

er sich in der Bildung zweier kompakter *factions* niederschlägt. Tāheri engagiert sich mit vollem Enthusiasmus bei der Pro-Mosaddeq-Gruppe, wird zum Freund von deren zentraler Persönlichkeit, dem charismatischen (Halb-) Bruder des Khans der mächtigeren Hälfte der Boyr-Aḥmadi, den er als Angehöriger einer Stammesdelegation mehrfach auf Reisen nach Teheran begleitet. Dort, in den Verhandlungen mit Staats- und Armeevertretern, erlebt er schmerzlich die Unterlegenheit der Politik tribalen Stils mit ihren klaren Freund-Feind-Konturen gegenüber der undurchsichtigen, moralisch indifferenten oder sogar zynischen Politik des Staates.

Der Staatsstreich von 1953 begräbt alle Hoffnungen, die die Stämme auf die Regierung Mosaddeqs gesetzt hatten, Armee und Gendarmerie gewinnen die volle Kontrolle über die Stammesgebiete zurück. Auch bei diesem Umschwung wird ein Unterwerfungsoffer gefordert: Die Putschregierung verlangt von dem Khan, seinen von der Schah-Partei als Kommunist und Apostat diffamierten Bruder zu beseitigen. Der Khan fügt sich im Interesse des Stammes. Mit diesem Brudermord, von Tāheri als traumatisierender Schock erlebt, endet der Bericht.

ʿAtā Tāheri tritt in seiner Autobiografie dem Leser als die interessante Gestalt eines Stammesangehörigen entgegen, der infolge der Gebrochenheit seines Werdegangs und dank seiner unbestechlichen Humanität eine kritische Haltung gegenüber seinem Herkunftsmilieu einzunehmen und es distanziert zu beschreiben in der Lage ist. Heute, sieben Jahrzehnte später, gehört er zu den Letzten, die aus eigenem Erleben über die Kultur der iranischen Stämme berichten können – die schon so sehr eine vergangene ist, dass sie bereits in “Festivals der *ʿašāyer*-Kultur” – Event-Veranstaltungen mit grobschlächtigen Show-Effekten – repräsentiert zu werden beginnt.

Burkhard Ganzer

Xie, Yuanyuan: *Ecological Migrants. The Relocation of China's Ewenki Reindeer Herders.* New York: Berghahn Books, 2015. 220 pp. ISBN 978-1-78238-632-2. Price: \$ 95.00

In her monograph, Xie Yuanyuan examines the whys and wherefores of the 2003 policy of “ecological migration” initiated by the local authorities to sedentarise the Reindeer Ewenki, a small group of herders living in northeastern Inner Mongolia, PRC. Originally published in Chinese by Peking University Press (2010), the present volume is the second English-language book devoted to the Chinese Reindeer Evenki, following “Reclaiming the Forest. The Ewenki Reindeer Herders of Aoluguya,” edited by the same author together with Åshild Kolås (Berghahn Books, 2015). It is thus a welcome contribution, since recent academic work on the Tungus people of China remains limited in comparison with the abundant literature available on the Tungus of Russia. Divided into five chapters, the book explores the “migration” project from its planning phase and execution to the final stage. Relying on official documents, interviews, and personal fieldwork, Xie argues that the so-called “ecological policy” was an example of “planned modernization” which

led to the emergence of social conflicts between the different parties.

The author begins with her fieldwork conducted between 2003 and 2004 in the new “Aoluguya ethnic village” and nomadic camps in the forest. It emerges that the local government’s plan to resettle the Ewenki was a failure: because reindeer herding requires a viable environment, the Ewenki still spend part of the year in the forest. Xie gives the reader a glimpse into the complex issues surrounding the relocation and the multiple actors involved: these included Ewenki herders, Ewenki working in the government, the local authorities, Han Chinese who used to live in the former Aoluguya village, and journalists.

