

## **Pastoralist mobility and resettlement in Bhutan highlands in light of northern border issues**

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This study examined the current situation of a pastoral society in Bhutan, particularly groups with members residing at higher altitudes and raising yaks near the northern border. When the Bhutanese government pursued development as a semi-sedentary rice farming agricultural society, the pastoral society in the highlands was not acknowledged during national unification and modernization. Instead, they became the object of a resettlement program and were recommended to undertake sedentary farming. However, recent disputes with the Chinese government on the northern border have forced the government to acknowledge the “highlanders” and their significance from the viewpoint of “national security”. Now, maintenance of the highlanders’ pastoral lifestyle and development of the highlands have become objectives that the government must achieve. However, many highlanders have already altered their own means of livelihood and places of residence. Simultaneously, conventional asymmetrical socioeconomic relations between pastoralists in the highlands and sedentary agricultural farmers in lowlands have been gradually reconstructed.