



Where do Mongolians live? (图)

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Today, there are over six million Mongolians in the world, i.e. people who speak the Mongolian language. They mainly live in three neighboring countries: two million in Mongolia, 3.5 million in China, and half a million in Russia.

As for Mongolia proper, the population is rather homogeneous, with Mongol speaking people constituting 95% of the total population. Among them the Khalkha Mongols (77.5 %) have best preserved their language, traditions and customs.

In China, the largest contingent of Mongolians (2.5 million) lives in the Autonomous Region of Inner Mongolia. There are also separate sprinklings of Mongolian ethnic groups in the provinces of Xinjiang, Jilin, Liaoning, Heilongjiang, Qinghai and as faraway as Yunnan. Historically, the origin of most Chinese Mongolians dates back to the days of Mongolian domination over China in mid-13th century when Khubilai Khan, Chinggis Khan's grandson, founded the Yuan Empire with Khanbaliq (now Beijing) as its capital.

The Dunxian, Poan, Tu or Mongour minorities are also descendants of medieval Mongolian warriors or settlers from the Great Steppe. In the south of China where it borders on Vietnam, live so-called Yunnan Mongolians whose origin dates back to the Mongols' military campaign in the countries of Southeast Asia. From 1253 a large Mongolian cavalry detachment was stationed there.

Representatives of two large Mongolian ethnic groups live in Russia. Both have administrative-territorial autonomy as republics. One is the Buryats (353,000) who settled in the Baikal and Trans Baikal steppe and taiga regions of Siberia in 13th century. The other is the Kalmyks (156,000), descendants of the oldest Oirat clan who moved in early 17th century from the high mountain Western Mongolia to the flat lower reaches of the Volga River. In 1921-1925, some of Kalmyks emigrated to France, and today about one thousand of them live there. Nearly two thousand Mongolians live in USA, mainly Kalmyks and Inner Mongolians, in ethnic pockets around Philadelphia, New Jersey, Patterson and other cities.

To give the total picture, a small community of 40,000 Mongolian-speaking herders living in Afghanistan should be mentioned. These include Char and Khazar whose origin dates back from Il Khanid dynasty. Their state was founded in the second half of 13th century by Khulagu, Chinggis Khan's grandson, on the territory of what is now Iran, Iraq, TransCaucasia and Turkmenia. Mongols living now in the suburbs of Kabul and in the country's west and east parts are descendants of Mongolians who at one time founded the Empire of Great Mogols in India.

From history we know that after seizing new lands, the medieval Mongols settled in various regions of the vast Empire and were then assimilated to become part of the people they had conquered.

It is said that at the time of the rise of the Mongolian state in the early 13th century, they numbered 44 tumen (one tumen = 10,000) in Mongolia proper. A little over a century later the figure was only ten tumen- 6 eastern and 4 western.

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