

ROLE OF MONGOLIAN GER IN SOCIAL INTERACTION AND TRANSLATION OF GER INTO ENGLISH

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Cultural heritage of an ethnic group plays as a trademark of that nationality by being promoted and recognized in worldwide. Ancient nomadic culture allows Mongolians to cherish many unique heritage pieces such as Mongolian ger, horsehead fiddle, Mongolian long song, Mongolian throat singing, “airag” (mare’s fermented milk beverage), etc.

This article aims to analyse the role of Mongolian ger in social interaction and propose the translation of “Ger” into English.

One. Since the tribal settlement of ancient humans the social interaction has developed between members of a tribe and between tribes.

One of the factors of social interaction is the type of dwelling of members of the society. Mongolian ger is a unique dwelling, which is environmentally friendly, simple and convenient for nomadic lifestyle, and it allows humans to have a direct connection to nature. Also Mongolian ger is an essential part of social interaction and cultural distinction of Mongolians.

The center part of Mongolian ger is dedicated to the fireplace and Mongolian fireplace has far more significance than just for heating and cooking unit. It has the highly revered notion of a Hearth of home and plays deeply in spirituality of Mongolian people. Within this sentimental and devotional conception they see it as a base of a family home, warmth and liveliness of a family.

In ancient times they used three rocks positioned in a triangular form to make fire and set a pot to cook. The direct energy of an open fire had a positive influence on human’s physical, mental and spiritual development and wellbeing. Fire energy cleanses the family hearth and home from negative intrusions.

Mongolians do sacrificial offerings to the fireplace and spiritual beings through fire, which directly connects them with Celestial Bodies as in a form of a vertical tunnel through the opening at the center of roof of a Mongolian ger, according to the ancient Mongolian shamanic ritual. Derived from this fact there is a concept that Mongolians have strong “Vertical energy”.

Unique design and settings of Mongolian ger put a strong impact on sense of direction, which is the basic of spiritual stability for leading life. Mongolians obtain respectful behavior environmentally and socially from their childhood on the base of discipline related to Mongolian ger and that guides them through in social interaction, adaptation, flexibility, social code and life philosophy.

Mongolian ger always faces to the south, and it has designated seats for men, on the right side of the ger; and for women, on the left side of the ger; and the north is for the family shrine. The head of family seats on the northeast, seniors seat on north west or northeast, guests are invited to seat upper parts of both sides, people are expected to seat in age sequences, and avoiding to seat in opposite to the door. All these rules are a part of main fundamentals of social interaction.

One of the distinguishable characters of Mongolian ger is its potential of harmonizing a warm and close environment inside the family. All family members living together in one ger and finding a harmony to coexist are the most valuable life lesson. Having conversations, feeling close to each other, sharing good and bad, helping and supporting each other are the foundation for social integrity.

In modern society the urban lifestyle diminishes the old tradition. Homes are getting bigger, in which almost every member of a family has his own room, and that causes separation of family members, lessens the feelings for each other, weakens the relationship and loosens the family ties. Every member has his own agenda, going to work or school or day-care center, from morning till evening, and after dinner all disappears into their own rooms from evening till next morning, there is not time for each other and not much care and affection and nourishing energy left for one another.

Not long ago Mongolians had been talking about dysfunctional family relationships in western, developed countries. But in 20 years we are catching up them in a hurry, adopting that dysfunctional lifestyle.

The article "Living with less" (Graham Hill) in the New York Times newspaper stated: "The average size of a new American home in 1950 was 983 square feet (89 square meter); by 2011, the average new home was 2480 square feet (230 square meter). And an average of 3.37 people lived in each American home in 1950; in 2011, that number had shrunk to 2.6 people".

Imagine a child is growing up alone in his room, sleeping and playing alone, seeing his parents a few hours a day. That is the cause of becoming a selfish, secluded and uncaring person, and it should be considered as a human rights issue as well.

Humans have been existed in tribal and communal structures since their origins and survived through communal efforts, and no history of an individual existence can be found. The modern, urban settlement is explained by human rights, privacy and individual space. But a person's private space and energy sphere do not have to be protected with separate rooms, actually, personal energy field cannot exist in a vacuum environment, it must be being recharged from other sources. The Sun, fire source, celestial energy and fellow human's positive energy exchange are the sources to nourish a person's energy in daily life.

