History 170A
The Mongol Empire in China
Mongol Camp Near Karakorum

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

- Illustration from a Persian history of the Mongols written by Rashid al-Din (1247-1318), who served the Mongol rulers in Iran
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
Siege Engines

- Though developed by Song Chinese, the catapult (left) and scaling ladder (right) were adopted by the Mongols for siege warfare against walled cities.
Mongol Cannon

- Inscription on this bronze cannon is dated 1351
Japanese-Mongol Naval Battle

- The Mongols launched a massive armada to invade Japan in 1281, but the fleet was destroyed by a powerful storm, which the Japanese called the “divine wind” (*kamikaze* 神風)}
Conquest of Baghdad by Hulegu (1258)

- Foreground: drummers in Mongol costume; archers in Persian dress; catapult
- Upper left: caliph flees in a boat (but was caught and executed)
- 14th century album painting
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
Khubilai and ‘Phags-pa Lama

Head of the Saskya sect of Tibetan Lamaism, ‘Phags-pa (1235-1280; at right) became spiritual adviser to Khubilai

‘Phags-pa anointed Khubilai as cakravartin (“Wheel-Turning King,” righteous defender of the Buddhist faith)
The White Pagoda

- Khubilai commissioned a Nepalese architect to build a Lamaist monastery at his capital of Dadu 大都 (Beijing) in honor of his religious advisor, ‘Phags-pa Lama
- Completed in 1279
Mongol Khanates Ca. 1300
Mongol Medallion Passport

- Such passports were required to use the far-flung system of way-stations the Mongols established along Central Asian trade routes
- One side (left) written in Mongolian, other in Chinese
Yuan 10-Cash Paper Note

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.
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
Chinese and Central Asian Written Scripts

- Chinese text in column at right
- Reading right to left:
  (1) Khitan
  (2) Jurchen
  (3) Tangut
  (4) Uighur/Mongolian
Gate at the Juyong Pass
(50 km north of Beijing)

- Built in 1345 as part of the Great Wall, this gate was crowned with a Lamaist pagoda, and its walls inscribed with Buddhist scriptures written in Sanskrit, Tibetan, Uighur, Mongolian, Tangut, and Chinese.
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)