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The justice of Gengis Khan: in Life and Empire

The great son of the Mongolian people, Genghis Khan, was a just, wise, and brave man. Genghis Khan's birth name was Temujin. Temujin's youth was quite difficult. After the Tatars poisoned Yesukhei Baatar, Temujin's father, a harsh time ensued.



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According to the "Secret History of the Mongols," after Yesukhei Baatar's death in 1171, many of his followers abandoned his family, driving them from their homes, and for several years his widows and children lived in abject poverty.

Temujin was nine years old at the time.

Temujin, the future Genghis Khan, learned from childhood the meaning of justice, gratitude for good deeds, order, and discipline. We can see several examples of Genghis Khan's fairness in his personal life and in the empire he founded.

For example, the case of Shikhikhutug.

According to the "Secret History of the Mongols," Shikhikhutug was the son of a noble Tatar. In early childhood, in the early 1190s, he was lost during a battle between the Tatars and the Mongols. Discovered by Temujin's men, he was taken in and adopted by his mother, Hoelun.

Temujin treated the child fairly, arguing that the child was not to blame for the vile actions of adult Tatars.

Shikhikhutug proved to be a smart child, and thanks to Hoelun's wise upbringing, he grew up an educated man and was well-versed in matters of customary law.

In 1206, Genghis Khan appointed him a judge, and Shikhikhutug handled legal matters, maintaining close ties with Yelu Chucai. He was later appointed Supreme Judge of Northern China by Ögedei.

Genghis Khan's justice can also be seen in the case of Zev. Zev wounded Genghis Khan with an arrow. It would seem that Genghis Khan would order Zev's head to be cut off. But after speaking with him and seeing Zev, Genghis Khan spared Zev for his truthfulness and courage.

The Secret History of the Mongols records:

During a battle with the Taijiuts at the Koiten tract in 1201, Temujin was wounded by an arrow. After recovering from his wound, Temujin asked the Taijiut prisoners:

"Do you know who shot my white-faced, dun-haired warhorse through the cervical vertebra?"

To which Zhirgoadai boldly replied: "It was I who shot from the mountain! If the khan orders my execution, all that will remain of me will be a wet spot the size of a palm." If the khan so desires, then... I will serve him."

Temujin was impressed by the marksman's honesty and fearlessness. The khan gave Zhirgoadai the nickname Zev, which means "arrow" in Mongolian.

Thanks to this wise decision, Zev's rapid military career began. Beginning his service with Genghis Khan as a foreman, five years later he was given command of a thousand men. He participated in wars with the Kereits and Naimans.

During the war with the Jurchens, the corps under Zev's command operated, depending on the situation, either as the left wing of the army or as a vanguard, penetrating deep into enemy territory. Zev's ability to make unconventional decisions in a rapidly changing situation ensured victory over his opponents. He managed to capture such important fortresses as Wushapu, Juyungguan, and Dongjing.

In 1218, he received a tumen with the task of pursuing the Naiman Khan Kuchlug, who had

seized power in the Kara-Khitan state. Zev, taking advantage of local discontent with Kuchlug's rule, achieved victory and annexed the Kara-Khitan state to Genghis Khan's domains. In 1219–1220, he participated in the Mongol defeat of the Khorezm state, including the pursuit of the Khorezmshah Muhammad. After this, together with Subutai, he participated in the campaign to the Kipchak steppes in 1220–1223.

Genghis Khan's justice and gratitude toward Sorkhon Shar is clearly evident.

In his youth, the future Genghis Khan was captured by his enemy relatives, the Taijiut tribe, on the orders of the leader Targudai Khiriltug. A heavy wooden stock (a heavy block with holes for the head and hands) was placed on him. In this position, the prisoner was unable to eat, drink, or protect himself from insects. During a feast and guard duty, Temujin struck the guard over the head with the stock and fled. He ran to the river and hid in the water of a small lake, exposing only his nostrils to avoid being noticed by the guards. He was discovered by a local commoner shepherd, Sorkhon Shar. He took pity on the young man, hid him in his wool cart, and helped him escape pursuit.

