

# Mongol Documents

## Doc 1:

**The Secret History of the Mongols, 13th Century, compiled from Mongol Oral Traditions**

After this in the Year of the Sheep Chinggis Khan set out to fight the people of Cathay (the Chin Empire in north China). First he took the city of Fu-chou then marching through the Wild Fox Pass he took Hsuan-te-fu. From here he sent out an army under Jebe's command to take the fortress at Chu-yung Kuan.

When Jebe arrived he saw the Chu-yung Kuan was well defended, so he said: I'll trick them and make them come out in the open. I'll pretend to retreat and when they come out I'll attack them.

So Jebe retreated and the Cathayan army cried: Let us go after them!

They poured out of their fortifications until the valleys and mountainsides were full of their soldiers. Jebe retreated to Sondi-i-wu Ridge and there he turned his army around to attack as the enemy rushed towards him in waves. The Cathayan army was beaten and close behind Jebe's forces Chinggis Khan commanding the great Middle Army attacked as well, forcing the Cathayan army to retreat, killing the finest and most courageous soldiers of Cathay, the Jurchin and Khara Khitan fighters, slaughtering them along the side of Chu-yung Kuan so that their bodies lay piled up like rotten logs.

## Doc 2:

**The Chronicles of Novgorod, 1016-1417, written by anonymous monks in Novgorod near Russia.**

[In 1238] foreigners called Tartars came in countless numbers, like locusts, into the land of the Ryazan, and on first coming they halted at the river Nukhla, and took it, and halted in camp there. And thence they sent their emissaries to the Knyazes of Ryasan... And the Knyazes said to them: only when none of us remain then all will be yours...and then the pagan foreigners surrounded

Ryazan and fences it in with a stockade. And the Tartars took the town on December 21, and they had advanced against it on the 16th of the same month. They likewise killed the Knyaz and the Knyaginya, and men, women, and children, monks, nuns and priests, some by fire, some by sword, and violated nuns, priests wives, good women and girls in the presence of their mothers and sisters. And who, brethren, would not lament over this, among those of us alive when they suffered this bitter and violent death? And we, indeed, having seen it, were terrified and wept with sighing day and night over our sins.

## Doc 3:

**Travels, Marco Polo, Written in 1298 based on his travels from 1274 to 1290.**

Their arms are bows, iron maces, and in some instances, spears; but the first is the weapon at which they are the most expert, being accustomed, from children, to employ it in their sports.

They wear defensive armor made from buffalo and hides of other beasts, dried by the fire, and thus rendered extremely hard and strong. They are brave in battle, almost to desperation, setting little value upon their lives, and exposing themselves without hesitation to all manner of danger. Their disposition is cruel.

They are capable of supporting every kind of privation, and when there is a necessity for it, can live for a month on the milk of their mares, and upon such wild animals as they may chance to catch. Their horses are fed upon grass alone, and do not require barley or other grain. The men are trained to remain on horseback during two days and two nights, without dismounting.

**Doc 4:**

**Persian History of Chinggis Khan, Juvaini, prior to his appoint as governor of Baghdad in 1259 by the Mongols.**

For they have divided all the people into companies of ten, appointing one of the ten to be the commander of the nine others; while from among each ten commanders one has been given the title of commander of the hundred, all the hundred having been placed under his command. And so it is with each thousand men and so also with each ten thousand, over whom they have appointed a commander whom they call commander of the men. In accordance with this arrangement, if in an emergency any man or thing be required, they apply to the commanders of the men; who in turn apply to the commanders of the thousands, and so on down to the commanders of tens.

Throughout the length and breadth of the land they established yams [rest stops], and made arrangements for the upkeep and expenses for each yam, assigning thereto a fixed number of men and beasts as well as food, drink, and other necessities.

**Doc 5:**

**A Report on Gender Relations, William of Rubruck, a Franciscan friar who visited the Mongols in 1250s on behalf of the King of France.**

One woman will drive twenty or thirty wagons, since the terrain is level. It is the women's task to drive the wagons, to load the dwellings on them and to unload again, to milk the cows, to make butter and grut [curds or cheese], and to dress the skins and stitch them together, which they do with a thread made from sinew.

