



Mongolei-Colloquium

NEUER TERMIN: Dienstag, 18. November 2025, 10 Uhr (c.t.)
Brühler Straße 7, NUR via ZOOM

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Milk and Microbes: Matters of Care in Mongolian Pastoralism

In **Mongolian pastoralism**, milk and dairy production compose primary fields of multispecies interaction where biosocial growth is generated through the meticulous labor and **knowledge of herder women**.

In this talk, I draw on **ethnographic insights** from three different pastoral regions of Mongolia to demonstrate how milk fermentation, as a **more-than-human relationship between herders, animals, microbes, and material culture**, constitutes a central part of pastoral livelihoods and knowledge systems. At the center of these relationships is the **notion of *khöröngö***, a term that takes material and immaterial form as it **translates as lactic ferment, property, capital, heritage, and knowledge**. *Khöröngö* as ferment creates bonds between a multiplicity of living beings and across time and space. Through cross-generational sharing and exchange across varying geographic scales, *khöröngö* becomes a “matter of care” (Puig de la Bellacasa 2016) that also provides for a conceptual framework of growth based on a nuanced cyclical pattern that goes beyond limitless extraction and accumulation. In this context, **herder women are the stewards of biosocial growth and well-being**. Despite the detailed techniques and situated knowledge that are crucial for navigating milk fermentation and generating growth, herder women’s labor and pastoral heritage is only little acknowledged for.



Im Mongolei-Colloquium, seit 2013 organisiert von der Mongolistik am IOA, werden aktuelle mongoleibezogene Forschungsprojekte und Praxisfelder vorgestellt. In diesem Forum kommen Forschende, Studierende und die interessierte Öffentlichkeit ins Gespräch.

Interessierte & Gäste sind herzlich willkommen!