

Outreach Notes, Vol. 14, No. 2

Sent 10/19/16 by Randi Hacker, CEAS Outreach Director

MONGOLIA – The Eagle Has Landed... On My Shoulder (Gr. K-12)

The lure of the urban life is wreaking havoc on ancient traditions here in Mongolia. One of these traditions is hunting with eagles. For 4,000 years, the clans of Western Mongolia have worked in partnership with golden eagles. Eagle chicks are taken from their nests and raised by a single hunter in order to create the intimate relationship necessary to working with a majestic bird of prey with 2-inch talons and a lethal beak. It's this bond that allows this partnership to work: You don't control an eagle; it has to want to work with you. Historically, eagle hunters have been men but there have always been a few women and, even now, there is one 13-year-old girl among the 70 remaining eagle hunters. No matter what your feelings are about the domestication of animals, you have to admit that the image of a fur-clad hunter on a horse, an eagle perched on a shoulder makes a great cover for a fantasy novel. Below, two stories about the last eagle hunters of Mongolia with some awesome photos. Some thoughts for discussion: How do your students feel about humans raiding nests and raising an eagle chick to hunt for them? What do they think of the intense bond that develops between bird and hunter? As the traditional life of survival in the often inhospitable environment of the steppes disappears, is it legitimate to keep on using eagles as hunters just to be sure the tradition isn't lost altogether?

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/in-sight/wp/2015/08/21/the-4000-year-old-art-of-falconry-is-dying-out-in-mongolia-see-some-of-the-last-eagle-hunters-in-the-world/>

http://www.bbc.com/travel/story/20160926-mongolias-6000-year-tradition?ocid=global_travel_rss&ocid=global_bbccom_email_28092016_travel

Founded in 1959, the Center for East Asian Studies (CEAS) at the University of Kansas is the only East Asian resource center in the Great Plains region. Educational outreach is a key component of the Center's mission. You can find lesson plans and many other materials online at <http://ceas.ku.edu/educator-resources>. If you're a teacher who would like to add East Asia content to your lessons across all curriculum areas, sign up for Outreach Notes at <http://ceas.ku.edu/email-list>.