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Government Land Policies and Systems

in Early Imperial China

by

William Gordon Crowell

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

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ABBREVIATIONS

BIHP ------- *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology*, Academia Sinica.

Ch'en shu -- Yao Ch'a and Yao Ssu-lien, *Ch'en shu*.

Chhp ------- *Ch'ing-hua hsüeh-pao*.

Cklttt ----- *Li-shih yen-chiu* pien-chi pu, ed. *Chung-kuo li-tai t'u-ti chih-tu t'ao-lun chi*.

Cs --------- Fang Hsüan-ling, *Chin shu*.

HFHD ------- Homer H. Dubs, trans., *The History of the Former Han Dynasty*.

HHc -------- Ssu-ma Piao, *Hsü Han chih*.

HHs -------- Fan Yeh, *Hou Han shu*.

HJAS ------- *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*.

Hs --------- Pan Ku, *Han shu*.

Hspc ------- Wang Hsien-ch'ien, *Han shu pu-chu*.

HTcfc ------ Ho Ch'ang-ch'ün, *Han T'ang chun feng-chien t'u-ti so-yu chih hsing-shih yen-chiu*.

Hwts ------- Ch'eng Jung, *Han Wei ts'ung-shu*.

JAS -------- *Journal of Asian Studies*.

Khcpts ----- *Kuo-hsüeh chi-pen ts'ung-shu*.

Legge ------ James Legge, trans., *The Chinese Classics*.

Ls --------- Yao Ch'a and Yao Ssu-lian, *Liang shu*.

Lsyc ------- *Li-shih yen-chiu*.

NCs -------- Hsiao Tzu-hsien, *Nan-Ch'i shu*.

Ns --------- Li Yen-shou, *Nan shih*.

PCs -------- Li Te-lin and Li Pai-yao, *Pei-Ch'i shu*.

Ps --------- Li Yen-shou, *Pei shih*.

Sc --------- Ssu-ma Ch'ien, Shih chi.

Skc -------- Ch'en Shou, San-kuo chih.

Ss --------- Shen Yüeh, Sung shu.

Sui shu ---- Wei Cheng, Sui shu.

Tctc ------- Ssu-ma Kuang, Tzu-chih t'ung-chien.

Tfyk ------- Wang Ch'in-jo, Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei.

TkHc ------- Pan Ku, et al., Tung-kuan Han-chi.

Tpyl ------- Li Fang, T'ai-p'ing yü-lan.

Tt --------- Tu Yu, T'ung tien.

T'ung-chih - Cheng Ch'iao, T'ung-chih.

Whtk ------- Ma Tuan-lin, Wen-hsien t'ung k'ao.

Ws --------- Wei Shou, Wei shu.

Ytl -------- Wang Li-ch'i, Yen-t'ieh lun chiao-chu.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In his classic study of the political systems of empires, S. N. Eisenstadt noted that one of the fundamental concerns of the rulers of empires was the development and maintenance of unified and centralized polities and the continuance of their sovereignty over them. In order to achieve this, these rulers required a regular supply of resources in order to sustain the administrative structure that served as an important basis of their strength and as the primary medium of the execution of their policies. To assure the constant availability of these resources, it was necessary that the rulers be able to maintain a continuous and independent mobilization of these resources. To this end, the rulers (and their governments) were interested in assuring the continued existence and further development of "free-floating resources," that is, resources that were not ascribed to any other group or strata of society. Being mobile, these resources could be taken over and utilized by the ruler and his agents as they saw fit.[1]

These resources--by which we should understand manpower and revenue--were necessary to the ruler of the bureaucratic empire if he were to achieve his goal of a

centralized and unified empire and his continued sovereignty over it. But these goals could be realized only so long as these resources were "neither entirely dependent on other groups, nor committed to their use, nor obtainable only through their good will."[2] To the degree that a ruler was dependent upon ascriptive and committed resources, his independence to formulate and pursue his goals and policies was circumscribed. Consequently, notes Eisenstadt, the rulers of bureaucratic empires have historically sought to reduce the control of other centers of power over these resources and thereby decrease the possibility that such centers could become entirely autonomous and monopolize resources in the society.[3]

It was, of course, scarcely enough for the ruler to simply declare the independence of the resources that he sought. Rather it was necessary for the ruler and his agents to take steps to free those resources and to make certain that they would remain free. In doing so, however, they met with resistance from groups in the society that sought to make those resources ascriptive if they were not already or to maintain them as such if they were. This produced then a competition between the ruler and his agents on the one hand and the resisting groups--often local notables--on the other. In this competition, the government devised and pursued policies intended to preserve the flexible nature of the resources and to deny them

to competing groups. The present dissertation is an examination of one such set of policies--the land policies proposed and pursued by successive regimes in China during the early imperial period (221 B.C.--A.D. 617). It seeks to examine the ideological bases of those policies, the particular conditions existing under each dynasty that led to the formulation of those policies, the content and nature of the measures adopted by each dynasty to give force to those policies, and the extent to which they--the policies and measures--may have been successful in assuring the continued availability of free-floating resources to meet the needs of the imperial government.

Land policies were not the only means by which early imperial regimes sought to ensure the continued availability of such resources, but they were undeniably considered the most important. The creators of each new system drew upon classical models for inspiration and sought to build and improve upon the efforts of their predecessors. The result was a series of increasingly elaborate and complex measures regulating land tenure and utilization which culminated in the development of the system of equal land allotments promulgated under the Northern Wei in 485. This system was adopted with slight modification by the regimes that immediately followed the Northern Wei. This study is limited (!) to covering the developments in the nearly seven hundred years leading up to the promulgation of the

system of equal land allotments and the attempts by the Northern Wei to enact the system.

The end of the Northern Wei may be rightly viewed as a sort of watershed with regard to land policy. On the one hand it marked the culmination of the search for a comprehensive land policy based on the ideals of the well-field system. On the other hand, the system of equal land allotments was the beginning of a new set of developments that were to last for some three hundred years until the system was abandoned by the T'ang toward the end of the eighth century. During this period, the regimes which followed the Northern Wei--the Western and Eastern Wei, the Northern Chou, the Northern Ch'i, the Sui, and the T'ang dynasties--modified and elaborated the system of equal land allotments to meet their particular needs. Moreover, the Western Wei period saw the appearance of a new system of military organization--the _fu-ping_ system--which attempted a return to Toba principles of organization. Coming after the Revolt of the Six Garrisons and about the same time as the return to using Toba surnames, this new system can be seen as part of the reaction to the sinification that had taken place under the Northern Wei, especially under Emperor Hsiao-wen. Subsequently this system became linked to the system of equal land allotments, thereby producing a new type of military-agricultural system.

The watershed character of the late Northern Wei period makes it a natural terminus for this study. However, this stopping point is also chosen for practical reasons--the materials for the post-Northern Wei through T'ang period are much richer than for any previous period, and adequate treatment of them would require a study at least as long as the present effort. For the system of equal land allotments under the T'ang the reader is referred to voluminous secondary literature in Chinese and Japanese and the brief but useful discussion by Denis Twitchett in English.[4]

Before launching into the treatment of the specific policies and measures adopted by particular dynasties, some general comments regarding land policy and how it relates to the competition for free-floating resources in early imperial China are in order. These comments will be brief, and as is often the case with brief comments, it will sometimes be difficult to avoid oversimplification. It is hoped, however, that this will serve to highlight important developments during the period under consideration that might be obscured in the individual chapters.

In discussing the competition for free-floating resources during the early imperial period, it is useful to begin by describing the competitors since it is, of course, rather difficult to have a competition without

them. For analytical purposes, it is convenient to break these down into the government, powerful notables, and the peasantry. These of course were not the only elements comprising the early imperial polity, but for our discussion they were the most important. Let us begin by delineating each in turn.

First of all, there were the ruler and his agents--in this case the Chinese emperor and the members of the bureaucracy. Collectively these may be referred to as the "central government." Of course at times the emperor might be simply a cipher, as during the reign of Emperor Hsien of the Han when Ts'ao Ts'ao was in control of the government, and members of the bureaucracy might be working more for their own individual interests than for those of the imperium. In the former case, however, policies were pronounced in the name of the emperor and can be considered to have been carried out in his behalf. Moreover, they were quite clearly directed at extending central government control over free-floating resources at the expense of locally-powerful notables. In the latter case, we can say that these officials were _de facto_ no longer serving as the agents of the ruler and their activities do not change the characterization of the bureaucracy as being the agents of the ruler.[5]

Opposed to the ruler and his agents in the competition for free-floating resources were the locally powerful

notables. Naturally, there were many different types of notables to be found in local society during the early imperial period, and not all of them were in competition with the central government for resources.[6] Some notable families, for example hereditary official families, supplied the bureaucracy with officials and therefore served as agents of the emperor. Others became notable for reasons of intellectual ability or moral integrity. Such persons might be influential or powerful in a manner of speaking, but they were not usually the ones who were in competition with the central government for free-floating resources. Who then were the families in competition with the government for free-floating resources, the ones that I have designated "powerful families" or "locally powerful families?"

By these terms I mean generally those families who were able to exercise influence in their home area, generally through their wealth or coercive power, and did so for their own aggrandizement. The hereditary official families of the Han period and the aristocratic families (shih-tsu) of the post-Han period were probably not among this group, though they had obvious wealth and influence in their home area. As a rule, they probably were not prone to use this power to encroach on the peasantry since they were already well established, and for the most part they probably maintained cordial relations with their neighbors.[7] Most of powerful families probably came from

up and coming families in the earlier part of the early imperial period and from the "minor lineages" (hsiao-hsing) or families even lower down the social scale during the period from about the Chin on.[8] These families were often referred to as "monopolizers" (ping-chien) and often denoted as "hao" ("eminent," "overbearing," "brave"), a term which is used to describe families or individuals who were seen as rivals to the authority of the government in their home area and as an actual or potential threat to order.[9]

The third element in the competition for resources was the peasantry. Indeed, in a very real sense they were the resources, since they provided the manpower, money, and grain that the government needed in the form of taxes, rent, and conscript service. Similarly, they might produce revenue for the locally powerful families through the rents they paid as tenants of those families, and they could provide manpower in the form of hired laborers or as clients of such families. The latter tended to become more prevalent during the periods of turmoil and administrative breakdown. As the government became unable to provide protection and relief for the peasantry in a particular area, they would turn to local magnates for such protection, frequently offering their land in exchange. This would result in a partron-client relationship, with the patron (= powerful notable) now serving as an inter-

mediary or "broker" between the peasant and the central government.[10] In later periods, when the household (hu) was taken as the basic unit for taxation, such persons would be registered as members of the locally powerful family, thereby evading taxes. The result, naturally, was a concomitant loss of revenue and manpower for the state.

Because the peasantry were the source of the bulk of the free-floating resources, a great deal of emphasis was placed upon their well-being and independence. For this reason, the central government from a very early period--at least the fourth century B.C. in the state of Ch'in--sought to create and maintain a free peasantry. This did not mean that they were "free" in any modern sense of political freedom, but that they were free of any obligations or loyalties to anyone that might hinder their ability to fulfill their tax and manpower obligations to the central government. Persons who were dependents or clients of locally powerful families were not in this sense free.

This desire to create a free peasantry was by no means a phenomenon limited to early imperial China. Professor Eisenstadt notes that in general the rulers of empires made various attempts to create and maintain an independent free peasantry on small landholdings. The purpose of such a policy was partly economic--to ensure a flow of resources

to the state in the form of tax monies and service, but it was also partly political and social--to create a social stratum both dependent on and loyal to the state, one that would identify with the emperor rather than any other lord.[11] Roman leaders such as Julius Ceasar were aware of the need for the strong backing of a sound and healthy stock of citizen-farmers in ruling a vast empire.[12] And under the Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1911), the central government attempted to balance the power and local domination of the gentry by reserving the posts of pao-chia heads for commoners.[13]

The importance attached to the peasantry can be seen in numerous pronouncements by emperors and political thinkers which have an almost democratic ring to them. During the early imperial period the peasantry were synonymous with "the people" (min), and the people were considered to be "the basis of the state."[14] Without their support, a dynasty could fall, and a putative lack of popular support was reason enough (ostensibly, at any rate) to take up arms against the current occupant of the throne.[15] Such notions had a venerable heritage in Chinese thought and had found their most famous articulation in Mencius' statements that a ruler should act in accordance with the will of the people.[16]

Considering the importance of the peasantry, it is only natural that much attention was paid to land policy.

For it can be said that land is what defines a peasant and makes his existence as an independent entity possible.[17] As long as the peasant had land, he possessed the means to maintain himself independent of any permanent obligations to an overlord or patron. He also had the wherewithal to pay taxes, because the land provided him with an income. Moreover, if he had no patron, such as a locally powerful notable, serving as an intermediary or "broker" between him and the central government, the government had direct access to him as a source of manpower. Consequently, by guaranteeing the peasant land, the government was ensuring the availability of free-floating resources. And when the government was unable to guarantee land for the peasant--either in the form of distribution of land to those who had none or in the form of security of tenure to those who already held land--then those resources went to the person who could, usually a locally powerful notable.

The measures with regard to land which the central government adopted during the early imperial period to ensure the availability of resources were generally of three kinds. One was efforts to forestall the concentration of land in the hands of the powerful. Concerned officials very early recognized what Western students of land reform have pointed out, namely, that private ownership of land leads to the concentration of holdings.[18] To prevent this, as early as the Former Han officials proposed

establishing limits on the amount of land that one could hold. Although these early proposals were not adopted, a comprehensive system of limitations was adopted by the Western Chin toward the end of the third century. Prior to this there had been statutes under which officials could act against persons under their jurisdiction who were monopolizing land, but almost nothing is known about these.

The second measure which the central government adopted was the direct administration of lands which it either rented out to peasants (and sometimes to local notables as well) or conscripted peasants to cultivate. The former included the imperial fields of the Han and the government fields of the Han and later periods. Among these would also be the emolument lands from which officials drew their official salaries. The latter--the lands farmed by conscripts--would have included the agricultural colonies, both military and civilian. Government-administered lands were instrumental in making land available to peasants who otherwise would have had nothing to cultivate.

A third measure was the distribution of land to peasants who had none or who did not have enough. This was carried out on an *ad hoc* basis under the Han, in a more extensive way under the system of land assignments of the Western Chin, and most comprehensively under the system of equal land allotments of the Northern Wei dynasty in

485. Unlike the previous efforts, the latter system was intended to be permanent and continuing.

Complementing these three different types of measures was a policy of promoting agriculture that was common to all periods. This involved dissemination of new techniques, distribution of seed and implements to those who needed them, assistance to peasants when natural disaster struck, reclamation projects, and so on. It also included a policy of discouraging commercial activities and encouraging--sometimes coercing--craftsmen and merchants to become agriculturalists. By these means, the government sought to encourage people to enter agriculture and to stimulate agricultural expansion.

The importance attached to land by the central governments of the early imperial period is obvious. Now we must turn to a discussion of the measures adopted by these various regimes, to what they were, what conditions gave rise to them, what the various governments hoped to achieve by them, and how successful they were.

Note on Sources: Although the source materials used for this study will be readily familiar to any student of the period, they might not be so familiar to persons whose primary interests lie in other fields of Chinese studies or who are not sinologists. Unfamiliarity with the source materials, naturally, deprives the reader of a sense of

the reliability of the data used and may result in an unwarranted sense of confidence (or lack thereof) in the conclusions reached on the basis of that evidence. For this reason and in the hope of improving the usefulness of sinological studies for persons who have no sinological training but who wish to undertake comparative studies or treat issues over a cross-cultural spectrum, the following cursory remarks on sources are presented.

Generally speaking, the source materials for the present study may be divided into four categories: 1) the Standard Histories, 2) collectanea, 3) miscellaneous texts, and 4) archeological materials. The sources in the various categories are not necessarily of equal value, and the material that they contain frequently overlaps. We shall briefly describe each in turn.

1) The Standard Histories (cheng shih) are by far the most important of the sources available to us, because they contain the most information. In later periods a new dynasty would usually commission compilation of a Standard History of the dynasty which had preceded it.[19] For the early imperial period, however, approximately half the Standard Histories were begun as private enterprises and only later were given official sanction. The model for the Standard Histories was the Records of the Grand Historian (Shih chi) compiled by Ssu-ma T'an (d. 110 B.C.) and his son Ssu-ma Ch'ien, whose name is usually associated

with the work.[20] The Records differed from later Standard Histories in that it dealt with the period from remotest antiquity through the reign of Emperor Wu of the Han (140-87 B.C.), whereas the others generally limited themselves to the histories of particular dynasties.[21] The Records was divided into five sections--the imperial annals, the tables, the treatises, the hereditary noble houses of pre-dynastic China, and the biographies. The imperial annals are a straightforward chronicle of events during the reign of each emperor. The tables are a chronological arrangement of such things as the enfeoffment of nobles, appointments to office, and the like. The treatises are specialized discussions of such topics as economy, rites, music, irrigation, the calendar, and so on. The section on the hereditary noble houses of pre-dynastic China contains annalistic accounts of the ruling houses of the various states that comprised China prior to its unification by the Ch'in. And the biographies contain, as one might anticipate, biographies of important individuals. Frequently, the biographies are grouped according to a theme, for example, biographies of Confucian scholars, biographies of harsh officials, biographies of knights-errant, and the like. The term "biography" is something of a misnomer, however, since some of them are discussions of non-Chinese peoples and states rather than individuals.

Subsequent Standard Histories generally followed the pattern of the Records, though most of the histories dealing with the early imperial period omitted the tables (only the History of the Former Han Dynasty has them) and the section on hereditary nobles. The Records of the Three Kingdoms contains only biographical chapters, and eight of the fifteen histories covering the pre-T'ang period contain no treatises. This latter omission is compensated by the fact that the treatises in the History of the Chin Dynasty and the History of the Liu Sung Dynasty discuss the Three Kingdoms period for which there are no specific treatises, and the treatises in the History of the Sui Dynasty deal with the Liang, Ch'en, Northern Ch'i, and Northern Chou dynasties.[22]

In some cases, the compilers of the Standard Histories had access to archival materials when they were composing their histories. This was the case, for example, with Ssu-ma Ch'ien and with Pan Ku who compiled the History of the Former Han Dynasty, a work that had been begun by his father.[23] Others of the histories were compiled using available secondary works, some of which may have been themselves based upon archival or official materials. These materials included such things as memorials sumitted by officials, imperial decrees, and the "diaries of rest and repose" which were officially kept records of the emperor's daily activities. Most of the histories covering

the early imperial period from the Later Han on seem to have been based on a mixture of secondary materials and available official documents. Such histories obviously must be used with caution.

In addition to the frequently secondary or tertiary nature of the materials upon which particular histories are based, there are other problems. In some cases the historian was not above fleshing out his account by fabricating material, often in the form of speeches and conversations. The language is often formulaic and given to hyperbole.[24] Numbers are frequently not to be taken literally--"hundred" or "ten thousand" may simply mean "many" rather than referring to an actual number.[25] Since the histories were often intended for imperial perusal, they were sometimes composed in a tendentious manner in order to emphasize particular points that the historian wished to make.[26] Finally, there are problems arising from textual transmission. It would be marvelous indeed if a text could be handed down over 1,500 or so years and remain intact. Because of the depredations of transmission, the texts sometimes are corrupt or contain omissions that can cause no small amount of difficulty for the historian.

In light of these problems, it seems that one would despair of ever being able to use the Standard Histories (or any other ancient Chinese text; many of the problems enumerated here are common to all texts of the period).

These problems, however, are by no means insurmountable. By exercising caution, the historian can usually sense when material is suspect, and he can catch on to the formulaic and hyperbolic language. The tendentious nature of presentation presents problems that are more subtle, but again they are not insurmountable if one is aware of their existence. And as for difficulties arising from the secondary nature of many of the source materials and the problems of textual transmission, the historian is blessed with the fruits of a venerable commentative tradition among Chinese scholars.

From a very early period Chinese scholars began to write commentaries to a wide variety of texts in which they explicated difficult passages or cited corroborative material from other texts which are no longer extant. This latter practice has provided later scholars with a means of verifying much of the information that is given in the histories. Moreover, it is frequently possible to verify information in the histories by comparison with material contained in extant texts such as the collectanea and The Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government (Tzu-chih t'ung-chien). The latter was compiled during the Sung dynasty by Ssu-ma Kuang and presented to the emperor in 1084. It chronicles Chinese history from the fifth century B.C. to the tenth century. In compiling it, a wide range of sources was consulted, many of which are no longer

extant, making the Comprehensive Mirror an important means of corroborating the Standard Histories. The commentary by Hu San-hsing is also important in this regard.[27]

2) The collectanea (lei-shu) are one of the most important sources for Chinese institutional history.[28] In brief, they are generally composed of material culled from various texts such as the Standard Histories, belles lettres, philosophical works, and so on, which was organized topically. The earlier collectanea were compiled to provide material that would be useful in the writing of essays or in providing students with a basic foundation of knowledge. Among these were the Excerpts Copied from Works in the North Hall (Pei-t'ang shu-ch'ao) compiled by Yü Shih-nan (558-638), the Collection of Literature Arranged by Categories (I-wen lei-chü) compiled by Ou-yang Hsün (557-641), and the Writings for Elementary Instruction (Ch'u hsüeh chi) compiled by Hsü Chien (659-729).