The men make bows and arrows, manufacture stirrups and bits, fashion saddles, construct the dwellings and the wagons, tend the horses and mares, churn the comas [that is, the mare's milk], produce the skins in which it is stored, and tend and load the camels.

**Doc 6:**

**History of the Mongols, Rashid al-Din, Mongol high official, written after 1241.**

During the seven years (between 1235 and 1241) Ogedei (the son of Chinggis Khan) enjoyed life and amused himself. He moved from summer to winter camp and visa versa, serene and happy, and took permanent delight in beautiful women and moonfaced enchantresses.

At every opportunity, he allowed his sublime thoughts to overflow lavishly into the most just and charitable of good deeds, into the eradication of injustice and enmity, into the development of cities and districts, as well as into the construction of various buildings. He never neglected

any measure designed to strengthen the framework of peace, and to lay the foundation of prosperity.

**Doc 7:**

**Anonymous eyewitness account, translated by Urgunge Onon, 1993.**

That summer Chinggis Khan pitched his camp on the Snowy mountain. He sent soldiers out against those of the Tangqut people who had rebelled against him.

The whole tribe was completely wiped out. Then he showed favour to Boiorchy and Mugali, saying: take what you want, until you can carry no more. Make their fine sons follow behind you, holding your falcons. Bring up their daughters to arrange your wives skirts.

**Doc 8:**

**Letter from Pope Innocent IV to the Great Khan, 1245**

It is not without cause that we are driven to express in strong terms our amazement that you, according to what we have heard, have invaded many countries belonging both to Christians and to others and are laying waste in a horrible desolation, and with a fury still unabated you do not cease from breaking the bonds of natural ties, sparing neither sex nor age, you rage against all indiscriminately with the sword of chastisement.

**Doc 9:**

**Letter from Great Khan to Pope Innocent IV**

Those of whom you speak showed themselves highly presumptuous and slew our envoys. Therefore, in accordance with the commands of the Eternal Heaven the inhabitants of the aforesaid countries have been slain and annihilated. If not by the command of Heaven, how can anyone slay or conquer out of his own strength?

Thanks to the power of the Eternal Heaven, all lands have been given to us from sunrise to sunset. How could anyone act other than in accordance with the commands of Heaven? Now your own upright heart must tell you: We will become subject to you, and will place our powers at your disposal. You in person, at the head of the monarchs, all of you, without exception, must come to tender us service and pay us homage, then only will we recognize your submission.

But if you do not obey the commands of Heaven, and run counter to our orders, we shall know that you are our foe.

**Doc 10: Map**

**Doc 11: Art from China**

**Doc 12: Art from Persia**

**What Were the Mongol People Like in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Centuries?**  
*Depends on Whom You Ask!*

Chinggis Khan's shaman, reported in a Mongol-written history in 1228:

Before you were born [1167] ... everyone was feuding. Rather than sleep they robbed each other of their possessions ... The whole nation was in rebellion. Rather than rest they fought each other. In such a world one did not live as one wished, but rather in constant conflict. There was no respite [letup], only battle. There was no affection, only mutual slaughter.

Italian friar John of Plano Carpini, who spent several months in the Great Khan's court in the 1240s:

In the whole world there are to be found no more obedient subjects than the Tatar [Mongols] ... they pay their lords more respect than any other people, and would hardly dare to lie to them ... Their women are chaste ... Wars, quarrels, the infliction [causing] of bodily harm, and manslaughter do not occur among them, and there are no large-scale thieves or robbers among them ... They treat one another with due respect; they regard each other almost as members of one family, and, although they do not have a lot of food, they like to share it with one another. Moreover, they are accustomed to deprivation [doing without]; if, therefore, they have fasted for a day or two, and have not eaten anything at all, they do not easily lose their tempers ... While riding they can endure extreme cold and at times also fierce heat

They are extremely arrogant toward other people, [and] tend to anger easily ... They are the greatest liars in the world in dealing with other people ... They are crafty and sly ... [and] have an admirable ability to keep their intentions secret ... They are messy in their eating and drinking and in their whole way of life, [and] cling fiercely to what they have. They have no conscience about killing other people ... If anyone is found in the act of plundering or stealing in the territory under their power, he is put to death without any mercy.

