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THE MONGOLS AND THEIR STATE IN THE TWELFTH TO THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY*

*Sh. Bira***Contents**

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The geographic setting of Mongolia was of vital importance in shaping its unique history and civilization. The vast mountainous-steppe zone of Mongolia forms part of two important regions of world civilization, the oases of Central Asia and the so-called Eurasian steppe belt stretching from the Danube to the Great Wall of China. From early times, Mongolia was at the crossroads of world communications. Two great highways, the Great Silk Route and the Eurasian steppe corridor, also known as the Silk Route of the Steppes, linked Mongolia with the centres of civilization of East and West. The birth of nomadic civilization was an appropriate response to the physical challenges in that specific part of Central Asia.

It was in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries that the Mongols proper appeared on the stage of history. Occupying the main regions of Mongolia, they represented the great majority of its inhabitants. The problem of the genesis of the Mongols is not yet settled, but what is most probable is that the Mongol ethnic group of people had been formed as a result

* See Map 6, pp. 434–5.

of the long historical and ethno-cultural processes in which various peoples who inhabited the Mongolian steppes took part from very early on, and which was likely to have been of Altaic provenance (Proto-Mongol, Proto-Turkic and Proto-Tungus). The name 'Mongol' is apparently mentioned in Chinese sources from the fourth century A.D. as Shi Wei Meng-gu or Shi-Wei Mongol. In the period of the rise of the Mongols, the most important fact was that the greater part of the tribes living in Mongolia were sufficiently alike, both ethnically and in their way of life, for them to be moulded together into a highly organized nomadic society.

The socio-economic and political situation

By the thirteenth century, the traditional social system of the nomads in Mongolia had undergone considerable change, with a decay of the primitive clan system held together by blood relationships; consciousness of membership and a sense of solidarity with the nomadic society now tended to be determined by shared socio-economic interests.¹ The clan lineage or the common descent group, usually referred to as *obuq* in Mongolian, had already fallen into decay as a nucleus of social structure in Mongolia. The more the clans propagated themselves, the more they developed into other groups and subdivisions (*yasuns*). *The Secret History of the Mongols* and Rashīd al-Dīn's history give many concrete examples of the splitting of clans into subgroups and their reassembling into larger units and tribes (*aymaks*). On the other hand, the great changes in the traditional nomadic system could not but cause the centripetal tendencies that encouraged the development of another process, i.e the unification of all separate social groups or divisions into larger units or tribal confederations, or even state formations of varying size, under the supremacy of a leading clan lineage, such as that of the Borjigid. With the development of Mongol society, the coalescence of clans and their subdivisions into tribes and tribal confederations had become ever more vital.

The decay of the kinship structure in Mongolia went hand in hand with a process of social stratification. Private ownership of the country's main wealth – cattle – became the basic criterion for social position within Mongol society; this was concentrated in the hands of a small group of people, while the greater part of the population remained as dependants. Hence there developed two main classes: the nobility (*noyad*) and the commoners (*karachu*). In its initial stage, the nobility might have largely consisted of those who held various traditional titles – Khan (chief, king), *mergen* (meaning 'an excellent archer', later 'a wise man'), *baghatur* (brave, hero), *sechen* (wise), *ejen* (lord), *beki* (honoured shaman),

¹ Vladimirtsov, 1938; Jagchid and Hyer, 1979, Ch. 6.

singgüm, and so on. The authority of the Khan, the highest rank in the hierarchy, grew with the increase in the common interests of the nobility. Whenever a confederation of tribes emerged, a supreme leader with the title of Khan was declared.

The majority of the population comprised the commoners, *karachu* or *irgen* and *haran* (*aran*); the last two terms are mentioned in *The Secret History* and other sources. They included different categories of people: *boghol* (so-called slaves), members of defeated *aymaks* (*jadaran*) and poor cattle-breeders. The Mongol term *boghol* included various different categories. Corresponding to the real meaning of slaves were the so-called *ötög boghol* (prisoners of war), who were used as servants in the households of the privileged. Another category, the *unaghan boghol*, may be interpreted as ‘slaves by origin’. This category of *boghol* had almost nothing to do with real slaves. In nomadic society, the practice existed of families or individuals presenting young men to a prominent leader, usually a *qan*, as a token of friendship or submission. Here, the institution of *boghol* reflected a vassalage-type relationship rather than the subordination of slavery. The so-called *ömchi boghol* (personal slaves) in effect represented the followers or vassals of their lord, and were different from the institution of *nüker*. *Nüker* (pl. *nüküd*) means ‘friend’, and the term referred to a member of a group of warriors who freely declared themselves to be the ‘men’ of a chosen leader, irrespective of their origin or tribal affiliation. In the beginning, a *nüker* was a loyal companion in battle, but later he assumed the special character of vassal; the institution played an essential role in the formation of vassalage-type relations in Mongolia.

The transformation of the clan system in Mongolia caused great changes in the country’s economic structure. Under the conditions of a primitive kinship society, in which cattle, its main wealth, were the common ownership of clans, the nomads moved collectively or by *küriyen*, i.e. the community of clans tied together by blood. The *küriyen* (or ‘circle’) was the traditional form of economic organization of the nomads, reflecting the nomadic custom of erecting tents in the form of a circle, with the tent of the clan leader in the centre. The *küriyen* was a specific collective institution for the joint ownership of cattle and pasturelands, but when private cattle ownership developed and the clan system fell into decay, this form of economic structure did not meet the requirements of daily life; private cattle-owners preferred to nomadize by smaller groups, i.e. by *ayil*. Hence the *küriyen* form of management of the cattle-breeding economy changed into the *ayil* form, suitable for the private ownership of cattle and grazing land. Thus by the advent of Chinggis Khan in the latter half of the twelfth century, most of the Mongols had adopted the *aymak* tribal system of social order. Numerous nomadic tribes are known to have inhabited the main parts of

Mongolia. Some of them formed separate and often rival tribal confederations, for example the Kerait, Naiman, Merkit and Tatar, each with its own Khan.²

Special mention should be made of the Mongols whose pastures were in the southern valleys of the mountain of Burqan Qaldun in the Khentei mountains, the headwaters of three rivers, the Onon, Kerulen and Toul, a region considered to be the cradle of the Mongols. The Daychud and Jalayr, who may be called the 'Three River Mongols', constituted the virtual nucleus of the Mongol people; they had started to play a prominent role in the country's history well before the time of Chinggis Khan. Tribal tradition attributes the major events pertaining to the initial period of Mongolian history solely to the Mongols of these regions. According to *The Secret History*, from the very beginning the ancestors of the Mongol Khans had chosen the lands of Burqan Qaldun for their principal camping ground. The legendary forefather of Chinggis Khan's clan, Bürte-chinua, who is said to have been born 'having his destiny from Heaven above', together with his spouse Go'amara, came from over the sea and encamped at the head of the Onon river, at Burqan Qaldun.³

The centre of gravity of Mongol history in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries had already shifted to the eastern regions of Mongolia. It was during the reign of Qabul Khan, who probably lived in the first half of the twelfth century and was the great-grandfather of Chinggis Khan, that the Mongols of the Three River regions became powerful enough to be united into a state-like confederation (*ulus*). It is not certain when Qabul Khan died, but there is no doubt that this *ulus* continued to exist after his death. He is known to have been succeeded by at least two Khans, Ambaqay and Qutula. But soon after the death of the latter in the late twelfth century, the confederation of the Three River regions disintegrated due to the constant feuds between the Mongols and the Tatar. The Chin dynasty of China's policy of playing off one group of the 'barbarians' against another contributed to this decline.

