

# The Mongols and their impact on China and Korea

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# Review

- What is the relationship of religion and philosophy to social structure?
- How much social mobility was there in pre-modern Asia?
- What was the relationship between China and Tibet before 1500?
- What was the relationship between India and Tibet before 1500?
- How is Tibetan Buddhism different from Chinese Buddhism?
- How is Tibetan society different from Chinese society?

# The Mongols emerge

- Who were the Mongols?
- How did Temujin become Chinggis Khan?
- Which countries did he defeat first? Why did the Mongols move beyond Mongolia? (Drought pushed them south and west)
- What was the Mongol attitude toward China?
- They saw it as a place they seize control of so that they could profit from the rich Chinese economy as well as from the trade along the Silk Road.
- What was the Mongol attitude toward Korea?
- They seized control of Korea in order to protect their flank during their attacks on China, and to profit from Korea's economy.

# Mongol society

- Mongol society was neither agricultural nor trade-oriented. Instead, it originally was a herding society, launching raids on sedentary (agricultural) societies when it need food and other items those societies produced.
- When the Mongols seized control of sedentary societies, they encouraged commercial activities and gave greater opportunities to merchants in order to gain access to a greater variety of goods.
- However, the Mongols weren't particularly interested in being merchants themselves. Nor were they interested in settling down on a farm. Instead, they use their control of governments to benefit from the activities of peasants and merchants.

# Rise of the Mongol Empire

- [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mongol\\_Empire\\_map.gif](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mongol_Empire_map.gif)
- **Animated Map of the Mongol Empire**

# Khubilai Khan

- Ruled over the eastern part of the Mongol empire, which included China but also included Korea, Tibet, Manchuria, and eastern Mongolia.
- Established the Yuan dynasty in 1272 (after serving as ruler of northern China since 1260) Completed the conquest of Southern Song by 1279 (The emperor and his capital were captured in 1276)
- How did the Mongols conquer the much larger and richer Song? They had superior military tactics, used Chinese military technology (including gunpowder), took advantage of Song mistakes, and took advantage of the lack of nationalism in China at that time. (culturalism was more important than nationalism.)

# Mongol rule over China

- After a few decades, the Mongols revived the civil service exam system, and made Neo-Confucianism the subject of those exams.
- Divided the population into four ranked groups: Mongols, non-Mongol allies such as Uighurs, “Han” (northern Chinese plus Koreans, Jurchen, and Khitan), and Southern Chinese (at the bottom of the ethnic social ladder).
- Promoted religious diversity, including providing support for Tibetan Buddhism (though the Mongols did not adopt Tibetan Buddhism as a group until the 16th century).
- Allowed cultural development, including the rise of vernacular drama (Chinese opera)
- There were major advances in math (algebra) and calendrical science in the Yuan dynasty.
- Continuation of the Song trend toward a more labor-intensive economy rather than developing more labor-saving machinery.

# The end of the Yuan

- Why was Mongol rule over China so short? (1279-1351 or so)
- Too many corvée labor demands
- inefficient tax collection
- The Black Death (the Plague) may have moved up from Yunnan (Some scholars challenge this assertion.)
- Failed to maintain the dikes along the Yellow River.
- Popular rebellions, fuelled by popular religious beliefs (White Lotus Society), pushed the Mongols back north. (Ethnocentrism rather than nationalism)

# Women among the Mongols

- Since Mongols were originally a herding and hunting people, the women were left in charge of the home when the men were out hunting or with their herds.
- Some women actually exercised political power. From 1241-1251, women ruled the Mongol empire (they were not Mongols, but had married powerful Mongol men). The Mongols earlier also named one woman a provincial governor in northern China.
- The autonomy and power Mongol women enjoyed disturbed many Chinese men, who thought that was a trait of an uncivilized people

# The impact of Mongol rule

- Spread the Black Death to Europe, leading to major loss of population there.
- Created a Eurasian trade market.
- Ended the caliphate, giving South Asian Muslims more autonomy. (The Mughals, centuries later, claimed Mongol ancestry.)
- Brought Tibet under Beijing-based, but not Chinese, rule.
- Undermined Korea's Koryŏ dynasty.
- Weakened Japan's Kamakura Shogunate.
- Weakened the Burmese, and pushed the Thais into what became Thailand (Siam). Also weakened Vietnam, delaying its push south.
- led to rise of Majapahit (a Hindu-buddhist kingdom) in Java

# Koryŏ

- The longest lasting Buddhist kingdom in East Asia. (918-1392)
- Still ruled by an aristocracy, with little social mobility, and with more slaves than China as well as more autonomy and power enjoyed by women.
- Korea's most troublesome pre-modern period--had to contend with the Khitan (Liao dynasty) and the Jurchen (Jin Dynasty) and was incorporated into the Mongol empire.
- Yet had great technological accomplishments, including the first movable metal type in the world, and beautiful in-laid design celadons (another global first).
- Also produced the first comprehensive history of Korea (rather than histories of one kingdom only) and the first account of Tan'gun.

# The break in civilian rule

- Koryŏ was ruled by generals from 1170 to 1258, though there was still a king on the throne.
- When the Mongols attacked, those generals retreated to an island offshore rather than fight the Mongols, leaving the Mongols free to wreak havoc on the mainland. Finally, the leading general was overthrown, the king returned to power, and a treaty signed that made Korea a son-in-law nation of the Mongols and a part of the Mongol empire.
- Korea remained a part of the Mongol empire until the Mongols were chased out of China. Ties between the Mongols and the Koreans were very close. The favourite consort of the last emperor of the Mongol Yuan dynasty was actually a Korean (Lady Ki)