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The Political Doctrine of the Mongols

Doktryna polityczna Mongołów

Политическое учение монголов

The end of the tenth century is marked by a period of great expansion of western Christianity. From that time on the borders of the Latin world are constantly being shifted toward the North, South and East.

Though in the times of the emperor Otto I the risings of the pagan Slavonic tribes caused the destruction of Hamburg and the removal of Germanic settlers from the districts of Havelburg and Brandenburg, the rivers Elbe and Saale marking the temporary border line between the Christian and the pagan worlds, already toward the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh centuries a renewed expansion of the Latin world started. New dukedoms and kingdoms, remaining in religious, and not infrequently in political dependence on Rome, were established on the north-eastern frontiers. These were Norway, Sweden and Denmark in the North, and Poland, Hungary and Bohemia in the East.

The southern frontiers undergo no slighter changes. Towards the end of the tenth century the Pyrenees still separated the Christian world from that of the Arabs, who were rulers over the western territories of the Mediterranean, embracing also Majorca, Corsica, Sardinia, Malta and Sicily. However, the adherents of the Western Church were to become masters over two thirds of Spain and to win full control over the Mediterranean as a result of fights with the Moslem world. The Westerners created their feudal states in Greece and Macedonia, and eventually they mastered Byzantium. All the losses and the pain-

ful failures of the crusaders, even the fall of Jerusalem which in 1187, after 88 years, was again in the hands of the Moslems, did not soften the deluded optimistic belief of the Westerners in their supreme power. The expansion of Western Christianity brought the majority of European knights into contact with the Moslem and the Byzantine world. The West, while bringing destruction to their cultivated neighbours, started to assimilate their culture, particularly the comforts and luxuries of the East. The ruling classes of medieval Europe started to form their way of life, their ideas and views, under the ever increasing influence of Byzantine, and especially Arabic culture¹.

The attitude of western Christianity towards the Byzantines remained unchanged for a period of two centuries. The generally accepted view was that of Liutprand, bishop of Cremona and ambassador of the emperor Otto I, who visited Byzantium twice, in 949 and 968, and who used to stress in his reports that the Byzantines were proud and boastful and disdainful of the heroic adherents of western Christianity².

The elaborate ceremoniousness, the forced courteousness and the lofty erudition of the Byzantine court must have been much against the taste of the primitive people of the West. How long-lasting was the attitude of the West towards the Byzantines may be illustrated by the fact that the chronicler of the second crusade³, two hundred years after Liutprand, accuses the people of the Eastern Empire of being false, perverse, heretical and arrogant, and contrasts „the meanness of the Byzantines with the magnanimity of the western knights”.

The Westerners regarded the Byzantines as sinful heretics who had betrayed the teaching of Christ, hence eastern and western Christianity was divided in, so to say, a passionate family quarrel. The imagination of the Westerners was stimulated by the legends about the inexhaustible treasures allegedly possessed by the court and the people of the Byzantine capital. They were excited too by the news of a multitude of holy relics; the Eastern Church boasted and created legends about their possession of the holy rood, the crown of thorns, Christ's blood, and relics of saints and martyrs. While the lustre of Byzantine

¹ My presentation of the relationship of western Christianity to the Moslem world is based on the book, *The Making of the Middle Ages*, by R. W. Southern, London, 1956.

² *Liudprandi episcopi Cremonensis Opera*. Ed. J. Becker, M.G.H., *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum*, 1915.

³ *De Projectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*. Ed. V. G. Berry, Columbia 1948, p. 27, 41, 55 ff.

gold evoked a maddening greed, the desire to deprive the heretical Byzantium of the holy relics and to bring them to orthodox Christian churches gave a justification of robbery.

The attitude of Europe to the Moslem world, however, was different. At first the followers of Islam were looked upon with hostile indifference, and incredible stories concerning their religion were current among the Christians. However, with time, in spite of bloody wars, Europe tended to see Mohammedanism in a more objective light. This change was, to a large extent, the result of the influence of Giraldus Cambrensis, a sober thinker of the twelfth century who, while discussing some features of Islam, discloses the influence of Judaism on Arabic doctrine⁴.

In fact, the Arabic world was to become a teacher for medieval Europe, the influence of Byzantium remaining slight. Though the sending of the Ptolomean *Almagest* to the king of Sicily in about the year 1160 marked a great step forward on the part of the Eastern Empire, the translation of the Greek texts accomplished almost immediately afterwards soon disappeared, and a Latin translation from Arabic took its place⁵.

Bloody battles fought by the crusaders did not interfere with a strong infiltration of Arabic learning into primitive Europe, the more so since intellectual and commercial contacts had started in earlier times. It is known that Gerbert, the future pope Sylvester II, had studied mathematics and astronomy near Barcelona, wanting to investigate the wisdom of the Arabs, whose renown in these fields was widespread. The commercial route from eastern Europe led through Verdun beyond the Pyrenees, and along it merchants drove the pitiful crowds of slaves to be sold in Arabic Spain. This must also have been the route for the Arabic thought which penetrated into Christian Europe toward the end of the tenth century. Contrary to expectation, the intellectual influence of the Arabs was constantly growing with their gradual retirement from south-western Europe and the islands of the Mediterranean. In the former Arabic territories there remained centres of learning and learned people speaking Arabic, especially Jewish scholars, who were the transmitters of Moslem wisdom to medieval Europe. It is due to them that the West came to know the works of

⁴ Giraldus Cambrensis: *De Principis Instructione*. Distinctio I, Cap. XVII; and U. Monneret de Villard: *Lo studio dell'Islam in Europa nel XIIe nel XIII secolo*, 1944.

⁵ C. H. Haskins: *Studies in the History of Medieval Science*. 1924, p. 157 ff.

ancient thinkers, not in the best translations thinkable, but in editions enlarged by the queries and comments of Arabic scholars.

This was the dawn of the development of science in the darkness of magic thinking. Under the influence of Arabic translations science started a new course, with changes affecting natural sciences in the first place. In the twelfth century serious mathematical and geometrical studies started with Euclid, astronomical studies with Ptolemy, while in medicine translations of Galen and Hippocrates were used. The Latin world became acquainted with the achievements of Arabic medicine, thanks to the most diligent work of Gerard of Cremona in the years 1175 to 1187. The translation of Arabic and Greek works, and especially the cognizance of Aristotle's works on nature, led to an enrichment of European learning in the twelfth century, with new branches like physics, optics, mechanics, biology. A picture of the state of learning in the western world is contained in the work of Bartholomew Anglicus⁶. In the year 1230 the provincial of the Franciscans in Saxony asked the provincial in France to send him the Franciscan brother Bartholomew Anglicus to lend a hand in the work of organizing a new province. We do not know whether Bartholomew did go to Saxony, but his reputation must have been great and widespread, since it was he who was asked to lecture at the University of Paris and to write a handbook of contemporary lore for the use of priests and monks. The author, in his attempt to deal with all topics and problems, writes on questions concerning God and the angels, and after discussing problems referring to fire, water and air passes to terrestrial matters and social relations. Bartholomew's work, translated into English, French and Spanish, constituted for a number of generations a reference book embracing all the learning accepted by western Christianity. Bartholomew bases his work on Albert the Great who, in the thirteenth century, assimilated Aristotle's works on nature. In addition, the Franciscan friar quotes a number of Arabic and Jewish scholars. After him all Europe echoed the strange-sounding names of Eastern scientists and philosophers: Albumazar, Al-Farghani, Al-Farabi, Avicenna, Averroes, Al-Ghazali. Europe learned about the medical works of a number of Jews, like Ibn Gabirol in *Fons Vitae*, and Haly. The latter's work, *Complementum Medicinae*, was translated by the Benedictan monk, Constantine the African.