Chinggis Khan and the founding of the Mongol state

Qutula was probably the last Khan of the Mongols of the Three River regions. In any event, the historical records do not mention any other Khan up to the rise of Chinggis. Yesügey, Chinggis Khan's father, although he was the grandson of Qabul Khan and one of the most influential noblemen, was not of sufficient stature to be called Khan. He served Qutula Khan loyally and displayed courage in numerous battles, and held the title of Baghatur, which he must have inherited from his father, Bartan Baghatur.

² Shirendev et al., 1966.

³ Cleaves, 1982, p. 11.

It is not certain when the future Chinggis Khan was born. According to most Chinese and Mongolian records, he was born in 1162 (a Year of the Horse) on the Delügiin-Boldog watershed on the upper reaches of the River Onon.⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn and other Persian sources place his birth in 1155 or 1167 (a Year of the Pig). The date of his death in 1227 is, however, certain. He is said to have been born at the moment when his father returned from a successful campaign against the Tatar. Following an ancient custom, Yesügey gave his son the name of the captured chief of the Tatar, i.e. Temüjin, which may have meant 'blacksmith'. Although the extensive information on the early life of Chinggis Khan in *The Secret History* is almost certainly romanticized, it is likely that he had to overcome numerous difficulties and hardships in the steppe, left to the mercy of fate after losing his father in early childhood. As Lattimore has pointed out:

Chinggis Khan was a genius but not a savage, illiterate but not ignorant. He was born into a tradition that embraced war as a profession and also included a sophisticated knowledge of the political and economic uses of power. All his natural talent would not have got him very far, however, if he had not been born into this tradition at a propitious moment and in just the right geographical region.⁵

Indeed, Chinggis Khan was a real son of his time, for his advent coincided with crucial changes in the nomadic society of the Mongols, as mentioned above, and the appearance of such an able figure possibly accelerated the development of this historical process. The secret of his unprecedented career was perhaps that he could make the best use of the situation that prevailed in the nomadic society of his time. This last engendered both centrifugal and centripetal tendencies. On the one hand, different tribes tried to be separate and to provide for their independence existence, which led to mutual feuding. On the other hand, the more powerful a tribe became, the more it endeavoured to incorporate others, resulting in fewer but larger tribal units.

To achieve his purpose, Chinggis Khan resorted to a great variety of means and tactics. First, he was clever in manipulating traditional tribal politics, deriving great benefit from his skilful use of some old tribal institutions, such as those of the *nüiker*, the *anda* and others. Thanks to such tested devices, the young Temüjin was able to save his family from the humiliating position in which it found itself after it was deserted by its tribesmen following the death of Yesügey. He was further able to restore the leading role of the Borjigids. The *anda* was the oldest form of alliance in the kinship society, by which warriors were sworn to blood loyalty with one another. In Chinggis Khan's time, the oath of *anda* lost its primary feature and could be found among warriors belonging to different tribes or clans.

⁴ At present, this is known as Gurban-nuur in Dadal-sum territory, Khentei-aymak, in eastern Mongolia.

⁵ Lattimore, 1963a, p. 57.

What was needed was that those who wanted to become *andas* shared common interests; they had to confirm their oath by tasting each other's blood in order to symbolize their close brotherhood. At the beginning of his career, Temüjin was able to win over to his side many talented and loyal *nükers* and *andas*.

The fact that the young Temüjin enjoyed the patronage of the mighty Toghril Khan greatly enhanced his position. The Kerait Khan placed a considerable force at his disposal; and several kinsmen of Temüjin and some tribal chieftains, like Jamuka of the Jajirad, joined him and were ready to help. In 1185 Temüjin, with his united forces, easily defeated the Merkit and secured abundant loot, freeing his wife Börte (who had previously been abducted by them). This was the first serious victory which Temüjin achieved over his enemy with the aid of his *andas*, Toghril Khan and Jamuka. After his victory over the Merkit, Temüjin became a notable figure among rival chieftains in the steppe. He renewed his *anda* brotherhood with Jamuka, who was at this time stronger than Temüjin and no less ambitious and energetic: in the future, these two young men were to become the main rivals for power.

The *anda* brotherhood between Temüjin and Jamuka did not last long. According to *The Secret History*, after the victory over the Merkit they lived together for one and a half years on very friendly terms. But it seems more probable that during this period they kept an eye on each other and did their best to increase their forces by attracting adherents. When the *anda* alliance between them broke up, Temüjin found himself in a much stronger position. Altogether, twenty-three groups of kinsmen and noblemen from some twenty-three clans and tribes had come over to Temüjin when he encamped at Ayil Qaraghana on the Kimuragha stream. Among those who rallied to his rising standard were such hereditary representatives of the Mongol nobility as Da'aritay, the grandson of Qabul Khan, the fourth son of Bartan Baghatur, his uncle Altan Odchigin, the third son of Qutala Khan, Quchar, Yesügey's nephew, the son of Neken-taysi, Sacha-beki, Qabul Khan's grandson and others.

Temüjin had become virtual overlord of the Borjigids, the noblest clan, from which the Mongol royalty derived its origin. He was again in possession of the original home of his tribe. It was the Mongol nobility which provided both moral and physical support for Temüjin to become Khan. Thus it says in *The Secret History*, 'When Altan, Quchar, and Sacha Beki took counsel with one another together and spoke unto Temüjin, saying "We shall make thee to become khan".'⁶ Temüjin's accession to the throne took place in 1189 at Lake Kökö of Qara Jürügen, on the Senggür stream, within Mount Gürelgü in the upper reaches of the rivers Onon and Kerulen, near Burkhan Qaldun. The official title 'Chinggis'

⁶ Cleaves, 1982, 123.

was conferred on Temüjin by the shaman Kōkōchū Teb-Tenggeri.⁷ The etymology of his name has been explained differently by scholars, but the most convincing interpretation is that ‘Chinggis’ means ‘fierce, hard, tough’; thus ‘Chinggis Khan’ means ‘the Fierce Ruler’, not ‘the Universal Ruler’.⁸ One has also to assume that the Mongol shaman called his militant leader by the name Saqiyusun (Defender).

According to *The Secret History*, Chinggis Khan then instituted ten court offices, but, with the exception of that of Cherbi, the names of the officials are not given and only their duties are indicated, even though without precision. As the chief advisers of the Khan, the duty of maintaining order in the meetings very probably devolved upon them. The two offices of ‘guardians of the assembly’ were occupied by Bo’orchu and Jelme, to whom Chinggis reputedly said, ‘Being my shadow, this settles my mind, so let this be in my thoughts.’⁹ Chinggis’s guard was organized more formally in 1203, after the victory over the Kerait, when Chinggis became the chief personage in eastern Mongolia. Seventy men were selected for the day guard and eighty for the night guard; altogether, they constituted the protective guards or *kesigten* (sing. *kesik*, meaning ‘turn’, ‘relief’).

The enthronement of Chinggis meant the restoration of the state confederation of the Mongols of the Three River regions which had fallen into decay after Qutula Khan. From now on, Chinggis Khan could act as the lawful ruler of all the Mongols. But to become the genuine lord of the nation in Mongolia, he had to achieve the real unification of all the people on a country-wide scale, and this took him from 1189 to 1206. The majority of the tribes continued to be separate and were not initially disposed to recognize Chinggis Khan’s rule over the whole country. Among them were such powerful tribes as the Tatar, the Kerait, the Naiman and others, but by manoeuvring between the conventions and oppositions of the tribal system, Chinggis was finally able to unite all the peoples living under felt tents.

