

Joyce Toomre also attempts to measure the impact of this experiment in her innovative contribution, which uses oral interviews about cooking methods to chart the transformations traditional Armenian culture has undergone since the early twentieth century. Although one wonders whether the recent revival of the old foodways are not superficial, her approach could fruitfully be applied to many other cases to help assess the nature of ethnic identity and its ability to endure under stress.

The book has some inadequacies. Two of the articles do not belong here: LeBlanc's analysis of eating metaphors in Dostoevsky and Pamela Chester's entry on strawberries and chocolate in the poetry of Tsvetaeva and Mandelstam are fine works of literary exegesis, but yield little information on society at large. Had these chapters been replaced by one on sources and another on the state of scholarship in areas outside of the Russian Empire, the volume could have made a more substantial contribution to stimulating work in its field. But even as a research sampler it certainly is enticing.

Steven Marks
Clemson University

Caroline Humphrey and David Sneath, *The End of Nomadism? Society, State and the Environment in Inner Asia*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1999, 355 pp. + maps, photographs, tables, graphs.

It is often assumed that the mobility associated with nomadic pastoralism is incompatible with the interests of the modern nation state. Throughout this century, nomads in various regions of the world have been encouraged or forced to settle in the name of development and progress. In this book, Caroline Humphrey and David Sneath argue that it is wrong to assume that mobility prevents the adoption of modern technology and the extension of state services. Further, in the case of Inner Asia where pasture degradation is a growing concern, the authors stress that mobility in fact ensures the optimal conditions for environmental sustainability. Based on this conclusion, the authors recommend that the states of Inner Asia proceed very cautiously when it comes to land privatization, a process that has strong potential to further reduce the mobility of herders.

This book is one of several publications to emerge from an international collaborative research project on environmental and cultural conservation in Inner Asia, carried out between 1991 and 1995 under the direction of the authors. Both the project and the book are impressively comparative in scope for anthropology, with ten primary field sites situated within three different countries (Siberian Russia, Mongolia, and northwest China). In addition to four sites in Mongolia, the sites include towns in Xinjiang (China), Inner Mongolia (China), Buryatia (Russia), Tuva (Russia), and Chita *oblast* (Russia). While ethnicity is not viewed as a significant variable in this study, the project does include several different Mongolian (Halh, Buryat, Oirat) and Turkic (Tuvan, Kazakh) groups.

At each site, local scholars collected interview and survey data from a minimum of 18 households representing various occupational backgrounds. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected from each household regarding household composition, property,

income, and migration patterns. Although data were gathered from individual households, the book is clearly focused on the status of the local environment, not the economic well-being of individual families. The overall quality of data is astounding, yet the sample size limits the reliability of certain comparisons. For example, the sample is too small to make site comparisons based on the number of private religious services (p. 31), the patterns of dwelling (p. 185), or the forms of sedentary activities (p. 192).

As anthropologists, Humphrey and Sneath are careful to include the herders' perceptions of pasture degradation. At several sites, elderly herders confirmed that water resources, botanical diversity, and vegetation distribution have all been decreasing over the past few decades. Throughout the book, the authors rely heavily on "perceived pasture degradation" in order to make comparisons between the sites. Regrettably, the authors offer little reassurance that the perceptions of pasture degradation have been measured in a way that indeed makes them comparable.

Many of the herders interviewed for this study explain the process of pasture degradation in terms of restricted mobility, not excessive herd sizes. The authors use comparative and historical data to support the herders' opinions. Among the sites studied, pasture degradation is most pronounced in some of the Russian and Chinese sites, where the development of agropastoralism introduced new production methods which in turn forced herders to adopt a more sedentary lifestyle. For example, the development of agropastoralism curtailed the mobility of herders by expanding the cultivation of vegetables and livestock fodder and by introducing the use of trucks for transporting water. The introduction of "improved" breeds further limited mobility because these non-indigenous breeds required heated sheds in the winter and were unsuited for long migrations. As a result of these developments, seasonal migrations in certain regions of Inner Asia were limited to such an extent that the utilized pastures were overgrazed.