Later collectanea were often compiled with an eye to providing the emperor with a convenient distillation of the information he required for running the empire or to furnishing candidates for the official examinations with handy references for use in preparing for the examinations. Among these are the Imperially Reviewed Encyclopedia of the T'ai-p'ing Era (T'ai-p'ing yü-lan) compiled under the nominal direction of Li Fang (925-996),[29] the Outstanding Models from the Storehouse of Literature (Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei)

compiled under the direction of Wang Ch'in-jo and completed in 1013, and the Sea of Jade (Yü hai) compiled by Wang Ying-lin (1223-1296). Information in these works, as with the first three, consists of topically arranged quotations from a large number of works, many of which are no longer extant. The quotations are of much greater value for institutional history than those in the earlier three.

Of greatest value for institutional, economic, and social history are the three institutional encyclopedias known collectively as the San-t'ung (the Three T'ung). The first of these, which set the general pattern for the others, was Tu Yu's Encyclopedic History of Institutions (T'ung tien), which was completed in 801. This work is of tremendous value for the early imperial period. It is organized topically with sections on economics, the examination system, the bureaucracy, rites, music, the military system, the legal system, political geography, and border affairs. Although the bulk of the material is in the form of quotations from the classics, histories, memorials to the throne, and belles lettres, it is arranged in such a manner that it reads quite smoothly, as though it were all part of a single essay. The information given is important for corroborating that given in the histories and other works and because some of it is not available elsewhere. The other two works of this genre, the Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Institutions (T'ung chih) by Cheng Ch'iao

(1104-1162) and the General History of Institutions and Critical Examination of Documents (Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao) by Ma Tuan-lin (13th C.) are less important for the early imperial period because they take most of their material for this period from Tu Yu's work.

3) Miscellaneous texts include all manner of contemporary writings by political thinkers, social critics, agricultural writers, historians (other than the compilers of the Standard Histories), poets, and the like. The number of texts covered by this category is too great to allow discussion of individual texts. The reader can gain some idea of the sort of data that can be gotten from these works from the references to them in the notes, especially in Chapters II and III. These works are especially useful for the incidental information they contain concerning the social and economic history of the period and because they frequently articulate the thinking that was instrumental in the formation of government policies.

4) Of the archaeological materials germane to the present study, the most important are the Han dynasty administrative records recorded on strips of bamboo and wood that were discovered in Northwest China.[30] These records provide us with extremely important information on such things as prices, food consumption, and administration. They thereby afford us an opportunity to fill in our picture of everyday life in early imperial China and

furnish us with the hard evidence that we need to corroborate data in the textual sources (for example, see Appendix II). Although some of the more recently discovered materials have come from the interior, the bulk of the records have come from frontier regions and therefore may not always reflect conditions obtaining throughout the empire; in this regard they need to be used with care.

Another important set of archaeological data is the household registers which were also discovered in Northwest China. It was through these records that scholars were finally able to show with confidence that the system of equal land allotments had been actually carried out, since these documents record holdings according to the categories established by the system.[31] Unfortunately, none has been found for the Northern Wei itself, though one document has been found for the Western Wei-Northern Chou period which immediately followed the Northern Wei. The problem with these documents, as with the bamboo strips, is their regional character which may not reflect conditions throughout the empire.

This does not exhaust the sources available for the period, though it does give a fairly representative sample which should aid the non-sinologist in appreciating the sort of data upcn which this study and others like it are based. One note of caution should be added. Most of the information yielded by these sources is anecdotal in nature.

It therefore does not lend itself to the sort of quantitative treatment that is popular among social scientists. One hopes, even yearns, for such data, which would enable social and economic historians of the period to set their conclusions on firmer foundations. Until such data become available (if indeed they ever do) we must content ourselves with trying to extrapolate from individual or limited numbers of cases. And except at a very primitive level, we should eschew trying to manipulate the data in a quantitative fashion that lends a false sense of scientific certainty to their presentation.

Notes:

[1]S. N. Eisenstadt, The Political Systems of Empires (New York, 1969), pp. 118-119.

[2]Ibid., p. 119.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Denis Twitchett, Financial Administration under the T'ang Dynasty, 2d. ed. (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 1-11, 124-135. A convenient bibliography of Chinese and Japanese works dealing with the system of equal land allotments is that in Hori Toshikazu, Kindensei no kenkyū (Tokyo, 1975), pp. 439-485.

[5]The situation could become confusing at times, such as when at the end of the Han dynasty bureaucratic and eunuch factions each claimed to be exercising authority on behalf of the emperor. In such cases, however, it is still usually clear which actions may be rightly considered to be in the interests of the imperium and when persons may be considered to be working in their own behalf or in behalf of the ruler.

[6]I have discussed the different types of local notables in an ms, "Notables, Officials, and Local Society during the Later Han," pp. 13-31.

[7]Patricia Ebrey, The Aristocratic Families of Early Imperial China (Cambridge, 1978), p. 56.

[8]For discussions of the different types of families during the Han, see T'ung-tsu Ch'ü, Han Social Structure (Seattle, 1972), pp. 160-274; Utsunomiya Kiyoyoshi, Kandai shakai keizai shi kenkyū (Tokyo, 1954), passim; Yang Lien-sheng, "Tung Han ti hao-tsu," Chhp XI.4 (1936), 1007-63; and Crowell, "Notables," pp. 13-31. For the later period, see p. 355 n. 68 and works cited therein.

[9]Crowell, "Notables," pp. 16-24.

[10]The term "brokers" has been suggested by Eric Wolf ("Aspects of Group Relations in a Complex Society: Mexico," American Anthropologist LVIII [1956], 1072).

[11]S. N. Eisenstadt, pp. 124, 136-137.

[12]Tenney Frank, Social Behavior in Ancient Rome (Cambridge, Mass., 1932), p. 74.

[13]Kung-ch'üan Hsiao, Rural China: Imperial Control in Nineteenth Century (Seattle, 1967), p. 74.

[14]Chia I, Hsin-shu (Taipei, 1967), 9.1a-5b.

[15]Wang Ch'ang used lack of popular support for Wang Mang's regime as the justification for his taking up arms against Wang (HHs 15.759).

[16]Legge, II, 166, 169-172.

[17]This assumes a strict definition of the peasantry. Here I am generally following Eric Wolf who sees the peasant

as an agricultural producer, thereby excluding others such as rural craftsmen and fishermen which some such as Raymond Firth (Elements of Social Organization [London, 1952], p. 87) would include. Wolf distinguishes between "the peasant who retains effective control of land and the tenant whose control of land is subject to an outside authority" ("Types of Latin American Peasantry: A Preliminary Discussion," American Anthropologist LVII [1955], 453). He says that what distinguishes the peasant from a tenant is that the latter tends "to seek security primarily through the acceptance of outside controls over the arrangements of production and distribution" and consequently accepts subordinate roles in hierarchically arranged systems of relationships (ibid., pp. 453-454). In the case of early imperial China, Wolf's definition of the peasant as an agricultural producer may be said to apply throughout the period. Clear distinctions were made, at least on the part of the government and in the writings of political thinkers and social critics, among agriculturalists, artisans, and those who engaged in commerce. To include non-agriculturalists under the rubric of "peasant" when discussing early imperial China would therefore be misleading. Fishing was not considered an agricultural enterprise, though some peasants did engage in fishing on the side, probably mostly for their own consumption. In sum, in speaking of peasants in the period under discussion,

we should understand the term as referring to agricultural producers.

With regard to Wolf's distinction between peasant and tenant, the matter is less clear. During the Han period, peasants were also tenants. That is to say, many persons who exercised direct control over some land and did not have to pay dues on that land to an outside owner (one of Wolf's attributes of a peasant) also rented land. The relationship between renter and landlord in these cases seems to have been a fairly straightforward contractual sort of relationship, with the renter paying the landlord a fixed amount of the yield for the use of the land and any implements, oxen, seed and the like that might be furnished by the landlord. Other than the rent paid, there do not seem to have been any other "controls over the arrangements of production and distribution." The same seems to have been the case with those who rented all of their land, though conclusive evidence is lacking. Since these arrangements were between persons who were theoretically of equal social standing, it seems safe to call these tenants "peasants" as well.

From the end of the Later Han on, however, the situation began to change. Faced with increasing administrative ineffectiveness and growing banditry, the peasantry sought protection from locally powerful families. In some cases, they sold themselves into slavery, while in others they

entered into permanent arrangements in which they turned over their land in exchange for protection. Although they probably continued to work the land, they no longer had control of it. When this happened, we can say that they ceased to be peasants in Wolf's sense of the term. It was the goal of the central government during this period to restore these persons to their former status as peasants.

On the problem of defining the peasantry, see George M. Foster, "What is a peasant?" in Peasant Society, A Reader, ed. Jack M. Potter, May N. Diaz, and George M. Foster (Boston, 1967), pp. 2-14 and Daniel Thorner, "Peasantry," in International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (New York, 1968), XI, 503-511.

[18]Elias H. Tuma, Twenty-six Centuries of Agrarian Reform: A Comparative Analysis (Berkeley, 1965), p. 168. Tung Chung-shu during the Han remarked that concentration of land had appeared once people were permitted to buy and sell land (Hs 24A.1137; Nancy Lee Swann, trans., Food and Money in Ancient China [Princeton, 1950], pp. 180-181).

[19]Lien-sheng Yang, "The Organization of Chinese Official Historiography, Principles and Methods of the Standard Histories from the T'ang through the Ming Dynasty," in Historians of China and Japan, ed. W. G. Beasley and E. G. Pulleyblank (London, 1961), pp. 44-59; Yü-shen Han,

Elements of Chinese Historiography (Hollywood, 1955), pp. 191-203. Still useful as a general treatment of the Chinese historiographical tradition (certainly more so for the non-sinologist than Han's work) is Charles S. Gardner, Chinese Traditional Historiography (Cambridge, Mass., 1961).

[20]On the Records of the Grand Historian, see Edouard Chavannes, trans., Les mémoires historiques de Se-ma Ts'ien, 5 vols. in 6 (Paris, 1895-1905), especially the introductory remarks; Burton Watson, Ssu-ma Ch'ien: Grand Historian of China (New York, 1958) and Records of the Grand Historian of China, 2 vols. (New York, 1961). In addition to the translations by Chavannes and Watson, neither of which is complete, individual sections of the Records have been translated by numerous scholars. A list of those sections which were not translated by Chavannes has been compiled by Timoteus Pokora and included in Volume VI of the Paris 1969 reprint of Les mémoires historiques, pp. 113-146.

[21]Exceptions for the early imperial period are the History of the Northern Dynasties and the History of the Southern Dynasties. Each covers four dynasties, the former dealing with the Northern Wei, Northern Ch'i, Northern Chou, and Sui, while the latter deals with the Liu Sung, Southern Ch'i, Liang, and Ch'en dynasties.

[22]Unfortunately, little work has been done in Western languages (or in any language for that matter) on the

Standard Histories for the Liu Sung, Southern Ch'i, Liang, Ch'en, Northern Ch'i, and Northern Chou. A bit more has been done with the Standard Histories for the Northern Wei and the Sui, though not so much as they warrant. A convenient list of translations from the Standard Histories covering the period from the Later Han to the end of the T'ang is to be found in Hans H. Frankel, comp., Catalogue of Translations from the Chinese Dynastic Histories for the Period 220-960 (Berkeley, 1957). It is limited in that it contains nothing that has been published in the past twenty-odd years. More recent translations include: Roy A. Miller, trans., Accounts of Western Nations in the History of the Chou Dynasty (Berkeley, 1959); Chauncy S. Goodrich, trans., Biography of Su Ch'o, 2d. ed. (Berkeley, 1961); and Albert E. Dien, trans., Biography of Yü-wen Hu (Berkeley, 1962).

[23]Regarding the History of the Former Han Dynasty, see Homer H. Dubs, trans., The History of the Former Han Dynasty, 3 vols. (Baltimore, 1938-55); O. B. van der Sprenkel, Pan Piao, Pan Ku and the Han History (Canberra, 1965); and Nancy Lee Swann, Pan Chao, Foremost Woman Scholar of China, 1st Century A.D. (New York, 1932). In addition to Dubs' translation of the annals section of the History of the Former Han Dynasty, translations of individual treatises and biographies include: A. F. P. Hulsewe, Remnants of Han Law (Leiden, 1955) has a translation of

part of the "Treatise on Rites and Music" (Hs 22) and a complete translation of the "Treatise on Penal Law" (Hs 23); Nancy Lee Swann, trans., Food and Money in Ancient China (Princeton, 1950) contains a complete translation of the "Treatise on Economics" (Hs 24A and B) plus translations from the "Biographies of Wealthy Persons" (Hs 91); Burton Watson, trans., Courtier and Commoner in Ancient China (New York, 1974) contains translations from ten of the biographical chapters. This by no means exhausts the number of available translations. A convenient list of others may be found in Timoteus Pokora, "Pan Ku and Recent Translations from the Han Shu," Journal of the American Oriental Society XCVIII.4 (October-December, 1978), 459-460.

[24]These and similar problems are discussed in Hans Bielenstein's "Prolegomena on the Historiography of the Hou Han Shu," in his "The Restoration of the Han Dynasty," Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, no. 26 (1954), pp. 20-81.

[25]On the problems associated with numbers and units in ancient Chinese sources, see Lien-sheng Yang, "Numbers and Units in Chinese Economic History," in Lien-sheng Yang, Studies in Chinese Institutional History (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 75-84.

[26]An excellent case study of this sort of historiography is Michael C. Rogers, The Chronicle of Fu Chien:

A Case of Exemplar History (Berkeley, 1968). See especially pp. 32-73.

[27]Translations of the Comprehensive Mirror which deal with the early imperial period include Achilles Fang, The Chronicles of the Three Kingdoms (220-265), 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1952-1965) and Rafe de Crespigny, The Last of the Han (Canberra, 1969).

[28]Brief descriptions of individual collectanea may be found in Ssu-yü Teng and Knight Biggerstaff, An Annotated Bibliography of Selected Chinese Reference Works, rev. ed. (Cambridge, Mass., 1950), pp. 106-158 and Endymion Wilkinson, The History of Imperial China: A Research Guide (Cambridge, Mass., 1974), pp. 126-128, 163-168.

[29]The Imperially Reviewed Encyclopedia of the T'ai-p'ing Era may have been pasted together from earlier collectanea and may have been compiled primarily to satisfy a mania for knowledge on the part of the Sung emperor, T'ai-tsung. See the fascinating article by John Winthrop Haeger, "The Significance of Confusion: The Origins of the T'ai-p'ing yü-lan," Journal of the American Oriental Society LXXXVIII.3 (July-September, 1968), 401-410.

[30]On the bamboo strips, see Michael Loewe, Records of Han Administration, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1967) and Henri Maspero, Les documents Chinois de la troisième expédition de Sir Aurel Stein en Asie Centrale (London, 1953).

[31] On the household records discovered in Northwest China, consult Yamamoto Tatsurō, "A Tunhuang Manuscript of the Sixth Century A.D. Concerning the Chün-t'ien Land System (Part I)," Memoirs of the Research Department of Tōyō Bunko XVIII (1959), 141-152 and Ikeda On, "T'ang Household Registers and Related Documents," in Perspectives on the T'ang, ed. Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett (New Haven, 1973), pp. 121-150.

CHAPTER II

EARLY CHINESE THEORIES OF LAND TENURE AND UTILIZATION

Perhaps in no other place or time has the importance of agriculture been stressed so greatly as in ancient China; surely, nowhere has it been stressed more. It is difficult to find an important thinker of the period who did not at least make a comment on the subject, and some have devoted entire chapters to some aspect or another of it.[1] In addition, agrarian and related matters were the subject of numerous imperial decrees. Quite naturally this emphasis upon agriculture led to a corollary concern with the problems of land utilization and land tenure.

An important element of the concern with land tenure was the desire for an equitable distribution of land. Modern Chinese political commentators, concerned more with the needs of their own time, and impelled by the desire to salve national pride, have looked to this aspect of early Chinese economic thought to find indigenous antecedents for their own proposals for land reform. Some have even found there ideas which they have considered to be proto-socialist and proto-democratic, ideas which to them demonstrated that the Chinese too were capable of becoming democratic and modern.[2] While such an interpretation may

have been psychologically comforting, it was historically fallacious and resulted in a distorted understanding of the true motives behind the early proposals for the equitable distribution of land. These proposals were neither socialistic nor democratic. Rather they were quite pragmatic and were directed at solving two of the most important problems of any political regime, namely, social stability and assured revenues. To better understand this point, it will behoove us to first examine the ideas and proposals of pre-Han and Han political thinkers and administrators, ideas which became the classic theories of land tenure for imperial China.

Classical Chinese land theory can be divided into two approaches which coincide approximately with the division between the "Legalist" and "Confucian" schools of thought. This division does not mean that these two approaches conflicted or that there was competition to gain acceptance for one over the other. Indeed, as we shall see, they were complementary and government land policy during the early imperial period was a combination of the two.

The "Legalist" approach characteristically emphasized placing as much land under cultivation as possible. The earliest exposition of this policy is attributed to the Legalist economic thinker Kuan-tzu or Kuan Chung (d. 645 B.C.). Whether or not the ideas expressed in the work which bears his name were actually his is problematic,

but, what is important here is that thinkers of later periods believed that they were, and they formed an important part of the background for the economic thought of thinkers of the Han and later periods.[3]

The Kuan-tzu says that land is the basis of government,[4] and it is clear that by this it means that the strength of the state depends greatly upon proper management of the land. The strength of the state depends upon its citizenry being well off, which in turn depends upon there being enough grain. Ensuring a sufficient supply of grain depends upon the people's engaging in agriculture rather than in handicrafts or trade, activities which were considered to be ancillary in contradistinction to agriculture which was considered to be primary. If everyone engaged in agriculture, then the land would be cultivated, grain would be plentiful, and the state would thus become wealthy and its armies powerful.[5] Particular emphasis was placed on bringing as much land as possible under cultivation. If the amount of cultivated land were small, even though there might be neither flood nor drought, there would be famine. And when floods or drought did occur, the people would scatter and the state would be empty. The state would be insecure and difficult to defend, because as the Kuan-tzu wisely observes, you cannot make people fight on empty stomachs.[6] Although the passages in which these ideas occur are considered by many to

actually date from several centuries after Kuan-tzu,[7] the ideas themselves are consonant with reforms allegedly proposed by him and supposedly instituted by Duke Huan of Ch'i in order to strengthen his state.[8]

The idea of maximizing utilization of the land was a central tenet in the thought of the early Legalist economic thinker, Li K'uei, who served as minister to Marquis Wen of Wei during the first part of the 4th century B.C. Li stressed "maximizing land and labor" (chin ti li), which for him meant simply ensuring conditions which would encourage people to engage in agriculture. He calculated that if 100 square li (=approximately 427,140 acres or 172,864 hectares) were to fall out of production, it could mean a difference of 1,800,000 piculs (=approximately 36,000,000 liters or 1,021,616 bushels) of millet.[9] Li's proposal for ensuring full utilization of the land involved a system whereby in years of feast the government would levy an amount of surplus grain (i.e., amounts above the 150 piculs that he determined to be the basic amount required to meet the needs of a family of five) in proportion to the yield, and in years of famine it would distribute amounts of grain from government stores in proportion to the severity of the famine. He believed that such a system would cause the people to be content with working at agriculture and encourage them to cultivate land, which in turn would result in the state's becoming wealthy and

powerful.[10] Little is known concerning the extent to which Li's ideas were utilized by Marquis Wen, though according to Pan Ku (d. A.D. 92), author of the History of the Former Han Dynasty, the state of Wei became wealthy and powerful because of them.[11]

The policy of maximizing land and labor found its most powerful advocate in Kung-sun Yang, who had also served in Wei. It has been suggested that he was Li K'uei's disciple,[12] and although he may not have actually studied under Li, he can nonetheless be considered a follower of Li in spirit. Kung-sun Yang, or Shang Yang as he is more commonly known, was unappreciated in Wei, at least by the ruler, and left to go to Ch'in. There, he was able to rise to high office, and he initiated a number of measures which were clearly designed to achieve the purposes of the policy of "maximizing land and labor." In order to achieve maximal utilization of the land, Shang Yang proposed and initiated a series of measures which later writers viewed as altering the fundamental nature of landholding and allowing the development of private ownership of land. Since this was considered to have later allowed concentration of land in the hands of the powerful, it earned for Shang Yang no small amount of disapprobation, most of which is undeserved.

The sources for examining Shang Yang's proposals and policies are considerably more complete than those for

anyone else during this period. On the one hand there are the records of the reforms that he actually undertook while serving as minister to Duke Hsiao which are described in the Records of the Grand Historian, History of the Former Han Dynasty, and the Intrigues of the Warring States, while on the other hand there are the ideas concerning land tenure and utilization outlined in the Book of Lord Shang. Although the latter work is certainly not all from his hand, and perhaps none of it is, it is generally accepted as dating from shortly after his tenure in office and is considered by many scholars to be the work of his followers.[13] The ideas it contains are certainly consistent with the actions he undertook as minister, and most importantly here, were considered in later periods to be representative of his ideas.