The second stage in Chinggis Khan’s rise to power began with his victory over the Tatar as a result of the successful campaign that he had undertaken in 1196 in alliance with Toghril Khan of the Kerait and the Chin dynasty of China. By subjugating the Tatar, Chinggis not only took vengeance on his family’s enemy but eliminated the threat to the southern side of his domain. However, these successes alarmed his rivals, first of all Jamuka. In 1201 Jamuka was proclaimed Gür Khan at the *kurultay* (general council) of the leaders of the Daychud, Qonqirad, Ikira, Qorlo, Qatagin, Oyirad and Naiman, against the Wang Khan (Toghril) of the Kerait and his son, the allies of Jamuka. Chinggis Khan was victorious over

⁷ Juwaynī, 1958, Vol. 1, p. 39; Rashīd al-Dīn, 1952, p. 167.

⁸ Rachewiltz, 1989, p. 288.

⁹ Cleaves, 1982, 123–4; Barthold, 1968, pp. 38–23.

the Wang Khan and the latter was killed, but Chinggis still had to overcome an alliance of opponents led by Jamuka until the latter was also killed. Thus Chinggis finally triumphed in the tribal wars which had continued for more than twenty years.

Chinggis Khan now held all Mongolia, having subjugated all the tribes of the Mongolian steppe. To guarantee his right to rule over the entire country, in the Year of the Tiger (1206) he called a *kurultay* at the head of the Onon river, where he 'set up a white standard with nine tails' and was once again proclaimed Chinggis Khan.¹⁰ This event signified the birth of a Mongol power that stretched some 1,600 km from east to west, from the Khingan mountains to the Altai range, and more than 960 km from north to south, from Lake Baikal to the southern margins of the Gobi desert along the Great Wall of China.

Between 1206 and 1211 Chinggis Khan was engaged in establishing and reorganizing the civil and military administration. The head of state was the Khan, who was declared to have a mandate from Mōngke Tengri (Everlasting Heaven). The second most important office was that of Guiong (Chinese Kuo-Wang), or 'Prince of the Realm'. This title was conferred on Muqali, the most devoted companion of Chinggis. The office of Supreme Justice or *jarghuchi* was introduced: it was given to Sigi Qutuqu, a Tatar by extraction, who had been adopted as a boy by Chinggis Khan's mother and was one of the best-educated men of his time. The office of *beki*, which designated the chief shaman, the highest religious authority, was also set up; it was occupied by Üsün-ebügen. He was instructed 'to ride on a white horse, wear white raiment' and 'choose a good year and moon'.¹¹ The Uighur Tatatungha, the keeper of the seal of the Naiman Khan, held the same office at the court of Chinggis Khan and was also commissioned to teach the Khan's sons reading and writing.

The Khan's guard, or *kesigten*, was also reorganized. It consisted of *kebte'ul* (night guards), *qorchin* (day guards) and *turgha'ud* (bodyguards). The number of each of these corps of guards was raised to 1,000 men, making a total of up to 10,000 men. It was decreed that each son of a 'leader of a 1,000' had to bring with him 1 kinsman and 10 companions; the son of a 'leader of 10' and freemen in general had to bring 1 kinsman and 3 companions. The guard was subject to severe discipline, but its members enjoyed great privileges: a combatant private in the guard stood higher in rank than a 'chief of 1,000' in the army, non-combatants in the guard stood higher than a 'chief of 100'. Members of the guard who committed a crime could not be punished by anyone except Chinggis himself. The bodyguard was not only the personal guard of the Khan and the core of the army; it was also a sort of military school which allowed the Khan personally to test the future leaders of

¹⁰ Cleaves, 1982, 202; Ishjamts, 1974, pp. 48–61.

¹¹ Cleaves, 1982, 216

his military forces. The army was reorganized according to the traditional decimal system. Chinggis Khan appointed 95 ‘*noyans* (chiefs) of 1,000’; the names of these *noyans* are listed in *The Secret History*.¹²

Administratively, Mongolia was divided into three large *tümens* (‘myriads’): the Left, the Right and the Centre, each of them in turn consisting of tens, hundreds and thousands. The main *tümen* was the Left *tümen* commanded by Gui Ong Muqali. The other two *tümens* were headed by Bo’orchu and Naya. The Central *tümens* occupied the main area of Mongolia; the Right *tümens*, the lands near the Altai mountains; and the Left *tümens*, the lands up to the Khingan mountains.¹³ Chinggis appointed leaders for all the tribes and clans from among his personal followers and his family, thus laying the framework of the new Mongol empire and destroying the old tribal system; Chinggis Khan’s own clan, the Borjigids, with its vassals and followers, now became the supreme clan of the Mongols.

One of the most important measures undertaken by Chinggis Khan in the field of the civil administration was the codification of laws under the title of *Yeke Jasa* (The Great Law). Although this work has not yet come to light, data from various sources prove beyond doubt the existence of a written version. According to an authoritative source, the history of ‘Atā’ Malik Juwaynī:

In accordance and agreement with his [Chinggis’s] own mind, he established a rule for every occasion and a regulation for every circumstance, while for every crime he fixed a penalty. And since the Tatar peoples had no script of their own, he gave orders that Mongol children should learn writing from the Uighurs, and that these *Yasas* and ordinances should be written down on rolls. These rolls are called the *Great Book of Yasas* and are kept in the treasury of the chief princes. Whenever a khan ascends the throne, or a great army is mobilized, or the princes assemble and begin to consult together concerning affairs of state and administration thereof, they produce these rolls and model their actions thereon, and proceed with the disposition of armies or the destruction of provinces and cities in the manner therein prescribed.¹⁴

In general, the *Great Jasa* represented a code of laws which is said to have been prescribed by Chinggis Khan for the various spheres of social life and in military, organizational and administrative affairs. It also dealt with religious beliefs, court ceremonial, civil rules, general conduct and justice, and so on. Thus it laid down the juridical basis for the newly born Mongol state. Moreover, with the creation of the Mongol empire, it eventually became the most authoritative handbook of Mongol jurisprudence, to be strictly followed throughout the expanse of the empire. Its authority was so great that, even after the fall of the empire, it had some appeal for statesmen in the countries of Central Asia (as for Timur, known

¹² Ibid., 202.

¹³ Ishjamts, 1974, pp. 59–61.

¹⁴ Juwaynī, 1958, Vol. 1, p. 25.

to the West as Tamerlane, and others), serving as a political and moral instrument for the justification of their expansionist ambitions.

According to the Sino-Mongolian inscription of 1346, in the fifteenth year of Chinggis Khan's reign, i.e. in 1220, the capital city of Mongolia, Karakorum, was founded in the valley of the Orkhon river,¹⁵ demonstrating that Chinggis wished to rule his empire from Mongolia.

