

Japan Academy Prize to:

Masaaki SUGIYAMA

Professor, Graduate School of Letters,
Kyoto Universityfor *The Mongol Empire and Dai-ön Ulus**Outline of the work:*

While the Mongolian empire is renowned for its unparalleled unification of the steppe tribes of northern Eurasia under the aegis of the Mongols in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, it bequeathed no systematic description of its own history to later researchers. One reason for this is the linguistic multiplicity in the polyethnic territories that were brought under the empire's administration. Another is linked to a trend toward disintegration of the polity that was salient in the latter half of the empire. The question was how to reconstruct the total process of the Mongolian empire history from scattered patches of information and what method to use in making such an historiographic attempt. Some precursors suggested that a collation of contemporary or close-to-contemporary Persian documents with Chinese documents of the Yuan dynasty era could help fill in the blanks. To develop this method further with an eye to advancing the research would be a heavy task, however.

Dr. Sugiyama had dedicated the early years of his research to amassing the best extant texts of Persian documents pertaining to the empire's history, while at the same time obtaining a mastery of the Chinese texts of the Yuan period, which are of a more crabbed nature than those of other dynasties. Official documents are kept in a binary format of colloquial and literary styles, while bilingual Chinese-Mongolian combinations of the edicts (i.e. Chinese interlinear versions accompanying original Mongolian texts) are not uncommon.

Dr. Sugiyama's above-titled book (Kyoto University Publishing House) is the most valuable contribution to the elucidation of the empire's history. It consists of four main parts. Part 1 begins with an analysis of the primordial framework of the empire's organization that took shape in the early stage of the empire, followed by an investigation into the eventual changes that visited the empire in the middle of the thirteenth century. By collating *The Secret History* (Mongyor-un ni'ucha tobchiyan, in Mongolian) with Rašid al-Din's chronicle, *Gami' al-Tavarih*, along with some other Persian sources, Dr. Sugiyama clarified the tripartite division of the elite corps—i.e. the Central, Left, and Right Wings—which worked as the prime essentials in managing the empire's politico-military system. In campaigns of conquest, they were the sources wherefrom armies were mobilized, while in peace time generals and government administrators were chosen from among them. The working of this tripartite system could be seen in the enthronement of Činggis (alt. Chinggis, Gengis) to the title of Great Khan in 1206, and was linked closely with the enfeoffing of pastures to his kinsmen on the Mongolian plateau. Laying aside the Central Wing which was kept under Great Khan's direct jurisdiction, the Left Wing was put under the command of Činggis's brothers, while the Right Wing was placed under the sons of his principal wife. A fierce rivalry among the grandsons of Činggis for the accession to the throne of the Great Kahn in the 1260 was a sign of the loosening of this erstwhile cohesive organization. The details of Qubilai's (alt. Khubilai) victory

in this struggle, however, are hidden from view in the official records of the Chinese. Taking frequent recourse to Rashid's chronicle, Dr. Sugiyama revealed the truth of Qubilai's final victory, that it was brought about through an alliance with a group of descendant Čingghis brothers, namely the forces of the Left Wing.

Part 2 turns to the inner administration of Yeke Mongyor ulus, or China Proper, under the direct control of the Great Kahn from his home on the Mongolian plateau. First, Dr. Sugiyama investigates the construction of Dadu or latter-day Peking. He emphasizes that Peking was built based on its locational significance as a pivotal point on the seasonal circular tour of the Mongolians between their winter pasture in Mongolia and summer pasture in China. Then, he analyzes the fiefs in China Proper, which were administered by Mongolian overlords. Getting a clue from an edict issued by Babuša, (descent of Joči-Qasar, or younger brother of Činggis, who held a dukedom in China's northern Shandong Peninsula), Dr. Sugiyama provides a penetrating analysis of how and with what mechanisms the feoffees in China were governed by the Mongolian overlords.

Part 3 reconstructs the history of the Čayatai ulus (the Khanate of Chagadhai), which held both territories in Central Asia and the western periphery of China Proper, and had remained ambivalent between cooperation and dissidence in its relationship to the suzerainty of the Great Khan of Yeke Mongyol ulus until its final incorporation into the empire of Tamerlain after 1370. By combined use of the Collected Genealogies of the Royal Families of the Empire (*Mu'izzal-Ansāb*) edited under Tamerlain's reign and other relevant Chinese sources, Dr. Sugiyama provides a clear and factual account of the trajectory of the Kahnate's fate. Its binary split between the cooperation and dissidence had already existed in the middle of the thirteenth century. Under a full-scale attack by the Ming army to recover China Proper in 1368, the Kahnate was compelled to cut off the eastern part of its territory and to retreat to the remaining part in Central Asia.

Part 4 focuses on the methodological issues involved in reconstructing the empire's history. Dr. Sugiyama argues that the use of the steles carrying the edicts in bilingual formats (in Uigurian-Mongolian and Chinese, Phags-pa Mongolian and Chinese, Uigurian-Mongolian and Persian, and Tibetan and Chinese) is of effective utility in reconsidering this history. In this part, he limits himself to an analysis of the edicts in Mongolian-Chinese format, and investigates the styles and types peculiar to these documents, together with their spatial and temporal differences.

Altogether, Dr. Sugiyama's book indeed constitutes a pathbreaking contribution to advancing research into the history of the Mongolian empire. It not only has opened new horizons in historiographical methods, but also has filled a lacuna in our heretofore knowledge in this area of study.