# The Outer Limits of Steppe Power: Mongol Military Excursions in Southeast Asia

By: James A. Anderson

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**Abstract:**

During the second half of the 13th century, Mongol military forces attempted on several occasions to expand southward into Mainland and Island Southeast Asia. The Mongol inability to secure any territorial conquests in Southeast Asia was blamed in subsequent court chronicles on the perceived impact of tropical climate and local "miasmas" that weakened and sickened the Mongol armies. Examining the substitution of trade relations for military domination helps us move beyond these general tropes, regarding the limits of Mongol power emanating from the steppe region of Eurasia. This chapter includes several case studies involving Mongol encounters with Southeast Asian states to illustrate the strategy employed by the Yuan court and the difficulties faced in attempting to implement this strategy. John Herman notes that most of the local elite who elected to serve the Mongols had not held positions of authority within the Dali political order.

**Keywords:** Mongols History To 1500 | Eurasia History to 1500 | Mongolia History to 1500 | Mongols | Eurasia | Mongolia | History

**Article:**

During the second half of the 13th century, Mongol military forces attempted on several occasions to expand southward into Mainland and Island Southeast Asia. Tansen Sen argues that "(the) Chinggisid civil war that centered on Qaidu in Central Asia seems to have forced Qubilai to explore the maritime routes for military expansion, political alliances, and commercial proft."[1] These overland efforts brought mixed results for the Mongol conquerors and their local supporters, which were coordinated with maritime expeditions that exploited existing coastal trade routes connecting the coastal emporia of Champa to the Malay Peninsula and southward to Java. The Mongol navy scored several notable victories against Southeast Asian defenders, but the nature of warfare in tropical Southeast Asia and the lack of local allies undermined the Mongol advance. Eventually Yuan forces withdrew from the region, acknowledging that trade would provide the northern court

with the wealth that military conquest had failed to deliver. Trade, rather than military force, would be the manner with which the Mongol Empire maintained its intervention through most of the Southeast Asian region.
To understand better the nature of Mongol encounters with Southeast Asian states in this period, one needs to understand the basic political and economic realities of these communities. In his article introducing the general outlines of Southeast Asia, Craig Lockard wrote,

> The most populous societies lived along the coastal plains or in the river valleys where irrigated rice cultivation was possible. . . . The more thinly spread, less technologically advanced shifting cultivators who dwelled in the highlands and rainforests lived in politically-decentralized, often semi-nomadic communities. The dichotomy between lowlanders and highlanders, each with differing social, economic, political, and cultural systems, produced a situation of cores and fringes; the 'core' societies in the lowlands attempted to influence or control the 'fringe' peoples with mixed success, and the lowland states were essentially fluid spheres of influence sometimes extending into nearby fringe zones.[2]

The highland-lowland divide complicated the Mongol advance into Southeast Asia when lowland rulers would melt into the surrounding hills and mountains at the sight of the Mongol armies and use the safety of remote highland retreats to plan and coordinate their defense and eventual counterattacks.
On the eve of the Mongol conquests, Chinese trade connections emanating southward from the South China Sea (Eastern Sea) provided the maritime signposts utilized by Mongol naval expeditions in their efforts to continue the "southernization" of the Mongol Empire. In this chapter, I have included several case studies, involving Mongol encounters with Southeast Asian states to illustrate the strategy employed by the Yuan court and the difficulties faced in attempting to implement this strategy. Ultimately, much of the Southeast Asian region proved to be a "bridge too far" for Mongol forces, and it is this realization that we explore.

## DALI KINGDOM

To better understand the path taken by Qubilai's forces in their conquest of the Dali 大理 Kingdom (937–1253), located in modern-day Yunnan, one needs to look at the strategic concerns of the state that occupied the region during the Tang dynasty, the Nanzhao 南詔 Kingdom (738–937). Grant Evans argued that Nanzhao had thrived on interregional trade and that the only manner by which this kingdom could have expanded was to extend its control of the territory along the Southwestern Silk Road that supported this trade.[3] Evans quotes C.P. Fitzgerald in summarizing the strategic difficulty that confronted the Nanzhao leadership:

> (to) gain real strength beyond the narrow rice plains and valleys of Yunnan, separated as they are by great tracts of empty mountain country, (Nanzhao) must occupy permanently and then fully (colonize) and assimilate a truly rich region of heavy population.[4]

The Nanzhao's efforts to remain a unified polity in a rugged landscape that tended toward fragmentation caused the kingdom's leadership to rely even more heavily on their control of trade.

Evans argued that the Nanzhao leadership failed to fully colonize their region or expand into neighboring Sichuan and that this failure hastened the kingdom's demise.[5] As Evans wrote,

> (the Dali) Kingdom thereafter turned inward, not unlike its Buddhist kings, and became quiescent. The edges of the kingdom, made up of many different ethnic groups brought under control by the Nanzhao ruler Ge Luofeng 閣羅 鳳 (r. 748–779), gradually slipped out of its grip, and by this time the Tai were on the move.[6]

This failure to control the surrounding upland peoples played a large role in the weak defense the Dali Kingdom presented when Mongol forces converged on its political capital in the 1250s

Two years after ascending to the throne as qa'an in 1251, Möngke (1208–1259) chose his brother Qubilai (1215–1294) to develop an attack strategy to the south, avoiding the Song Army's main line of defense.[7] Qubilai and his advisers soon announced a plan to attack and defeat the Dali Kingdom, thereby bringing men and material resources through the southwest to encircle Song defenses prior to an all-out invasion of the Chinese empire. Mongol forces had sought to attack Dali in 1244 and again in 1248, in part from routes that passed through neighboring Tibet after that kingdom had surrendered to Mongol armies dispatched by Ögödei and later by Ögödei's son, Güyük (r. 1247–1248), but Dali forces under their ruler Duan Xiangxing (r. 1239–1251) and Song forces based in Sichuan thwarted these attempts.[8] In the autumn of 1253, Qubilai ordered the general, Uriyangqadai (1202–1272), the eldest son of Sübedei (1176–1248), to assemble an army of 100,000 men in the region of modern-day Henan. In the summer of 1254, the forces under Uriyangqadai were assembled in Lintao (in present-day northwest Shanxi) for training.[9] At the same time, a second Mongol military commander, Wang Dechen (1222–1259), arrived from Jiading (modern-day Leshan in Sichuan province) to join Qubilai's forces.