For the time being learning was only accumulated, but it was to bear fruit two centuries later. Meanwhile, however, the results of the

⁶ *Medieval Lore*, from Bartholomew Anglicus, texts chosen by R. Stell, London 1905.

crusades were directly painful for the medieval society in all its strata and classes. The period of great hopes was followed by one of great disappointments. Absorbed as they were in the holy wars, contemporaries did not notice far-reaching changes, namely, an increase in economic activity which was to determine the future course of the crusades as well as the fate of western Christianity.

In the tenth century and at the beginning of the eleventh Europe had not many goods to offer to her neighbours. For luxuries, like spices, silk, perfumery, ivory, brought from the East, the Westerners had to pay in gold, as they were unable to balance the cost of imported goods from overseas by selling weapons and people.

Gold coins, spent on luxuries imported from the East, ceased to be current and silver coins took their place. While in Byzantium and the Moslem world gold coins were in use, the economically weak Europe had to use silver coins in her small-scale internal commercial transactions. The economic situation, however, changed in the thirteenth century as a result of an increase in western production. The area of cultivated land had become larger and cultivation itself was intensified. Because of the development of sheepbreeding, Flanders and England became the centres of the textile industry. Textiles and woollen clothing were, side by side with timber, weapons and furs, the chief items of European export to the East. The amount of export was greatly increased as compared with that of the preceding period. In the lowlands of Lombardy, and especially in Pavia, various goods from eastern and northern Europe were being sold to Genoese and Venetian merchants, who, competing with each other, monopolized between them the trade with Byzantium and the Arabs. This brought about a change in the situation: the East paid in gold currencies for imported goods from the West, hence the amount of gold coins in Europe constantly increased and soon there was more gold than silver⁷.

While the fanatic preacher Peter the Hermit was the hero of the first crusade, the same position was occupied in the time of the fourth by the clever doge of Venice, Enrico Dandolo, who managed to „make the naive crusade a profitable commercial undertaking”⁸.

The western world took the initiative. It reached the frontiers of the world mentioned by Pope Urban II, who initiated the crusade of 1095. In Clermont the pope spoke of three continents, the Christian Europe, and Africa and Asia, both in the hands of heathens⁹.

⁷ M. Bloch: *Le problème de l'or au Moyen Age*. Annales d'histoire économique et sociale, V, 1933, p. 1—33.

⁸ The Marx and Engels Archive, Russ., ed., vol. V, p. 194.

⁹ William of Malmesbury: *Gesta Regum*, Ed. W. Stubbs, vol. 2, p. 395.

In the eyes of the Europeans the limits of the world were set by the vastness of the Atlantic Ocean in the West, the vertical line connecting the Dnieper with the Nile in the East, while the Mediterranean, dividing Europe from North Africa, was considered the axis of the world¹⁰. The eastern boundary, that is the Dnieper-Nile line, used to be crossed by merchants attempting to penetrate into the country of the Volga, or trying to establish closer commercial contacts with Arabic caravans on their way from Persia and Khorezm. The eastern peripheries of the world were of special interest to western Christianity, since for many centuries all kinds of stories had been repeated about various communities, even Christian states, allegedly existing there. The belief that Christians lived amid the flood of heathenism, far beyond the Dnieper-Nile line, led to a desire to help them to become unified with the Church. The stories were to some degree founded on fact, at least in so far as it was still remembered that the Nestorians, because they refused to recognize the divine attributes of Christ's mother, had been excluded from the Eastern Church in the fifth century and dispersed all over Asia.

In the year 1122 all Rome was stirred by the appearance in the eternal city of a mysterious person who caused amazement even in the court of the pope. He presented himself as the ruler of a Christian kingdom situated in distant eastern territories. Two years after this event a false letter, allegedly sent from the unknown Christian country, was circulated among the courts of Europe. In it the ruler of the country, generally called Father John, presents a magnificent description of his powerful state and demands from all a recognition of his supremacy over the Christian world. In the year 1177 Pope Alexander III, under the influence of this mysterious report, sent his personal physician on a special mission to the mysterious Father John in order to make clear to him the claims of the Holy See¹¹.

There must have been in Europe a convinced belief in the existence of the mysterious Father John; indeed, almost a hundred years later the Franciscan friar, William of Rubrouck, while giving an account of his mission to the Great Khan, also mentions the legendary father. William of Rubrouck identifies him with Toghrul, the Nestorian ruler of the Keraites, who, having been the friend of Jenghiz Khan, the founder of the Mongolian power, changed into his enemy. Following

¹⁰ R. W. Southern: *op. cit.*, p. 68 ff.

¹¹ F. Zarncke: *Der Priester Johannes*. Abhandlungen der Königl. Sächsischen Gesell. der Wissen., VII, Göttingen 1879.

William's account, Marco Polo, in his *Description of the World*, repeats the story of the friendship and fight of the mysterious Father John and Jenghiz Khan. Knowledge of the Far East, however, was not limited to the more or less fantastic stories of Father John, of the communities of Christians lost in the Islam world, or of the immeasurable wealth of Asia. The two worlds were to meet in the thirteenth century, when the people inhabiting the eastern frontiers of Europe experienced the brutal invasion of the Mongols who came from the steppes of Asia.

„This was an event”, to quote the Arabs of the thirteenth century, „whose sparks dispersed over all and the evil of which affected everybody; it ran through the settlements like a cloud driven by a gust of wind”¹².

In the first half of the thirteenth century it seemed that no power would be able to resist the destructive impetus of the Tartar cavalry. The Venetians entered into trade and other negotiations with them, the Church dreamt of their conversion, and only the Slavs attempted to hold back their aggressive impetus.

In the year 1222 the best sections of the Mongolian army, after having plundered and destroyed Georgia, (Gruziya), passed through the territory between the Black and the Caspian Seas, and arrived at the South Russian steppes covering the vast spaces east of the Dnieper line and reaching far beyond the Volga. On these steppes, called the „Land of the Kipchaks”, the Mongols encountered the nomadic tribes of the Polovtsi, whose level of cultural development almost equalled that of the Mongols themselves. The leaders of the Mongolian army, as it approached the frontiers of Europe, were two fierce men, Chepé and Subutai. They were two of Jenghiz Khan's four most faithful and most cruel leaders, whose reputation in the East was well established as „the four dogs of Jenghiz Khan, fed with human flesh; he held them on chains; these dogs have brows of brass, hewn teeth, tongues sharp as awls, hearts of iron... They drink the dew, ride with the wind, and in battles eat human flesh... The four dogs are Chepé, Kublai, Chelme and Subutai”¹³.

Fire, destruction and death marked the track of the Mongols. Commerce, so far quite animated in the region of the Dnieper and Volga, was declining. It was there, along the Volga, that the commercial track

¹² Ibn al-Asir, according to В. Г. Тизенгаузен: Сборник материалов, относящихся к истории Золотой Орды, I, p. 2.

¹³ Б. Я. Владимирцов: Общественный строй Монголов. Москва 1934.

from the country of the Bulgarians led through the Caucasus towards Central Asia, or to the Far East, or through the steppes to the Crimea. The use of the commercial tracks was in the hands of the Arabs, whose wares reached the West by means of the Genoese merchants settled in the Crimea. This commerce suffered severely from the invasions of the Mongols, who mercilessly destroyed the storehouses of the Genoese merchants in the Crimea, but at the same time saved those of the rival Venetians and Armenians in order to obtain information about Europe.

The Russian dukedoms, which lay close to the pasture lands of the nomadic Polovtsi, were also involved in eastern trade, since from them corn and flax were exported to Central Asia. Relations between the nomadic Polovtsi and the settled Russians were changeable: forays and wars mingled with periods of peaceful, even friendly co-existence. The Mongolian invasion, however, made the Polovtsi ask the Russian dukes for help, and this help was granted. The epilogue of the first Mongolian invasion in Europe is generally known: on the 16th of June 1223 the Russian and Polovtsi forces suffered a bloody defeat at the river Kalka. The unified and disciplined Mongolian army proved triumphant over the divided, disunited regional dukes. A chronicler of these times made the following note: „A great multitude of people fell, and there was lamentation and weeping and sadness in the towns and villages. ...The Tartars, however, turned back away from the Dnieper. And we do not know whence they came, or whither they went”¹⁴.

