

From Chingis Khan to Ottoman:A Brief Introduction

Notes prepared by Prof. Erdal Yavuz. For the definitions , images, original texts as well as content, the following internet sources are primarily used: <http://en.wikipedia.org/>, <http://www.m-w.com/>, <http://www.questia.com/library/encyclopedia/>, <http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~dee/WORLD.HTM> , <http://www.allempires.com/> , <http://www.bartleby.com/67/> , <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/>

Turks and Mongols: AD 1000-1500

The first half of our own millennium was dominated, in Asia , Near East and Eastern Europe by the movement of Turks and Mongols.

Almost every part of the continent (southern India and southeast Asia are the exceptions) is connected in this period by conquerors whose own roots lie in the steppes north of the mountain ranges.

The first historical mention of the Turks is in Chinese accounts of a great empire established by a confederation of nomads in the 6th century AD. Stretching from north of the Great Wall in the east to the Black Sea in the west, the empire is known to the Chinese as *T'u K'ue* and to the Turks themselves as *Gök Türk*.

Besides different episodes and various states and formations, a global episode starts when in the 13th century the Mongols emerge from the steppes to setup a vast and virtually instant empire. By the time of Kublai Khan almost the whole habitable continent is theirs, except India, southeast Asia and Japan.

In the 15th century Tamerlane (Timur) almost repeats their great feat of conquest, but the effect is only to place his Turkish descendants on thrones previously held by Mongols ,except for the imperial throne in China, by now returned to a native dynasty (the Ming).

Beginning by the 14th century a new Turkish power, that of the Ottomans, wins control of Anatolia.

And by early 16th Century the Ottoman Turks extend their rule round the eastern Mediterranean and down into North Africa and Arabia as well as the steppes of Russia. This had lasting impacts on later Near Eastern and European politics and culture.

(As Reader 4, you will find a news article by the occasion of a presentation in Arizona Opera published in *The Arizona Republic* on February 17, 2006, to see how this influence today is presented to the American public.)

Challenges from the East

From the late 12th century to the end of the Tamerlane's empire in the early 15th century the empires founded by the Turkic and Mongolic peoples of Asia constituted the center of the world history.

It is now accepted by most historians that they imposed a certain peace , *pax mongolica* on the regions they came to dominate and enabled the establishment of a Eurasian-wide system of trade and cultural exchange.

The Mongol Empire

The high plateau of Mongolia, east of the Altai Mountains, is the original homeland of both Turks and Mongols; two groups much intermingled in history.

The emergence of the Turks from Mongolia is a gradual process. Each successive wave makes its first appearance in history when they acquire power in some new region, whether they be the Khazars, the Seljuks, Ottomans or one of many other such groups.

The sudden eruption of the Mongols from their homeland was different. Their astonishing expansion, on both sides of the Asia, can be dated to the early years of the 13th century and can be attributed to the military genius of one man - born with the name of Temujin, but known now as Chingis Khan.

The ability to construct tribal alliances and state building were valued traits of leadership hence Chingis Khan is considered to be such a leader.

In the Asia, the Mongols had enjoyed brief periods of dominance in the fourth and tenth centuries but that of The Chingis Khan was much more successful.

Mongol armies were entirely of cavalry and depended on speed and mobility in making their assaults. Reorganized into units called *tumen* containing 10,000 men, each army was also divided into heavy cavalry, light cavalry, and lightly armored scouts who preceded the main forces. The later Mongol forces were equipped with gunpowder and artillery.

The empire under Chingis Khan and after

Chingis Khan after series of attacks in 1207 defeated the kingdom of Hsi Hsia in northern China, then attacked the Chin empire. The Sung, instead of allying with the Chin against took the chance to ally with the Mongols instead, and Sung and Mongol troops put an end to the Chin Dynasty in 1234 AD. (Refer to the map)



On the other hand the "Southern Sung", flourished without its northern territories. There were even greater technological and cultural advancements, and the population increased greatly.

However the Sung remained militarily weak, in addition corrupt officials and weak emperors contributed to their downfall. So Kublai Khan, grandson of Chingis Khan, defeated the last major Sung armies and reduced the last pockets of resistance by 1279.



Chingis Khan

Kublai Khan (1215–1294), Mongol military leader, became Khan (1260–1294) of the Mongol Empire and founder and first Emperor (1279–1294) of the Chinese *Yuan Dynasty*.

Under the Mongol Yuan dynasty in China, a new social order emerged. At the top of the hierarchy were the Mongols and their allies, then the northern Chinese, then the southern Chinese and other ethnic groups. The central administration was reserved to Mongols and their allies, meanwhile the Chinese continued to control the local administrative network.

The Yuan dynasty continued to patronize a full range of scholars and artists from other lands within the Mongol empire. Muslims and Islamic culture were particularly prominent in the Mongol court in China. As elsewhere, the Mongol overlords of China preserved religious toleration and admitted Nestorian and western Christians, as well as Buddhists and Taoists, within their kingdom. It was during the reign of Kublai Khan that Marco Polo of Italy made his journey to China.

