Hi, I’m Mr. FOshei; this is crash course world history and today we’re going to discuss…wait for it…THE MONGOLS!!!

So you probably have a picture of the Mongols in your head, Yes; that’s the picture: brutal bloodthirsty, swarthy, humorously mustachioed warriors riding the plains, wearing fur, eating meat directly off the bone, saying bar bar bar bar bar.

In short, we imagine the Mongol empire as stereotypically barbarian. And that’s not entirely wrong. But if you have been reading recent world history textbooks like we here at Crash Course you might have a different view of the Mongols, one that emphasizes the amazing speed and success of their conquests – how they conquered more land in 25 years than the Romans did in 400. How they controlled more than 11 million contiguous square miles. And you have may even read that the Mongols basically created nations like Russia and even Korea. One historian has even claimed that the Mongols “smashed the feudal system and created international law.” Renowned for their religious tolerance, the Mongols, in this view, created the first great free trade zone, like a crazy medieval Eurasian NAFTA” And that’s not entirely wrong either.

Stupid truth, always resisting simplicity.

**Introduction: (Theme Music)**

So remember herders? We talked about them back in episode one as an alternative to hunting and gathering or agriculture. Here are the key things to remember:

1. Nomads are not jack Kerouac. They don’t just go on like random road trips. They migrate according to climate conditions so they can feed their flocks.
2. Nomads don’t generally produce manufactured goods which means they need to trade, so they almost always live near settle people.
3. Because they generally live close to nature and in harsh conditions, pastoralists tend to be tougher than diamond-plated differential calculus. Like, think of the Huns, or the Xiongnu. Or the Mongols.

Okay seriously, that enough of that, back to me. I am the star of this show NOT THE MONGOLS.

Hi, sorry about that.

Right, so one last thing:

1. Pastoral people tend to be more egalitarian, especially where women are concerned. Paradoxically when there’s less to go around, humans tend to share more, and when both men and women must work for the social order to survive, there tends to be less patriarchal domination of women. Although Mongol women rarely went to war. I can’t tell your gender. I mean you got the pants but then you also have the floopity flop, so…That’s the technical term, by the way. I’m a historian.

If you had to choose a pastoral nomadic group to come out of central Asia and dominate the world, you probably wouldn’t have chosen the Mongols. Because for most of the history we’ve been discussing, they just hung out in the foothill bordering the Siberian forest, mixing herding and hunting, quietly getting really good at archery and riding horses.

Also the Mongols were much smaller than other pastoral groups like the Tattars or the Wigars but not to get too much into Great Man History on you or anything, but the reason the Mongols came to dominate the world really started with one guy, Genghis Khan.

Let’s go to the Thought Bubble.

The story goes that Genghis or Chingus [?] Khan was born around 1162 with the name Temujin