In autumn 1255, Uriyangqadai seized the Shanchan garrison at modern-day Kunming, taking the last Dali ruler, Duan Xingzhi (r. 1251–1253), prisoner and causing Duan's vanguard of 20,000 soldiers to surrender unconditionally. The entire Dali region was now under Mongol control, and it was with the help of certain indigenous groups that Qubilai's forces achieved their victory. According to the offcial History of the Yuan Dynasty (Yuan shi), in the same year Qubilai sent Duan Xingzhi north with his uncle Duan Fu for an official audience at the court of Möngke.[10] After Möngke received the two men, he gave the Dali ruler a golden seal to confrm his position as a Mongol vassal, and in the following year, Duan Xingzhi presented the Mongol ruler with a map of Dali. Möngke was reportedly overjoyed with this gift, and he subsequently gave Duan Xingzhi the title "Maharaja (mo he luo cuo 摩訶羅 嵯)."[11] The once-dominant Duan clan was granted a ceremonial role in the administration of Dali after the Mongol conquest, but a Mongol overseer (daruqachi, Chin. daluhuachi 達魯花赤) was appointed by Möngke to supervise the leadership of Duan Xingzhi and the conquered Dali court.[12] Numerous court appointees from the Central Asian region filled administrative roles at all levels, such as Sayyid Ajall Shams al-Din (1211–1279), who served as the Mongols' first governor of the newly created Yunnan province and who, along with his descendants and other Central Asians, brought a connection to the Islamic world through trade and cultural exchange.[13] John Herman notes that most of the local elite who elected to serve the Mongols had not held positions of authority within the Dali political order.[14]

The Mongols established commanderies throughout the formerly autonomous kingdom to displace the overarching authority of the Duan clan. According to the Yuan shi account, 100,000 troops followed the Mongol military command to the Yunnan region, where they settled in several villages south of modern Kunming.[15] Still, space remained for local self-rule, and the native clout

of the Duan was never eliminated. As Bin Yang has argued, the Mongol leadership never displaced the Duan completely, and the Mongols "relied on the Duans to contain and comfort small native chieftains, and, if necessary, to suppress local rebellions."[16] Michael C. Brose notes that Mongol control of Yunnan, "the last of [the] Mongol loyalists," did not end until 1382, when Ming founder Zhu Yuanzhang sent a force of 300,000 troops under the Muslim generals Lan Yu and Mu Ying to demand the submission of the Mongol Prince Basalawarmi, who committed suicide when confronted with this force. As Brose notes, the Ming generals were also required to subdue the Duan clan, still present in the region, and to confirm its leadership as subordinates of the Ming court.

## PAGAN

Mongol military advances had a regional impact on other areas of Mainland Southeast Asia. Bin Yang notes that the Duan clan had also been recruited to assist with the further invasions of the Burmese kingdom of Pagan (1044–1287) and the initially successful attack on the Tran rulers of the Dai Viet kingdom, about which more is written later.[17] During the reign of Pagan's final ruler, Narathihapate (r. 1256– 1287), internal and external tension began to undermine the state's foundations, and leaders of rival upland polities challenged Pagan authority from the periphery. For example, the Mon elite of Lower Burma launched a rebellion in 1273, and in 1281, Mon forces captured the coastal region of Martaban from Pagan, which became a separate state under the leadership of Wareru (r. 1287–1307).[18] In this time of unrest, the Mongols continued their advance against the smaller polities occupying modernday Southwest China, as well as the northern region of modern Myanmar. In 1271, shortly after founding the Yuan dynasty, Qubilai sent envoys to Pagan to request submission to Mongol rule, but the envoys did not receive an audience with the Pagan ruler Narathihapate, meeting instead with his ministers. Sun Laichen argues that this act of dispatching subordinates demonstrates that the Pagan ruler did not take the Yuan seriously and therefore did not bother to meet them.[19] In 1277, the Yuan court sent another diplomatic mission, including several high-ranking court officials. Despite some ambiguity in the sources, the entire mission was reportedly executed by order of the Pagan court.[20] The Mongol leadership then turned to military means of persuasion. In early 1278, Mongol forces attacked the northeast regions of Bhamo and Nga Hsaunggyan, but the troops eventually withdrew due, according to the sources, to the humid, miasmic climate. In late 1283, Mongol forces attacked again, and then in late 1285 attempted a diplomatic settlement, which failed again with the Mongol envoys likely executed. In early 1287, Yuan forces based in Yunnan directly attacked and captured the capital city of Pagan, defeated the Pagan court and extracted a promise of tribute.[21] As Sun Laichen notes, even this defeat did not cause the Pagan ruler Narathihapate to capitulate completely. He refused to visit the Yuan court in person, and from 1287 until 1332, not a single Burmese ruler would travel to the Mongol court.[22]