The chiefs or princes of the army ... take up their stand some distance away from the enemy, and they have beside them their children on horseback and their womenfolk and horses ... to give the impression that a great crowd of fighting-men is assembled there.

**What Were the Mongol People Like in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Centuries?**  
*Depends on Whom You Ask!*

French friar William of Rubruck who spent several months in the Great Khan's court in the 1250s:

It is the duty of the women to drive the carts, get the dwelling on and off them, milk the cows, make butter and to dress and sew skins ... They also sew the boots, the socks, and the clothing, make the felt and cover the houses.

The men make the bows and arrows, manufacture stirrups and bits, do the carpentering on their dwellings and carts; they take care of the horses, milk the mares, churn the mares' milk, make the skins in which it is put; they also look after the camels and load them. Both sexes look after the sheep and goats.

At the entrance [of the palace] Master William of Paris has made for him [the Great Khan] a large silver tree, at the foot of which are four silver lions each having a pipe and all belching forth white mares' milk ... The whole dwelling was completely covered inside with cloth of gold, and in the middle in a little hearth was a fire of twigs and roots of wormwood ... and also the dung of oxen.

Letter by a Hungarian bishop who had custody of two Tartar [Mongol] captives taken in Russia, written to the bishop of Paris in 1257:

I asked them about their belief; and in few words, they believe nothing. They began to tell me, that they were come from their own country to conquer the world. They make use of the Jewish [actually, Uighur; the Uighurs were a semi-sedentary, literate steppe people, and early allies of the Mongols] letters, because formerly they had none of their own ... They eat frogs, dogs, serpents and all things ... Their horses are good but stupid.

Matthew Paris, English chronicler, in the 1270s:

They are inhuman and beastly, rather monsters than men, thirsting for and drinking blood, tearing and devouring the flesh of dogs and men, dressed in ox-hides, armed with plates of iron ... thickset, strong, invincible, indefatigable ... They are without human laws, know no comforts, are more ferocious than lions or bears ... They know no other language than their own, which no one else knows; for until now there has been no access to them...so that there could be no knowledge of their customs or persons ... They wander about with their flocks and their wives, who are taught to fight like men

## What was the Mongol Leader, Chinggis Khan, Really Like? Depends on Whom You Ask!

southern Chinese author who was an eyewitness of the bloody Mongol campaign in north China:

This man is brave and decisive, he is self-controlled, and lenient [merciful] towards the population; he reveres [respects] Heaven and Earth, prizes loyalty and justice.

Indian historian Juzjani wrote in 1256 in the Sultanate of Delhi and had been an eyewitness of Chinggis Khan's raid on India in 1221.

A man of tall stature, of vigorous build, robust in body, the hair on his face scanty and turned white, with cat's eyes, possessed of great energy, discernment [judgment], genius and understanding, awe-inspiring, a butcher, just, resolute, an over thrower of enemies, intrepid [fearless], sanguinary [bloodthirsty] and cruel. Chinggis himself had a letter written to a Chinese Daoist sage whom he had invited to discuss religious topics. The Daoist's companion included the letter in the account of the trip. He said: I wear the same clothing and eat the same food as the cow-herds and horse-herders. We make the same sacrifices and we share our riches. I look upon the nation as my new-born child, and I care for my soldiers as if they were my brothers.

Decisions that tradition claims Chinggis Khan made:

When fighting against hereditary enemies of his tribe, Chinggis's own son begged him to spare the life of the enemy leader's son. Chinggis replied: "How often have we fought them? They have caused us much vexation and sorrow. How can we spare his life? He will only instigate another rebellion. I have conquered these lands, armies, and tribes for you, my sons. Of what use is he? There is no better place for an enemy of our nation than the grave!

At a Grand Council meeting headed by Chinggis in 1202, it was decided that "in days gone by the Tartars killed our ancestors and forefathers. [Therefore] we will sacrifice them in revenge and retribution...by massacring all except the youngest...down to the very last male and the remainder will be shared as slaves among us all.

