

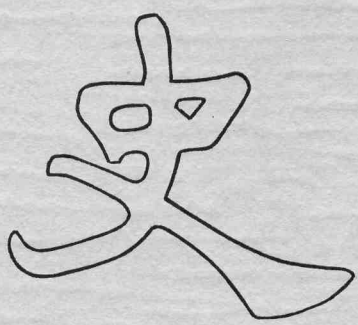
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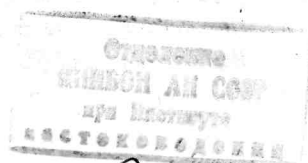
March 1973

SOME REMARKS ON
THE IDEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF CHINGIS KHAN'S EMPIRE¹

Igor de Rachewiltz

The political and military aspects of the Mongol conquests in the thirteenth century have attracted the attention of Western scholars since the first half of the eighteenth century² and much work has been done since. As a result we have today several good studies on the Mongol campaigns in Asia, the Near East and Europe.³

1. Paper read at the II International Congress of Mongolists, Ulan-Bator, on 3 September 1970.
2. The first important contribution in the West to the history of Chingis Khan and the Yüan dynasty is A. Gaubil's *Histoire de Gentchiscan et de toute la dynastie des Mongous*, published in Paris in 1739.
3. A complete and up-to-date bibliography on the medieval Mongols is unfortunately lacking. A useful guide to literature on the subject is D. Sinor, *Introduction à l'étude de l'Eurasie Centrale* (Wiesbaden, 1963), pp.294-319. Cf. also by the same author the "Bibliographical note" in R. Grousset, *Conqueror of the World*, tr. by D. Sinor and M. MacKellar (Edinburgh and London, 1967), pp.293-300. The Russian contributions are listed in the useful bibliographies on Mongolian studies published by the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. (1953, 1963 and 1966; cf. also the



The first serious investigation of Mongol medieval society based on original sources in B.Ya. Vladimirtsov's masterly work *The Social Structure of the Mongols*,⁴ published posthumously in 1934, which is still the fundamental text on the subject. Its appearance gave rise to lively controversies among scholars, especially in the Soviet Union⁵ and Japan, where it was first translated in 1937⁶ and where numerous investigations of Mongol society have appeared in the last thirty years.⁷

As for the economic aspect of the Mongol conquest, several penetrating studies on the effect of Mongol rule in China, Mongolia, Iran and Russia have been contributed by scholars of various countries in

important bibliography of bibliographies issued by the Library of the Academy, Leningrad, 1962). For the Chinese and Japanese contributions see the *Meng-ku ts'an-k'ao shu-mu* (Chung-hua ts'ung-shu ed., Hongkong, 1958), and the *Bibliography of Mongolia for 1900-1950* published by the Jimbunkagaku kenkyūsho (Kyōto, 1953). Most of the important books and articles on Mongolian history in Japanese are included in the yearly bibliographical volume of *Shigaku-zasshi* (May issue, devoted to Historical Studies in Japan).

4. *Obščestvennyi stroi mongolov. Mongol'skii kočevoi feodalizm* (Leningrad, 1934). French translation by M. Carsow, *Le régime social des Mongols. Le féodalisme nomade* (Paris, 1948).
5. Cf. A.Yu. Yakubovskii in *Očerki po istorii russkogo vostokovedeniya* (Moscow, 1953), pp.82ff. See also N.P. Šastina's remarks in *Fifty Years of Soviet Oriental Studies (Brief Reviews)*, ed. by the Institute of the Peoples of Asia, Academy of Sciences (Moscow, 1967), section on "Mongolic Studies," pp.10ff.
6. *Mōko shakai seido-shi*, tr. by the Gaimushō chōsabu (Tōkyō, 1934). Reprinted in 1941.
7. The most recent work is Iwamura Shinobu, *Mongoru shakai keizai-shi no kenkyū* (*Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Mongols*) (Kyōto, 1968).

the last two decades.⁸ In the field of Mongolian institutional history there are, moreover, a number of important monographs dealing especially with the legal and administrative system of the Yüan period.⁹

Although much remains to be done in all these fields, a good deal of pioneer research has been carried out already. The same cannot be said, unfortunately, of the ideological aspect of the Mongol invasion. I refer in particular to the ideology behind the empire-building policy of Chingis Khan which determined the later political doctrine of the Mongol emperors.

