

Liu Pang Biography

Liu Pang

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Biography

Liu Pang (256 BC-195 BC) was emperor of China. His reign established China's imperial system which lasted until the twentieth century.

Liu Pang, posthumously named Kao Tsu, ruled as the first emperor of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.) from 202 B.C. to 195 B.C. Empress Lü, the first woman ruler of China, was one of his wives. Liu Pang's influence on China is significant as his reign established the basis for the imperial system of China that would endure until the beginning of the twentieth century.

The child of peasant parents, Liu Pang spent his early adulthood working as a police officer. A turning point occurred in his life with the death of the Ch'in dynasty emperor Shih Huang-ti. Liu Pang became a rebel leader during the struggle for control of the nation. The Ch'in dynasty was replaced by the leadership of Hsiang Yu. Liu Pang was recognized for his leadership skills and took authority over a region in West China, the Han kingdom. As Liu Pang power increased, a civil war ensued. Although he came from a peasant background, Liu Pang was a skillful general. When Hsiang Yu committed suicide, Liu Pang became emperor of the Han dynasty.

The rule of Liu Pang laid the beginnings of a system of government and life that would have lasting weight on China. The influence of the Han dynasty was so significant, in fact, that many Chinese people continue to call themselves the "Han people." The Han dynasty employed some of the basic principles of the Ch'in dynasty but did not include some of its more oppressive policies. Liu Pang had, however, little mercy for those that challenged his authority in China. Liu Pang sought to improve the lives of peasants by lessening their taxes and renewing the rural economy. He is remembered as both a harsh man and as a practical leader.