In developed countries the suicide rate is being increased during an economic recession. According to the statistics since 2000 the suicide rate in New York is increased by 20% and white Americans take the most of the percentage. This can be reasoned with the lifestyle of being raised in lonely environment, based on conscience of self-dependency, and that mentality cannot stand the challenge of economic crisis. Those, who was raised without learning to receive and exchange energy flow from external sources, fall into depression and give up easily when they face crisis and their internal energy is depleted.

In contrary, children raised in Mongolian gers learn the ethics, social codes from early ages and grow up with knowledge and purpose of life. They always feel close to their family, which gives them comfort and security in good and bad times.

Becoming a person starts with learning to love and respect others while living with parents, siblings and grandparents in loving relationship. This basis is not inhibited by going to schools, it is gradually set by close observation and participation of daily chores and cultural rituals, habits of respectful manner towards to elderly and the nature and discipline for learning of living in a harmony. If the foundation is set right it is much easier to build up the knowledge and education on top of that. It is like building a good house - with a solid foundation and rightly designed structure the building will withstand firmly against any storm, likewise, that kind of person will accumulate knowledge and enhance his mind and become a powerful, leading force in a society.

Mongolian ger allows people to interact with nature directly. They walk out simply and easily into the nature, interact with their neighbors in daily basis, cooperate in their dealings, help each other, communicate freely, which strengthen their social interactions, improvise language, culture and tradition. Thus, there is a Mongolian proverb "One life within family, one purpose within neighbors".

One of the distinctions is tidiness of the ger. Inside of the ger is wide open, like an object on the palm, and it is unwritten rule to keep your home clean and tidy out of respect for each other, guests and even outsiders, because the door is never locked except at night. Every morning beds are made, clothes and personal items kept away, all furniture have designated places, and floors are cleaned. But in big houses and apartments it is common that a living room looks clean, but back rooms are not behind closed doors.

There are visible signs of communication like the top opening called "toono" is covered at night as a window in a house, but if it is covered day and night that shows someone just died in the ger. If there is someone is sick with infectious disease they cross the door with red ribbon.

Mongolian custom is related to the nomadic lifestyle, a part of which is ger, and there are certain rules to follow like it is prohibited to step on or sit on the threshold of the ger, to stumble over the threshold while going out, in that case a person

should come back and put a piece of dung or firewood into the fireplace, then go out, to walk in front of the family shrine, to hold the door frame with stretched arms, to seat by crouching down, to cross between columns, to lean over the column, to put any garbage in the fireplace, etc.

Another special feature of the ger is open-door custom that doors are not locked during the day, and that represents hospitality of the family as well as welcoming, positive attitude and openness in social interaction. When someone approaches a ger, he makes a sound or saying aloud “Watch your dog!”, which is a sign of respecting privacy but not much of fear of a dog, and one of a family members comes out to greet and welcome him in. Neighbors, too, make a sound as if clearing their throat before entering the ger.

Open-door custom advocates respect for others, unwritten social norm and proper interaction in society. It is not uncommon that strangers in long journey find a ger unoccupied and unlocked and go ahead to serve food and drinks themselves and no guilt or blame occur in such event.

The distinguished characteristics of Mongolian Ger is not measured by its size and form, but it is valued by its vital energy flow between humans and other entities, as well promoting humane mind and social norm. Thus Mongolian Ger plays a major role in social interactions in nomadic culture.

TWO. The word “Mongolian ger” has been translated in English literature as a “Yurt” or “Tent”, and that is not expressive translation to represent Mongolian life, culture and tradition.

“Yurt” is a word, originally from a [Turkic](#) word referring to the imprint left in the ground by a moved yurt, and by extension, sometimes a person's homeland, but it was borrowed into Russian representing all round shaped dwellings in Central Asian countries.

“Tent” is a word for a temporary shelter, made of canvas, so it even is used with adjectives “round, felt” it does not express anything except the form.

Thus, above translations show differences not only between compared objects, but also values of those objects, and that causes lessening of cultural value of source text.

Lawrence Venuti suggested a foreignizing method, an ethnodeviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad, over a domesticating method, an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bringing the author back home.

The word “Ger” is a root word for many words and phrases such as home, marriage, wife, domesticate, become homey, family, home affair, etc., and it comprises wide range of meanings so that it cannot be translated into form describing words.

Using the foreignizing method of translation will do the best to keep the cultural identity of Mongolian tradition, and translate it as “Ger”.

This translation will promote Mongolian culture heritage in worldwide, and for that initiation the word “Mongolian Ger” should be used in all literary writings and advertisements with a footnote of “Mongolian traditional dwelling” and inserted in dictionaries.