

2014 – Nogai People

“Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you” – Luke 6:31

Proud descendants of the ancient Golden Horde, the Nogai people are now located in scattered regions of southern Russia--northern Dagestan, northern Chechnya, and Stavropol, Astrakhan, and Karachai-Cherkessia. The name *Nogai* is derived from Nogai Khan, a general of the Golden Horde, who was a great-great-grandson of Genghiz Khan. The Mongol Empire, under Genghiz Khan and his sons, swept into power across a wide swath of western Asia and eastern Europe (reaching all the way to Hungary) in the early 13th Century. The Golden Horde was the western wing of the Mongol Empire, holding sway in southern Russia and eastern Europe from the 13th to the 15th Century. Eventually defeated by the Lithuanians and Russians in the late 15th Century, the remnants of the Golden Horde continued to live in large numbers in southern Russia in the Volga region, in the steppe lands north of the Caucasus and in southern Ukraine and Crimea. The Nogai, one of the surviving sub-groups of the Golden Horde, are of combined Mongol-Turkic descent. The Nogai speak their own distinct Nogai language, which is a Turkic language—one of 5 Turkic languages spoken in the North Caucasus (Kumyk, Karachai, Balkar, Meskhetian Turk—the other 4).

The largest concentration of present-day Nogai culture is in 20 towns/villages of the steppe lands of northern Dagestan, and as part of the ethnic melting-pot composition of major urban areas of Dagestan, such as Kizlyar and Makhachkala. Of the 34 distinct languages of Dagestan, one is of Persian origin (Tat), two are Turkic (Kumyk, Nogai), and the other thirty-one are from the ancient Caucasus family of languages. Estimated Nogai population in and near Dagestan is approximately 70,000—with a total of over 100,000 in Russia as a whole. More than 90,000 self-identified Nogai live in Turkey, with significant Nogai populations also in Romania, Bulgaria, and the Ukraine.

This once-nomadic people now primarily live in small villages and work within agriculture, and with livestock in particular. A distinctive Nogai cuisine, preserving many of their Mongol roots, survives—embodied vividly by *Nogai Tea*, a hot tea prepared by boiling milk and tea together, along with butter, salt, and pepper. In southern Russia Nogai patriarchal traditions are mixed with contemporary Russian, Central Asian, and Muslim world influences. As seen in the pictures below, ancient customs are still revered; but life is tempered today by disillusionment from the destabilizing elements of violence/chaos/corruption amidst the ‘graceless’ dynamics of present-day Dagestan. There is a great need for agape love to infuse Nogai culture and Dagestan as a whole. Pray that the descendants of the Golden Horde will find their greatest joy in the generation ahead in the fulfillment of the Golden Rule, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

At present there are believed to be as many as 20 Nogai followers of Jesus. In 2011 the New Testament was published in the Nogai language, and now Genesis, Ruth, Esther, and Jonah have also been completed in Nogai. Pray for many Nogai to come to new openness to the love, peace, and joy of the gospel of Jesus, and for this to spread thru Nogai circles in the Nogai language. Nogai believers risk rejection by their families, as well as a threat to their livelihood, if their identity in Christ becomes known in the midst of the intensely Muslim Nogai society. Pray for courage.

*** PRAY for many Nogai to come to great joy in the overflowing of agape love (Jn. 15:11) and in the fulfillment of the Golden Rule in the power of the Holy Spirit. Luke 6:31/ 11:13**
*** Please ASK the Lord for true friends of the Nogai to become carriers of grace into the Nogai world. Matthew 9:36-38**
*** PRAY for men and women of peace in each Nogai community (Luke 10:6) to be keys in welcoming the love of God, the grace of Jesus, and the power of the Holy Spirit into Nogai lives. John 10:10**
*** PRAY blessing on the Words of Life in the Nogai New Testament and in Genesis-Ruth-Esther-Jonah as they penetrate into Nogai culture. Isaiah 55:11**



Nogai Golden Horde warriors – 15th Century



Contemporary Nogai Men --- Dagestan



Gospel of Luke in Nogai Language



Nogai Women in Traditional Dress



Contemporary Nogai Women -- Dagestan