



## Genghis Khan: The World Conqueror, Volume I

**Sam Djang**

New Horizons Books

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Sam Djang's biographical novel about the Mongol emperor is a fine book, an easy read, and educational. Readers who do not know much about the thirteenth-century emperor will find *Genghis Khan: The World Conqueror, Volume I* a good place to start their exploration. Those who are familiar with his history will find little to dislike, but they may have previously read more detailed, exciting, or compelling works of fiction about the great conqueror.

Although the tone of the writing is light and the text is simple, Djang has written a solid book. It is obvious he has done a lot of homework—including travel—to get to the heart of the legend of Genghis Khan. His style reflects the oral histories and stories he heard about the great warlord; the volume contains many anecdotes of the Mongol leader's youth.

*Genghis Khan* is reminiscent of a young-adult version of a novelized biography—an embellished history presented through a series of stories and episodes. There is much here that will appeal to a young or casual reader, such as how Temujin (Genghis Khan's original name) learns battle tactics by watching animals fight over their prey.

Djang punctuates his progression through Temujin's life with lessons on the history, culture, social structure, and religious and moral beliefs of the Mongols. The author also includes versions of traditional Mongol songs, poems, and chants to bring authenticity and humanity to his characters and story. All of this material is educational and informative, and provides good color to an oft-told story.

The author has sprinkled the book with bits of the Great Khan's martial and political philosophies. Examples include when Temujin learns "losers are inferior, below moral standards and against god's law," and "women are born, but the men are made."

The focus of this story is why and how Temujin unites the Mongol clans, forms them into one of the world's most terrifying and efficient mobile fighting forces, and leads them on a great march to ultimate victory to create an empire that stretches from Beijing to Baghdad to Budapest. *Genghis Khan: The World Conqueror, Volume I* is the prelude that sets the stage for that march, which Djang covers in his second volume.

MARK G. MCLAUGHLIN (October 3, 2011)

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