Wu-Ti Encyclopedia Article

Wu-Ti

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Wu-Ti

156-87 B.C.

Chinese Han Dynasty emperor noted for his reforms and expansion of the empire. Wu-ti replaced the power of nobles with that of Confucian civil servants, for whom he established a system of examinations (formalized c. 600) that would remain in use until modern times. He also issued an early form of banknote, and in 138 B.C. sent an official named Chang Ch'ien (c. 114 B.C.) westward on a diplomatic mission that resulted in the first Chinese contact with an outside civilization. As a result of Chinese exposure to Central Asia, Wu-ti became intrigued with the region's sturdy "Celestial Horses," which were brought back to China and bred.