

VASSAL KINGS AND MARQUISES OF THE FORMER HAN DYNASTY

(前漢 206 B.C.—9A.D.)

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One problem the Former Han government tried to solve was that of finding the right persons to carry out all kinds of governmental functions. Chinese political philosophers had faced this problem from a very early time. The majority of influential schools of thought during the Eastern Chou (東周) period, while differing sharply on other issues, strongly advocated the principle that the government post should go to the best qualified. This principle not only became one of the dominant current in Chinese political thought, but also exerted a strong influence on the Chinese political system. The principle was wholeheartedly accepted by the Chinese government and was partly carried out during the Eastern Chou dynasty. However, it was during the Ch'in (秦) and the Han dynasties that China created an elaborate civil service system and brought this principle to a high degree of realization. The Former Han dynasty especially made important contributions, and laid down the framework for the system which was to last for the next two thousand years.

However, the system of choosing government personnel in the Former Han dynasty still had its dark side. Factors other than the candidate's fitness for his job played a role in selecting government personnel. For example, one's wealth, one's personal connection and one's birth were all of importance.

The hereditary system always presents a threat to the selection of public personnel. Besides an emperor, there were two other hereditary posts in the Han government; vassal king and marquis.

The feudal system was abolished in the Ch'in dynasty. During the Ch'in dynasty, the question arose: should the government establish royal princes as vassal kings to control the remote area and safeguard the central government? It was debated in court in 221 B.C. (秦始皇二十六年) and 213 B.C. (秦始皇三十四年). The opinion of Li Ssu (李斯) won the approval of the emperor. He stated that the feudal system was the main cause of the constant

wars which prevailed during the preceding Chou dynasty (周) and that the reestablishment of the feudal system would invite war and anarchy. Ch'in abolished the feudal system and in its place gave the central government power to control the whole country.¹ However the Han re-established the feudal system. Following the collapse of Ch'in, many military powers sought to establish their own dynasty. Kao Tsu, a leader of one of these military groups, emerged only after a long struggle as head of the new dynasty. It was necessary for him to reward his powerful generals and appease his rivals who acknowledged his sovereignty. Tsang T'u (臧荼) was made the King of Yen (燕王),² Han Hsin (韓信) the King of Han (韓),³ Chang Erh (張耳) the King of Chao (趙王),⁴ Han Hsin (韓信 not the same one mentioned above) the King of Ch'i (齊王),⁵ Ch'ing Pu (黥布) the King of Huai nan (淮南王),⁶ P'ing Yüeh (彭越) the King of Liang (梁王),⁷ Wu Jui (吳芮) the King of Ch'ang sha (長沙王),⁸ and Lu Kuan (盧綰) the King of Yen (燕王).⁹ Moreover, one hundred and forty-three who followed Kao Tsu during his campaign were made marquis.¹⁰ Kao Tsu had no choice but to accept the feudal system. However, the feudal system was also established by his own choice.

The value of the vassal kings of the imperial family in safeguarding the central government was pointed out in the two debates during the Ch'in dynasty. Because the Ch'in dynasty fell so quickly under the attack of the revolt, the Han government felt that without vassal kings of the imperial family, the emperor would be too weak to face possible threats by himself. Also in order to keep watch over the powerful vassal kings who were not members of the imperial family, Kao Tsu had many of his close relatives made kings.¹¹ In 201 B.C. (漢王六年) Liu Ku (劉賈), Kao Tsu's cousin, was made the King of Ching (荊王),¹² Liu Hsi (劉喜), Kao Tsu's elder brother, the King of Tai (代王);¹³ Liu Chiao (劉交), Kao Tsu's younger brother, the King of Ch'u (楚王);¹⁴ and Liu Fei (劉肥), Kao Tsu's son, the King of Ch'i (齊王).¹⁵ Kao Tsu's other sons:

1. Ssu-Ma Ch'ien 司馬遷 (ca. 145-ca. 86 B.C.). *Shih-chi* 史記 (Shanghai: Chung Hua Book Co. SPPY edition; hereafter referred to as *SC*), 6, pp. 12a, 12b, 21b, 22a; Pan Ku 班固 (39-02). *Han shu* 漢書 (I wen yin shu kuan. Reprint of 1739 Wu ying tien ed.; hereafter referred to as *HS*). 13, pp. 1b, 2a; 28A, p. 11b.
2. *HS*, 1A, p. 20a; 13, pp. 2b, 3a; 31, p. 18a.
3. *HS*, 1A, p. 23a; 13, p. 5b.
4. *HS*, 1A, p. 32a; 13, p. 10b.
5. *HS*, 1A, pp. 32a, 32b; 13, p. 11a.
6. *HS*, 1A, p. 32b; 13, p. 11b.
7. *HS*, 1B, pp. 1a, 1b, 2b.
8. *HS*, 1B, p. 4a; 13, p. 12a.
9. *HS*, 1B, pp. 7a, 7b; 13, p. 12a.
10. *HS*, 1B, pp. 9a, 9b, 10a; 16, pp. 1a, 1b.
11. *HS*, 4, p. 2a; 14, p. 2b; 19A, p. 15b; 35, p. 1b; 38, pp. 12a, 12b; 53, p. 9b; 63, p. 10a.
12. *HS*, 1B, p. 9a; 14, p. 9b; 35, pp. 1a, 1b.

Heng (恒), Hui (恢), Yu (友), Ch'ang (長), Chien (建), and his nephew, Piu Pi (劉濞) were made kings in 196 B.C. and 195 B.C.¹⁶ The hereditary kings and marquises again became a part of the governmental system. A serious threat to the principle that governmental position goes to the best qualified again existed.

The information on the question how the successors to kings and marquises were chosen is not as complete as that on the emperor. From available information, the succession system of the kings appears to have been quite similar to that of emperors.

A king's throne was inherited in one family. In the solemn ceremony of investiture of a vassal king the emperor commanded in a decree that the king, generation after generation, be a devoted follower to the Han dynasty.¹⁷ The investiture was sealed with covenant and the document of investiture was carefully kept in the imperial temple.¹⁸ The kingdom was bestowed upon a family for all time to come. In handing the throne to the next king, either an heir-apparent was chosen while the reigning king was alive or the selection was made after the throne was vacant. Because a throne had to remain in one family, the choice of successors was very limited.

The practice whereby the throne went to the *ti chang tzu*, the eldest son of the principal wife, was adhered to for selection of kings as well as the selection of the emperor. This conclusion is based upon the following evidence. The line was clearly drawn between the principal wife and the king's other concubines. The principal wife was called *hou* (后 queen) while the concubines were called *ch'ieh* (妾).¹⁹ The king's other wives held various other titles, such as *chi* (姬), *fu jen* (夫人), *pa tzu* (八子), *chia jen tzu* (家人子), etc.²⁰ The terms *ti* (嫡) and *nieh* (孽) were used to designate the sons of the king's principal wife and those of his concubines respectively.²¹

Besides the above terms which testify to the special status of the king's principal wife and her sons as opposed to his other concubines and their sons, there are several actual succession cases which show that a son of the *ti* lineage had precedence over other sons in inheriting the throne. For example, the King

13. *HS*, 1B, p. 9b; 14, p. 6b. 14. *HS*, 1B, p. 9b; 14, p. 6a. 15. *HS*, 1B, p. 9b; 14, p. 7a; 39, p. 10b.

