

Name _____

Date _____

The Mongols and Genghis Khan

The Mongols were herdsmen that originally lived north of the Gobi desert and south of the Siberian forests. Prior to 1200, the Mongols lived in small groups that were led by one chief, or khan. The Mongols lived in portable dwellings called “ger.”

Near 1200, one Mongol named Temujin became khan over several families. He was a vassal to Ong Khan. Ong Khan was the leader of one of the better organized Mongol clans. Temujin joined Ong Khan in a fight against the Tartars. After their successes, Ong Khan made Temujin his adopted son and heir. Ong Khan’s biological son, Senggum, was displeased by this action and planned to assassinate Temujin. Temujin had many people that were loyal to him, and they defeated those that were loyal to Senggum.

In 1206, Temujin took the title of Universal Leader, which translates to Genghis Khan. This is the name that he is typically known by. Genghis Khan’s subjects believed they were favored by the gods. They believed they were successful in war because Genghis Khan was the rightful master of the entire world. Genghis Khan improved the military, and he disbanded and tribes that were not loyal to him.

Additionally, Genghis Khan created a body of law. Previously, kidnapping of women was a common practice, and it led to fighting amongst the Mongols. In fact, as a teen, Temujin’s wife, Borte, was kidnapped. He devoted himself to her rescue. Once he became Genghis Khan, he outlawed the kidnapping of women. He also made a law that said that no woman could be sold into marriage.

Animal theft was also a problem for the Mongols. Genghis Khan made this a capital offense. He also regulated hunting, which made food more available for everyone. He also introduced record keeping to the Mongols.

In addition to his laws and other advances, Genghis Khan wanted to secure his borders. Genghis Khan formed an alliance with the Uighurs to secure his southern border. Genghis Khan’s daughter married Uighur Khan to firm up this alliance.

In the north, Genghis Khan needed money to pay troops to secure the border. As a result, he attacked the farmers and herders in northwestern China. Genghis Khan and his men were outnumbered, so they learned better tactics, such as cutting supply lines. In 1210, Genghis Khan won the recognition as overlord in this area.

In 1210, the ruling dynasty of northern China, the Jin dynasty, demanded that Genghis Khan and the Mongols submit to their authority. Genghis Khan chose to go to war with them rather than to submit. The Jin dynasty had a good army, but their efforts were divided because they were also warring with other peoples. As a result, the emperor of the Jin dynasty eventually recognized Mongol authority and paid tribute to Genghis Khan.

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The Mongols and Genghis Khan (Cont'd)

After this, Genghis Khan returned to Mongolia, but it was not the end of fighting for the Mongols. Genghis Khan wanted trade and goods for his people. A Mongol caravan of several hundred merchants was formed. As they approached the Khwarezmid Empire, the sultan there said that there were spies in the caravan. Genghis Khan had sent envoys into the empire. The sultan killed the chief of the envoys and burned the beards of the others, then sent them back to the Mongols. Genghis Khan sent his army westward in response. He warred with the smaller towns in the sultan's empire and frightened many into surrender. Those who resisted or refused to surrender were killed as an example to others. Genghis Khan pushed further into the sultan's empire. He conquered lands in Afghanistan and Persia. While fighting in Persia, Genghis also sent Mongols to fight in Azerbaijan and Armenia.

By 1225, Genghis Khan returned to Mongolia. At this point in time, he ruled everything between the Caspian Sea and Beijing. Genghis Kahn declared freedom of religion in these lands to prevent fighting as a result of religion. He also created a pony express system and sought to keep order. The Mongols believed he was the greatest man of all time. To the Mongols, he was known as the Holy Warrior.

It is said that Genghis Khan fell off of his horse and died at the age of sixty-five while leading the fight against the Tangut. His third son, Ogedei, became Khan after his death.

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The Mongols and Genghis Khan Questions

Multiple Choice:

1. The Mongols were:
 - a. herdsmen
 - b. knights
 - c. scientists
 - d. architects

2. Mongols lived in small groups that were led by one:
 - a. master
 - b. executive officer
 - c. khan
 - d. supervisor

3. In 1206, Temujin took the title of:
 - a. President
 - b. Captain
 - c. Admiral
 - d. Universal Leader

Fill In:

4. By 1225, Genghis Khan ruled everything between the Caspian Sea and _____.
5. Genghis Khan formed an alliance with the _____ to secure his southern border.
6. Genghis Khan outlawed the kidnapping of _____.
7. Mongols lived in portable dwellings called _____.

True or False:

- ___ 8. Genghis Khan made animal theft a capital offense.
- ___ 9. Genghis Khan took measures to secure the borders of his people.
- ___ 10. The emperor of the Jin dynasty never recognized Mongol authority, nor paid tribute to Genghis Khan.

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The Mongols and Genghis Khan Answers

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