## What was the Mongol Leader, Chinggis Khan, Really Like? Depends on Whom You Ask!

Muslim historian Rashid al-Din, the official court historian of the Mongol khan of Persia. Chinggis's sayings included.

From the goodness of severity the stability of government. When the master is away hunting, or at war, the wife must keep the household in good order. Good husbands are known by their good wives. If a wife be stupid or dull, wanting in reason and orderliness, she makes obvious the badness of her husband.

Only a man who feels hunger and thirst and by this estimates the feelings of others is fit to be a commander of troops. The campaign and its hardships must be in proportion with the strength of the weakest of the warriors.

My bowmen and warriors loom like thick forests: their wives, sweethearts and maidens shine like red flames. My task and intention is to sweeten their mouths with gifts of sweet sugar, to decorate their breasts, backs and shoulders with garments [clothes] of brocade, to seat them on good geldings [horses], give them to drink from pure and sweet rivers, provide their beasts with good and abundant [plentiful] pastures, and to order that the great roads and highways that serve as ways for the people be cleared of garbage, tree stumps and all bad things; and not to allow dirt and thorns in the tents.

It is delightful and felicitous [good] for a man to subdue rebels and conquer and extirpate [destroy] his enemies, to take all they possess, to cause their servants to cry out, to make tears run down their faces and noses, to ride their pleasant-paced geldings [horses], to make the bellies and navels of their wives his bed and bedding, to admire their rosy cheeks, to kiss them and suck their red lips.

Laws that tradition claims Chinggis set up:

If it is necessary to write to rebels or send messages to them they shall not be intimidated by an excessive display of confidence on our part or by the size of our army, but they shall merely be told: if you submit you will find peace and benevolence. But if you continue to resist—what then do we know [about your future]? Only God knows what then shall become of you.

Whoever gives food or clothing to a captive without the permission of his captor is to be put to death.

[Leaders are to] personally examine the troops and their armament before going to battle, even to needle and thread; to supply the troops with everything they need; and to punish those lacking any necessary equipment.

Women accompanying the troops [are] to do the work and perform the duties of men, while the latter are absent fighting.

All religions [are] to be respected and . . . no preference [is] to be shown to any of them.

## How Did Chinggis Turn a Pastoral Nomadic Society Into an Efficient War Machine?

Before Chinggis, the Mongols were organized into tribes that fought and raided each other for plunder, for women (no marriages were allowed between members of the same tribe), and to avenge insults. Largely self-sufficient, they often raided, traded with, and extracted tribute from neighboring settled agricultural communities.

In most tribes, there were no specialists other than shamans and blacksmiths. Women and men both contributed to the economy, and the division of labor by sex was not rigid. Those men who could afford it married more than one wife, each of whom had her separate household, owned property outright, and had considerable freedom of action. Women rode, shot with bow and arrow, and hunted. They gave political advice and could rise to the rank of chief, though rarely. The senior wife had special status and respect, and her children were often favored as heirs. On campaign, wives, children, and flocks often went with the army. Women and even children could be drafted to ride on the fringes of battle to simulate larger numbers. It is unclear whether they ever took an active part in combat. The tribes were divided into nobles and commoners, and only members of noble lineages could become chiefs, though class differences were not strongly marked.

All Mongols were fighters, but Chinggis made a reorganized army the core of the society and the carrier of many of his reforms. Under him and his successors, the Mongol army had the following characteristics, many designed by Chinggis himself:

- All males 15-70 served in the army, all as cavalry.
- The army's 95 units of 10,000 soldiers were subdivided into units of 1,000, 100, and 10. Members of different tribes were mixed together in units of every size to ensure loyalty to the army above loyalty to the tribe. Allies and levies from conquered territories were also integrated into the fighting force, the latter usually being placed in the front ranks.
- Absolute obedience to orders from superiors was enforced.
- Officers had tight control over their troops' actions (plunder only with permission, no one allowed to transfer out of their unit).
- Officers and men were bound to each other by mutual loyalty and two-way responsibilities.
- No one in the army was paid, though all shared to varying degrees in the booty. All contributed to a fund to take care of those too old, sick, or hurt to fight.
- During three months every year, large-scale hunting expeditions served as intensive military training simulations.
- Cavalry troops had to supply their own bows and other military equipment, which had to meet officers' standards.
- Gathering intelligence had high priority. Scouts were sent out, local knowledge sought, and traveling merchants rewarded for information.
- Foreign experts and advisors were extensively used, notably Chinese and Persian engineers skilled at making and using siege weapons such as catapults and battering rams.