16. (a) Heng (恒): *HS*, 1B, pp. 16a, 16b; 14, p. 11a. (b) Hui (恢): *HS*, 1B, p. 17b; 14, p. 11a. (c) Yu (友): *HS*, 1B, p. 17b; 14, p. 11b. (d) Ch'ang (長): *HS*, 1B, pp. 18a, 19b. (e) Chien (建): *HS*, 1B, p. 20b; 14, p. 12a. (f) Pi (濞): *HS*, 1B, p. 20a; 35, pp. 4a, 4b.

17. *HS*, 63, pp. 6b, 7a, 13b. 18. *HS*, 16, pp. 1b, 2a.

of Huai nan, Liu An (淮南王劉安), had two sons. The elder one was born of a concubine. The younger one was born of his *kou* (后 principal wife). The younger one was made *t'ai tzu* (太子 heir-apparent).²² The King of Ch'ang shan, Liu Shun (常山王舜), had four sons. One was born of his principal wife. The other three, including his eldest son, were born of his concubines. His principal wife's son was made *t'ai tzu*.²³ The King of Heng shan, Liu Szu (衡山王賜), had nine children. Besides his sons who were born of his concubines, he had two sons of his principal wife. The elder of these two sons was made *t'ai tzu*.²⁴ More significantly, Chu-Fu Yen (主父偃) at the time of Wu Ti, described the succession system of kings in general terms. He said that the throne was handed down from generation to generation through the *ti* lineage. Other sons, although being the children of the kings, did not possess their own fiefs.²⁵ The *ti chang tzu* had the precedence over other sons to be chosen as the new king. The choice was extremely limited.

When a king had sons, none of whom was a legitimate successor through the *ti* lineage, a choice of the king again appeared to be extremely limited. The selection was usually decided by the age of his sons. The eldest one among the candidates normally had precedence over the others. For example, (1) Liu Hsien (劉賢) was the eldest son of Liu Chi (劉寄), the King of Chiao tung (膠東王). His mother did not enjoy the favor of the king. The king intended to have a younger son of his favorite wife be made *t'ai tzu*. However, the king did not act on his intention because it was against the correct sequence of selection. Especially after the king was seriously suspected by the central government of conspiracy, he did not mention his intention and did not dare to make one of his sons *t'ai tzu*. He died without a legitimate successor. The emperor made Liu Hsien, the eldest son, the next King of Chiao tung.²⁶ The phrase used in *Han shu* to indicate that such a choice was against the correct sequence of selection reads as "wei fei tz'u" (爲非次). There was a sequence in selecting the next king among one's own sons. The elder son had the prece-

19. *HS*, 53, p. 18b.

20. (a) *hou*: *HS*, 38, pp. 2a, 3b; 44, pp. 9b, 14a, 14b; 47, p. 5b; 53, pp. 5b, 13b, 18a; 80, p. 11a. (b) *fu jen*: *HS*, 53 pp. 14a, 15b, 63, p. 12b. (c) *chi*: *HS*, 53, p. 5a; 63, p. 12b. (d) *pa tzu*: *HS*, 38, p. 12a; 53, p. 5a; 63, p. 15a. (e) *chia jen tzu*: *HS*, 63, p. 15a.

21. *HS*, 38, p. 9a; 44, pp. 9b, 11a; 53, p. 18b; 64A, p. 19a.

22. *HS*, 44, pp. 9b, 11a.

23. *HS*, 53, p. 18a.

24. *HS*, 44, p. 14a.

25. *HS*, 64A, p. 19a.

26. *HS*, 53, pp. 17a, 17b.

dence over the others. (2) The case of the King of Kuang ch'uan (廣川王), Liu Ch'i (劉齊), was also revealing. Liu Ch'i made his younger son *t'ai tzu* because his eldest son with his uprightness repeatedly remonstrated against him. Therefore the king passed over his eldest one and made his younger son his legitimate successor. The phrase used in *Han shu* to indicate the fact that the younger son over-passed the eldest son in being made the *t'ai tzu* reads as "ch'ü (the younger son) ku shang li yen" (去故上立焉).²⁷ (3) Wen Ti in establishing a successor to the King of Chao (趙王), Liu Yu (劉友), had the eldest son of Liu Yu made the king.²⁸ The practice having the elder one among the sons of a king made the successor limited the chance to have a selection of the next king. However, by petitioning the emperor the king could ask the approval of a choice which would disregard the precedence enjoyed by a son of *ti* lineage or an elder son and the emperor could make his choice as he saw fit. For example: (1) The above mentioned case of Liu Ch'i (劉齊) is a good illustration of how the precedence could be changed. (2) The King of Heng shan (衡山王), Liu Szu (劉賜), had two sons born by his principal wife. The elder one was made the heir-apparent. After the heir-apparent's mother died, the new queen continuously slandered the son before the king. The king therefore petitioned to the emperor to have his heir-apparent replaced by the younger son of the dead queen.²⁹ (3) Wu Ti once made a choice of the successor of the King of Chao (趙王) which, as he saw fit, was based on the consideration of the candidates' character instead of the age sequence among the sons. Liu P'eng-tsu (劉彭祖), the King of Chao, died without appointing a successor. Wu Ti inquired about the character of the sons of the king from one of his attendants who came from that kingdom. Wu Ti considered one son who had many desires as unqualified to rule the kingdom. The son he did choose had neither a good nor a bad reputation.³⁰ Under the above situation the choice was widened but it was still strictly limited to the king's sons.

Under the next situation the succession system of the kings differs sharply with that of the emperors. When the emperor did not have a son of his own the new emperor would be chosen from the descendants of the preceding emperors. However, in the case of a king without a son, his kingdom would be abolished.

In the biographical section on the vassal kings in *Han shu*, we come across

27. *HS*, 53, p. 16b.

28. *HS*, 38, pp. 2b, 3a.

29. *HS*, 44, pp. 14b-16b.

time and again situations where a king died without a son and consequently had his kingdom abolished. For example: At the time of Ching Ti, Liu Jung (劉榮), the King of Lin Chiang (臨江王), died without a son. His kingdom was incorporated into the territory directly under the control of the Han government and was made into a province called *Nan chün* (南郡).³¹ After we put collected information together, we find that it was a common practice during the Former Han dynasty that the kingdom could only be inherited by one's own son and that without a son the kingdom would be abolished.

One piece of evidence is very revealing. In 1 A.D. (平帝元始元年) the government decreed that from then on all those kings and marquises who did not have sons could have their grandsons or their nephews who were adopted as their sons be made their heirs.³² The regulation implies that before 1 A.D., in other words, during the whole Former Han dynasty, when the kings did not have a son, the noble titles could not be inherited by grandsons or adopted sons. We may also assume that the throne could not be given to relatives more remote than king's own grandsons and adopted sons.