It is a well known fact that, whatever the real social and economic causes of the Mongol conquest, Chingis Khan himself motivated his military ventures in terms of an order received by Heaven (*tengri*; *tenggeri* in the *Secret History of the Mongols*). His successors followed his example and further elaborated on this politico-religious theme. From a number of imperial edicts and from official letters to the Pope and the monarchs of Europe issued by their chancelleries in Qaraqorum, China and Iran, as well as from numerous epigraphic and literary sources, it is possible to reconstruct the political doctrine of the first Mongol rulers. Efforts in this direction were made as early as the 1820s by the French scholar Abel-Rémusat.¹⁰ However, the only two really important contributions to the subject are the article by W. Kotwicz "Formules initiales des documents mongols aux XIIIe et

8. In particular the learned contributions of H. Franke, H.F. Schurmann, I.P. Petruševskii, A.A. Alizade, B. Spuler, G. Vernadski, G. Grekov, A. Yakubovskii, and N.Ts. Munkuev should be mentioned.
9. See the works of C. Alinge, P. Ratchnevsky, V.A. Riasanovsky, P. Olbricht, Yanai Watari, Abe Takeo, and Iwamura Shinobu.
10. J.-P. Abel-Rémusat, "Mémoires sur les relations politiques....," in *Hist. et mém. de l'Inst. royal de France, Acad. des inscr. et belles-lettres* VI (1822), 396-469; VII (1824), 335-438.

XIVe ss." published in *Rocznik orientalistyczny* in 1934,¹¹ and E. Voegelin's article "The Mongol Orders of Submission to European Powers, 1245-1255," which appeared in *Byzantion* in 1941.¹² The latter study represents a considerable advance on its predecessor. From a perceptive analysis of eight official documents dating from the reign of Güyüg to that of the Möngke, Voegelin has been able to reconstruct the rather sophisticated empire-building conception of these emperors.

According to this conception, the right to rule over the whole world had been conferred by Eternal Heaven (*möngke tengri*) on Chingis Khan and his successors, who were considered in this system as the counterpart of Heaven on earth. The khans of the imperial line ruled as universal sovereigns on the strength of their "good fortune" and by the very power of Heaven. The universality of their rule is aptly described by the expression *dalai-yin qayan* found in the legend of the seal of Güyüg. Although many nations at the time were still *de facto* outside Mongol control, they were already *de jure* potential members of the Mongol empire-in-the-making. It followed that those peoples and nations that had not yet submitted to the Mongol court and who, by this very fact, had failed to accept the doctrine of the Mongol *oikoumenē* were regarded also as rebels (*bulya irgen*) against a divinely inspired

11. *Rocznik orientalistyczny* (hereafter *RO*) X (1934).131-157. Cf. also by the same author "Les Mongols, promoteurs de l'idée de paix universelle au début du XIIIe siècle", *RO* XVI (1950).428-434.
12. *Byzantion* XV (1940-1941).378-413. Cf. also P. Pelliot, "Les Mongols et la papauté," *Revue de l'Orient chrétien* XXIII, 1-2 (1922-1923). 22ff; A. Mostaert and F.W. Cleaves, "Trois documents des Archives secrètes vaticanes," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* XV (1952). 482-495; and G.L. Seidler, "The Political Doctrine of the Mongols," *Annales Univ. M. Curie-Skłodowska* VI, 7 (1959).249-274.

social order.¹³ War against these nations was, therefore, morally and ideologically right and necessary, in exactly the same way as the thirteenth-century crusades against the heretics were right and necessary in the eyes of most contemporary Christians.

This explains why the Mongols until the time of Qubilai, *i.e.* two generations after Chingis Khan, could not conceive of international relations on the basis of parity with foreign countries, and why the tone of their letters to foreign leaders was that of an arrogant feudal lord to an insubordinate vassal.

Since the crime of turning a deaf ear to the Mongol court's order of submission was not, in the conception just described, merely an offence against the emperor, but an overt rebellion against Heaven's Decree, punishment for the offender had, of course, to be proportionate. Hence the frightful massacres and destructions, and the complete lack of pity towards the civilian population, which was often annihilated. Here again we find an exact parallel in the practice of the crusading armies.

The terse terminology of the Mongol orders contained in the imperial edicts and in diplomatic correspondence (later crystallized into stereotyped formulas through chancellery practice) rested on a set of equally terse injunctions governing all aspects of Mongol life which, according to tradition, were issued by Chingis Khan himself. These formed a code of laws known as *Yasay*, which in essence was a systematization and adaptation of tribal customary laws to the needs of the "modern" military state founded by Chingis Khan in 1206.

