

Mountain Farmers: Moral Economies of Land & Agricultural Development in Arusha & Meru

Thomas Spear

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As he traces the history of settlement on Mt. Meru since the seventeenth century, Spear focuses on the coming of colonizers and missionaries and local resistance to them; the transition from German to British colonial rule; colonial struggles over land, taxes, forced labor, coffee cooperatives, Christianity, education, and more. In addition, Spear explains the background to one of the most famous episodes in Tanzanian political history, the Meru Land case. This is the first extended study of one of the most historically and culturally interesting regions of Tanzania in East Africa. *Mountain Farmers* is a detailed comparative history of two ethnic groups who share one mountain home--the Meru are traditionally farmers; the Arusha cattle-herders related to the Maasai. Thomas Spear's engaging study, based on recent archival and field research, ranges across several centuries of political and economic history, comparing the responses of these very different peoples to the settlement of Mount Meru, to colonial conquest, and to increasing land shortages. Spear moves away from models of social history that tend toward economic determinism, and instead seeks to understand the role of culture in socio-economic change.

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