

[New China](#)[Top News](#)[Latest News](#)[Pho](#)[Latest News](#)  [Turkish president says new lira deposit instrument achieved its goal](#)

Amazing China: The last Kazakh falconers in China



Source: Xinhua | 2017-01-16 10:51:30 | Editor: huaxia



Kazakh herder Haymu trains an eagle with fresh meat in Qinghe County. (Xinhua/Jiang Wenya)

URUMQI, Jan. 16 (Xinhua) -- Seventy-year-old Kazakh herder Haymu has just experienced his proudest moment of the year.

He performed eagle hunting to over 10,000 visitors at an ice and snow festival on Jan. 10 in Qinghe County, in the northeast of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, along the Chinese border with Mongolia.



Haymu and his eagle. (Xinhua/Jiang Wenya)



Haymu performed eagle hunting at an ice and snow festival. (Xinhua/Jiang Wenya)

Haymu, who hails from a small town called Qagan Gol, learned the craft much later than is usual -- when he was 40 -- from his uncle.

"Golden eagles are precious. Not everyone can tame them. My uncle passed on his bird to me when he became too old for it," he said.

Golden eagles are protected birds and falconry is banned in China. It took organizers of the ice festival a lot of hard work to give Haymu a platform.

"People like the Kazakh tradition of eagle hunting. Some have accused me of animal abuse, but I treat each and every eagle like family. I think of them more often than I think of my grandsons," Haymu said.



Haymu treats each and every eagle like family. (Xinhua/Jiang Wenya)

Haymu has had seven eagles over the past few years. The one he is currently training is only one year old.

"I feed him well in the summer, to help him grow. When it's cold, however, he needs to be more active and train, so he can learn to follow my instructions," he said, adding that January is the best time to train eagles.

The eagle, which lives in Haymu's yard, eats lamb meat and livers.



Haymu rides a horse with his eagle. The 70-year-old man is still agile. (Xinhua/Jiang Wenya)



Haymu trains the young eagle in front of his home. (Xinhua/Jiang Wen Yao)

When the sun rises high, Haymu dons his fox fur hat, sheepskin coat, and felt boots -- the traditional attire for a falconer.

He trains the young eagle in front of his home. When the eagle lands steadily on his right arm, Haymu rewards it with fresh meat.

He also trains the bird to follow a moving target. An assistant on horseback drags a fox hide through the snow, and the falcon sets off from the old man's right arm to find the target.



Haymu trains the eagle to follow a moving target. (Xinhua/Jiang Wen Yao)

The falcon only succeeded to do this four times in two hours, but Haymu was not discouraged. "A young eagle takes time to learn," he said.

Haymu has to be tough when the young eagle becomes wayward, but he has never harmed his birds. "It bit me once. It was wearing a blinder and I was mimicking the sound of a hare. It flew down and jammed its beak into my palm," he said.



Haymu trains an eagle at home. (Xinhua/Jiang Wenya)

The birds are usually kept for around four years before they are released back into the wild so that they can mate.

Haymu does not depend on falconry for a living, but he wants to see the tradition goes on.



Tuokun and his eagle. (Xinhua/Jiang Wenya)



Haymu and his assistant ride with his eagle in the snow. (Xinhua/Jiang Wenya)

In Qinghe, there are 40 eagle-hunters and 40 eagles, said Tuokun, head of the falconers' association.

The average age of falconers is over 50, and both Haymu and Tuokun worry that they might be the last generation that keeps the art alive.

"I have two sons, a driver and a businessman. Neither wants to learn. I am worried that when I die, falconry might die with me," said Tuokun, 60.



Haymu, his wife and their grandchildren. (Xinhua/Jiang Wenya)



Share

 Back to Top

 Close