After this fierce attack the army of Chepé and Subutai retired beyond the Dnieper far into the steppe. Thirteen years later, in 1236, an army of several thousand Mongols attacked Europe again. The expedition was headed by Batu, accompanied by the bloody victor of the battle at the Kalka, Subutai, who provided the necessary inspiration and advice. This was not an unprepared, spontaneous foray; the situation was quite the contrary. For many years before the actual attack numerous commercial caravans of the Venetians and Armenians had been passing through Russia, Poland and Hungary, effectively uniting their own profitable commercial transactions with collecting information about Europe to be passed over to the Mongols. That is why Subutai was well acquainted with everything concerning the forces of his enemies, while Europe had only a vague idea of the dangerous storm approaching from the East. After overrunning the steppe of the Kipchaks and destroying the Russian dukedoms, the Mongolian cavalry began to devastate Poland, Hungary and Dalmatia. In 1242—1243 the Mongo-

¹⁴ Новгородская летопись, p. 219—220.

lians took their route back through Wallachia and Moldavia to the Kipchak steppe, in order to found there, in these vast territories, their huge state, called Golden Horde.

The destructive invasion of the Mongols was felt very painfully on the eastern frontiers of Europe, and their cruelty and fierceness could paralyse even the boldest men. The disunited Christian world was unable to take any measures of united action against the Asiatic invaders. While Louis IX of France was involved in struggles with his vassals, and the quarrel between Gregory and Frederick II was reaching its peak, the Slavonic world was left to itself in the fight with the Mongol invaders.

JENGHIZ KHAN AND THE MONGOLS

The Mongolian highlands, bordering on Siberia in the North, China in the South and Manchuria and Dzungaria in the East and West respectively, are divided into the mountainous north-western part and the flat land of the South-East, the latter constituting the central part of the Gobi desert. The nomadic population of the vast highlands led the lives of shepherds and hunters and moved from place to place on the steppe in search of new pasture land and suitable hunting ground. The migrations of the Mongols were to a large extent dependent on climatic conditions, which determined their nomadic existence. During the winter, when the north-western territories lay under a thick layer of snow, the Mongols moved toward the south-eastern regions, where there was much less snow and it was easier to find food for the animals. In the late spring, however, they abandoned the dried-out steppes for the north-western territories which abounded in both water and grass. The Mongols lived close to the pastures in tents made of felt. Life on the steppes determined their primitive religious beliefs. They worshipped as divinities natural powers and phenomena; the highest position in the hierarchy was attributed to the „Heavens” (*tengri*), which they regarded as the source of life and all justice. The cult of the gods was concentrated in the hands of the *shamans*, who were both priests and seers, officiating at religious services as well as disclosing the decrees of the heavens.

In the course of many centuries the patriarchal system of the Mongols underwent only slight changes, and it was only shortly before the time of Jenghiz Khan's empire that the feudal system developed. Out of the mass of nomadic Mongols certain rich families (*ajil*) pushed themselves into the foreground. These families ran large, independent households, including not only relatives but also a number of depend-

ents, and thus an aristocracy was formed, subjugating the poorer nomads. This nobility of the steppes, distinguished by wealth and influence, was given the name of „white bone”, in contrast to that of „black bone” used in reference to the poorer Mongols.

Towards the end of the twelfth century the aristocracy of the steppes constituted a considerable part of the Mongolian society, which was composed of a number of nomadic tribes. In this period Mongolia was the scene of incessant fights between the leaders of different tribes in order to win new pastures, flocks and herds, and power. Hosts of Mongolian warriors took part in the fights on the steppes, and upon their united bravery depended the prestige of their leaders¹⁵. By the aid of warrior-bands the economic position of the aristocrats was strengthened, since they were able, by means of military power, to master the rest of the population and the slaves taken during the numerous domestic fights.

The chaos of inter-tribal conflicts must have brought to the minds of the more ambitious leaders the idea of organizing a uniform state. The unification of the nomadic tribes into one organism reflected the interests of the aristocracy. They desired to preserve their position, as well as that of the shamanistic priests who, aware of the growing infiltration of Nestorianism, Buddhism and Islam, expected support from a powerful state organization. The priests sustained the belief among the Mongols that the „Heavens” would send them a supernatural being (*dżajagatu*) who, endowed with miraculous power, would create a mighty state among the nomads.

Sometimes, in periods of impending danger for all, the nomads gave up domestic fights. The particular tribes were then united and temporary unions formed, and the rule over them was put into the hands of one of the leaders. Controversial matters were, at such times, solved at meetings (*kurultai*) of the leaders and the aristocracy, and these meetings also decided about the tasks of the leaders of the tribal union¹⁶.

One of the tribal leaders who wanted to unify the nomads was Yesukai, the father of Temuchin, the future founder of the Mongolian empire, Jenghiz Khan. The latter was born in the year 1155. But even before his birth people said about his mother, Yulun, that „the son born of her will be a hero”. At the age of ten Temuchin lost his

¹⁵ Б. Я. Владимирцов: *op. cit.* p. 91 ff.

¹⁶ R. Grousset: *Histoire de l'Extrême Orient*. Paris 1929; H. H. Howarth: *History of the Mongols*, London 1880—1888; J. Curtin: *The Mongols*, Boston 1908.

father, whose death impoverished the family and brought about the loss of the position it had so far held in the tribe. After Yesukai's death his band of warriors was also destroyed, and Yulun had to bring up her son by herself. She awakened in Temuchin a belief in his heavenly mission to rule over all the Mongolian tribes.

His unusual personality enabled him to organize his own host of warriors. His abilities as a leader and politician put him into an advantageous position in his relations with the other tribal leaders, who eventually acknowledged him as their superior and frequently turned from enemies into the most faithful fighters for his cause. One of the people closest to the leader of the Mongols was Mukhuli, the future conqueror of China, who, like Yulun, spread among the nomads a belief in Temuchin's divine mission. Dzirguadai, of the tribe of the Isuts, compensated for his former hostility with absolute faithfulness to Temuchin, who entrusted him with the highest military functions and, for his exceptional fierceness in battle, called him Chepé (Arrow), a name of distinction for warriors of the steppe.

The support of the *shamans*, who showed their approval of Temuchin's actions by attributing religious authority to them, was of especially great importance for the beginning of the leader's career. Temuchin's step-brother Kekcze, the chief *shaman*, called the „Spirit of the Heavens” (*Tebtengri*) and generally recognized as an intercessor between heaven and the people, made an official statement about the mission to be fulfilled by the new leader of the tribes of the steppes.

Temuchin knew how to make good use not only of military power and negotiations but also of the belief of the Mongols, spread and sustained by the people close to him, that it was he who was the creator of the Mongolian power, sent by the heavens and long waited for by the people. At the same time he took great care that booty was distributed among the warriors, which ensured his popularity with them. In the eyes of the aristocrats and the *shamans* he represented a power able to unify the tribes so far divided by strife.

After his victory over the Nestorian ruler of the Keraites, and after defeating the Naimans, Temuchin became the incontestable ruler of all Mongolia. During the *kurultai* at the river Onon in the year 1206 the aristocratic representatives of the Mongolian tribes proclaimed Temuchin khan of khans of all Mongolia (great khan over khans), and gave him the title of Jenghiz Khan. A horse's tail with nine white bones symbolized the power over the new steppe empire, the capital of which was Karakorum, located at the spring of the river Orchon. Thus a huge state was brought into existence, one that stretched as far as the Altai Mountains and the Argun river, the Siberian Taiga and the Great Wall.