Another group of data is very convincing. We collected as complete as possible a list of kings who died without a son in the Former Han period and got twenty-seven names. Among the twenty-seven cases, there are three which do not clearly indicate to us that the kingdom was abolished;³³ the rest all had their kingdoms abolished after their death. For example, the King of Ching (荆王), Liu Ku (劉賈), at the time of Kao Tsu;³⁴ the King of Liang (梁王), Liu I (劉揖);³⁵ the King of Ho Chien (河間王), Liu Fu (劉福);³⁶ the king of Ch'i (齊王), Liu Tse (劉則);³⁷ the King of Ch'ang sha (長沙王), Liu Ch'an (劉產);³⁸ at the time of Wen Ti; the King of Chi yin (濟陰王), Liu Pu-shih (劉不識);³⁹ the King of Lin Chiang (臨江王), Liu E (劉闕);⁴⁰ the King of Lin Chiang (臨江王), Liu Jung (劉榮);⁴¹ at the time of Ching Ti; the King of Ch'i (齊王), Liu Tz'u-ch'ang (劉次昌);⁴² the King of Shang yang (山陽王), Liu Ting (劉定);⁴³ the King of Chiao hsi (膠西王), Liu Jui (劉瑞);⁴⁴ the King of Ch'ing

30. *HS*, 53, pp. 8b, 9a.31. *HS*, 14, p. 19a; 53, pp. 3a, 3b.32. *HS*, 12, p. 3a.33. (a) Liu Pu-i (劉不疑): *HS*, 13, pp. 14a, 14b; 18, p. 4a. (b) Liu Ch'iang (劉彊): *HS*, 13, p. 15b; 18, p. 4b. (c) Liu K'ai-ming (劉開明): *HS*, 80, p. 11b.34. *HS*, 14, p. 9b.35. *HS*, 14, p. 12b; 47, p. 4b.36. *HS*, 38, p. 3a.37. *HS*, 14, p. 7a; 38, p. 8a.38. *HS*, 13, p. 19a.39. *HS*, 14, p. 14a; 47, p. 5b.40. *HS*, 14, p. 15b; 53, p. 3a.41. *HS*, 14, p. 19a; 53, pp. 3a, 3b.42. *HS*, 14, p. 7a.43. *HS*, 14, p. 14a; 47, p. 5b.44. *HS*, 14, p. 18a; 53, p. 7b.45. *HS*, 14, p. 20b; 53, p. 17b.

ho (清河王), Liu Ch'eng (劉乘);⁴⁵ the King of Ch'i (齊王), Liu E (劉閔);⁴⁶ the King of Szu shui (泗水王), Liu an (劉安);⁴⁷ at the time of Wu Ti; the King of Chao (趙王), Liu Tsun (劉尊);⁴⁸ the King of Chung shan (中山王), Liu Hsiu (劉脩);⁴⁹ the King of Chung shan (中山王), Liu Yün-k'e (劉雲客);⁵⁰ at the time of Hsüan Ti; the King of Chung shan (中山王), Liu Ching (劉竟);⁵¹ the King of Ch'ang sha (長沙王), Liu Tan;⁵² at the time of Yüan Ti; the King of Ch'eng yang (城陽王), Liu Yün (劉雲);⁵³ the King of Kuang ling (廣陵王), Liu Huo (劉獲);⁵⁴ the King of Ch'u (楚王), Liu Wen (劉文);⁵⁵ at the time of Ch'eng Ti; the King of Lu (魯王), Liu Tsun (劉睦);⁵⁶ the King of Kuang Ping (廣平王), Liu Kuang-han (劉廣漢);⁵⁷ at the time of Ai Ti. Among the above twenty-seven cases there are fourteen in which after a kingdom was abolished a relative of the deceased king was later reestablished as a king of the formerly abolished kingdom by the emperor's special favor.⁵⁸ For example: (1) at the time of Wu Ti the King of Szu shui (泗水王), Liu An, died without a son. Wu Ti felt pity for the king that his lineage would come to its end, and he therefore established Liu An's brother, Liu He (劉賀), as the King.⁵⁹ (2) At the time of Hsüan Ti the King of Chung Shan (中山王), Liu Hsiu (劉脩), died without a son. The kingdom was abolished. Forty-five years later, and after the rule of two emperors, Hsüan Ti and Yüan Ti, Ch'eng Ti made Liu Hsiu's cousin the king.⁶⁰ Among the above fourteen cases in which a relative later was made a king, nine were brothers of the deceased kings,⁶¹ two were uncles,⁶² and two were cousins.⁶³

46. *HS*, 14, p. 22a; 63, p. 7a. 47. *HS*, 14, p. 21b; 53, p. 19a. 48. *HS*, 14, pp. 16b, 17a; 53, p. 9a.
49. *HS*, 14, p. 18a; 53, p. 12a. 50. *HS*, 14, pp. 18a, 16b; 53, p. 12a. 51. *HS*, 14, p. 25b; 80, p. 12a.
52. *HS*, 14, p. 17b; 53, p. 13a. 53. *HS*, 14, p. 7b; 38, p. 8a. 54. *HS*, 14, p. 22b; 63, p. 16a.
55. *HS*, 14, p. 24b; 80, pp. 7a, 7b. 56. *HS*, 14, pp. 15b, 16a; 53, p. 3b. 57. *HS*, 53, p. 12a.
58. (a) Liu Pu-i (劉不疑): *HS*, 13, pp. 14a, 14b; 18, p. 4a. (b) Liu Ch'iang (劉強): *HS*, 13, p. 15b; 18, p. 4b. (c) Liu Tse (劉則): *HS*, 14, p. 7a. (d) Lin An (劉安): *HS*, 14, p. 21b; 53, p. 19a. (e) Liu Tsun (劉尊): *HS*, 14, pp. 16b, 17a; 53, p. 9a. (f) Liu Hsiu (劉脩): *HS*, 14, p. 18a; 53, p. 12a. (g) Liu Yün-k'e (劉雲客): *HS*, 14, pp. 18a, 18b; 53, p. 12a. (h) Liu Tan (劉旦): *HS*, 14, p. 17b; 53, p. 13a. (i) Liu Yün (劉雲): *HS*, 14, p. 7b; 38, p. 8a. (j) Liu Huo (劉獲): *HS*, 14, p. 22b; 63, p. 16a. (k) Liu Wen (劉文): *HS*, 14, p. 24b; 80, pp. 7a, 7b. (l) Liu Tsun (劉睦): *HS*, 14, pp. 15b, 16a; 53, p. 3b. (m) Liu Kuang-han (劉廣漢): *HS*, 53, p. 12a. (n) Liu K'ai-ming (劉開明): *HS*, 80, p. 11b.
59. *HS*, 14, p. 21b; 53, p. 19a. 60. *HS*, 14, p. 18a; 53, p. 12a.
61. (a) Liu Pu-i (劉不疑): *HS*, 13, pp. 14a, 14b; 18, p. 4a. (b) Liu Ch'iang (劉強): *HS*, 13, p. 15b; 18, p. 4b. (c) Liu An (劉安): *HS*, 14, p. 21b; 53, p. 19a. (d) Liu Tsun (劉尊): *HS*, 14, pp. 16b, 17a; 53, p. 9a. (e) Liu Yün-k'e (劉雲客): *HS*, 14, pp. 18a, 18b; 53, p. 12a. (f) Liu Tan (劉旦): *HS*, 14, p. 17b; 53, p. 13a. (g) Liu Yün (劉雲): *HS*, 14, p. 7b; 38, p. 8a. (h) Liu Wen (劉文): *HS*, 14, p. 24b; 80, pp. 7a, 7b. (i) Liu Tsun (劉睦): *HS*, 14, pp. 15b, 16a; 53, p. 3b.
62. (a) Liu Tse (劉則): *HS*, 14, p. 7a; 38, p. 8a. (b) Liu Huo (劉獲): *HS*, 14, p. 22b; 63, p. 16a.
63. (a) Liu Hsiu (劉脩): *HS*, 14, p. 18a; 52, p. 12a. (b) Liu K'ai-ming (劉開明): *HS*, 80, p. 11b.

