

Wisdom of the Steppe

What is the etymology of the word and title *khan*?

Who were the Huns? Whence came they? Who is their most famous ruler, and when did he live? What does his name mean? What is scapulimancy? What written records did the Huns leave? Describe Why did they enter Europe? What happened to the Huns ultimately?

How did the Turkic peoples differ from the Huns? What records did they leave of their culture and values? What were the conditions required for leaving inscriptions? What is the source of the word *Turk*?

What are Sogdian script, Sanskrit script, and Turkic runes? For how long did these languages exist—and where—before Temujin adapted Mongolian language into written script?

What is *nomos*, and why does it become important to the Mongols?

What exactly are the standing stones near the Karakorum, built in 731 and 734 CE?

The Turkic peoples believed that “to be civilized was to follow these moral principles, which are natural, divine laws, not man-made laws” (p. 56). What does that mean?

Who is Tengri? How does Tengri fit into Turkic mythology? How does Turkic fatalism carry into Mongol spirituality, especially with regard to destiny, separation of body and soul, of life and death?

Who were the Uyghurs (Uighurs)? What happened to their empire and their culture?

Conflicting Selves

What happened between Temujin and Jamuka? Between the two of them and Ong Khan? Why did Temujin and Jamuka break their *anda*? What made Jamuka seem especially cruel, inhumane?

When Temujin became a khan in 1189 at age 27 (just imagine), roughly how many were his followers? From what tribes? Why did they follow him? How did he organize them? When Temujin conquered a tribe, what happened to the

men he defeated? To the women and children? Why did he accept two Tatar sisters as wives? With what results?

What caused Temjuin to despise the Jin? What happened, so far as we know, to Ambaqai Khan?

By age 42, Temujin had defeated the Tatar, Kereyid, Naiman, Merkid—why especially significant?

What does Weatherford mean when he says “the teeth in his soul had grown stronger and sharper” (p. 78)?

Messenger of Light

Why are the Uyghurs (Uighurs) particularly important in the development of Mongol writing? Who were the Sogdians? What is the source of their influence?

Who was the prophet Mani? What religion did he create? What are the main features of that religion? How does it attempt to “incorporate” elements of other religions? Who is Ahura Mazda? Ahriman? How have elements of this religion seeped into Christianity?

What are the strictures of Manichean religion? What are some of the dietary laws—and their sources?

As you read about rules concerning priests, power to tax, “soul monitors,” other conventions, do you see parallels to anyone we know? What about the elite families born apparently “destined” to prosperity?

What is the Mongolian counting unit based on the horse?

Why was the winter of 839 CE especially important—and the five subsequent years—for the Uyghurs?

Why is Alexander the Great an important influence on Uyghur culture?

How did Mongolians distinguish between public and personal concerns and domains of rule? What is *tor*? What is *nom*? And what has either to do with the khan and his rule?

What is the irony (or humor) in the myth about Temujin’s meeting with Mani on the mountain and their agreement about the animals?

Finally, what is “the golden cord”?