Once Jenghiz Khan succeeded in his task of unifying all the tribes inhabiting the Mongolian highlands, he turned towards China and proceeded to attack it. The result of this undertaking was a quick subjugation of the Tangut empire. This accomplished he turned towards the northern parts of China and, after a long series of fights, conquered the Kin empire, to which he had so far been in allegiance. In the course of the invasion of China the Mongols made use of all the fierce cruelty they were capable of and they terrorized the population, depriving them of all their property. In conquering the fortified towns they made use of the inhabitants. It was here that Jenghiz Khan learnt the method of besieging and conquering towns, a knowledge of great importance for his future wars in the West. A seemingly negligible event which took place during the Chinese war proved of great importance later. After the conquest of Peking Jenghiz Khan discovered the great Chinese thinker, Yeliu Chutsai, a descendant of a princely house, who enjoyed the reputation of being the most perfect of all men. This man became one of Jenghiz Khan's most influential counsellors and helped him in the task of creating a world empire. Educated Chinese people who came over to the side of the victorious Mongols lent a hand in working out the proper structure for the steppe empire. The wise Chinese thinker tried to oppose the idea of absolute terror by suggesting that the subjugated peoples should be governed by means of a well organized administration, one that would be guided by law. The Chinese repeatedly told the warlike Mongolian leaders that „it was possible to conquer the whole world on horseback, but it was not possible to govern the world on horseback”.

However, Jenghiz Khan never stopped fighting, being convinced that Heaven had commanded the nomads of the steppes to conquer the whole world.

After the conquest of China the Mongols turned westward. In the year 1216 Subutai passed the Altai Mountains, all covered with snow, and in the lowlands of the upper Irtysh defeated the Merkits army. A year later Jenghiz Khan's son, Juji, attacked the Khirghiz tribes, and Chepé invaded the vast Karakitai territory. The latter undertaking was preceded by the activity of Mongolian emissaries who organized riots and revolts against the ruler of the country, Kushlek Khan. Kushlek Khan, while supporting Buddhism, persecuted the adherents of all other religions, and this caused dissatisfaction among the people. As soon as Chepé found himself within the boundary of the Karakitai country, he made public the proclamation of Jenghiz Khan in which it was announced that all people would have religious freedom and that priests and people who had anything to do with religious service, what-

ever the religion, would not be taxed. Thanks to religious tolerance Chepé managed to master the vast spaces of the Karakitai country in a short period of time and made them part of the Mongolian empire. The domains of the Mongols now bordered on Khorezm, which included almost the whole of the Turan lowlands and the Iranian highlands. At this time the ruler of Khorezm was consolidating his country by force, and in the first decade of the thirteenth century his army occupied Bukhara, Samarkand and Ferghana. Thus the warriors of Khorezm became the masters of Pamir and, marching through the Iranian provinces, reached the borders of India.

Jenghiz Khan's great success encouraged him to claim, in the year 1218, allegiance from Khorezm in order that he might be the sole master of the commercial routes passing through Central Asia. He did this because he was aware that, after the defeat of China, Mongolia had become the chief transmitter of Chinese goods exported to the West, and also of the imported western corn which the East needed so badly after the great desolation in the northern provinces of China.

The inhabitants of Khorezm reacted to the provocative proposal of Jenghiz Khan by massacring a caravan of 450 merchants, whom they treated as Mongolian spies. This happened in the wealthy commercial town of Otrar, located on the eastern frontier of Khorezm, which the caravan had reached together with Jenghiz Khan's diplomatic emissaries. In consequence, the army of the steppes rushed like a hurricane towards central Asia, leaving desolation behind them and bringing destruction to the highly civilized towns of Khorezm. In spite of desperate attempts at defence, the invaders soon conquered Bukhara, Samarkand, Merv and Urgench, and in the course of less than three years (1219—1221) the complete conquest of Central Asia was achieved. The unprecedented cruelty of their treatment of the inhabitants evoked general abhorrence and fear. After the flood of the Mongols over Khorezm, life in the country stopped for a number of years. The barbarians of the steppe saved only those merchants, priests and craftsmen who declared themselves ready to cooperate. Thousands of craftsmen were sent far into Mongolia, or else had to perform various tasks at the time of besiegement. From Samarkand alone Jenghiz Khan sent 30,000 craftsmen to the East.

The invasion of Khorezm in the year 1223 gave Chepé and Subutai an opportunity of overrunning Iran and devastating its northern parts, after which they passed the Caucasus and attacked the Polovtsi and the Russians.

In the year 1222 Jenghiz Khan led his chief army to the lowlands of the Indus, whence, however, he soon withdrew, probably after re-

ceiving the news about the rising in China. Thus the invincible nomads returned to their home country from far-off lands. In 1225 Jenghiz Khan was again in his capital, Karakorum, and two years later the cruel tyrant of the empire of the steppes, who called himself „God's scourge on earth”, was no longer alive:

According to Jenghiz Khan's will, his third son, Ogotai (1229—1241), became khagan. Following the imperialistic policy of his father, he continued to organize the great empire. The huge Mongolian state could not do without an effective administration. The system of communication, the monetary system, taxes, administration of the conquered territories, military supply, judicial activities, all called for a well thought-out organization and precision in execution. With the help of the wise Jeliu-Chutsai, Ogotai laid the foundations of his state of the nomads, and in this he made use of the Uigurs, the Moslems, and above all the Chinese. In the first period the Uigurian alphabet was used for official purposes in the state, modifications to suit the requirements of the Mongolian language having been introduced. With time, however, administration came more and more into the hands of the Chinese, whose diligence and precision in action brought about the more and more frequent use of the Chinese language side by side with Mongolian.

During the *Kurultai* of 1235 the Mongolian leaders decided that an invasion of Europe was the most important task for them. The leadership of the army was given to Jenghiz Khan's grandson, Batu, who was accompanied by the bloody Subutai, well remembered from the first invasion of Europe. Seven years later the Mongolian army was seen in Hungary, where, at the beginning of the year 1242, Batu received the ominous horsetail, indicating the death of Ogotai.

The Mongols gave up the idea of any further conquest of Europe and retired to the vast territory of the Kipchak steppe, where Batu founded his own, independent state, *Ulus* of Juji, Golden Horde.

The Christian world was horrified at the desolation the Mongols made in Russia, Poland and Hungary. Europe was stricken with fear by the unknown power of the steppe empire. Christianity was endangered by the eastern military state, organized according to the pattern of a dynastic monarchy governed by the whole family of the ruler. Each of the members of the dynasty was master over his own district, over which, however, the khagan had supreme authority. In spite of the fact that the whole family of the ruler governed the country, the powerful individuality of Jenghiz Khan was a guarantee of unity. He himself was the absolute ruler, and the khans only represented his power in the particular *uluses* and acted on his behalf.

He also managed to impose his will on the kurultai, reducing its sphere of activity to the acceptance of the suggestions made by the khagan.

The state of the Mongols, created by and for the conquests, had to adapt its inner organization to the needs of the huge army of the nomads. The skeleton of the state organization, in principle, consisted of the tribal-patriarchal system. The nomadic society, however, was not a disorganized crowd. Each tribe fell into larger and smaller organizational units, each embracing a definite number of tents. They were headed by appointed chieftains, who were hierarchically dependent on their superiors. The army, however, was the backbone and the essential feature of the state of the nomads. From the age of 15 up to 60 each Mongol had to serve in the army, the organization of which reflected the decimal system. The smallest organizational group of the army consisted of ten warriors. That which embraced 100 people was the next unit; a still larger one, called a *hezareh*, amounted to 1000 warriors; the largest unit equalled 10 *hezarehs*, that is, it consisted of 10,000 warriors and was called a *touman*. The army of the warriors of the steppe consisted first of all of cavalry. The fierceness and perseverance of the Mongolian warriors was well-known everywhere. From an early age they were used to horses, their inseparable companions in the migrations on the steppe. They became a part of the vast Asiatic steppe on which they grew up. The severe climate hardened them and their nomadic way of life made them physically strong. Marco Polo says of them: „In all the world there is no such army that would be more persevering in toils and hardships, none that would be cheaper, or better qualified for the conquest of countries and kingdoms... And take it from me, they are able to ride for 10 days without stopping, if necessary, without eating or burning a fire, living only on the blood of their horses”¹⁷.