In order to maximize utilization of land, Shang Yang proposed and executed a number of measures designed to open up new lands, ensure revenues from the lands already being exploited, and to cultivate more efficiently land which was already being farmed. The Book of Lord Shang says that to have much land and not cultivate it is the same as not having any land at all. If population were dense and land in short supply, then reclamation should be encouraged; conversely, if people were few and much land were available, emigration should be encouraged.[14] Shang Yang estimated that 40% of the territory of the state of

Ch'in was comprised of good arable land, but that only 20% of it was actually under cultivation. To open up this land and bring it under cultivation, he proposed encouraging emigration from areas where population was dense and land was insufficient. Specifically he suggested encouraging persons from the rival states of Han and Wei to immigrate to Ch'in to cultivate unreclaimed land. This would have the effect of opening up new land while at the same time depriving rival states of manpower.[15] Whether or not such a policy was ever carried out is uncertain, but the idea did establish a precedent for later periods--the Han for example--when relocation of persons in order to open up new lands was in fact carried out.

In order to achieve more efficient exploitation of land that was already under cultivation (though it was probably not limited to such lands), Shang Yang is said to have initiated a system of field rotation, though he may have been simply rationalizing and extending an already existing system of rotation. The "Treatise on Geography" of the History of the Former Han Dynasty records that Shang Yang instituted a system of "revolving fields" (yüan-t'ien[a]), though it does not elaborate.[16] There is sufficient reason to identify this system with another system called yüan-t'ien[b] (the two graphs yüan are different, though they are cognate) in which fields were graded according to their fertility and then rotated accordingly.

Thus, fields of the highest quality were cultivated every year, fields of the second highest quality were cultivated once in two years, and fields of the lowest quality were cultivated once in three years.[17] Such a system would obviously have been important in achieving efficient use of the land and ensuring maximum production over a long period of time by preventing the land from becoming exhausted.

Another land measure which was carried out as a part of Shang Yang's reforms was the creation of balks and headlands.[18] This was done in conjunction with the creation of local administrative units known as hsien or prefectures, and it seems to have been related to the formation of a local administrative structure.[19] It may also have been part of an effort to rationalize the field system. A re-ordering of the land system would have been necessary to break up the power of local notables and bring about a high ratio of small peasant landholdings. Establishment of the system of balks and headlands presumably would have involved some sort of cadastral survey that would have enabled the government to apply tax collection more uniformly. The Records of the Grand Historian note that once they had been established tax collection became more equable.[20] Creation of such a rational system would have ensured the government the greatest possible income from the land.

Among the measures which Shang Yang proposed to ensure maximum utilization of labor was a system of rewards and punishments. Those who worked diligently at agriculture and sericulture were to be rewarded with tax exemptions. On the other hand, those who engaged in the ancillary occupations or were idle and poor would be reported and made into government slaves.[21] Presumably as slaves the government would have been better able to encourage them to use their time productively. In another effort to maximize labor, when there was more than one male adult living in a household, the tax liability of each was doubled.[22] Subsequently, this provision was changed to prohibit completely two or more adult males living in the same household.[23] The purpose of this measure was to prevent the underemployment that might result if two or more adult males were to share cultivation of the land belonging to a single household. By forcing a person to leave the household and begin to farm on his own, the government could promote expansion of the amount of land under cultivation. Finally, as already noted, Shang Yang favored a policy of encouraging emigration in order to achieve a balance between land and labor and to bring as much land as possible under the plow.

In Shang Yang's ideas and policies concerning land tenure we find the embodiment of the policy of maximizing utilization of land and labor. These policies must have

made more than a minor contribution to Ch'in's success in uniting China under its rule, so it is hardly surprising to find that a later work compiled in the state of Ch'in, the Spring and Autumn Annals of Mr. Lü, also stressed the importance of maximizing the utilization of land and labor.[24]

As important as this approach was, however, it is not the best known of the land policies propounded during the pre-Han period. That honor goes to the system described in a famous passage by the political thinker Mencius (372-289 B.C.). This was, of course, the famous "well-field" system, so named because the layout of the fields in this system was supposed to have resembled the Chinese character for "a well." This system has been the object of much discussion and disagreement, particularly by modern scholars, many of whom have doubted that it ever existed.[25] Whether or not the system actually existed is really not very important here. What is important is that the concept of the "well-field" system so caught the imagination of later thinkers who dealt with problems of agrarian reform that it became central to discussions on land tenure during the early imperial period--so much so that proposals for land reform were presented in the form of calls to revive the system.[26] The putative egalitarian nature of the system even inspired Chinese revolutionaries at the beginning of the 20th century to suggest that the

graph for "well" be emblazoned on the revolutionary flag of the Revolutionary Alliance (T'ung-meng hui).[27]

For Mencius a well-ordered system of land tenure was a prerequisite to good government. He said that benevolent government necessarily had to begin with the rectification of boundaries, and that were the boundaries not well managed, then the parts of the well-field unit would be unequal. If this were allowed to happen, there would be insufficient grain to pay official salaries. This, said Mencius, was why evil rulers and corrupt officials were remiss in ordering the boundaries.[28] Whereas Kuan-tzu, Li K'uei, and Shang Yang had stressed maximum utilization of land and labor in order to achieve a wealthy state and a strong army, Mencius stressed equitable distribution of land in order to achieve a well-governed state. This was in line with Confucius' own statement that the ruler of a state "does not worry about insufficiency, but is concerned about insecurity. If there is equality, there will be no poverty. If there is harmony, there will be no insufficiency. If there is security, there will be no coups d'etat."[29]

The well-field system described by Mencius consisted of nine plots of land of 100 <u>mou</u> each arranged in the form of the character for "well" 井 , a form which is similar to our "tic-tac-toe" matrix. The outer eight squares were to be occupied by eight families, each of whom held one

plot as a private holding. Together they cultivated the center plot, the produce from which belonged to the ruler.[30] This central plot was termed kung-t'ien, a term which has often been translated "public fields," but which should more properly be rendered "lord's fields."[31] The produce from this plot in effect constituted the taxes levied by the lord on his subjects. In essence, then, the tax would have been equal to one-ninth of the farmer's produce. However, Mencius distinguished between the outlying districts (yeh) where he said the rate should be one-ninth, and the central districts where he said the rate should be one-tenth.[32] He gave no reason for having different tax levies, nor did he explain how the one-tenth rate was to be levied. He admitted that his description was merely an outline of the system.[33]

According to Mencius, it was thought that if the land was fertilized, a superior cultivator with 100 mou of land could feed nine persons; a second class cultivator could feed eight persons; and so forth on down to the lowest grade cultivator who could feed only five persons.[34] Such productivity figures seem to have been widely accepted and were repeated in the Spring and Autumn Annals of Mr. Lü and by Tung Chung-shu.[35] Elsewhere, Mencius said that with 100 mou a family of eight would not starve.[36] In addition to the 100 mou that were to be planted in grain, Mencius notes in a number of places that families

should plant their five mou of dwelling land in mulberries.[37] He does not explain how this land might have been linked with the well-field system, if indeed it was. It may have referred to land which was considered to be held apart from the land granted under the well-field system, and thus have provided a classical precedent for the permanently-owned dwelling and mulberry lands under the system of equal land allotments instituted by the North Wei dynasty (see Chapter VII).

In addition to the 100 mou plots granted to individuals to cultivate, officials were each granted a plot of 50 mou of kuei-t'ien, a term which is explained by the late Han commentator Chao Ch'i as meaning "pure fields," that is, fields meant to support sacrifices.[38] He gives no evidence for this, and attempts by later commentators to explain the identification of this land seem convoluted at best. Mencius perhaps meant these fields were to be granted to officials in lieu of official salary.[39] In addition to the plots of 100 mou and 50 mou, there were other plots of 25 mou which were to be granted to "supernumerary males." Mencius does not make clear just who these supernumerary males were, but they are explained by Chao Ch'i as male members of the family who were either very young or very old, but who nevertheless had strength enough to cultivate some land. Others elaborate by saying that the term refers to those additional males in the

household beyond the five persons generally taken as constituting the standard household.[40]

Mencius' description of the well-field system is unfortunately vague and incomplete. The most complete pre-Han description of the system that remains to us seems to be that in the Ssu-ma Fa, which is quoted by the late Han scholar, Cheng Hsüan, in his commentary to the Rites of Chou.[41] Specific dimensions, which are largely lacking in Mencius' description, are given here. According to the Ssu-ma Fa, "Six feet constitute a pace, 100 paces make a mou, and 100 mou form the holding of a cultivator (fu). The holdings of three cultivators make a 'house' (wu) and three 'houses' constitute a well-field unit."[42] The description continues on to explain how well-field units combined to form larger units, and how these various larger units were expected to provide a certain number of troops, hide-covered carts, and the like. Unlike the system described by Mencius, a well-field unit had nine cultivators rather than eight. Clearly in the Ssu-ma Fa's description the emphasis is on military levies rather than on the equal distribution of land, and in this respect perhaps should be considered an antecedent of the system of military colonies initiated by the Han.

Because of the incompleteness of the early descriptions, later generations, relying on weak evidence and fertile imaginations, proceeded to flesh out and elaborate

the description of the well-field system. This process of elaboration was an important feature of the ideas concerned with land tenure that developed under the Han dynasty. The earliest example of this occurs in Han Ying's commentary to the Book of Odes, the Han shih wai chuan. Han gives a fairly detailed description of the system, adding details which are missing from Mencius' description. For example, he gives the dimensions of the mou (1 pace by 100 paces) and says that each of the eight families received 2-1/2 mou of the kung-t'ien on which to build a summer dwelling to occupy during the growing season. The remaining 80 mou were divided equally among the eight families who then cultivated 10 mou apiece on behalf of the lord.[43] The provisions concerning the plots for the dwellings and the cultivating of 10 mou by each family appear to be a departure from the system described by Mencius, though they may in fact accord with the system which he described for the central regions.[44] The concept of dwelling plots in center square may have originated with the Ku-liang Commentary to the Spring and Autumn Annals, a work that probably dates from the late pre-Han or early Han period. The description there, however, is extremely sketchy and says on this point only that the central plot was for dwellings.[45]

At about the same period as Han Ying was formulating his description of the well-field system, another important

thinker of the Han period was also setting down his conception. This was Tung Chung-shu (179?-104? B.C.), and his description appears in the twenty-eighth chapter of his work, The Fructifying Dew of the Spring and Autumn. Tung also describes eight families, each comprising five persons, living on 900 mou, but he does not indicate whether they collectively cultivated the central plot or individually cultivated 10 mou plots within it. Like Mencius, Tung said that a superior farmer cultivating 100 mou could feed nine persons, and he ranked cultivators on a descending scale, with the farmer who could feed only five mouths at the bottom. Tung reckoned that each 100 mou would, on the average, support three males for service in the army, meaning that one well-field unit could provide twenty-four men.[46] Other than this, Tung's description has nothing to add. However, in a memorial he presented to Emperor Wu in which he discussed social and economic problems of the period, Tung saw the well-field system as a means of preventing the poor from being exploited by the rich. He asserted that Shang Yang's destruction of the system had allowed the development of private land-ownership and this in turn had resulted in concerntration of land in the hands of the powerful and rich until the poor "had not even a place to stick an awl."[47] Like others before him, Tung believed that the well-field system had served as the basis of a well-ordered polity.

In the first century A.D. the historian Pan Ku in the treatise on economics in his History of the Former Han Dynasty developed the description of the well-field system even further and provided a synthesis of earlier descriptions. Pan held that land was of fundamental importance in administering the populace, and like Mencius he stressed the importance of the proper laying out of boundaries. His description follows that of the Ssu-ma Fa in sub-dividing the well-field unit and assigning special terms to each sub-division. Thus, "six feet make a pace, 100 paces make a mou, 100 mou make a fu, 3 fu make a wu, and 3 wu make a well-field unit."[48]

Pan borrows from Han Ying's description the idea that each of eight households received 100 mou and cultivated 10 mou in the central plot on behalf of the lord with the remaining 20 mou of the central plot being set aside for the summer dwellings of the cultivators. Pan, however, went beyond previous descriptions in breaking the land down into three grades according to fertility, a concept he probably borrowed from the Rites of Chou. A cultivator would receive 100 mou of the highest grade land which could be planted every year, 200 mou of middle grade land which could be cultivated one year in two, or 300 mou of the low grade land, which could only be cultivated one year in three.[49] Thus, in any given year a farmer would have 100 mou under cultivation, regardless of the grade of land he

held. Whereas Mencius and Han Ying had said that supernumerary males were to receive 25 mou apiece, in Pan's description they were to receive the same as a household.[50]

Pan Ku's description also went beyond those of his predecessors in that it made provision for distributing land to non-cultivators--i.e., to scholars, artisans, and merchants. He said that they received land at a ratio of five non-cultivator households to one cultivator household, which presumably meant that each of these households would receive 20 mou of land. This could be considered, he said, a method of equalizing landholdings. Still, another point on which his description went beyond those of his predecessors was that Pan gave the age limits at which one could receive land and at which he had to return it. Thus at twenty a person received land, and at the age of sixty he had to return it, probably so that it could be redistributed to another who was young enough to work it, although this was never explicity stated. The fields were to be planted with the five different types of grain in order to provide against natural disaster, but the planting of trees in the midst of the fields was prohibited. Mulberry trees were to be planted about the dwellings; there was a plot for vegetables; and gourds and fruits were planted on the field boundaries.[51]

Pan Ku's description is the most complete we have up to his time, and it contains elements found in the

descriptions given in the Mencius and the Ssu-ma Fa along with some others whose origins are less clear. In Pan's depiction of the system we see a fairly comprehensive and well-integrated system of landholding and land utilization, one which provided a paradigm to be adopted or modified by later officials seeking to restructure land tenure patterns. Because of the synthetic nature of the work that Pan was writing, it may well be that he was the first to provide such a completely integrated description of the system, but this cannot be known for certain.

Whether or not Pan was the first to give such a complete description of the system, the description he gave had an influence on later depictions of the system. Ho Hsiu's discussion of the system in his commentary to the Kung-yang Commentary to the Spring and Autumn Annals includes most of the elements which appear in Pan's depiction. The only really important lacunae are the ages at which land was to be granted to the cultivator or returned to the government and the provision for grants to supernumerary males. Otherwise, the units of land involved and the provisions regarding what sorts of crops to plant and where to plant them are essentially the same.[52]

The most important feature of Ho's discussion of the well-field system is his explication of the purpose of the system. He noted that although Kao Yao, minister to the legendary emperor Shun, had regulated the laws,

he had not been able to eliminate the distinctions between wealthy and poor. As a consequence, he was unable to prevent the powerful from oppressing the weak. It was for this reason that the sages had set down the well-field system and distributed land on a per-capita basis. The purposes of the system, said Ho, were five-fold: 1) to avoid losing the strength of the land; 2) to make use of every single family; 3) to unify social customs; 4) to bring together the skillful and the clumsy (i.e., to achieve an equal distribution of talent); and 5) to distribute wealth and property.[53] Obviously, for Ho the well-field system was a means of achieving social stability as well as efficient use of the land. The Record of the Well-field System of the Spring and Autumn Period, which may antedate Ho's work, gives identical goals for the system. Indeed, the two descriptions are remarkably similar, except the latter work gives 30 as the age at which one received land and gives 5 mou as the amount for summer dwellings as opposed to Ho's 2 1/2.[54]

Clearly by the beginning of the Later Han, and quite probably much earlier, a rather comprehensive and fairly well integrated model for land tenure and utilization had been developed. This ideal exercised a strong hold on the minds of Han officials, as well as those of later periods, who were charged with dealing with land problems.

The strength of this hold is manifested in the changes

which took place in the size of the mou during the reign of Emperor Wu. From pre-Han times 100 mou had been considered the standard allotment of land for a peasant family. As we have seen, this was the amount that was to be granted to each family under the well-field system. During the reign of Emperor Wu the size of the mou was increased from 100 paces to 240 paces in length. One scholar, Utsunomiya Kiyoyoshi, has suggested that this change resulted from the advances in agricultural technology that were taking place at this time which enabled the individual cultivator to farm more land than he previously had been able. Rather than simply increase the standard holding in order to keep pace with these advances, says Utsunomiya, Han officials preferred to increase the size of the mou in order to maintain the 100 mou ideal.[55] The Discourses on Salt and Iron say that the size of the mou was increased because 100 of the old-style mou were insufficient to support an average peasant family.[56] Whichever, the change shows the strong hold that an ideal could and did exercise over Chinese officials; the well-field ideal exercised just such a hold. However, it is one thing to hold an ideal, and quite another to put it into practice, as many a reform-minded official has so painfully discovered.

The problems of applying the well-field system were already well recognized during the Han, and there were a

number of opinions offered on how it might best be established. In a famous memorial in which he discussed the social and economic ills of the day, Tung Chung-shu said that the system could not be effectuated precipitously. Nevertheless, he believed that the Han should take steps to at least approach conditions obtaining under the well-field system by limiting individual landholdings.[57] Although Tung did not specifically state that he considered a restoration of the system through gradual means to be possible, he did imply it. Toward the end of the Former Han, during the reign of Emperor Ai the system was mentioned again by another official, Shih Tan, who sought to have limitations placed on landholdings. Although Shih asserted that none of the sage-kings of antiquity failed to adopt the system and that government under the system was fair, his own proposal in no way resembled the well-field system and was in fact nothing more than a set of sumptuary regulations intended to control the aggrandizement of imperial affines.[58] Apparently he felt that he should refer to the concept in order to sanctify his own proposals, but considered the system itself to be irrelevant or inappropriate to what he wished to achieve.

Such was not the case with Wang Mang who agreed with the views held by Tung Chung-shu on the effects of Shang Yang's putative abolition of the well-field system and who usurped the throne in A.D. 9 and established the short-lived

Hsin dynasty.[59] When Wang had held high office in the Han imperial administration, he had attempted a reorganization of the imperial fields along the lines of the well-field system. According to him, hardly an unbiased source, the move would have been highly successful; but, it had been postponed because of the presence of "rebellious caitiffs and treasonable rebels."[60] In any event, shortly after he took the throne, he set about enforcing the system throughout the empire. In A.D. 9 he decreed that cultivated fields throughout the empire were henceforth to be known as "royal fields" (_wang t'ien_) and were not to be bought or sold. Land was to be organized along the lines of the well-field system, and if anyone criticized the system, he was to be banished. Families of fewer than eight males whose holdings exceeded the equivalent of one well unit were to give up their excess land to relatives or to neighbors, and those who had no land were to receive land according to the regulations.[61]

Wang's efforts met with a great deal of opposition and within three years he had to rescind his decree.[62] His land reform had accomplished little, except in modern times to earn him the rather incongruous title of "China's first socialist emperor" and to serve as an object lesson to later proponents of the well-field system. Wang's example demonstrated that the system could not be revived overnight. If the system or anything approaching it were

to be achieved, it would require either special conditions or careful preparation.

Reinstitution of the well-field system in the latter half of the Later Han was proposed by Ts'ui Shih (fl. c. 150), an official who was also an agriculturalist and perceptive social critic. Ts'ui was concerned about concentration of landholding and about an uneven distribution of population and land. In some areas--specifically in Ch'ing, Yen, Hsü, and Chi provinces--population was high, but land lacking, while in other areas--especially near the capital and in Yu and Liang provinces--there were large amounts of land while people were sparse.[63] Ts'ui called for a revival of the well-field system;[64] but, since his writings remain only in fragments or summaries, we do not know just how he thought this ought to be accomplished.

Hsün Yüeh (148-209), a Later Han scholar, was one who did not fail to grasp the significance of Wang's failure. Hsün complained that the powerful families were occupying large amounts of land, sometimes as much as several hundreds or thousands of _ch'ing_, which he thought amounted to self-enfeoffment.[65] He noted that some had proposed re-establishing the well-field system, but he was opposed to such a move. Monopolization of land had not existed in antiquity, he said, and the well-field system did not belong to the present.[66] Hsün said that the well-field system was appropriate when the people were

numerous, but when people were few and the land extensive, it was all right not to enforce the system. However, if the system were not established when people were few and there were an attempt to institute it when the people were numerous, the land would be by then already valuable and in the possession of the powerful. If restrictions were suddenly imposed on the land, there would be widespread resentment. The result, said Hsün, would be disorder, and the regulations would be difficult to enforce. He believed that it would have been easy to have adopted the well-field system during periods when population was not great, such as following the conquest of the empire by the first Han emperor, Kao tsu, or subsequent to the restoration under Emperor Kuang-wu of the Later Han. Hsün suggested that in order to establish the well-field system, the government should first prohibit the buying and selling of land, thereby preventing concentration of holdings. The amount of land that a person would be allowed to hold was to be determined according to the number of persons in his household.[67] Hsün apparently thought that in this way the hold of the powerful on the land could gradually be broken and the proper conditions for instituting the well-field system could be achieved.