These fourteen cases further prove that when a king died without a son his kingdom was abolished. If the dead king had living brothers, uncles or cousins, his throne could be handed to one of them only by special favor of the emperor. Under the above situation, when the emperor granted special favor to have one member of the heirless king's family be made a king, the choice would be made from a little wider circle: from the king's family. It is encouraging to note that a choice from a wider circle might offer a possibility of making a more selective choice. However only when the king died without a son and his kingdom was abolished for good was the threat of putting a person qualified only by birth in the position of king completely removed.

The succession system of the marquises was very similar to that of kings. The noble title was handed down from generation to generation in one family as described in a decree of the Empress Dowager Lü.⁶⁴ The emperor in the solemn speech given at the investiture ceremony for the marquis blessed him that his kingdom last forever.⁶⁵ The investiture was solemnly sealed with a covenant and carefully kept in the imperial temple.⁶⁶ There are two cases in which the title of a marquis could not be inherited.⁶⁷ In both cases the title of marquis was given to a foreign general who surrendered to Chinese troops in war. These two marquises, being exceptional cases which were made by order of the emperor's special favor, do not have any effect on the succession system of the marquis being a hereditary one.

In handing the marquis title to its successor, on most occasions, an heir-apparent was chosen before the position was vacant. The heir-apparent was called *t'ai tzu* (太子),⁶⁸ *shih tzu* (世子)⁶⁹ or *szu tzu* (嗣子).⁷⁰ Since the noble title of marquis was kept in one family, the choice of a new marquis was limited to a small circle of the marquis' relatives.

The practice that a son of the *ti* lineage had precedence over other sons regarding inheritance was also a common practice in the succession system of marquis. We do not have much data on this practice. However, the scanty information we have can sufficiently tell us of the existence of this system. First, the son of a marquis' principal wife and the son of his concubines' were called *ti* (嫡) and *shu* (庶) respectively.⁷¹ The differentiation of the sons of the principal wife from those of concubines can only serve as subsidiary evidence. More

64. *HS*, 3, p. 2a.67. *HS*, 17, pp. 21a, 22a.70. *HS*, 3, p. 2a; 16, p. 9a.65. *HS*, 16, p. 1b.68. *HS*, 4, pp. 8a, 8b.71. *HS*, 15B, p. 17a; 58, pp. 8a, 8b.66. *HS*, 16, p. 1b.69. *SC*, 49, p. 12a.

significant is the case of Kung-Sun Hung (公孫弘). Kung-Sun Hung's marquissate was abolished in 107 B.C. (元封四年) after his son inherited the title.⁷² About a hundred years later, at the time of P'ing Ti, the government found one of his descendants of the *ti* lineage and granted him the noble title of *kuan nei hou* (關內侯 marquis of the Imperial Domain).⁷³ The descendants of the *ti* lineage had precedence over other descendants in succession. The choice of a new marquis was extremely limited.

When the marquis had sons, but no one of the *ti* lineage, choice of his successor was still limited to his own sons. The elder son appeared to have precedence over other candidates. Wei Hsien's (韋賢) case is a good illustration. Wei Hsien had four sons. Wei Fang-shan (韋方山) was the eldest son, Wei Hung (弘) the second, Wei Shun (舜) the third, and Wei Hsüan-ch'eng (玄成) the youngest. The eldest son died early. Wei Hsien's second choice of his heir was his second son.⁷⁴ Like-wise, Wei Ching (衛青) had four sons. The eldest son was made heir.⁷⁵ The age sequence among the brothers appeared to be a factor in making the choice of the heir. However, similar to the practice of the succession system of vassal kings, the marquis could petition to the emperor for approval of a choice in disregard of the precedence enjoyed by the sons of the *ti* lineage or the elder sons and the emperor could make a choice as he saw fit. Wei Hsien's case is again a good illustration. Wei Hsien considered that his second son, Hung (弘), should be his heir after his eldest son died. He ordered Hung to resign from his appointment in the Ministry of Ceremonies because in that particular position it was very easy to get into trouble. Wei Hung, out of humility, dared not act as if he wanted to inherit the noble title. Since the resignation from his job was considered a gesture of assuming the heir status, he did not resign from his position as ordered by his father. When Wei Hsien was seriously sick and the problem of choosing an heir was urgently brought up for a decision, Wei Hung did make a mistake in the work under his charge and was jailed pending trial. The family members asked Wei Hsien on his death bed to name his heir. Wei Hsien was angry that his second son did not do as he was told and finally got himself into trouble. He did not want to answer the question. Wei Hsien's disciples and the members of his family decided to have the youngest son, Wei Hsüan-ch'eng, chosen as heir and reported this decision in the name of Wei Hsien to the Minister of

72. *HS*, 18, p. 9a.73. *HS*, 58, pp. 8a, 8b.74. *HS*, 73, pp. 5a, 5b.75. *SC*, 49, p. 12a; *HS*, 55, pp. 14a, 14b.

ta hung lu (大鴻臚 grand herald). Wei Hsüan-ch'eng was made marquis.⁷⁶ The marquis could petition to the emperor for approval of a choice to disregard the precedence enjoyed by the sons of the *ti* lineage or the elder sons. However, the choice was still limited to his own sons.

In situations when a marquis died without a son, his marquissate would be abolished, because his noble title could only be inherited by his own son. This practice is even better documented than that of the succession system of the kings.

First, this can be illustrated by the case of Huo Ch'ü-p'ing (霍去病). When Huo died in 116 B.C. (元鼎元年), his son Ch'an (嬪), inherited the title of marquis.⁷⁷ However, seven years later under Wu Ti (in 110 B.C. 元封元年) when Ch'an died without a son, his marquissate was abolished.⁷⁸ Yet Huo Ch'ü-p'ing had enjoyed the unparalleled favor of the emperor⁷⁹ and was widely hailed for his victories over the Hsiung nu (匈奴).⁸⁰

More concrete evidence can be gained from P'ing Ti's decree of 1 A.D. which has been mentioned earlier. According to this decree, from that time on all kings and marquises who did not have sons could have their grandsons or their adopted nephews made heirs.⁸¹ This implies that before 1 A.D., namely, throughout virtually the whole Former Han dynasty, when the marquis did not have a son, his title could not be inherited by his grandson or his adopted nephew. We may assume that relatives more remote than grandson and adopted nephew also could not inherit his title.