Chinggis Khan's campaigns of conquest: The foundation of the Mongol empire

Shortly after the creation of the political and military machinery in his own country, Chinggis Khan embarked on an expansion of his power. It is difficult to say whether from the outset he had any serious intentions of conquering the great settled civilizations outside Mongolia. The order of his conquests shows that, having settled internal affairs, he first incorporated within his state all other nomadic peoples who lived outside Mongolia and whose way of life was similar to that of the Mongols, rather than any of the settled peoples. In 1207 the nomadic tribes in the valleys of the Selenga and the Yenisei were added to his dominions. In 1209 the Uighur Türks, who had some four centuries earlier created their own empire in Mongolia, with a capital in the valley of the Orkhon river, and who had migrated south-westwards to the oases of the Tarim basin after the fall of their empire, were peacefully incorporated. It is true that Chinggis Khan twice (in 1210 and in 1214–15) campaigned against the Chin empire of China. But by doing so, he probably wished to demonstrate his might and fame rather than to subjugate China, for he soon desisted; but he continued to bring under his control the nomadic tribes of the Eurasian steppes. He conquered practically all the nomadic peoples of Turkic origin up to the north-eastern fringes of Persia. In 1218 the Kara Khitay of Transoxania submitted to his power almost without opposition. Thus the lands of East Turkistan and some other areas of Central Asia came under the rule of the Mongols.

Chinggis Khan's domains now bordered directly on the great empire of the Khwarazm Shah 'Alā' al-Dīn Muhammad, who at this time controlled most of northern Persia and Transoxania (the latter having been largely taken over from the Kara Khitay in 1210). Central Asia in this period was divided into an eastern part ruled by the Mongol Khan, while its western part was under the power of the Turkish Khwarazm Shahs. It was perhaps natural, though not inevitable, that these two political forces should be rivals. Chinggis Khan is said to have recognized the Khwarazm Shah as ruler of the west, as he himself

¹⁵ Cleaves, 1952.

was the ruler of the east, and to have expressed the hope that peace would be maintained and trade promoted between the two empires. But the Mongol Khan pointedly addressed the Khwarazm Shah as his 'son', hardly the treatment of an equal by an equal. There is no material available to ascertain the real intentions of Chinggis Khan towards his neighbour.

Whatever his true motives, between 1219 and 1224 Chinggis Khan embarked on his campaigns of conquest against the Khwarazmian empire, which was at the time affected by internal discord and feuds. As a result, such Transoxanian and Khurasanian cities as Samarkand, Bukhara, Urgench, Utrar, Nishapur, Balkh and Merv were devastated by the armies of Chinggis Khan.

Thus the people of the north-eastern Islamic world, mostly of Turkic stock, were brought under the rule of the Mongol Khan. In their pursuit of the defeated Khwarazm Shah, two Mongol generals Jebe and Sübetey reached the Caucasus in 1221, defeated the Georgian king George IV Lashen and emerged on to the southern Russian steppe. In the spring of 1223, at the battle of the River Kalka, the Mongols crushed the combined Russian and Kipchak forces, but did not really exploit their success. At the end of that year, the armies of Jebe and Sübetey rejoined the forces of Chinggis Khan. The Khan himself returned to Mongolia in 1225. Chinggis Khan's last campaign ended with the subjection of the Hsi-Hsia (Tangut) in 1227. Soon afterwards, he fell ill and died in the same year. His body was taken home to be buried in the Khentei mountains.

It is likely that at the outset Chinggis Khan did not have a clearly formulated policy of conquest; but if one judges his wide-ranging conquests by their practical outcome, it is possible that what we might now call a grand strategy lay behind his military actions. In Lattimore's view, Chinggis was anxious to avoid the classic mistake of previous barbarian rulers of the steppe who, as soon as they had formed an effective nomadic confederation, succumbed to the temptation to invade northern China and to establish themselves there. This sequence of events generally created, Lattimore suggests, a power vacuum within the steppe. This was duly filled by the next nomadic general to form a confederation, and he in his turn would then invade China and expel his predecessor. By contrast, Chinggis Khan's strategy was first to form his confederation, secondly to neutralize temporarily the danger from China, and then to return to the steppe to mop up and incorporate all the remaining Turko-Mongol peoples, thus ensuring that no power vacuum would be created and that, when China was conquered, the steppe would be retained as well.¹⁶

Indeed, Chinggis, a true son of the nomadic culture, remained loyal to the ideals of his background until the very end of his life and resisted the allurements of settled civilization. He bequeathed to his successors a great empire consisting mostly of the nomadic peoples

¹⁶ Lattimore, 1963b, pp. 6–7; Morgan, 1986, p. 73.

who inhabited the vast area extending throughout Central Asia with its centre in Mongolia. He knew how to take advantage of those achievements of the sedentary civilizations which could be beneficial to his empire; thus the Sogdian-Uighur script was adopted for the writing of Mongolian and use made of it in his chancery. With the conquest of the Uighurs and the Kara Khitay, Chinggis could use the administrative skills of these peoples, who had much in common with the Mongols as regards their nomadic mode of life – and these were the intermediaries who transmitted the acquisitions of Islamic and Chinese civilization to the Mongols. Muslims played a particularly prominent part in the service of the Mongol Khan; their activities were greatly stimulated by the atmosphere of religious toleration and the policy of unhampered trade and communications.

There were, of course, many factors behind the successes of Chinggis's conquests, not least the role of the Khan himself, a shrewd politician and a military genius. Light cavalry, comprising tough, swift-footed Mongol horses and archers, was always the main force, but Chinggis also took over military techniques and improved them with the help of Chinese and Muslim experts. He even used gunpowder in siege warfare, sapping and mining operations, during his western campaigns.

The Mongol empire during the reign of Chinggis Khan's successors

Contrary to Alexander the Great, whose Graeco-Asian empire did not even survive his death, Chinggis Khan left a great empire which was capable of continuing to function in both time and space, and had many successors from his own family to continue his imperial policy. During their reign, the Mongol empire became the largest continuous land empire that had so far existed in history. At its greatest extent, it stretched from the Far East to eastern Europe. Military expeditions were mounted into mainland South-East Asia, and even against Java and Japan, but without success. As a whole, the empire lasted for well over a century, and some parts of it survived for much longer.

The successors of Chinggis Khan, although they proclaimed on every occasion their adherence to the commandments of their great predecessor, in fact departed from his fundamental principle of staying outside 'civilization' and not sacrificing the ideals of the nomads for their sake. Ögedey (1229–41), Güyük (1226–48) and Möngke (1251–9) went on expanding their empire into the sedentary lands (for further details, see Chapter 13 below).

The unprecedented territorial expansionism of the Mongol nomads undoubtedly caused great upheavals and distress for large numbers of people, although the bloodshed and

destruction caused to the settled civilizations may not have been so widespread as some terrified contemporaries depicted it. Like all conquerors, Chinggis Khan could calmly exterminate people by the thousands if he considered it necessary for the consolidation of his rule, but none of his actions shows any sign of useless or stupid cruelty,¹⁷ and he was far from being a savage warrior, blindly ferocious and conquering for the sake of plunder.¹⁸ At the same time, we must understand the feelings of hatred and horror that the conquered peoples naturally had – and still have today – towards their enemy.

The problem of consolidating and administering such a great empire was the most difficult task the Mongols had ever faced. Nevertheless, judging by their actions, it is clear that they did their best to secure their rule for as long as possible. Characteristically, the first successors of Chinggis Khan tried to keep the centre of their empire in Mongolia itself. But to do this proved much more difficult for them than for Chinggis Khan. The conquest of Persia and China involved them in the governance of two great sedentary societies, and it was then that the Mongol Khans encountered the problem of reconciling two incompatible ways of life – a nomadic existence and a sedentary civilization. This was a problem that had never previously been solved and it proved to be a major cause of the decline of the Mongol empire.