The highest level of government was Chinggis and his family, especially his sons by his senior wife and their descendants, known as the "Golden Family." From among their members the Great Khans and after Chinggis Khan's death the khans ruling the four successor empires were selected by agreement of the Kuriltai, the council made up of Chinggis's family members and those others they invited.

Lack of clear-cut rules of succession opened the way for power struggles after the death of each ruler. Some earlier pastoral nomadic empires did not long survive the death of the leader who founded them. The Mongol state was unusual in surviving for as long as it did, even though it divided into four separate kingdoms, or khanates after about 1260.

Chinggis Khan's administrators were picked for demonstrated high performance regardless of their wealth or social class. Among Chinggis's closest advisors were people from both allied and conquered non-Mongol backgrounds, notably literate scholars and scribes from China, Persia, and the Inner Eurasian oasis towns.



## **Mongol Technology: Highly Effective Low Tech**

The Mongols' own tribal technology was similar to that of other steppe nomads. The weapons their blacksmiths made on portable anvils and forges were relatively crude. The Mongols also acquired by plunder, tribute, and trade high-quality weapons made by urban artisans.

The bow was the Mongols' most important weapon. Made from layers of horn, sinew, wood, and waterproof lacquer, it shot an arrow faster and with more power than a wooden bow could. It had a pull of up to 160 pounds and a range of up to 350 yards.

A stone thumb-ring used in the release further increased the speed and penetrating power of arrows, which were made for different purposes. There were short and long range arrows, "singing" arrows used for signaling, fire-starting arrows, and arrows tipped with tiny gunpowder grenades. The Mongols did not, however, win every battle they fought because mounted enemies usually had similar equipment.

Mongol troops also carried iron or leather helmets, a leather-covered wicker shield, a lasso, a forearm-strapped dagger, a small sword, and if they were heavily armed, a scimitar, battle-axe, and 12-foot lance. Soldiers learned from the Chinese to wear closely-woven silk undershirts. If an arrow hit a soldier's torso, it would drive the silk into the wound without breaking it.

Therefore, the arrowhead might do less damage and could more easily be removed. Mongol saddlebags, made from the waterproof stomachs of animals, could be inflated to help in river crossings. These bags held minimal field rations of millet, dried meat, fermented mares' milk in a leather bottle, and tools such as files and needles for repairing equipment. When a Mongol messenger needed to ride a long distance and had little food and no time to hunt, he sometimes opened a vein in one of his horses and drank the blood.

In military communications, it well-coordinated and efficient use of transport and signaling that gave the Mongols an edge. They signaled by shooting whistling arrows tuned to make different sounds, waving flags (a forerunner of the semaphore), burning torches, and dispatching fastriding couriers. The army set up and maintained networks of staging posts where riders could rest and exchange horses.

## Shamans, Heaven, and the Ideology of Conquest

The Mongols' religion was shamanism. They combined this with belief in Tengri, the Eternal Sky, as the supreme supernatural power. They also believed in an earth and fertility goddess and in nature spirits. The major religions, including Tibetan Buddhism, Daoism, Nestorian Christianity, and Islam, were seen as having access to other spiritual beings who might, if properly approached, also be helpful.

Shamans were considered go-betweens or bridges, joining the human and the spirit world. They could be women or men, and they were always people of prestige and importance. They communicated with the spirits in trances, exorcised evil, blessed flocks and herds, and made prophecies by examining cracks in the burnt shoulder-blades of sheep. Mongols had no temples, no hierarchy of religious specialists, no regular public worship, no sacred scriptures, and no required beliefs. Their religious concerns were practical aimed toward ensuring fertility, prosperity, health, and military success. As chiefs usually did, Chinggis Khan and his descendants climbed to high places to pray to Heaven before a decisive battle. The Mongols also regarded vengeance for insult or injury as a moral duty, approved by Heaven. And the duty to avenge was handed down from generation to generation.

