

Study of empress wu zetian history essay



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Empress Wu Zetian is a famous and also the only one empress in Chinese history. Though the rule was quite harsh in her reign, She did a great contribution to the development of China. She had much more achievements than faults in her fifty-year's term. So, we think that Wu Zetian is a good person. We'd like to set forth our reasons mainly in four aspects in detail, which include her contribution to the

The first contribution of Empress Wu Zetian was that she gave a heavy blow to the aristocratic families. After WuZeTian became the empress, she exiled the people who objected to her becoming the emperor to the remote areas. At that time, the families of commoners and the aristocratic families were struggling for power. When Emperor Li ShiMin was in power, the families of commoners had become stronger, and Empress Li ShiMin made a code to restrain their power. Though Wu ZeTian's father ranked high, he was born in a family of commoners, so he could not change the fact to a large degree.

After Wu ZeTian was in power, many aristocratic families objected to her. First she was a woman who was supposed to have no right to be an emperor. Second because she was born in a family of commoners. In order to hit the aristocratic families and give vent to her anger, Wu ZeTian rewrote the the Family name description to replace the one Li ShiMin wrote. The one written by Emperor Li didn't record Wu ZeTian's family name, which made her very angry. At this time, in the Family name description, Wu Zetian let her family to be the first one in the rank. At that time, ranks had nine levels. People who were at the first five levels can be enrolled and become a social stratum between senior officials and the common people. In that way, a lot of people who were born in the families of commoners and had some knowledge

poured in. It indeed gave some fresh air to the politics and the economic. It also gave a boost to the development of the society. People who were born in the aristocratic families had completely lost their political advantages that inherited from their ancestors to elevate their ranks. Of course, the aristocratic families were very unsatisfied, they mocked the the Family name description is just a book used to award the military exploit, but not a record of the important families. Wu ZeTian didn't care about that, she insisted to carry out the Family name description. It had a great influence in the society at that time. She elevated the status of commoners to a large degree. We have to admit that Wu ZeTian is really a woman with ambition and abilities.

Wu ZeTian was also very intelligent. She knew the families of commoners were eager to win in the race for power, so she raised their ranks in the court. The families of commoners were roped in to support Wu ZeTian. She used them to give a heavy blow to the aristocratic families and solidified, and thus stabilized her rules. The reason why she hit the aristocratic families is that Wu ZeTian wanted to solidify her rules and it was a historical trend at the same time: The expansion of the families of commoners was inevitable, and through hundreds of years, the aristocratic families monopolized the political power.

Another contribution is that she improved the development of economic. Though at the time of Zhen guan the emperor put forwarded a policy to encourage doing farming, this policy was not carried out actually. So Empress Wu carried out a policy to encourage farming and collect fewer taxes. She also strengthened the regulation of chief magistrates. Empress Wu was very tolerant to the fugitive farmers. So in the reign of Empress Wu,
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the society was quite stable. The agriculture, handicraft and business had a rapid development. The population grew to 6150000 families. In the ancient times, it was a large size of the population. This was an objective data that could reflect the development of economy.

Empress Wu intensified water-central project to help the farming. As we know, agriculture was an important part of economy in ancient times, and building aqueducts could increase the productions. So she ordered the officials to build many aqueducts in Shanxi, Hebei, Henan, Shandong, Hunan, Sichuan, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Gansu and Qinghai.

Empress Wu had a policy of leniency for fugitive farmers that the fugitive farmers needn't to pay taxes for one year. And the people who were unable to lead a living on his own would be given financial help by local government. Then the society became more and more stable, and people could pay more attention to farming. In addition, handicraft and business developed a lot at the same time.

Because of the great progress in agriculture, surplus labor appeared which spurred the handicraft industry. In the areas of technique, category, or industrial scale, the development of the handicraft industry in Tang Dynasty surpassed that of the previous dynasties in the history. In field of textile, the technology reached a fairly advanced standard. The technique of making silk became refined and delicate. The ceramic industry also entered into a new phase. Some other kinds of manufacturing, including papermaking, tea-leaf processing, metallurgical industry and shipbuilding also thrived in that period.

In Tang Dynasty the main commodities included foodstuffs, salt, spirits, tea, medicine, textiles, gold or silver ware and other daily items. A large number of commercial cities sprang up during the time of Empress Wu, such as Lanzhou, Chengdu, Guilin, Hangzhou as well as the capital Chang'an and the auxiliary capital Luoyang. Special markets were set up in those cities, in which a strict market order ran very well. Due to the opening up of the Silk Road in the Han Dynasty, vast quantities of foreign merchants and envoys came to trade in China. This also promoted the development of the marine trade. At that time, Tang ships could traverse the Indian Ocean and reach the Persian Gulf. Merchant ships traded frequently between China and countries in Asia and Africa. The great influence that Wu Zetian had on the economy is both important and remarkable.