Eventually the Chinese began to raise rebellions against the Mongol conquerors particularly after their defeats to the Vietnamese and the Japanese (helped by a **kamikaze**)

Following the death of Kublai Khan no vigorous successors reigned in China. As dissatisfaction with the Yuan dynasty grew, the scholar- gentry called on the people to oust their oppressors.

Popular dissatisfaction, traditional Chinese scholar- gentry's called on the revolts to overthrow the Yuan and the governments inability to suppress local violence, made the Yuan rulers retreat to central Asia. A new order was restored under Ju Yuanzhang, a peasant and the founder of the Ming dynasty.

Yuan period contributions

During the Yuan period agriculture remained central to the national economy and introduction of new crops helped revitalize and repopulate northern China.

Imperial inspectors annually examined crops and the food supply with a view to purchasing when stocks were ample, for storage against famine.

The Grand Canal was built, imperial roads were improved, and postal relays of 200,000 horses were established. Charitable relief was organized for scholars, orphans, and the sick, for whom hospitals were provided

The use of paper money, first used in the Tang and carried on in Song and Jin times, further developed under the Mongols.

In the realm of science, meteorology developed to the extent that by the 14th century the correlation between climatic changes and the sunspot cycle was observed.

Marco Polo the Venetian merchant who traveled widely in China between 1275 and 1292 in the service of Kublai, has been the source of Western fascination from his own day forward. His *Description of the World* was immediately translated into other languages of Europe, and it became an instant success.

Westward expansion

In 1236, Chingis Khan's grandson, Batu, led the first Mongol invasion of Russia. The Russian princes, who failed to unite in the face of the nomadic threat, were defeated.

After the break up of the Mongol Empire in the 1240s the lands of Eastern Europe parts of present-day Russia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan was entrusted to the *Golden Horde*.

The Mongol conquest of Russia reduced the Russian princes to tribute-payers. Payments of the landlords felt heavily on the peasants, reduced to serfdom. Until the mid- nineteenth century, serfdom was typical of Russian agricultural labor. Some Russian cities, such as Moscow, recovered their fortunes by the increased trade the Mongol empire permitted. After 1328, Moscow also profited by serving as the tribute collector for the Mongol overlords.

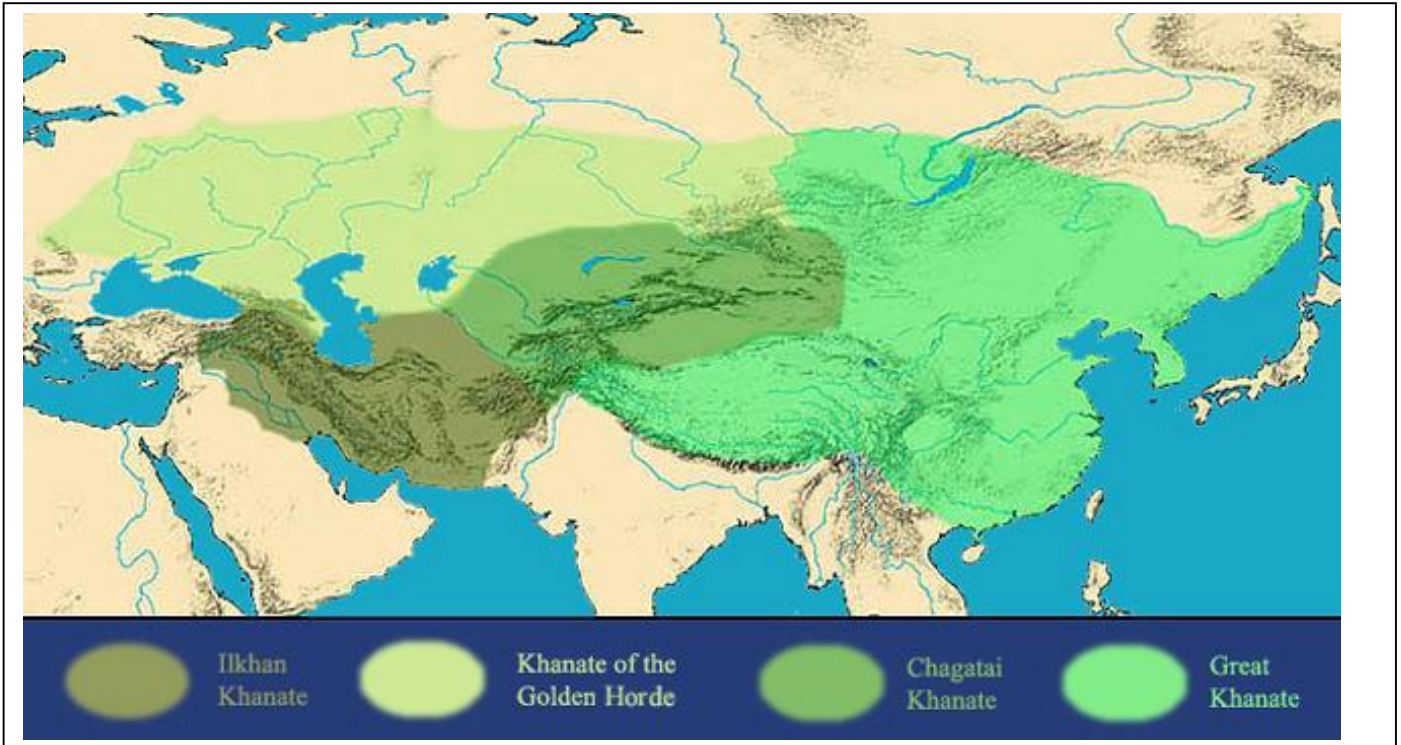
The Mongol conquest of Russia ensured the central position of Moscow and the Orthodox Church, led to changes in Russian military organization, and revised the political concepts of Russian rulers.