Many such cases in which a marquissate was abolished when a marquis died without a son are available. We have tried to compile as complete a list as is possible. Of the hundred and thirteen cases we have found there are five which did not explicitly show that the marquissate was abolished,⁸² but the remaining hundred and eight cases deal with marquissates which were abolished when the marquis died without a son.⁸³ In many cases, a son inherited the title of the marquis only to have it taken away later, when it was discovered that he actually was not the son of the dead marquis. For instance, Lü Ch'eng (呂成) at the time of Wen Ti,⁸⁴ Fan T'o-kuang (樊它廣) at the time of Ching Ti;⁸⁵ Ch'en Chiang (陳彊) at the time of Wu Ti;⁸⁶ Liu Chia (劉嘉) at the time of Chao Ti;⁸⁷ Fu (福), the great-great-grandson of Fu-lu-chih (復陸支),⁸⁸ and Chao Ts'en (趙岑) at the time of Ai Ti,⁸⁹ all had their marquissates abolished on the ground that they were actually not the son. In the case of Ch'en Chiang (陳彊) the

76. *HS*, 73, pp. 5b-6b.

77. *HS*, 18, p. 9a; 55, p. 14a.

marquisate was handed down from Ch'en Chia (陳嘉) to his 'son' Ch'en Shih (陳拾) and from Ch'en Shih (陳拾) to his son Ch'en Chiang (陳疆). But after Ch'en Chiang had held the title for seven years, it was discovered that Ch'en Shih actually was not Ch'en Chia's son. Consequently Ch'en Chiang lost his noble title.

Further illustration of the practice of abolishing a marquis' title when he died without a son can also be presented. Among the above hundred and eight cases, there are thirty cases in which a marquisate was abolished only to be

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78. *HS*, 18, pp. 9a, 9b; 55, p. 14a. 79. *HS*, 55, pp. 9a, 13a, 13b, 14a.
 80. *HS*, 55, pp. 6a-12b. 81. *HS*, 12, p. 3a.
 82. (a) Hsi Ch'uan (奚涓): *HS*, 16, p. 24b. (b) Hsiao I (蕭遺): *HS*, 16, pp. 9b, 10a. (c) Nai Chih (耐趾): *HS*, 16, p. 22b. (d) Hsiao Lu (蕭祿): *HS*, 16, p. 9b; 39, p. 7a. (e) Ch'i Ying (齊應): *HS*, 16, p. 63b.
 83. (1) 劉良: *HS*, 15A, p. 6b. (2) 劉章: *HS*, 15A, p. 7a; 36, p. 4b. (3) 劉黨: *HS*, 15A, p. 9b. (4) 劉敢: *HS*, 15A, p. 11a. (5) 劉繼: *HS*, 15A, p. 11b. (6) 高樂康侯: *HS*, 15A, p. 55b. (7) 劉明: *HS*, 15A, p. 22a. (8) 劉晏: *HS*, 15A, p. 22b. (9) 劉泰容: *HS*, 15A, p. 26a. (10) 劉忠: *HS*, 15A, p. 30a. (11) 劉遷: *HS*, 15A, p. 30b. (12) 劉訴: *HS*, 15A, p. 34b. (13) 劉章: *HS*, 15A, p. 39a. (14) 劉破胡: *HS*, 15A, p. 44a. (15) 劉燕: *HS*, 15A, p. 47b. (16) 劉昆景: *HS*, 15A, p. 49b. (17) 劉朱: *HS*, 15A, p. 43b. (18) 劉宣: *HS*, 15B, 13a. (19) 劉梁: *HS*, 15B, p. 15b. (20) 劉曄: *HS*, 15A, p. 54a. (21) 劉使親: *HS*, 15B, p. 5b. (22) 劉璋: *HS*, 15B, p. 27a. (23) 劉遷: *HS*, 15B, p. 28a. (24) 劉遺: *HS*, 15A, p. 23b. (25) 劉安上: *HS*, 15B, p. 19a. (26) 劉成: *HS*, 15B, p. 22a. (27) 劉疆: *HS*, 15B, p. 37a. (28) 劉貴: *HS*, 15B, p. 3b. (29) 劉江: *HS*, 15B, p. 14a. (30) 劉恢: *HS*, 15B, p. 47a. (31) 劉蒼: *HS*, 15A, p. 19b. (32) 劉得: *HS*, 15A, p. 27a. (33) 劉莫如: *HS*, 15A, p. 43a. (34) 劉象: *HS*, 15B, p. 6a. (35) 劉妄得: *HS*, 15B, p. 21a. (36) 劉守: *HS*, 15B, p. 24a. (37) 劉申: *HS*, 15B, p. 29b. (38) 魏駟: *HS*, 16, p. 67b. (39) 吳重: *HS*, 16, p. 45b. (40) 召嘉: *HS*, 16, p. 6b. (41) 陳程: *HS*, 16, p. 31b. (42) 高: *HS*, 16, p. 42b. (43) 靈勝: *HS*, 16, p. 56a. (44) 朱慶: *HS*, 16, p. 61a. (45) 黃赫: *HS*, 16, p. 57a. (46) 陳最: *HS*, 16, p. 16a. (47) 朱辟疆: *HS*, 16, p. 18b. (48) 蔡奴: *HS*, 16, p. 20b. (49) 陳羌: *HS*, 16, p. 40a. (50) 吳周: *HS*, 16, p. 64b. (51) 僕隲: *HS*, 17, p. 5b. (52) 王不害: *HS*, 16, p. 5b. (53) 杜武: *HS*, 16, p. 36b. (54) 趙胡: *HS*, 16, p. 37b. (55) 紀夷吾: *HS*, 16, p. 43b. (56) 張疆: *HS*, 16, p. 47a. (57) 韓則: *HS*, 16, p. 68b. (58) 程同: *HS*, 17, p. 2b. (59) 于軍: *HS*, 17, p. 4b. (60) 樂: *HS*, 17, p. 7a. (61) 於單: *HS*, 17, p. 8b. (62) 趙充國: *HS*, 17, p. 8b. (63) 王援營: *HS*, 17, p. 11a. (64) 蘇: *HS*, 17, p. 12a. (65) 應朶: *HS*, 17, p. 12b. (66) 廣漢: *HS*, 17, p. 13a. (67) 伊即軒孫輔宗: *HS*, 17, p. 14a. (68) 雕延年: *HS*, 17, p. 14b. (69) 蘇弘: *HS*, 17, p. 18a. (70) 饒終古: *HS*, 17, p. 19a. (71) 涉都侯喜: *HS*, 17, p. 20b. (72) 王啖: *HS*, 17, p. 20b. (73) 稽谷姑: *HS*, 17, p. 21b. (74) 涇陽康侯最: *HS*, 17, p. 22b. (75) 烏黎子餘利提: *HS*, 17, p. 12b. (76) 渠復桑子乃始: *HS*, 17, p. 16a. (77) 蔡義: *HS*, 18, p. 12b. (78) 史曾: *HS*, 18, p. 17b. (79) 呂騰: *HS*, 16, p. 36b. (80) 樊市人: *HS*, 16, p. 12b; 41, p. 5b. (81) 陳嘉: *HS*, 16, p. 33a. (82) 劉廣: *HS*, 15A, p. 15a. (83) 復陸支曾孫宜平: *HS*, 17, p. 13b. (84) 趙欽: *HS*, 18, p. 13a; 69, p. 18a. (85) 劉霸: *HS*, 15B, p. 14b. (86) 劉霸: *HS*, 15B, p. 24b. (87) 劉霸: *HS*, 15B, p. 10a. (88) 劉霸: *HS*, 15B, pp. 11b, 12a. (89) 劉推: *HS*, 15B, p. 3a. (90) 劉未央: *HS*, 15B, p. 7b. (91) 劉敬: *HS*, 15B, p. 8b. (92) 霍疆: *HS*, 18, pp. 9a, 9b. (93) 金常: *HS*, 17, p. 30b. (94) 便臨: *HS*, 18, p. 14b. (95) 許廣漢: *HS*, 18, p. 15a. (96) 金賞: *HS*, 17, p. 26b. (97) 鄭光: *HS*, 17, p. 31a. (98) 王廣漢: *HS*, 17, p. 31b. (99) 許常: *HS*, 18, p. 18b. (100) 韓寶: *HS*, 16, pp. 69a, 69b. (101) 駒幾孫崇: *HS*, 17, pp. 16a, 16b. (102) 鍾祖: *HS*, 17, p. 33a. (103) 史崇: *HS*, 18, p. 16b. (104) 許並: *HS*, 18, p. 18a. (105) 許去疾: *HS*, 18, p. 18b. (106) 成褒: *HS*, 17, p. 23b. (107) 郭萌: *HS*, 17, p. 28a. (108) 史淑: *HS*, 18, p. 16b.
 84. *HS*, 16, p. 36b.