Mongol attacks into Southwest China and northern Southeast Asia had a deep impact on state building in the region. As Grant Evans wrote,

> (it) now seems indisputable that the Mongol destruction of the Pagan kingdom in 1287 facilitated the rise of Tai/Shan principalities in northern Burma and Thailand, and Tatsuo Hoshino argues that some eighty years later the rise of the Lao Kingdom, Lan Xang in Luang Prabang, was a direct outcome of Mongol strategy.[23]

Michael Aung-Thwin and Maitrii Aung-Thwin dispute Evans's point regarding Mongol conquest, arguing that the Mongol armies were ultimately unable to topple the Pagan state but that

> (the Mongols) did accelerate [authors' italics] the long-term trends and patterns already in progress, exacerbating them further. The resources and energy spent in the (defense) of the kingdom also exacted a heavy toll on state and society, which when combined with the already depleted treasury was a burden from which the dynasty could not recover intact.[24]

Change was already in motion for Pagan with its own inherent political weaknesses, but the destabilizing effect of the Mongol advance allowed smaller polities to gain traction and for the region's larger states to fragment into competing factions.

Trade and migration were the longest-lasting outcome of Mongol military activities in this region. As Andrew Forbes noted, Arab and South Asian Muslim traders in the early period of the maritime expansion of Islam across the Indian Ocean network into the Bay of Bengal must have visited the coasts of Arakan and the Gulf of Martaban from at least the reign of Pagan's founder Anawrahta (1044–1077).[25] It was, however, during the Mongol-appointed administration of Sayyid Ajall Shams al-Din and his son, Nasir al-Din (d. 1292), that trade and traders from overland routes originating in Inner Asia were connected to the eastern borderlands of the kingdoms occupying modern-day Myanmar.[26] Nasir al-Din had been appointed pacifcation commissioner and concurrently commander-in-chief (xuan wei shi dou yuanshuai 宣慰使都元帥) for the Yunnan Circuit,[27] and in early 1278 Qubilai ordered that he lead 10,000 troops in the first punitive expedition against Pagan.[28] Under the leadership of Sayyid Ajall Shams al-Din and his extended clan, the Yuan court had a large number of Muslim soldiers of Central Asian origin transferred to the former territory of the Dali Kingdom in western Yunnan. These troops participated in the Mongol invasions of the Pagan Kingdom during the Yuan period, and their descendants formed the basis for the modern-day Chinese Muslim population in both Yunnan and Myanmar.[29] While the Mongol military may not have caused the complete collapse of the Pagan state, the excursions shook the foundations of the Pagan political order and the movement of other peoples into the region would leave a lasting impact on post-Pagan society.

## DAI VIET KINGDOM

During the Tran 陳 (1225–1400) dynasty, the territorial integrity of Vietnam was successfully defended on three occasions (1257–1259, 1284–1285, and 1287–1288) against Mongol expansion, beginning with the campaigns that followed the Mongol conquest of the Dali Kingdom. The Mongol armies faced a very different foe in Tranera Vietnam than they did with Dali. The Dali Kingdom ft what Roshan de Silva Wijeyeratne defines as a "galactic polity"–style state organization, in turn quoting Stanley Tambiah by noting that such states "'modelled on mandala-type patterning had central royal domains surrounded by satellite principalities and provinces replicating the center on a smaller scale', while at the margin, there were 'even more autonomous tributary principalities.'"[30] As I have noted elsewhere,

> (while) the more fluid mandala state of the Dali kingdom never achieved the conditions necessary for the transition to a new political order, the Dai Viet

> kingdom progressed from its founding until the era of its confrontations with the Mongols through a period of state-building shared by the other Classical Era (800 CE–1200 CE) Southeast Asian states.[31]

The Vietnamese expelled the Mongols following their first invasion of the region, although the Mongols sacked the Tran capital at Thang Long in the attempt.[32] Qubilai desired to use the Tran kingdom as a stepping-stone into the Southeast Asian region, but the Mongols were thwarted. In late 1257, Qubilai sent a force of several thousand Mongol troops and upland Yi militia from the Dali region into Tran territory under the command of Uriyangqadai.[33] Tran forces, with native upland allies from the Sino-Vietnamese borderlands halted the Mongol military advance, which resulted in a stalemate at the frontier. Eventually, in the summer of 1259, the Mongol court ordered Uriyangqadai's forces to withdraw from Dai Viet territory to join other Mongol armies in a concerted assault on Southern Song defenses in the area of modern-day Guangxi and Guilin.

The second expedition against the Dai Viet kingdom waited until Qubilai established his own court in Daidu in 1260. Diplomatic tensions with the Tran court had been building in this period. As Kathlene Baldanza has noted, the Dai Viet kingdom's leadership had rejected as demeaning the Yuan court's attempt to appoint a daruqachi to their state, which had been one of the Yuan's 1267 "Six Duties" (liushi 六事) following their first failed invasion in 1257.[34] It may be that the Mongols also wished to prevent a joint anti-Yuan effort by Southern Song Dynasty exiles and Dai Viet. The exiled Song scholar Zheng Sixiao 鄭思肖 (1241–1318) observed that in the early Yuan "many civilian and military officials (of the fallen Song) went into exile abroad, took up official service in Champa, married into the ruling elite in Jiaozhi (Dai Viet), or left to drift abroad in distant kingdoms (諸文武臣流離海外, 或仕占城, 或婿交趾, 或別流遠國)."[35] The Tran court continued to maintain tribute relations with the Southern Song court until shortly before the dynasty finally collapsed in 1279.[36]

