

Genghis Khan Quotes

"I am the punishment of God...If you had not committed great sins, God would not have sent a punishment like me upon you."

"It is not sufficient that I succeed - all others must fail."

"The greatest happiness is to scatter your enemy, to drive him before you, to see his cities reduced to ashes, to see those who love him shrouded in tears, and to gather into your bosom his wives and daughters."

"Heaven grew weary of the excessive pride and luxury of China... I am from the Barbaric North. I wear the same clothing and eat the same food as the cowherds and horse-herders. We make the same sacrifices and we share.. our riches. I look upon the nation as a new-born child and I care for my soldiers as though they were my brothers."

"If unable to abstain from drinking, a man may get drunk three times a month; if he does it more than three times he is culpable; if he gets drunk twice a month it is better; if once a month, this is still more laudable; and if one does not drink at all what can be better? But where can I find such a man? If such a man were found he would be worthy of the highest esteem."

Genghis Khan: The Feared Warrior (Informative Essay)

Genghis Khan was born around 1162 in Mongolia. He grew up in a hostile world, where war between rival clans was brutal. His father was a Mongol ruler. Genghis Khan was raised to be a warrior and great military leader. Among the lessons he learned was to take any possible advantage over his enemies. This included letting his rivals know just how powerful his forces were. He also let them know how brutal and merciless he could be to his foes.

Genghis Khan applied these tactics in his life as a warrior. When Genghis Khan was nine, a rival clan, the Tartars, killed his father. Around 1205 he avenged his father's murder by wiping out the Tartars in battle. He ordered that all men taller than the wheels of an ox cart be killed, which left only women and children alive. The women and girls were enslaved. Their settlement was destroyed. His purpose in this battle was twofold. First he hoped to get rid of anyone who challenged his leadership. Second he wanted to influence the minds of the children, making them become warriors loyal to Genghis Khan. Early historians from the 1100s and 1200s wrote with horror about the tactics Genghis Khan used. Even today historians know that he was a brutal, but effective, leader.

This period of time, the early 1200s, was marked by Genghis Khan working to unite the Mongol tribes. Some leaders in history have united people by allowing them freedom and rights. This was not the case with Genghis Khan. He made the tribes of Mongolia come together, but he was ruthless in his approach. To create a united Mongolia, he killed the rulers of all the tribes, so there would be no one left to challenge his rule. With their leaders dead, many tribesmen offered their loyalty to Genghis Khan, likely because they feared their own death if they were to disagree with him. Genghis Khan used fear and intimidation to create a united Mongolia. By making threats and following through with them, Genghis Khan used people's fear and successfully waged psychological warfare.

Creating Fear in Asia

By 1206 Genghis Khan had united the tribes of Mongolia under his rule. With a large fighting force, Genghis Khan was ready to expand his rule. He carefully selected generals whom he knew would remain loyal to him. Then he turned beyond his borders to add more territory to his kingdom. This involved even more brutal tactics of intimidation. For example he and his armies attacked and leveled the Tangut kingdom in northwest China using the tactics of a siege.

A siege involves cutting off the enemy's supplies to starve them. To further frighten the weakened population, the Mongols attacked the Tangut using military machinery like catapults and flame-throwers. When the Tangut still did not surrender, their city was burned, their buildings were destroyed, and most of their people were slaughtered. Word of Genghis Khan's brutal tactics spread, and so did the fear they inspired. After conquering the Tangut, Genghis Khan conquered the Jin kingdom in northern China. His attack on the Chinese kingdoms lasted about 20 years, until he withdrew to Mongolia in 1223.

During those years, the people of northern China lived in fear of Genghis Khan's advancing army. His troops did not just conquer people; they destroyed the way people lived and impacted every aspect of their life. His troops burned cities that refused to surrender. Genghis Khan's armies destroyed irrigation projects and ruined fields so the people would have no food. He forced the Chinese people to serve as the forward troops, making them fight their own people. He used his methods to affect the Chinese psyche and create a culture of fear.

Other Warfare Tactics

Genghis Khan used other methods to wage psychological warfare as well. Before a battle it was very common for the Mongols to send out scouts. Their job was to determine the strength of their opposition and to spread stories about Genghis Khan's violent conquests. He would then send out soldiers to make a deal: surrender or die. While his opponents had the chance to think about their options, Genghis Khan's troops would lead them to believe that they did not stand a chance against the Mongol forces.

When the Mongol warriors traveled, they dragged large objects behind their horses to create dust storms. The dust storms made the advancing troops appear to be much larger than they were. Genghis Khan ordered his soldiers to burn hundreds of extra fires at night, which also made the armies appear larger. Mongol soldiers fired arrows with a small hole in them, which made the arrows whistle as they traveled through the air. The whistling sound was intended to terrify the opponent. These tactics were psychological: they inspired fear in his enemies in order to gain an advantage.

Even after his death, Genghis Khan's generals used other methods to both destroy their enemies and put fear in the hearts of those they wished to conquer. In 1236 one of his great generals, Subotai, began a campaign to take over territory in Russia. He used speed and surprise to destroy enemy cities quickly and thoroughly. In 1238 Subotai and his troops sacked 12 walled cities in only 60 days. In doing so, he made sure that nearby towns knew of the Mongols' massive destructive force. The level of destruction also kept enemies from reorganizing to fight back. In addition the Mongol military also pursued enemy leaders who were not slain in battle. They wanted to remove them from power and neutralize their ability to rally forces. Genghis Khan's psychological warfare tactics impacted the ways that future military leaders waged war.