It was only gradually that Chinggis and his Mongols arrived at an ideology of conquest. Eventually, he, or at least the sons and grandsons who followed him, came to believe that the Mongols had a mission from Heaven to conquer the world and establish a universal empire. In this, Mongol leaders were almost certainly influenced by contact with the Chinese ideology of the Mandate of Heaven, the belief that the emperor ruled because the Supreme Being wanted him to. Some Mongol tribes professed the form of Christianity known as Nestorian. So Christian monotheism and rituals may have influenced them, too.

The Mongol view of Heaven's attitude towards their conquests developed slowly but surely. Chinggis Khan's early campaigns were clearly not part of a larger plan for universal conquest. In 1206, he was named Great Khan primarily because of his military and political successes. However, it helped that one of his followers saw a vision: "A white ox harnessing itself to a wagon and pulling it behind Chinggis, bellowing: 'Heaven and Earth agree, let [Chinggis] be the nation's master! Bearing the nation, I am bringing it to him'"

His first invasion of northern China in 1211 followed the usual pattern of nomad raids. Chinggis made no attempt to occupy or to keep Chinese territory, which was then under the Jin dynasty, a ruling family that had come originally from Manchuria far north of the Yellow River valley. The

Mongols returned, however, and in 1215 took the Jin capital of Beijing. Chinese officers deserted to Chinggis in large numbers, some bringing with them tens of thousands of troops.

Determined to crush all resistance, Chinggis discussed with his generals what to do with the land once it was conquered. According to some accounts, they considered exterminating the north Chinese farming population in occupied territories and turning the country into pasture for the Mongols' horses. They were dissuaded when one of Chinggis's valued Chinese advisors pointed out that taxes from a live population were worth more to the conquerors than a depopulated land occupied by horses.

Evidence suggests that Chinggis originally had no intention of invading the Qara-Khitai and Khwarizm empires, which lay to the west of Mongolia. The populations of these empires varied from highly sophisticated urban Persians to illiterate nomads. Most were unhappy with their own rulers. Chinggis conquered the huge Inner Eurasian territory of the Qara-Khitai without much trouble. He then attacked Khwarizm, which included northern Persia, in revenge for its ruler unwisely killing some Mongol envoys. Chinggis announced that "Heaven has granted me all the Earth, from sunrise to sunset." This was a claim to universal empire. He would stick by it for the rest of his life, and his descendants would echo the claim.

From this time on, he consistently considered those opposing him not as enemies but as rebels. That made resistance to Mongol takeover treasonous, meriting wholesale executions as punishment. By the 1240s, it was reported that "The Mongols do not make peace with anyone who has not submitted to them, because of the instruction of Chinggis Khan that they should seek to bring all peoples under their yoke."

There were other reasons for conquest besides religious ideology:

- Enemies and continual conquests were needed to keep the Mongol forces united and not slipping into the old ways of tribal squabbling and feuding.
- The army was financed with booty.
- Followers needed rewards in plunder, lands, and slave captives to keep them loyal. The Mongol elite's newly-honed taste for luxuries could not be satisfied from the old nomad economy.
- Each conquest put the Mongols in touch with new enemies and new threats.

Chinggis's ideology of ruling those he conquered was simple. His rule was intended solely to benefit the Mongols. Subject peoples were seen only as sources of plunder, cannon-fodder, forced labor, taxes, and experts in areas where Mongols were ignorant.

## Could an Empire be Ruled From Horseback?

Some 50 years after Chinggis's death, the following situation existed.