For all these reasons, Qubilai increased pressure on the Vietnamese Tran court. During the early 1280s, Mongol armies serving the court of Qubilai were making ever-deeper inroads along the Southeast Asian Peninsula. In 1281, when Mongol forces first threatened the ruler of Champa,[37] Indravarman V, the Tran leadership at the Dai Viet court declined requests from the Yuan to assist with these southern expeditions.[38] In the summer of 1283, Qubilai's court sent a Uyghur envoy, Ariq Qaya (1227–1286), to the Tran court with another request for troops and assistance in a military assault on Champa.[39] The new Tran emperor, Tran Nhan Tong (r. 1279– 1308), again refused to offer assistance, but instead prepared for another Mongol attack.[40] The Tran defenses were readied by the emperor's uncle Tran Quoc Tuan (1226–1300), best known to future generations by his honorific title, the Hung Dao Prince. By 1284, Mongol troops had landed on the frontier between Champa and the Dai Viet kingdom. Under the leadership of Qubilai's son Toghon, this force planned a second attack, coordinating a northward push along the coastline with another military force sweeping southward from Lang Son to invade the Vietnamese across two land borders and from the sea. Early in this second invasion, the situation looked bleak for the Viet defenders. In early 1285, the northern force crossed into Viet territory, sacking Thang Long for a second time and executing its defending general Tran Bình Trong 陳平仲 (1259–1285). The Tran court had abandoned the city prior to the Mongol assault, regrouping on their estates further out in the Red River delta.[41] At this point, Toghon's army moved north into the province of Nghe An, where the Mongols defeated a Vietnamese army under the command of General Tran Quang Khai 陳光啓 (1241–1294), the former student of historian Le Van Huu 黎文休 (1230–1322). General Tran Kien 陳鍵 (?–1285) had been left in charge of defending Nghe An; however, when faced

with this formidable invasion force, the general instead turned his services (and troops) over to the Mongol invaders.[42] Le Tac 黎崱 (dates unknown), future author of the well-known historical text An Nam chi luoc 安南志略, professed loyalty to the incoming Mongols, as did other members of the imperial clan, including Tran Van Long 陳文弄 (?–1313), the Van Chieu 文昭 marquis (hau 侯), Tran Ich Tac 陳益稷 (1254–1329), the Chieu Quoc 昭國 prince, and Tran Tu Vien 陳秀嵈, among others. Tran Ich Tac's reasons for collaborating with the invading Mongols now seem obvious, given the fact that he wished to take the throne for himself as a tributary vassal of the Yuan court.[43] The remaining collaborators may well have supported Tran Ich Tac's bid for power against the other factions within the imperial household.

The remaining Vietnamese guardians serving the Tran emperor-in-exile soon benefited from the astute leadership of General Tran Hung Dao. According to the 15th-century Complete History of the Great Viet (DVSKTT 大越史記全書), by the summer of 1285, the Yuan general Sögedü had allegedly replenished the Mongol force with some half a million men, comprised of militia from Yunnan and troops from the Champa campaigns.[44] However, the Vietnamese defenders adopted new, more effective tactics, such as "scorched earth" attacks on Mongol supply lines.[45] Yuan troops failed to supply themselves through foraging, casualties among Mongol forces increased, and the Mongol collaborators from the Tran court were suddenly on the run. Fearing for his life, Tran Kien and his supporters fed toward Daidu with Qubilai's son Toghon and his retreating armies. The Vietnamese forces soon caught up with Toghon's army in modern-day Lang Sơn. Tran Kien was killed, and 50,000 Mongol troops were captured.

Qubilai was so enraged by this defeat that his court's efforts to amass a third expeditionary force to attack the Vietnamese contributed to a postponement of a planned third invasion of Japan. In early 1288, Qubilai chose the royal defector Tran Ich Tac 陳益稷 (1254–1329) to replace the reigning king Tran Nhan Tong 陳仁 宗 (1258–1308) as the puppet "king" of a Mongol-controlled "An Nam," adopting the pejorative Tang-era title for this state.[46] The Mongol court then assembled an invasion force of 70,000 Mongol and Han troops, 500 warships, 6,000 troops from Yunnan (former Dali Kingdom territory), and 15,000 native borderlands militia.[47] The supreme commander was again Toghan, who likely wished to complete the work he started with the previous invasion effort. In the spring of 1288, the Mongol army again captured Thang Long, which they burned and looted on this occasion. Vietnamese forces fed Thang Long in disarray, but efforts to reorganize began immediately. Eventually, Tran troops cut off the Mongols' overland supply lines, while the Vietnamese naval forces scored a victory at sea in late 1287 against the Mongol feet at Van Dòn Island, causing an even greater loss of provisions to the Yuan military.[48] Toghon called for part of his forces to retreat by sea, and he chose to lead the overland withdrawal of the remaining Yuan army, which retreated to the region of the Bach Dang River. It was at this site where General Tran Hung Dao used the 10th-century local strongman Ngo Quyen's (897–944) iron-tipped stake defense of 938 to trap the remaining feet in the river at low tide for a second remarkable success.[49] The Yuan land forces were completely routed in a subsequent series of skirmishes, and Toghon, wounded by a poisoned arrow, retreated to southern China and ultimately withdrew in shame from public life.

