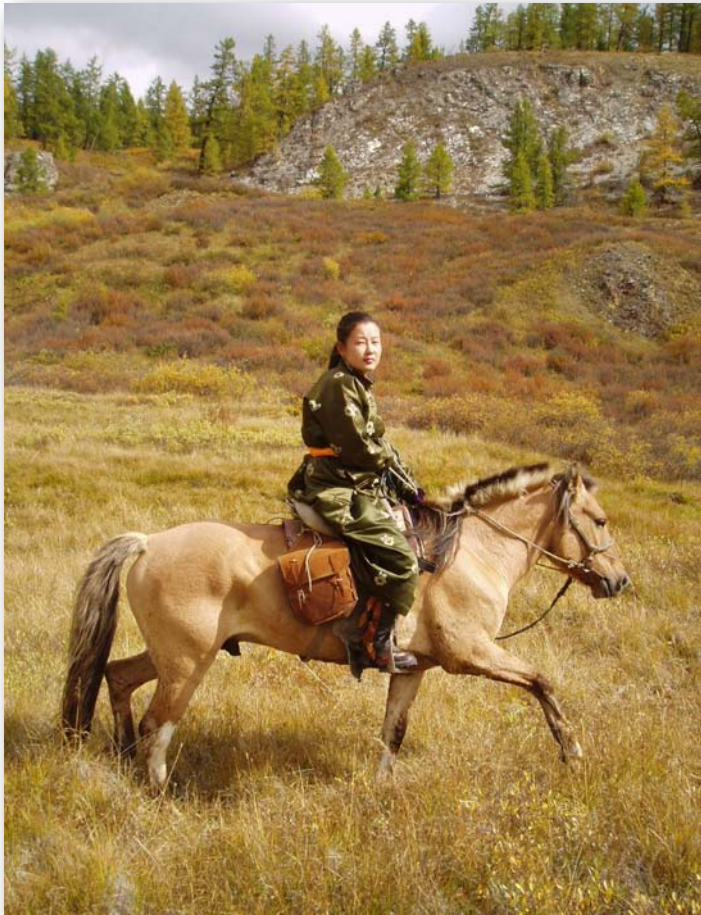


The Mongolian Leather Project

So people whose lives depend on horses can repair their own gear, shape leather into the necessities of nomadic life, or handcraft leather goods of Mongolian design.



Raised in a gur (yurt) with her nomadic grandparents, Badmaa Dovchin grew up singing, herding animals, and attending school in winter. Each birthday her gift was a horse: she now has a herd of 24. While working as an interpreter and guide, she earned a masters degree in linguistics. Badmaa is fluent in English and Russian, as well as her native Mongolian. After six years guiding foreigners to all parts of Mongolia, she was inspired by conversations with Loren and Lisa to found her own NGO, to help her people maintain their culture. The Mongolian Leather Project is one of her NGO's first partnership endeavors.



Loren and Lisa Skyhorse pose with their new friend and future student.

"Our ride was one of constant repairs. There were traditional saddles, but mostly we saw jerry-rigged straps that were constantly breaking. These people are true horsemen, but the only tool they carry is a seven-inch knife in their boot. Without proper tools, repairs are difficult."

—Loren Skyhorse





“These far-north people admired my belt—one I’d made and brought to wear around my deel (traditional robe). I’d decorated it with a carved horse, feathers, and some stamping. Since I had a few tools, our guide, Badmaa, suggested I show people how it was done. They brought me a stump, a piece of wood, some water, and a reindeer hide—and were thrilled to see the tools at work. One young man was especially excited and used the swivel knife to carve animals and flowers immediately. He was a born artist and so delighted by the process I gave him all my tools on the spot, asking him to keep them but share them with the whole group.”

—Lisa Skyhorse



Lisa and Loren Skyhorse, Master Saddlemakers for 35 years

If you’d like to be a part of this project, you can help us with the funding. Your donations go entirely to the project—things like leather, materials, tools, shipping, translators, wranglers, drivers, and transport of materials in Mongolia. We’re paying our own travel expenses. We’re not yet set up as a non-profit, so what you contribute is purely a gift (not tax-deductable). Send your check to:

MONGOLIAN LEATHER PROJECT, PO Box 4317, DURANGO, CO 81302

QUESTIONS? CALL 970-385-7660 OR EMAIL LISA@SKYHORSE.COM

SEPTEMBER 2008 OBJECTIVES:

Set up and fully equip a permanent leather workshop and offer basic skills training to herdspeople of Mongolia’s Darhat Valley region.

Secondary Objective: Assist the Mongolian Cultural Project in setting up leatherworking skills for displaced Mongolian nomads living in Ulanbaatar who desire to learn a marketable skill connected to their heritage as horsepeople.

WHO’S MAKING IT HAPPEN?

Lisa and Loren Skyhorse: master leatherworkers, saddlemakers, and teachers will gather all tools, leather and supplies, and teach skills.

Badmaa Dovchin: Coordinator/facilitator/interpreter and project manager will develop workshop sites, coordinate transportation of tools and supplies across Mongolia, oversee continued development of project.

Mishek: Mayor of Renchinlumbe will supply space and support.

THE DARHAT VALLEY REGION LEATHER CO-OP

WHY IS IT NEEDED? In this remote region, four days travel from the capitol, the horse is nearly the only means of transportation. 4000 – 5000 Nomadic herdspeople and about 200 town dwellers lack tools and skills to repair or make necessities (horse gear, tack, saddles).

WHY RENCHINLUMBE? Renchinlumbe is the ideal location—a crossroads for nomadic families migrating to and from winter grazing grounds. The 200 year-round residents also depend on their horses for transporting themselves and all goods and supplies. The mayor is totally supportive and has made a space available in an old Russian building, now the region’s cultural center. A small number of tourists, plus nomads and townspeople are a likely market for co-op-made leather goods.

WHAT IS THE WORKSHOP? The Workshop provides all leather, supplies, and tools for five or six people at a time to work on-site. It includes patterns for such things as saddlebags, pouches, satchels, belts, horse tack; and Mongolian designs for stamping and carving.

The workshop also provides basic skills training during two weeks in September, coinciding with the nomadic gathering for the Nadaam festival.

WHAT’S THE COST? Use of the workshop—including supplies and skills training—is free of charge. Loren and Lisa will equip the workshop with tools they bring from the US. They will buy other needed supplies in Mongolia with funds provided by friends of the project.