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## World History

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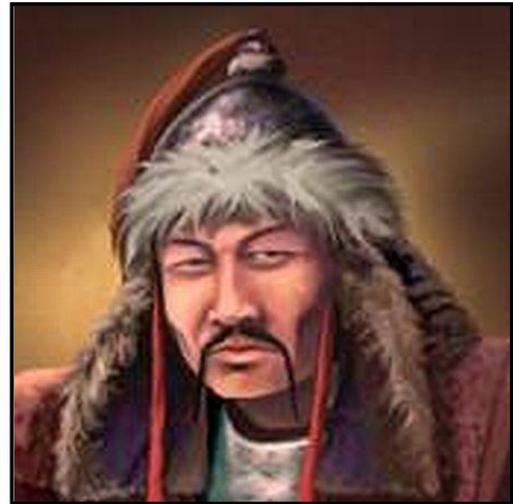
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### The Rise of Genghis Khan

The man known to the world as Genghis Khan was originally named Temüjin and born in 1162, to a Mongol tribe that lived near the Burkhan Mountains (located in present-day Mongolia). The *Secret History of the Mongols* claims that Temüjin was born with a large blood clot clenched in his right fist, a sign that he was destined to become a great leader. By the time of his death in 1227, Temüjin had become both "khan" (ruler) and "Khagan" (emperor) of the Mongol Empire, the largest contiguous empire in history.

Temüjin had three brothers, named Khasar, Khajiun, and Temüge, and one sister, named Temülen. He also had two half-brothers, named Bekhter and Belgutei. Like many of the nomads of early Mongolia, Temüjin's early life was difficult. His father arranged a marriage for him, and at nine years-old, Temüjin was delivered by his father to the family of his future wife Börte (who was also a member of the same tribe as Temüjin's mother). Temüjin was to live there in service to Sansar, the head of the household, until he reached the marriageable age of 12. While heading home, Temüjin's father ran into a group of Tartars, who had long been enemies of the Mongols, and he was subsequently poisoned. Upon learning of his father's death, Temüjin returned home to claim his father's position as "khan" of the tribe. The tribe's elder members, however, refused to be led by a boy so young. Temüjin, his mother, and her remaining children were abandoned by the tribe and left without protection.



For the next several years, Temüjin's family lived in poverty, surviving mainly on wild fruits, marmots, and other small game hunted by Temüjin and his brothers. It was during one hunting excursion that 13-year-old Temüjin killed his half-brother, Bekhter, during a fight which resulted from a dispute over hunting spoils. This incident cemented his position as head of the household.

During the late 12th century, none of the tribes of Mongolia were united politically, and arranged marriages were often used to form temporary alliances. Temüjin grew up observing the tough political climate of Mongolia, which included tribal warfare, thievery, raids, corruption, and continuous acts of revenge carried out between the various tribes. In addition, the tribes had to deal with interference from foreign forces such as the Chinese to the south. Temüjin's mother taught him many lessons about the unstable political climate of Mongolia, especially the need for alliances.

Temüjin began his slow rise to power by offering himself as an ally to his father's sworn blood brother, Toghrol. By 1190, Temüjin and his followers had united the small Mongol confederation. In his rule and conquest of rival tribes, Temüjin broke with Mongol tradition in several ways. He promoted his followers based on merit and loyalty, rather than on family ties. As a reward for absolute obedience and following his rule of law, Temüjin promised wealth from future spoils of war. As he defeated rival tribes, Temüjin did not drive away enemy soldiers.

Instead, he took the conquered tribe under his protection and drew its members into his own tribe. Temüjin would even have his mother adopt orphans from the conquered tribe, thereby bringing them into his family. These practices inspired great loyalty among the conquered people, making Temüjin stronger with each victory.

Despite Temüjin's successes at uniting the Mongol Empire, he would soon face challenges that would challenge his rule...

1. **When** and **where** was Temüjin born?

1162 CE (AD) in Burkhan Mnts (Mongolia)

2. Why was it believed that Temüjin would become a great ruler?

Born clenching a blood clot in his fist - symbol for a strong ruler

3. Explain why Temüjin was sent to live in the household of Sansar when he was nine years-old.

He was sent as part of his arranged marriage

4. Why did the tribal elders refuse to make Temüjin "khan" upon the death of his father?

They felt he was too young to rule

5. Describe the ways in which Temüjin broke with Mongol tradition in his rule and conquest of rival tribes.

- 1 Promote men based on Merit
- 2 He protected those whom he captured
- 3 Promises \$ from conquered areas