Nevertheless, Chinggis Khan's successors managed to set up an imperial organization whose unity endured for forty years after the death of the founder, with the supremacy of members of Chinggis Khan's family extending over several generations in the successor states. How was this achieved? Yeh-lü ch'u-ts'ai, the great Kitan adviser of the Mongol Khans, is said to have repeated to Ögedey Khan the old Chinese admonition: although the empire had been conquered on horseback, it could not be ruled from horseback. No doubt the Mongol Khans realized this when faced with the problem of how to maintain their rule over the conquered lands. First of all, they depended on what had already been achieved by their great predecessor in the field of empire-building, while modifying and developing some of its institutions.

In ideology, the first successors of Chinggis Khan followed tradition and maintained the belief that the Khan ruled by the mandate of Heaven (Tengri); the forefather of the Altan Urugh (Golden Kin) Bodonchar was considered to have been born from Light.¹⁹ They also paid attention to spiritual factors in their policy for the subjugation of different peoples, adhering to the following instruction: 'Having seized the body, hold the soul. If the soul

¹⁷ Barthold, 1968, p. 461.

¹⁸ Lattimore, 1963a, p. 62.

¹⁹ Cleaves, 1982, 20.

is held, the body will not go anywhere.’²⁰ In this connection reference should be made to the religious policy of the Mongol Khans. Religious fanaticism was alien to the Mongols; they pursued a policy of religious tolerance in their multinational empire. Some scholars have held that this was determined simply by the Mongols’ indifference or ignorance; but it may rather have been a premeditated approach necessitated by ‘holding the soul’ of the subjugated peoples belonging to different ethnic groups and beliefs. It may well be that the Mongols’ religious tolerance was influenced by the attitude of their nomadic predecessors, like the Uighurs and the Kitan, towards the great variety of religions coexisting in Central Asia.

The first Chinggisid rulers endeavoured to strengthen their control all over the conquered countries by consolidating the rule of their sons and relatives in their own domains, granted as appanages. But the more the empire expanded, with its various parts ruled by different agents, the more necessary it became for the supreme imperial power to avert the danger of discord and disunity. In this connection, some traditional institutions of the nomadic society acquired particular significance and were modified and strengthened in conformity with the new requirements. Thus the *kurultay*, the ancient political institution of the nomads, now assumed greater importance than it had ever had previously. It became a true assembly of the Mongol élite, princes and nobles acting on the basis of old traditions and customs in order to handle the most important matters of state, such as the election of a Khan, the question of war, the establishment of law and issues of policy. All the great Khans, including Chinggis himself, had to be proclaimed at a *kurultay* especially convened for this purpose, and quite a number of *kurultays* are known to have been convened in order to discuss other important military and governmental affairs of the Mongol empire.

The Mongol empire was created through military conquest and the Mongol Khans regarded the army as the basic institution of the empire. The organization based on the decimal system was not only maintained for several generations of Mongol Khans, but also served as the model for the armies of their followers and pretenders to the heritage of the members of Chinggis Khan’s family. An important new element of the Mongol army structure during the Chinggisid period was the institution of the *tamma*. *Tamma* forces were originally established by order of the central imperial government for the purpose of maintaining control of the conquered territories. Some *tamma* armies ultimately became

²⁰ According to Lubsan-Danzan, 1937, p. 46, this instruction emanated from Chinggis; but according to another source written in the so-called ‘Square script’, it came from Qubilay or Khubilay Khan (album *Najm al-‘ajā’ib*, in Istanbul University Museum, in Ligeti, 1972, p. 123).

the nuclei of the permanent military forces of the empire's subsidiary Khanates, such as Hülegü's Il Khanate in Persia.²¹

Among the numerous institutions facilitating control within the empire, the communications system should be mentioned. The Mongols were among the first to introduce a transcontinental network of communications, thus encouraging the movement of peoples and ideas. The real initiator here was Ögedey Khan: 'I made one to establish post stations for that Our messengers, hasting on the way, make speed, and again for that We make them to convey Our needs and necessities.'²² Having consulted with his brothers, Ögedey instituted the *jam* (*yam*) system, setting up post-stations within his dominions. It was further extended by his brothers Chaghatay and Toluy and by his nephew Batu to include the lands under their direct rule. For the first time in history, a network of post-stations was established covering the whole of Central Asia; its efficient functioning impressed European travellers such as Marco Polo.²³ The structure of the system was based on post-stations (*jams*), established at stages equivalent to a day's journey. The stations held horses and stocks of fodder for those who travelled. Official envoys or messengers had to carry a special authorization tablet called in Mongolian *gerege*, made of wood, silver or gold, in order to make use of the system. Normal traffic might travel some 40 km a day, but express messengers could go very much faster, covering up to 300–500 km a day.²⁴

As regards Mongol rule over the great sedentary societies of Persia and China, it should be noted that the Mongols invented several institutions and offices which not only functioned efficiently, but left a noticeable imprint on the civil administration and the government of the conquered countries. One of the key institutions in local administration was the office of the *darughachi*. This system was set up in all the Mongol-ruled regions of Inner Eurasia, i.e. Persia, China and Russia, with the purpose of controlling the conquered territories. The term *darughachi* (in Russian, *darugha* or its Turkic equivalent *baskak*; in Persian, *darūghā*) was widely known all over the empire. The Mongol preference for the hereditary transfer of the office of *darughachi* was valid in all the parts of the empire. But in most cases, for instance in China, where problems arose due to the insufficient numbers of Mongols capable of holding the office, the Mongol Khans enlisted the services of Western Alans and Central Asians in order to guarantee Mongolian and non-Chinese predominance in the local civil bureaucracy.²⁵ This made it easier for Uighur, Persian and other Asian Muslims to gain high positions in the Mongol bureaucracy in various parts of

²¹ Morgan, 1986, pp. 94–5.

²² Cleaves, 1982, 281.

²³ Ricci, 1931, pp. 152–7.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 157.

²⁵ Endicott-West, 1989.

the empire. Although the office of *darughachi* was first entrusted by Chinggis Khan with mostly military tasks, its main function gradually developed into that of the chief civil official stationed in the conquered territories; thus one of the primary duties of *darughachis* in Persia, Russia and Central Asia was the collection of tribute.

The Khans introduced various forms of taxation in the regions of their empire. From his examination of the Persian sources of the Mongol period, Petrushevsky has concluded that some forty-five different terms for taxation were used, though this does not imply that there were forty-five distinct taxes, since the terminology varied at different times and places.²⁶ The original Mongol taxation may be divided into tribute (*alba*) and levy (*qubchighur* or *qubckur*). In 1229 Ögedey Khan issued the first decree with the aim of regulating the *alba*:

[As we are] sitting on the [throne made] ready by Our father the Kaghan, not making the people to suffer, for [lack of] broth, from these peoples, in year after year, let one give one sheep of two years old of [every] flock. Let them, bringing forth one sheep from one hundred sheep. . .²⁷

Alba and *qubchur* were paid in kind. With the conquest of the sedentary populations of Persia and Central Asia, however, *qubchur* gained a rather different meaning and it became the term used for a poll tax, either flat-rate or graduated, fixed and imposed on the conquered sedentary peoples.²⁸

The first three successors of Chinggis Khan were committed to making Mongolia the centre of their empire. Such a policy could not but favour the political, economic and cultural revival of the country, although this did not continue for long. Mongolia had become a vortex of great events and innovations, with extended relations with other countries, particularly those of Central Asia. For a while, it became a meeting-place of different peoples, cultures and religions. Its capital Karakorum was a cosmopolitan city where Christians, Muslims, Buddhists and such nationals as Hungarians, Alans, Russians, Georgians, Armenians and, of course, Chinese and Central Asians, mingled freely. The city itself was mainly built by captured artisans. Thanks to their knowledge and abilities, Uighur, Persian and other Central Asian Muslims occupied high posts in the Mongol bureaucracy; their role in the ruling of the empire was no less essential than that of the military leaders and their strategies for conquering other countries. Mongolia became directly involved in the caravan trade between East and West, with a liberal policy by the Mongol Khans towards trade. The *jam* system of communication greatly favoured commercial travel, and the caravan trade was generally protected and encouraged. Muslim merchants of western

²⁶ Petrushevsky, 1968, p. 529; Morgan, 1986, p. 100.

