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In Photos: Buddhist Monastery in Russia's Tyva Holds Animal Blessing Ceremony

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Worshippers brought their pets to a Buddhist monastery in Russia's republic of Tyva for an animal blessing ceremony this month. The Thubten Shedrub Ling monastery, Russia's largest Buddhist monastery, hosted the annual ceremony for the third year, welcoming owners with cats, dogs and other pets. The ceremony included prayers and sacred mantras wishing the animals good health, long lives and favorable rebirths, and also drew participants from outside the Buddhist faith. Tyva lies in southern Siberia along Russia's border with Mongolia. It is home to the Indigenous Tyvan people, who speak a Turkic language and accounted for nearly 89% of residents in the 2021 census. Tibetan Buddhism has long coexisted with shamanic traditions in the republic, where religious practices include reverence for spirits associated with the natural world. Both traditions have experienced a revival following decades of Soviet repression. The blessing comes amid legal disputes over the treatment of stray animals in Tyva, where a 2024 law allows for the euthanization of animals displaying "persistent aggressive behavior." See more photos from the animal blessing below:

Aylan Oyun / Nalanda Foundation

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