When the enemies began searching for Temujin, Sorkhon Shar repeatedly urged them to look for the fugitive elsewhere.

After the search was over, Sorkhon Sar fed Temujin, gave him a horse and weapons, and sent him home. In 1206, at the All-Mongol Khural (Khural), which proclaimed the founding of the Mongol Empire, Sorkhon Shar was among ninety-five people to whom Genghis Khan granted the title of "Noyon." Later, Sorkhon Shar and his sons were granted permission to use all military and hunting spoils as a token of gratitude for their services.

Sorkhon Shar's sons, Chimbay and Chuluun, were commanders of Khishigten's army, Genghis Khan's personal guard. Chuluun's descendants founded the Choban dynasty, whose members held high positions in the state of Hulagu and eventually established their own state in Iranian Azerbaijan.

In imperial affairs, Genghis Khan’s fairness is surprising, especially in his dealings with the Khorezm state.

Genghis Khan wanted to peacefully coexist and engage in trade with the Khorezm state and sent merchants. But Kaiyir Khan, the ruler of the city of Otrar, under a trumped-up pretext—that they were not merchants but spies—killed the merchants and confiscated all their goods.

Genghis Khan was outraged, but did not want war.

He showed justice! The population of cities and villages should not suffer or die for the vile act of one man.

Next, Genghis Khan sent ambassadors to the Khorezmshah and demanded the extradition of Kaiyir Khan, the murderer of the merchants.

Genghis Khan said, “We will not fight; only extradite the culprit.”

But the Khorezmshah also acted vilely, executing and insulting the ambassadors. After this, Genghis Khan had no choice but war.

Historical chronicles record:

After conquering the Qara Khitai Khanate, Genghis Khan's Mongol Empire became bordered by the Khwarazm Empire.

According to the Persian historian Juzjani, Genghis Khan initially sent a message to the ruler of Khwarazm, Ala ad-Din Muhammad, greeting him as his neighbor:

"I am the Khan of the Land of the Rising Sun, and you are the Sultan of the Land of the Setting Sun. Let us conclude a firm agreement of friendship and peace."

In 1218, Genghis Khan proposed an alliance with the Khwarazm Shah for mutually beneficial trade. He first sent a group of merchants, but the ruler of Otrar, Kaiyir Khan, executed the merchant envoys.

Genghis Khan then sent a second group of three envoys (one Muslim and two Mongols) to demand the punishment of Kaiyir Khan, whom he believed guilty of murdering the envoys. The Shah shaved both Mongols and beheaded the Muslims, then sent them back to Genghis Khan.

This was considered a grave insult to the Khan himself, who considered the ambassadors "sacred and inviolable." This became a pretext for Genghis Khan to attack Khorezm.

As a result, the Khorezmshah state completely collapsed, and its flourishing cities (Bukhara, Samarkand, Urgench) were destroyed. The Khorezmshah fled and died on a small island in the Caspian Sea.

Genghis Khan, the great son of the Mongol people, placed special emphasis on justice.

Genghis Khan created the Yasa code of laws.

In Genghis Khan's Great Yasa, justice was understood as strict order, equality before the law, severe punishment for treason and theft, and the protection of the weaker members of society (the poor and orphans).

The law demanded honesty and mutual assistance on campaign, but knew no mercy for enemies.

The main rules of justice are equal judgment:

The law applied equally to everyone.

A khan and a common warrior received equal punishment for the same offense.

Theft was strictly prohibited.

Aid to one's own: Warriors assisted each other in battle. Abandoning a wounded comrade or concealing loot meant death.

Protection of honesty: Lying, deceit, and witchcraft were punishable by death.

The Yasa united different tribes under one rule. It helped maintain discipline in the army.

Much can be written about the life of Genghis Khan, his just and noble deeds.

Genghis Khan’s just laws ensured peace and order in the Mongol Empire, the largest empire in human history.

The borders of Genghis Khan’s empire stretched from the Pacific Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea. Even today, from the average tourist to the heads of state of various countries, kings and emperors pay tribute to the great justice of Genghis Khan.

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