

Student Project: Subtitle Creation for Original Language Films from Mongolia

Since the winter semester 2013/2014, Mongolian film evenings have been held regularly at the Central Asia Seminar, organized by Dr. Ganchimeg Altangerel. These supplementary events enable students to get to know the socio-political and historical processes of change in Mongolia through cinematic artefacts. This film series, selected in advance after careful and detailed research, includes historical and fairy-tale films, social dramas, comedies, action films, documentaries and documentary feature films, both from the socialist era and contemporary time. Within the framework of student projects, the students develop German and English subtitles for the screenings under the supervision of Dr. Ganchimeg Altangerel. Through these projects, students have the unique opportunity to study the Mongolian language intensively. Not only are the language skills of listening comprehension and writing practice but the translation work also gives them a better understanding of cultural concepts within Mongolia because often an accurate translation requires not only linguistic but also cultural comparison. Therefore, some terms, idioms or proverbs in the subtitles are not so much translated as explained.

Over the course of this long project, the following feature films from the socialist era have been subtitled to date: *Serelt* (Awakening) from 1957, *Ardyn Elch* (The People's Envoy) from 1959, *Aman Khuur* (Harmonica) from 1963 and *Ulaanbaatar Baigaa Miny Aav* (For My Dad in Ulaanbaatar) from 1961. The old German translation of the fairy tale film *Altan Örgöö* (The Golden Yurt), a 1961 co-production of the film studios of the GDR and the Mongolian People's Republic, was revised in the winter semester 2015/2016 and more accurate German subtitles were added. Subtitles for the feature films *Irij Yavaa Tsag* (The Time to Come) and *Nandin Erdene* (My Most Valuable Treasure), both from the 1980s, round out the thematic diversity of the film series. The subtitled feature films *Single Ladies* from the year 2013 and *Ürgeeleg* (Drifting Hunt) from 2014 offered the students the opportunity to deal with current research topics in regional studies in Mongolia and the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in the People's Republic of China using the medium of film. These included socio-political challenges such as cross-border human trafficking, poverty, divorce, etc..

Mongolian Studies at Humboldt Universität receives all original-language films free of charge through contractual agreements between the State Archive of Mongolia, the media company Univision, and Mongolian Studies at Humboldt Universität. In return, Mongolian Studies at Humboldt Universität makes the German and English subtitles freely available to the Mongolian contract partners. The Mongolian Film Evening at Humboldt Universität is still the only university event outside of Mongolia worldwide that continuously and successfully stages such a program.