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In the 13th century Chinggis Khan conquered Mongolia as a part of his Eurasian empire. After Khan's death the empire returned to its original borders after Khan's death and later came under the rule of China. In 1921, the Soviet Union helped Mongolia gain its independence from China and was then under the political power of the ex-Communist Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP). With a gradual surrender of power, the Democratic Union Convention (DUC) gained power in 1996 and in 2000, when parliamentary elections returned to Mongolia. The nation's capital is the city of Ulaanbaatar.

The country is located in Northern Asia and is landlocked between China and Russia. It is at the geographic coordinates 46 00 North (of the equator) and 105 00 East (of the Prime Meridian). The country is a little smaller than the state of Alaska. It has both a desert and continental climate with drastic daily and seasonal temperature changes. The terrain varies as well, with the west and southwestern parts of the country, the south-central area making up the Gobi Desert, and the remainder being grassy steppe and large semi-desert and desert plains. The natural resources of the region include oil, copper, nickel, tin, tungsten, phosphates, molybdenum, zinc, gold, silver, iron, and fluorspar. The area is known for its weather condition known as *zud*, which is a harsh winter climate as well as dust storms, drought, and fires in the grasslands and forest regions.

In Mongolia, farming and herding accounts for 42% of the economy. All services combined account for 29% of economic opportunities. Inter-national trade (14%), manufacturing (6%), public sector enterprises (5%), and mining (4%) create the remaining factors of the national economy.

Ethnic groups in Mongolia are about 95% Mongolian, and almost 5% Turkic. There is a small amount, less than one-tenth of a percent, of Russians as well. About half of the country's population practices the Buddhist Lamaist faith, 40% of the country practices no religion, Shamanist and Christians combined is about 6%, and about 4% of Mongolians practice the Muslim faith. 90% of people in Mongolia speak Khalkha Mongol and 10% combined speak the Turkic and Russian languages.

The country has a mixed parliamentary government and a presidential election. There are 21 provinces and one municipality. The legal system blends aspects of Soviet, United States, and German systems that combine civil codes and case-precedents. The constitution is ambiguous on legislative acts' judicial reviews. Universal suffrage is granted at the age of 18 years-old. The unicameral State Great Hural contains 76 seats and elections are for a four-year term filled by popular elections. There is a Supreme Court established, but few lower court decisions are overturned .

Mongolians are known for their hospitable treatment of their guests. In the summer, dairy products are offered to guests, and in winter meats are offered, following tradition and customs. When not at home, most Mongolians will leave their residence, of ger, unlocked, to welcome in travelers to rest and also leave treats on the table for guests to enjoy. The entrance to the family ger always faces to the south. For over a thousand years, the structure is made of wood lashed together with leather thongs. These are then covered by felt. The home is easy to erect and dismantle. The entire ger, its furnishings, and the stove can be carried on three camels or pulled by yaks upon wagons. The ger is small, but provides enough space

for the family, is well-ventilated, and is wind resistant.

The growing season in Mongolia is short, and plays a secondary role to animal husbandry. Providing meat, transportation, wool, and dairy products, the animals most commonly depended on by Mongolians include cattle (including yaks), sheep, goats, camels, and horses. Horses are the most valued of the animals. Mongolians are one of the few cultures remaining in the world that have a horse-based culture.

As is the case in most nomadic cultures, families move their herds to grazing grounds that their clans have been using for generations. All family members have daily work responsibilities and one person's work is as equally important as everyone else's work. Men usually take care of the herds, hunt, and make the saddles, weapons, and harnesses. Women milk the animals, cook, make clothing, and care for the children. It is also a part of the culture to trade with surrounding civilizations for items that Mongolians do not produce themselves, including grain, silk, rice, tea, and cotton .

Works Cited

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