Another Later Han scholar, Chung-ch'ang T'ung (b. 180), was also very much concerned about the problems of monopolization, and in his work, Frankly Talking, he viewed the

well-field system as a possible solution. Like Tung Chung-shu and Wang Mang before him, Chung-ch'ang believed that it had been the abolition of the well-field system which had resulted in the concentration of land in the hands of the wealthy in the first place. The result was that the estates of the powerful and wealthy became so extensive that they were comparable to a state.[68] Chung-ch'ang wrote that the best way in which to solve the social and economic problems which had resulted from monopolization was to restore the well-field system.[69]

Although Chung-ch'ang said that the well-field system was the best solution to the problems plaguing Later Han society, a close examination of his ideas reveals that he was not so naive as to believe that the system could simply be adopted <u>in toto</u>. He believed that the government should impose limits on the amount of lands a person could hold and make certain that they were not exceeded, especially by the powerful families.[70] He further proposed that whatever land was not yet under cultivation should become government land (<u>kuan t'ien</u>) and that the government should distribute it to anyone who was strong enough to cultivate it.[71] Although he does not specifically say so, like Hsün Yüeh, he seems to have considered such measures to be preliminary steps to an ultimate return to the well-field system.

Ssu-ma Lang, an official and Chung-ch'ang T'ung's

contemporary, also called for a restoration of the well-field system. Like Chung-ch'ang, he too was bothered by the problem of monopolization. He believed that the government could take advantage of the unoccupied lands which had resulted from the dislocations caused by years of chaos. Whereas the ideas of Ts'ui, Hsün, and Chung-ch'ang were contained in their writings, Ssu-ma Lang's may have been contained in a proposal made to Ts'ao Ts'ao who at the time was in control of the government. The government, Ssu-ma said, should convert all unoccupied land into imperial fields (kung-t'ien) and use them to restore the system.[72] There is no indication, however, that any action was taken regarding Ssu-ma's ideas.

Chinese political thinkers very early developed a set of ideas and paradigms concerning land tenure and utilization. The purposes of these ideas and models were much broader than simply improving agriculture; they were directed at producing a strong, wealthy, and well-ordered polity. Officials of later periods continually drew upon them in proposing and formulating solutions to the social, economic, fiscal, and even military problems of their own times. Others--Shih Tan is an example--could refer to these early models as a means of sanctifying proposals with other purposes. Some of these ideas, especially the

well-field system, exercised an extraordinary hold over the minds of thinkers of the Han and post-Han periods, and there was a continuing effort to restore the system, at least in part. Even after it became apparent that the system could not be readily revived without considerable opposition, there were still proposals to institute it through a gradual process designed to overcome resistance. Although the well-field system itself was not adopted by the Han dynasty, certain elements of it were, as we shall see, and post-Han land systems resembled the model quite closely in many of their features. No doubt the belief that the idea had been applied by sage-kings and had functioned well during a past golden age that was thought to be historical contributed much to the influence that the ideal had on the thinking of the officials of early imperial China. In any case, it and the idea of achieving maximal utilization of land and labor were to leave an indeliable imprint on government policy throughout the Han and post-Han period.

Notes:

[1]This emphasis has led some writers to describe the economic thought of this period as "physiocratic" because of the emphasis of agriculture (e.g. Teng-ping Yu, "Physiocratism in Ancient China," M.A. Thesis, Univ. of Washington, 1948; Lewis Maverick, ed., The Kuan-Tzu [Carbondale, Ill., 1954], pp. 407-428). Such a characterization, however, though perhaps superficially appropriate, is wrong. Both the Western physiocrats and the early Chinese economic thinkers stressed the importance of agriculture, but the physiocrats emphasized the importance of large-scale cultivation in order to achieve as high a return as possible on investment. Small-scale agriculture was considered inefficient and representative of agriculture in decline. Moreover, the physiocrats wished to have unrestricted trade, and pushed for elimination of such trade barriers as internal customs, tolls, and so on (see Ronald L. Meek, The Economics of Physiocracy [Cambridge, Mass., 1963], pp. 139 n. 1, 151 n. 1, 303, 346-7; Arthur Young, Travels in France During the Years 1787-1788-1789, ed. Jefferey Kaplow [New York, 1969], pp. 319-24; Joseph J. Spengler, "Economic Thought: Physiocratic Thought," International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences [New York, 1968], IV, 443-5; and J. F. Bosher, The Single Duty Project [London, 1964], p. 64). In contrast, early Chinese economic thinkers and early Chinese land policy favored

the development of small-scale cultivation, ideally on plots of 100 mou, and sought restrictions on the development of large-scale holdings. Many also favored restrictions on commerce, and the Han followed a policy of "suppressing commerce and valuing agriculture" and enacted discriminatory laws against merchants.

[2]Joseph Levenson, "Ill Wind in the Well-field," in The Confucian Persuasion, ed. Arthur F. Wright (Stanford, 1960), pp. 268-287, and Martin Bernal, "Chinese Socialism before 1913," in Modern China's Search for a Political Form, ed. Jack Gray (London, 1969), p. 70.

[3]The dating and authorship of the Kuan-tzu are problems which have long taxed the minds of scholars. It is generally agreed that the work consists of material from different periods, though there is no agreement on the dating of the various sections. For excellent summaries of the problem, see Chang Hsin-ch'eng, Wei-shu t'ung-k'ao (Taipei, 1973), pp. 887-896; W. Allyn Rickett, trans., Kuan-tzu (Hong Kong, 1965), pp. 1-20; and Sydney Rosen, "In Search of the Historical Kuan Chung," JAS XXXV.3 (May, 1976), 431-440.

[4]Fang Hsüan-ling, ed., Kuan-tzu (Sppy ed.), 1.17b-18a.

[5]Ibid., 15.14a-b.

[6]Ibid., 5.1b-2a.

[7]See above, n. 3.

[8]Henri Maspero, La Chine antique (Paris, 1965), pp. 245-247. Cf. Sydney Rosen.

[9]Hs 24A.1124-1125. For measurements and conversions, see Appendix I.

[10]Hs 24A.1124-1125.

[11]Hs 24A.1125. A good brief explication of Li K'uei's policies may be found in T'ang Ch'ing-tseng, Chung-kuo ching-chi ssu-hsiang shih (Shanghai, 1936), I, 251-255.

[12]Ho Ch'ang-ch'ün, "Ch'in-Han ko-t'i hsiao-nung ti hsing-ch'eng ho fa-chan," in HTcfc, p. 91.

[13]J. J. L. Duyvendak, trans., The Book of Lord Shang (London, 1928), pp. 141-159; Chang Hsin-ch'eng, pp. 896-901.

[14]Chu Shih-ch'e, Shang-chün shu chieh-ku (Taipei, 1958), 2.25; Duyvendak, pp. 214-216.

[15]Chu Shih-ch'e, 4.53-54; Duyvendak, pp. 266-267.

[16]Hs 28B.1641.

[17]Hs 28B.1642 n. 7; Hspc 28B.50b-51a, commentary. Cf. Li Ya-nung, "Shang Yang pien-fa," in Li Ya-nung shih-lun chi (Shanghai, 1964), p. 1041; Moriya Mitsuo, "Kai sen-baku no ichi kaishaku," in Chūgoku kodai no shakai to bunka (Tokyo, 1957), pp. 213-14; and Yang K'uan, Shang Yang pien-fa (Shanghai, 1973), pp. 42-43. Translations of the

pieces by Li and Yang may be found in Li Yu-ning, "Shang Yang's Reforms and State Control in China, I & II," Chinese Studies in History (Spring-Summer, and Fall-Winter, 1976).

[18]Sc 68.2230; Hs 24A.1126; Kao Yu, ed., Chan-kuo ts'e (Khcpts ed.), 5.48. The matter of the balks and headlands has long been a subject of debate and there is by no means even a modicum of agreement concerning it. The various arguments are much too involved to pursue in great detail here, though I hope to do so elsewhere. Generally, I follow the interpretation of Moriya Mitsuo. For others, see Chu Hsi, "K'ai ch'ien-mo pien," in Chu Wen-kung wen chi (Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an ed.), 72.3a-5a; Li Ya-nung, pp. 1034-1035; and Yang K'uan, pp. 39-43.

[19]Moriya Mitsuo, p. 217.

[20]Sc 5.203.

[21]Sc 68.2230.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Sc 68.2232.

[24]Hsü Wei-yü, Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu chi-shih (Taipei, 1966), 26.8a-b.

[25]The bibliography on the well-field system is quite extensive and need not be repeated here. A comprehensive compilation of the data pertaining to the system can be

found in Hsü Kuang-ch'i, Nung-cheng ch'üan-shu (Khcpts ed.), 1D.59-78. Discussions of the system may be found in Yü Ching-i, Ching-t'ien chih-tu hsin-k'ao (Canton, 1934), which argues that the system did exist, and in Wan Kuo-ting, Chung-kuo t'ien chih shih (Nanking, 1933), which argues against the system's existence. See also the opinions expressed in letters exchanged between Hu Shih and Liao Chung-k'ai which are reproduced in "Ching-t'ien pien," in Hu Shih wen-ts'un (Taipei, 1975), I, 413-439. This exchange has been summarized by Paul Demieville in Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extreme Orient, XXIII (1923), pp. 494-499. A discussion in English may be found in Chung-shu Hsü, "The Well-field System in Shang and Chou," in Chinese Social History, trans. E-tu Zen Sun and John De Francis (Washington, 1956), pp. 3-17, and summaries of the interpretations of some of the more important Chinese scholars working on ancient Chinese social and economic history are given by Lien-sheng Yang in his "Notes on Dr. Swann's Food and Money in Ancient China," in L. S. Yang, Studies in Chinese Institutional History (Cambridge, Mass., 1961), pp. 85-118, and Wolfram Eberhard, "Zur Landwirtschaft der Han-Zeit," Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen XXXIV (1932), 74-105.

[26]Cf. Etienne Balazs, "Evolution of Landownership in Fourth- and Fifth-century China," in Chinese Civiliza-

tion and Bureaucracy, trans. H. M. Wright (New Haven, 1964), p. 102.

[27]Chün-tu Hsüeh, Huang Hsing and the Chinese Revolution (Stanford, 1961), pp. 50-51.

[28]Chiao Hsün, Meng-tzu cheng-i (Taipei, 1971), 5.205-61; Legge, II, 243-44.

[29]Lun Yü, 16.1; Arthur Waley, trans., The Analects of Confucius (London, 1938), p. 203.

[30]Meng-tzu cheng-i, 5.212-3; Legge, II, 245.

[31]The word kung (公) means "duke" or "lord" as well as "public." The kung-t'ien cannot be understood as being "public" in the sense of something "that is open to, may be used by, or may or must be shared by all members of the community; not restricted to the private use of any person or persons," or as "of or belonging to the people as a whole" (OED). Other lands such as mountains, marshes, etc., from which natural products could be gathered were sometimes "public" in the former sense; but, the kung-t'ien of the well-field system were farmed by specific groups of cultivators to provide revenue for the lord. Cf. Wu Ch'i-ch'ang, "The Chinese Land System before the Ch'in Dynasty," in Sun and De Francis, pp. 67-68. Wu's original article has been unavailable to me.

[32]Meng-tzu cheng-i, 5.207; Legge, II. 244.

[33]Meng-tzu cheng-i, 5.213; Legge, II, 245.

[34]Meng-tzu cheng-i, 10.406; Legge, II, 3.

[35]Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu chi-shih, 26.8a-b; Tung Chung-shu Chung-shu, Ch'un-ch'iu fan-lu (Taipei, 1967), 28.191.

[36]Meng-tzu cheng-i, 1.35, 37; Legge, II, 131, 149.

[37]Ibid. The dwelling land (chai) should be distinguished from the lands granted for summer dwellings (lu) in the central plot of the well-field unit.

[38]Meng-tzu cheng-i, 5.209; Legge, II, 244.

[39]Ibid., commentary and sub-commentary. The Ch'ing commentator Chiao Hsün identifies these lands with the shih-t'ien ("official's lands") mentioned in the Rites of Chou. He believes they came from lands which could not be laid out neatly in the "well-field" arrangement and that the graph kuei 圭 was a pictographic representation of how they were arranged.

[40]Ibid., 5.210.

[41]I say "seems to be" because the passage here cited does not occur in the present text of the Ssu-ma Fa, which is considerably shorter than the text mentioned in the "Treatise on Literature" in the History of the Former Han Dynasty, and there is some question whether this passage and others attributed to the same work are genuine. On this

point see Chang Hsin-ch'eng, pp. 945-50.

[42]Sun I-jang, Chou-li cheng-i (Khcpts ed.), 20.10.

[43]Han shih wai chuan (HWts ed.), 4.7a; James Hightower, trans., Han Shih Wai Chuan (Cambridge, 1952), pp. 138-9.

[44]The ten mou cultivated by the family would have been the equivalent of one-tenth of their holding.

[45]Chung Wen-cheng, Ku-liang pu-chu (Khcpts ed.), 16.429.

[46]Ch'un-ch'iu fan lu chu, 28.190-191.

[47]Hs 24A.1137; Nancy Lee Swann, trans., Food and Money in Ancient China (Princeton, 1950), pp. 180-181.

[48]Hs 24A.1119; Swann, pp. 116-117.

[49]Ibid.; Chou-li cheng-i, 19.90; Edouard Biot, trans., Le Tcheou-li ou rites des Tcheou (Paris, 1851; reprint ed., Taipei, 1969), I, 206-207.

[50]Hs 24A.1119; Swann, pp. 116-117.

[51]Hs 24A.1120; Swann, pp. 122-125.

[52]Ch'en Li, Kung-yang i-shu (Khcpts ed.), 48.1254.

[53]Ibid., 48.1261.

[54]Ch'un-ch'iu ching-t'ien chi cited in HHs 76.2478 n. 1.

[55]Utsunomiya Kiyoyoshi, Kandai keizai shakai shi

kenkyū (Tokyo, 1954), pp. 304-305, 372.

[56]*Ytl*, 3.106.

[57]*Hs* 24A.1137; Swann, p. 181.

[58]*Hs* 24A.1142-3; Swann, pp. 200-204. I have discussed the nature of these limitations in "The Land Limitations of Emperor Ai--A Re-examination" (forthcoming).

[59]*Hs* 99B.4110; *HFHD*, III, 285.

[60]*Hs* 99B.4111; *HFHD*, III, 286.

[61]*Hs* 99B.4111; *HFHD*, III, 286-7.

[62]*Hs* 99B.4129-30; *HFHD*, III, 324.

[63]*Tt*, 1.12a.

[64]*HHs* 52.1729.

[65]Hsün Yüeh, *Shen chien* (*HWts* ed.), 2.7b-8a; Hsün Yüeh, *Ch'ien-Han chi* (Taipei, 1974), 8.3b; Chi-yün Chen, *Hsün Yüeh (A.D. 148-209): The Life and Reflections of An Early Medieval Confucian* (Cambridge, 1975), pp. 159-160; Lü Ssu-mien, "T'ien chih" in *Yen shih hsü-cha* (Taipei, 1975), pp. 4-8.

[66]*Shen chien*, 2.8a.

[67]*Han chi*, 8.3b-4b.

[68]*HHs* 49.1648.

[69]*HHs* 49.1651.

[70] _HHs_ 49.1653, 1656.

[71] _HHs_ 49.1656.

[72] _Skc_ 15.467-9.

CHAPTER III

LAND POLICY UNDER THE HAN DYNASTY

China's first imperial regime, the Ch'in, was a short-lived affair which came to an end in 206 B.C. Its successor, the Han, in many ways seems the beginning of a new era. Yet the Han, no better than anyone else, were able to escape the processes of history, and many of the developments and institutions under the Han were merely a continuation of those of the pre-Han period. This is quite clear in the case of land tenure and utilization policies.

We have already noted that the Han period saw the development and elaboration of an integrated set of ideas and models for formulating land policy which were based upon ideas and policies that already had begun taking shape during the pre-Han period. The Han was an important period of incubation and maturation for these concepts, some of which exercised an important influence on the institutions and policies that were developed during this period.

The Han also witnessed the continuing growth of private ownership of land. Private ownership of land was recognized and accepted by the Han, albeit not without reservations and limitations. One of the more important matters occupying those concerned with the social and

political developments of the day was how to cope with the problems that were engendered by private ownership.

Finally, the Han continued to adopt, sometimes in modified form, the various policies used by the Ch'in and other pre-Han regimes to achieve maximum use of the land and efficient application of labor to it. These policies included reclamation of land through clearing and irrigation projects, development and dissemination of agricultural technology, and other measures, such as relocation, that were intended to achieve a balance between land and labor.

The Imperial Fields: One of the more interesting and important aspects of Han land policy, one that shows conceptual continuity with the past, is the land referred to as *kung-t'ien*. This land has been described as an important "material condition" for the establishment of the centralized government,[1] as the forerunner of the system of land limitations of the Western Chin in its administrative aspects,[2] and as an important source of revenue for the imperial household.[3] For all its importance, however, the nature of this land has been given little detailed treatment by Chinese and Western scholars. Japanese historians have done a great deal of work on the subject, but even a cursory survey of their work reveals that there is no general agreement on the nature and function of *kung-t'ien*. If we are to fully understand the nature of land tenure systems during the Han dynasty, the degree to which they

were derived from earlier models, and the contributions they made to subsequent systems, we shall need as complete an understanding of kung-t'ien as the meager sources remaining to us will allow.

The term kung-t'ien when used with reference to the Han has usually been rendered as "public fields" or as "government fields."[4] While both terms convey something of the nature of the fields in that they make clear that the fields were not privately owned, they fail to reveal the true significance of the term. These fields were not public in the sense that they were owned in common by the people and administered in their behalf. Nor, strictly speaking, did they belong to the "government." The significance of the term kung-t'ien is that these lands were thought of as belonging to the ruler rather than to the government, and although they were administered by government officials, those officials had a special relationship to the emperor. Therefore, for the Han period the term kung-t'ien would better be rendered into English as "imperial fields." Although not all of this land may have been under cultivation, the term "fields" is adopted here in preference to "lands" in order to distinguish the imperial fields from other types of imperial land such as parks, preserves, gardens, natural resource land, and the like.

The term kung-t'ien was of course not new with the Han. We have already seen it mentioned in the previous

chapter with regard to the well-field system. The origin of the Han system of <u>kung-t'ien</u> has been traced to the pre-imperial Ch'in state and the state of Wei by Masubuchi Tatsuo in his valuable study.[5] Masubuchi believes that Shang Yang promoted the system together with the collection of revenues from the products of natural resource lands such as mountains, marshes, forests, and so forth in order to supplement the tax revenues gathered from the people who had been brought under the direct central government control through the adoption of the new administrative system of commanderies and prefectures. The collection of the revenues from the products of the natural resource lands had for some time been reserved for the use of the ruler, as Masubuchi shows. But Li K'uei in the state of Wei and Shang Yang in the state of Ch'in were the first to propose having people cultivate land on which they paid rent rather than a land tax.[6] These lands were not privately owned, and the cultivator was essentially a tenant of the ruler, and the rent paid on these lands was higher than the tax paid by private cultivators on their land. Masubuchi thinks that these tenants may have also been exempt from military service. This, he says, would have solved a shortcoming of the commandery-prefecture system, namely that the people who were the source of government revenue were also those who were conscripted to fight in wartime, which meant a decline in production and revenues

when they were most urgently needed. Furthermore, this land could be rented out to landless persons as well as to vagrants (liu-min). This land was derived from the reclamation of uncultivated land, and the amount of such land under the control of the imperial family increased greatly during the Ch'in. Masubuchi says that the distinction between the fiscal administration of the imperial family and that of the state was not nearly so clear under the Ch'in as it was to become under the Han, though the prototype of the Han system was already there. It should be further noted that although Masubuchi refers to this land as kung-t'ien, the term itself does not occur in any of the examples he cites from the pre-Han period.

As Masubuchi himself admits, it is very difficult to obtain a clear picture of the kung-t'ien (if indeed they were called that) under the Ch'in. When we come to the Han, however, the characteristics of the kung-t'ien or imperial fields are rather clearer. They were lands which were under the fiscal administration of the imperial household and which were rented out to cultivators, the rental providing an important source of income for the imperial household. Moreover, they could be bestowed upon imperial favorites or distributed to persons who had no land in order to encourage them to engage in agriculture. Some of the imperial fields were probably inherited from the Ch'in, some came from confiscations of land, and others were the

result of reclamation projects.

