

Almasty Anecdotes

There are probably just as many sightings, if not more, of the Russian snowman (almasty, alma) as there are of sasquatch. That there are no photographs or videos of the being is a bit of a concern, but probably more justification in Russian than in North America. In Arthur C. Clark's *Mysterious World*, Volume 6, there are two short segments on the unusual being. One covers an encounter and the other a summary by Dr. Myra Shackley.

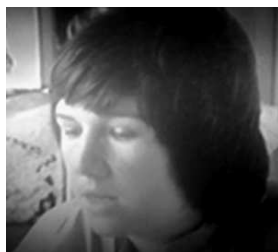
The images shown on the right are an artist's impression of an almasty based on an eyewitness account collected by Dr. Marie-Jeanne Koffmann. They are from Dmitri Bayanov's book, *In the Footsteps of the Russian Snowman*, (Crypto-Logos, Moscow, Russia, 1996).

The encounter was experienced by Victor Usechek, seen here, who escaped from a Russian prison camp in 1941 and made his way through Mongolia. It appears he was on foot and apparently came quite close to the being. Here is exactly what he said:



For a moment I was very terrified, and at the same time excited. He was very broad, he's got no hair on his face, he's got wide mouth, he's a Mongol - Mongolian, an Eskimo type; very broad white teeth, his look is...you never see anything look like that, this is stone age man.

Dr. Myra Shackley, seen here, who is world renown, went on an expedition to the Gobi Desert in 1979 and did research in the Alti Mountains. Here is what she said about almas:



I got a picture [impression] of almost unanimous agreement that strange wild people were living in the high mountain areas. The Mongols say that they're children in appearance, but their speech isn't the same as the Mongols speech. There's been no attempt at direct communication, although they trade by putting a parcel of skins on the ground, then retreating, and then coming back later to collect what's been left in exchange.

There's a recent report of a Russian doctor,



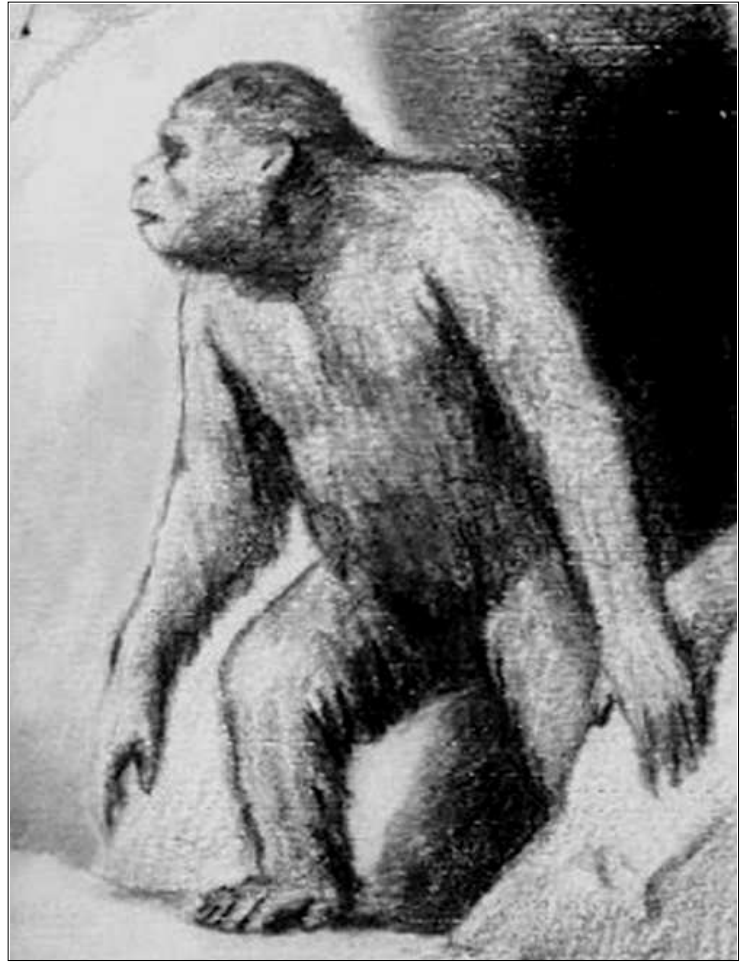
Drawings of an almasty based on and eyewitness account.

who in treating some of the Mongols in a very remote area, met an almas family, so there seems to be no doubt the creatures are there. They seem to be rather short, stocky, and to be very shy, and it's also mentioned in many stories that they are rather hairy and have very primitive clothes. In this respect the description of Neanderthal man fits the almas really quite well.

If you manage to get into the high mountain areas, then there's no reason why there shouldn't be adequate breeding populations of Neanderthal man still surviving. And indeed this seems more likely than the alternative which is that a very successful species of man should suddenly become extinct for no apparent reason.

When I see material like this, and indeed all of the material Dmitri Bayanov and Igor Burtsev have collected

on the Russian Snowman, I get a bit upset that very little has been done on a reasonably large scale to resolve the issue. I don't think that it is for lack of interest by scientists, but rather lack of money. Scientists generally depend on the government (directly or indirectly) for their livelihood and few politicians have any interest in this type of science. Let's face it, capturing an almasty is not going to generate a lot of revenue. I would also speculate that there is little interest on the part of the Russian people, whose main concern is getting enough food on the table.



A traditional drawing of an almasty. It has been around for many years and was likely the first published image of the subject. Although it shares many features with the sasquatch, Dr. Grover Krantz did not think it was as large.