



Ancient Futures: Lessons from Ladakh for a Globalizing World

Helena Norberg-Hodge

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A gripping portrait of the western Himalayan land sometimes known as “Little Tibet,” *Ancient Futures* opens with author Helena Norberg-Hodge’s first visit in 1975 to idyllic, preindustrial Ladakh. She then tracks the profound changes that occurred as the region was opened to foreign tourists and Western goods and technologies, and offers a firsthand account of how relentless pressure for economic growth precipitated generational and religious conflict, unemployment, inflation, and environmental damage, threatening to unravel Ladakh’s traditional way of life.

Energized by the fate of a people who had captured her heart, Norberg-Hodge helped establish the Ladakh Project (later renamed the International Society for Ecology and Culture) to seek sustainable solutions that preserve cultural integrity and environmental health while addressing the hunger for modernization. Since then, other Ladakh-based projects have proliferated, supporting renewable energy systems, local agricultural methods, and the spiritual foundations of Ladakhi culture.

The author’s new afterword brings readers up-to-date on the work of these projects and on her own career over several decades as she traveled widely, observing similar impacts on other cultures. She challenges us to rethink our concepts of “development” and “progress,” stressing above all the need to carry ancient wisdom into our future.

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