With the territorial expansion of the invasions into countries whose inhabitants led a settled life, the Mongols adopted the Chinese methods of besieging and conquering towns, hence, side by side with the cavalry, there appeared in the army squadrons specially trained in this field.

The personal division of the khagan, his guard (*keshichan*), constituted a school for military leaders and was at the same time the heart of the Mongolian army. Simple warriors in this division had the respect of commanders of *hezarehs*. „My simple, ordinary warrior”, Jenghiz

¹⁷ Marco Polo: *Opisanie świata*. Polish ed. 1954, p. 194—195.

Khan used to say, „is of higher rank than any of the commanders of a *hezareh*”¹⁸.

The characteristic feature of the army of the nomads, apart from the extremely rigorous discipline, the breaking of which was punished by death, was the collective responsibility of a division for the appointed task, and thus there was little chance for individual heroism. The Mongolian cavalry was extremely mobile; its divisions often managed to cover as many as 60 kilometres a day, and this repeatedly so for a number of weeks without stopping. In the course of covering thousands of kilometres, the army was victorious again and again.

The successes can be accounted for by the warriors' speed in attack, their blind obedience, physical strength and knowledge of the enemy. In order to lead the enemy astray the Mongols invaded a country from various angles. Information about the location of the enemy forces, received from merchants who penetrated the given land before the attack, allowed the Mongols to move about even more boldly.

Jenghiz Khan made war the regular job of the Mongols, conquest their vocation, plundering their source of income. The desolation which marked the routes of the Mongols brought them new power and new wealth. The occupied country had to provide food and maintenance for the nomads; the devastated fields were changed into pasture land for the nomads, and the subjugated population had to serve in the army of the invaders.

In the subdued countries the Mongols introduced methods of unprecedented and most cruel terror in order to prevent even the slightest opposition. News of their cruelty spread through various countries even before an actual invasion, rousing unnecessary panic, and this frequently enabled even small divisions of the warriors of the steppe to be victorious over a more numerous enemy.

When towards the end of March 1242 the army of the nomads suddenly withdrew from the banks of the Danube into the steppe, Europe was overwhelmed by fear and uncertainty. Nobody knew whence the Mongols came, whither they went, or when they would be back again. In the year 1245 Pope Innocent IV sent two missions to the East, to the unknown ruler of the Mongols, asking him to discontinue the wars with the adherents of the religion of Christ, at the same time threatening him with God's revenge for the wrong done to the Christians. One of the Pope's emissaries was the Franciscan friar Giovanni

¹⁸ „Secret History”, a work of the XIIIth cent., which in the form of an epic saga describes the events connected with the rise of the Mongolian empire, quoted after В. Я. Владимирцов: *op. cit.* translated by С. А. Козин.

de Piano Carpini, the same who first informed Europe about the military state of the Mongols. Together with the archbishop of Antivara and Benedict of Poland, in the year 1246, he reached the capital of the Mongols, Karakorum, where, five years after Ogotai's death, his son Kuyuk (1246—1248) had just become khagan.

Fra Carpini brought from Karakorum the news that the Mongols were planning an invasion of Europe. He also brought Kuyuk's letter in which the Great Khan demanded absolute obedience from the pope, since such was the Decree of the Heavens.

The controversies between Kuyuk and Batu, the khan of the Golden Horde, prevented the Mongols from organizing a new invasion of the West. It had become increasingly difficult to preserve the unity of the nomadic empire. In these attempts an important role was played by Siurkukteni, the influential and wise widow of Tule, Jenghiz Khan's youngest son. After the death of Kuyuk her sons held, one after the other, supreme rule over the Mongolian empire. These were the times of Mangu (1251—1259) and of Kublai (1260—1294), a period during which the victorious invaders were absorbing the culture of the conquered tribes.

In the West the follower of Batu Khan of the Golden Horde. Bereke, accepted Islam. The Arabic historian wrote the following words about him: „Bereke... made a renewed vow of faithfulness to Islam, and the *sheikh* obliged him to proclaim (Islam) officially. He (Bereke) spread (Islam) among all his subjects, started to build mosques and schools in all the countries under his rule, was himself surrounded by learned men and lawyers, and was in friendly relations with them”¹⁹.

In the East an analogous increase of interest in the culture of settled societies can be observed. Mangu was surrounded by learned men; in Karakorum he built an observatory for the famous mathematician, Nasir ed-din, whom he brought to Mongolia after the conquest of Iran, bestowing great honours on him. Kublai was brought up in the Chinese tradition and remained from an early age under the influence of his wise teacher, Lao-shi. The latter inculcated into his pupil the idea of the superiority of Chinese culture and at the same time taught him a new attitude to life, one that was foreign to the Mongols. He dedicated to Kublai a dissertation containing eight chapters: on the necessity of perfecting one's personality, on eagerness for learning, on

¹⁹ Ibn Khaldun: *Arab historian of the XIVth cent.*, quoted after B. Г. Тизенгаузен: *Сборник материалов, относящихся к истории Золотой Орды*, 1884, p. 379.

respect for learned men, on love of relatives, on obedience to the decrees of Heaven, on compassion for one's neighbours, on good conduct, and, finally, on condemning flatterers. This work must have been much at variance with the ideas and ways of the warriors of the steppe.

The toil of the wise Chinese bore fruit; the cultivated Chinese became victorious over the barbaric Mongols. Jenghiz Khan's grandson, Kublai, moved his capital from Karakorum to Peking. The ruler of the Mongols became the heir of the Chinese emperors.

The shift of the axis of the Mongolian empire towards the East caused a complete break in the former unity. The Great Khan of Peking had no longer any influence on the policy of the *uluses*, which grew increasingly independent. The ruler of the Golden Horde, Bereke Khan, was involved in a war in the defence of Islam, one that he had undertaken, together with the Egyptian Seljuks, against the Mongolian ruler of Iran, Hulagu. On the battle-field after the defeat of Hulagu's army the victorious Bereke Khan is said to have uttered words which illustrate the tragedy of Jenghiz Khan's empire: „May Allah send ignominy on this Hulagu, who caused Mongols to be killed with the swords of Mongols. Had we acted together we would have conquered the whole world”²⁰.

The East, too, was not spared from barbaric wars. Here Kublai fought against his brother Arikbugha, the ruler of Mongolia proper. This was a struggle between two ideas: Arikbugha represented the idea of war and the steppe tradition, the centre of which was Mongolia and Karakorum, while Kublai defended settled life and the idea of peaceful government, which he tried to put into practice in Peking, the new capital of the Mongols.

In spite of the warnings of Jenghiz Khan, an end was put to the unity of the ruling family, which he had regarded as the essential condition of the power and greatness of the Mongols. The military empire of the Mongols became a thing of the past. On its ruins the independent states, *uluses*, were built, but these were unable to continue the idea of mastering the whole world.

MESSIANISM OF THE STEPPE

The views of the steppe aristocracy, supported by the priests of shamanism, constituted the political doctrine of the Mongols in the period of their great expansion. Its content was a primitive kind of messianism which justified their deeds by the belief that according to

²⁰ В. Г. Тизенгаузен: *op. cit.* p. 75.

the decree of heaven the ruler of the nomadic Mongolian tribes ought to conquer all the world. With every new military success the Mongols made a clearer formulation of their ideas, which reflected the desires and the ways of the warriors of the steppe.

The first words of Jenghiz Khan uttered about his exceptional role were rather reticent. At the beginning of his career, when his hair was just beginning to go grey, Jenghiz Khan said to his people:

„The Almighty Lord has made me leader of divisions of a thousand and ten thousand warriors and has raised my horsetail, the symbol of my power; that is also why He marked me with grey hair, which indicates my seniority”²¹.