reinstated so as to allow a relative of the deceased marquis to continue the sacrifices to the first founder of the marquiseate.⁹⁰ These were exceptional cases decided by the emperor's special favor. For example: (1) Huo Ch'ü-p'ing's case again is a good illustration. As prominent as Huo Ch'ü-p'ing was, yet his marquiseate was abolished under Wu Ti when Huo Ch'ü-p'ing's son, Huo Ch'arr (霍嬭), also one of Wu Ti's favorites, did not have a son. Forty-two years later the kingdom was reestablished under Hsüan Ti, by the special plea of Huo Kuang (霍光) who practically ruled the country. When the Emperor Hsüan visited Huo Kuang at his death bed, the latter requested that three thousand households in his fief be made into a marquiseate for Huo Shan (霍山), a grandson of his brother, Huo Ch'ü-p'ing, so as to carry on the sacrifices to Huo Ch'ü-p'ing. Huo Shan was made a marquis. However, Huo Shan was made a marquis because of Huo Kuang's merit, not because he was a descendant of Huo Ch'ü-p'ing.⁹¹ Clearly then, when Huo Ch'an died, he had had close relatives, brothers or nephews, but none of them could inherit his noble title except his own son. Since he died without a son his marquiseate was abolished. However, forty-two years later with the special favor of Hsüan Ti, his nephew was reestablished as a marquis.

In the thirty cases we examined the gap between the time of abolition and the time of re-establishment ranged anywhere from the same year to one hundred forty-six years.⁹² For example, Fan K'uai's (樊噲) marquiseate was abolished in 144 B.C. (景中六年) with his grandson's generation. However, after hundred

85. *HS*, 16, p. 12b; 41, p. 5b.

86. *HS*, 16, p. 33a.

87. *HS*, 15A, p. 15a.

88. *HS*, 17, p. 13b.

89. *HS*, 18, p. 13a; 69, p. 18a.

90. (1) 劉翽: *HS*, 15B, p. 14b. (2) 劉翽: *HS*, 15B, p. 24b. (3) 劉翽: *HS*, 15B, p. 10a. (4) 劉翽: *HS*, 15B, pp. 11b, 12a. (5) 劉推: *HS*, 15B, p. 3a. (6) 劉未央: *HS*, 15B, p. 7b. (7) 劉敬: *HS*, 15B, p. 8b. (8) 樊它廣: *HS*, 16, p. 12b. (9) 霍嬭: *HS*, 18, pp. 9a, 9b. (10) 金常: *HS*, 17, p. 30b. (11) 許廣漢: *HS*, 18, p. 15a. (12) 金賞: *HS*, 17, p. 26b. (13) 鄭光: *HS*, 17, p. 31a. (14) 王廣漢: *HS*, p. 31b. (15) 許常: *HS*, 18, p. 18b. (16) 韓實: *HS*, 16, pp. 69a, 69b. (17) 駒幾孫崇: *HS*, 17, pp. 16a, 16b. (18) 鍾祖: *HS*, 17, p. 33a. (19) 史崇: *HS*, 18, p. 16b. (20) 許並: *HS*, 18, p. 18a. (21) 許去疾: *HS*, 18, p. 18b. (22) 成褒: *HS*, 17, p. 23b. (23) 郭萌: *HS*, 17, p. 28a. (24) 奚涓: *HS*, 16, p. 24b. (25) 蕭遺: *HS*, 16, pp. 9b, 10a. (26) 祗陌: *HS*, 16, p. 22b. (27) 蕭祿: *HS*, 16, p. 9b; 39, p. 7a. (28) 齊應: *HS*, 16, p. 63b. (29) 便臨: *HS*, 18, p. 14b. (30) 史淑: *HS*, 18, p. 16b.

91. *HS*, 18, pp. 9a, 9b; 68, pp. 12a, 12b, 13b.

92. 奚涓 (the same year): *HS*, 16, p. 24b. (1) 蕭祿 (the same year): *HS*, 16, p. 9b. (3) 劉翽 (8 years): *HS*, 15B, p. 14b. (4) 劉翽 (8 years): *HS*, 15B, p. 24b. (5) 駒幾孫崇 (11 years): *HS*, 17, pp. 16a, 16b. (6) 許並 (15 years): *HS*, 18, p. 18a. (7) 史崇 (16 years): *HS*, 18, p. 16b. (8) 韓實 (21 years): *HS*, 16, pp. 69a, 69b. (9) 霍嬭 (42 years): *HS*, 18, pp. 9a, 9b. (10) 鄭光 (47 years): *HS*, 17, p. 31a. (11) 王廣漢 (46 years): *HS*, 17, p. 31b. (12) 金常 (55 years): *HS*, 17, p. 30b. (13) 便臨 (72 years): *HS*, 18, p. 14b. (14) 樊它廣 (140 years): *HS*, 16, p. 12b.

and forty-six years in 2 A.D. (元始二年) one of his great-great-grandson's sons was again made marquis under the special favor of the emperor.

In those cases in which a marquis was selected from among the relatives of the sonless marquis, the choice would be made from a little wider circle, from the marquis family. Among the above thirty cases twelve were brothers of the deceased marquis,⁹³ one a grandson,⁹⁴ one an uncle,⁹⁵ one a cousin,⁹⁶ three nephews,⁹⁷ two mothers,⁹⁸ and one a son.⁹⁹ The case of the son attracts our attention. In the source it is clearly mentioned that Chung Tsu (鍾祖) died in 5 A.D. without a son. The most acceptable interpretation is that the son in this case was the adopted son who was allowed to inherit the noble title as regulated by the decree of 1 A.D. Besides choosing from among the relatives closely related to the deceased marquis, many were accepted on the ground that they were the descendants of the founder of the marquisate, and not as the close relatives of the deceased marquis. For example, two were grandsons of the founder of the marquisate,¹⁰⁰ four great-grandsons,¹⁰¹ and two the sons of the great-great-grandson.¹⁰²

Thus in those instances in which the emperor granted special favor to have one member of the heirless marquis' family inherit the title, the choice was not confined to a very small circle, namely, one's own son, or one's own son of the *ti* lineage, or the oldest among sons. It is encouraging to note that a choice from a wider circle might offer a possibility of making more selective choice. However when the kingdom was abolished permanently in case the marquis died without a son, the threat of putting a less than qualified person in the position of marquis was completely removed.