The code as such is now lost, but quotations from and references to it are preserved in the works of Persian, Arabic, Syriac, Armenian

13. See Voegelin, pp.402-413. The Mongol empire-in-the-making is aptly called by Voegelin "imperium mundi in statu nascendi" (*ibid.*, p.404).

and Chinese historians of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. These extracts confirm that the supreme authority proceeded from Eternal Heaven, whose power guided and protected the emperor.¹⁴

The basic concept of Heaven's protection of the Mongol ruler needs, I think, a closer scrutiny. Neither Kotwicz, nor Voegelin, nor any of the other authors who have discussed Chingis' attitude towards the Supreme Power, have dealt with it satisfactorily.¹⁵ The documents examined by Voegelin are, we must not forget, a production of the post-Chingiside period: they were issued between twenty and thirty years after his death. The surviving fragments of the *Yasay* are also found in works written well after the death of the conqueror in 1227. The only major contemporary source on Chingis Khan is the *Secret History of the Mongols*, the first redaction of which dates, in the present writer's opinion, from 1228. The portion of this text dealing with the life of Chingis Khan represents a tradition evolved in his lifetime and reflects, therefore, as close an image of the man's personality and beliefs as we can possibly get.¹⁶ Now there are many passages in the *Secret History* that illustrate his views on Heaven and his own destiny.

First of all, Chingis claims to descend from a mythical animal - a bluish wolf - born "at the order of Heaven Above" (§1). The direct involvement of Heaven in his family affairs is further evidenced by

14. See G. Vernadsky in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* III (1938). 345, and 'Ala-ad-Din 'Ata-Malik Juvaini, *The History of the World-Conqueror*, tr. by J.A. Boyle (Manchester, 1958), p.26.
15. See, for instance, the cursory way in which the subject is dealt with in all current biographies of Chingis Khan.
16. On the textual history of the *Secret History* see my article "Some Remarks on the Dating of the *Secret History of the Mongols*," *Monumenta Serica* XXIV (1965).185-206.

the conception of one of Chingis' ancestors, Bodončar, which occurred as a result of a contact between the ancestress Alan-go'a and a spiritual emanation from Heaven in the shape of a "golden man" (gold symbolizes, of course, imperial dignity) who visited her in her yurt, coming and going on a shaft of light (§21).

As a boy Chingis, escaping his pursuers, hid in a forest where he had three signs from Heaven warning him not to leave the woods. He did, in the end, and was captured (§80).

After his victories over enemy tribes and foreign nations, Chingis regularly ascribed his success to the strength and protection he had received from Heaven, and also from the Earth-goddess (§§113,125,187, 208,260,265,267). Both "strength" (*güčü*) and "protection" (*ihe'ekde-*) are indispensable to ensure success (§§199,256).

Heaven's favour is withdrawn both from the enemy, and also in cases of breach of friendship (§§143,167,246).¹⁷

Chingis ordered to pray to Heaven for success in a difficult expedition and thanked Heaven for special favours (§§172,240).

In the *Secret History* we find also some important statements by Chingis claiming that he had been "designated by the powerful Heaven" (*erketü tenggiri-de nereyitčü*) to win, and that he had subjugated "all the people" (*gür ulus*) and gained the "throne" (*ündür-ün oron*) by the strength and protection that he had received from Heaven (§§113,187, 203,224). Heaven had, moreover, notified the shaman Kōkōčü Teb-Tenggeri that Chingis should rule the empire (§244).

All these references indicate that Chingis had an unshakable faith in the power, or "strength," of the Eternal Heaven, and that he regarded

17. According to Jūwainī and Rašid al-Dīn, Chingis Khan prayed to Heaven before his campaigns against Chin and Khwarezm. See *The History of the World-Conqueror*, p.80; *Rašid ad-Din. Sbornik letopisei*, I/2, tr. by O.I. Smirnova (Moscow, 1952), pp.189 and 263.

his fortunate career as preordained by a sort of Divine Providence, which is nothing but the will of Heaven.¹⁸ In the *Secret History* and in later documents the special good fortune enjoyed by the emperor is called *su* (*suu*), from which we have the adjectives *sutu*, *sutai* "fortunate."¹⁹

We may then ask: where did Chingis Khan get these ideas from?

