

Mongolei-Colloquium

Prof. Dr. L. Munkh-Erdene

(Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology)

„Making Mongolia Multi-Ethnic: Knowledge, Power and Identity“

Starting from the 1920s and onward, new terms such as *ündersten*, *ugsaatan*, and *yastan* and much later *ugsaatny бүлэг* began to circulate in Mongolia's political and scholarly discourses to denote Mongols as a whole or to divide them into separate categories. Today, Mongolians are accustomed to think of themselves as forming a nation (*ündersten*) and an ethnicity (*ugsaatan*) of more than 20 “nationalities” (*yas ünder* or *yastan*) or “ethnic groups” (*ugsaatny бүлэг*) such as the Khalkha, Dörböd, Dariganga and so on. All of these sub-Mongolian categories are officially recognized as “nationalities” and publicly accepted as “ethnic groups”. Yet, paradoxically, all of these “ethnic groups”, with the exception of the Kazakhs, are considered to belong to the Mongol ethnicity.

This situation raises several important questions. What exactly are these sub-Mongolian “ethnic groups” if they are ethnically Mongol? How have they come into existence within the ethnic Mongols in the nation-state of Mongolia, especially, if Mongolians were building a nation-state? What could have motivated the Mongolian state to divide its own population into multiple nationalities instead of cementing them into a single nationality, as it was the case in most of the modern nation-building projects? How were these “different” nationalities or ethnic groups identified and recognized? How did Mongolians know to which nationality they belong?

To answer these questions, the research examines two hitherto neglected, yet critical developments: the ethnological study of Mongolia and the Mongolian state's nationality policy, and their impact on Mongolians' way of conceptualizing themselves in terms of nationalities or ethnic groups. In addition, by analyzing the agency that the state power and “scientific” knowledge play in the construction of an ethnically framed vision of society, this research aims to explore the theoretical implication of Mongolia's apparently paradoxical and counterintuitive case to the understanding of ethnicity.

Mittwoch, 27. Jan. 2016

18:00 Uhr c. t.

Zentralasien-Seminar 5. Etage, Raum 507

Invalidenstr. 118 10115 Berlin

(U6 Naturkundemuseum, S-Bhf Nordbahnhof)

Gäste sind herzlich willkommen!