There is no mention of the term "imperial fields" during the Han prior to the reign of Emperor Wu, and but for the work of Masubuchi, it would be tempting to interpret this as an indication that they did not exist prior to his reign. The earliest references to imperial fields during the Han are to two requests for the use of such land that were presented to Emperor Wu shortly after he acceded to the throne.[7] Coming at the very beginning of his reign, these requests suggest the prior existence of imperial fields. The lack of an earlier mention of them perhaps indicates that they were not very extensive prior to the reign of Emperor Wu.[8]

The amount of imperial fields is generally considered to have increased markedly during the reign of Emperor Wu with the confiscation of lands that accompanied a systematic persecution of wealthy persons, particularly merchants, who were accused of minting debased coinage and evading the land tax. A staggering amount of wealth, including a great deal of land, was taken. In the larger prefectures these confiscations were reputed to have amounted to several thousand _ch'ing_ and in the smaller prefectures to over a hundred _ch'ing_, with proportionate confiscations of dwellings and dwelling lands. So enormous were these confiscations that they necessitated some administrative changes. A chief commandant of parks and

waters was created to take charge of the Shang-lin Park, previously under the privy treasurer, where confiscated goods were stored. The confiscated lands were placed in the charge of newly created agricultural officers (nung-kuan) who were subordinates of the chief commandant of waters and parks, the privy treasurer, the grand coachman, and the grand prefect of agriculture. The agricultural officers travelled throughout the empire to direct cultivation of the fields as they were confiscated.[9] Of the offices to which they were subordinate, the first three--the chief commandant of waters and parks, the privy treasurer, and the grand coachmen--were officials of the imperial household, and the first two were concerned primarily with its fiscal administration.[10] The land which came under the jurisdiction of these two officials quite likely became imperial fields, although this is not specifically stated.[11] The land which fell under the jurisdiction of the grand coachman was probably mostly pasture land, since that official was responsible for the imperial chariots and horses.[12]

The administration of kung-t'ien by officials of the imperial household lends support to the view that these lands were conceived of as belonging to the ruler and being set aside for his support. Other available references to officials having imperial fields under their jurisdiction are to those who in some way were connected with the

emperor or the court. There are references, for example, to imperial fields under the jurisdiction of the grand minister of ceremonies.[13] This official was in charge of the imperial mausolea and the ceremonies in the imperial ancestral temple. These mausolea were not merely grave sites, but also included settlements of substantial size (there are references to thousands of persons being relocated to them) which included tracts of arable land.[14] There are also references to the imperial fields of the Three Adjuncts, i.e., the three districts of the capital.[15] This area had a special relationship to the emperor quite different from other administrative units, and its chief officers were court officials as well as administrative officials.[16]

It should not be thought, however, that imperial fields were limited to the capital region and the imperial mausolea. The confiscations of land had taken place throughout the empire, and as we have noted, officials were appointed to travel about and oversee the cultivation of the fields, which initially at least seems to have been done by slaves acquired through the confiscations.[17] Later, the letting out of such land became more common, a point which will be described in more detail below. Although these lands might be some distance from the capital, the income from them, at least during the Former Han, was still remitted to the privy treasurer or other

officials directly connected with the administration of the imperial household. There are references, for example, to lands which were rented out in Ho-tung and Nan commanderies that were under the jurisdiction of the privy treasurer.[18] References to imperial fields in the commanderies and principalities being turned over or let out to the poor became more common during the Later Han,[19] perhaps reflecting some important changes which took place in the central administration between the Former and Later Han.

During the Former Han, the financial administrations of the imperial household and the central government were separate, with the privy treasurer and the chief commandant of waters and parks being responsible for the former and the grand minister of agriculture, for the latter. The imperial fields were under the jurisdiction of officials subordinate to the privy treasurer, the chief commandant of waters and parks, and some other officials of the imperial household. At the beginning of the Later Han, however, two important changes took place. First, the fiscal duties of the officers of the imperial household were curtailed. The commandant of waters and parks was absorbed by the privy treasurer, and the fiscal administration of the imperial household was taken over by the grand minister of agriculture, thus relegating the privy treasurer to a secondary position of handling various goods, precious items, jewelry, and the like in the

palace.[20] This transfer of fiscal duties no doubt included administration of the imperial fields. Second, there was a further devolution of functions from the office of the grand minister of agriculture to local officials. For example, the supervisors of waters who had charge of the imperial natural resource lands (i.e., the mountains, marshes, ponds, and so forth) and who during the Former Han had been subordinate to the privy treasurer, chief commandant of waters and parks, the Three Adjuncts, and the grand minister of agriculture[21] were made subordinate to the commanderies and principalities during the Later Han.[22] In a similar manner during the Later Han we begin to see references to imperial fields under the control of commandery and principality officials,[23] which also reflected a tendency to make agriculture the responsibility of local officials.[24]

The imperial fields seem to have been derived from several sources. The results of Masubuchi Tatsuo's study summarized previously point to the existence of such land under the Ch'in, and it is likely that this land was taken over by the Han. There does not seem to have been a very great amount of this sort of land, however. Another source was the confiscation of private landholdings, the most famous example being those carried out on a grand scale under Emperor Wu.[25] Some of the lands taken over for use as imperial parks included farmlands, and it may be that

these lands continued to be cultivated as imperial fields.[26] But these were not the only sources of imperial fields. A third source was land that had been reclaimed through irrigation projects. Imperial fields are mentioned in connection with irrigation projects in the Three Adjuncts, Ho-nei, Ho-tung, the principality of Chao, and T'ai-yuan.[27]

Frequent reference has been made to the grand prefect of agriculture, or grand minister of agriculture as he came to be called during the reign of Emperor Wu, the official in charge of the fiscal administration of the central government. There was land under his jurisdiction as well, and some writers have concluded that this included _kung-t'ien_.[28] If this were the case, it would serve to weaken the argument that _kung-t'ien_ were "imperial fields," that is, fields the income from which was considered to be reserved for the use of the emperor. There is no clear evidence, however, that the fields under the jurisdiction of the grand minister of agriculture were in fact _kung-t'ien_. The passages normally cited as evidence for this contention are those which describe the confiscations carried out under Emperor Wu and the establishment of the agricultural officers under the grand prefect of agriculture, the chief commandant of waters and parks, and the grand coachman. Yet there is no specific mention of _kung-t'ien_ in these passages, and although it is certain

that some, if not most, of the cultivated land did become kung-t'ien, there is no reason to assume that this is true for all of it. It has already been suggested that the land placed under the grand coachman was probably pastureland. While it is true that all four of these officials, including the grand prefect of agriculture, are mentioned in the Discourses on Salt and Iron in connection with kung-t'ien, other types of lands--parks, ponds, pastures, and the like--are also mentioned there, and the text is too ambiguous for a specific official to be connected with a specific type of land.[28] But if the fields under the grand prefect of agriculture were not kung-t'ien, what were they? The answer is perhaps to be found in another type of land known as kuan-t'ien or "government fields."

There are several references to government fields during the Han. Unfortunately, they do not make clear who had jurisdiction over them. The Chinese historian, Ho Ch'ang-ch'ün, simply equates them and "grasslands" (ts'ao-t'ien) with the imperial fields.[29] His evidence on this point, however, is contradictory, and there is no reason to assume that they were the same. Indeed, "grasslands" referred simply to uncultivated land, and the fact that proposals were made to convert such land into imperial fields and government fields shows that they were in fact different.[30] Moreover, there may be justification for considering kung-t'ien and kuan-t'ien as being distinct.

Certainly none of the references to kuan-t'ien preclude such a conclusion.[31] References to the repair of old irrigation systems in T'ai-yuan commandery during the reign of Emperor An suggest that the two were indeed not the same. An entry in History of the Later Han Dynasty for the year Yung-ch'u 2/3 (A.D. 108) says that T'ai-yuan commandery, among others, undertook the repair of an old irrigation system "in order to irrigate imperial and private fields."[32] A subsequent entry for Yung-ch'u 3/1 (A.D. 109) says that old canals in T'ai-yuan commandery were repaired "to irrigate government and private fields (kuan ssu t'ien)."[33] While it might be possible to interpret the two entries as referring to the same repair work, thus indicating that kung-t'ien and kuan-t'ien were the same, the explicitness of the entries suggests two different types of fields. Administration and use of the two different types of fields, which are discussed below, were probably similar, however.

One of the most interesting bits of evidence concerning the special nature of kung-t'ien is the case of Chih Shou, a supervisor of the masters of writing under Emperor Ho (r. A.D. 89-105) who had the audacity to criticize Tou Hsien's campaigns against the Hsiung-nu and the extravagance of members of the Tou family. Tou, an imperial favorite, was incensed and calumniated Chih, saying that he had "bought imperial fields." Consequently, Chih was

imprisoned and sentenced to death; his crime was that he had been "greatly disrespectful" (ta pu ching).[34] Crimes adjudged "greatly disrespectful" included those which were considered to be in some manner directed against the emperor.[35] It is inconceivable that an alleged attempt to purchase kung-t'ien could have been considered so serious a crime, one carrying the death penalty if the kung-t'ien were not considered as belonging to the emperor.

The imperial fields were important to the emperor and the imperial family in several ways. The most important of these was the revenue that they provided for the imperial household. The importance of this is underscored by the fact that before the two fiscal administrations were combined, the revenues of the imperial household (including those from sources other than the imperial fields) may have exceeded those handled by the grand minister of agriculture.[36]

Income from the imperial fields was derived in two ways: through cultivation of the land by slaves and through renting the land to tenants. The extent to which cultivation of the imperial fields was conducted by slaves cannot be known. Indeed, there is no specific mention of it at all. That slaves did cultivate imperial fields is suggested by the large number of slaves that were confiscated under Emperor Wu.[37] Some of these slaves were probably put to work cultivating land under the supervision

of the agricultural officers.

It was not slave cultivation, however, but tenant cultivation which became the most common method of cultivating imperial lands. It has been suggested by one writer that this was due to slave revolts which made slave cultivation difficult to maintain.[38] Another student of the subject has pointed out, however, that uprisings by slaves engaged in iron production did not lead to their elimination from the iron industry and has suggested that slaves ceased to be used to cultivate imperial fields because it was difficult to maintain a body of slaves who were trained in agriculture.[39] More likely, slave labor ceased to be used because it is most suitable to plantation-type cultivation, and in any case has been found to be a relatively inefficient method of cultivation.[40] Whatever, lack of sufficient evidence moots the entire question, which is an example of the penchant of some historians for engaging in debates over probable effects simply by assuming the existence of the causes.

In examining tenant cultivation we are on firmer, albeit hardly solid ground. Letting out land and the right to collect wild produce from imperial and government lands was a very common method of obtaining income from these lands. There are references in the sources to the letting of imperial fields, government fields, land in the parks and preserves, and the right to gather from the

natural resource lands. In addition to the lands subordinate to the privy treasurer, grand minister of agriculture, and chief commandant of waters and parks, there were also lands under local officials from which they received an income.[41] The general form of management of these lands by the various administrative units was probably similar. We have already seen that there were agricultural officers established during the reign of Emperor Wu to oversee the cultivation of some of these lands. In addition to these, there were other officials involved in supervising cultivation of land. For example, there was an officer of fields for Pei-chia who was in charge of letting fields, though it is unclear whether the fields were imperial or government.[42] There was also a commissioner of rice fields who had charge of letting out paddy fields;[43] but again, it cannot be determined whether the revenue from these fields went to the imperial household or to the central government.

Tenants were of several types, and the terms of tenantry depended upon the type. There has been a great deal of argument over the exact amount paid as rental on the imperial fields. Nishijima Sadao, a noted Japanese historian, basing himself on an ambiguous and controversial passage in the Discourses on Salt and Iron, says that the rental was the same as the land tax rate--one-thirtieth of the yield.[44] The passage in question occurs when the

literatus, who argues that imperial land and fields should all be turned over to the people who would then simply be taxed, asserts that although "taxes" and "rent" are nominally different, the two are in fact the same.[45] This evidence is tenuous at best, and the speaker quite likely equates the two simply as a rhetorical device. Moreover, one-thirtieth seems an absurdly low rent when compared with rents in the private sector which were running upwards of fifty per cent of the yield.

The basic rate for imperial fields also seems to have been fifty per cent of the yield. This can be ascertained by analogy with the private sector, by comparing the anticipated income from a particular bloc of fields with the projected gross yield, and by analogy with subsequent similar systems. That the going rate in the private sector was fifty per cent has already been mentioned. Another important piece of evidence for determining the rate for imperial fields is to be found in the "Yellow River and Canals" treatise of the Records of the Grand Historian. Each year a million piculs of grain were transported up the Yellow River to the capital at Ch'ang-an. The cost of transport was very high, and much of the grain was lost in negotiating the Ti-chu narrows. P'an Hsi, the administrator of Ho-tung commandery, which was located east of the capital, proposed an irrigation project to open up 5,000 *ch'ing* of new land, which he predicted would produce

two million piculs annually.[46] Thus, if the income from this land were meant to replace the grain shipped up the river, that would mean that those cultivating that land would need to have been levied fifty per cent of what they produced.[47]

Further evidence for the fifty per cent figure lies in the rate that was levied under the system of government agricultural colonies (t'un-t'ien) established by the state of Wei of the Three Kingdoms period. In describing this system, Fu Hsuan of the Western Chin period said that if government oxen were used to till the soil, the cultivator had to pay sixty per cent of his produce to the government; but, if the cultivator furnished his own oxen, the rate was fifty per cent.[48] Since the imperial fields constituted something of a prototype for the system of civilian government fields of the Wei,[49] the rate of the latter probably reflects that of the former.

The basic rate was fifty per cent, but the actual rate might deviate from this, depending upon several conditions. One of these, as seen from the cases of the Wei and of private tenantry during the Han, was whether or not the tenant provided his own plow ox. If he did, then he paid only half the produce as rent. Additional amounts might be levied if the tenant were furnished implements, seed, and so forth. In the case of really poor peasants, sufficient rations to tide the tenant over until the harvest

had been gathered might also be furnished.[50] These levies were called "obligations" (tse) and were generally added onto the basic rate, so that if one were paying for everything from his land rent to food to last him until harvest time, he might be liable for a fairly hefty amount.[51] In the case of persons who were particularly poor, these charges and the rent might be cancelled or reduced.[52] Sometimes--in the case of the poor--land, seed, tools, and so forth might be simply granted outright.[53]

Some of those who rented imperial fields and government fields may already have had small landholdings and rented land in order to supplement those holdings.[54] There may have been others who possessed dwellings, but had no land to cultivate and so rented imperial or government fields. But there were also a great many who had nothing. These included the poor, disaster victims, and vagrants, i.e., persons who had left their home areas and in some cases their own lands and begun roaming.[55] In some cases, in order to encourage such people to settle down and engage in agriculture, rent might not be collected for a fixed period, and tools, grain, and so on, might be granted outright.[56] Imperial lands--the imperial parks and preserves, pasture lands, and natural resource lands--were opened up to cultivation and gathering by the poor and needy, and proposals were often made to abolish them and turn them over to the poor.[57] Indeed, instances involving

imperial lands were more numerous than those concerning imperial fields.

At first glance it might seem curious that imperial lands--lands not originally intended for cultivation--should be given to the people to cultivate more frequently than were imperial fields. This suggests that there were more imperial lands available for such purposes than there were imperial fields. This is probably because most of the imperial fields were normally kept under cultivation in order to produce revenue and thus were not always available to let out to the poor.

Imperial fields were also used to reward deserving subjects and as gifts to imperial favorites, deserving and otherwise. They were employed in this manner by Emperor Wu, who granted imperial lands to relatives and to such favorites as Tung-fang Shuo.[58] These bestowals have been criticized by modern writers as having contributed to the problem of "monopolization" (chien ping) which deprived the peasantry of land.[59] It is rather doubtful, however, that these bestowals could have been very important in this regard.[60] Imperial fields could also be granted in order to encourage loyalty to the emperor. During the reign of Emperor P'ing, for example, a bandit leader who had surrendered himself was given imperial fields in the prefecture in which he was relocated.[61] It was common practice to relocate potential troublemakers

and to give them land, and since many of these people were relocated to imperial tombs, the land that they were granted may very well have been imperial fields.[62]

The imperial fields of the Han reveal an interesting feature of Han fiscal administration, namely, the tendency to rely on the income from lands subordinate to officers of the imperial household and the central government rather than on revenues derived from a regular land tax. To do this meant, of course, that large amounts of land had to be in the hands of the imperial household and the central government. This made it possible for the Han to maintain the land tax at an extremely low rate--one-thirtieth of the yield--although expenditures continued to climb.[63] More importance seems to have been attached to income produced by imperial and government fields and lands so that the land tax simply was not considered an important source of revenue. Rather than concentrating on developing the land tax as a significant source of revenue the Han developed land systems. This concept was to remain important into the post-Han era, which saw continued experimentation with land systems, though there was also a growing emphasis on taxation.

Private Ownership: The existence of imperial and government fields naturally implies the existence of privately-owned land, and indeed, by the beginning of the

Han we find that private ownership of land was well entrenched. There is disagreement over precisely when and where private ownership of land began in China. It has traditionally been held that originally all land belonged to the Chou kings, and the Book of Poetry contains the famous line, "Everywhere under Heaven/Is no land that is not the king's./To the borders of all those lands/None but is the king's servant."[64] Some have believed that the Chou kings held and administered this land through the well-field system discussed previously and that private ownership of land began with the breakdown of that system. This assertion was made during the Former Han by members of the Confucian school such as Tung Chung-shu and Chia I.[65] In particular, they laid responsibility for destruction of the system and the appearance of private ownership at the feet of Shang Yang. But this interpretation has more to do with Confucianist-Legalist antagonisms during the Han than with actual conditions resulting from Shang's reforms,[66] and modern scholars have shown that the appearance of private landholding in ancient China is a complex matter that can be hardly attributed to the policies of a single official, no matter how odius those policies might have seemed to some. Precisely when private ownership of land became prevalent is unclear, but one modern writer, Wu Ch'i-ch'ang, believes that not a few great families had risen as early as the seventh century

B.C. through the purchase of landed property.[67] In any event, the character of landed property was changing throughout the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods, with possession shifting from the hands of lords of manors into those of independent farmers or landowners who were not necessarily of noble descent.[68]

Regardless of when private ownership of land came into being, it was well established by the beginning of the Han. This is amply demonstrated by the case of Hsiao Ho, chancellor to the first Han emperor, Emperor Kao-tsu (r. 206-195 B.C.), who bought up vast amounts of land in the capital area in a subtle scheme to convince the emperor of his loyalty.[69] Land was considered the basis of wealth and a source of prestige, and already during the reign of Emperor Kao-tsu there was competition for land.[70] Wealthy merchants and entrepreneurs, who had made their fortunes in commercial activities, sought to purchase land because there were not many other attractive outlets for investment, and agriculture was considered the best means of preserving one's wealth.[71]

The idea of private ownership of land and the right to dispose of one's land as one saw fit became well established during the Han. The single attempt to abolish private ownership and the right of alienation of land--Wang Mang's decree creating the royal fields--met with rigorous opposition. Wei Hsiao, a general leading forces

in support of the overthrow of Wang Mang and the restoration of the Han, gave the creation of the royal fields and prohibition of the sale of land as one of the reasons for taking up arms against Wang.[72] The attempt during the reign of Emperor Ai (r. 6 B.C.-A.D. 1) to limit landholdings, about which more will be said shortly, implied recognition of the right to own land privately,[73] and during the Later Han, decrees concerning irrigation projects juxtaposed private fields to imperial and government fields.[74]

An individual could acquire land in several different ways. In special cases--for example, court favorites, worthy subjects, poor and displaced persons--outright grants of government or imperial lands might be made.[75] A person could reclaim wasteland, which he could then retain or perhaps even sell.[76] No doubt there were also a number of illegal methods by which the powerful and wealthy could acquire land to extend their holdings.[77] But the most common method of obtaining land indubitably was by purchase. Merchants or others who had extra funds which they wished to invest used them to buy land, in some cases from peasants who wished to acquire sufficient working capital to set themselves up in business.[78] The land which was confiscated from merchants by the government under Emperor Wu quite probably had been acquired mostly through purchase.

Although evidence is slim, we do have some idea of what the price of land was. During the reign of Emperor Wu, the famous wit, Tung-fang Shuo, said that a mou of land in the capital region was worth one chin, which was equivalent to 10,000 cash.[79] It is clear from the context that this land was relatively expensive. Surviving records from a pair of land sales during the Later Han reveal prices of 1,500 and 3,000 cash per mou for land outside the capital region.[80] Other sources indicate that land in the frontier regions might go for as little as 25 or 100 cash per mou.[81] Thus even a peasant, were he fortunate enough to be blessed with a few abundant harvests, could probably save enough to buy a little land in order to gradually expand his holdings.[82]

As noted, a number of persons believed that private ownership of land led to the monopolization (ping-chien) of land. According to a T'ang dynasty commentator to the History of the Later Han Dynasty, Li Hsien, "monopolization" is defined as "the powerful and wealthy families using the power of their wealth to everywhere take the fields of the poor and to possess them all."[83] In discussing the problem of monopolization, modern writers have tended to emphasize two sources: gifts of large blocs of land by the emperor to favorites and acquisitions by the powerful and wealthy through purchase and foreclosure.[84] It is significant that ancient critics of monopolization

did not refer to the former as a source of monopolization, though they were sometimes critical of such grants. The idea, propounded primarily by modern Chinese scholars, that imperial gifts contributed significantly to monopolization and hence to depriving the peasant of arable land must be taken with a grain, perhaps even a hefty dash, of the proverbial salt of scepticism. First of all, the land that was bestowed on favorites was usually imperial land and not land that was granted at the expense of the peasant, except insofar as it became no longer available to grant to the poor during times of dearth. Secondly, the position of a favorite was subject to imperial whim and vagaries of political change.[85] As these persons fell from favor, their lands could be confiscated by the emperor and thus become available for distribution to other favorites; hence, the total amount of land in the hands of favorites probably remained fairly constant, perhaps increasing somewhat through the course of the dynasty as the power of imperial affinals, eunuchs, and other favorites tended to grow.