The Mongols on the Islamic territories

The task of conquering the remainder of the Islamic world and of the Middle East fell to Hulagu another grandson of Chingis Khan and the ruler of Ilkhan State. In 1258, the *Ilkhan* armies captured Baghdad.

The Mongol invasion and the consequent destruction of many cities also caused a start for decline of Islamic state and culture.

Only in 1260 did the Mamluk army of Egypt defeat the Mongols and was able to hold off further Mongol invasions. Lack of unity among the Mongol hordes also caused Hulagu to end his assault on Islamic territories.



The extent of the empire of Chinghis and later Khanates

Following the fragmentation of the Mongol empire, a second nomadic expansion occurred under Tamerlane towards the end of 14th Century. His armies devastated a wide region of the Middle East, India, and southern Russia including the Ottoman Empire. After his death in 1405, his kingdom rapidly disintegrated leaving behind an irremediable sense of insecurity in the region.

Life Under the Mongols

Despite a reputation of “aggressiveness” in thought and religion Mongol rule is accepted to be tolerant. The Mongols offered religious toleration to Confucians, Buddhists, Taoists, and Muslims and different religious groups built houses of worship in Yuan-era cities.

For example Chingis Khan is particularly inclined to **Taoism (Reader 1)**, while some other Khans favored Christianity. In that line the Orthodox Patriarch of Baghdad created an archbishopric of Beijing (1275), and churches were built elsewhere in Chinese cities.

The Mongol administration drew from examples in both the Islamic and Chinese world. Chingis Khan formulated a legal code, **yasa(k)**, intended to end tribal and clan divisions among the Mongols and regulate the administration. Under the Mongol peace, trade and cultural exchange flourished.

The Mongol invasions caused Europeans to alter their military organization and to adopt the use of gunpowder. Mongol conquests facilitated trade across the Asiatic steppes between Europe and Asia..

The Mongol Interlude in Chinese History had enduring consequences. like opening China to external influences from the other civilized regions of Eurasia.

The “Seljuk” and “Ottoman” Turks

Turkish tribes to the east of the Khazars, settled around the cities of Bukhara and Samarkand, was under the powerful religious influence of Islam by the 7th Century.

Within the Muslim caliphate, which from AD 762 based in Baghdad the Turks began to play an increasingly important role, both as tribal allies and as soldiers in the armies. Gradually the Turks begin to obtain ranks as well as territories for themselves.

Seljuk is considered to be the ruler of a group of Turkish tribes who migrated, in the late 10th century, from the steppes to the northern borders of the Persian empire They embraced Islam, played their part in the frontier defenses of the Muslim world. The Seljuks establish their base in this border region between modern Iran and Afghanistan, while Tugrul Beg looks further west.

Tugrul Beg gradually fought his way westwards through Persia and by 1055 he is in a position to enter Baghdad itself. The caliph, as a liberator from the Shi’as, welcomes him. The caliph honours him the title of sultan with an ambitious task to overwhelm the Fatimids, the Shi’ite dynasty controlling the caliph’s Egyptian territories.

From then on Turkish officers will begin to rise to higher ranks, commanding armies, governing provinces, sometimes ruling as independent princes

The entry of the Seljuk Turks into Western Asia in the second half of the eleventh century forms one of the great epochs of world history. It added a third nation, after the Arabs and Persians, to the dominant races of Islam, it tore Asia Minor away from Christendom and opened the path to the later Ottoman spread to Europe, it put an end to the political domination of the Arabs in the Near East.

In 1064 the Seljuk Turks, under their sultan Alp Arslan, invade Eastern Anatolia, a disputed frontier region between the Byzantine empire and neighbors to the east.

Alp Arslan follows his success here with an attack on Georgia, in 1068. These acts of aggression prompt a response from the Byzantine emperor, Romanus Diogenes.

