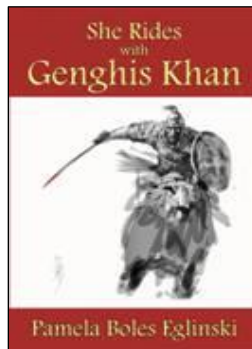


On Writing
She Rides with Genghis Khan
History Retold
by
Pamela Boles Eglinski



She Rides with Genghis Khan is a modern day story laced with legend and fact. Think: Asia, esoteric, exotic—and you’ll find the story behind the title. When preparing to write my novel, I quickly learned that understanding Mongolia—the birthplace of Genghis Khan—demanded more than reading books on the topic, it required an on-site visit.

In the summer of 2011, I traveled to Ulaanbaatar, prepared for an expedition across the vast Mongolian steppe. I was on a mission to find the burial site of the one-time ruler of the known world—Genghis Khan—and the soul of modern-day Mongolia. My quest took me hundreds of miles across the legendary Mongolian plains and deep into the Great Taboo Area.

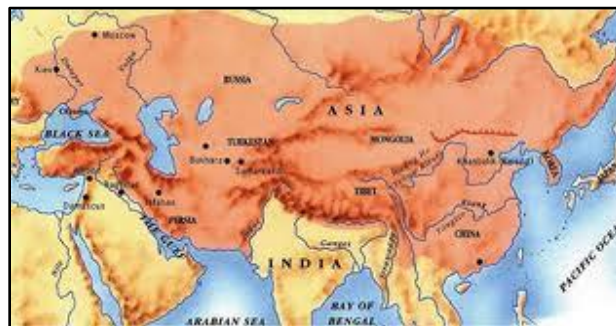
It was just 6 a.m. when sunlight blushed the surrounding mountains, and my guide and driver picked me up at my brother’s home in Ulaanbaatar. We skirted the city in a large black SUV, and set out for Khentii province—the homeland of Mongolia’s hero.

An hour into our journey, just beyond Ulaanbaatar, we’d reached the colossal equestrian statue of the great Khan—a newly erected one-hundred-thirty-foot steel giant holding a golden whip—a whip that pointed toward his homeland, a day’s journey away.



We stepped out of the SUV to take a few pictures. Turning back toward the car I heard a train rumble down the tracks, just below the highway. It was the historic Trans-Siberian railway, with passengers traveling from Ulaanbaatar to St. Petersburg. It reminded me of the Stalinist era, when trains linked Mongolia to the oppressive Soviet state and the man who forbade travel to the spiritual center of the country—the Almsgiver’s Wall—holy ground for Mongolians and perhaps the resting place of the great Khan.

Now, free of Stalin, visitors and scholars were allowed to explore the land of Genghis’ birth, where he grew to manhood and gathered his first army—an army that conquered the known world. I took a deep breath. What had begun as research for my novel became a journey to the heart of a nation—its very soul.



Before departing for Mongolia I’d contacted a professor at the University of Chicago, who was spearheading an archeological dig in Mongolia’s Khentii region. His team of academics were searching for artifacts of the great Khan, and the body of Genghis himself. The professor encouraged me to visit the site, once I arrived in Mongolia. He would be there during the summer months, and was willing to give me a tour of the excavation.

When I arrived at the Almsgiver’s site my guide and driver held back, anxiously waiting beyond the wall while the professor ushered me around the dig.

We circumambulated a twenty-foot tall *ovoo*—stones piled high in a conical shape. *Ovoo* are designated sacred sites by Mongolian shamen. We stepped lightly around the structure counterclockwise, adding three stones to the mound for good luck. I wondered, was anyone buried in the center of that tall mound of stones? The professor didn't have the answer, but he did show me some freshly uncovered artifacts—none attributed to Genghis Khan.



The professor went on to tell me stories of an invisible power, within the walls where we stood. [Was this why my guide and driver remained on the outskirts of the wall?] He explained how his team had to call off their research a few years ago because of massive swarms of black biting flies—and how his research stopped the following summer when their SUV's were flipped over on their roofs—making transportation impossible. It was clear to him that a supernatural force did not want him digging there. After those two summers, the Mongolian government discouraged further research. “Leave the spirits alone,” they cautioned. “The great Khan is not pleased.”

Research on my novel took me to the homeland of Genghis Khan, and also [via the internet] to ancient Buddhist scriptures housed in the British Library, to the Bamiyan Buddhas along the Silk Road, and to the once forbidden writings: *The Secret History of the Mongols*. As I gathered information, I began to understand mysterious objects like Buddhist wish-fulfilling jewels, and the Wind Horse—a shaman's passage to the Blue Sky Heaven and an allegory for the human soul.



My journey began with an exploration into Mongolia's Great Taboo Area, and concluded with a dynamic second novel—one rich in Buddhist lore, a modern day caravan across the ancient Silk Road, and a supernatural ride with Genghis Khan. If you read books by James Rollins and Dan Brown, I suspect you'll like this one too.

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I hope you've enjoyed this peek into the researching and writing of *She Rides with Genghis Khan*. If you read my book, please review it on Amazon when finished. Thoughtful reviews are an author's reward for hard work. Thank you, and keep on reading.

1. If you'd like to "look inside," or purchase *She Rides with Genghis Khan*, please click [here](#).
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