

Advances in Asian Human-Environmental Research

Hermann Kreutzmann  
*Editor*

# Pastoral practices in High Asia

Agency of 'development' effected  
by modernisation, resettlement and  
transformation

 Springer

# Pastoral practices in High Asia

# **Advances in Asian Human-Environmental Research**

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Hermann Kreutzmann  
Centre for Development Studies  
Geographic Sciences  
Freie Universität Berlin  
Malteserstr. 74-100, House K  
D-12249 Berlin, Germany

ISBN 978-94-007-3845-4                      ISBN 978-94-007-3846-1 (eBook)  
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-3846-1  
Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg New York London

Library of Congress Control Number: 2012935644

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Printed on acid-free paper

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# Preface

Eckart Ehlers

If we believe the results of the synthesis report of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, published in 2005 under the title ‘Ecosystems and Human Well-Being’, only very few terrestrial biomes are still in a somewhat pristine condition. Amongst them are, not surprisingly, the desert regions of the earth, its boreal forests and tundras and, of course, the ice-covered regions of the northern and southern hemispheres. But also parts of the tropical forests and of the montane regions are so far comparatively little affected by human conversion. These – the montane grasslands and shrublands as well as the tropical and subtropical moist broadleaf forests – will, however, experience dramatic changes until the midst of the twenty-first century, especially due to human interferences and impacts on their natural environments.

High Asia – defined as a region between the Hindukush in the West and the fringes of the Tibetan Plateau in the East, between the Altay and its Mongolian promontories in the North and the Himalayas in the South – is the most significant part of this montane milieu on a global scale. Covering a highly dynamic region of recent state formations, of fundamental political changes and of remarkable socio-economic developments, ongoing and future transformation processes have dramatic impacts on all spheres of life – and will continue to have so even more in the future. They will affect the fragile and sensitive natural environments of the montane milieus, because their inhabitants’ traditional lifestyles, land uses and land management practices are under rapidly increasing pressures from population growth and modernization processes.

These developments set the frame for the contents of this book. ‘*Pastoral Practices in High Asia*’ gives insights into the aforementioned processes of change. Based on a number of preparatory workshops in Germany and in the regions under review, on field visits and discussions with local stakeholders and incorporating the experiences of local experts and their intimate knowledge of the problems at stake, the book contains a broad set of articles, in which the wide range of crucial coping and adaptation strategies of pastoral nomads and mountain farmers and their struggles with change, both natural and structural, are presented and discussed. A remarkable feature of all contributions is their focused approach to those aspects of herding practices that are crucial to its sustainable future in the light of modernization and

globalization. Due to the fact that all presented case studies are located in similar ecological environments, on the one hand, in different political and socio-economic settings, on the other, however, each of the case studies contains an element of comparability and transferability. It may therefore be argued with good reasons that the 16 regionally and/or thematically different analyses of pastoral practices and experiences in High Asia are in fact a comprehensive survey of adaptation and transformation processes in a comparative view – an approach which enables researchers and practitioners to reflect on best practices and to consider lessons to be learnt from each other.