Of greater importance for the development of monopolization were the acquisitions through purchase and foreclosure by the powerful and wealthy. We have already seen that land was viewed as an effective means of preserving wealth acquired in commerce or industry and passing it on to one's descendants. Land offered security, prestige, and

regular income, and consequently, from pre-Han times merchants and others had sought to turn their specie into space.

The Han adopted a number of measures to prevent the wealthy, merchants in particular, from acquiring large quantities of land. In 120 B.C. taxes were levied on the property of merchants and artisans for the first time, and those merchants who were registered in the market-places and members of their families were enjoined from owning land.[86] The decree laying down this injunction said that this action was taken for the benefit of the peasantry and that anyone who disobeyed the order faced confiscation of his fields and goods.[87] This decree, a reflection of the Han policy of restricting commercial activities and stressing agriculture, was prompted by the growing wealth and power of the merchants who were feeding on the fruits of a period of stability and growth at the beginning of the Han.

In addition to prohibiting the commercial classes from owning land, Emperor Wu three years later undertook an ambitious series of confiscations to weaken the wealthy and powerful families and undermine their hold on economic resources. In 117 B.C. he issued a decree which dispatched six officials to look into charges that debased coins were being minted, that agriculture had been harmed, and that the number of those engaging in commercial activities was

increasing. These officials were to travel to the various commanderies and apprehend large landholders and high officials who had been seeking to profit themselves, an indication perhaps that non-merchants were also engaging in commercial activities.[88] One Yang K'o was placed in charge of hearing accusations against those who allegedly had failed to report property for tax purposes. As a result of his findings there were huge confiscations of strings of cash, slaves, and land.[89] In the larger prefectures, confiscations of land reputedly amounted to several hundred *ch'ing* and in the smaller prefectures to over a hundred *ch'ing*, with proportionate numbers of houses also being confiscated. Many wealthy merchants were ruined as a result of these confiscations.[90]

How the confiscated lands were disposed of has already been described (above pp. 77-78). The confiscations are important because they offer an indication of the amount of land and wealth that merchant and powerful families were able to amass. Had the policy of prohibiting merchants from owning land been systematically and effectively enforced, or had later similarly large-scale confiscations been undertaken, merchants would have been in no position to monopolize land. But neither happened, and subsequent to the large-scale confiscations under Emperor Wu, the wealthy were once again in a position to acquire land.[91]

Studies of the problem of monopolization during the

Han period often assert that the Han attempted unsuccessfully to deal with the problem through a policy of "limiting fields" (<u>hsien-t'ien</u>).[92] Such a policy was first suggested by Tung Chung-shu in the proposal discussed previously (p. 49). He believed that landholdings ought to be limited in order to mitigate insufficiency and prevent monopolization, but his proposal was not adopted. Limitation of landholdings was again proposed by Shih Tan during the reign of Emperor Ai (r. 6 B.C.-A.D. 1), and this time limitations were indeed adopted. They met with opposition from a court favorite and imperial affines, however, and within two years of their enactment they were suspended before they really could have any impact.[93]

The suspension of the limitations imposed by Emperor Ai has been lamented by writers who view it as the failure of the sole attempt of the Han to deal with the problem of monopolization and to ensure land to the peasant. Viewed in this light, the restrictions imposed by Emperor Ai are seen as the forerunner of such later systems as the "land limitations" (<u>chan-t'ien</u>) system of the Western Chin and the "system of equal land allotments" (<u>chün-t'ien chih-tu</u>) of the Northern Wei. Such an interpretation, however, is incorrect on two counts: other measures were adopted to cope with monopolization, and the limitations imposed by Emperor Ai were not meant to address the problem of monopolization in the first place. Rather, these

limitations were intended as sumptuary regulations proposed by officials who were disgusted by the blatant aggrandizement of the imperial affines, a point which is clear from the context of decree in which they appear.[94] There was very little in this decree that is meant to ensure land to the peasant. The lowest maximum amount of land that could be held under the limitations was thirty ch'ing (=3,000 mou), which was equivalent to what was considered to be the ideal amount to be cultivated by thirty families. This does not mean, however, that the Han failed take action against monopolization.

If the limitations were not directed at monopolization, then what did the Han do in order to address the problem? It is evident that the lack of limitations notwithstanding, Han officials had the authority to deal with persons who were engaging in monopolization. This can be seen from instances in which officials took action against persons, some of high position, who were involved in monopolization.[95] In such cases, the land which had been engrossed was confiscated and returned to the people from whom it had been taken. Even the government lands were not exempt; in one case it was discovered that a marquis had engrossed land belonging to the state as well as to the people.[96] Unfortunately, it is impossible to know what sort of statutory authority officials had to deal with monopolization. Some must have existed, however,

since the Records of the Three Kingdoms tells us that in A.D. 204 Ts'ao Ts'ao gave serious attention to the "laws concerning bullies and monopolizers."[97]

In considering private ownership of land during the Han, it is useful to also examine briefly the various forms of labor used in cultivating it. For the type of labor used is often closely related to the manner in which the land is held and the way in which it is worked. Moreover, land policy during the Han included a desire to encourage the establishment of cultivation by a particular form of labor, namely, the free peasant cultivator working his own land.

It has been pointed out by S. N. Eisenstadt in his study of the political systems of empires that rulers frequently attempted to create and maintain an independent free peasantry on small landholdings. The purpose of such a policy was partly economic--to ensure a flow of resources to the state in the form of tax monies and services; but, it was also political and social--to create a social stratum both dependent on and loyal to the state, one that would identify with the emperor rather than any other lord.[98] The realization of the need for the strong backing of a sound and healthy stock of citizen-farmers in ruling a vast empire was realized by Roman statesmen such as Julius Caesar.[99] And during the Ch'ing dynasty (1644-

1911), the government attempted to balance the power and local domination of the gentry by reserving the posts of _pao-chia_ heads to commoners.[100]

Such views of the importance of the peasant were prevalent also during the Han and had roots extending back into the thought of Confucius and Mencius. Wang Fu, the second century Han thinker, stated quite baldly, "The way in which a state becomes a state is by having the support of the people, and the way in which people become people is by having grain."[101] And, of course, in order to have grain they had to have land. Similar sentiments were commonly expressed throughout the Han.[102]

Another important consideration where the government was concerned was that the peasantry should be settled on the land as a way of ensuring social stability. Persons not settled on the land were considered unproductive and potentially disruptive. There were frequent attempts by the government to encourage vagrants (_liu-min_)--generally persons who had been displaced by natural disaster, social upheaval or had left to escape debt and the like--to return to their home districts and to work their abandoned lands.[103] Such persons were frequently given special treatment, such as tax exemption, if they would return.[104] And if a person had no land to return to, the government might relocate him to an area where there was unoccupied land, a point which will be discussed further shortly.

Although the ideal was for a peasant to have 100 mou of land, it seems that many in fact held rather less. Although we have no figures regarding the size of peasant landholdings, there are a number of factors which point to the peasant's holdings being small, and perhaps tending to grow smaller. One of these is the practice of dividing property equally among sons.[105] If we assume, for example, that a peasant held 100 mou and that he had two sons, then each of them would inherit 50 mou. Unless they were extraordinarily successful and were able to accumulate enough capital to buy additional land, they would be forced to rent land since 50 mou would be insufficient to support a family.[106] A tenant would perforce have to obtain additional land elsewhere, perhaps by reclaiming land or, more likely, by renting it from a nearby large landholder or from the government. Consequently, holdings would tend to become fragmented, making efficient cultivation difficult. Occasionally a peasant might sell off whatever land he had to obtain a little capital and try to enter commerce.[107] If there were a poor harvest, a peasant might be reduced to selling his land and his goods in order to buy food.[108] Others who were unable to support themselves on whatever land they possessed might resort to brigandage,[109] or perhaps might become wage laborers.[110] In the event of natural disaster, a poor harvest or warfare, a peasant might even abandon his land; therefore, the government

often granted tax exemption and other forms of special treatment in order to encourage peasants to remain on their land.[111]

The general picture, then, admittedly an impressionistic and fuzzy one, is that peasant holdings were small and had a tendency to grow smaller unless the peasant was in some manner able to reverse the trend. This he could perhaps accomplish through a series of outstanding harvests which would allow him to save enough to purchase additional land.

Aside from freeholding peasants cultivating their own holdings, the most important form of cultivation was tenantry. Although large landowners might work their land with slave or hired labor, two forms which will be discussed momemtarily, they most commonly let out their land to tenants to be worked in a form of sharecropping or metayage. Tenants would have been more attractive to the landlords than either slaves or hired labor because the former would have required a considerable capital investment while the latter would not have been very stable. In cases where the landlord obtained land in lieu of payment of debts owed him, it would simply have been convenient to allow the original owner to remain on the land as a tenant cultivator.

Precisely what the terms of tenantry were is not entirely clear. Statements made by Tung Chung-shu and

Wang Mang indicate that the landlord took fifty per cent of the yield.[112] Hsün Yüeh, on the other hand, refers to their taking two-thirds.[113] Just exactly what the differences between the two cases might have been is not entirely clear, though some enlightened speculation is possible. In the case of the 50/50 division of the yield, the tenant probably provided his own tools and plow oxen. This would have been most common in cases where the tenant was the original owner of the land that he worked and which he had lost through debt. The tenant in this case would have continued to cultivate much as before, simply turning half of his produce over to his landlord who in turn would cancel his debt and take care of the land tax.[114]

The landlord who took two-thirds of the produce probably supplied the tenant with tools and plow oxen as was the case with the government and imperial fields described above. Ts'ui Shih's Monthly Instructions for the Four Classes of People contains a passage which says that in the twelfth lunar month it was time to gather together the plows and farm implements, to nourish the plow oxen, and to select those who were to do the cultivating in order to prepare for the beginning of the agricultural season.[115] Although there is nothing directly said about tenants, the assumption that it is indeed tenants whom are being referred to seems warranted since they were the most common form of cultivators on large landholdings. Since the

preparation of plow oxen and the farm implements is mentioned in the same sentence as the selection of the persons who are to do the cultivation, it does not seem unwarranted to deduce that they were being prepared in order to provide them to cultivator. Such an interpretation gains further credence when it is remembered that in cases where the government let lands to people to cultivate, they also frequently lent tools and seed.[116]

Rent was no doubt paid in kind and was probably based on a fixed estimated yield determined by the landlord in order to minimize his risks rather than on a percentage of the actual yield of each harvest; that such a system obtained is suggested by analogy with the land tax which was based upon a fixed estimated yield rather than the actual yield. It is possible to calculate, albeit roughly, the amount of rent that a tenant would have had to pay. If we accept Chung-ch'ang T'ung's figure of a 3 hu per mou average yield for the period and assume that an individual cultivated a holding of 100 mou, a tenant paying 50% would have retained 150 hu and a tenant paying two-thirds would have been able to keep 100 hu.[117] An adult male would have required about three hu per month and a woman about two hu as food.[118] A man and his wife would therefore have required about 60 hu per year, not to mention children or other members of the family. In order to survive, then, a tenant would have needed to raise other produce and

and livestock which he could either eat or sell in order to purchase additional grain. Many tenants must have lived at a subsistence level, and Tung Chung-shu and others have described them as leading a perfectly miserable existence.

A potential source of agricultural labor, in addition to tenants, was slave labor. The use of slave labor on government and imperial fields has already been touched upon. Some powerful and wealthy families owned large numbers of slaves, sometimes numbering in the hundreds and thousands,[119] and analogy with conditions in the Roman Empire would seem to argue strongly for such employment. Marxist scholars have sometimes posited that Han society was a slave society and that slaves were the most important form of agricultural labor.[120] Yet, surviving sources seldom show slaves so serving. In his classic study of slavery during the Former Han, C. Martin Wilbur concludes that slaves were relatively unimportant in agriculture.[121] His conclusion seems equally valid for the Later Han as well. Utsunomiya Kiyoyoshi, basing himself on figures that are more literary than literal, believes that tenants may have outnumbered slaves by ten to one.[122]

The relative unimportance of slaves in Han agriculture is explained by a number of factors. One is the high cost of slaves. The average price of a slave during the Han was about 15-20,000 cash, which may be compared with the salary of a prefect of the second century whose annual

salary was 24,000 cash and 240 _hu_ of grain paid in monthly installments.[123] A rather high initial capital investment would have been required to obtain slaves for agricultural work. This would have been unattractive to a landholder, especially given a second factor--the existence of a rather large pool of peasant labor.[124] A third factor discouraging the utilization of slave labor in cultivation was the fragmentation of holdings. Slave labor is most suitable to plantation-type holdings such as existed in the Later Roman Empire and in 18th and 19th century United States, while during the Han many large landholdings appear to have been broken up into smaller holdings which could more suitably be cultivated by tenants or hired labor. Such slave labor as was used may have been primarily on large contiguous holdings.

The use of hired labor seems to have been fairly common during the Han. Sometimes peasants would abandon their home district to seek work elsewhere.[125] An individual might find employment as a wage laborer with wine sellers, lacquer manufacturers, founders, and vegetable peddlers.[126] The majority of such jobs, however, were probably agricultural. From the latter half of the Former Han on there seems to have been a fairly sizable body of agricultural laborers who were looking for work,[127] and there are examples of such persons being hired for such tasks as cultivating and milling grain.[128]

We do not know in what form hired cultivators were paid. The distinction between such laborers and tenants who were furnished with plow oxen, seed, implements, and so forth was perhaps very fine or even non-existent. Such laborers may have been paid simply with a portion of the harvest of the land that they had been hired to cultivate.

The Land Tax: In considering privately-owned land under the Han, there is an important point which must be examined, namely, the land tax. The Han land tax is a curious matter, for it seems to have been quite low throughout most of the dynasty, and at one point it was even abolished entirely for a short period.

Under the Ch'in the land tax was a tithe, and in the initial years of the Han this rate was continued. During the reign of Emperor Wen in 195 B.C., it was reduced to one-fifteenth of the yield, and in 167 B.C. the tax was abolished entirely. It was subsequently restored in 156 B.C., although at half the former rate.[129] Except for a brief period at the beginning of the Later Han when the tithe was again in effect, the basic rate remained a one-thirtieth part of the yield throughout the Han, though at various times surcharges were added.

Initially the amount that an individual paid was probably determined annually. The First Ch'in Emperor in 216 B.C. had ordered that the peasants were to report

their own holdings to the government for tax purposes.[130] Since the Han adopted many of the Ch'in administrative forms, it no doubt followed the Ch'in in this regard as well. Under this system a cultivator would have been required to report yearly the amount of his harvest and pay the required portion as tax. Should he be found to have falsified the amount of his harvest, he would have been subject to punishment.[131] Nontheless, the temptation to underreport would still have been great, as is demonstrated by a famous case at the beginning of the Later Han when a number of powerful families and high local officials were caught conspiring to falsify cadastral records.[132]

In order to deal with the problem of tax fraud, Emperor Chang decreed in A.D. 79 that land should be surveyed and classified into three grades. This was done at the suggestion of an official, one Ch'in P'eng, who had initiated the system first as grand administrator of Shan-yang. He surveyed the land, graded it into three categories according to fertility, recorded it, and filed the records in the district and prefectural offices.[133] Such a reform makes little sense unless the purpose was to grade the land according to fertility and then levy the tax of one-thirtieth on an estimated yield based on this classification. This reform meant in effect a change from a _de jure_ tax determined according to yield to a _de facto_ tax determined according to the amount of land held. The

result was a streamlining of the administration of the land tax since it eliminated the need for an annual accounting of the yield as well as reducing the possibility of peculation by local officials and tax evasion through the under-reporting of the size of one's harvest.

Even with improved reporting techniques, a rate of one-thirtieth was not very onerous.[134] The low tax rate on land was part of a general policy of encouraging people to engage in agriculture and to remain settled on the land.[135] Social and economic stability took precedence over short term fiscal demands. Thus the government was quick to abrogate, or at least partially abrogate, the land tax in periods and areas of poor harvest.[136] It was able to do this without seriously jeopardizing its fiscal stability because it and the imperial household enjoyed the income from the government and imperial fields together with the income from other taxes such as the poll tax (<u>suan</u>) and those on mercantile activities.[137]

Although the land tax was low, the benefits accrued only to the actual landowners. Several observers--e.g., Tung Chung-shu, Wang Mang, and Hsün Yüeh--noted that although many praised the low tax rate, in fact it was of little help to the peasant who still had to pay a rental of fifty per cent or more to his landlord.[138] Perhaps it was this knowledge together with an increasing breakdown of order and rising fiscal needs that led Ts'ao Ts'ao to

lower the land tax in A.D. 204.[139]

Land Utilization Policies: During the Han, land utilization policy generally involved three aspects: adjustment of the land/labor ratio, technological improvement and land reclamation. These were by no means new with the Han, nor did government involvement in these areas end with the Han.

Many of the policies propounded and adopted during the Han were in some measure indirectly concerned with adjusting the land/labor ratio. For example, any policy concerned with the problem of monopolization would be at least indirectly concerned with this because it would have the effect making more land available to more people. Of a more direct nature, however, was the policy of relocating people. Relocation generally was of two types. One was intended to locate powerful families and other potentially disruptive elements where they could be more closely watched and controlled by the government.[140] These cases are of little concern for the present discussion. Of direct concern, however, are those cases in which the poor, victims of natural disasters, those who lived in areas where land was in short supply, and vagrants were moved or allowed to relocate in areas where there was an abundance of uncultivated land. This was generally in the border regions, so the relocation of persons to these areas

produced a three-fold benefit from the point of view of the government: additional land was brought into production, potentially disruptive and unproductive elements were put to work, and Chinese control of these areas was extended and solidified. In some cases such relocations were linked to the establishment of the system of military colonies in the frontier regions, a topic which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Persons who were relocated were frequently given considerable government assistance to enable them to become established. Such assistance might include gifts of farm implements, and grants or rental (presumably at a low rate) of plow oxen, seed, and grain for food.[141] In one case they were even to be given sustenance by the governments of the prefectures through which they passed on their way to their new home.[142] It was also very common for such people to be completely or partially exempted from paying the land tax for a few years.[143] Sometimes when there was a localized famine in a particular region, the government might permit people to leave their home areas to go to areas where land and food were more plentiful.[144] Once the famine were over, they might be permitted to remain in the new area.[145] However, even government encouragement and assistance and the promise of a better life were sometimes insufficient incentive, and many people remained reluctant to move. Their reasons are not hard to under-

stand--the desire to be near relatives and ancestral graves and the reluctance to leave an area where they had lived all their lives. In some cases, moving could even mean loss of property.[146]

Similar in intent and method to the government policy of relocating people in order to achieve a balance between land and labor and to settle vagrants on the land was the policy of encouraging those who had abandoned their land because of famine, natural disaster, or whatever and had taken to the road in search of food and fortune to return to their homes and again cultivate their land. This was considered desirable in order to preserve public order and to assure that taxes would be paid and government service would be performed.[147] Vagrants who were willing to be registered in a specific area were frequently granted rank which would have exempted them from service.[148]

In addition to attempting to achieve a balance between land and labor and to increase the amount of labor engaged in agriculture, the government also tried to improve agricultural technology and to disseminate new techniques to the cultivators. The best known of these undertakings was the work of Chao Kuo during the reign of Emperor Wu. Chao had been appointed clerk of the capital for grain, and he was familiar with a rather elaborate system of field rotation which was supposed to have been practiced anciently. He introduced this system together with a method of plowing

with a double-shared plow. The result was a significantly increased yield. The government also undertook the manufacture of iron farming tools, and commandery administrators sent prefects, thrice venerables, "diligent cultivators," and particularly good farmers to learn the new techniques and to receive tools.[149] The techniques were adopted on imperial lands in the capital region and were taught to the soldier-cultivators in the frontier regions.[150]

Not every effort at improving technology and disseminating new techniques had such widespread impact. There were other lesser efforts by local officials to introduce new techniques into their own bailiwicks. Ts'ui Shih, for example, when he was appointed grand administrator of Wu-yüan, found that the soil there was quite suitable for raising hemp, but that weaving was not commonly known. Instead, the people would collect fine grasses to lie on, and if they had occasion to see an official, they would use grass to dress themselves as well. Ts'ui obtained weaving and reeling implements and taught the people how to use them.[151] Other officials who had charge of areas inhabited by people who were hunters or fishers by custom, taught them to reclaim land and cultivate it.[152] Others manufactured farm implements, taught people how to build carts, and showed them ways to obtain enough capital to purchase plow oxen.[153]

One of the most impressive aspects of the efforts by the Han government to improve land utilization was the reclamation of land. This might be approached in two ways: the clearing of wasteland and the construction of irrigation projects. The former consisted primarily of clearing away brush and so forth and putting the plow to the land.[154] Lands thus opened might include paddy land for rice cultivation as well as land for dry farming.[155] An important aspect of the clearing of lands was that it was often done in areas where the Han was attempting to establish its hegemony. As a part of its efforts to integrate newly conquered non-Chinese peoples into the Han polity and cultural sphere--to confucianize them as it were--land was cleared and the people, who were generally hunters and fishers sometimes engaging in swidden agriculture, were taught to cultivate it in Chinese fashion using oxen.[156] Important as these undertakings were, however, the most important efforts were concerned with irrigation projects.