So far we have examined the succession system of vassal kings and marquises. It was designed primarily to keep the noble title in one family, and not for the purpose of finding a qualified ruler. There is not much information

93. (1) 劉霸 : *HS*, 15B, p. 14b. (2) 劉霸 : *HS*, 15B, p. 24b. (3) 劉推 : *HS*, 15B, p. 3a. (4) 劉未央 : *HS*, 15B, p. 7b. (5) 劉敬 : *HS*, 15B, p. 8b. (6) 劉霸 : *HS*, 15B, p. 10a. (7) 蕭祿 : *HS*, 16, p. 9b; *HS*, 39, p. 7a. (8) 許常 : *HS*, 18, p. 18b. (9) 駒幾孫崇 : *HS*, 17, pp. 16a, 16b. (10) 史崇 : *HS*, 18, p. 16b. (11) 許並 : *HS*, 18, p. 18a. (12) 成褒 : *HS*, 17, p. 23b.
94. *HS*, 18, pp. 9a, 9b. 95. *HS*, 15B, pp. 11b, 12a. 96. *HS*, 16, pp. 69a, 69b.
97. *HS*, 16, pp. 22b, 63b; 18, p. 15a. 98. *HS*, pp. 9b, 24b. 99. 17, p. 33a.
100. (a) 金安上 : *HS*, 17, p. 30b. (b) 王定 : *HS*, 17, p. 31b.
101. (a) 樂成 : *HS*, 18, p. 14b. (b) 金日磾 : *HS*, 17, p. 26b. (c) 鄭吉 : *HS*, 17, p. 31a. (d) 史高 : *HS*, 18, p. 16b.
102. (a) 樊噲 : *HS*, 16, p. 12b. (b) 郭忠 : *HS*, 17, p. 28a.

available on how well these hereditary nobles performed as king or marquis. However, there are many accounts of their personal lives. Especially among vassal kings, there were many notorious cases of immoral behavior. For instance (1) when the King of Chiang tu (江都王), Liu Chien (劉建), was heir-apparent, he forced a beautiful woman who was presented to his father as concubine to become his own wife. When the person who had wanted to offer the woman to the king voiced his objection, Liu Chien had him killed. When his father died he ordered ten of his father's favorite wives to have relations with him even before he had buried his father. He also had relations with his sister. Liu Chien was also known to have had women subjected to intercourse with animals. Women in the palace were made to have intercourse with dogs and goats. One time in a lake, he deliberately had a boat carrying four palace women overturned. He watched as two of the women drowned. Another time in a storm, he ordered two of his palace attendants to go out into the lake in a boat. Consequently the boat was overturned, and Liu Chien enjoyed the spectacle of seeing these two attendants clinging on desperately to the capsized boat. He laughed heartily as both of them drowned. To punish those wives and women attendants who made mistakes, he ordered them to be starved to death or killed by wolves. Altogether thirty-five innocent people were killed by him.¹⁰³ (2) Another notorious case was the King of Yen (燕王), Liu Ting (劉定). After his father's death he had relations with his father's concubine and gave birth to a son. He also seized his younger brother's wife as his own concubine, and had relations with three of his daughters.¹⁰⁴ (3) The King of Ch'i (齊王), Liu Chung-ku (劉終古), often made his favorite slave have intercourse with his concubines while he watched. He also enjoyed watching his concubines having intercourse with dogs and horses.¹⁰⁵ According to *Han shu*, there were approximately a hundred vassal kings during the Former Han. Most of them were arrogant, lewd, and immoral.¹⁰⁶

To a lesser extent as in the case of kings some notorious stories can be repeated about marquises. At the end of Wu Ti's reign, very few marquis families which had been enfeoffed at the time of preceding emperors were still in existence. Marquises in large numbers had offended the law and had had their marquisates abolished.¹⁰⁷ All these notorious kings and marquises were actually the rulers of their kingdoms. Hereditary kings and marquises posed a

103. *HS*, 53, pp. 4a-5b.104. *HS*, 35, p. 3b.105. *HS*, 38, p. 12a.106. *HS*, 53, p. 19b.

very serious threat to the principle that the government position would go to the best qualified. The only way to avoid this was to deprive kings and marquises of their political influence.

A marquis' fief ranged in size from that of a village to a country.¹⁰⁷ The population under their rule also varied. At the time of Kao Tsu, the largest marquissate had a population of approximately ten thousand households, while smaller ones had five of six hundred households.¹⁰⁸ The population of each marquissate also varied from time to time. For example, after decades of peace and order that existed in China during the reign of Wen Ti and Ching Ti, the people who had fled previously during the time of turmoil now returned to their native places. This partly contributed to the increase in numbers of inhabitants of marquis' fiefs. The large marquissate contained thirty or forty thousand households, while the small ones doubled their population.¹⁰⁹ These people were under the rule of the marquises, their lords. Many examples can be cited to show that marquises actually ruled over their fiefs. For instance (1) Kao Tsu in one of his decrees described the political power of a marquis as including that of having the right to appoint their own officials and to collect tax.¹¹⁰ (2) Wen Ti once ordered those marquises who stayed in the national capital to return to their own fiefs so as to be able to give guidance to their subjects.¹¹¹ (1) *Hou han shu* describes the marquis system in general terms. It says that the officials and commoners in a fief were the subjects of the marquis.¹¹²

At the beginning of the Former Han dynasty, the kingdoms of the vassal kings enjoyed an autonomous status. The kings themselves ruled over their own kingdoms¹¹³ with the governmental structure of each kingdom completely similar to that of the central government.¹¹⁴ The only appointment in the kingdom made by the central government was that of the *hsiang* (相 chancellor), while the king made all other appointments.¹¹⁵ Moreover, the territory under the control of a king was not just a village or a county as in the case of marquis. The larger kingdoms covered a territory of several *chün* (郡), with around a hundred cities apiece. Even the smaller kingdoms had at least thirty or forty cities.¹¹⁶ For example, at the time of Kao Tsu, the kingdom of Ch'i had seventy-two cities,¹¹⁷

107. *HS*, 16, p. 2a.

108. (a) a county: *HS*, 19A, p. 17a; Fan Yeh 范曄 (398-445). *Hou Han Shu* 後漢書. (Shanghai: Chung Hua Book Co. SPPY ed.; hereafter referred to as *HHS*), 38, p. 9b. (b) a village: *HHS*, 38, p. 9b; *HS*, 40 pp. 16a, 16b; 58 p. 6b.

109. *HS*, 16, pp. 1a, 1b.

110. *HS*, 16, p. 2a.

111. *HS*, 1B, p. 21a.

the kingdom of Ch'u forty cities,¹¹⁹ and the kingdom of Wu over fifty cities.¹²⁰ In a kingdom of such a large size, an inappropriate ruler could bring terrible damage not only to his own kingdom, but also to the whole country.

