

The Mongol Empire

Background

- The Mongols established the biggest land empire in history
 - Its territory extended from the Yellow Sea in eastern Asia to the borders of eastern Europe
 - At various times, it included Armenia, China, Korea, Mongolia, Persia (Iran), and parts of Burma (Myanmar), Russia, Siam (Thailand), and Vietnam

Background

- The Mongols were the most savage conquerors of history
- The development of this vast empire helped increase contacts between peoples of different cultures
 - Migration fostered these contacts and promoted trade

Background

- Roads were built to connect Russia and Persia with eastern Asia
- Many Europeans came to China, and Chinese went to Russia and other parts of Europe
- Printing and other Chinese inventions such as paper, gunpowder, and the compass may have been introduced to the West during Mongol times

Genghis Khan

- The Mongols originally consisted of loosely organized nomadic tribes in Manchuria, Mongolia, and Siberia
- Early on rival Mongol clans spent a lot of time fighting each other
- Genghis Khan (“Universal Ruler”) was able to unite these tribes

Genghis Khan

- Under his leadership, the Mongols conquered a vast empire and served as a unifying force in Asia
- Genghis is described as shrewd, ruthless, ambitious, and a strict disciplinarian
- His goal was to have the best-disciplined and most effective army
 - His army contained some of the most skilled horsemen in the world

Rule Under Genghis Khan

- Genghis wanted to conquer China
 - This was difficult due to walled cities
 - The Mongol conquest of all of northern China took several decades
 - It was not completed until after his death in 1234

Rule Under Genghis Khan

- In 1218, Genghis ended his attack on China and turned west toward central Asia and eastern Europe
- His armies charged into the steppes of Russia and some Muslim lands, including Persia

Rule Under Genghis Khan

- Once the Mongols completed their conquest they did not rule harshly
 - Genghis set the tone and ruled with toleration and justice
 - He died in 1227 and his son, Ogotai, pushed the Mongols into Europe

Rule After Genghis

- During the 1200s and 1300s the sons and grandsons that ruled after Genghis sought to establish peace and order within their empire
 - Historians call this the *Pax Mongolica*, or period of Mongol peace

Rule After Genghis

- The empire thrived
 - They controlled the Silk Road
 - Cultural exchanges increased as tools, food, inventions and ideas spread along trade routes

Rule Under Kublai Khan

- Kublai was a grandson of Genghis Khan
 - He completed the conquest of China in 1279, after attacking the Song Dynasty that ruled southern China
 - He sought to prevent the Mongols from being absorbed into Chinese culture

Rule Under Kublai Khan

- He only allowed Mongols to serve in the military
- High-level government jobs were also reserved for Mongols
- The Mongols under Kublai had a reputation for greater tolerance than that of earlier Mongol rulers

Rule Under Kublai Khan

- He permitted the existence of various religions
- He supported Confucianism and Chinese political ideas
- Kublai's rule was referred to as the Yuan Dynasty and lasted until 1368

Fall of the Mongols

- The empire began its decline in 1294 after Kublai's death
 - The empire lacked unity
 - They lacked experience with running the affairs of the empire
 - After his death, the empire broke into 3 parts

Fall of the Mongols

- Finally, a revolution in China in the 1300s ended the Yuan Dynasty and restored Chinese rule in the form of the Ming Dynasty