Soon thereafter, Tran Nhan Tong sent a delegation to Daidu to present tribute and request vassal status. There is no evidence of Mongol resettlement in Vietnamese territory after the conflict's conclusion. The Vietnamese released all prisoners of war, except one leading general. When this general was finally released, Tran Hung Dao had his ship home sabotaged at sea. In 1289, the Chengdu Protectorate military commander Liu Delu 劉德祿 memorialized Qubilai with the

following request, "I wish to take a force of five thousand men to demand the surrender of the southwestern communities of the 'Eight Barbarians Militarized Region (八番順元宣慰司)' in order to invade and conquer Jiaozhi (願以五千人招降八番蠻夷, 用以進取交趾)."[50] Liu received approval from Qubilai for the plan, and in 1291 and 1293 additional invasion plans were proposed, but with the death of Qubilai in 1294, these plans were never realized.[51] After Chengzong 成宗 (Temür Öljeitü, r. 1294–1307) came to the throne, the Yuan court implemented the conciliatory policy of "great forgiveness, far and near (大肆赦宥, 無問遠近)," while the Vietnamese court too adopted a matching policy of "great forgiveness (寬宥)" regarding its northern neighbor.[52] The Dai Viet kingdom subsequently continued to act as a tributary vassal throughout the Yuan dynasty, although it and the neighboring Southeast Asian states, with the exception of Pagan Burma, all avoided the harsh demands for tribute items and tribute missions imposed by the Mongol leadership.[53]

The Mongol efforts against the Tran court were as commercially oriented as they were politically directed. Francesca Fiaschetti's suggestion that the attacks on the Dai Viet were as much efforts to seize control of Cham commercial routes as they were a strategy to gain access to the Song dynasty's "soft underbelly" is a useful alteration of the prevailing view of these campaigns.[54] This effort to dominate lucrative trade is very persuasive, given Mongol efforts elsewhere in the region.

## CHAMPA

The Mongols, having taken the Song throne in China, looked to control the sea lanes of maritime Southeast Asia, this time with their sights set on the conquest of Dai Viet's southern coastal neighbor, Champa (Zhancheng 占城). Champa is the region of modern-day Central Vietnam between Quang Binh in the north and Phan Thiet and Bien Hoa in the south. As Masaki Mukai and Francesca Fiaschetti note, both Dai Viet and Champa had maintained regular trade and tribute relations with the Song court and had attempted to maintain these relationships even as the Mongols first sought the submission of these two Southeast Asian polities.[55] When questioned by Qubilai's court, the Guangnan Western Circuit (modern-day Guangxi) Pacification (xunweishi 宣慰使) Commissioner Ma Chengwang 馬成旺 claimed confidently that he would be able to lead a force of 3,000 troops and a cavalry of 3,000 horses to victory against Champa.[56] In 1279, Qubilai appointed a trusted mixed lineage TangutMongol military commander Sögedü (Suodu 唆都, d. 1285) to the position of provincial secretary (xingsheng zuocheng 行省 左丞) in the port of Quanzhou 泉州 "to spread word of the Yuan's founding" to the various Southeast Asian kingdoms.[57] Momoki Shiro notes that the establishment of a foothold in Champa by an official of this position, entrusted with the administration of conquered territory, is evidence that the Yuan court regarded Champa as a pivotal region for the dominance of trade between the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean.[58] In 1278, Sögedü was sent to the Cham court to invest its ruler Indravarman V (r. 1257–ca. 1285) with a mandate to rule and bring Champa into tributary relations with the Mongol court. Accompanying Sögedü as envoys were Meng Qingyuan 孟慶元 and Sun Shengfu 孫勝夫, the Guangzhou pacification commissioners (Guangzhou xunweishi 廣州宣慰使).[59] Although Sögedü announced to the Yuan court that the Cham leadership was willing to accept an alliance as an "interior (within the Yuan empire) dependency" (neifu 內附) and tributary state, when he brought a "tiger tally" (hufu 虎符) to Champa to confer this status on Indravarman V, the Cham court had changed its position and was no longer willing to submit.[60] When Indravarman V refused to accept this investiture in person and allow the Yuan to use Champa as a

launching pad for naval expeditions further into Island Southeast Asia, the Mongol authorities took this diplomatic slight as a pretense for a punitive military expedition. According to the Yuan shi account, in the summer of 1282, Qubilai ordered the assembly of a feet of 100 ocean-going vessels (haichuan 海船) and 250 battleships (zhanchuan 戰船),[61] along with 5,000 soldiers called up from Southeastern China, to be placed under the leadership of Sögedü for the purpose of carrying out this expedition.[62] The large Mongol feet arrived off the coast of Champa in early 1283, capturing the capital Vijaya (modern-day Binh Dinh) in the same year, forcing the Cham king Indravarman V and his court to escape into the mountains.
Modern scholar Lo Jung-pang located the central rationale for this Mongol expedition in the following Yuan shi passage:

> The court discussed sending troops on punitive expeditions to invade Sukhothai (Xianguo 暹國), Lopburi (Luohu 羅斛), Malabar (Mabaer 馬八兒), Kaulam (Julan 俱藍), Samudra (Sumudula 蘇木都剌), among other kingdoms. (Ethnic Uighur scholar) Jialunatasi 迦魯納荅思 (d. 1314) presented a memorial to the emperor saying: "As for these various small kingdoms, of what benefit would their conquest be to us? To launch a war would be to risk the lives of our people for no useful purpose. It would be better to send envoys to advise them of the disaster [that would befall them if they do not submit] and the good fortune [they would share if they submit]. If they do not submit, it would not be too late to invade them."[63]