However, the Han government did launch a campaign to reduce the power of the vassal kings. The semi-independent kingdoms were too big and powerful to be neglected by the central government. Right after Kao Tsu ascended the throne in 202 B.C. (高祖五年), and in the following seven years before he died, those kings who were not members of the imperial Liu family were eliminated. Thus the kingdoms of Tsang T'u, Han Hsin, Chang Erh, Han Hsin (not the same one mentioned above), Ch'ing Pu, P'eng Yüeh and Lu Kuan were abolished one by one.¹²¹ The only king not of the royal family who survived was the King of Ch'ang sha whose realm was deemed insignificant.¹²²

Having the threat from these kings removed at the time of Kao Tsu, Wen Ti and Ch'ing Ti still felt the threat presented by the remaining vassal kings even though they were all members of the imperial family. Three emperors, Wen Ti, Ching Ti, and Wu Ti, with the assistance of their ministers, Chia I (賈誼), Ch'ao Ts'o (鼂錯), and Chu-Fu Yen (主父偃), carried on the campaign to weaken the vassal kings and to bring their territories under the control of the central government. The critical turning point in the struggle between the central government and the vassal kings was the defeat of the seven rebellious kingdoms in the war of 154 B.C. (景中六年).¹²³

Besides the war of 154 B.C., the Han government used a very peaceful but effective method to eliminate vassal kings as a threat. Chia I, at the time of Wen Ti,¹²⁴ and Chu Fu-yen, at the time of Wu Ti,¹²⁵ both suggested to break down the territory of each vassal kingdom into small pieces by having the kings divide their realms among their own sons. Originally the whole kingdom was inherited by the heir-apparent. Wu Ti adopted Chu Fu-yen's suggestion. From then on the vassal kings voluntarily petitioned to break their realms up among their

112. *HS*, 4, p. 8a.

113. *HHS*, 38, p. 9b. 114. *HS*, 19A, p. 15b; 35, p. 4b; 51, p. 8b.

115. *HS*, 14, p. 3b; 19A, p. 15b.

116. *HS*, 38, p. 12b. 117. *HS*, 14, pp. 2b-3b, 48, p. 9b.

118. *HS*, 35, p. 4b; 38, p. 1b; 39, p. 10b.

119. *HS*, 35, p. 4b. 120. *HS*, 35, p. 4b.

121. (a) Tsang T'u: *HS*, 1B, p. 7a. (b) Han Hsin: *HS*, 1B, pp. 7b, 8a, 9a, 16a; 16, p. 22a; 39, p. 4b. (c) Chang Erh: *HS*, 1B, p. 14a. (d) Han Hsin: *HS*, 1B, p. 11a. (e) Ch'ing Pu: *HS*, 1B, pp. 18a, 18b. (f) P'eng Yüeh: *HS*, 1B, p. 17b. (g) Lu Kuan: *HS*, 1B, p. 20b; 14, p. 12a.

122. *HS*, 48, p. 11a.

123. *HS*, 14, p. 4b. 124. *HS*, 14, p. 3b, 48, p. 11b.

125. *HS*, 14, pp. 3b, 4a; 53, p. 11b; 64A; p. 10a.

sons.¹²⁶ For instance, the kingdom of Ch'i was broken into seven kingdoms, the kingdom of Chao into six, the kingdom of Liang into five, and the kingdom of Huai nan into three.¹²⁷

Moreover, right after the war of 154 B.C. the central government forbade the vassal kings to rule over their own kingdoms.¹²⁸ For instance: (1) The King of Chao (趙王), Liu P'eng-tsu (劉彭祖), liked to work as a public official. He had to petition the emperor for approval allowing him to take charge of the police work.¹²⁹ (2) When the king of Yen (燕王), Liu Tan (劉旦), planned rebellion, in order to control the government he had to lie saying that he got a decree from Wu Ti to allow him to take charge of government affairs.¹³⁰ At the same time kings were also deprived of the right to appoint officials in their own kingdoms.¹³¹ Officials in kingdoms were directly appointed by the central government. *Han chiu i* (漢舊儀), mentions this change in more detail. It tells us that the central government would appoint all officials in the kingdom above four hundred piculs rank.¹³² In one instance, when the King of Heng shan (衡山王), Liu Szu (劉賜), offended against the law, the central government took a step to restrict further his right in appointing officials. The central government appointed all officials in his kingdom above two hundred picul rank.¹³³

After the time of Wu Ti, vassal kings inherited kingdoms greatly reduced in size. Even in their remaining small kingdoms, they were deprived of political power. The only thing they could get out of their own kingdoms was a share of taxes.¹³⁴ By the time of Ai Ti and P'ing Ti, the vassal kings had been lowered to such a status that they were just another group of wealth families, and no longer even enjoyed respect in the society.¹³⁵ Moreover, since the emperors were very jealous of the political power which might be exerted by the vassal kings, the vassal king's influence outside of his kingdom and in the central government was strictly restricted. Being deprived of influence in the court and of the power to rule over his kingdom, the vassal king now no longer played a role of any kind in the government. The succession system of vassal kings no longer had an important effect on the government of the Han dynasty.

The process of depriving the marquises of their power in ruling their fiefs was also carried on, only attracting less attention. In the section on governmental

126. *HS*, 6, pp. 9b, 10a; 14, p. 4a; 15A, p. 1a.

127. *HS*, 14, p. 4a.

128. *HS*, 19A, p. 15b.

129. *HS*, 53, pp. 8a, 8b.

130. *HS*, 63, p. 8b.

131. *HS*, 19A, p. 15b.

132. Wei Hung 衛宏. *Han chiu i* 漢舊儀. in *Ping chin kuan t'sung shu*. 1885 edition., B, p. 5a.

133. *HS*, 44, pp. 14a, 14b.

structure in *Hou han shu*, it describes the marquise.¹³⁶ Among the officials in a marquise, the most important one was called *hsiang* (相 chancellor). There was a *hsiang* in each marquise. He received the same rank and salary as the magistrate of a *hsien* (縣 county) of equal size. He ruled over the marquis' fief as the magistrate ruled over his *hsien*. The *hsiang* was not subordinate to the marquis. He only gave the marquis a share of the tax which was collected from his fief. According to this piece of information, a marquis was deprived of all his power in ruling his own realm. What he got from his fief was only his income: his share of taxes collected from his fief. Information on a very important aspect is missing in the above source. There is no indication when this change took place. One clue might supply us with the answer. In the section on government in *Han shu*, it mentions that the position of *hsiang* in the marquis' fief was established during the reign of Wu Ti.¹³⁷ However, *Han shu* fails to describe its function and its relationship with the marquis. If we assume that the *hsiang* which is mentioned in *Han shu* was the same office described in *Hou han shu*, then the marquises were deprived of their power to rule over their marquises at the time of Wu Ti. If that assumption is correct, from Wu Ti's time on marquises were no longer the rulers of their territories. However, unlike the kings whose political influence were seriously suspected and therefore eliminated by the emperors, the marquises still enjoyed lofty positions and exerted influence in the court. The hereditary nobility of marquises remained as an undesirable element in the Han selection system of public personnel.

134. *HS*, 14, p. 4b.135. *HS*, 14, p. 4b.136. *HHS*, 38, pp. 9b, 10a.137. *HS*, 19A, p. 15b.