

Altai throat-singing sponsorship program

*We can now rejuvenate ancient sacred human technologies
for the welfare of all humanity.*

Context

We are at a moment in history with the potential for great healing of ourselves and the whole planet. The long-suppressed indigenous cultures of the world are gathering strength again. Out of their unbroken ancestral lineages they now are bringing forth human technologies that humanity needs to re-orient ourselves toward sustainability. However, to bring these forth, they must, in the face of continued pressure, re-gather the cultural critical mass that enables these technologies to flourish.

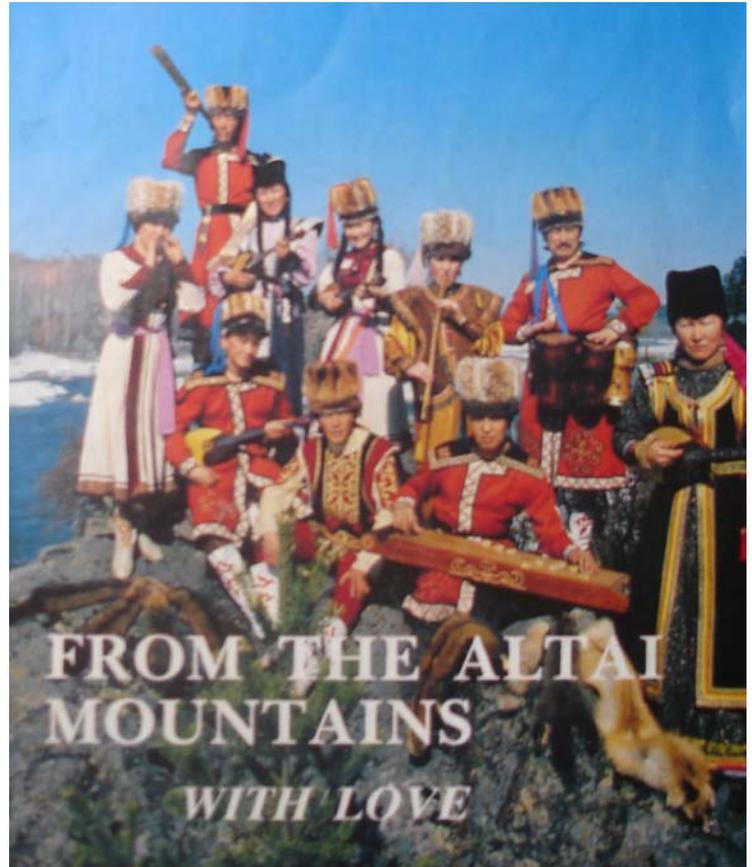
Altai is one of very few places on the planet where the sacred lineages are intact. The Altai people hold a crucially important strand of human heritage that they understand must be shared with the world. And we, the beneficiaries, must help them become strong.

Svetlana Katynova, the farsighted leader who organized our land registration campaign, has now turned her attention to systemic rebuilding of Altai's cultural vigor. She

conceived a program that will not only sponsor talented and promising young Altai throat-singers, but also establish healing/cultural centers out of which they can deliver their gifts to their indigenous communities as well as all comers. But first, they need to finish the schooling that will prepare them for this work. And for that, these heritage-rich, cash-poor students need our help.

Svetlana explains that the young musicians she proposes to sponsor are not simply individually talented. Rather, they carry forth what the Altai people call *khan* (pronounced *han*), which is the genetic spiritual gift of their people to commune directly with the Spiritual Source – their unbroken sacred lineage. The manifestation of *khan* through an individual as a shamanic gift is called *kan*, and as a throat-singing gift is called *kai*. A master throat-singer is called a *kaichi*.

Throat-singing is much more than music or oral history. The songs of throat-singers with *kai* are not memorized, but rather directly accessed. And they transmit not only the words, but also a coherent sonar energy field that can enable listeners to “see” the stories unfold as images in their minds. The most important result is not that the Altai people “know” their history in the Western sense, but that they are energetically aligned with what they are as a people. Throat-singers sing wholeness/health into their people/culture and simultaneously into their land (of which they consider themselves to be an integral part.



I (Carol Hiltner) have come to understand that this core sense of being *one* with a living Mother Earth, which is globally shared among indigenous peoples, is the vital awareness through which our planetary environment can be healed. The Altai Mountains are well recognized as the “cradle” of indigenous peoples worldwide, and the continuing source of cosmic/planetary life force to this day.

During Stalinist times especially, such powerful cultural practices were forbidden, as were indigenous languages (an essential basis of culturally integrated worldview). However, the ruggedness and remoteness (as well as the powerful spiritual energy field) of the Altai

Mountains enabled protection of the cultural essence, which is now re-emerging, and the Western world must foster if we wish for planetary harmony. This fostering global healing using the coherent energy field in the Altai Mountains is the essential work of Altai Mir University.

To this end, both Svetlana and Danil Mamyev have developed comprehensive plans for the revitalization of their culture at the source, and then out of that, the revitalization of humanity through sharing the extraordinary gifts for which their people are stewards.

- The first objective was to secure the most sacred lands under new Russian laws. With the assistance of citizens and organizations around the world, this phase is nearing completion, with the self-organization of Altai land collectives and legal registration of traditional farming/grazing lands in two major sacred areas that are under high tourism pressure (the Karakol Valley and the lands near Mt. Belukha), and well as on-going efforts to put some conservational “teeth” into the protection of Altai’s five UNESCO World Heritage Sites.
- The second (current) objective is to re-establish an economically sustainable Altai culture, strengthening and sustaining the new land collectives through the re-deployment of traditional technologies and collective enterprises for internal use as well as export, such as medicinal herbs, pure honey production, healthy organic foods, useful/beautiful handicrafts. Development/production of music, art, and dance are essential, because they support the *process* of spiritual and physical health in indigenous communities.
- The third (somewhat concurrent) objective of these plans is to export the integrated *means* for healthy, sustainable living into mainstream global culture.