Startling achievements in irrigation had already been made prior to the Han. The best known of these are the Cheng Kuo irrigation complex north of present-day Sian and the Kuan-hsien complex located in modern Ssu-ch'uan province. Both projects, which were constructed by the Ch'in, are still in use. The Cheng Kuo complex which was suggested to the Ch'in ruler by a hydraulic engineer from the state of Han (a small state to the east of Ch'in, not to

be confused with the Han dynasty which succeeded the Ch'in) as part of a subtle ruse to sap the economic strength of the Ch'in. The project irrigated some 40,000 ch'ing and ironically has been credited with contributing to Ch'in's conquest of all China by adding significantly to its economic strength.[157] The Kuan-hsien project as well contributed significantly to the economic resources of the empire, and the lesson of the benefits of these two works surely was not lost on the officials of the Han.

Not all irrigation projects undertaken by the Han were on quite so massive a scale as the two just described, and those that were, were not necessarily so successful.[158] There was, however, a large number of lesser projects carried out on the initiative of local officials. Most of these were intended to irrigate only a few hundred or a few thousand ch'ing of land. Yet their importance should not be underestimated. Numerous reservoirs were constructed which not only made barren land productive and marginal land profitable, but could also provide an additional source of food in the form of fish.[159] The benefits to the general populace from these project could win heartfelt praise from the populace for the official who initiated them and disapprobation for any who thwarted such projects.[160] Such projects were, therefore, equally important as a means of achieving social stability as they were a contribution to economic growth.

Conclusion: The Han, basing itself on concepts and developments stemming from the pre-Han period, evolved a multifaceted land policy aimed at achieving fiscal security for the government and the imperial household, together with social stability and economic strength for the empire. As complementary as these ends might seem in their expression, in fact they were not without contradiction, and in practice two of them--fiscal security and economic strength--may be said to have been subordinated to the third--social stability.

To achieve fiscal security there were set aside particular lands which were to provide incomes for the imperial household and the central government. The concept of such lands derived from a pre-Han paradigm which had been adopted and elaborated by Han thinkers--the *kung-t'ien* or "lord's fields" of the well-field system. These lands were let out to tenants whose rental formed an important part of the imperial and governmental income. These lands also provided a means of dealing with one of the most important social problems of the day--landless persons who were both unproductive and potentially disruptive.

Not all land was imperial or government land, however. Private landholding had by Han times become well established and recognized. Land was considered an important outlet for investment, and many merchants and other wealthy persons sought to buy large amounts. This created a

potentially serious social problem. For if these persons were able to buy up land without restraint, in some areas peasants might be left with only marginal land to work or perhaps even deprived completely of the means of earning a livelihood. These peasants might then be tempted into banditry to provide for themselves, or perhaps they might crowd into urban areas. In any case, they could only become a potential problem for the government. Consequently, although large contiguous landholdings might make better sense insofar as economic growth were concerned, the demands of social stability were given higher priority. It was this priority as well which dictated that the land tax remain low throughout the Han. It also explains why the government was so willing to rescind the tax whenever a bad harvest occurred.

Yet Han land policy did not entirely neglect economic development. Within the limits imposed by the desire for social stability, the government undertook to stimulate agricultural expansion by striving for maximum utilization of land. In some instances, such as the relocation of the landless and the attempts to encourage people to return to lands which they had abandoned for one reason or another, these efforts meshed neatly with the emphasis on social stability. But in addition to these measures, the government initiated others directed at making cultivation more efficient and productive. These included numerous irriga-

tion projects and efforts to develop and disseminate new agricultural technology.

In sum, Han land policy was primarily concerned with assuring stability of the social order by removing potential sources of unrest. In this respect, its goals differed little from those of the land reforms carried out in many countries in modern times.

Notes:

[1]Ho Ch'ang-ch'ün, "Lun Liang-Han t'u-ti chan-yu ti fa-chan," in HTcfc, p. 190.

[2]Nishimura Gen'yū, Chūgoku keizai shi kenkyū, 2d. ed. (Kyoto, 1970), p. 31.

[3]Yamada Hachiō, "Kandai no kōden," Tōyō gaku, no. 25 (1971), p. 2.

[4]Esson M. Gale, trans., Discourses on Salt and Iron (Leiden, 1931; reprint ed., Taipei, 1973), p. 83, has "public fields" as do Homer H. Dubs, HFHD, II, 222, 302, and C. Martin Wilbur, Slavery in China During the Former Han Dynasty, 206 B.C.--A.D. 25 (Chicago, 1943), p. 304. Nancy Lee Swann, trans., Food and Money in Ancient China (Princeton, 1950), p. 190, has "government fields," while "Official Titles of the Han Dynasty--A Tentative List," (mimeo.), p. 16, of the Han Dynasty History Project of the University of Washington renders the term as "government-owned" fields."

[5]Masubuchi Tatsuo, "Sen Shin jidai no sanrin sosawa to Shin no kōten," in Chūgoku kodai no shakkai to bunka, ed. Chūgoku kodaishi kenkyū kai (Tokyo, 1957), pp. 239-306.

[6]Part of Masubuchi's evidence for attributing this system to Shang Yang is the "Encouraging Immigration" chapter ("Lai min p'ien") of the Book of Lord Shang (Shang chün shu). However, because of anachronisms in the text,

much of this work, including this particular chapter, has been dated subsequent to Shang Yang's time (see Chang Hsin-ch'eng, Wei shu t'ung-k'ao [Taipei, 1973], II, 896-901, and J. J. L. Duyvendak, trans., The Book of Lord Shang [London, 1928], p. 268 n. 3). Still, this does not negate Masubuchi's general thesis that the system began in Ch'in. Furthermore, he gives additional evidence from Shang's biography in the Shih chi which indicates that Shang Yang contributed to the development of the system.

[7]Sc 49.1982, 126.3204; Hs 97A.3984. The reference in Sc 126 may be suspect since it comes from the section written by Ch'u Shao-sun who is sometimes unreliable and since it is not repeated in the Han shu. Nonetheless, the account still shows how contemporaries considered these fields might be utilized.

[8]Ho Ch'ang-ch'ün, "Han-T'ang chien feng-chien kuo-chia t'u-ti so-yu chih ho chün-t'ien chih," in HTcfc, p. 287, says that prior to the reign of Emperor Wu, there was little land under the direct control of the emperor, and the term "kung-t'ien" did not exist. The fact that the term does not appear any earlier in the sources is, of course, not necessarily proof that it was not used. Some scholars have cited references to imperial parks, preserves, ponds, and so forth as examples of kung-t'ien prior to the reign of Emperor Wu. Such lands, however, though

sometimes opened to cultivation, were different from kung-t'ien.

[9]Sc 30.1436; Hs 24B.1171; Burton Watson trans., The Records of the Grand Historian (New York, 1961), II, 98; Swann, pp. 296-300. In translating titles for the Han, I have generally followed "Officials Titles of the Han Dynasty--A Tentative List" (mimeo.) compiled by the Han Dynasty History Project at the University of Washington.

[10]For a discussion of the fiscal administration of the imperial household see Katō Shigeshi, "Kandai ni okeru kokka zaisei to teishitsu zaisei to no kubetsu narabi ni teishitsu zaisei ippan," in Shina keizai shi kōshō (Tokyo, 1952), pp. 35-156. Professor Katō was the first to suggest that the revenues from the kung-t'ien were part of the income of the imperial household (ibid., pp. 72-73). The grand prefect of agriculture (later called the grand minister of agriculture) was in charge of the fiscal administration of the central government.

[11]Whether or not the confiscated fields actually became imperial fields is a point worthy of further consideration, for previous writers have accepted this interpretation without question. (For example, Katō, p. 72; Ho Ch'ang-ch'ün, "Han-T'ang chien...," in HTcfc, p. 287; Goi Naohiro, "Kandai no kōden ni okeru kasaku ni tsuite," Rekishigaku kenkyū, no. 220 [1958.6], p. 14). But is

such a conclusion justified? A passage from the Discourses on Salt and Iron indicates that it is. In chapter 13, "Parks and Ponds," the grandee says, "The grand coachman, chief commandant of waters and parks, the privy treasurer, and the grand minister of agriculture yearly compute the profit from the fields and pastures and the rental from the parks and ponds" (Ytl 13.95; cf. Gale, p. 81). In the subsequent passage the literatus in rebutting the grandee says, "Now the imperial government much increases the parks, imperial fields, ponds and marshes. The imperial family has exclusive rental in name, but the profits go to the powerful families" (Ytl 13.96; cf. Gale, p. 83). In this section the literatus is criticizing, and the grandee is defending, the policy of the emperor possessing and renting out various types of land, including imperial fields. The four officials named by the grandee are precisely those mentioned in the Shih chi as having had agricultural officers established under their jurisdiction. It should be noted, however, that both sources are ambiguous and in no way imply, as Katō assumes, that all four officials had kung-t'ien under them.

[12] Hs 19A.729.

[13] Hs 9.279; HFHD, II, 302; Tctc 28.893 and commentary. The reference to Chao Kuo's demonstrating new techniques of cultivation on land under the jurisdiction of the grand

minister of ceremonies may also refer to kung-t'ien. Hu San-hsing says that because the grand minister had charge of the imperial mausolea, he also had imperial fields.

[14]Hs 24A.1140 n. 14.

[15]Hs 9.279, 24A.1139; HFHD, II, 302; Swann, p. 190.

[16]Yen Keng-wang, Chung-kuo ti-fang hsing-cheng chih-tu shih--Ch'in-Han ti-fang hsing-cheng chih-tu, 2d. ed. (Taipei, 1974), pp. 98-99.

[17]Masubuchi, p. 298; Goi, p. 14; Katō, p. 73; Yamada, p. 3.

[18]Hs 28.1680, 77.3258, 3259 n. 2.

[19]Hs 9.281; HHs 2.112, 5.206, 76.2461; TkHc 15.6b.

[20]HHc 26.3600; Nishimura, pp. 3-6; Ōba Osamu, "Kan ōchō no shihai kikō," in Seikai Rekishi (Tokyo, 1970), IV, 277.

[21]Hs 19A.731, 735, 736.

[22]HHc 26.3600; Yen, Ch'in-Han, p. 191; Nishimura, pp. 6-8.

[23]HHs 2.112, 5.206, 32.1128.

[24]This trend is well described by Nishimura, pp. 10-13. Nishimura believes that the Later Han inherited the system of placing imperial fields in the commanderies and principalities under local officials from the Former

Han. It seems more likely, however, that it was the result of administrative changes at the beginning of the Later Han. There is a reference (TkHc 15.6b; HHs 76.2461) to the commandant of the western circuit of Kuei-chi commandery allowing cultivation of imperial fields. But this occurred during the reign of the Keng-shih emperor when the area had just been pacified, and from the context it seems that the measure was an extraordinary one.

[25]Another example of a more limited nature occurred during the reign of Emperor Huan of the Later Han (HHs 67.2199).

[26]Katō, p. 71. The lands taken over for the Shang-lin Park included large amounts of farmland, and there were fields in other parks as well (Hs 9.281, 282 n. 4). The original commentary under the entry for prefect of the Shang-lin Park in the Hsü Han chih (HHc 26.3593) indicates that there were people living in the park.

[27]HHs 5.222.

[28]See above n. 10.

[29]"Lun Liang Han...," in HTcfc, p. 158.

[30]Ho cites a passage from the "Institutional Modification" chapter of the Frankly Talking of Chung-ch'ang T'ung as evidence that "grasslands" and "government lands" were the same. However, he misunderstands the passage which

reads 今者土廣民稀中地未墾雖然猶當限以大家. 勿令過制. 其地有草者盡曰官田, 力堪農事乃聽受之. In this passage Chung-ch'ang is suggesting what ought to be. Thus the passage should read, "Presently land is extensive and the people are few. Middle-grade lands have not yet been reclaimed. Even so, [the government] still ought to limit the great families and not allow them to exceed the regulations. That of their land which is uncultivated should all be government land and those able to engage in agriculture should then be allowed to receive it" (HHs 49.1656; cf. Etienne Balazs, "Political Philosophy and Social Crisis at the End of the Han," in Chinese Civilization and Bureaucracy [New Haven, 1964], p. 224). Ho gives no evidence for equating kung-t'ien and kuan-t'ien, but simply assumes that they were the same. See also Hs 65.2847, 2849 n. 18, 77.3259 n. 1; HHs 49.1656; Skc 15.467-468. The equating of ts'ao-t'ien with kung-t'ien seems to have begun with Wang Ying-lin's Yü hai (n.p., 1883), 176.27a.

[31]HHs 5.224, 49.1656, 82B.2730.

[32]HHs 5.222.

[33]HHs 5.224.

[34]HHs 29.1033-1034.

[35]A. F. P. Hulsewe, Remnants of Han Law (Leiden, 1955), p. 182. This case is mentioned on page 195.

[36]This conclusion, originally that of Katō Shigeshi, is based on figures from Huan T'an's Hsin-lun quoted in Tpyl 627.8a and from Hs 86.2494. The former gives total tax revenues as 4 billion cash and total revenues from lands under the Privy Treasurer as 8.3 billion cash, while the latter gives 4 billion for the central government and 4.3 billion for the imperial household. These figures are discussed by Katō, pp. 38-39, 147-149; Masubuchi, pp. 241-242; Ōba, p. 277; Ying-shih Yü, Trade and Expansion in Han China (Berkeley, 1967), p. 62; and Timoteus Pokora, trans., Hsin-lun (New Treatise) and Other Writings by Huan T'an (43 B.C.-28 A.D.), Michigan Papers in Chinese Studies, No. 20 (Ann Arbor, 1975), pp. 49, 59 n. 21. Lao Kan has questioned the 8.3 billion figure of the Hsin-lun and contends that the character 八 ("eight") is a mistake for 凡 ("altogether"), since, says he, the income of the privy treasurer could not possibly have been twice that of the grand minister of agriculture (Ch'in-Han shih [Taipei, 1952], p. 136). Lao does not comment on the Hs 86.2494 figures which apparently refer to amounts held by the two fiscal administrations during the reign of Emperor Yuan rather than to annual revenues. The fact that the Hsin-lun figure appears both in Tpyl 627.8a and Wang Ying-lin, K'un-hsüeh chi-wen (Sppy ed.), 12.14a argues for its accuracy. The question, however, is far from settled and requires further examination.

[37]Sc 30.1436; Hs 24B.1171; Watson, II, 98; Swann, pp. 296-300; Yamada, p. 3; Goi, pp. 14-15.

[38]Kawachi Jūzō, "Kandai no tochi shoyūsei ni tsuite," Keizaigaku nempō, no. 5, cited in Goi, p. 15. Kawachi's article has not been available to me.

[39]Goi, p. 15.

[40]Cf. Tenney Frank, An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome: Rome and Italy of the Empire (Baltimore, 1933), pp. 169-182.

[41]HHs 80A.2615. Cf. Yen Keng-wang, Ch'in-Han, pp. 89-93. At the end of the Later Han during the reign of Emperor Hsien, a period marked by upheaval and administrative breakdown, imperial fields were distributed to officials in lieu of official salaries (HHc 28.3633 & n. 4; T'ang Ch'ang-ju, San chih liu shih-chi Chiang-nan ta t'u-ti so-yu-chih ti fa-chan [Shanghai, 1957], p. 65, n. 2). This was an emergency measure, however, and not a common feature of the Han.

[42]Hs 9.285, 286 n. 8.

[43]Hs 9.227 & n. 4.

[44]Nishijima Sadao, "Daidenhō no shin kaishaku," in Nishijima Sadao, Chūgoku keizaishi kenkyū (Tokyo, 1966), p. 120.

[45]Ytl 13.96. In addition to Nishijima Sadao (above,

n. 44) this passage has been discussed by Katō, pp. 69-70; Goi, pp. 13-14; and Hiranaka Reiji, "Kandai no kōden no 'ka'--Yen t'ieh lun 'Yuan ch'ih p'ien' no kisai ni tsuite," in Hiranaka Reiji, Chūgoku kodai no densei to zeihō (Kyoto, 1967), pp. 81-96. The latter summarizes the various interpretations of the troublesome but important Chapter 13 of the Discourses.

[46]Sc 29.1410; Watson, II, 73-74.

[47]Goi, p. 18. Cf. Yamada, pp. 1-2.

[48]Cs 47.1321. Fu does not state specifically that he is speaking of the Wei, but only that he is referring to "formerly." However, the reference is generally understood as being to the Wei, which is plausible since Fu compiled a History of the Wei (Wei shu) and frequently used examples from the Wei in discussing affairs of government. It is also possible that the reference is to the Han.

[49]Masubuchi, p. 239; Goi, p. 20.

[50]Hs 8.248, 9.279, 287, 12.353; HHs 3.145; Goi, p. 18.

[51]Goi, p. 18; Yamada, p. 5.

[52]Masubuchi, p. 300.

[53]Hs 12.3531; HHs 3.145.

[54]Yamada, p. 12.

[55]Hs 248 & 249, 9.279; TkHc 15.6b; HHs 2.112, 3.132, 5.209, 32.1128, 51.1687.

[56]Hs 8.249, 9.279, 12.353; HHs 3.145. In one case the fields were granted outright and no tax was collected on them for five years.

[57]Hs 1A.33, 7.229, 8.249, 9.279 & 280, 12.353, 63.2761; 72.3072. HHs 2.118, 3.134, 4.183, 185, 186, 191, 34.1187.

[58]Sc 49.1982, 126.3204 (see n. 7 above); Hs 97A.186. The land that Emperor Wu granted to Pu Shih may have also been imperial fields (Hs 24B.1167 & 1173).

[59]For example, see the treatments by Lü Ssu-mien, Ch'in Han shih (Shanghai, 1947), pp. 528-542, and Wan Kuo-ting, Chung-kuo t'ien chih shih (Nanking, 1933), pp. 81-84.

[60]Such recipients were surely limited in number. Moreover, it is rather doubtful their cumulative impact on the empire as a whole could have been very significant. This would have been possible only so long as such land remained in the possession of the recipient and his descendants, thus depriving the emperor of the lands and forcing him to draw upon other lands for his bestowals. As years passed, more and more land would accumulate in the hands of favorites and their descendants. However, since this land was imperial land, it was not land granted at the expense of the peasant except insofar as it no longer could be granted to the poor during times of dearth.

Moreover, the position of a favorite was a tenuous one and difficult to maintain over a long period of time, as has been amply demonstrated by Wu Ching-chao in his article, "Hsi Han ti chieh-chi chih-tu," CHhp, X.3 (May, 1935), 612-613. As these families fell from favor, their lands were confiscated becoming available for redistribution to others.

[61] Hs 12.353.

[62] Hs 6.158 & 170.

[63] At the beginning of the Han, Emperor Kao-tsu set the land tax at one-fifteenth of the yield (Hs 24a.1127; Swann, pp. 149-150). This was reiterated by Emperor Hui upon his accession to the throne (Hs 2.85; HFHD, I, 175). In the second and twelfth years of his reign (178 and 168 B.C.), Emperor Wen reduced the tax to one-thirtieth and in the thirteenth year (167 B.C.) did away with it completely (Hs 4.118, 124, 125; HFHD, I, 245-246, 254, 256). His successor, Emperor Ching, in the second year of his reign (155 B.C.) restored the tax at one-thirtieth (Hs 24A.1135; Swann, p. 172). For a more detailed description of these changes and a discussion of some of the problems involved, see Ch'en Teng-yüan, Chung-kuo t'ien fu shih (Shanghai, 1937), pp. 53-57.

[64] Mao 205; Arthur Waley, trans., The Book of Songs (New York, 1960), p. 320; Legge, IV, 360. I have modified

Professor Waley's translation slightly.

[65] Hs 24A.1137, 48.2244; Swann, pp. 180-181.

[66] Okazaki Fumio, "Han shu 'Shih-huo chih shang' ni tsuite," in Okazaki Fumio, Nambokuchō ni okeru shakai keizai seido (Tokyo, 1935), pp. 142-152, contains an interesting discussion of how Pan Ku's Confucian viewpoint colored his selection of material in composing the "Economic Treatise (Shih huo chih)" of the History of the Former Han Dynasty in such a manner as to put the Legalists in a bad light.

[67] Wu Ch'i-ch'ang, "The Chinese Land System before the Ch'in Dynasty," in Chinese Social History, trans. E-tu Zen Sun and John De Francis (Washington, 1956), p. 79.

[68] Cho-yün Hsü, Ancient China in Transition (Stanford, 1965), p. 107.

[69] Sc 53.2018; Watson, I, 130-131.

[70] Li Chien-nung, Hsien-Ch'in Liang-Han ching-chi shih-kao (Peking, 1962), pp. 227-228.

[71] Sc 129.3272, 3281; Watson, II, 494, 498-499.

[72] Hs 13.516.

[73] Hs 11.336, 24A.1142-1143; HFHD, II, 21-24; Swann, pp. 200-204.

[74] HHs 5.222, 224.

[75]Sc 30.1430, 49.1982, 126.3204; Hs 12.353, 24B.1167 & 1173, 97A.3984; HHs 3.145.