Specific mention must be made of the both careful and focused editorship of this book. Guided by an almost all-embracing introduction by the editor of this volume, all authors are more or less embedded in a structural frame in which they were expected ‘to elaborate on the varied expressions of pastoral practices, frame conditions and performances’. Arguing that agencies, that is, institutions and actors on local to global levels, cause developments which not seldom lead to *endisms* (e.g. the end of nomadism), poses an intellectual challenge and hypothesis which authors had to respond to. The editor takes up this challenge in his final conclusions. Analysis and critical evaluation of the presented case studies lead him to basic reflections on Hardin’s ‘tragedy of the commons’. An important result of this book is the proposal to complement this tragedy by a ‘tragedy of responsibility’. Arguing that ‘vital interests of rural people and communities are at stake and grossly neglected’ opens a new dimension of research on the future role and potentials, that is, aspects of good governance and responsible decision-making processes as indispensable preconditions of a long-term sustainable use and preservation of the montane grass- and shrublands of High Asia. As a matter of fact, most contributions to this collection of articles give testimony to obvious negligence of pastoral interests, to a lack of understanding of the ecological, economic and social potentials of pastoralism and a corresponding irresponsibility of governmental policies. Such a finding is the more deplorable as pastoralists, and mountain farmers have accumulated knowledge systems that have enabled them again and again to overcome short-term natural catastrophes, to adapt to risks and hazards of their mountainous environments and to cope with longer-term changes of nature and society. Pastoralists and mountain farmers with their specific forms of animal husbandry have been the real protectors of one of the last nature reserves and stewards of their sustainable uses in the past. This book pays tribute to their achievements – and shows pathways of how to preserve and apply their accumulated knowledge and experiences in a modernizing and globalizing world.

In summarizing the findings of the various case studies, the editor rightly concludes that while ‘pastoral activities have been shrinking further since the competition between combined mountain farmers and pastoralists increased the demand for grazing lands’, the latter have proven their adaptive capacities again and again. Thus, it is easy to follow his conclusion according to which the presented transformations of pastoral practices are not necessarily part of those endisms of high-mountain pastoralism, but signifiers and indicators of its flexibility to cope with changing survival conditions.

Our introductory reference to the findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and our specific reference to the extremely pressurized montane grass- and shrubland biomes are alarmingly underpinned by the extensive and partly generalizable results of the presented case studies in this volume. I dare say that this book can claim the status of a work of reference – at least for the manifold aspects of pastoral practices in High Asia, their challenges and responses. It is a major contribution to a specific aspect of our planet under pressure. And it is to be hoped that this profound collection of articles will instigate similar research not only on pastoral lifestyles in other endangered and vulnerable mountain, desert and steppe environments, but also in tropical and subtropical forest biomes and beyond! This extremely thorough, thoughtful and thought-provoking book will hopefully reach policy-makers and practitioners not only in pastoral environments in High Asia and beyond, but everywhere where our fragile natural environments are at stake and need careful and responsible human stewardship.





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# Contributors

**Christoph Bergmann** Department of Social Anthropology, South Asia Institute, University of Heidelberg, Im Neuenheimer Feld 330, D-69120 Heidelberg, Germany

**Ted Callahan** Boston University Arts & Sciences Anthropology, Boston, MA 02215, USA

**Andrei Dörre** Human Geography, Department of Earth Sciences, Centre for Development Studies (ZELF), Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin, Germany

**Eckart Ehlers** ZEF, Bonn University, Bonn, Germany

**Fazlur-Rahman** Department of Geography, Urban & Regional Planning, University of Peshawar, Peshawar, Pakistan

**Martin Gerwin** Department of Geography, South Asia Institute, University of Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany

**Melvyn C. Goldstein** Center for Research on Tibet, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH, USA

**Andreas Gruschke** Institute of Oriental Studies, University of Leipzig, Leipzig, Germany

**Arnd Holdschlag** Institute of Geography, Hamburg University, Hamburg, Germany

**Toni Huber** Central Asian Seminar, Institute for Asian and African Studies, Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany

**Muhammad Ismail** Rangeland Resources Management, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, Kathmandu, Nepal

**Tobias Kraudzun** Department of Earth Sciences, Centre for Development Studies (ZELF), Geographic Sciences, Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin, Germany

**Hermann Kreutzmann** Human Geography, Department of Earth Sciences, Centre for Development Studies (ZELF), Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin, Germany

**Wu Ning** Chengdu Institute of Biology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Chengdu, Sichuan, China

**Marcus Nüsser** Department of Geography, South Asia Institute, University of Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany

**Jarmila Ptackova** Central Asian Seminar, Institute for Asian and African Studies, Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany

**William S. Sax** Department of Social Anthropology, South Asia Institute, University of Heidelberg, Im Neuenheimer Feld 330, D-69120 Heidelberg, Germany

**Stefan Schütte** Department of Earth Sciences, Centre for Development Studies (ZELF), Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin, Germany

**Yi Shaoliang** NRM (Land & Water), Aga Khan Foundation, P.O Box 5753, House No.2, Qala-e-Fatullah, Kabul, Afghanistan

**Chetan Singh** Department of History, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla, India

**Bernd Steimann** Human Geography, Department of Geography, University of Zurich, Zürich, Switzerland

**Emilia Róża Sułek** Central Asian Seminar, Institute of Asian and African Studies, Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany

**Lu Tao** Chengdu Institute of Biology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Chengdu, Sichuan, China

**Yan Zhaoli** Chengdu Institute of Biology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Chengdu, Sichuan, China

# List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADGM	Administrative documents concerning grassland management
AKRSP	Aga Khan Rural Support Programme
AN KSSR	Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Socialist Soviet Republic
art.	Article in a legal document
asl	Above sea level
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CCS	Chitral Conservation Strategy
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CPC	Communist Party of China
CPI	Consumer price index
CR	Cultural Revolution
CSG	Chamba State, 1904. 1910. Punjab States Gazetteers. Vol. XXII A. Lahore: The Civil and Military Press
est.	Estimated
ETP	Eastern Tibetan Plateau
FES	Foundation for Ecological Security
GAOZh	State Archive of the Zhalalabad Oblast'
GDP	Gross domestic product
GIPROZEM	State Design Institute for Land Management
GJ	<i>Guomin jingji he shehui fazhan tongji ziliao huibian 2007</i> [Statistical Yearbook on People's Economic and Social Development 2007]
GK KSSR IPK	State Committee of the Kyrgyz Socialist Soviet Republic for publishing, print and book trade
GLSKR and GUL	State Forestry Service of the Kyrgyz Republic and Main Department of Forest Regulation
GoNWFP	Government of North-West Frontier Province
GOP	Decree of the Head of the rayon administration Bazar Korgon 'Borders of remote pastures'
GoP	Government of Pakistan

GOSREGISTR	State Property Registry
GoU	Government of Uttarakhand
GTH	<i>Guoluo zhou tuimu huancao gongcheng jingshi chengxiao xianzhe</i> [Guoluo Prefecture's Tuimu huancao Construction Program is a Remarkable Success]
GUGK	Head office for geodesy and cartography
ha	Hectare
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICG	International Crisis Group
IITM	Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology
INR	Indian Rupee
IOR	India Office Library Records
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
KDG 1918	Kangra District, Parts II, III, and IV, 1917. 1918. Punjab District Gazetteers, Vol. XXX A. Lahore: Superintendent Government Printing, Punjab
KDG 1926	Kangra District, 1924–1925. 1926. Punjab District Gazetteers, Vol. VII. Part A. Lahore: Superintendent Government Printing, Punjab
kg	Kilogram
KGS	Kyrgyzstan Som (national currency)
KIRGIZGIPROZEM	Kyrgyz State Design Institute for Land Management of the Kyrgyz Socialist Soviet Republic
KKH	Karakoram Highway
km	Kilometre
km <sup>2</sup>	Square kilometre
KR	Kyrgyz Republic
KSSR	Kyrgyz Socialist Soviet Republic
LARC	Legal Assistance to Rural Citizens
LKKR	Forestry Code of the Kyrgyz Republic
MAWPRI	Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Processing Industry of the Kyrgyz Republic
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MSG	Mandi State, 1904. 1908. Punjab States Gazetteers, Vol. XII A. Lahore: Civil and Military Press, Punjab Government
MQ	<i>Maqin xian zhi</i> [Annals of Maqin County]
MT	Metric ton
N.S.	New series
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NDC	National Documentation Centre
NSKKR	National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe
par.	Paragraph
PNV	Pastoral new village