Priests and diviners had first to proclaim the person of the ruler as divine and as fulfilling a divine mission before all this could become a truth for everybody. The authoritative pronouncement of Kekze (*Tebtengri*), the chief *shaman*, gave religious sanction to the attempts to unify all the tribes. This priest charged Jenghiz Khan, in the name of God, with the duty of ruling over all the world. „I speak with God, and I visit heaven”, *Tebtengri* said, „God has decided that you should be the ruler of the world. It is His will that you should be called Jenghiz Khan”²².

The great victories of the Mongols, such as that over China, the conquest of the huge Karakitai country and that of Khorezm, led to radical changes in the formulations of the doctrine. It expresses the desire to completely exterminate settled peoples, a tendency seen as early as the period of the conquest of China, when the aristocracy of the steppe demanded a massacre of all the settled population and wanted to turn all the fields into pasture land²³.

An even more radical variety of messianism was being propagated at the time of the wars conducted in Central Asia. Jenghiz Khan raised cruelty to the dignity of the highest virtue, which endowed the warriors of the steppe with everlasting fame. The Persian historian of the times of Jenghiz Khan, Juzjani, says that the Mongolian ruler was boastful of his cruelty. In Central Asia he said to his people that the numerous massacres in the conquered countries would bring him everlasting fame and would fill all countries of the world with awe of his name²⁴.

²¹ Rashid al-Din, Persian chronicler of the XIII/XIV cent., Сборник летописей, Москва 1952, I, book 2, p. 265.

²² Rashid al-Din: *op. cit.*, book 1, p. 167.

²³ И. Бичурин: Записки о Монголии, История первых четырех ханов из дома Чингизова. Russ. transl. Петербург 1829, p. 153.

²⁴ Juzjani: *The Tabaqat-i Nasiri*. Ed. W. Nassau Lees. Calcutta 1863—1864, p. 352.

Jenghiz Khan demanded absolute obedience from subjugated people, and regarded any discussion or negotiation as a sin against himself and against heaven, not to speak of any attempt at opposition or defence. In a speech delivered to the citizens of Bukhara, after the town was taken, Jenghiz Khan said:

„...And I am telling you, be afraid of me, for I am the punishment sent by God on you. If you had not committed great sins, the Almighty God would not have punished you by sending me”²⁵.

During this campaign all the towns of Khorezm received decrees (*yarlighs*) in which the Mongols repeatedly expounded their doctrine very clearly.

„Let it be known to all emirs, aristocrats and to the people”, the *yarlighs* said, „that the Almighty gave us (Mongols) all the world from the East to the West. Those who show obedience to us will be saved, and so will their wives, children and relatives; but those who act otherwise will die, and so will their wives, children and relatives”²⁶.

The messianic idea, which unified the nomadic tribes in their attempt to conquer the world, at the same time promised concrete advantages and profits for the life of the Mongols on the steppe. Jenghiz Khan speaks of the definite tasks awaiting him, and in future to be carried on by every ruler of the Mongols.

„It is my desire”, Jenghiz Khan declares, „that my shooters and my guards... as well as their wives, their betrothed and their daughters should, thanks to my generosity, eat only the most exquisite food; that they be dressed, from head to heel, in robes with gold inwoven; that they ride the best horses properly broken in; that they have clean and fresh-tasting water and good pasture land for their flocks and herds; that they move about in the country along tracks that are free from all obstacles and dangers...”²⁷.

The doctrine of the Mongolian messianism, so cruel in its essence, had certain unique features resulting from the primitive social relations of the nomadic system. The fanaticism of religious strife was incomprehensible to them, the inequality of women was a thing unknown, and divergence between doctrine and practical life was alien to them.

Completely adapted to the life of the vast, wild steppe, they worshipped the powers of nature, and showed no understanding of the theology of the other beliefs which they encountered in their country.

²⁵ Rashid al-Din: *op. cit.* I. book 2, p. 205.

²⁶ Rashid al-Din: *op. cit.* I. book 2, p. 211.

²⁷ Rashid al-Din: *op. cit.* I. book 2, p. 263.

Here they met the Christian Nestorians, the Chinese Buddhists, and the adherents of Islam, but these different religions, rites and ceremonies must only have deepened the scepticism of the nomads. Those who, by the decree of the heavens, were destined to rule over all humanity, could not accept any of these beliefs, so hostile to each other. Their God spoke to them in a simple and clear language when He commanded them to fight for rule over all the world.

The Mongols, while demanding absolute obedience from their subjects, left them complete religious freedom. At the same time they freed the priests of all religions from tax duties, because they were aware that the priests and their prayers for the success of the invaders might prove helpful in the task of fully mastering the subdued territories. Thus the most cruel leader did not neglect religious tolerance.

„Chepé, accompanied by his personal division of warriors, made special messengers announce that everybody was to stick to his belief and be faithful to the religion of his forefathers”²⁸.

The Persian historian of the latter half of the thirteenth century, Juwayni, mentions a typical example which illustrates the complete religious indifference of the Mongols. He says about Batu Khan, the ruler of the Golden Horde, that „he (Batu) did not belong to any religion or sect, neither did he feel any desire to know God”²⁹.

As well as their religious tolerance, the position of the Mongolian woman deserves to be stressed. Women had an almost equal share with men in economic duties, and among aristocratic families, in ruling also. The Mongolian warriors, frequently away from their home-tents (*yurts*) by hundreds or even thousands of kilometres, during hunting or in war-time, left to their women the leadership in economic and political life. The women of the ruling dynasty were present at *kurultais* and took an active part in them.

It is possible to multiply examples to show that Mongolian women took decisions even in the most crucial affairs. Rashid al-Din says that the mother of Jenghiz Khan „was a very talented and wise woman, who took care of her son as well as she could, and at the same time was in charge of her husband’s possessions, service, soldiers and supporters, everything that Yesukai left her”³⁰.

²⁸ Rashid al-Din: *op. cit.* I. book 2, p. 183.

²⁹ Juwayni: *The Tarikh-i Jahān gushā of Ala ud-Din Atā Malik-i Juwayni*. GMS, XVI, part I.

³⁰ Rashid al-Din: *op. cit.* I, book 2, p. 265.

Particularly memorable in the history of the steppe empire is the prudent wife of Jenghiz Khan's youngest son, who managed to prevent a fratricidal fight between Kuyuk and Batu Khan. Her *ulus*, which included Mongolia proper, the heart of the empire, constituted a model of good administration. Her judicious assignment of pasture land and the alertness of her warriors, always equipped for quick action, made Siurkukteni a respected and influential woman at the court of the Khan. The mother of Mangu and Kublai, the two future khagans, formed the views of her sons by choosing their teachers properly, and she could to a large extent foresee their future policy. The common law of the nomads said that „...a wife, whose husband had to leave for hunting or for war, should be so efficient in running everything, that any guest or wanderer who chances to arrive, cannot but praise her. Only such a wife brings her husband good fame and raises the glory of his name among members of the tribe”³¹.

The position of women in the nomadic society evoked an understandable surprise among the strangers who encountered them. At the beginning of the fourteenth century the Arabic traveller, Ibn Batuta, wrote: „I saw miracles in this country (Mongolia), resulting from the high respect the people have for women. Women are more respected than men”³².

A similar report is given by the Arabic historian, Al-Omari, who says that the Mongolian aristocratic women „take part in ruling on equal terms with their husbands, the decisions taken being common”. In his surprise the historian adds: „Indeed, I have not seen any women in our times that would have as much power as they have there”³³.

The messianism of the steppes is also characterized by a surprising correspondence between the idea and practical life. The simple aims of the imperialistic doctrine were amplified by rules which guaranteed their execution.

Shortly before his death the founder of the empire ordered the common law (*Yassa*), in which the doctrine as well as the measures for its realization are expressed, to be engraved on iron plates. *Yassa* has not survived to our times, but we know its content from the reports of chroniclers; it is a collection of principles referring chiefly to the technique of ruling over the nomadic society, which undertook to fight for rule over all the world. The chief idea of *Yassa* may be reduced to the thought that the victory of the Mongols depends on unity

³¹ Rashid al-Din: *op. cit.* I, book 2, p. 261.