The Heaven that he claims increased his strength and lavished protection on him, assisting him in his great exploits, is of course the deified sky - the supreme Sky-god of the shamanistic Turco-Mongolian peoples of Inner Asia. The Heaven Above (*de'ere tenggeri*) and the Eternal Heaven (*möngke tenggeri*) of the *Secret History* are identical with the Blue Heaven Above (*üzä kök tengri*) of the Orkhon Turks of the seventh and eighth centuries A.D. (the Northern, or Eastern, T'u-chüeh of the Chinese authors). The very expressions found in the *Secret*

18. From the Chinese sources it appears that the Mongol chancellery employed formulas which emphasized the "strength of Heaven" already in Chingis Khan's time. See Mostaert and Cleaves, p.486. Cf. *RO X* (1934).132.
19. On the origin of the term *su*, *suu* see Pelliot in *Revue de l'Orient chrétien* XXIV, 3-4 (1924).318,320; Kotwicz, pp.142ff., and his "Contributions à l'histoire de l'Asie Centrale," *RO XV* (1949). 193-195; N. Poppe and J.R. Krueger, *The Mongolian Monuments in hP'ags-pa Script* (Wiesbaden, 1957), pp.72-76, 90-91. This term almost certainly derives from Chinese *tsu* 祚 "good fortune, blessing." In Turkish mythology Earth, or the Earth-goddess, plays a secondary role and appears much less frequently than Heaven in presiding over man's destiny. See R. Giraud, *L'empire des turcs célestes* (Paris, 1960), p.105. This is also the case with the Mongol Earth-goddess Etügen (ᠶᠣᠲᠦᠭᠡᠨᠶᠣᠲᠡᠭᠡᠨᠶᠡᠲᠦᠭᠡᠨ). She is usually called "mother" (*eke*) or "brown" (*dayir*). Cf. Old Turkish *yagız yir*, which also means "the brown Earth." Etügen is probably related to Ötüken, the sacred forest of the Turks. See Pelliot in *T'oung Pao* XXVI (1929).212-219. Cf. A. Mostaert in *Oriente Poliano*, ed. by the I.S.M.E.O. (Rome, 1957), pp.95-101.

History are very similar, and at times identical, with those of the Orkhon inscriptions. Like the Mongol Eternal Heaven, so does the Blue Heaven of the Turks preside over the ruler's destiny, infusing him and his followers with strength (*küç*) and ensuring their victory. Both heavens issue orders (Old Turkish *yarlıy*, to which corresponds the *jarliq* of the *Secret History*), confer dignity and, when angered, withdraw favour and protection. However, whereas the old Turkish inscriptions emphasize the Will of Heaven, the medieval Mongols lay stress on its Power. Both refer to the good fortune (Old Turkish *qut* = Old Mongolian *suu*) of the emperor. For both, Heaven is the king-maker, and the state a national monarchy based on divine right.²⁰

Now, the role of Heaven as king-maker is a special development of the original, early role of the Sky-god among the Turco-Mongolian nomadic tribes. This new function implies a whole conception of political unity and tribal organization which, as Barthold correctly says, under normal circumstances is quite alien to a nomadic people.²¹ Heaven-sanctioned kingship is a concept borrowed from a sedentary society. There is no doubt that the idea of khaghanship conceived as the rule of a supreme leader appointed, chosen or "willed" by Heaven, over a powerful nomadic state which we find among the Orkhon Turks, is strongly influenced by the Chinese conception of the Son of Heaven (*t'ien-tzu*) and the Mandate of Heaven (*t'ien-ming*). The sinicization

20. See V. Thomsen, *Inscriptions de l'Orkhon déchiffrées* (Helsingfors, 1896), pp.97ff.; Giraud, pp.102ff.; and more recently L. Bazin in "Man and the Concept of History in Turkish Central Asia during the Eighth Century", *Diogenes* XLII (1963, ii).92. Cf. also the entries "küç" and "qut" in the *Drevnetyurskii slovar'* published by the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. (Leningrad, 1969).