The decision of the court was to proceed with the control of commerce from these regions through regulating the tribute system and to make Champa a stable Mongol-friendly coastal node on this trade network. Armed entourages were sent to each of the states listed in the previous passage, as well as other trading states in southern India and Island Southeast Asia. The common transit node from all points throughout this trade network would be Champa.[64] Geoff Wade contends that Arab and Persian traders operating in the South China Sea could have been the managers of trade from several of the Cham polities, gaining access to commodities from Africa, the Persian Gulf, as well as Island Southeast Asia.[65] In this manner, the Mongol world of the late 13th century attempted to merge the Indian Ocean world that had already for centuries extended along the southernmost reaches of Eurasia. Tributary relations, however, did not develop easily between Champa and the Yuan court. As Lo notes, envoys from Daidu in the summer of 1282 had been detained by Cham authorities, an act that had caused Qubilai Qa'an to order a punitive expedition.[66] The Cham ruler and his entourage remained in the mountains for two years, and they refused to negotiate with Yuan envoys dispatched to speak with them. The Chams also executed two of the Yuan envoys they had captured earlier and 100 of these envoys' retainers.[67] The Mongols soon learned that the Cham ruler had issued calls for assistance to the courts of the Dai Viet, Angkor (Zhenla 真臘), and Java (Dupo 闍婆), and that the Chams had no intention of surrendering to the Yuan forces.[68] Sögedü's army was running low on supplies, and the Yuan court was preoccupied with a planned third invasion of Japan, so the Yuan soldiers were forced in the summer of 1284 to clear land and plant rice for their own survival while waiting for reinforcements. It was not until the spring of 1285 that a relief expedition was sent by the Yuan court to Champa. When the replacement forces arrived, they discovered that Sögedü's camp outside of the Cham capital had been burned to the ground by Cham prisoners of war after Sögedü had led most of his forces north to take control of

the Tran prefectures of Thuan Chau 順州 and Hoa Chau 化州 and join Mongol forces assembling for the second invasion of the Dai Viet kingdom.

The Cham ruler Indravarman V had still refused to submit to Mongol authority, which enraged Qubilai, who dispatched another army to attack Champa from the north through Dai Viet territory. In 1285, the Cham prince and military commander (and future ruler Jaya Simhavarman III, r. 1288–1307) Che Man led a successful assault on the Mongol forces still present and drove them from northern Champa. The Mongol leader Sögedü had already memorialized the Yuan court with a plan to seize the Dai Viet kingdom and use this territory as an access point to the other polities of Mainland Southeast Asia and southwestern China. This successful Cham military move played a significant role in prompting the second Mongol invasion of the Dai Viet, which ended with the death of Sögedü and many of his men, described earlier in greater detail. After the third attempted invasion of Dai Viet in 1287, interest in occupying Cham territory largely subsided. The network of coastal entrepot polities that comprised "Champa" extended from Indrapura (modern-day Da Nang) to the region near Tuy Hoa at the mouth of the Da Rang River, which comprised a long stretch of coastline.[69] The Mongols could not control the region territorially, although trade continued with one or another of the ports throughout this period. Cham under Jaya Simhavarman III and Vietnamese Tran forces briefly allied to defend against additional Mongol invasions, but the alliance crumbled shortly before the decline of the Yuan dynasty.[70]

## JAMBI-PALEMBANG (MALAYU)-JAVA

Mongol interest in Island Southeast Asia was deeply influenced by this region's pivotal importance in connecting points of long-distance trade across the Indian Ocean networks to southern Chinese ports. At the center of this trade were maritime empires, the most prominent of which in the pre-Mongol era was the Srivijaya 三 佛齊 Empire, which functioned in many ways like its inshore neighbors. Far-fung maritime connections caused Srivijaya to become embroiled in a regional rivalry with its South Asian rival the Chola Empire, but its economic base remained fixed on the upland region, supported by ties Srivijaya leaders maintained with local chieftains. Hall and other scholars noted that

> (while) a royal navy of maritime sojourners based at the Srivijaya port who had sworn their alliance maintained the capital's position as the dominant port on the Sumatra coast, a network of ritualized alliances with its hinterland tribesmen allowed a flow of goods from the interior to the ports to sustain the port's resident community as well as provide them with desirable commodities for export – giving Srivijaya its economic and thus it political strength.[71]

The Javanese defeat of Srivijaya allowed for a shift eastward of the region's center of economics and political power with the Singhasari kingdom (1222–1293), followed by the more expansive Majapahit kingdom (1293–ca. 1520s), marking the growth and consolidation of East Javanese (zhaowa 爪哇) power and influence. As Thomas Hunter notes,

> Wisnuwardhana's rule (1248–68 CE) appears to have marked the beginning of a reunifcation of East Java, an effort consolidated by his son, (Kertanagara) (1268–92 CE), who first established his control over the region, then went on to ensure

> Javanese hegemony over the all-important trade routes of the archipelago with his campaign to ensure the fealty of the Malay states of coastal Sumatra.[72]

The Singhasari court sent an expedition to the Jambi-Palembang region in 1275 in an attempt, some scholars argue, to fend off the Mongol advance.[73] Kertanegara had consolidated control over the spice trade coming from the Moluccan Archipelago, and he wanted to keep control of this section of the Maritime Silk Road and keep out Mongol encroachment. In 1279, a small Mongol feet carrying envoys who sought Javanese submission to Mongol authority was driven back by Javanese naval forces, angering Qubilai's court.[74] In 1282, Meng Qingyuan and Sun Shengfu, Yuan envoys earlier sent to Champa, were dispatched in another diplomatic mission to Java. After this cordial ambassadorial effort failed, Qubilai sent his envoy Meng Qi to Kertanegara's court to demand that Javanese leadership submit to Mongol control. Kertanegara responded by ordering that the Mongol envoy be branded on the face and expelled from his kingdom.[75] David Bade has noted that Qubilai Qa'an's desire to bring skilled artisans to his court and for the Mongol Empire to have unfettered access to Southeast Asian trade were primary drivers in the push to control Java.[76] We have already examined how the network of trade from the region around Java north across the Malay Peninsula to coastal Mainland Southeast Asia was interconnected in its economic exchange and that upland access to trade items was as important as control of the coastal ports. These factors played important roles in how reactions to the Mongol advance were handled.