The armies meet in 1071 at Manzikert, near Lake Van. The battle, a resounding victory for the Seljuks, is a turning point in the story of the Byzantine Empire. Within a few years Turkish tribes are settled in many parts of Anatolia.

This irruption was a major factor in bringing about the Crusades, during which a three-part struggle among Christians, Seljuks, and Egyptian Mamluks developed.

Alp Arslan's son, Malik Shah (reigned 1072–92), ably administered and developed his huge empire; he was a protector of Omar Khayyam, who reformed the calendar at his behest.

At the start of the 12th cent. the Seljuk empire began to fragment, and various parts achieved virtual independence. The attacks of the Khwarazm shah led to the final downfall of the empire in 1157.

The sultanate of Rum

Among the successor states the one that is more important for our history is the "Sultanate of Rum" which comprised a large part of Asia Minor.

Pressing deep into Anatolia, after the victory at Manzikert in 1071, the Seljuks reached Konya in the following year and Nicaea, much closer to Constantinople, in about 1080. They made Nicaea their capital until it is recovered by the Byzantines during the first crusade, in 1097. In 1099 Konya, strategically placed in the centre of Anatolia, became the Seljuk capital. Konya became also famous for being the home of Mevlana at that period. **(Reader 2)**

The Seljuks describe their new territory, at the heart of the old Byzantine empire, as the sultanate of Rum. Rum, meaning Rome, is the word used by the Turks for Byzantium.

Throughout the 12th and 13th century Anatolia is in confusion. Turkish tribes also fight among themselves. The Byzantines try to recover their land. Crusaders, passing through and from 1204 occupying Constantinople, complicate the picture.

But the new and overriding feature is that Anatolia is now largely occupied by Turks. This fact enters the languages of the period. In addition to its many other names, the region begins to be referred to as Turkey - the land of the Turks.

For an observation of the famous traveler Ibn Battuta on the Turks of Anatolia of that period see **(Reader)**

The Ottomans

The Ottomans had come primarily as settlers during the reign of the Seljuks in Turkey and soon ruled a small military state in western Anatolia by 1300, about the time the Seljuk state was collapsing.

By 1400, the Ottomans had managed to extend their influence over much of Anatolia and even into Byzantine territory in eastern Europe: Macedonia and Bulgaria.

In 1402, the Ottomans moved their capital to Edirne where they threatened the last great bastion of the Byzantine Empire, its capital, Constantinople.

Not only would the seizure of Constantinople represent a powerful symbol of Ottoman power, but it would make the Ottomans master of east-west trade.

In 1453, Sultan Mehmed (1451-1481), then on called "The Conqueror," finally took this one last remnant of Byzantium. The capital of the Ottoman Europe would remain fixed in Istanbul and, under the patronage of the Ottoman sultans, become one of the wealthiest and most cultured cities of the early modern world.

The State

The Ottomans inherited a rich mixture of political traditions from disparate sources: Turks, Persians, Mongols, Mesopotamian and, of course, Islam.

The Ottoman state, like the Turkish, Mongol, and Mesopotamian states rested on a principle of absolute authority in the monarch. The nature of Ottoman autocracy, however, is greatly misunderstood and misinterpreted in the West, particularly in world history textbooks.

The Ottoman Empire was, in modern terms, a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-religious organization, as, in fact, were most, if not all traditional empires.

The central function of the ruler or Sultan in Ottoman political theory was to guarantee justice (*adalet*) in the land, expressed by the famous formula called the **Circle of Justice (Daire-i Adl)**.

This idea of justice while explains the working of the system is a justice of fairness and equity that comes closer to the Western notion of "equality" where everybody gets his due share.

In this tradition, *adalet*, or justice, is the protection of the helpless from the rapacity of the powerful. This, in Ottoman political theory, was the primary task of the Sultan. The Sultan personally was responsible protecting his people from the excesses of government, such as predatory taxation and the corruption of local officials.

In thought, the ruler could only guarantee this justice if he had absolute power. For if he was not an absolute ruler, that meant that he would be dependent on others and so subject to corruption. Absolute authority, then, was at the service of building a just government and general welfare.

In order to ensure the justice the Sultan's duty was primarily to keep a watch on all the officials. In some cases, this observance of government involved the personal involvement of the Sultan, monitoring central and local officials through a vast, complex, and elaborate system of administration with feedbacks to the top administration. In that sense the administration was very efficient and maintained a remarkable series of registers (*defter*) detailing the population and resources of the empire, the holders of *timars*, and so on.

The Ottoman government also cultivated an understanding of consent in its wars of conquests. Soldiers were not allowed to mistreat peasants nor take anything from them without their permission or reimbursement.



Anatolia and Balkans around the year 1300

The Ottoman conquerors believed that no conquest could stand without the goodwill of the general population of the conquered, so military campaigns were remarkably fair and easy on the average person.