21. W. Barthold, *Zwölf Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Türken Mittelasiens* (rep. Hildesheim, 1962), p.11. Cf. V.V. Bartol'd, *Sočineniya*, V (Moscow, 1968), pp.22-23.

of the Eastern Turks is a well known fact, discussed by various scholars,²² and we shall not dwell upon it except to say that the same phenomenon is evident also in the history of the earlier barbarian confederations and empires, from the Hsiung-nu to the T'o-pa Wei, which to a greater or lesser degree were affected by the outlook of the Chinese imperial court.²³

Contact between tribal chiefs and representatives of Chinese culture was frequent, not only through the exchange of embassies and the mediation of other, already sinicized, tribal chiefs, but also through the actual defection of Chinese officials to the side of the nomads. Chinese and sinicized counsellors and scribe-secretaries were among the regular recruits of the successful tribal leaders. As far as the Eastern Turks are concerned, apart from the fact that they were under Chinese rule for half a century (630-680), we know that the real architect of the restoration of their empire in Mongolia was their chief minister, the "Sage" Tonyuquq, who had received a Chinese education.²⁴

After the Turks we find the same combination of shamanistic beliefs of Altaic origin and imperial attitudes of Chinese origin in the courts

22. For recent discussions see Giraud, pp.107-108; Bazin, pp.92ff.; and J.J. Saunders, "Le nomade comme batisseur d'empire: conquête arabe et conquête mongole", *Diogenes* LII (1965, iv).90-91. In the Orkhon inscriptions we find expressions like "By a Mandate from Heaven above and from Earth below." See Bazin, p.90. The evidence for the Chinese cultural influence on the Eastern T'u-chüeh found in the Chinese sources is discussed by Liu Mau-tsai, *Die chinesischen Nachrichten zur Geschichte der Ost-Türken (T'u-kü)*, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden, 1958), I, 458-465; II, 751-754.
23. See W. Eberhard, *Histoire de la Chine*, tr. by G. Deniker (Paris, 1952), pp.82-83, 144, 152-153, 158.
24. Cf. R. Grousset, *L'Empire des steppes* (Paris, 1948), pp.154ff.; R. Giraud, *L'inscription de Baïn Tsokto* (Paris, 1961), pp.59-64.

of the Khitan-Liao and Jurchen-Chin dynasties (tenth to thirteenth centuries).²⁵

The tribe of Chingis Khan shared in the common religious patrimony of the Turco-Mongolian peoples of Inner Asia, and the *Secret History*, as we have seen, offers ample evidence of this. When, from the position of tribal chief, Chingis Khan aspired to become a world ruler, he and his successors (who inherited the unfinished task) were bound to adopt a political doctrine that could explain, and at the same time foster, their aspiration to world leadership.

So long as the Mongol political centre of gravity remained in Mongolia, the ruler could not be influenced directly by China, his nearest model, and become rapidly sinicized like the Khitan and Jurchen sovereigns. Chingis, like the Turkish khaghans, did not relinquish his native steppeland, and any influences that he received could only reach him indirectly, i.e. through intermediaries. There is, I believe, sufficient evidence to show that these "cultural middlemen" not only existed at his court, but were also actively engaged in ideological propaganda.

As I have shown elsewhere,²⁶ Chingis Khan was early acquainted with Chinese society and culture through his relations with the

25. On Liao traditional beliefs and "selective sinicization" see K.A. Wittfogel and Fêng Chia-shêng, *History of Chinese Society. Liao (907-1125)* (Philadelphia, 1949), pp.4-7, 14-23, 206ff. Chin society and culture are still imperfectly known. On Chin shamanism see provisionally the *Ta-Chin kuo chih* (Wan-yu wen-ku ed.)18.133. On the sinicization of the Jurchen see Wittfogel and Fêng, p.8.
26. See my article "Personnel and Personalities in North China in the Early Mongol Period," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* IX (1966).88-144. It seems that before Chingis Khan, his father Yisügei had already had contacts with the Chin court, which had bestowed on him an honorary title.

sinicized Chin court and, chiefly, through Chin defectors who had entered his service well before his formal enthronement in 1206. From 1208 he had also as advisers Chinese scholar-officials from the Chin capital (Chung-tu/Peking), among them a member of the National University (*t'ai-hsüeh*). From 1210 onwards a stream of defectors, most of them sinicized Khitans, rallied to him.

