

YAK CULTURE



Subsistence patterns are a keystone to understanding the nature of a society or community. This work considers nomadic pastoralists whose staple is the yak. Using Tibetan nomadic pastoralists of the highlands, the parts and parcels of their society form a framework from which world builders can create similar communities in their campaigns.

While some generalizations translate easily to created communities, there are certain aspects that are specific to Tibetan yak pastoralists. For example, although Tibetan pastoralists rely heavily on their herd for survival, they have adopted a religion of the agricultural lowland that frowns upon killing animals and eating their meat. While this unique factor of Tibetan yak pastoralists has some creative social workarounds, it is not wholly indicative of yak pastoralists in general.

First, I talk about annual and daily routines and how movement works with nomadic yak pastoralists. Then, I discuss the different types of reaping and harvest that takes place in yak communities. Following that, I talk about the material culture of their communities: food, housing, and clothing. Lastly, I talk about ideological culture, including personality tendencies, religion (specific to Tibetans), hospitality, and dispute resolution.

Thanks for picking up this article, and look for more World Building Library articles concerning various aspects of Tibetan culture.

Sincerely,
Suzi Yee
Expeditious Retreat Press, September 5, 2006