In order to prevent fraudulent taxes and arbitrary laws by public officials, the Sultans "orders" (*firman*) and taxes were declared and posted in public. There was, then, always direct diffusion of information to the people. Another measure was the universal access to centralized authority. The highest reaches of power—with the exception of the person of the Sultan—was available to each and every citizen of the Empire. Every single member of Ottoman society could approach the Imperial Council with grievances against government officials

The Structure of Government

Officially, the Sultan was "the government / the state". He enjoyed absolute power and, in theory at least, was personally involved in every governmental decision. In the Ottoman experience of government, everything representing the state government issued from the hands of the Sultan himself.

Although the Sultan was regarded as personally responsible for every government decision, in reality a large bureaucracy ran the government. This bureaucracy was controlled by a rigid and complex set of rules, and the Sultan himself was constrained by these rules. At the top of the bureaucracy was the *Divan*, which served as a cabinet to the Sultan for making decisions.

The most powerful member of the Sultan's government was the Grand Vizier who largely oversaw all the executive functions of the government. Appointments to these positions were not arbitrary but followed strict rules.

Ottoman governing class was known as soldiers (*askeri*), and the army was a dominant institution. The early Ottoman forces had consisted of Turkish cavalry (*sipahis*) paid by grants of government revenues (usually land revenues) known as *timars*.

From the mid-15th century the members of the *askeri* class was procured through a levy of Balkan Christian youths (the *devshirme*). From these new forces, the *kapikulu*, emerged the celebrated, highly disciplined Ottoman army known as the Janissaries as well as the top bureaucratic administrators.

The departments of government were grouped under the control of the Grand Vizier, who was the Sultan's deputy in all state matters.

The Grand Viziers, like other state officials, were drawn from the *kapıkulu* class in the same way as the Janissaries. Most, therefore, were converts to Islam of Christian origins and came from European provinces. Typically, a promising boy would be attached to the household of a minister (vizier) and brought up as an administrator.

His legal status was that of a slave (*kul*) of the sultan, although the word "*kul*" do not have the connotations of domestic or plantation slavery as it did in the West.

This circumstance made it difficult to establish administrative families, which might have constituted the basis of an aristocracy. For example, when an administrator died, his property, until 1838, was returned to the sultan.

Ottoman state was unique in that it lacked an aristocracy and was run by men chosen for their merit and wholly loyal to the sultan. For some contemporary Europeans it seemed as an admirable feature while others believed that the absence of an aristocratic check upon the sultan led to what came to be termed "*oriental despotism*".



A view of the Ottoman Court remarked by its "order"

Society and economy

All of the people outside the governing corporation were classed as *reaya*, literally "flocks" (of sheep) and their social organization was primarily by religion.

The state did not play a large part in the religious life of the Muslim population. Mosques, schools, and colleges were supported by charitable foundations (*vakıf*).

In one way the Ottoman empire was a model of religious toleration, a state in which people could enjoy their own religion.

Ottoman communities lived apart from each other in their different social compartments.

For the most part, governments left people alone in their social life but found it convenient to deal with their own leaders, usually of religious corporations, but also of guilds, together with the heads of tribes, village headmen, and big landowners, where they existed.

These men later during the period of decline became, in practice, an intermediate class between the government and the people, known as *ayan* (notables).

By occupation, the greatest part of the empire lived in villages and was engaged in settled agriculture, although some worked in mining and many supplemented their incomes by domestic industrial crafts.

Townsppeople accounted for some 15 per cent of the population. Craftsmen in the towns were organized in guilds (*lonca*), partly for the regulation of working conditions and prices in the various trades and partly because it suited government to have an organization with which to deal.

Big merchants played an important role in handling international trade. As well as constituting a large and wealthy market in its own right, it must be kept in mind that the Ottoman empire was across the major trade routes from the south and east (via the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea) to Western and Northern Europe.

Domination of the traditional spice and silk routes made certain towns and regions prospered, like Bursa, which became famous for its silk manufacture. Aleppo and İzmir were the major exporting cities of the Eastern Mediterranean for the trade from Iran, as well as Anatolian products like *angora* wool from Ankara.

The value of trade to the empire is confirmed by the extensive building of facilities like roads, bridges, caravanserai, fortified warehouses, and the great town bazaars. The merchants were Muslims, Christians, and Jews. Contrary to common belief, Muslims dominated almost all trades and it was only in the 19th century that non-Muslims came to predominate.

Terms and names

Pax Mongolica

The Pax Mongolica or "Mongol Peace" is a phrase used by scholars to describe the social, cultural, and economic outcome of the Mongol Empire's conquest of the territory from Southeast Asia to Europe in the 13th and 14th centuries.

As a result of the Mongol conquest, much of the "Silk Road," which connected trade centers across Asia and Europe, came under the rule of the Mongol Empire.

In that sense "Pax Mongolica" refers to the facilitation of communication and commerce that occurred as a result of this unified administration.

Kamikaze

Name given to attacks of suicide missions by "kamikaze" pilots during the Second World War in which various types of warplanes would be strategically flown with the pilot into a target enemy naval ship.

