

## The Secret History of the Mongols (ca. 1240)

### **Anda: Temujin and Jamugha**

Temujin and Jamugha pitched their tents in the Khorkonagh Valley. With their people united in one great camp, the two leaders decided they should renew their friendship, their pledge of anda. They remembered when they'd first made that pledge, and said, "We should love one another again." That first time they'd met Temujin was eleven years old.... So Temujin and Jamugha said to each other: "We've heard the elders say, 'When two men become anda their lives become one. One will never desert the other and will always defend him.' This is the way we'll act from now on. We'll renew our old pledge and love each other forever."

Temujin took the golden belt he'd received in the spoils from Toghtoga's defeat and placed it around Anda Jamugha's waist. Then he led out the Merkid chief's warhorse, a light yellow mare with black mane and tail, and gave it to Anda Jamugha to ride. Jamugha took the golden belt he'd received in the spoils from Dayir Usun's defeat and placed it around the waist of Anda Temujin. Then he led out the whitish-tan warhorse of Dayir Usun and had Anda Temujin ride on it. Before the cliffs of Khuldaghar in the Khorkhonagh Valley, beneath the Great Branching Tree of the Mongol, they pledged their friendship and promised to love one another. They held a feast on the spot and there was great celebration. Temujin and Jamugha spent that night alone, sharing one blanket to cover them both.

Temujin and Jamugha loved each other for one year, and when half of the second year had passed they agreed it was time to move camp....

### **Temujin Becomes Chinggis Khan**

Then they moved the whole camp to the shores of Blue Lake in the Gurelgu Mountains. Altan, Khuchar, and Sacha Beki conferred with each other there, and then said to Temujin: "We want you to be khan. Temujin, if you'll be our khan we'll search through the spoils for the beautiful women and virgins, for the great palace tents, for the young virgins and loveliest women, for the finest geldings and mares. We'll gather all these and bring them to you. When we go off to hunt for wild game we'll go out first to drive them together for you to kill. We'll drive the wild animals of the steppe together so that their bellies are touching.

We'll drive the wild game of the mountains together so that they stand leg to leg. If we disobey your command during battle take away our possessions, our children, and wives. Leave us behind in the dust, cutting off our heads where we stand and letting them fall to the ground. If we disobey your counsel in peacetime take away our tents and our goods, our wives, and our children.

Leave us behind when you move, abandoned in the desert without a protector." Having given their word, having taken this oath, they proclaimed Temujin khan of the Mongol and gave him the name Chinggis Khan....

### **Reflections of Ogodei**

Then Ogodei Khan spoke these words: "Since my father the Khan passed away and I came to sit on his great throne, what have I done? I went to war against the people of Cathay (China) and I destroyed them. For my second accomplishment I established a network of post stations so that my words are carried across the land with great speed. Another of my accomplishments has been to have my commanders dig wells in the desert so that there would be pasture and water for the people there.

Lastly I placed spies and agents among all the people of the cities. In all directions I've brought peace to the Nation and the people, making them place their feet on the ground; making them place their hands on the earth. Since the time of my father the Khan I added these four accomplishments to all that he did. But also since my father passed away and I came to sit on his great throne with the burden of all the numerous people on my shoulders I allowed myself to be conquered by wine. This was one of my mistakes. Another of my mistakes was to listen to a woman with no principles and because of her take

away the daughters who belonged to my Uncle Odchigin.

Even though I'm the Khan, the Lord of the Nation, I have no right to go against established principle, so this was my mistake. Another mistake was to secretly harm Dokholkhu. If you ask, 'Why was this wrong?' I would say that to secretly harm Dokholkhu, a man who had served his proper lord, my father the Khan, performing heroic deeds in his service, was a mistake. Now that I've done this who'll perform heroic deeds in my service? So now I admit that I was wrong and didn't understand. I secretly harmed a man who had served my father the Khan, someone who deserved my protection. Then my last mistake was to desire too much, to say to myself, 'I'm afraid that all the wild game born under Heaven will run off toward the land of my brothers.' So I ordered earthen walls to be built to keep the wild game from running away, but even as these walls were being built I heard my brothers speaking badly of me.

I admit that I was wrong to do this. Since the time of my father the Khan I've added four accomplishments to all that he'd done and I've done four things which I admit were wrong."

- How would you describe the anda relationship?
- What does the Secret History suggest about the nature of political authority and political relationships among the Mongols?
- What did Ogodei regard as his greatest achievements and his most notable mistakes?
- What evidence do the selections from the Secret History provide that the author was an insider?