backpack: he got a great pair of hiking boots, because when he returned most of my stuff (too late for the trek), he hung onto the boots, claiming that he had worn them so hard that they were not worth returning. I was able to borrow boots (OUCH!) and a backpack, and did without my usual stuff, so my pack was a bit lighter. Fortunately my rain jacket, sleeping bag, and tent were not among the missing.

But the drama began even before that: This spring, I met Kewaunee Lapsertis, who is a friend of the elusive “big-foot,” “sasquatch,” or “yeti” people, who are much more populous than I had ever guessed. They come in different shapes and sizes around the world, generally communicate telepathically, and exist interdimensionally – so they can act upon physical matter, but they can also walk through walls, for example. They are quite aware of the current crisis on Earth, and are working on ways to help humanity get through the coming changes.

Kewaunee suggested that I meet with the Almas “big-foot” people in Altai, and this idea felt very positive to me. Through his “big-foot” contacts, he found a female willing to meet with me near Lake Kucherla, in the next valley west of Mt. Belukha. He marked on my map the place where I should camp for as long as possible, to allow the Almas female to become accustomed to me. I had time to spend a week there.



It has been an unusually wet summer in Altai, which is saying a lot. I hired a horseman to take me in to Lake Kucherla—a strenuous one-day ride. Not only did we spend the day riding in a downpour, but the bridge was under water when we arrived at the lake. The boat from the tourist camp there ferried me across. But the place that Kewaunee had designated was inaccessible with steep rock-falls and no trail, so I camped in the nearest flat spot and hoped for the best. I got a strong telepathic message on the

first day that the Almas female would come to me. Apparently she did. In the middle of the night I heard a couple of snorts that I have since learned are their signature way of informing people of their presence. It was too dark to see anything though, so I set aside my expectations, trusting the process. I hoped for more contacts that didn’t come.



So, after a blissful week of solitude mixed with a bit of socializing with other trekkers, I solo-backpacked over 10,000-foot Karatyurek Pass to Lake Akkem at the base of Mt. Belukha – my usual haunt because of the powerful energy vortex there. For me, with a backpack, it’s a three-day trek. Setting off again in a downpour, I was delighted that the rain stopped just as I reached the tree-line on a beautiful ridge where there was a flat spot for my tent.

I had been warned about bears in the Kucherla area, and just in case, I had sung all day as I trekked, so as not to surprise the bears whose presence I seemed to be able to sense—apparently an Altai expansion of my cognitive senses. But I wasn’t thinking about bears as I cooked and ate my dinner: I was appreciating the sun setting on the ring of glacier-covered mountains around me. Just as I finished, the rain started again, so I climbed in my tent and went to sleep. I awoke after dark to hear night

birds calling from different directions, followed almost as rhythmically by loud sniffing and an occasional grunt: BEARS!

Oh, I must be mistaken, I thought. But if not, I’m a sitting duck, with my food inside my tent, and no trees nearby that are big enough for hanging my food even if I’d thought of it. Fortunately, my body did not respond with an adrenaline surge of fear, because neither fight nor flight were possible, and the bears would certainly have been able to smell the fear. Instead, feeling grateful for my wonderful life, I surrendered to the idea of being bear dinner if that was in store for me,

and peacefully went back to sleep. Once during the night, I awoke and still heard the bears nearby. Interestingly, I sensed that there was a large cat in the area also, and that the bears' presence protected me. I have had bears as dream-guides on occasion, so I greeted the bears telepathically and asked them to be my guardians. Later, when I told the tale, a couple of different hunters mentioned lynxes as a much bigger danger than bears, so my intuition seems to have been correct.

In the morning, the bears' tracks were clear in the mud. Two bears had arrived at my ridge coming from the opposite direction of my travel. I suspect that they were sniffing because they were trying to decide whether my almonds, instant pea soup, minute rice, and freeze-dried veggies were really food. So I credit my diet, and maybe a week without a shower, for keeping me safe.

I was SO grateful for the next two days of perfect hiking weather and dry trails. Karatyurek Pass is always a stretch for me, because it ends with a steep 3,000-foot descent.



My legs are noodles when I finish, and this time my feet were also hash because of the borrowed boots. Nonetheless, early the next morning, I crossed Lake Akkem to continue my effort to connect with the "bigfoot" people. There is a hermit's hut about an hour's walk up a side valley, and Kewaunee thought he would have information for me.

I stopped at a campsite to ask if they knew whether the hermit was there. No, he wasn't, and then the rain started again, so with nothing to lose, I invited myself to their camp and told them my quest. To my surprise, one woman told me that there were giant "snow-people" in the immediate vicinity. She herself had heard them walking, and a friend who had just left the lake had photographed giant footprints and reported that the creatures were 14 feet tall. I'll try to get the photo by e-mail, of course, but I also decided to camp a little further up that valley where the footprints had been found and stay a couple extra days.

I dashed back, collected my camp, and stopped off for much-needed scheduled banya before heading up the valley. When I undressed to bathe, I was shocked to discover that I had picked up a passenger coming across Karatyurek Pass – an encephalitis-carrying deer tick. Bummer! In 12 years hiking there, this was a first. I needed immediate medical treatment to ward off infection, but Lake Akkem is three days from "civilization." Fortunately, there is a mountain rescue station at Lake Akkem, from which Mt. Belukha climbers are regularly evacuated by helicopter. This time, they evacuated ME. The giant "big-foot" people would have to wait. SUCH a disappointment!



Usually, the trek out from Lake Akkem is the high point of my year, even with badly-fitting boots, because I have repeatedly experienced it as a profound rebirth. The helicopter ride was the spiritual equivalent of a C-section: using complex technology, I was plucked out of the womb of Nature, and within minutes was sitting in a sterile hospital room.

Once I was treated, I went again into the nearby forest for one last fruitless attempt to connect with the "big-foot" people. A night camped by an exquisite teal-green lake was worth three more days of trekking in the rain, though.

And when I returned to Ust Koksa, I was able to gratefully collect most of my camping gear from the police, and bravely re-entered civilization refreshed from my time in the wilds.

Why is it that I suspect there will be more to this story?