The word *kamikaze* means "divine wind". In 1281 the Mongol's armada, led by Kublai Khan were attempting to take over the Japanese islands. Kublai Khan's plan was almost assured, but a typhoon pushed back and destroyed the Mongol fleet. The typhoon believed to be sent by God was named the "Divine Wind": *Kamikaze*.

Taoism

Chinese system of thought and one of the four major religions of China (with Confucianism, Buddhism, and Chinese popular religion).

The philosophical system is largely from the Tao-te-ching, a text traditionally ascribed to Lao Tzu but probably written in the mid-3d cent. b.c.

Human beings, following the Tao, must renounce all greed. The ideal state of being, fully attainable only by mystical contemplation, is simplicity and freedom from desire, comparable to that of an infant.

Taoist political doctrines reflect this philosophy: the ruler's duty is to impose a minimum of government, while protecting his people from experiencing material wants or strong passions. The social virtues expounded by Confucius were condemned as symptoms of excessive government and disregard of effortless action.

Yasa or **yasak** of Chingis Khan was, among other things, a collection of Chingis Khan's maxims, regulations and instructions.

At his acquisition of supreme power in 1206, he already had prepared his Great Yasa, which continued to be developed during his lifetime.

In his words "If the great, the military leaders and the leaders of the many descendants of the ruler who will be born in the future, should not adhere strictly to the Yasa, then the power of the state will be shattered and come to an end, no matter how they then seek Chingis Khan, they shall not find him."

The work was written in the Uighur script that Chingis himself had introduced as the written language of the Mongols.

It was written on scrolls that were bound in volumes, and kept in secret archives to which only the supreme ruler and his closest associates had access.

Some clauses of the yasa according to the contemporary authors:

"One must magnify and pay honor to the pure, and the innocent, and the righteous, and to the learned, to whatsoever people they may belong; and condemn the wicked and the men of iniquity." [Ab-ul-Faraj, sec.2.]

"The first is this: That ye love another; second, do not commit adultery; do not steal; do not bear false witness; do not betray anyone. Respect the aged and poor." [Grigor of Akanc.]

"He [Chingis Khan] forbade them (the Mongols) to eat anything in the presence of another without having him invited to partake in the food; he forbade any man to eat more than his comrades." [Makrizi, sec. 2]

"He [Chingis-Khan] ordered that all religions were to be respected and that no preference was to be shown to any of them." [Makrizi, sec.11]

Source of the quotations above :George Vernadsky's "The Mongols and Russia," page 102 mentioned by <http://www.coldsiberia.org/webdoc9.htm>

Circle of Justice

The conduct of a bureaucratic empire carried with a political and social morality, expressed as a circle. The circle begins with the peasantry, who paid taxes into the treasury, which paid salaries for the armies which protected and expanded the realm of the king, who gave justice to peasants, protecting them from oppression. The circle of justice dates back to pre-Islamic, perhaps Achaemenid times. It reflects the working ethos of bureaucratic empires supported by agricultural taxes. The following is from *Siyasat-name* of Nizam al-Mulk (d.1092) who was the Grand vizier of the Muslim Seljuk dynasty in Persia; he articulated the below mentioned ancient Persian motto of social justice known as the Circle of Justice.

Make it your constant endeavor to improve cultivation and to govern well; for understand this truth: the kingdom can be held by the army, and the army by gold; and gold is acquired through agricultural development; and agricultural development through justice and equity. Therefore be just and equitable.

A better circular explanation of the concept may be found in the following often used form:

There can be no state without men
There can be no men without money
There can be no money without prosperity
There can be no prosperity without justice
There can be no justice without state.

For a good source on this concept refer to the article of Linda T. Darling at www.cssaame.ilstu.edu/issues/22/darling.pdf

Reader 1

Chingiz Khan's letter to Taoist monk

Source: <http://depts.washington.edu/uwch/silkroad/texts/changchun.html>

K'iu Ch'ang Ch'un was an eminent Taoist monk born in 1148 CE and thus elderly at the time of his trip. He was ordered by Chingis Khan to travel to his court, which at the time encamped in Central Asia. The route went through the Altai and Tienshan mountains, the southern parts of today's Kazakhstan, through Kyrgyzstan, to Samarkand and then down into NE Iran and Afghanistan. He was accompanied by his disciple Li Chi ch'ang who composed the narrative—a rather detailed diary of the journey... It is indeed a brilliant account of Central Asia at the time, providing insight into many areas including geography, the life of ordinary people, Mongol administration, travel conditions, and even a more endearing and benevolent portrait of emperor Chinghis himself. For the entire letters and the rest of the account refer to the above mentioned source.