Throat-singing sponsorship

Mentoring the up-coming generation is crucial to achieving the above-listed objectives. Various intra-cultural processes are already underway to discover the special gifts of each young person so that his/her gifts can be fostered for the greater good.

The young throat-singers for whom sponsorship has been requested have been discovered and developed through this system as being the most gifted, serious, *and* capable. As they complete their educations, they anticipate stepping into the essential cultural roles that best utilize their gifts and training. While they are studying, others are creating the “sanctuaries” (physically building the healing centers) that will enable optimal performance of their finely developed abilities for the well being of the community. Thus, when the training is complete, sustainable livelihood using this training will be a reality.

Most of the current group are just at the beginning of 4-year programs, but the students will work during summer breaks, and are expected to be self-supporting after 2 years, so we are looking for 2-year, 9 or 10 month sponsorships at 1000 rubles/month (which is about \$35-40/month). We expect that up-coming talent will also benefit from this program in future years.

Students



Tatuna Nikolaevna Pashtakova is now 20 years old. She completed public school in Gorno-Altai, Altai Republic, in 2007, and now studies in the Eastern Studies department at Buryat State University (near Lake Baikal), in the field of language, music, and cultural traditions of the Mongolian people (which loosely includes Altai people). Tatuna takes a great interest in Altai and Mongolian national songs, plays music on indigenous instruments, and studies the common sources of Altai and Mongolian cultures. She writes verses and stories in her native Altai language.



The **domra** is a 3- or 4-stringed strummed instrument



Alan Amyrovich Samoev is now 20 years old, born in Gorno-Altai. He has finished Altai Republic College of Culture and Art in the Department of Indigenous Instruments, specializing on the *domra*. During the second year, he began to work in the Altai Republic State Orchestra. He is currently studying at Khakasia State University in the Katanova Institute of Arts in the Department of Indigenous Artists, specializing in Khakasian national instruments. (The Republic of Khakasia is directly to the east of Altai.) He participates in musical educational program «Sonorous Strings of Altai» under direction of Svetlana Katynova.

Competitions:

- Students' spring, 2008, 1st place
- Students' spring, 2009, 2nd place
- International students' competition «Silver strings», 1st place
- International competition «Kurultai storytellers», 3rd place



Artyom Yurevich Terengin is now 24, and was born in the Onguday Region of Altai Republic. He has finished Altai Republic College of Culture and Art in the Department of Indigenous Instruments, specializing on the *domra*. During the second year, he began to work in the Altai Republic State Orchestra. He is currently studying at Khakasia State University in the Katanova Institute of Arts in the Department of Indigenous Artists, specializing in Russian national instruments. (The Republic of Khakasia is directly to the east of Altai.) He participates in musical educational program «Sonorous Strings of Altai» under direction of Svetlana Katynova.

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The **topshur** is a 2-stringed instrument, strummed or bowed, that usually accompanies throat-singers



Madiy Albertovich Kalkin is now 18 years old and was born in the Ust-Kan region of Altai Republic. He finished Yabogan High School in 2007. In 2009 he started the Altai Republic College of Culture and Art in the Indigenous Instruments Department. Madiy is an hereditary *kaichi*: the grandson of the legendary Altai throat-singer Alexey Grigorevich Kalkin. In 2009 he won 1st place in the “under 21 years” division of international competition “Kurultai” storytellers. He is keen about the texts of heroic epics,



The khomus is also known as a “Jew’s harp.” It is placed between the teeth and plucked, making a buzzing sound.

and executing them by throat-singing and accompanying himself on the traditional indigenous instruments, the *topshur* and *khomus*. Since 2002, Madiy has worked in the museum that honors his grandfather A.G. Kalkin.



Olesya Mihailovna Samoeva is now 20 years old, born in the Kosh Agach region of Altai Republic. She has completed the Polytechnical College in Gorno-Altaiisk in the Jurisprudence Department. Now she studies at Khakasia State University in the Katanova Institute of Arts in the Departments of Socio-Cultural Activities and Indigenous Artists, specializing in Khakasian national instruments. She chose this direction because she is interested in Altai indigenous instruments and wants to learn to play them, particularly to perform on the *yagadan*, which is one of the most ancient instruments of the

Altai Mountains. She participates in the musical educational program «Sonorous Strings of Altai» under direction of Svetlana Katynova.



The yagadan is a harpsichord-like instrument that is plucked or strummed.



Tolunay Alexandrovna Katynova is now 20, and was born in Gorno-Altaiisk. She finished Gorno-Altaiisk Musical School #1 in 2005, specializing in piano. The chorus is which she sang for 7 years usually took 1st place in competitions. She also plays the *khomus* and *topshur*. She sings and composes original Altai songs and piano pieces.

Competitions:

Students’ competition for musical compositions, 2004, 2nd place
Biysk Musical College competition for musical compositions, 2005, 3rd place.
Tolunay now studies at Novosibirsk State University of Economics and Management in the Anti-Crisis Management Department. She plans to continue composing songs for herself or for others singers, and hopes to go

to musical college when she finishes the university. Tolunay will be the organizer/administrator of the healing center that is planned for Tyungur.