Tensions between the Mongol leadership and Kertanegara's court were manifested in a series of aggressive moves that culminated in the 1292 Mongol naval invasion of Singhasari.[77] Qubilai's forces consisted of 20,000 men, 1,000 ships, and a year's supply of provisions.[78] Kertanegara's forces had been dispatched to Champa and along the Malay Peninsula to prevent a direct encounter with the Mongols and to urge an allied response from leaders in this region. Although there is no evidence that the Javanese and Mongols clashed in Champa, his army's departure also emboldened his political rivals and following an internal power struggle, Kertanegara was killed and power was transferred to his son-in-law, Raden Vijaya.[79] After initially cooperating with the Mongol invaders, Raden Vijaya convinced most of the Mongol forces to attack and kill the rival, who had murdered Kertanegara, and for part of the Mongol army to accompany Raden Vijaya to the coastal village of Majapahit. On route to Majapahit, the ruler set an ambush for his Mongol escort, and he had all the troops captured and killed.[80] The few remaining Mongols withdrew from the region, the great Javanese maritime empire of Majapahit (1293–1527) was established, and the greatest reach of Mongol military power was confirmed.

Military conquest was not the greatest legacy of the Mongols in Island Southeast Asia. The extent to which trade under the Mongols was present in the region following these attempted territorial conquests may be viewed through the archeological records. Leong Sau Heng noted that in an archeological site near the modern village of Pengkalam Bujang located in the northwestern part of Peninsular Malaysia, over 10,000 shards of Song- and Yuan-period ceramics were found, along with Southeast Asian earthenware and Middle Eastern glassware.[81] This ancient port connected goods from the South China Sea (Eastern Sea) network with the Indian Ocean trade network, and it provided the Yuan elite with access to trade items from distant mercantile centers, even though the region remained beyond direct political administration by the Mongol leadership.

The Mongol expansion elsewhere in Southeast Asia was more diplomatic and trade oriented, and, for that reason, more successful, than the efforts mentioned earlier.[82] Following a period of conflict, the northern Thai polities of Chiang Mai and Chiang Hung established peaceful tributary relations with the Mongol court, with Chiang Hung sending six tribute missions between 1315 and

1347.[83] Despite unrest caused by Kertanegara's struggle with the Mongols, the tiny 13th-century maritime kingdom of Malayu Dharmasraya on the Malay peninsula engaged in peaceful tributary relations with Daidu,[84] which stimulated additional trade of the sort noted in the aforementioned shipwreck.

## CONCLUDING POINTS

The Mongol inability to secure any territorial conquests in Southeast Asia was blamed in subsequent court chronicles on the perceived impact of tropical climate and local "miasmas" that weakened and sickened the Mongol armies. Examining the substitution of trade relations for military domination helps us move beyond these general tropes, regarding the limits of Mongol power emanating from the steppe region of Eurasia. The East Asian system that the Mongols controlled during the 13th and 14th centuries became more actively interconnected through trade with a maritime network that spanned Eurasia. The central node of this growing trade network was Island Southeast Asia. As Tansen Sen notes, Java in the 13th century took a central role in supplying South Asian goods to the East Asian market, "the Chinese eventually also took on the role of tax collectors in Java . . . and became involved in Indian Ocean commerce."[85] John Chaffee writes that "(because) of internecine Mongol conflicts on the continent in the late thirteenth century, the sea route to western Asia gained strategic as well as economic importance, since it connected (Qubilai) to his allies in the Persian Il-Khanate."[86] Yuan-period trade would come to be dominated by Muslim traders, so such connections proved to be vital.[87] Derek Heng concludes that the fiscal administrators of Yuan-period China depended much more on the import of foreign goods than was the case under the Song.[88] Chaffee moderates Heng's conclusion with the following point:

> lest we imagine the Mongols to be precursors to Adam Smith, we should remember that they were warriors and empire-builders first and foremost, who over the course of their conquests had developed a particular approach to trade and traders that differed dramatically from that of previous dynasties.[89]

The Mongol conquests in Southeast Asia may have been initiated with military or diplomatic goals in mind, but the result of Yuan-period interactions in this region corresponded with, and stimulated in many cases, greater trade contact and commercial exchange. The regions targeted by Mongol forces also largely correspond to the "classical states" that emerged around the first millennium CE with political centers located in what is today Cambodia, Myanmar, Java, Sumatra, and Vietnam.[90] These states were tested in their confrontations with Mongol armies, and through these tests there emerged stronger, centralized political orders that would strongly influence the next period of state-building in both Mainland and Island Southeast Asia. However, the thread that joined these states with other regions of Eurasia was a new web of cultural and commercial ties stimulated by the Mongol leadership's desire to facilitate both overland and maritime long-distance trade. Pondering the outcome of the Mongol intervention in Southeast Asia, Qubilai is recorded in the Yuan shi as asking, "who benefits from force?"[91] The answer appears to be the Mongol legacy in the region.