²⁷ Cleaves, 1982, 279.

²⁸ Morgan, 1986, p. 100.

Central Asia co-operated with Mongolian Khans and the nobility and were particularly active in money-lending and tax-collection. All this tended to come to an end with the creation of the Yüan empire in China, however, and the centre of trade, as of most other activities shifted from Karakorum to Khanbalik.

The Yüan empire of the Mongols and its fall

After the death of Möngke Khan in 1259, internecine disputes broke out among the Toluyids themselves. In 1260 the two sons of Möngke, Arig-böke and Qubilay, simultaneously had a *kurultay* convened and each declared himself Khan. In the Mongol traditionalist view, Qubilay's rise to power was illegal and a four-year fratricidal war between the two brothers ensued, with Arig-böke wishing to retain the centre of the empire in Mongolia. After his defeat, the struggle was continued by Qaydu until his death in 1303.

During the reign of Qubilay Khan (1260–94), the Mongol empire underwent a great transformation. The transference of the empire's capital from Karakorum to Khanbalik (or Dai-du) in northern China, and the adoption of the Chinese title Yüan (The Origin) for the Mongol reign in China, meant a change in the traditional policy of Qubilay's predecessors. Theoretically, Qubilay Khan was the ruler of the whole empire and tried to avail himself of his rights in all the subjugated countries. But in reality, in his time and particularly in the reign of his successors, the component parts of the Mongol empire progressively achieved such a degree of independence that it was difficult for the Khan to claim the status of universal ruler. It is probable that Qubilay Khan realized this and regarded himself more as a Mongol-Chinese emperor than as a universal sovereign. Despite having settled in China, Qubilay did not forget that he was a Mongol emperor and did his best to make the Mongols an élite group in the conquered country. Having thus secured Mongol rule in China, it became possible for a small, non-Chinese ethnic group to govern the huge Chinese sedentary society for almost a century.

CENTRAL ASIA UNDER THE RULE OF SUCCESSORS*

B. Akhmedov revised by and D. Sinor

As a result of both major and minor wars waged with great effectiveness between 1188 and 1206, Chinggis Khan (1155–1227) laid the foundations of a new state destined to play a major role in the history of the peoples of Central and East Asia, and of eastern Europe. Chinggis Khan liquidated the Tangut state of Hsi Hsia (982–1227), located on the frontiers of the contemporary Chinese province of Gansu and the western part of Shanxi, and the Jurchen Chin empire which covered the territory of north-east and northern China. Having defeated the Chin, the Mongols directed their conquest against the powerful state of the Khwarazm Shahs. On their way, they crushed the Kara Khitay empire, which was by then under the leadership of Küchlüg. Between 1219 and 1224 the Mongols conquered, one after the other, Utrar, Binakat, Khujand, Bukhara, Samarkand, Gurganj and other Transoxanian towns, garrisons of the Khwarazm Shah ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muhammad (1200–20), and established their rule in Transoxania and Khwarazm.

Already during his lifetime, the vast empire of Chinggis Khan was divided into domains (*ulus*) which he assigned to his sons Jöchi, Chaghatay, Ögedey and Toluy. His eldest son Jöchi (who predeceased his father) received an appanage ranging from the Irtysh river ‘as far as Mongol hoofs had beaten the ground’, and the lower Syr Darya (the towns of Signak, Barchkent and Yengi-kent) and north-western Khwarazm. Jöchi’s summer seat was on the Irtysh, while his winter quarters were on the lower Syr Darya. Chaghatay received Kashghar, Yeti Su and Transoxania. Later, under Baraq Khan (1266–c. 1271), the Chaghatayids were to spread their power over northern Afghanistan as well. Chaghatay’s seat was on the Ili river. Western Mongolia and Tarbagatai were assigned to Ögedey, who

* See Map 6, pp. 434–5.

resided in Chughuchak. The youngest son Toluy inherited his father's former *ulus*, i.e. Mongolia proper. His seat was on the banks of the Kerulen river.

The founder of the Golden Horde¹ was Jöchi's son Batu (1236–56), the conqueror of eastern Europe who also played an important role in the political life of the entire Mongol empire under the Great Khans Ögedey (1229–41), Güyük (1246–8) and Toluy's son Möngke (1251–9). Batu and his successors ruled over vast territories not only in Transoxania but also in Iran; it was a huge empire, whose exact frontiers cannot be exactly defined. In the northeast, the Golden Horde included Volga Bulgharia; in the north the frontier followed that of the Russian principalities. In the south, the territory of the Golden Horde included the Crimea, the Caucasus up to Darband, occasionally Baku, and also northern Khwarazm with the town of Urgench. The frontier followed the steppes from the Dniestr to western Siberia and the lower Syr Darya. The capital of this state under Batu was Saray-Batu (Old Saray), located not far from Astrakhan, while under Berke Khan (1257–66) it was Saray-Berke (New Saray), located on the Aktuba, a branch of the Volga.

As far as the *ulus* of Chaghatay (1227–42) was concerned, initially it comprised only the lands from the country of the Uighurs in the east to Samarkand and Bukhara in the west. But Chaghatay held it from the Great Khan, or Kaghan, only as *injü* (crown land), civil power being exercised, on his behalf, by the Khwarazmian Mahmūd Yalavach and, after his transfer to China (after 1239), by his son Mas^cūd Beg (d. 1289). Military power, including duties such as taking a census of the population and collecting taxes and exactions, was in the hands of Mongol officials called *darughachi* or *tammachi* (see above, p. 292). Judging by the fact that Mahmūd Yalavach was able to prevent the Mongol commanders Ildiz-noyon and Jighan-khorchi, who had crushed the rebellion in 1238 of Mahmūd Tarābī (see below), from plundering Bukhara and slaughtering its inhabitants, he must have enjoyed great power in the *ulus* of Chaghatay, and the local Mongol officials were clearly obliged to abide by his orders. Mahmūd Yalavach and his son Mas^cūd Beg were accountable only to the Great Khan Ögedey. The following story by the historian Rashīd al-Dīn is characteristic:

It is said, that during the reign of Ögedey kaghan, Chaghatay . . . gave some of the provinces of Transoxania, which, by the command of the kaghan were under the control of Yalavach, to someone else. Yalavach reported the matter to Ögedey who sent an order to Chaghatay rebuking him and ordering him to write an answer. Chaghatay wrote in his reply: 'I acted from ignorance and without guidance. I have no answer that I can write, but since the kaghan has ordered me to write I dared to write this.' The kaghan was pleased and accepted this excuse; and he gave that province to Chaghatay as *injü*. Thereafter Yalavach came to visit Chaghatay,

¹ A name apparently given to them by the Russians, although Russian and Polish-Lithuanian sources usually refer to it simply as 'the Great Horde', see Bosworth, 1996, p. 253.

who rebuked and abused him. Yalavach said to Vazir [one of Chaghatay's viziers]: 'I should like a word with you in private.' And when they were closeted together he said to Vazir: 'I am the kaghan's minister and Chaghatay cannot put me to death without consulting him. If I complain of you to the kaghan he will put you to death. If you will set matters to right with me, well and good; otherwise I shall denounce you to the kaghan. And if you repeat these words to Chaghatay I will deny them however much I am questioned, and you have no witness.' On this account, Vazir was forced to put the matter to rights.²

Soon afterwards, around 1239, probably because of his strained relations with Chaghatay, Mahmūd Yalavach was transferred to China and his son Mas^cūd Beg was appointed governor-general of Turkistan.

