MYTHS AND LEGENDS
OF ALTAYA REPUBLIC

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Altai Republic is located in the Russian Federation. The capital of the Republic is the town of Gorno-Altaiisk.
Wherever you go in the Altai, whatever mountain you climb, whatever cave you come into, everywhere there are lurking myths and legends. The impression is that the legends are composed of every mountain, river, lake, etc. This is not surprising. The fabulous unique beauty of picturesque landscapes of the Altai created legends which have survived up to this day.

We present to you some of the myths and legends of the Altai and hope they will help you make a more complete picture of this amazing corner of the Earth and the peoples who inhabit it.
Mountain Babyrgan

It is here where Altai begins.

Etymologists consider the name of the mountain someone's personal name. And, perhaps, they are right. At midnight sharp in a full moon it is possible to see Babyrgan's face. What is necessary to see it: you should find the rock "Tribune" in the rocky massif and go about 15 metres to the east, then sharply turn back to face the mountain and you can see a huge head of an Altaian which appears due to a fancy game of light and shadows.

The name of the mountain Babyrgan is translated from Altaic as "flying squirrel", a small animal extremely sensitive to weather changes. The mountain is some kind of a weather forecaster for locals: clouds or haze at its top promise bad weather, while its clear top tells about fine weather. There is a legend: "The God Tengri, been angry with a flying squirrel because it had offended his son, threw a lightning to her, and the flying squirrel stretched its pads and turned into a mountain with the same name. Since then, Babyrgan covers itself with clouds to warn about bad weather ". 
How has the lake Aya got its name? The legend tells that a girl loved a young man and he loved her too. But there was no future for their love. The girl knew that her parents wanted to marry her to a rich man whom she did not love. The girl and her beloved man climbed the highest rock on the lake shore (where they always went together) and decided to jump into the lake. The young man suddenly got scared, confused for a moment and saw his girlfriend jumping into the water. He understood that he lost his love forever and shouted: A ya? A ya? That is why this lake is called Aya.
Katun and Biya

People say that Katun is a woman with long hair and Biya is a man. Once met, young people fell in love and decided to escape together, because the girl's father was going to give her to another man. Young people agreed to escape together...

They joined afterwards, forming the river Ob, which means "both" in the Russian language.
Lake Teletskoye

Long, long time ago in a bad year, when taiga was empty, cattle died and barley was burnt, people wandered in search of food. One day a poor peasant got lucky: he found a large piece of gold. He was very happy. The peasant walked from village to village in hope to exchange the piece of gold for something to eat, but people were so poor that they had nothing to eat. Seeing that gold is powerless to help him, the peasant climbed the highest mountain on the lake shore, threw his useless gold from the breakage and committed suicide. Since then the lake is called Alty-Kol that means "Gold Lake" in the Altaic language. And the mountain got the name of gold mountain – Altyn-Tuu.
Nikolay Konstantinovich Roerich was a Russian artist, a philosopher-mystic, a writer, and a traveler.
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