The second chapter presents the Ewenki’s “traditional lifestyle.” Combining hunting with reindeer herding, the Ewenki used to nomadise according to seasonal variations and the needs of their herds. However, their nomadic way of life has undergone profound changes over the past 70 years. Xie provides some telling examples in this respect: since the 1980s, the *urilen*, a family-based nomadic camp, has gradually been replaced by a social organisation dependent on practical and profit-based considerations. The same holds true for religious practices related to Christian Orthodoxy and shamanism, which are nowadays confined to the existence of some Russian surnames and the *malu* (the name of both a spirit and a sacred place in the tent), respectively. These transformations must be seen alongside the various sedentarisation campaigns launched since 1949. The first Ewenki ethnic village, created in 1957 in the vicinity of the Russian border, was moved in 1965 because of the hostile Sino-Soviet relationship and the fear that the Ewenki would flee to the USSR. The older herders who were interviewed demonstrated their satisfaction with the second relocation, as they were allowed to open new hunting grounds: this was important given the fact that hunting was their predominant economic activity in this period. Simultaneously, the arrival of Chinese workers gradually damaged the ecosystem, depriving the Ewenki of game and natural resources. Soon, the “hunting at the forefront” policy was replaced by the “herding reindeer at the forefront” policy.

From the third chapter on, the book centres on the process of “ecological migration.” Partly financed by the Western Development Policy, the project was spread over three years and cost 11 million RMB. Xie reveals that, in addition to the official aim of “preserving the natural environment and improving reindeer herders’ life,” the local government was also motivated by the prospect of financial gain. The author equally underlines the advocacy work carried out by the local authorities to convince the herders that the migration policy was sound. In 2002, a new site was finally selected next to Genhe City, 250 kilometres away from the previous location. Along with reindeer pens, a hunting park and a museum were founded to preserve “ethnic culture,” develop tourism, and provide the herders with new economic perspectives. Although fenced enclosures for reindeer herding had been unsuccessful in the past, the government decided to attempt it again; unsurprisingly, it was doomed to failure.

However, this did not bring this extraordinary situation to a close. While managing housing allocation, the government discovered that the number of Ewenki households had been wrongly reported on the basis of records dating from the 1960s (there were 31 instead of 62). The government had to allocate residence on social and ethnic criteria, only the Ewenki without employment were given a house.

In the fourth chapter, the author deals with the aftermath of “ecological migration.” Since the fences produced a death of reindeer, the herders went back to their nomadic camps. Still, the damage was already done. The government then had to deal with complaints from all the parties involved: while some claimed relocation fees or guns after the ban on hunting, other herders were worried about the poor health of their reindeer. Meanwhile the people who used to live in old Aoluguya complained that no assistance was being provided to help them to find a house in the city. The author finishes with a section on education, showing that there continue to be opportunities only for those Ewenki who work for the government. The final chapter ends with considerations of the future of Aoluguya. According to the herders, ecological migration has led to impoverishment.

Through a detailed analysis of the policy of “ecological migration,” Xie uncovers the inside story of a misguided policy that resulted in various conflicts. In the end, the Reindeer Ewenki’s greatest complaint is that they have to live on government subsidies instead of being able to use their own resources. The most insightful part of the book lies in the way the author describes the migration process,

striking a balance between the voices of all the groups concerned. However, inappropriate expressions recur throughout the book: while the “History of Ming” and the “New Book of Tang” are labelled “antiquarian book” (4), the feminine given Maria is written Maruia (20), Malia (57), and then Marian (59). Additionally, while some Russian appellations are provided in Cyrillic, others appear in Chinese transliteration (“Nigelai” instead of Nikolai and “Dajiyana” for Tatiana, p. 59). The most problematic issue is the chaotic usage of terms connected with evolutionism and physical anthropology: provided without quotations or explanations, they may confuse the author’s intentions. Consider, for instance, the following examples: “Their skin color was relatively light, though their faces and hands had darkened into a healthy tan due to sweat and labor under the sun” (23); “From what I saw – from the eyes of modern civilization –” (39); “pure blood Evenki,” etc. Furthermore, the assumption that the herders used to live “quite isolated from the rest of the world” prior to the 1950s (50) is an argument that has already been discredited by various scholars, such as Khazanov. The Reindeer Evenki have always maintained strong ties with various peoples, like other Evenki groups, the Chinese, and Cossacks. Additional references to other cases studies of ecological migration in China would have reinforced the analysis (for example, the Tibetans). Nonetheless, this book provides a good account of the Reindeer Evenki of China and will be useful for those interested in the policies of the Chinese government directed towards nomadic groups scattered within its borders.

Aurore Dumont