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MunkhDalai A. Zhang

*Bureau of Land and Mineral Resources of Hulunbuir City, China*

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## **Mongolian nomadic culture and ecological reconstruction in the agro-pastoral mosaic zone in northern China**

*MunkhDalai A . Zhang*

*Bureau of Land and Mineral Resources of Hulunbuir City , Hulunbuir , Inner Mongolia , China , E-mail : chaganchulu@126 .com*

**Key words :** Mongolian nomadic culture , ecological safety , ecological protection and sustainability

**Introduction** We deal with the environmental problem of sandy desertification and ecological reconstruction in the arid region of northern China from a cultural approach . Historically , the region was the homeland of nomadic ethnic groups , with mobile livestock grazing as their dominant culture . Due to the large scale immigration of agrarian population from the Central Plain of China mainly from 1740s ( Baozhong , 2003 ) , the grassland ecology has become gradually fragmented and turned into an agro-pastoral interlocked mosaic pattern in the transition area between nomadic and agrarian cultures . This marked the beginning of serious problems of wind erosion and sandy desertification relevant to land use patterns , which has been posing an ever growing threat to ecological , environmental , economic and social safety of the region and adjacent areas .

**Materials and methods** Grassland investigation and site testing , document analysis and reasoning .

**Results** Strong wind and arid climate can cause severe wind erosion if the grassland surface is disturbed . Therefore , protection of the soil-grass roots layer is crucial in protecting grassland stability and controlling desertification in the arid northern China ( see also MunkhDalai , 2007 ) . And this could be the basic reason why the nomadic Mongolians stress most strongly the soil-grass roots layer protection in their unwritten regulations , statute law , custom , literature , ethics and so forth . Mongolian nomadic culture is distilled from the nomads' experience based on knowledge gained from struggles against natural disasters and constraints . It is established due to long-term adaptation of nomadic people and the selection of their environment . This is a unique cultural existence that is suitable , compatible , and sustainable way of development in accordance with the natural and environment in the area . In order to mitigate the ecological pressure and promote re-construction of the ecology in the agro-pastoral mosaic area in northern China , there is a need to re-look and re-think of the principles embodied in nomadic culture .

**Conclusions** Expansion of cropping into the fragile ecosystem in the arid northern China was an unfortunate mistake . The ecological reconstruction in the region and sustainable management of these grassland ecosystems can benefit from reviving mobile/rotational livestock grazing system that has been successfully applied for centuries by Mongolian herders . Meanwhile , relevant policies should be revised so that to avoid exacerbating land degradation and desertification in such region .

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