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LIFE'S LIKE THAT!

Hunter's Code of Ethics

For centuries Mongols moved across huge spaces, following the rhymes of nature, learning how to co-exist with the surrounding world. This traditional respect to the environment can be found at all levels of national culture.

An Italian traveler Marco Polo, who visited Mongolia in 13th century wrote in his diary "In Tartar there is a law under which no a king, noble or ordinary folk is allowed to hunt down rabbit, deer, antelopes and other animals that multiply from March to October. "

Almost all laws, adopted since the time of establishing the first Mongolian state in 13th century, contain provisions related to the protection of environment, including rather strict and harsh penalties.

For example, one of decrees issued in 18th century proclaims the Khentii Mountains (presently in Hentii province) a protected area and orders that "no ordinary person shall cut a tree or kill an animal. By doing so he commits a crime, and those violators shall be considered as a thief, put into chains and their horse and guns confiscated."



The laws were strictly enforced and even high nobles were reminded that they may "be deprived of their title, and their horse and weapons handed over to the Treasury."

When hunter undergo a training, a list of 108 hunting commandments was learnt by heart and strictly observed. In case of their violation, the hunting right could be suspended for 2- 3 years. Out of these 10 commandments are presently widely known:

1. Do not decimate the entire herd or pack
2. Do not kill more than needed
3. Don't hunt animals of special color or body built (means albinos and animals with special marks or appearance)
4. Don't kill pregnant or she-animals with young litter
5. Do not hunt migrating animals
6. Don't kill an animal, escaping from a predator
7. Don't hunt animals during their pairing season
8. Never kill leader of a herd or pack
9. Never let blood of prey onto ground
10. Leave no traces on watering places or with salt frequented by animals

Therefore, hunters must wait until animals will gain both weight and their fur reaches good quality. Even when hunted, only matured or that are apparently sick or lost animals.



As for wolf hunting, any hunter knows not to kill she wolf with cubs, or decimate the entire litter. Otherwise one should expect revenge or other trouble.

Love to nature and wildlife is instilled from the very childhood. "Once, when I was small, my mother sent me to collect wild grits (*Polygonum*). I was too

lazy and, by digging out marmot's hideout, has collected a small bag and proud of my cleverness has brought it to my mother. The mother reprimanded me saying this was a sin.

"Poor marmot will starve in winter," she told me and send me to put grits back. I was very small then, but I remember this lesson my whole life," recalls J.Myagmarsambuu, a journalist.

And even now, reprimanding children for negligence towards the nature, Mongols use word "sin" rather than "never ever do it." For it is considered to be a real sin to cause damage to a live nature.

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