History 170E
The Mongol Interregnum & the Ming Reaction
East Asia in the Twelfth Century

- Jurchen invaders from Manchuria conquered North China in 1127 (became Jin dynasty)
- Song retreated to south (capital at Hangzhou)
- Mongols conquered Jin in 1234
Mongol Camp Near Karakorum

Chinggis (Genghis; c. 1163-1227) made his capital at Karakorum upon his election as Great Khan in 1206
Chinggis Khan and his Four Sons

- Temujin was given the title Chinggis ("Oceanic") Khan in 1206
- Two years after the death of Chinggis in 1227, his four sons divided the Mongol realm into four separate khanates
- Illustration to Rashid al-Din’s *History of the Mongols*
Four Mongol Khanates, c. 1300
Khubilai Khan (r. 1260-94)

- Khubilai, grandson of Chinggis, was elected Great Khan in 1260
- In 1271 Khubilai declared himself, in Chinese style, as emperor of the Yuan dynasty
- Khubilai completed the Mongol conquest of Southern Song China in 1279, bringing all of China under foreign rule for the first time
The Forbidden City in Beijing Today
Mongol *Paiza* Passport

- Such passports were required to use the far-flung system of waystations the Mongols established along Central Asian trade routes.
- The inscription (in Mongolian) on this silver *paiza* reads: “By the power of the Eternal Heaven, may the name of the Great Khan Mongke (son of Chinggis, r. 1251-59) be sacred. He who does not honor it shall perish.”
Gravestones of Foreign Merchants

Left: Venetian merchant Dominic Birioni, died in Yangzhou in 1342, erected by his daughter Katarina

Right: Headstones in Arabic for Muslim merchants who died in the southern port city of Quanzhou
Under Khubilai, the Mongol rulers of China issued paper currency in imitation of the notes issued by the Song.

The Yuan government banned the use of coin as money, and issued small denomination notes like this one for use in daily exchange.
Ethnic Hierarchy in Yuan China

(1) Mongols (1 million people)
(2) “affiliated peoples” (*semuren* 色目人), 31 non-Chinese groups (1 million)
(3) “Han” 漢人: former subjects of the Jin, conquered in 1234 (8.5 million)
(4) “Southerners” 南人: former subjects of the Southern Song, conquered in 1276 (50-60 million)
Founder of the Ming Dynasty
(1368-1644)

- Orphaned as a child, Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 joined uprisings against Mongol rulers, rose to military leadership in civil wars
- Founded Ming empire in 1368; reigned as Emperor Hongwu 洪武 (r. 1368-98)
Nanjing as Ming Capital

- Hongwu moved capital from Beijing to Nanjing to disassociate his dynasty from Mongols
- Nanjing adjacent to Yangzi River (at top)
- Imperial palaces arrayed on north/south axis at right
Ming Paper Money

Monetary value of 1 guan (equivalent to 1 ounce of silver, or 1,000 bronze coins)

Monetary value in hard currency indicated by illustration of 10 strings of coin (each string equal to 100 coins) at center