- The unified Mongol empire divided about 1260 into four successor empires, or khanates:
  - 1) China and part of Mongolia, where the Mongol regime was called the Yuan dynasty
  - 2) Inner Eurasia, a state called Chagatay after the name of one of Chinggis's sons
  - 3) the Khanate of the Golden Horde (or the Khanate of Kipchak), which included the steppes north of the Caspian and Black Seas, as well as domination over Russia, and
  - 4) the Ilkhanate of Persia. The Ilkhans had that title because they were in theory "deputies" of the Great Khan in China, though in reality they were independent.
- Khubilai Khan was the Great Khan and ruled China. But his relatives who ruled Chagatay, the Golden Horde, and the Ilkhanate in Persia and Iraq were in reality independent, though acknowledging the Great Khan as supreme. The term Ilkhanate means "deputy" of the Great Khan.
- The military under Khubilai Khan consisted of an infantry and a navy, as well as cavalry. Soldiers were paid from the government treasury.
- In China, Muslims, Christians, and Buddhists from central and western Eurasia were given most key positions because the Mongol rulers distrusted Chinese high officials owing to their local interests and loyalties. Governing methods were a mixture of Chinese, Muslim, Turkish, and Mongol ideas. Finances for the empire came almost entirely from relatively low-level taxation, based on as accurate a census of the population as possible.
- Khubilai Khan performed public Confucian rituals prescribed for Chinese emperors, while personally leaning towards Tibetan Buddhism and keeping up to shamanist rituals. Ideology of conquest showed in Khubilai's thinking of himself as a universal emperor. He made repeated, though mostly unsuccessful, attempts to conquer Japan, Vietnam, Burma, and even Java in Southeast Asia.
- Khubilai's ideology of rule was not only to enrich Mongols, but also to serve China as a Son of Heaven. Concerned to establish the legitimacy of his rule, he tried, with some success, to enlist the goodwill and support of the peoples he ruled.
- Among Buddhists, his legitimacy was bolstered when monks declared him to be the reincarnation of a Bodhisattva, or Buddhist saint. He worked to keep Mongol backing by acting traditionally in at least some ways, and protecting Mongols' privileged position in the empire. He drew his advisors from many ethnic, language, and religious backgrounds. In line with Khubilai's ideology of rule, his government had a welfare program. It paid for assistance to the old, infirm, and poor out of taxes. Villages that suffered natural disasters were sent grain, clothes, cash, and had their taxes cancelled.
- Khubilai founded the Office for Stimulation of Agriculture; forbade nomad animals from roaming on farmland; arranged for the teaching of advanced agricultural techniques to the population around the old Mongol capital of Karakorum; and forgave taxes for those who chose to become settled farmers.
- He moved the Mongol capital to a newly-built city near modern Beijing in China, its site chosen according to the Chinese ideas of feng shui.
- The name of the dynasty was changed to Yuan—Chinese word meaning "origin." Mongols were forbidden intermarriage with Chinese.
- Women's position under Mongol rule was generally higher than it had been in the agricultural societies the Mongols had conquered. A woman was named provincial governor under Khubilai. Mongol women refused to adopt the Chinese custom of foot binding. Khubilai took his second wife Chabi's advice on some public issues.

## AP World History Mongol Chronology

### Mongol Chronology

- 1188-1204 Temujin wars against and/or allies with neighboring tribes
- 1206 Temujin elected Great Khan by Kuriltai (council of allied nomad tribes and states), and takes name Chinggis (literal meaning: Oceanic)
- 1211-1216 Mongols under Chinggis Khan war successfully against Jin empire of North China
- 1219-1222 Mongols conquer Khwarizm empire, after murder of merchants and ambassadors there
- 1221-1224 First invasion of southern Russian steppe
- 1229 Election of Ogotai as Great Khan after two years of political infighting following Chinggis Khan's death
- 1230-1234 Definitive conquest of Jin empire by Mongols.
- 1234-1235 Ogotai establishes post-station system for couriers. Kuriltai decides on war against Europe, Korea, and Song empires.
- 1237 King of Hungary and the Holy Roman Emperor receive letters from Khan Batu, demanding their unconditional surrender in return for holding office under the Mongols. The demand is ignored.
- 1238 Request by Muslims of Syria and Persia to European rulers for alliance against the Mongols.
- 1236-1242 Campaign led by Khan Batu, a grandson of Chinggis, against Europe. Mongols invade Poland and Hungary but they withdraw in 1242, though remaining in control of Russia.
- 1241-1246 Regency of Toregene, widow of Ogotai, as Great Khan.
- 1244 Crusaders lose Jerusalem to Muslims for good.
- 1245 Pope sends four friars as ambassadors to "Tartars," who return with Great Khan's orders for submission of Pope.
- 1248-1251 Regency of Gaimish, widow of Guyuk, as Great Khan.
- 1248 Mongol proposal sent to French king for joint action against Muslims in Egypt, promising help in freeing Jerusalem. An embassy takes gift of portable chapel with fragment of True Cross, interpreted by Mongols as tribute showing formal submission of the Christian West.
- 1250 Mamluks (Turkish Muslim slave soldiers) revolt and take over rule of Egypt.
- 1253 Friar William of Rubruck leaves for the Mongol court at Karakorum. The Great Khan sends him back with a letter to the French king claiming universal rule.
- 1252-1279 Conquest of Song Empire of South China by Mongols.
- 1258 Mongols conquer Baghdad, killing last Abbasid Caliph and ending the Caliphate; Turkish Mamluks in Egypt now center of Muslim power.
- 1259 Khubilai, grandson of Chinggis, elected Great Khan by a Kuriltai; the same year, his brother elected Great Khan by a rival Kuriltai in the Mongol homeland, but surrenders to Khubilai after four years of bitter civil war.

