



Disasters and Cultural Stereotypes

Elya Tzaneva

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This volume is a second attempt of a joint international research team (consisting of Bulgarian, Chinese, Russian and American ethnologists), to contribute to a domain of ecological anthropology. The editors of and contributors share the understanding that catastrophic events challenge society to rework a specific methodology, and to activate a specific resource, to adapt to and cope with crises ecologically, socially and ideologically. The main aim of this volume is to reveal the important role of studying and taking into account the cultural stereotypes in this process. Through detailed analysis of different case studies, the contributors further generalize the definition of disasters and critical situations as situations that arise from the violation of a balance in individual and collective life, as any deviation from normality in the particular context of each discreet culture. This interpretation informs a structural grouping of the materials in this collection into three main parts. The section on Cultural Responses to Natural and Biological Disasters (specific case studies) follows the Conceptualization of Cultural Knowledge about Disasters. The contributors to the collection share the conviction that the ecology of social crises (presented in the volume by the third section on Cultural Management of Social Crises) is a valuable and necessary addition to the field of natural and technological, bio-and man-made disasters. They believe this is proved by the texts presented in this volume. The empirical data employed in the volume, respectively the forms of disasters researched include materials from the Tibetan Pastoral area and the Pamir Plateau in Asia, from the Rhodopes and Strandja Mountains on the Balkans, from Macedonia and Central and Western Bulgaria, ethnic minority areas in Central and Western China, and from Ukraine and Moldova.

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