



Village Life in Late Tsarist Russia (Indiana-Michigan Series in Russian & East European Studies)

Olga Semyonova Tian-Shanskaia

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Village Life in Late Tsarist Russia provides a unique firsthand portrait of peasant family life as recorded by Olga Semyonova Tian-Shanskaia, an ethnographer and painter who spent four years at the turn of the twentieth century observing the life and customs of villagers in a central Russian province. Unusual in its awareness of the rapid changes in the Russian village in the late nineteenth century and in its concentration on the treatment of women and children, Semyonova's ethnography vividly describes courting rituals, marriage and sexual practices, childbirth, infanticide, child-rearing practices, the lives of women, food and drink, work habits, and the household economy. In contrast to a tradition of rosy, romanticized descriptions of peasant communities by Russian upper-class observers, Semyonova gives an unvarnished account of the harsh living conditions and often brutal relationships within peasant families.

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