Pasture degradation, however, is not a serious problem for all regions of Inner Asia. According to the authors, regions with relatively low levels of pasture degradation (Mongolia, Tuva, Xinjiang) contain highly mobile herder populations. Although these herders migrate frequently and live in mobile dwellings, they have strong cultural and economic links with urban district centers. In comparison, herders with permanent dwellings tend to be more isolated because they are permanently settled far from the district center. Thus, mobile herders living in regions with minimal pasture degradation generally have greater access to urban-type services (*i.e.* transportation, education, health care, education, and communications) than settled herders living in regions with serious pasture degradation. Based on these observations, the authors conclude that the process of sedentarization should be analytically separated from the process of urbanization.

Humphrey and Sneath suggest that, in addition to promoting environmental sustainability, herd mobility increases productivity. In Chapter Six, the authors describe how Mongolian herders in the pre-collective era linked herd mobility with productivity. According to the available historical sources, yield-oriented herders, who were typically employed by a local monastery or a rich family, were much more mobile and more productive than subsistence-oriented herders. Since these herders knew the best times to exploit various pastures in several different ecological zones, their herds tended to be fatter and stronger than those of less mobile subsistence herders.

While this book as a whole should be of great interest to those who are engaged in the study of Inner Asia, nomadic pastoralism, or environmental issues, certain chapters should be of equal interest to those who follow the post-socialist transitions. Chapter Four, for example, describes the development of new social institutions. And Chapter Seven contains an engaging narrative of how one Mongolian family has been affected by the new market conditions. Finally, the conclusion addresses the ways in which the post-socialist transition will affect the environment. The authors suggest that the establishment of market conditions in Russia, Mongolia, and China has the potential to reduce the mobility of pastoralists and thus cause further damage to the pastures. As a possible solution, Humphrey and Sneath propose that the state-run collectives be replaced by another large-scale organization, such as an association of herders, which would maintain the mobility of herds.

Cynthia Werner
Pitzer College

Gregory Gleason. *The Central Asian States: Discovering Independence*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1997, xix, 220 pp. + photographs, maps, chronology, index.

This brief yet engaging volume is eminently readable and useful for both non-specialists and scholars. Gleason avoids the pitfalls of the usual organizational structure of volumes on Central Asia (typically divided into chapters by state). Instead, the region as a whole (with caveats regarding its designation as such) is discussed according to themes that roughly follow a chronological sequence without merely describing sequences of events. Gleason places critical emphasis on ancient cultural and historical legacies, on the superimposition of statehood on discontinuous nations, and on specific legacies of the Soviet period.

Two initial chapters focus on the historical legacies and ancient cultures of the many nations of Central Asia. The chapter "Legacies of Central Asia" provides an excellent discussion of language groups and identity, the importance of kinship and clan, and the role of geography past and present. The role of Islam in Central Asian cultures is explained here and elsewhere in the volume, but discussion is limited. Given widespread stereotypes and misperceptions regarding Islam in Central Asia, some additional coverage of the role of religion in politics is desirable.

Discussion of twentieth-century developments in each of the Central Asian states as we know them today is divided into two chapters, one covering the Soviet era, and one covering post-Soviet developments in each state. Although this means that the reader has to hop back and forth between chapters to get a unified chronology for any one state, such division is still appropriate because it emphasizes the distinctions and legacies of each period. The international relations chapter "Central Asia and the World" briefly explains issues of power struggles with Russia over questions of oil and environment, but the primary focus of this chapter is on security issues.

The coverage of political development of the Central Asian states is not equally distributed. Of the five republics, Uzbekistan receives the most attention, and Kazakstan is also more thoroughly covered than the remaining three. This is not entirely inappro-