³² В. Г. Тизенгаузен: *op. cit.* I, p. 288, 208.

³³ В. Г. Тизенгаузен: *op. cit.* I, p. 288, 208.

of action, proper choice of leaders, and bravery in the army of the steppes.

It seems that the greatest worry of Jenghiz Khan was the preservation of unity among the members of the dynasty. It was in connection with this problem that he approached his sons in his testament:

„For you, my sons, I have won and mastered, with the help of God and the Heavens, a large and vast state from the centre of which it takes a whole year to reach any of the frontiers. Now I am passing to you my last wish: be of one mind and one thought both in fighting enemies and in winning friends — this will bring you a rich and happy life and joy in ruling...”³⁴.

Similarly, he starts the *Yassa* with the reminder that inwardly divided societies were soon overpowered by the Mongols, because they were too weak to resist.

Jenghiz Khan thought that the best guarantee of unity was an absolutely consistent adherence to the steppe traditions which the *Yassa* included. Thus we read in it:

„If members of the dynasty occupying the khagan's throne in the future do not change the customs of Jenghiz Khan, which regulate all the affairs of society, but keep them, they will rule in happiness and joy, with the help of Heaven, ...for ever”³⁵.

Yassa expected from the Mongolian leaders a constant perfecting of oneself, ability in leadership, discipline, sobriety and courage.

„Only such a person”, *Yassa* says, who is able to remove his personal faults is able to remove the malice that is around him... Only he who can manage his tent (*yurt*) will be able to manage a district. Only he who effectively leads ten warriors into battle may be given a larger unit... If a chieftain is unable to lead ten warriors, he will be punished and in his place another warrior from among the unit will be nominated. The same procedure will be adopted in relation to bad leaders of larger units...”³⁶.

War was to be the aim of life and the sum of happiness for all Mongols.

„The greatest happiness for a man”, Jenghiz Khan taught his people, „and the greatest joy is to defeat and exterminate the enemy, to destroy him in his very roots, to take all he possesses, to force his wives to weep, to ride his best and beloved horses, and to have the joy of possessing his beautiful women”³⁷.

³⁴ Rashid al-Din: *op. cit.* I, book 2, p. 234.

³⁵ Rashid al-Din: *op. cit.* I, book 2, p. 260.

³⁶ Rashid al-Din: *op. cit.* I, book 2, p. 260 ff.

³⁷ Rashid al-Din: *op. cit.* I, book 2, p. 265.

Yassa includes a number of rules concerning courage, mutual help, sobriety, discipline, the same perseverance in all situations, all of which were binding for the nomadic army. And the Mongols acted as Yassa told them to, for it was twenty years after Jenghiz Khan's death when Fra Carpini, having reached the capital of the Mongolian empire, informed Europe that the Mongols „were more obedient to their leaders than any other people in the world... Quarrels, brawls or fights are not known among them. They are extremely perseverent. They may be hungry for a day or two, having nothing at all to eat, but will not show discontent; just the contrary, they will sing and dance as if they had just finished a feast... They are extraordinarily haughty and proud towards other people, whom they despise and treat as nothing... Their emperor has a most surprising power over his subjects... whatever decision he takes, at any time or place, be it in war, or their lives or deaths, this they accept without any hesitation... It should be remembered that they do not negotiate with any state, but only demand absolute surrender... This is so because Jenghis Khan commanded them to subdue all people and make them obey them”³⁸.

Fra Carpini came to the court of khagan Kuyuk, who was an eager adherent to Jenghiz Khan's doctrine and the idea of the steppe messianism was also apparent in his policy. It is also found in a letter from the khagan to the pope, in which he haughtily says that by heaven's decree he is the lord of all the world and demands the complete surrender of the Christians and homage to be paid to him by the head of the Church³⁹.

The title which Kuyuk used also stresses his divine right to rule all the world; it ran, „God rules in heaven — Kuyuk Khan, God's power on earth — the emperor of all peoples”⁴⁰.

However, Kuyuk was the last khagan to represent radical political messianism. In the Mongolian empire more and more clearly and more and more often the idea of peaceful rule over the subjugated peoples gained prominence, and during the time of the second generation after Jenghiz Khan it eventually became victorious. While the founder of the empire was still alive, the ideas of radical messianism were opposed at the khagan's court. His eldest son, Juji, was against the mass extermination of the native population, a view opposed by the steppe

³⁸ Plano Carpini, Russ. transl., Petersburg 1911, p. 12, 13, 23, 32; see also Johann de Plano Carpini: *Geschichte der Mongolen und Reisebericht 1245—1247*. Übersetzt u. erklärt von F. Risch, Leipzig 1930.

³⁹ The original text of the letter is preserved in the Vatican Archive. The text is quoted by M. Prawdin: *Das Erbe Tschingis-Chans*, 1935, p. 56 ff.

⁴⁰ Plano Carpini, *op. cit.* p. 37.

aristocracy, who persistently objected to the rebuilding of towns and to any concession towards the defeated people⁴¹.

Juji's policy was continued by his sons, Batu and Bereke, in the Golden Horde. The latter even went as far as accepting Islam⁴².

During the reign of khagan Ogotai, and especially of Mangu, the doctrine of peaceful rule is the dominant one in the policy of the Mongols. The idea of the military messianism of the nomads was opposed by that of peaceful rule under the centralized and strong authority of the khagan. The adherents of the peaceful doctrine had to oppose the steppe aristocracy by seeking support from the wealthy classes of the subjugated people. They gave up radical messianism and supported the native aristocracy and the system of settled life, towns, commerce, trade, and agriculture⁴³.

The traditions of the steppe lasted longest, in fact until the beginning of the fourteenth century, in the former *uluses* of Jagatai, which included Turkestan; in the country of the Hulagids in Asia Minor they were liquidated slightly earlier, during the reign of Ghazan Khan (1295—1304).

The idea of peaceful rule, developed by association with the economy and culture of the subjugated peoples, led to an eventual discarding of primitive shamanism. The Mongols accepted the religious beliefs of the subdued peoples and, contrary to the principle of tolerance, became involved in religious quarrels, a phenomenon which was particularly striking in Iran, especially during the reign of Ghazan Khan, who associated the idea of peaceful rule with privileges for Islam. Rashid al-Din says of him:

„All the rules of *shari'ah* and *tarikah* had been, with time, forgotten... He (Ghazan Khan) revived them and made them binding, and at the same time completely removed all wrong beliefs and customs, thus making the bases of Islam stronger”⁴⁴.

Ghazan Khan also tried to improve the economic situation of his country, lowered the taxes of the peasants, improved the irrigation system, introduced stability into the value of money. His programme of peaceful rule was in obvious contradiction to the idea of destructive messianism.

⁴¹ The fight of the two tendencies in the policy of the Mongols is dealt with by И. П. Петрушевский, introduction to Rashid al-Din *op. cit.*, p. 12 ff.

⁴² B. Grekow, A. Jakubowski: *Złota Orda i jej upadek*. Warszawa 1953, p. 70 ff.

⁴³ E. Blochet: *Introduction à l'histoire des Mongols de Rashid al-Din*. Leiden — London 1910, p. 308—314.

⁴⁴ Rashid al-Din, *op. cit.*, I, book 2, p. 13.

„Order”, Ghazan Khan said, „the financial situation, the prosperity of the country and all our affairs depend on the conscientious work of the peasants, on the level of agriculture and the development of commerce. If we rob the peasants, who will provide our necessities? Just think! If we take the cattle and the seeds away from the peasants, they will leave the soil. And then what will you do, when they give up their work?”⁴⁵.

While the steppe messianism left only millions of slaughtered people, ruins and devastation, the system of peaceful rule led to the development of contact between the distant West and the Far East. The last decades of the thirteenth century brought peace to all the territories occupied by the Mongols. This was the victory of a new policy. During the reign of Kublai *pax tartarica* existed in Asia, and a period began in which the two cultures came into contact with each other.

