

The End of Nomadism?: Society, State, and the Environment in Inner Asia (Central Asia Book Series)

Caroline Humphrey, David Andrews Sneath

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Those who herd in the vast grassland region of Inner Asia face a precarious situation as they struggle to respond to the momentous political and economic changes of recent years. In The End of Nomadism? Caroline Humphrey and David Sneath confront the romantic, ahistorical myth of the wandering nomad by revealing the complex lives and the significant impact on Asian culture of these modern "mobile pastoralists." In their examination of the present and future of pastoralism, the authors recount the extensive and quite sudden social, political, environmental, and economic changes of recent years that have forced these peoples to respond and evolve in order to maintain their centuries-old way of life. Using extensive and detailed case studies comparing pastoralism in Siberian Russia, Mongolia, and Northwest China, Humphrey and Sneath explore the different paths taken by nomads in these countries in reaction to a changing world. In examining how each culture is facing not only different prospects for sustainability but also different environmental problems, the authors come to the surprising conclusion that mobility can, in fact, be compatible with a modern and urbanized world. While placing emphasis on the social and cultural traditions of Inner Asia and their fate in the post-Socialist economies of the present, The End of Nomadism? investigates the changing nature of pastoralism by focusing on key areas under environmental threat and relating the ongoing problems to distinctive socioeconomic policies and practices in Russia and China. It also provides lively contemporary commentary on current economic dilemmas by revealing in telling detail, for instance, the struggle of one extended family to make a living. This book will interest Central Asian, Russian, and Chinese specialists, as well as those studying the



environment, anthropology, sociology, peasant studies, and ecology.

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