As an emperor of Tang Dynasty, Wu Zetian's outstanding deed contributed greatly to the military field. In the period of Wu Zetian, the state and territory of Tang Dynasty had been kept at a high level. Since a large number of skilled soldiers was killed before she became the emperor, the nation suffered a lot from the civil war and outside war for a long period of time. While, the tendency of failure changed step by step.

In the northwest, Tang and Tubo had continuous conflicts on the western warriors. When Empress Wu got ready to seek the rights of emperor, Tubo had already occupied many places of western warriors even Dunhuang. After Wu claimed to be the king of Tang Dynasty, she demanded of her soldier to regain the places occupied by Tubo, and then garrisoned the western. Until then, the battle for the western warriors between Tang and Tubo ended up.

In the north, the east Turkistan had been wiped out during the period of Emperor Tang taizong, but it recovered during the time of Emperor Tang gaozong. Wu Zetian had to appoint his son Li Xian as the king of Luling and enlisted soldiers to fight for the east Turkistan, but the marshal is the famous detective Di Renjie actually. However, when the east Turkistan came to know that the army of Tang would set out to fight for them, they began to kill all the people they met on the land they pulled out from Tang's territory. During then about 1 million people were killed by them. At the time Di Renjie arrived, the east Turkistan had retreated. So he appeased the native people there, and ordered the soldiers not to disturb them at the same time. By this time, Hebei Province was stabilized.

In the northeast, the tribe Qidan rose during the period of WuZetian. Hebei was attacked again. Wu Zetian dispatched troops to crusade against the Qidan three times but failed. With the help of other two nations, Wu solved the problem at last. In the next year, Wu set a department to control the northwest region. That consolidated Tang's dominion of western warriors. What's more, the traditional army system began to collapse since Wu brought forth new ideas to the army system. The new system was called "united army", that was to say, the soldiers were hired. That could be regarded as "a pioneering work" in the history of Chinese army.

Based on the above cases, we can easily judge Wu's ability of military from her performance to stabilize the borderlands, and she was no less wise than the great Emperor Tang taizong. The authority that Empress Wu established led to a fairly stable borderland for a long time. So, we can not deny that

Empress Wu Zetian had done a great contribution to the nation's security and development of military field.

Another achievement of Wu is her effort on culture development. During her reign, Wu paid much attention to the imperial examination and took effective measures to develop this kind of exam. Wu added the courses of the exam and the number of people accepted by the court. This kind of method of the exam was different from the past. After examinees finishing the usual exams, she demanded the excellent examinees to have another exam in palace. She would present at the examination room and take charge of the exam in person. This method not only led to a strict attitude towards the exam, but also increased examinees' sense of pride.

Empress Wu appointed nobody but persons of merit, and made many a scholars and gentlemen enter politics which attributed greatly to the prosperity of her time. As long as they had the abilities, people would have the equal rights to get a position in the palace whether they were poor or rich. Especially, Wu was willing to pick out the high-rank bureaucrats from the excellent examinees of the imperial examination. The more examinees of imperial examination appointed by the court, the more people took the examination for a good position. This method stimulated poets' positivity for taking part in the exam; meanwhile, it burned the passion of ordinary people to learn scientific knowledge. Since the period of Wu, learning became a social atmosphere, and people attached more importance than ever to learning every day.

Due to the popularization of culture, Tang's culture earned many opportunities to develop entirely and reached a high height of power and splendor. During the period of Wu, there were so many great achievements appearing in the field of poem, literature, historiography, etc. An increasing number of poets and litterateurs sprung up like mushrooms. Sculpture and painting also reached the unprecedented high standard.

A poet in Tang created the first series of Tang dynasty's prose, in which people used plain words instead of euphuistical words. In the latter period of Tang, the mature style of prose was established. Poets created the first series of Tang poetry, Regulated Verse and Jueju poems, a style that had never appeared before. After a thousand years, Regulated Verse and Jueju still had the powerful vitality and kept developing. Wu was also good at writing this kind of poem and produced many great works. People who created regulated verse, also created the first couplet. Until now, couplets were used widely in different kind of festivals by Chinese. The first legend appeared surprisingly which had the perfect structure. In the latter period of Tang, more and more legends appeared and then legend became a part of Tang's literature. The first Historical Philosophy book, Shi Tong, had an important position in the world until now. Wu organized some people to write the first Chinese Pharmacopoeia Xinxiu Bencao which was also the first Pharmacopoeia in the world. Wu also organized many competent people to collect materials and write the first encyclopedia. The achievements in the field of culture reflected the harmony of nation and the contribution of Wu.

Although there was a difficult financial period and some other side effects during her time, the reign of Empress Wu Zetian is characterized by a unified

country, a stable society, a prosperous economy and a progressive cultural life. Also, as a result, the common people enjoyed a good and prosperous life. The prosperity of the time of Wu established a foundation for the great Kaiyuan Period, which was the most splendid time in China history and also the climax history of China. Wu's measures conformed to the historical trend, and had a great influence in Tang Dynasty and even Chinese history.