### The Four Mongol Empires (Khanates)

- 1260 Pope's envoy to Khan Hulagu is assured that Latin Christians in Holy Land would be protected by Mongol armies.
- 1260 Major defeat of Mongol army in Palestine by Mamluks of Egypt ends Mongol expansion in Southwest Asia.

## AP World History Mongol Chronology

- 1262 Khan Hulagu sends Pope and European kings proposal for joint military action against Mamluks. Response urges him to be baptized as precondition for alliance.
- 1260-1309 Intermittent civil war among Mongol rulers descended from the four sons of Chinggis Khan.
- 1270 French king leads an unsuccessful 8<sup>th</sup> Crusade; Prince Edward of England plans joint attack with Mongols on Mamluks, but design fails for lack of manpower.
- 1275 Italian merchant Marco Polo arrives at Khubilai's court in China.
- 1287 Nestorian Christian monk from China serves as Mongol envoy in Europe, and returns with Latin Christians' offers of assistance against the Mamluks.
- 1291 Egyptian Mamluk armies conquer last Christian footholds in Western Asia.

### Decline and fall of the Mongol empire

- 1294 Death of Great Khan Khubilai. His successor rules for 13 years, but after that Mongol regime in China becomes more and more unstable.
- 1295 Mongols in Persia become Muslim; ties binding them to the Mongol rulers in China weaken and gradually disappear.
- 1306-1316 Several more attempts to coordinate joint Mongol-European military action against Mamluks.
- 1313 Mongols of the Golden Horde become Muslims.
- 1320s-1340s Genoese and other Italian merchant colonies flourish in Chinese cities.
- 1338 Mongol ruler in China sends an embassy to the Pope composed of Frenchmen and Italians living at his court. Simultaneously, Pope's embassy carries gifts to the Great Khan, the last western mission to the Mongols.
- 1360-1405 Tamerlane, who claims descent from Chinggis Khan, conquers and rules what had been the western 1/3 or so of the Mongol empire.
- 1368 Han Chinese Ming Dynasty ousts the Yuan Dynasty. The last Yuan ruler dies in 1370 in Mongolia.
- 1478 Ivan III of Russia throws off Mongol sovereignty.
- 1526 Babur, a distant descendant of Chinggis Khan, founds Moghul dynasty in India.
- 1696 Chinese forces conquer Western Mongolia.
- Late 1700s Russia (Catherine the Great) extends control from Ural Mtns to Vladivostak (Pacific Ocean)
- 1911 Inner Mongolia declares its independence from China. (after the end of the Qing Dynasty)
- 1924 Mongolia becomes a Communist People's Republic and a satellite of the Soviet Union.
- 1946 China recognizes the Mongolian People's Republic.
- 1961 Mongolia becomes a member of the United Nations.
- 1984 Death of the last supposed descendant of Chinggis Khan, an official of the government of the People's Republic of China.
- 1990s Mongolia abandons rigid Communist ideology and restores Chinggis Khan from the status of "feudal oppressor" to national hero.