The political position of the Chaghatay *ulus* until the reign of Kebek Khan (1309; 1318–26) was unstable. Chaghatay's grandson, Qara Hülegü (the son of Mötöghan, killed at the siege of Bamiyan in 1221), did not rule for long (1241–7) and he was deposed by the Great Khan Güyük (1246–8), who enthroned Yesü Möngke (1247–52), Chaghatay's son. Yesü Möngke was Güyük's intimate friend, but he spent his time carousing and, like many Khans of the house of Chaghatay, did not effectively participate in governing the country. All power was in the hands of his wife Toqashi and of the Tajik vizier Bahā' al-Dīn Marghīnānī, son of the Shaykh al-Islām of Ferghana.

After Güyük's death his widow Oghul Qaymish acted as regent until 1251. In the forthcoming election of the Great Khan, Batu decided to lend his support not to one of her sons but to Toluy's son Möngke, and had him elected at a *kurultay* (general council) held in Karakorum in 1251. As might have been expected, the princes of Ögedey's lineage opposed this decision and were supported by Yesü Möngke, Chaghatay's fifth son and the ruler of the Chaghatay *ulus*. Following Möngke's accession to the throne, many of those who had opposed his election were executed, including Oghul Qaymish. The deposition of Yesü Möngke was also proclaimed and Qara Hülegü was appointed in his place. However, on his way to the *ulus* Qara Hülegü died and it fell to his widow Orqina Khātūn to have Yesü Möngke put to death. Toqashi Khātūn was also executed. Qara Hülegü's widow and her under-age son Mubārak Shāh were appointed to the Chaghatay *ulus*, but they were considered only nominal rulers. In fact, power was in the hands of Mas^cūd Beg, who ruled in the name of Batu and Möngke.

Hence, after the Karakorum *kurultay* of 1251, the Chaghatay *ulus* came to be split into two: East Turkistan, the Kulja region and Yeti Su (Semirechye), apparently, together with the north-eastern part of Ferghana, came within the Kaghan's sphere of influence. In Transoxania and the western part of Ferghana the Golden Horde's influence was preponderant,

² Boyle, 1971, p. 156.

judging by the indirect evidence, in particular the returning by Batu of all Temür-Malik's properties in Khujand to his son. In the words of the Franciscan William of Rubruck, the frontier between Möngke's and Batu's domains followed the steppe between Talas and the Chu river, east of the Alexander mountain range.

To save the Chaghatay *ulus* from annexation by the Golden Horde, Alughu (1260–4), son of Baydar, son of Chaghatay, continued the struggle against Berke Khan. Finally, a serious blow was delivered to the Golden Horde: a 5,000-strong garrison of the Golden Horde encamped at Bukhara was, in the words of Wassāf, 'withdrawn from the town to the steppe and exterminated; their property, wives and children were confiscated'.³ An account by Rashīd al-Dīn also deserves attention. He relates that under Alughu, the Chaghatayid army defeated Berke Khan's troops encamped near Utrar: 'He [Alughu] assembled the dispersed troops, and then fought with Berke, crushed him and pillaged Utrar.'⁴ Thus Alughu brought Transoxania under Chaghatayid rule. Alughu's successor, Mubārak Shāh, a Muslim, was, as already mentioned, a weak ruler, who soon after his enthronement was deposed by his cousin Baraq.

Under Baraq (1266–71), the Chaghatay *ulus* became somewhat stronger. Baraq tried to carry on an armed struggle against Qaydu (Ögedey's grandson), and Möngke-Temür (1267–80) of the Golden Horde, who were allies. Once, on the banks of the Syr Darya, he succeeded in defeating them, but subsequently suffered a defeat himself. The war with the Il Khan Abaqa (1265–82) did not bring Baraq success either. But in the last years of his life, the Chaghatay *ulus* was once again divided into distinct spheres of influence, those of Qaydu, in the 1260s, of Möngke-Temür of the Golden Horde, and of Baraq who received only about two-thirds of Transoxania.

Following the short reigns of Negübey (Nikpay in the Persian sources; c. 1271) and Toqa-Temür (1272–91), Qaydu enthroned in the Chaghatay *ulus* Baraq's son Duwa Khan (c. 1282–1307), with whose name the restoration of Andijan and its becoming the capital of Ferghana are associated. Duwa Khan was a true ally of Qaydu and actively participated in his military campaigns in Mongolia proper; he also interfered in the internecine struggles of the Jöchids in the White Horde and, after Qaydu's death (in the autumn of 1301), he enjoyed great authority within the territories of his successor Chapar. Accordingly, Duwa Khan can be seen as the true founder of the Chaghatayid state. After his death, disturbances again began in the Chaghatay *ulus*. The reigns of Könçek Khan (son of Duwa Khan), who was enthroned near Almalik, in a small town of Sabqu-bala, and Talighu (son of Qadami,

³ Barthold, 1968, p. 490.

⁴ Ibid.

son of Böri, son of Mitügen, son of Chaghatay) were not long. They ruled for hardly more than two years, marked by a revolt of princes led by Kursabe, a descendant of Ögedey.

To some degree, Duwa Khan's son Kebek Khan succeeded in curbing the separatist tendencies of his relatives. At a *kurultay* held in 1309, he had his elder brother Esen Buqa-Böge (1309–18) elected as Khan. Kebek Khan and his brother Yesü-Böge were able to annex the largest part of Qaydu's domains and to some extent stabilize, at least temporarily, the socio-political situation in the country. Kebek Khan (who succeeded his brother and ruled from 1318 to 1326) holds a special place in the history of the Chaghatay *ulus*. For example, his name is linked to the currency and administrative reforms which played an important role in the development of feudal statehood in Central Asia. His name is also linked to the building and restoring of the towns of Transoxania. Among his new constructions there was, for example, a palace (in Mongolian, *qarshi*) located near Nasaf around which a whole town later grew up. Among the towns restored by Kebek Khan was ancient Balkh, 'which, from the time of the Great Sāhib-Qirān [i.e. Chinggis Khan] was deserted and turned into a tangle of reeds'.

The administrative and monetary reforms of Kebek Khan were aimed at putting an end to confusion and checking the abuse by the various officials and speculators. The administrative reform divided the country around Bukhara and Samarkand into *tümens*, and in Ferghana and East Turkistan into *orchins* (literally 'near', 'around', 'surrounding'), i.e. a region located around the capital. As for the monetary reforms, the systems of Il Khanid Iran and the Golden Horde were utilized as models. The weight of 1 *kebek* dinar was 2 *mithqāls* and 1 *kebek* dirham was equal to 1/3 of a *mitbqāl*. The administrative and currency reforms of Kebek Khan were only superficial, however, and internal problems remained. The new monetary unit became known as *kebek*, a term that survives in the Russian word *kopek*.

