

The Eagle Huntress meets Genghis Khan's mother: Women in a nomadic society



Image credit: © 2018 Altitude Film Entertainment Ltd

Anna Edgar

William Elder Building,
Castlegate
15th May, 2019,
10 am to 12 noon
£6

This lecture by [Anna Edgar](#) will look at the ethnic Kazakhs of western Mongolia and the role of women in their nomadic culture. This is the setting for [The Eagle Huntress*](#).

In Almaty, the old capital of Kazakhstan, you can look up and see the huge snow covered peaks of the Altai range. The Mongolian Kazakhs live on the other side of this mountain border.

"Empire of the Eternal Blue Sky", as Mongolians call their country, is vast and landlocked, almost the size of Western Europe, and with a population of fewer than three million. It stretches from Russia in the North to the Gobi desert and China in the South, with Genghis Khan born and buried in the East. The Kazakhs live in the Westernmost region of Mongolia, a nomadic minority. They keep up many traditions which have been lost in present day Kazakhstan. The most notable is the seasonal hunting of the eagle.

(over)

We shall look briefly at aspects of the fascinating story of Mongolia and trace the challenges for women in this harsh nomadic way of life back to Hoelen. Widowed and abandoned on the steppes by her tribe for having too many children, she survived and raised Genghis Khan, the future emperor of Mongolia. Under Genghis Khan and his descendants, Mongolia became the largest land empire in history. Its distinct culture is still dominated by the nomadic way of life, maintained in a climate of great extremes. And, as in the past, Mongolia continues to be the focus of both Russian and Chinese interests.

The second part of this talk moves onto its links to the Berwick Film Society showing of "The Eagle Huntress", with a focus on why and how 100,000 Kazakhs come to be living as nomads in the remote Altai mountains with their separate language, religion and culture. We will look, in particular, at the annual eagle hunting season and the context of the young woman of The Eagle Huntress, and how the this film can be seen as representing a continuing thread in this region's history of strong "Warrior Queens".

*The Eagle Huntress will be screened by Berwick Film Society on Tuesday 21st May at 7.30pm. Non-BFS members are welcome at the screening; tickets are available at The Maltings box office.

The cost of the lecture is £6, including refreshments. All are welcome and no previous knowledge is assumed.

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(*Eagle Huntress*)