# NOTES

[1] Sen 2006, 324.
[2] Lockard 1995, 14.
[3] Evans 2014, 244.
[4] Fitzgerald 1972, 58.
[5] Evans 2014, 244.
[6] Evans 2014, 244.
[7] For a more detailed account of the Mongol conquest of Dali, see Anderson 2015, 106–134.
[8] Li 1988, 640. See also Duan 2003, 66–67.
[9] Rossabi 1994, 24.
[10] YS 97: 3910. Duan 2003, 67.
[11] YS 97: 3910. Duan 2003, 67.
[12] Grousset 1970, 284. See also Brose 2015, 135–155.
[13] Petersen 2018, 39.
[14] Petersen 2018, 39.
[15] YS 121: 2977. PRC data from early in the 1980s, prior to mass migrations associated with the reform era, indicated that more than 5,000 "Yunnan Mongols" still lived in the region. Schwarz 1984, 100.
[16] Yang 2009, 116.
[17] Yang 2009, 93–94. See also Sun 2015, 193–231.
[18] Aung-Thwin 1985, 195.
[19] Sun 2015, 203.
[20] Sun 2015, 203–204.
[21] Sun 2015, 205.
[22] Sun 2015, 205–206.
[23] Evans 2014, 247.
[24] Aung-Thwin and M. Aung-Thwin 2012, 105.
[25] Khan 1936, 409–14; Gaffari 1954, 23–24; Tibbetts 1979, 71–75. Cited in Forbes 1986, 385.
[26] Forbes 1986, 385.
[27] YS 97: 3067.
[28] YS 17: 222. Phayre 1969, 53–56; Shin 1969, 100–101. Cited in Forbes 1986, 385.
[29] Forbes 1986, 385.
[30] Tambiah 1992, 173. Cited in Wijeyeratne 2014, 579.
[31] Anderson 2015, 111.
[32] YS 209: 1.
[33] YS 97: 2981. Anderson 2015, 121.
[34] Baldanza 2016, 19–20; Fiaschetti 2017, 89, 93.
[35] Sixiao 1894, 70. Cited in Huang 2010, 95.
[36] Anderson 2015, 122.
[37] Hardy et al. 2009, 45–55.
[38] Anderson 2015, 122.
[39] Anderson 2015, 123.
[40] Fiaschetti 2017, 92.
[41] Anderson 2015, 125.
[42] Tran 1920, 117.
[43] Poliacop 1996, 216–217.
[44] Ngô 1993, 5: 359.
[45] Anderson 2015, 126.
[46] In 679, during the early Tang dynasty, the Han period name for modern-day northern Viet Nam Giao Chỉ (Jiaozhi 交趾) had been changed to An Nam 安南 (the Pacifed South), indicating the position, according to the Chinese leadership, that Vietnam occupied within the Tang Empire. See Anderson 2014, 22.
[47] Anderson 2015, 127.
[48] Anderson 2015, 128.
[49] Lê 2000, 147.
[50] YS 15: 320.

[51] Anderson 2015, 130.
[52] YS 209: 4650.
[53] Sun 2015, 228.
[54] Fiaschetti 2018, 1119–1135.
[55] Mukai and Fiaschetti 2020, 89.
[56] YS 210: 4660.
[57] YS 129: 3152.
[58] Momoki 2011, 127.
[59] YS 17: 235. See also Lo 2012, 285.
[60] YS 97: 4660.
[61] These battleships constructed under orders by the Mongol court, initially for use against Japan, but later committed to the invasion of Vietnam, included a variety of vessels, as Randall Saski notes, tower ships (楼船), combat junks (zhanjian 戦艦), sea-hawk ships (haigu 海鶻), covered swoopers (mengchong 蒙衝), fying barques (zouge 走舸), patrol boats (youting 遊艇). See Sasaki 2015, 34. Translations of the terms frst appeared in Wang et al. 1971, 686.
[62] YS 12: 243–244. Cited in Mukai and Fiaschetti 2020, 89.
[63] Translation somewhat revised from Jung-pang Lo's translated passage in Lo 2012, 286. Original passage found in YS 97: 3260. The original passage is as follows: "朝議興兵討暹國、羅斛、馬八兒、俱藍、蘇木都剌諸國，迦魯納答思奏:「此皆蕞爾之國，縱得之，何益?興兵徒殘民命，莫若遣使諭以禍福，不服而攻，未晚也."
[64] Lo 2012, 286.
[65] Wade 2011, 162.
[66] Lo 2012, 287.
[67] Lo 2012, 288. See YS 917: 4662.
[68] YS 917: 4663.
[69] Hardy 2009, 46–47. Momoki Shiro has argued for the term "Mandala Champa" to depict more clearly the network of ten possible polities engaged in coastal trade described collectively in Song-period Chinese sources. See Momoki 2011, 131.
[70] Schweyer and Piammettawat 2011, 37.
[71] Hall 2011, 19. See also Andaya 2008, 77–81.
[72] Hunter 2007, 28.
[73] Andaya 2008, 59.
[74] YS 47: 227.
[75] Rossabi 1994, 219.
[76] Quoting Rossabi 1994, 448; Bade 2013, 9.
[77] Bade 2013, 280.
[78] Rossabi 1994, 219.
[79] Hall 2011, 256.
[80] Rossabi 1994, 220.
[81] Heng 1990, 27.
[82] I wish to give special thanks to Francesca Fiaschetti for highlighting this comparative point in an October 2019 email correspondence.
[83] Yian and Miksic 2016, 456.
[84] Yian and Miksic 2016, 483.
[85] Christie 1998, 369. Cited in Sen 2014, 43.
[86] Chaffee 2018, 13. See also Ciocîltan 2012, 35; Kalra 2018, 82.
[87] Prange 2019, 210.
[88] Heng 2009, 67. Cited in Chaffee 2018, 126.
[89] Chaffee 2018, 126.
[90] Lockard 1995, 8.
[91] YS 210: 4656. The original text is 至若用兵，夫誰所好.

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*YS*, See List of Abbreviations.

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