Law Code Created by Genghis Khan

1. It is ordered to believe that there is only one God, creator of heaven and earth, who alone gives life and death, riches and poverty as pleases Him – and who has over everything an absolute power.
2. Leaders of a religion, preachers, monks, persons who are dedicated to religious practice, the criers of mosques, physicians and those who bathe the bodies of the dead are to be freed from public charges.
3. It is forbidden under penalty of death that any one, whoever he may be, shall be proclaimed emperor unless he has been elected previously by the princes, khans, officers and other Mongol nobles in a general council.
4. It is forbidden chieftains of nations and clans subject to the Mongols to hold honorary titles.
5. Forbidden to ever make peace with a monarch, a prince or a people who have not submitted.
6. The ruling that divides men of the army into tens, hundreds, thousands, and ten thousands is to be maintained. This arrangement serves to raise an army in a short time, and to form raw units of commands.
7. The moment a campaign begins, each soldier must receive his arms from the hand of the officer who has them in charge. The soldier must keep them in good order, and have them inspected by his officer before a battle.
8. Forbidden, under the death penalty, to pillage the enemy before the general commanding gives permission; but after this permission is given the soldier must have the same opportunity as the officer, and must be allowed to keep what he has carried off, provided he has paid his share to the receiver for the emperor.
9. To keep the men of the army exercised, a great hunt shall be held every winter. On this account, it is forbidden any man of the empire to kill from the month of March to October, deer, bucks, roe-bucks, hares, wild ass and some birds.
10. Forbidden, to cut the throats of animals slain for food; they must be bound, the chest opened and the heart pulled out by the hand of the hunter.
11. It is permitted to eat the blood and entrails of animals – though this was forbidden before now.
12. (A list of privileges and immunities assured to the chieftains and officers of the new empire.)
13. Every man who does not go to war must work for the empire, without reward, for a certain time.
14. Men guilty of the theft of a horse or steer or a thing of equal value will be punished by death and their bodies cut into two parts. For lesser thefts the punishment shall be, according to the value of the thing stolen, a number of blows of a staff – seven, seventeen, twenty-seven, up to seven hundred. But this bodily punishment may be avoided by paying nine times the worth if the thing stolen.
15. No subject of the empire may take a Mongol for servant or slave. Every man, except in rare

cases, must join the army.

16. To prevent the flight of alien slaves, it is forbidden to give them asylum, food or clothing, under pain of death. Any man who meets an escaped slave and does not bring him back to his master will be punished in the same manner.

17. The law of marriage orders that every man shall purchase his wife, and that marriage between the first and second degrees of kinship is forbidden. A man may marry two sisters, or have several concubines. The women should attend to the care of property, buying and selling at their pleasure. Men should occupy themselves only with hunting and war. Children born of slaves are legitimate as the children of wives. The offspring of the first woman shall be honored above other children and shall inherit everything.

18. Adultery is to be punished by death, and those guilty of it may be slain out of hand.

19. If two families wish to be united by marriage and have only young children, the marriage of these children is allowed, if one be a boy and the other a girl. If the children are dead, the marriage contract may still be drawn up.

20. It is forbidden to bathe or wash garments in running water during thunder.

21. Spies, false witnesses, all men given to infamous vices, and sorcerers are condemned to death.

22. Officers and chieftains who fail in their duty, or do not come at the summons of the Khan are to be slain, especially in remote districts. If their offense be less grave, they must come in person before the Khan.

Primary/Secondary Sources on Genghis Khan

Anonymous eyewitness account, translated by Urgunge Onon, 1993.

That summer Genghis Khan pitched his camp on the Snowy mountain. He sent soldiers out against those of the Tangqut people who had rebelled against him.... The whole tribe was completely wiped out. Then he showed favour to Bo'orchy and Mugali, saying: "Take what you want, until you can carry no more.... Make their fine sons follow behind you, holding your falcons. Bring up their daughters to arrange your wives' skirts."

Letter from Pope Innocent IV to the Great Khan, 1245.

It is not without cause that we are driven to express in strong terms our amazement that you, according to what we have heard, have invaded many countries belonging both to Christians and to others and are laying waste in a horrible desolation, and with a fury still unabated you do not cease from breaking the bonds of natural ties, sparing neither sex nor age, you rage against all indiscriminately with the sword of chastisement.

Letter from Great Khan to Pope Innocent IV.

Those of whom you speak showed themselves highly presumptuous and slew our envoys. Therefore, in accordance with the commands of the Eternal Heaven the inhabitants of the aforesaid countries have been slain and annihilated. If not by the command of Heaven, how can anyone slay or conquer out of his own strength?

Thanks to the power of the Eternal Heaven, all lands have been given to us from sunrise to sunset. How could anyone act other than in accordance with the commands of Heaven? Now your own upright heart must tell you: "We will become subject to you, and will place our powers at your disposal." You in person, at the head of the monarchs, all of you, without exception, must come to tender us service and pay us homage, then only will we recognize your submission. But if you do not obey the commands of Heaven, and run counter to our orders, we shall know that you are our foe.

Genghis Khan ordained that the army should be organized in such a way that over ten men should beset one man and he is what we call a captain of ten; over ten of these should be placed one, named a captain of a hundred; at the head of ten captains of a hundred is placed a soldier known as a captain of a thousand, and over ten captains of a thousand is one man, and the word they use for this number is tuman. Two or three chiefs are in command of the whole army, yet in such a way that one holds the supreme command. When they are in battle, if one or two or three or even more out of a group of ten run away, all are put to death; and if a whole group of ten flees, the rest of the group of a hundred are all put to death, if they do not flee too. In a word, unless they retreat in a body, all who take flight are put to death. Likewise if one or two or more go forward boldly to the fight, then the rest of the ten are put to death if they do not follow and, if one or more of the ten are captured, their companions are put to death if they do not rescue them.