Heaven has abandoned China owing to its haughtiness and extravagant luxury. But I, living in the northern wilderness, have not inordinate passions. I hate luxury and exercise moderation. I have only one coat and one food. I eat the same food and am dressed in the same tatters as my humble herdsmen. I consider the people my children, and take an interest in talented men as if they were my brothers. We always agree in our principles, and we are always united by mutual affection. At military exercises I am always in the front, and in time of battle am never behind. In the space of seven years I have succeeded in accomplishing a great work, and uniting the whole world in one empire. I have not myself distinguished qualities... To cross a river we make boats and rudders. Likewise we invite sage men, and choose out assistants for keeping the empire in good order. Since the time I came to the throne I have always taken to heart the ruling of my people; but I could not find worthy men to occupy the places of the three (kung) and the nine (k'ing). With respect to these circumstances I inquired, and heard that thou, master, hast penetrated the truth, and that thou walkest in the path of right. Deeply learned and much experienced, thou hast much explored the laws. Thy sanctity is become manifest. Thou hast conserved the rigorous rules of the ancient sages. Thou art endowed with the eminent talents of celebrated men. Do not think of the extent of the sandy desert. ...have pity upon me, and communicate to me the means of preserving life. I shall serve thee myself. I hope that at least thou wilt leave me a trifle of thy wisdom. Say only one word to me and I shall be happy. In this letter I have briefly expressed my thoughts, and hope that thou wilt understand them. I hope also that thou, having penetrated the principles of the great Tao, sympathisest with all that is right, and wilt not resist the wishes of the people.... **Given on the 1st day of the 5th month (May 15),1219.**

Chang ch'un's answer to Chinghiz Khan

..... I confess that in worldly matters I am dull, and have not succeeded in investigating the tao, although I tried hard in every possible way. I have grown old and am not yet dead. My repute has spread over all kingdoms; but as to my sanctity, I am not better than ordinary people, and when I look inwards, I am deeply ashamed of myself. Who knows my hidden thoughts? Before this I have had several invitations from the southern capital and from the Sung, and have not gone. But now, at the first call of the Dragon court (he means the Mongol court), I am ready. Why? I have heard that the emperor has been gifted by Heaven with such valour and wisdom as has never been seen in ancient times or in our own days. Majestic splendour is accompanied by justice. The Chinese people as well as the barbarians have acknowledged the emperor's supremacy. At first I was undecided whether I would hide myself in the mountains or flee (to an island) into the sea, but I dared not oppose the order. I decided to brave frost and snow in order to be once presented to the emperor..... I am old and infirm, and fear that I shall be unable to endure the pains of such a long journey, and that perhaps I cannot reach your majesty; and even should I reach, I would not be good for anything. Public affairs and affairs of war are not within my capacity..... Only I have undeservedly the repute of a sainted man. My appearance is parched, my body is weak. I am waiting for your majesty's order..... **Written in the 3rd month (April) of 1220.**

Reader 2

From *Mesnevi*

Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207-1273), known as Mevlana was perhaps the greatest of the mystical poets. Born in Balkh in 1207, he fled west from the advancing Mongol hordes and finally settled in Konya. His large collection of impassioned lyrical works (among them the celebrated Mesnevi) explores the spiritual paths to the identification of the human self with the divine being, blending mystical sentiment with amorous feelings. He became the patron saint of the Mevlevi Sufi order, whose ceremonies incorporated music and whirling dances in special dress (from which came their common description as "whirling dervishes"). The order spread from its headquarters in Konya to other cities, and won adherents among the Ottoman elite and the patronage of Ottoman sultans.

The following are taken from the page <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/1250rumi-masnavi.html> titled "Jalal ad-Din Rumi ,The Masnavi,"

Come whoever you are

*"Come, come, whoever you are.
Wanderer, idolater, worshipper of fire,
come even though you have
broken your vows a thousand times,
Come, and come yet again.
Ours is not a caravan of despair."*

Exert Yourselves

*"Trust in God, yet tie the camel's leg.'
Hear the adage, 'The worker is the friend of God';
Through trust in Providence neglect not to use means.
Go, O Fatalists, practice trust with self-exertion,
Exert yourself to attain your objects, bit by bit.
In order to succeed, strive and exert yourselves;
If you strive not for your objects, ye are fools."*

Humanity, the Reflection of the Beloved

Parrots are taught to speak without understanding the words. The method is to place a mirror between the parrot and the trainer. The trainer, hidden by the mirror, utters the words, and the parrot, seeing his own reflection in the mirror, fancies another parrot is speaking, and imitates all that is said by the trainer behind the mirror. So God uses prophets and saints as mirrors whereby to instruct men, viz., the bodies of these saints and prophets; and men, when they hear the words proceeding from these mirrors, are utterly ignorant that they are really being spoken by "Universal Reason" or the "Word of God" behind the mirror of the saints. Earthly forms are only shadows of the Sun of Truth---a cradle for babes, but too small to hold those who have grown to spiritual manhood.

