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# The Contribution Of Chinggis Khan In Military Strategy Planning

The strategic genius of Chinggis Khan is immortalized in history. The writings of Sun Tzu have established sound military principles that have transcended time and technology. No other conqueror in history had employed strategies so far ahead of their time than Chinggis Khan. He and his generals practiced and improved upon Sun Tzu's ancient stratagems, and in course, reshaped civilization in Asia and in Europe.

There are three principles outlined by the 6th century BCE Chinese philosopher, Sun Tzu, which the Mongols exemplified with deadly precision.

## Sun Tzu's Rule of Armed Struggle

Sun Tzu states: "Act after having made assessments. The one who first knows the measures of far and near wins—this is the rule of armed struggle."

Mongol scouts covered the landscape in every direction when a column was on the march. Their reconnaissance afforded vivid and current details of hundreds of square miles of the geography around them; the location and condition of fortified cities and towns, and most importantly, the location, size, and movement of the enemy army.

The scouts were well trained to observe important details of the enemy in the field or of a fortification's defenses. They interchanged between three to five mounts in order to maintain speed and cover great distance, transporting intelligence farther and faster than the enemy could dream possible. Chinggis and his generals were allowed to make their assessments on detailed and accurate information.

## Sun Tzu's Rule of Deception and Division

Sun Tzu states: "So a military force is established by deception, mobilized by gain, and adapted by division and combination."

They deceived their enemy by hiding their true numbers by division and mobility. They took advantage of their reputation for barbarism, disguising their foundation of order, discipline, planning, and communication.

Chinggis Khan would split his force into three to five independent columns during an invasion. Each commanding general had his specific objective, but was allowed to operate with a substantial degree of independence. This independence was contingent on maintaining steady channels of communication between Mongol columns in theater.

Defenders were often confounded by the apparent lack of cohesion the Mongol columns projected. Mongol generals swept across the land in different directions, often passing major fortifications, and laying siege to towns and villages, eliminating smaller defensive garrisons.

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Their maneuvers thinned defenses and rendered their enemy's superior numbers and strength impotent.

Once the defenders were on their heels, their resources spread over points of engagement, the separate Mongol columns could converge and overpower an unsuspecting, fragmented, and demoralized enemy.

Chinggis Khan's motivation was not often based on gain alone. He made it a point to eradicate the tribal custom of pillaging a camp or village before the battle had been decided. His men were forbidden from raiding until victory was clearly in their possession. As Chinggis had very little need for the accoutrements of sedentary culture, gain for its own sake was not his end goal. Gaining security for the tribes of the steppe by dominating their enemies was, in part, the core of his motivation.

## **Four Strengths of the Mongol Army**

Sun Tzu states: "Therefore when it moves swiftly it is like the wind, when it goes slowly it is like a forest; it is rapacious as fire, immovable as mountains."

Unencumbered by heavy cavalry, or long supply lines, the Mongol army moved swiftly over great distances. The sudden arrival of the Mongol horde over the horizon was swifter than the wind.

Chinggis Khan's regimented structure of the Mongol ranks empowered every soldier. Their precise movements, formations, and combat tactics on the field of battle harbored the impregnable strength of a dense forest.

Their rapacious invasions consumed countless lives across Asia. Entire populations were conflagrated in the cities and villages left smoldering behind advancing Mongol armies. Very few opponents savored victory over the Mongols on the field of battle.

If there was no advantage in engaging the enemy, the enemy found it very difficult to attack the Mongols. The mobility and nomadic structure of Mongol society allowed for them to remain out of reach of the enemy. To grasp and fix the Mongols was nearly impossible. They could disappear over an endless horizon, remaining eternally elusive from any aggressor. To force the Mongol army into a position of engagement was as difficult as moving a mountain.