

## **Woman in Mongolia - Wikipedia**

Compared to other civilizations, Mongolian women had the power to influence society. Even though men were dominant in society, many turned to women in their lives for advice. While developing organizations within the Mongol Empire, Genghis Khan asked for assistance from his mother. He honored the advice women in his life offered. Genghis Khan permitted his wives to sit with him and encouraged them to voice their opinions. Because of their help, Genghis was able to choose his successor.

The Mongols considered marriage as the passage into adulthood. Before a marriage could proceed, the bride's family was required to offer "a dowry of clothing or household ornaments" to the groom's mother. To avoid paying the dowry, families could exchange daughters or the groom could work for his future father-in-law. Once the dowry was settled, the bride's family presented her with an inheritance of livestock or servants. Typically, married women of the Mongol Empire wore headdresses to distinguish themselves from the unmarried women. It is claimed that the Yassa/Zasag prohibited trade in women.

Marriages in the Mongol Empire were arranged, however Genghis Khan's later *nokoger* (literally "women friends" but seen as wives usually and later) and those of his officers were not ever paid for with any bride price, but men were permitted to practice polygamy. Since each wife had their own yurt, the husband had the opportunity to choose where he wanted to sleep each night. Visitors to this region found it remarkable that marital complications did not arise. The location of the yurts between the wives differed depending on who married first. The first wife placed her yurt to the east and the other wives placed their yurts to the west. Even though a husband remained attached to his first wife, the women were "docile, diligent, and lacked jealousy" towards one another.

After the husband had slept with one of his wives, the others congregated in her yurt to share drinks with the couple. The wives of the Mongol Empire were not bothered by the presence of the other women in their household. As a married woman, she displayed her "maturity and independence from her father" to society. The women devoted their lives to their daily tasks, which included physical work outside the household. Women worked by loading the yurts, herding and milking all the livestock, and making felt for the yurt. Along with these chores, they were expected to cook and sew for their husband, their children, and their elders.

A wife's devotion to her husband continued after his death. Remarriages during the Mongol Empire did not occur often. Instead, her youngest son or her youngest brother took care of her. However Genghis Khan had allowed remarriage of widows including the levirate.

Mongol women enjoyed more freedoms than those in their foreign vassal countries. They refused to adopt the Chinese practice of footbinding and wear chadors or burqas. The Mongolian women were allowed to move about more freely in public. Toward the end of the Mongol Empire, however, the increasing influence of Neo-Confucianism, Buddhism and Islamicization saw greater limits placed on Mongol women.

## **From World History for Us All**

In most tribes, there were no specialists other than shamans and blacksmiths. Women and men both contributed to the economy, and the division of labor by sex was not rigid. Those men who could afford it married more than one wife, each of whom had her separate household, owned property outright,

and had considerable freedom of action. Women rode, shot with bow and arrow, and hunted. They gave political advice and could rise to the rank of chief, though rarely. The senior wife had special status and respect, and her children were often favored as heirs. On campaign, wives, children, and flocks often went with the army. Women and even children could be drafted to ride on the fringes of battle to simulate larger numbers. It is unclear whether they ever took an active part in combat. The tribes were divided into nobles and commoners, and only members of noble lineages could become chiefs, though class differences were not strongly marked.

Women's position under Mongol rule was generally higher than it had been in the agricultural societies the Mongols had conquered. A woman was named provincial governor under Khubilai. Mongol women refused to adopt the Chinese custom of foot binding. Khubilai took his second wife Chabi's advice on some public issues.