

History Access Reading Group

Meet with PROFESSOR JOEL WALKER
to discuss

Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World, by Jack Weatherford

Tuesday, May 20, 2008

3:00–4:30, Smith 306

The name Genghis Khan typically conjures the image of a relentless barbarian on horseback leading a ruthless band of nomadic warriors in the looting of the civilized world. This image, however, reveals only one side of the Mongols' legacy. As social anthropologist Jack Weatherford demonstrates in this bestselling biography, Genghis Khan was not only the world's greatest military conqueror, he was also a savvy, remarkably tolerant and wise ruler of one of the largest and most diverse empires in world history.

Study Questions on Reverse

Please sign up for this group by contacting History Undergraduate Advising:

Phone: 543-5691 or Email: histadv@u.washington.edu

Or visit our website and click on the RSVP button at:

<http://depts.washington.edu/history/studying/access/reading.html>

Study Questions

Here are some discussion questions for Weatherford's Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World:

1. What do the stories about Genghis Khan's youth tell us about nomadic society in twelfth-century Mongolia? What role did Christianity, Buddhism, and other religions play among the major tribal confederations of the Eurasian steppe?
2. What were the key stages in the Mongol military expansion? What combination of tactics enabled them to win victory after victory across Asia? How should we interpret the Islamic, Chinese, and European accounts of the Mongol conquests? Where, when, and why were the Mongol conquests halted?
3. What were the major divisions of the Mongol empire after the death of Genghis Khan? What do the reports of Western visitors like the Franciscan William of Rubruck tell us about the organization and customs of the Mongol court at Karakorum? How powerful were Mongol queens like Sorkhokhtani, mother of both Khubilai Khan, founder of the Yuan dynasty in China, and Hulegu, founder of the Ilkhanid dynasty of Persia?
4. How has the image of Genghis Khan and the Mongols evolved in response to shifts in modern European history? How have the Mongols been viewed in Russian and Chinese historiography? Finally, what do Weatherford's stories about modern Mongolia suggest about the complex ties between history, archaeology, and nationalism?