We know from a number of references scattered in the Chinese sources of the period that these defectors, many of whom were former high-ranking military officials and members of the Chin intelligentsia, were largely responsible for the rapid Mongol conquest of north China and for the setting up of the early Mongol administrative system, based on the Chinese model.²⁷ But they went even further. One of the leading advisers in Chingis Khan's entourage was the sinicized Khitan Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai (1189-1243), who had joined the conqueror in 1218 as secretary and astrologer. It was especially in his capacity as astrologer that he gained favour with the emperor.²⁸

This event is recorded s.a. 1147-1148 in the *Ta-Chin kuo chih* 12.99-100 (personal communication from Professor Herbert Franke, Munich). Relations between the Chin government and the Mongolian tribes in the twelfth century were more frequent than it is generally assumed and deserve closer scrutiny. Cf. Wang Kuo-wei, *Hai-ning Wang Ching-an hsien-sheng i-shu*, *Kuan-t'ang chi-lin* 14.25b-32b; 15.4a-13b, for many interesting references to these contacts. The influence of the Khitan Liao on the Mongolian tribes and the role of the Khitans as carriers of Chinese culture also deserve investigation. See O. Lattimore's remarks on the subject in his article "The Geography of Chingis Khan," *The Geographical Journal* CXXIX (1963).5.

27. See de Rachewiltz, pp.88-144.
28. See my article "Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai (1189-1243): Buddhist Idealist and Confucian Statesman," in A.F. Wright and D. Twitchett, ed., *Confucian Personalities* (Stanford, 1962), pp.194-195.

From the beginning of his career at the Mongol court, Yeh-li Ch'u-ts'ai endeavoured to legitimize and strengthen Mongol rule by invoking the age-old argument of the Mandate of Heaven. In a famous letter that Chingis Khan sent to the Taoist Patriarch Ch'iu Ch'u-chi (1148-1227), usually known as Ch'ang-ch'un *chen-jen*, in 1219, and which I believe was drafted by Ch'u-ts'ai, the emperor speaks in terms worthy of a Chinese sage-king of antiquity. The defeat of the Jurchen, he writes, is due to Heaven's displeasure with the extravagant behaviour and lack of virtue of their ruler. Because of this, Chingis "had received the support of Heaven and obtained the supreme dignity." The author of the letter adds strength to this statement by referring to the Mongols' military achievements of the previous seven years.²⁹ Although the letter was written in Chinese and in a literary style best suited to the aged Taoist master to whom it was addressed, its exact contents was beyond doubt known to, and approved by, Chingis Khan.³⁰

Ch'ang-ch'un made his epic journey across Mongolia and Central Asia, reaching Chingis' camp in Afghanistan in 1222. During the eleven

29. The text of the letter is found in Ts'ai Mei-piao, *Yüan-tai pai-hua-pei chi-lu* (Peking, 1955), p.115. For E. Chavannes' translation see *T'oung Pao* IX (1908).299-302. In the subsequent correspondence between Chingis Khan and Ch'ang-ch'un, the Mongol emperor is again designated as "Heaven-sent" (*t'ien-ch'i*). See *ibid.*, pp.304 and 306. An argument very similar to that used in Chingis' letter was employed 150 years later by the Hung-wu Emperor to explain the defeat of the Mongol Yüan. See Wang Gungwu, "Early Ming Relations with Southeast Asia: A Background Essay" in J.K. Fairbank, ed., *The Chinese World Order* (Harvard, 1968), pp.34-35.
30. The careful drafting and checking of official documents by court secretaries under the khan's personal supervision is well known through the accounts of John of Pian di Carpine and William of Rubruck.

months that he spent in the emperor's suite,³¹ he had ample opportunity to expound his philosophy to his exalted patron. One of the points that he emphasized in his sermons was the divine origin of emperors and kings, whom he calls "heavenly beings exiled [from Heaven to live] amongst men," and who are destined eventually to return to heaven. He illustrated, with examples drawn from mythology and history, the operations of the Mandate of Heaven, Heaven's decree that the emperor, as Son of Heaven, should be the ruler of mankind, and the means to ensure the emperor's health and good fortune.³² Chingis took a liking to the Chinese sage, whom he admired also on account of his great age (Ch'ang-ch'un enjoyed the reputation of being 300 years old!), and conferred special privileges on him and his followers.³³

Also in 1222, Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai was engaged in the compilation of a calendar. In the memorial that he wrote for the presentation of this calendar to the throne, he reiterated the concept that Heaven had been responsible for Chingis' conquest of the empire, as such a great feat could have not been accomplished by human power alone.³⁴ Chingis had thus proved beyond question his right by victory.

