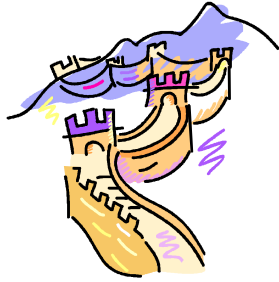


# Imperial China



*Imperial China (221 BC onward) represents a loss of power of the landed aristocrats, and the development of the power of the Emperor, allied with the peasants.*

## Emperor

- Brought new lands into cultivation, sending out huge numbers of peasant colonists
- Title to lands (new and old) given to peasants
- Acquired huge estates: from 100 BC to 100 AD, the annual imperial income was 8 billion coins; the rest of China's was 10 billion
- Used huge numbers of peasants, soldiers, and criminals on public works projects
- Received tax revenues (instead of aristocrats)
- Sent aristocrats to capital or new cities

## Peasants

- Would get loans and farming tools from imperial government
- Worked on irrigation projects
- Tendency was to get private ownership of land (as opposed to simply paying taxes to an aristocratic landlord), and to pay taxes directly to the emperor instead
- Tended to support the emperor, except if taxes were too high

Hostile tribes along the northern borders were always a problem for China.

- This is one reason why the emperors tried so hard to bring new lands into cultivation—it set up colonies and support for the Chinese army.
- Many gifts were given to the border tribes: gifts of silk to them grew from 7 tons in 50 BC, to 30 tons in 1 BC. At this time, the Chinese economy produced an average of 18 billion coins a year in value; some 3 to 4 billion coins worth of goods were handed over to the nomads along the north, and the desert tribes in the northwest.