

Makpal Abdrazakova – Kazakhi lady - berkutchi



"Born April 26, 1986, in Kazakhstan, Makpal Abdrazakova has been referred to as the "Queen of modern day Qazaq (Kazakh) eagle huntresses". This makes sense insomuch as a decade ago Makpal expressed a hope & made a prediction:"I hope in the future the number of women berkutchi will grow.It will be good for the sport." (Reuters article 2012). And two decades ago, in 2003, her father, Murat Abdrazakov said: "I HOPE IN THE FUTURE THE NUMBER

OF YOUNG CHILDREN WILL INCREASE...LIKE MY DAUGHTER, who loves her eagle."(Private 2003 archival video). Makpal began her ~17yr falconry career at age 13, in 1999. For historical context, Mongolian-Kazakh Aisholpan of Otto Bell's The Eagle Huntress film's fame was not yet born. Makpal 1st competed in 2001, making her the first female to engage in an eagle festival competition in Asia (noting that they were newly minted in 1999). Her first win was 'Sonar-2002'. Live prey fests, by the way, are harder to win than lure-based ones -and more controversial- given the unpredictable movements of live prey. In 2003/4 Makpal became a master berkutchi.

Although several eagle hunter aqsaqal blessed her career, research historian, Adrienne Mayor, noted: "As in any society, there are some exceptions and two conservative, older Kazakh eagle hunters, [two names were provided but not repeated here], feel strongly that only men should hunt with eagles." (Adrienne Mayor's May 1, 2016 research essay - a seminal research article on female engagement in eagle hunting).

Makpal's stance?: "Everyone has their own hobby & smart people treat it with understanding.[...]Keeping family traditions, a national treasure, is always an honor." (2012 Zakon.kz article). Amongst a number of other victories, Makpal won another fest in 2009. In 2013, Makpal was selected for Kazakhstan's national eagle hunting team for her country's first international fest. Teams from nine other countries competed. Makpal stood out, but not only as the sole female. What was her result? Against whom? Who judged? Who showed outward appreciation? Who did Makpal say was surprised to learn there was a female berkutchi in Kz? As researcher into Makpal's history says: "Investigate to find the answers - like I have- and Oooh Boy! The reasons Makpal's **full** accomplishments & place in history deserve proper acknowledgement will crystallize with surprising, and disturbing, facts. Journalists are welcome to contact Meghan for further information."

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