Reader 3

Turks according to Ibn Battuta

Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Battuta (born February 24, 1304; year of death uncertain, possibly 1368 or 1377) was born in Tangier, Morocco. He was a Sunni Islamic scholar and jurist and at times a Qadi or judge. However, he is best known as an extensive traveller or explorer, whose account documents his travels and side-excursions over a period of almost thirty years, covering some 73,000 miles (117,000 km). This journeying covered almost the entirety of the known Islamic world, extending also to present-day India, the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Southeast Asia and China, a distance readily surpassing that of his prior, near-contemporary and traveller Marco Polo.

From: <http://www.isidore-of-seville.com/ibn-battuta/>

"...A remarkable thing which I saw in this country was the respect shown to women by the Turks, for they hold a more dignified position than the men. ... I saw also the wives of the merchants and common [men]. [Their faces are] visible for the Turkish women do not veil themselves. Sometimes a woman will be accompanied by her husband and anyone seeing him would take him for one of her servants."

Impressions from Alanya

"[We] set out for the country of the Turks. ... It was conquered by the Muslims, but there are still large numbers of Christians there under the protection of the Turkmen Muslims. We traveled on the sea for ten nights, and the Christians treated us honorably and took no passage money from us. On the tenth day we arrived at Alanya [where the province begins]. This country ... is one of the finest in the world; in it God has brought together the good things dispersed throughout other lands. Its people are the most comely (handsome) of men, the cleanest in their dress, the most delicious in their food, and the kindest folk in creation. Wherever we stopped in this land, whether at a hospice or a private house, our neighbors both men and women (these do not veil themselves) came to ask after our needs. When we left them they bade us farewell as though they were our relatives and our own folk, and you would see the women weeping out of grief at our departure." [Gibb, p. 415 - 416] [Ibn Battuta: Travels in Asia and Africa 1325-1354](#) — excerpts from H. A. R. Gibb's translation

Reader 4

“Turkish craze finds its way into 'Algiers'”

By Richard Nilsen, *The Arizona Republic*, Feb. 17, 2006
<http://www.azcentral.com/ent/arts/articles/0217italiangirl17.html>

East is east and west is west. But the twain have met many times before the current unpleasantness.

The West and Islam go way back.

On the serious side, there were the Crusades. On the more trivial side, there was the Dutch craze for Asian tulips in the 17th century. advertisement

And one of the more interesting collisions between the West and Islam occurred in Europe in the 18th century with a craze for all things Turkish. It gave us coffee, croissants, Angora sweaters and Mozart's Rondo alla Turca.

It also finally gave us Rossini's Italian Girl in Algiers (L'Italiana in Algeri), which Arizona Opera brings to Phoenix this week.

Europe had been under the gun from the Ottoman Empire for centuries, but when the Treaty of Karlowitz was signed in 1699, it ushered in not only an era of peace but a fad in fashion. For the next century and a half, all things Turkish, Moorish and Islamic became the source of the culturally exotic in European minds.

It's really quite stunning to see it all: Turkish cigarettes, Turkish baths, Turkish carpets, harem pants, slippers with upturned toes. There were harem girls painted by Ingres and Delacroix. The turkey named for the color of its wattles, which matched a popular fabric dye of the time, called "Turkey red."

And one of the most pervasive effects was the popularity of "Turkish music." Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven all wrote versions of Turkish music.

When the Ottoman Turks sent janizary bands - their military bands - to Vienna as a kind of cultural-exchange program, the European ears were perked by the exotic sounds of drums, cymbals and chimes.

You hear the European orchestra expanded with new percussion instruments at just this time, when Haydn wrote his Military Symphony and Mozart his Turkish concerto for violin.

The characteristic rhythm of Turkish music was the march beat of "Left . . . left . . . left, right, left," and you can hear it in Mozart's Turkish rondo as well as in the concerto.

And Beethoven even included a segment of Turkish music in his sublime Ninth Symphony, the "Ode to Joy," when the whole thing comes to a momentary halt, interrupted by the burps of a contrabassoon, followed by the Turkish marching music that sounds remarkably like the theme song to Hogan's Heroes.

In fact, German military music made such pervasive use of the Turkish rhythm that it soon lost all sense of being exotic and became the drumbeat of Germanic militarism: If you watch the Leni Riefenstahl film, Triumph of the Will, about the Nazi Party rallies in Nuremberg before the war, you are nearly oppressed with that "boom . . . boom . . . boom-boom-boom" rhythm.

That is a baleful end to what began as pure fluff. Operas about Turkish pashas and European women were a regular occurrence.

Mozart wrote his Abduction From the Serail, filled with Turkish effects, and Rossini, decades later, imitated that sound - and pretty well stole the plot - from the Mozart, for his Italian Girl in Algiers.

In it, a crafty Italian woman outwits a foolish Turkish bey and saves herself and her fiancé from a fate worse than Wagner. It's a wonderful opera, full of Rossini's best tunes and imbroglios. You can't leave the hall without them resounding in your head.

A few years later, Rossini wrote a sequel: The Turk in Italy. He knew a good thing.