

## ATL RESEARCH AND COMMUNICATON

### Kuriltai of 1206

Read Atwood's entry in *Encyclopaedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire*, pp.98-99 explaining the importance of the kuriltai of 1206:

In 1206 Ternujin held a great assembly (*quriltai*) on the ONON RIVER, where he was acclaimed as Chinggis Khan ruler of the "Great Mongol Empire." The term Chinggis has often been interpreted as being meaning *Tenggis*, or "Ocean," thus referring to Chinggis's pretension of universal rule, yet Igor de Rachewiltz's identification of *Chinggis* with a Turkish word meaning "hard" or "severe" seems more probable. The name was pronounced "Chingiz" in the Turkish and Persian languages, and a misreading of the Persian manuscripts by pioneering French scholars in the 18th century produced the European "Genghis" or "Jenghiz."

The 1206 assembly also founded the core institutions of the new MONGOL EMPIRE. Both the Naiman and the Kereyid had a more centralized monarchy than did the tribal Mongols, and Chinggis borrowed extensively from them. He moved his headquarters to Ong Vhan's Shira Ordo, or "Yellow Palace Tent," and created a large imperial guard (KESHIG) divided into day guards and night guards on the model of the Kereyid guard. Chinggis ordered the Naiman's chief Uighur scribe, TATAR-TONG'A, to instruct his sons and the adopted foundling SHiGI QUTUQU in the mystery of writing, thus inaugurating the UIGHUR-MONGOLIAN SCRIPT, which has remained in use up to the present. He also divided all the Mongols into 10s, 100s, 1,000s, and 10,000s, each with its own commander. Chinggis Khan personally appointed all the commanders of rank of *chiliarch* (commander of 1,000) and above. This DECIMAL ORGANIZATION, part of a long tradition in Inner Asia, created a hierarchy of nested

cells through which he could easily mobilize forces of a desired size and transmit orders.

Perhaps the most important measures for Chinggis were the rewards decreed for those who had been faithful to him in his rise to power. Virtually all his uncles and cousins and most of the major clan heads had turned against him during his rise, so Chinggis found his supporters among individual companions (NOKOR) often hailing from clans of very low rank in the traditional Mongol order. Chinggis's mother, O'elun, had raised foundlings, discovered in the camps of defeated Tayichi'ud, the Yurkin, and the Tatar, to be adoptive brothers for her son, and Chinggis Khan gave many of them, such as Shigi Qutuqu, high position. The list of these positions in the *Secret History of the Mongols* divides them into several categories, such as the "four steeds" and the "four dogs." Chinggis expected both unwavering loyalty and effective service from his "dogs" and "steeds," and he received it from them virtually to a man. As a result their clans, such as MUQAU'S JALAYtR, Boroghul's Uushin, and Chila'uns Suldus, among the "steeds," and Qubilai's Barulas, among the "dogs," became powerful aristocratic families for the next few centuries, holding vast appanages and major political power in North China, Turkestan, Persia, and the Inner Asian steppe.

While hardly any of Chinggis's uncles and cousins even survived the brutal politics of his rise, his brothers, sons, daughters, and sons-in-law all became powerful members of the new ruling class. Chinggis's relations with his brothers were not free of tension. Qasar, his full brother, had often wavered in his support. Chinggis had excluded his half-brother Belgutei from his intimate counsels for his indiscretions, and his youngest brother, Temuge Odchigin, he considered too lazy for any serious posts. Even so, he assigned subjects and territory to all of them. To his sons he assigned subject peoples and advisers as well as chances to show themselves in battle. In accordance with the Mongolian tradition of QUDA, or marriage alliance, the families of his

sons' wives and of his sons-in-law (*kurgen*) also shared in his good fortune.

### Activity

**Read** the entry by Atwood from *Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire*, pp.98-99 and complete the table below with as many points as you can. One has been completed for you as an example:

Event, decree, Decisions...	Effect
Timujin was declared as "Genghis Khan"	-This meant he was supreme leader of the Mongols;  -This meant this self-proclaimed prophecy was fulfilled;  -This meant that he had absolute following.
Complete	
Complete	
Complete	