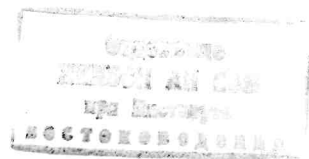
No doubt arguments like these, very flattering to the conqueror's ear, pleased Chingis Khan, particularly as they proceeded from personages

31. See the *Hsi-yu chi* (Hai-ning Wang Ching-an hsien-sheng i-shu ed.) A.44a-B.7b. Cf. A. Waley, *The Travels of an Alchemist* (London, 1931), pp.100-119.
32. See the *Hsüan-feng ch'ing-hui lu* (Tao-tsang ed.) .4bff. Cf. Waley, p.24.
33. See the *Hsi-yu chi* B.7b, and "fu-lu," pp.laff. Cf. Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai's version of these events in the *Hsi-yu lu*, *Monumenta Serica* XXI (1962).25ff.
34. See my "Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai," pp.208-209. The original text is reproduced in Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai's collected works, *Chan-jan chü-shih wen-chi* (Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an ed.) 8.15b-16a.

who enjoyed a semi-mystical aura. They confirmed the faith he already had in his own destiny and fanned his ambition of conquering All-under-Heaven, a task that was gradually turning into a grand mission especially entrusted to him and his "golden clan" by Heaven.³⁵

The present writer's view is that Chingis Khan's own attitude (known to us chiefly through the *Secret History*) towards the universality of his rule shows the influence of the Chinese traditional concept

35. The early Uighur advisers and secretaries at the Mongol court may also have played a part in glorifying their master's charismatic power, as the Nestorian Uighurs were wont to do, according to the Franciscan narratives, at the courts of Güyüg and Möngke. However, we lack evidence to this effect for the reign of Chingis Khan. It is, indeed, difficult to determine what kind of religious influences (Nestorian? Taoist?) were at work in the *Secret History* statement (§268) that Chingis Khan "ascended to Heaven" upon his death, an event which, as it has been claimed so far and perhaps incorrectly, was considered taboo by contemporary Mongols. It is perhaps also within the context of the Turkish cultural influence on the Mongols that one can explain the adoption of the title *qayan* by Ögödei. In Chingis Khan's time the Mongols used only the term *qan* to designate the chief of a tribe or confederation of tribes, and this term corresponds exactly to Chinese *wang* 王 "king." Among the Turks *qan* had the meaning of "king, ruler," while *qayan* was the term designating the person holding the supreme dignity, i.e. the Great Khan, the king of kings, the emperor. See the *Drevnetyurkskii slovar'*, s.v. "qan" and "qayan"; and L. Ligeti in *Acta Orientalia Hung.* XIX (1966).160, 161. In my opinion, it was under the Uighur-Nestorian influence of Ögödei's advisers that the title *qan* was replaced by that of *qayan* (pronounced *qa'an* in Mongolian) in the case of the emperor, while *qan* was retained for the princes of the royal family who ruled in their respective *ulus*'s. As *qan* had been the title borne by Chingis (he never assumed or used the title *qayan*), he continued to be referred to as Činggis Qan, and only much later this was changed to Činggis Qayan. Cf. H.F. Schurmann in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* XIX (1956).314-316, n.14. For a different approach to this problem see L. Krader, "Qan ~ Qayan and the Beginnings of Mongol Kingship," *Central Asiatic Journal* I (1955). 17-34.



of empire, and that the belief he held in his right to rule by the power of Heaven was inspired by the Chinese doctrine of the Mandate of Heaven. As we have seen, this phenomenon had occurred before among the other great nomadic peoples of Inner Asia that had been in close contact with China and her civilization - peoples with whom Mongol society of the twelfth-thirteenth centuries had in common both the geographical and cultural background. Without underestimating, of course, the importance of this background (which accounts, *inter alia*, for the similarity of the "language" of the Orkhon inscriptions with that of the *Secret History*), the present writer wishes to emphasize the fact that Chingis Khan's political outlook may have been influenced, to a large extent, also by representatives of Chinese culture within his immediate entourage.³⁶

36. No document from Chingis Khan's time that I know of actually calls him "Son of Heaven" (*t'ien-tzu*). However, he was definitely referred to as such in the time of Güyüg and Möngke, as shown by the imperial edict brought back by the Dominican Friar Ascelinus in 1248 and by Möngke's letter to Louis IX of 1254. See Voegelin, pp.389 and 391.