The paucity of sources makes it difficult to give a detailed picture of the social, economic and cultural aspects of life within the Chaghatay *ulus*. Fragmentary evidence provided by historical sources such as the works of Juwayni, Rashīd al-Dīn, Wassāf and Jamāl Qarshī allows us to say only the following. The Chaghatay *ulus* was a decentralized state, with governors appointed by the Kaghan (for the settled regions, until 1289) and rulers of provincial districts, i.e. princes assisted by special officials, the *darughachi* or *tammachi*, the representatives of Mongol power. Leaders of local origin such as Mahmūd Yalavach and Mas^cūd Beg from Khwarazm, Habash ^cAmīd from Utrar, Bahā' al-Dīn Marghīnānī, the vizier Yesūnte Möngke from Ferghana and others actively participated in government. Transoxanians were also involved in the political life of China under the Yüan dynasty (1279–1368). Among them there were, for example, Mahmūd Yalavach, his son ^cAlī Beg

and Ya[°]qūb son of [°]Alī Beg, Khwarazmians by origin, Shams al-Dīn Sayyid Aja and his son [°]Alā' al-Dīn who came from Almalīk, Bahā' al-Dīn from Qunduz and others.

Because of favourable climatic conditions, Transoxania had long been a region of developed agriculture based on artificial irrigation. The principal crops were cotton, grain, gourds, alfalfa and grapes. Furthermore, the region played a major role in the transit trade linking China, the Near and Middle East and Europe. Crafts and trade had developed in the towns there: besides Bukhara and Samarkand, there were also Khujand, a residence of the Kaghan's deputies in Transoxania such as Mahmūd Yalavach and Mas[°]ūd Beg; Uzgend where, as under the Karakhanids and the Kara Khitay, the Kaghan's treasury was kept; Andijan, developed by Duwa Khan and turned by him into the capital of Ferghana; Marghinan, which was a centre for many scholars and poets; Isfara, the home of a talented poet of the thirteenth century, Sayf al-Dīn Isfarāghī (d. between 1261 and 1267); and Kuba (the present Kuwa), the home town of Rukn al-Dīn Qubānī (thirteenth century) and others.

As mentioned above, the Chaghatayids had only *injū* rights in the *ulus*, that is, they had only the right to make use of the revenues. As far as the taxes and duties levied on the subject population are concerned, we have only very general indications. For example, Rashīd al-Dīn gives information on the main taxes levied on landowners and nomads. Thus the amount of *māl* (land tax) was 10 per cent of all the harvest yield, and a tax levied on nomads (*qubchighur*) was 1 per cent of 100 head of cattle. The *targhu*, a kind of trade duty, was also collected. At first, taxes and duties were paid in kind, but from the 1250s, after the introduction of various types of Mongol monetary units and the coinage issued by Möngke (1251–9), and later, particularly from 1270 onwards, duties came to be paid in cash. Coinage was minted in many large towns, such as Almalīk, Bukhara, Samarkand, Utrar, Taraz, Kashghar, Tashkent, Ush, Marghinan, Ak-tepe, Uzgend and Khujand.

With regard to the socio-economic life of the people of Transoxania under the Chaghatayids, the revolt of the population of the Bukhara district, which took place in 1238 and was led by an artisan called Mahmūd Tarābī, is worthy of attention. The cause of the revolt was the suffering of the masses caused by the oppression of local landowners, further aggravated by the outrages of the Mongol officials and tax-collectors. As related by Juwaynī and, following him, Ulugh Beg, the revolt began in the village of Tarab near Bukhara and very quickly spread throughout the region. Several thousand rebels, armed with sticks, spades and axes, moved towards Bukhara. Some Mongol high officials fled to Karmina, others pretended to side with the rebels. These officials planned to kill Mahmūd Tarābī on his way to Bukhara and thus to stifle the revolt, but the plot was unsuccessful. Eventually, the rebels occupied Bukhara and encamped on the height of Abū Hafis, situated on the northern side of the city. Mahmūd Tarābī was brought to Malik Sanjar's

palace and proclaimed caliph. The rich Mongol high officials who had no time to flee were arrested and executed and their properties were distributed among the poor. The Mongol commanders who had fled to Karmina assembled several scattered Mongol detachments and came out against the rebels, but were defeated. Nevertheless, because the rebel leaders – Mahmūd Tarābī, his brothers Muhammad and °Alī, the scholar-theologian Shams al-Dīn Mahbūbī and others – were inexperienced, the revolt did not spread beyond Bukhara. Taking advantage of this, Mahmūd Yalavach sent out forces from Khujand and defeated the insurgents; altogether some 21,000 men were killed. Thus the revolt was suppressed, but it showed the Mongols that the people hated the regime and could muster enough strength to challenge the entire establishment.

An essential feature in the life of the Chaghatay *ulus* in the middle of the thirteenth century was a growing conflict between Chaghatay's descendants who governed the various regions. As far back as the times of Mubārak Shāh (1266) and Baraq (1266–71), some princes had aspired towards the establishment of stable links with the settled population of Transoxania. Thus Mubārak Shāh moved from Yeti Su to the valley of Ahangaran, and Baraq at first moved to Chaghaniyan, where in 1266 his election took place. Conversely, a strong group of the military-nomadic aristocracy headed by Qaydu, Yasa'ur and Buzan favoured a nomadic way of life; they repeatedly attacked the settled regions of the country, pillaged the population and burned towns and villages.

After Kebek Khan, the Chaghatay *ulus* was again involved in internecine warfare. Thus in one single year (1326), Elchigidey and Dua-Temür, both sons of Duwa Khan, followed each other on the throne. Tarmashīrīn (1326–34), who, because of his adherence to Islam, was called °Alā' al-Dīn (Grandeur of the Faith), finally settled in the western part of the Chaghatay *ulus* and no longer came to Almalik. The eastern part of the *ulus*, which also included a part of Ferghana, fell under the power of nomadic feudal lords and Khans: Buzan (Dua-Temür's son) and Changshi (Abughan's son), both of them grandsons of Duwa Khan, and Yesün-Temür (Changshi's brother; 1334–8) ruled in name only.

In the 1340s the Chaghatay *ulus* finally disintegrated into two parts: Moghulistan (which included Yeti Su, the eastern part of Ferghana and East Turkistan) and Transoxania proper. The western part of the *ulus* also included eastern Khwarazm. The years 1340–70 witnessed an aggravation of disturbances and internecine wars and the feudal disintegration of the *ulus* into smaller, independent domains. In the main regions of the western part of the *ulus*, power was seized by tribal leaders. Thus Kish and its regions fell into the hands of the amir Hājjī Barlas; Bāyazīd Jalāyir took possession of the Khujand region; the Balkh region passed into the hands of Husayn, grandson of the Turkish amir Kazaghan, killed in 1358 while hunting; and in Shiburghan, the standard of independence was raised

by Muhammad Khwāja Apendi, the leader of the Naiman tribe. There were also regions where power was in the hands of local feudal nobles: the *sadrs* (leaders of the Muslim religious class) took possession of Bukhara and its regions, the local Kaykhusraw Sayyids of Termez took possession of Khuttalan, etc. A similar situation prevailed in the eastern part of the *ulus* in Moghulistan. Here also, in spite of the firm hold of the family–tribe tradition, disturbances and internecine struggles began. The Khans no longer wielded real power: it was wholly in the hands of nomadic feudal lords. It was of this state of affairs that the clever and enterprising Timur (known to the West as Tamerlane), the son of Barlas Beg Taraghay, took advantage.