

Inviting Happiness

Food Sharing in Post-communist Mongolia

SANDRINE RUHLMANN

For Mongols, sharing food is more than just eating meals. Through a process of “opening” and “closing”, on a daily basis or at events, in the family circle or with visitors, sharing food guarantees the proper order of social relations. It also ensures the course of the seasons and the cycle of human life. Through food sharing, humans thus invite happiness to their families and herds. Sandrine Ruhlmann has lived long months, since 2000, in the Mongolian steppe and in the city. She describes and analyses in detail the contemporary food system and recognizes intertwined ideas and values inherited from shamanism, Buddhism and communist ideology. Through meat-on-the-bone, creamy milk skin, dumplings or sole-shaped cakes, she highlights a whole way of thinking and living.

Sandrine Ruhlmann is researcher of anthropology at the French National Centre for Scientific Research. She has published many articles in French and English on Mongolian food practices and animal diseases governance in a post-communist context. *Inviting Happiness: Food Sharing in Post-communist Mongolia* is the English-language translation of her *L'appel du Bonheur. Le partage alimentaire mongol*, CEMS-EPHE, 2015.

ISBN 978 90 04 40965 1



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