

Liu Bang

248?-195 BC

**HOW HE AFFECTED THE REGION** Liu

Bang was the founder of the Han dynasty and its first emperor.



As you read the biography below, think about how Liu Bang went from a peasant's life to that of an emperor.

Liu Bang was born around 248 BC to a peasant family in China. His father was a farmer, and Liu Bang worked as a police officer during the Qin dynasty. After the death of Emperor Shi Huangdi, a warlord named Hsiang Yu attempted to seize control of China. Liu Bang opposed Hsiang Yu's plans. As a rebel leader, Liu Bang gained control of parts of western China. He then fought Hsiang Yu's army in a civil war that lasted about four years. When Hsiang Yu committed suicide, Liu Bang gained control of all of China.

Liu Bang reigned first as king from 206 to 202 BC, and then as emperor from 202 to 195 BC. During this time, Liu Bang revived **feudalism** in China. He replaced the original **vassals** with his own relatives. He gave his relatives several regional kingdoms that were controlled by a central government.

During his reign Liu Bang earned a reputation as a cruel and ruthless leader, but he also did many good things for China. He eliminated many harsh laws and reduced taxes on the peasants. Liu Bang is also known for his skills in foreign affairs. Using a combination of diplomacy and military force, Liu Bang made peace with tribes that were trying to invade China from Mongolia.



© The Art Archive/British Library/Art Resource, NY

VOCABULARY

feudalism government in which land is given to local rulers in exchange for loyalty and military service

vassals people granted land in return for services

Liu Bang, *continued***Biography**

Liu Bang's rule is known as the beginning of the Han dynasty. During the Han dynasty, China made several advances in art, literature, and science.

Liu Bang died in 195 BC. Although the Han dynasty collapsed around 24 AD, it had an influence on the culture and government of China that lasted well into the twentieth century.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

- 1. Identify** Name two things that Liu Bang did as ruler of China.

- 2. Sequence** Think about several things that occurred in Liu Bang's life, and list them in sequence below.

ACTIVITY

Write an epitaph for Liu Bang's tomb. Include details about his life from what you have read.