On the one hand, European craftsmen, at one time deported to the unknown eastern countries, became teachers in the art of the goldsmith, the production of weapons, mining and weaving. The young Venetian, Marco Polo, while at the court of Peking, managed through his narrative ability to evoke the interest of the Great Khan, Kublai, in the life and culture of the Italian towns.

On the other hand, distant China had much more to offer to Europe. The West came to know not only things of luxury, like costly silk textiles, but also the achievements of the inventive Chinese mind, as for instance the counter, so far not in use. It seems more than coincidence that the Franciscan friar, Schwarz, the discoverer of gunpowder, was a member of the order whose brothers were the first emissaries to the Far East, where gunpowder had been used for military purposes long before that time. In the fourteenth century the Chinese printing technique is found in Europe; this consisted in printing only one side of the pages, which then were glued together. Before the invention of Gutenberg letters of clay or metal were used in China and Korea for printing purposes. European painting is influenced by Chinese art, as seen in the appearance of the landscape background, a greater mobility in the human figure and in an asymmetry in composition which had so far been unknown. The East penetrated unnoticed into Europe.

⁴⁵ Rashid al-Din: Сборник летописей, Москва 1946, III, p. 262.

STRESZCZENIE

Na przełomie X i XI wieku Zachodnie Chrześcijaństwo rozpoczęło okres wielkiej ekspansji, w której wyniku zetknęło się ze światem muzułmańskim i bizantyńskim. Od tego czasu klasy panujące średnio-wiecznej Europy zaczynają formować swój sposób życia i poglądy pod wpływem kultury bizantyńskiej, a zwłaszcza arabskiej.

W oczach ówczesnych chrześcijan świat kończył się na zachodzie bezmiarem wód Oceanu Atlantyckiego, natomiast na wschodzie linią łączącą Dniepr z Nilem, poza którą leżały już nieznanne obszary — przedmiot fantastycznych opowieści. Dopiero w pierwszej połowie XIII wieku od tej strony przyszedł brutalny najazd Mongołów, naciągających ze stepów azjatyckich.

Na wyżynie mongolskiej z końcem XII wieku doszło do zjednoczenia koczujących plemion pod wodzą Czingiz-chana, którego poczynania odpowiadały zarówno arystokracji stepowej, jak i szamanom. Stworzył Czingiz-chan koczownicze państwo stepowe, dysponujące potężną armią konną, która zdołała ujarzmić niemal całą Azję i poważnie zagroziła Europie.

Doktrynę polityczną Mongołów w okresie ich zaborów stanowiły poglądy arystokracji stepowej, popieranej przez kapłanów szamanizmu. Był to prymitywny mesjanizm, tłumaczący rozbój wiarą, że, zgodnie z wolą nieba, wódz koczowniczych plemion mongolskich winien ujarzmić cały świat. Idea ta, jednocząca plemiona koczownicze do walki o władzę nad całym światem, żądała jednocześnie niszczenia ludów osiadłych. Miał jednak mesjanizm stepowy sobie tylko właściwe rysy w następstwie prymitywnych stosunków społecznych, w jakich żyli Mongołowie. Niezrozumiały był dla nich fanatyzm sporów religijnych, nieznaną dyskryminacja kobiet, obcy rozdzźwięk między doktryną a praktyczną działalnością. Stąd, żądając bezwzględного poddania politycznego, pozostawiają koczownicy swobodę religijną zwyciężonym. Oddaleni o tysiące kilometrów — w czasie swoich częstych wypraw wojennych — od jurt i koczowisk pozostawiają kobietom kierownictwo życiem gospodarczo-społecznym. Ponadto mesjanizm stepowy charakteryzuje zadziwiająca zgodność idei z działaniem. Proste cele zaborczej doktryny uzupełniały gwarantujące jej realizację reguły, które skodyfikował Czingiz-chan w jasio.

W imperium mongolskim, obok idei mesjanizmu radykalnego, dochodziły do głosu poglądy o potrzebie pokojowego władania podbitymi ludami. Już najstarszy syn Czingiz-chana potępiał masowe niszczenie tubylczej ludności wbrew opinii arystokracji stepowej, przeciwnej odbudowie miast i jakimkolwiek ustępstwom wobec podbitych. Zwo-

lennicy doktryny pokojowych rządów, mając przeciw sobie arystokrację stepową musieli oprzeć się o klasy posiadające ludów podbitych. Rezygnują wobec tego z mesjanizmu radykalnego i popierają arystokrację tubylczą, życie osiadłe, miasta, handel, rzemiosło i rolnictwo.

Zwycięstwo nowej doktryny politycznej przyniosło w ostatnich dekadach XIII stulecia pokój niemal na wszystkich obszarach zajętych przez Mongołów. Jeśli mesjanizm stepowy pozostawił po sobie miliony zabitych, zgliszcza i zniszczenia — to następstwem pokojowych rządów Mongołów było zetknięcie się Europy z kulturą chińską.

Р Е З Ю М Е

В конце X и начале XI веков западное христианство вступает в период великой экспансии, результатом которой явилось более близкое знакомство с Византией и мусульманством. С того времени византийская, а особенно арабская культура начинает оказывать сильное влияние на формирование взглядов и образа жизни господствующих классов средневековой Европы.

В глазах христиан того времени земля кончалась на западе безпредельными водами Атлантического океана, а на востоке линией соединяющей Днепр с Нилом, за которыми простирались неизвестные земли — сюжет фантастических повествований. Лишь в первой половине XIII века, оттуда пришло грозное нашествие монголов надвигающихся из азиатских степей.

В конце XII века на монгольских плоскогорьях произошло объединение кочующих племен под властью Чингис-хана, цели которого соответствовали стремлениям степной аристократии и шаманов. Чингис-хан создал кочующее степное государство, которое имело в своем распоряжении мощную конную армию, которой удалось покорить почти всю Азию и стать серьезной угрозой для Европы.

В период завоеваний политическим учением монголов были воззрения степной аристократии, поддерживаемой жрецами шаманства. Это был примитивный мессианизм, которой оправдывал разбой верой в то, что по воле неба вождь кочующих монгольских племен должен покорить все народы. Идея, объединяющая кочующие племена в борьбе за власть над всем миром, содержала одновременно требование истребления оседлого населения. Степной мессианизм отличался однако характерными ему только присущими чертами — следствие примитивных общественных отношений тогдашней жизни монголов. Им непонятен был фанатизм религиозных споров, неизвестна дискри-

минация женщин, чуждо несоответствие между учением и практической деятельностью. Поэтому, требуя безоговорочного политического повиновения, кочевники предоставляют в то же время покоренным народам религиозную свободу. Находясь часто во время походов на расстоянии тысяч километров от своих юрт и кочевий, они предоставляли женщинам руководство хозяйственной и общественной жизнью. Кроме того для степного мессианизма характерным является поразительное совпадение идеи с действием. Захватнические идеи монголов дополнялись правилами, гарантирующими достижение поставленной цели. Эти правила собрал Чингис-хан в „ясе”.

В монгольской империи наряду с идеей радикального мессианизма распространялось убеждение о необходимости мирного господства над покоренными народами. Уже старший сын Чингис-хана, вопреки мнению степной аристократии, которая противилась восстановлению городов и каким-либо уступкам покоренным народам, порицал массовое истребление местного населения. Сторонники учения о мирном господстве, ввиду сопротивления со стороны степной аристократии, должны были опираться на имущие классы подчиненных народов. Они отказались от радикального мессианизма и поддерживали местную аристократию, оседлый образ жизни, города, торговлю, ремесла и земледелие.

Победа нового политического учения способствовала тому, что в конце XIII столетия почти на всем пространстве занятом монголами установилось мирное правление. Если степной мессианизм оставил после себя миллионы убитых, пепелища и развалины, то мирное правление монголов впервые привело к соприкосновению Европы с китайской культурой.

