Fields On The Hoof Essay, Research Paper

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Your livelihood. How do you make a living? How do you support yourself and your family? What problems do you face? How do you solve them? What do you do, what must you do, to achieve a reasonable measure of economic security?

The people of the aBrog Pa live a very different and unique life. The aBrog Pa are considered pastoralist people who live in the Himalayan Mountains of Tibet. They live between 12,000 and 17,000 feet up in the Himalayan Mountains. For many of us, we would find it nearly impossible to function at altitudes of this magnification yet the aBrog Pa manage to have a civilized workable community in these elevations. The aBrog Pa have managed to make a living and support them selves in these harsh environments. Although they face problems at times, they usually find ways to solve them and continue with their lives.

The aBrog Pa have devoted their lives to their animals in order for them to make a living. The animals that this society depends upon are such animals as livestock, yak, sheep, cattle, horse, and some camels. Their entire economic structure is based upon these animals. The sheep in this society are important because of a particular kind of wool, which links the economy with world trade and brings special affluence to the society. The aBrog Pa do little if any hunting and gathering because animals are their main source of food. Some of the animals are used for milking such as the hybrids because these are the stronger animals and are said to produce more milk. This milk can either be drank or such things as butter and cheese are made from it. They also use it in their tea, which is drunk daily at meals or is offered to guest. Some animals are butchered for their meat. Every part of the animal is used. They throw nothing away. For instance, they may use a sheep?s stomach to store things in such as food. Even the animal?s blood is collected because blood is a major part of their diet. They rely mainly on horses as their main form of transportation. The horses are useful when the aBrog Pa have to move to different areas of the mountain. They make hauling everything a lot easier. The animals also provide clothing such as wool, skins, hair, and boots. Basically every article of clothing that an aBrog Pa has is made from an animal in one way or another. Their tents are made entirely from animal skins except the stakes. In order to get items that the aBrog Pa need but cannot produce; they must trade for them. They will either sell or trade their animals or animal products for grain and cash or they will use the cash they get from the animals to buy things that they need to survive. Wealth in the aBrog Pa society is based upon the number of animals that you own and how wisely you use them and to what affect.

The aBrog Pa as a group help and support eachother to certain extents. For the most part though, the nuclear families are responsible for supporting themselves and their family members. Other members of the group will help by watching your herd as they graze to make sure they do not run off. Each family is responsible for supplying their families with food and for the most part taking care of their herd. Other members may help you butcher an animal or help you with some other task. It is asked in return that you help that person at some point when they need help. In times of need, like in the winter, the whole tribe or group will help eachother as much as they can. In order for your animals to make it through the winter, you must make sure that you fatten the animals up as much as possible in the summer months. This requires a lot of movement to different areas of the mountain so the animals can feed. This requires lots of cooperation between family members? because they also must pack up and move with the herd. Each family member is responsible for packing and unpacking certain items. The aBrog Pa must make decisions about movement based on the needs of the animal not themselves because it is the herds that support the aBrog Pa.

With the aBrog Pa?s culture being based around their herds, they do run into a few major problems that they must deal with. Those problems have to deal with herd management. One of the problems that the aBrog Pa are faced with is raids. There are wild animals that will come and try to kill members of the herd. The aBrog Pa deal with this problem by having people watching the animals at all times and they also have dogs that are very protective and bark when they see an intruder or predators. All though it is impossible to eliminate raiding all together, taking these steps makes it a lot harder. Another problem that faces the aBrog Pa has to do with breeding. Since winter is such a hard time for the people and the herds, the last thing they want is the animal dropping babies at the toughest time of the year. They try to control the breeding by castrating a number of the males. They only leave a few members of each species with the ability to breed. This helps to control the problem a great deal. The aBrog Pa try to also eliminate the hybrid animals from breeding because they think that the offspring will take away from the animal. If hybrid animal gives any offspring, they are killed as soon as they are born. Like all societies deal with, the aBrog Pa also have to deal with diseases related to their animals. One of the major diseases that face these animals is the hoof and mouth disease. They also have to deal with animals with broken and bones and cuts. Open wounds are treated with hot butter and hot ashes. Broken bones are just set in place and then stabilized. One ointment is made from herbs and vegetable oil and it is used to treat scabies. The aBrog Pa also practice acupuncture on animals and many other ointments and medicine are used to try to stop and prevent diseases from occurring. If a disease spreads through out a group they will isolate the group or quarantine them so they will not spread the disease to the other members of the herd. This has been an effective technique in stopping the spread of a disease but it is not a cure. One of the major decisions that the aBrog Pa must make is in regards to the making of hay. They have the option of making hay for the animals so they will have something to eat when winter comes, or they can hope that the animal gets fat enough during the spring and summer so that they will survive the harsh winter. The problems with making the hay is that since the aBrog Pa is always on the move, it is really hard to store the hay. Since storage is so difficult, the animals usually end up getting into it and eating it. Another problem with making hay is that they can?t do it by themselves. They have to pay other people to help them make enough hay. If the animal gets into it, you have lost a lot of money and time all for nothing. The obvious problem with not making hay is that the animal may starve and die. Either way you are taking risk by making the hay or by letting the animal try to survive off it?s own fat.

Achieving economic security in the aBrog Pa society is not an easy thing. Their economy is based around the number animals that they have and how healthy they are. In order for an aBrog Pa to attain economic security this must take extremely good care of their animals, which is the basis for their economy. They must watch them at all times to make sure they don?t get raided. They must make sure that the animals breed so they will have security in the future. Everything that an aBrog Pa owns, wears, or eats is most likely in one way from an animal. As you can see these animals are extremely important and great care goes into each one making sure they are disease free and that they will be able to survive the harsh weather conditions so they will be able to produce off spring in the spring months. The higher numbers of animals you have that are healthy and reproducing, the better off you are in concerns with being economically secure. The aBrog Pa also need to make sure that they do not have too many animals in their herd so they must also controlling the breeding of some members of their herd. Too many animals would mean not enough food and then some would end up dying. The goal is to try to have as many animals in your herd but not to many because then the animals would be competing for food. Trying to find that right number is a difficult task because one never knows how much grass there will be to graze in a particular year. The aBrog Pa takes many risks about where to move their animals to graze, and how many animals to keep. Sometimes those risks do not pay off, but other times they do. It?s a risk that is taken from day to day and a risk that determines whether or not the aBrog Pa will be economically secure during that period of time.

The aBrog Pa is a simple but very complex society. They are simple in the basis that their daily schedule of events is almost the same from day to day. What they have to do how ever is not simple. It is very complex. They spend their entire days taking care of their herds because it is the herds that bring the aBrog Pa everything they need to survive from day to day.