The Mongolian Empire Essay, Research Paper

The Mongolian Empire

The most savage conquerors of history were the Mongols. The Mongolian empire was the largest land empire of its era and occupied land from the yellow sea in Eastern Asia to the border of Eastern Europe. The empire included land in China, Korea, Mongolia, Persia as well as parts of Thailand and Russia. The Mongols derived from loosely organized nomadic tribes around Mongolia, Siberia and Manchuria. They lived off their land and the resources provided, and became great warriors. It is believed that the Mongols helped the spread of racial tolerance, religion and trade promotion. The Mongols have also been credited with useful inventions such as paper and gunpowder. The early Empire, which thrived through the later part of the 11th century and into the mid 12th, held within it the great conquests of surrounding lands and the creation of strong leadership. The Later Empire was a period of tolerance for the Mongolian Empire through the late 12th century.

Chieftains much like the Hunnish tribes ruled Mongolian tribes until one great man named Temujin, or Genghis Khan rose to power as head chieftain. Genghis Khan unified the scattered Mongolian tribes into a great fighting force and a rising empire. He became the undisputed leader and was known as the ?Lord of all the peoples dwelling in felt tents.? Genghis aimed to train an efficient and disciplined army as well as to conquer lands for his growing empire. Genghis Khan was shrewd and ruthless with great ambition and power. He formed a crew of highly trained officers to travel through the tribes and train people for war. The Mongols specialized in sieging other empires and used specialized tactics such as filling the moats with sandbags for easier attacks. In the Early Empire Genghis Kan hoped to conquer China to expand the Mongolian Empire. His tribes first attacked Xi Xia along the North West Chinese border. He conquered Xi Xia by judging the Chinese Armies and applying tactics for his armies in relation to this. Xi Xia was the centrepoint of the Chinese military and was a great success for Genghis Khan and the Mongols. After Xi Xia, the Mongols approached Northern China. In North China, the Jin Dynasty of the Ruzhen tribe ruled. Genghis Khan and the Mongols attacked in the spring so that their horses would survive the route across the desert. This proves the intelligence and efficient planning that Genghis excelled at. Although the Mongols seemed well equipped for war against the Jin Dynasty, they were unable to subdue the Manchu people. Tragedy then struck the Mongolian Empire, their faithful and powerful leader, Genghis Khan died in 1227. But not before he was able to focus his ruthless attacks on Russia and Muslim lands in 1218; obtaining vast amounts of land at the cost of the Islamic-Arabic culture. Ogotai, the son of Genghis Khan ruled after his father?s death and led the Mongolians to victory against the Jin Dynasty in 1234. Seven years later, the Mongols threatened Western Europe and raided the lands with armies of over 150,000. Focusing their attacks on Hungary and Poland, the Mongols were succeeding in battles yet fate let them back to Mongolia when Ogotai died and left them without a leader. This led to the evolution into the later Mongolian Empire at a time of greater tolerance.

A picture of Genghis Khan

It was not until 1279 that a new Khan accepted the role of leader of the Mongolian people. Kublai Khan was Genghis Khans grandson and succeeding in completing his grandfather?s dream by conquering China. This later Empire lasted until 1368 and established a more structural empire. A capital was formed as the centre of the Mongolian Empire, Cambuluc, located near present day Beijing. After conquering China, Kublai Chan focused his attacks on South East Asia yet his warriors were unequipped for the tropical climate of the foreign land, and could not defeat the Asians at sea. After their defeat, the Mongolians became much more tolerant. This tolerance contributed to the fall of the empire. They began to permit the practice of religions such as Muslim, Christianity, Buddhism and Taoism. Kublai Khan also began to support Chinese politics yet avoided appointing Chinese politicians into high office positions. Not only were the late 1200?s a time of tolerance yet also a time of great changing in society. The Mongols began to adapt Muslim faith and tradition. This time was also a point of increased trade with Europe. By increasing the relations between Mongolia and Europe Kublai Khan gained alliances and for a short time increased the power of the Mongolian Empire. Christianity began to spread through out China and led to the conversion of many Chinese people. This and the lack of unity between the Chinese and the Mongols led to a corrupt government and poor administration of law. Revolts resulted and the Mongol Empire began to decline. The loss of lands catapulted after Kublai Khong?s death and slowly the Mongolian empire fell, breaking into smaller empires and by the 1300?s was no longer.

A picture of Kublai Khan

Mongolian society was based on war. All men were trained for battles as well as many women. The legendary ancestor of the Mongols is the wolf. The wolf symbolized the qualities that the Mongols possess such as endurance, intelligence and the inclination towards northern regions for living. The Mongols shared the language of the Turks and over time adopted the faith and customs of the Muslims. The early tribes of Mongolian people were called Omuks. Groups of these tribes, or clans were Zulus. There were two different types of tribes. The Northern tribes were hunters and fishers whereas the tribes of the Steppe were pastoral. The Pastoral tribes were more powerful, more civilized and wealthier. They herded animals, which in turn provided food, shelter, clothing and weapons. On the other hand, the Northern tribes relied on wild animals and fish, which varied from season to season and were less reliable. Typically, the Mongolians were short and stocky. Most were bowlegged due to the great amount of horse riding. Mongolians were deeply tanned due to heavy weathering and smeared their broad faces with grease for camouflage. When not in battle, the Mongolians wore white tunics similar to those of ancient Greece. The tunics were open from top to bottom, folded over the chest, and fastened on the right. Whilst at war, the warriors wore heavy fur pants, leather boots and a long coat with splits up each side. They would carry their weapons on them and hand two horses, one for extra supplies. Few things were valued by the Mongols except their herds and flocks, which were needed to survive. The animals provided their main food, meat and milk, as well as hides for clothing and horns and bones for weapons.

a typical Mongolian horseman A yurt-common dwelling for Mongols

For most of the 12th century and into the 13th, the Mongolian Empire conquered many parts of modern-day Europe and Asia. The empire was the most powerful during its time through fierce and determined leadership within the Dynasty of Genghis Khan down to his son Ogotai and grandson Kublai. An empire of great warriors and a time of great change were noted within the Mongolian Empire. The Early Empire showed the powerful skills of conquer and the Later Empire a time of tolerance. The people of Mongol, the once loosely organized tribes from scattered areas proved their intelligence like a wolf and survived for hundreds of years as leaders of the 12th and 13th centuries.