[76]Hs 77.3258 & nn. 2-3. Although this instance involves a case of land fraud, it still demonstrates how one might sell reclaimed land.

[77]HHs 1B.66, 22.780-781.

[78]Hs 72.3075 & 3076 n. 6.

[79]Hs 65.2849; Burton Watson, Courtier and Commoner in Ancient China (New York, 1974), p. 86. The high price of land in the capital region seems to be in contradiction to the assertion by contemporaries that much land in the capital region was still uncultivated (Ytl 15.106). If there were indeed a surplus of land in the capital region, one might reasonably expect the price to be low.

[80]Lo Chen-yü, Chen-sung t'ang chi ku i-wen (n.p., 1931), 15.27b-28a, 29b-30a; Niida Noburu, "Kan Gi Rokuchō no tochi baibai bunsho," Tōhō gakuhō, VIII (Jan., 1938), 54-55.

[81]For a brief discussion of land prices, see Ho Ch'ang-ch'ün, "Han T'ang chien feng-chien kuo-chia t'u-ti so-yu chih ho chün-t'ien chih," HTcfc, pp. 329-330.

[82]See Appendix II.

[83]HHs 49.1654 n. 3.

[84]See n. 59 above.

[85]See n. 60 above.

[86]Hs 6.178, 24B.1166-1167; HFHD, II, 65; Swann, 278-282.

[87]Hs 24B.1167; Swann, pp. 282-283.

[88]Sc 30.1433; Hs 6.180, 24B.1170; Watson, II, 95; HFHD, II, 68; Swann, p. 294.

[89]Sc 30.1436, 122.3146; Hs 24B.1170; Watson, II, 97, 440; Swann, pp. 287-288, 295.

[90]Sc 30.1436; Hs 24B.1170; Watson, II, 97; Swann, pp. 294-296.

[91]Although these measures were ostensibly directed at merchants, it is doubtful that all the confiscated land came solely from merchants or from former merchants. It is quite possible that the property of large landholders who engaged in ancillary commercial activities or even some who engaged in no commercial activities at all suffered confiscation at the hands of officials seeking to curb the power of such families. Cf. Ho Ch'ang-ch'ün, "Lun Liang-Han...," HTcfc, p. 143.

[92]Tt, 1.11c; Hsün Yüeh, Ch'ien Han chi (Taipei, 1974), 8.3b; Michael Loewe, Crisis and Conflict in Han China (London, 1974), p. 267; Han Fu-chih, Liang-Han ching-chi ssu-hsiang shih (Taipei, 1969), p. 123; Lü Ssu-mien, Ch'in Han shih (Shanghai, 1935), pp. 59-63;

Sun Chien-ch'ing, Chung-kuo li-tai t'u-ti chih-tu shih ti yen-chiu (Taipei, 1976), pp. 35-36; Niida Noburu, Chūgoku hōsei shi kenkyū (Tokyo, 1960), pp. 50-52.

[93]Hs 11.336, 24A.1142-1143; HFHD, III, 21-24; Swann, pp. 200-204.

[94]See the discussion in William G. Crowell, "The Land Limitations of Emperor Ai--A Re-examination," (forthcoming).

[95]HHs 26.913, 46.1553, 82B.2730.

[96]HHs 82B.2730.

[97]Skc 1.26.

[98]S. N. Eisenstadt, The Political Systems of Empires (Glencoe, Ill., 1969), pp. 124, 136-137.

[99]Tenney Frank, Social Behavior in Ancient Rome (Cambridge, Mass., 1932), p. 74.

[100]Kung-ch'uan Hsiao, Rural China: Imperial Control in the Nineteenth Century (Seattle, 1967), p. 68.

[101]Wang Fu, Ch'ien-fu lun (Khcpts ed.), 4.123.

[102]E.g., Chia I, Hsin shu (Taipei, 1967), 9.1a-5b.

[103]Hs 8.249; HHs 2.96, 106, 114, 115, 121, 3.129, 132, 136, 137, 181, 186, et passim.

[104]Hs 8.249, 4.178.

[105]T'ung-tsu Ch'ü, Han Social Structure, ed. Jack L.

Dull (Seattle, 1972), pp. 16-17.

[106]See Appendix II.

[107]Hs 72.3075, 3076 n. 6.

[108]Hs 24A.1132; Swann, pp. 162-164.

[109]Ts'ui Shih, Ssu-min yüeh-ling chiao-chu, ed. Shih Sheng-han (Peking, 1965), pp. 28-29.

[110]Hs 7.221.

[111]Hs 7.220; HHs 3.132, 4.174, 183, 188; Hiranaka Reiji, "Kandai denso to saigai ni yoru sono gemmen," in Hiranaka Reiji, Chūgoku kodai no densei to zeihō (Kyoto, 1967), pp. 97-182 contains a lengthy treatment of the policy of granting exemption from taxation in cases of natural disaster.

[112]Hs 24A.1137, 1138 n. 7, 1143, 99B.4111; Swann, p. 182, 209; HFHD, III, 286.

[113]Tt, 1.11c.

[114]Tung, Wang, and Hsün all noted that while the Han land tax of only one-thirtieth was universally thought to be a light one, the peasant did not enjoy the benefits of it because he was in fact paying one-half to one-third in rent.

[115]Ts'ui Shih, Ssu-min yüeh-ling, p. 77.

[116]Hs 12.353; HHs 3.145.

[117]HHs 49.1656.

[118]See Appendix II.

[119]HHs 24.857, 82A.2720; Skc 38.969.

[120]This view was expressed as early as 1936 by T'ao Hsi-sheng and Shen Chü-ch'en, Ch'in Han cheng-chih chih-tu (Shanghai, 1936), p. 6. Kuo Mo-jo, Nu-li chih shih-tai (Peking, 1954), pp. 65-75, 208-216 discusses the views of those who say the Han was a slave society, though Kuo himself believes it was not.

[121]Wilbur, pp. 215-216.

[122]Utsunomiya Kiyoyoshi, "Kandai dai shiyū ni okeru kosakusha to dorei," Tōyōshi kenkyū, I.1, 20-21. The figures he uses are those given by Chung-ch'ang T'ung in HHs 49.1648.

[123]Utsunomiya Kiyoyoshi, Kandai Shakai keizai shi kenkyū (Tokyo, 1954), pp. 297-298; Ts'ui Shih, Cheng lun, excerpted in Ch'ün-shu chih-yao (Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng chien-pien ed.), 45.788.

[124]Lao Kan, "Han tai ti ku-yung chih-tu," BIHP, XXXII (1951), 86.

[125]Hs 7.221.

[126]HHs 53.1751, 63.2090, 67.2202, 77.2494.

[127]Wilbur, Slavery, pp. 209-210; Lao Kan, "Han tai ti

ku-yung..., p. 77.

[128]HHs 64.2100, 76.2475, 83.2768.

[129]See above n. 63.

[130]Sc 6.251 & n. 1.

[131]Ch'en Teng-yuan, Chung-kuo t'ien-fu shih, pp. 49-50. This method was extended to the tax on spirits during the reign of Emperor Chao. According to the commentator Ju Shun, those who had falsified figures would suffer a fine of two units of gold (=20,000 cash) and confiscation of the unreported goods (Hs 7.224 & n. 1). See also Hiranaka Reiji, "Kandai no eigyō to senso," in Hiranaka, Chūgoku kodai no densei to zeihō, pp. 183-204 who discusses this institution with regard to taxes other than the land tax.

[132]HHs 1B.66, 22.780-781.

[133]HHs 76.2467; Whtk, 2.37a.

[134]In the Roman Empire during the sixth century, the rate of taxation was equal to about 1/4 to 1/3 of the gross yield (A. H. M. Jones, "Overtaxation and the Decline of the Roman Empire," in The Roman Economy, ed. P. A. Brunt [Totowa, N.J., 1974], p. 83).

[135]Observers in the Later Roman Empire attributed abandonment of the land there to a high rate of taxation. As Lactantius put it, "The resources of the farmers were

exhausted by the outrageous burden of all the taxes, the fields were abandoned and reverted to waste" (cited in Jones, The Roman Economy, p. 86).

[136]Such abrogation or partial abrogation was quite common, especially during the Later Han. See n. 111 above.

[137]These taxes are summarized in Wu Chao-hsin, Chung-kuo shui-chih shih (Shanghai, 1937), ch. 3, and Yoshida Torao, Ryō Kan sozei no kenkyū (Tokyo, 1932).

[138]Hs 24A.1137 & 1143, 99b.4111; Swann, pp. 182-209; HFHD, III, 286.

[139]Skc 1.26. The rate levied by Ts'ao was 4 sheng (=1.44 dry pints or 0.792 liters) per mou. If one accepts Chung-ch'ang T'ung's statement concerning yield, then at one-thirtieth the gross yield, a Han farmer would have paid about 10 sheng per mou.

[140]For a good description of the Han policy of relocating powerful families, see Ch'ü, Han Social Structure, pp. 196-199.

[141]Hs 12.353; HHs 3.157.

[142]Hs 12.353.

[143]HHs 3.157.

[144]Hs 1A.38, 5.139, 24B.1172; HFHD, I, 82, 309-310; Swann, pp. 301-302.

[145]Hs 24B.1172; Swann, pp. 301-302.

[146] Hs 9.292; HFHD, II, 327.

[147] Ytl 15.106; Skc 21.610.

[148] HHs 2.106, 114, 121, 123; 3.129, 136, 137, et passim.

[149] "Thrice venerables" were locally chosen and charged with moral instruction of their district (hsiang). "Diligent farmer" was an honorary title given to outstanding cultivators.

[150] Hs 24A.1139; Swann, p. 184-191. A description of Chao Kuo's methods in English can be found in Michael Loewe, Everyday Life in Imperial China (New York, 1968), pp. 167-170.

[151] HHs 52.1730.

[152] HHs 76.2462.

[153] HHs 31.1094; Skc 16.509, 513.

[154] Skc 13.400, 27.743-744.

[155] Skc 16.509.

[156] HHs 76.2462.

[157] Sc 29.1408; Watson, II, 71. Good descriptions of both projects are to be found in Joseph Needham, Science and Civilization in China (Cambridge, 1971), V. 3, 284-296.

[158] Sc 29.1410.

[159]HHs 15.584.

[160]HHs 31.1094; 82A.2710. The praise and disapprobation were usually in the form of popular ditties, a pair of which I translate here:

Heaven above has sent down a divine lord,
And granted us a benevolent father.
In ruling the people, he spreads virtuous favor,
Benevolent grace is bestowed in due order.
He excavates ditches, expands irrigation,
And opens canals to make the sweet rain.

(Hui Tung, Hou Han shu pu-chu [Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng chien-pien ed.], 12.537.)

The destroyer of our dam--Chai Tzu-wei
Feeds us on soy beans,
Gives us porridge of tubers.
Vacillating back and forth,*
The dam should be restored!

*Refers to first building the dam and then destroying it. (HHs 82A.2710.)

Not every reservoir proved a boon. Ill-conceived reservoirs could sometimes burst, drenching those living nearby in sorrow. See Cs 26.788-789; Lien-sheng Yang, "Notes on the Economic History of the Chin Dynasty," in Studies in Chinese Institutional History (Cambridge, Mass., 1961), p. 176; Wang Chung-lo, Wei Chin Nan-Pei-ch'ao Sui ch'u-T'ang shih (Shanghai, 1961), pp. 94-95.

CHAPTER IV

THE AGRICULTURAL COLONIES (T'UN-T'IEN) OF THE WEI

The end of the Later Han was marked by administrative decline. Rebellions and factional struggle within the government served to undermine the ability of the central government to operate effectively, and of course, this included the ability to meet its fiscal needs. This problem was especially acute for the various military leaders who were battling for supremacy and for the strongman Ts'ao Ts'ao, who, nominally at least, was struggling to maintain the Han dynasty. The internecine warfare being conducted by these various generals--all of whom were supposedly Han officials--resulted in widespread dislocation, devastation, and desolation. Land in large amounts was abandoned by its owners as security became non-existent, and many persons sought protection as clients of locally powerful families.[1] From the point of view of the government, this situation was extremely undesirable because it meant that the government was being deprived of its most important source of revenue--income from the land, and its most important source of manpower--the free peasantry. Ts'ao's solution was to establish a system of agricultural colonies.

The agricultural colonies established by Ts'ao Ts'ao have attracted the attention of a great many scholars. While there can be no doubt regarding their importance as a source of revenue for the Wei, the concept of agricultural colonies was not at all new with Ts'ao. At least as early as the Former Han dynasty, agricultural colonies of soldier-cultivators had been established in the frontier regions to alleviate the burden of supplying troops stationed there. At the beginning of the Later Han, Emperor Kuang-wu had established agricultural colonies in the interior to support his armies as they established control over the empire. In such cases, however, the goal of the agricultural colonies was limited to meeting specific needs in particular regions. Ts'ao's innovation was to make the agricultural colonies an important part of the national fiscal structure and to work them with civilians, thus expanding their application beyond the more limited needs which originally had called them into being.

This does not mean that the agricultural colonies ceased to be worked by soldiers; indeed, some were manned by them during the Wei and continued to be down into modern times. Because they were often worked by soldiers, the Chinese term "*t'un-t'ien*" has frequently been given such English renderings as "military colony," "military agriculture," "garrison lands," and the like. Such renderings, however, are descriptions of the functions of particular

t'un-t'ien rather than accurate translations of the term itself. As will be seen, the t'un-t'ien were manned by persons other than soldier-cultivators, and for this reason the term "agricultural colony" has been adopted here as being more faithful to the original meaning of the term.[2]

While detailed description of the frontier agricultural colonies that were established in order to supply the armies garrisoned there is beyond the scope of the present effort, a brief discussion of the agricultural colonies as they developed under the Han seems useful that was the model adopted by Ts'ao Ts'ao as he sought to gain control over the manpower and revenue that were necessary if he were to reunify the country.[3]

Agricultural Colonies During the Han: The motives behind the establishment of the frontier agricultural colonies during the Former Han were two-fold: to strengthen frontier defense and to reduce the cost of that defense. Proponents of relocating people to the frontier and of the establishment of agricultural colonies there stressed the advantages of encouraging the establishment of a resident population in the area. Permanent residents could provide a more stable defense force than conscripts who were replaced yearly, as was provided for under the Han system.[4] Moreover, by settling there, they would deny the area to the barbarians who would have to remain farther north, and

they could become more familiar with the terrain and the abilities of the barbarians.[5]

Proponents of the agricultural colonies stressed fiscal considerations no less than they did military considerations. Maintaining a strong frontier defense was extremely costly. The supply lines were long--as much as 3,000 li according to one account.[6] Transport costs were high. One estimate was that 10,000 men could be maintained for an entire year on what it cost to transport grain to the frontier armies.[7] By establishing agricultural colonies along the frontier, it would become possible to produce grain supplies for the troops at the frontier rather than having to rely on shipments over difficult terrain by ponderous means. An early proponent of the agricultural colonies, Chao Ch'ung-kuo, in 61 B.C. declared that further savings could be realized by replacing cavalry with soldier-cultivators. A soldier-cultivator, he asserted, could be supported for a year on what it cost to maintain a cavalry horse for a month.[8]

Chao's estimates were based upon years of experience as a general leading Han troops against barbarian tribes, so he knew whereof he spoke. Support for his assessment of the fiscal importance of the agricultural colonies is to be found in a couple of instances dating from the Later Han period. The first is found in a decree issued by Emperor Kuang-wu in A.D. 30. Kuang-wu stated that because

of insufficient revenue to meet the demands of the fighting which attended the overthrow of Wang Mang and the establishment of the Later Han, it had been necessary to levy a land tax of one-tenth--triple the previous rate. Now, however, agricultural colonies had been established and grain supplies had been built up, so the tax was to be restored to the original rate of one-thirtieth.[9] The second case occurred during the reign of Emperor Shun in A.D. 129. At the time, the three commanderies of Shuo-fang, Hsi-ho, and Shang-chün were reinstituted. People were relocated to these three areas along the northern frontier, city walls were repaired, and post stations were established. An irrigation system was dug to establish agricultural colonies, which yearly saved the interior commanderies expenditures of 100 million cash.[10] Clearly, the agricultural colonies provided an important supplement to the national budget.

During the Former Han, the agricultural colonies were established exclusively in the frontier regions as part of the Han policy of dealing with the barbarians. Their effectiveness in supplying the needs of troops in the field, however, made them attractive as a means of supplying troops in other contexts as well. It is, therefore, hardly surprising to find during the struggles which attended the restoration of the Han dynasty following the interregnum of Wang Mang that agricultural colonies were established

by Emperor Kuang-wu and his generals. The difference, however, was that these colonies were established not to provision frontier armies holding the line against barbarian incursions. Rather, they were established in the central part of the country to supply armies that were mopping up bandit groups and restoring order to the empire.[11] During this period normal sources of revenue had broken down, making it necessary for Kuang-wu and his supporters to seek alternative sources. The success of this measure has already been referred to; it was to provide a ready precedent when similar conditions obtained at the end of the second century.

Little is known about the actual structure and operations of the system of agricultural colonies during the Han. From the records on the bamboo strips recovered at Chü-yen[12] and elsewhere and from the dynastic histories it is possible to glean a number of titles of officials stationed in the northern and northwestern regions, but there is no certainty that all of these officials were in fact concerned directly with the agricultural colonies. One type of official--colonels (hsiao-wei) of one sort of another--are most frequently mentioned in connection with the agricultural colonies, and in some cases it is specifically stated that they were in charge of particular agricultural colonies.[13] Elsewhere, agricultural colonies are given in terms of numbers of "divisions" (pu);[14] for

example, "Hsuan-t'u commandery was re-established with agricultural colonies, 6 divisions."[15] Significantly, within the Han military structure, the unit led by a colonel was also called a "division."[16] It would appear, then, that the administrative structure of the Han agricultural colonies generally followed the unit structure of the Han military.

The agricultural colonies were manned, as one might reasonably expect of a military organization, by conscripts.[17] These included not only persons performing their normal military service, but pardoned criminals as well.[18] Civilians were also settled in the frontier regions and often given land, farming utensils, seed, and other support,[19] but it is not certain that these people were actually part of the system of agricultural colonies as some writers have assumed. They may have simply been settled in the frontier commanderies as ordinary farmers in order to populate the area rather than as an integral part of the defense system.

Cultivators on the agricultural colonies appear to have received about 15-20 mou of land apiece.[20] Such a small amount would have been enough to support the cultivator himself and still leave something of a surplus that could be paid into the government granaries; it would not have been enough to have supported a family.[21] This point is of no little significance, for it raises questions about

the tendency of many writers to simply assume that all landholding in the frontier commanderies was in the form of agricultural colonies. Land tenure in these areas must have been a mixture of the various forms of private landholding found in the interior, government and imperial lands, and military agricultural colonies, the latter being established for the specific purpose of reducing the severe fiscal burden of supporting defense forces in the area.

Agricultural Colonies During the Wei: Toward the end of the second century the Han empire fell into disorder. Suffering the depredations of uprisings, factional strife and administrative breakdown, many people abandoned their land to seek haven wherever they could find it. Agricultural production declined as a consequence, making food scarce to the point of reducing some to eating one another (literally and figuratively) in order to survive and creating a problem of supply for the different armies.[22] Seeking protection, many of the peasantry who abandoned their lands became the dependents of locally powerful families who often constructed fortifications to protect themselves and their clients from bands of marauding bandits. In this way some of these powerful families managed to establish a hegemony over their locale that could be considered to have supplanted the hegemony of

the government.[23] This was the situation with which Ts'ao Ts'ao was confronted.

Ts'ao Ts'ao was ostensibly trying to preserve the Han dynasty and secure the throne of the young Emperor Hsien, who had been bounced about and fought over by the various factions and generals as though he were the ball in a game of political keep-away until finally he had ended up under the protection of Ts'ao. If Ts'ao were to re-establish Han (and thereby establish his own) hegemony, he would need to restore government fiscal administration on a firm footing and break the hold of the powerful families over the people in their individual areas. To achieve the former would require putting abandoned lands back into production, and to attain the latter would necessitate putting the peasantry back onto those lands and securing their livelihoods there. Ts'ao Ts'ao's solution was to establish a system of agricultural colonies that would put land back into production and would bring large number of the peasantry under close government supervision. The government could thereby extend its control over the "free resources" of revenue and manpower that it needed to reunify the country.

A fundamental feature of the system of agricultural colonies during the Wei was that it was of two kinds, military and civilian, a distinction based on the types of people--soldiers or civilians--who manned the two kinds

of colonies.[24] Although there were still military colonies located in the frontier regions, during this period of increasing internal struggle they also began to be increasingly adopted in the interior of the country. This was particularly true once China became divided into the three states of Wei, Shu, and Wu. Wei established military agricultural colonies along its frontiers with Shu and, especially, with Wu to supply the troops who were fighting there.[25] The best known example of the establishment of military agricultural colonies followed the proposal by Teng Ai in 243 to create colonies in the Huai River valley in order to supply the troops that were fighting Wu. His plan was adopted and resulted in enormous savings in transportation and supply costs.[26] Wei, however, was not the only state to adopt the system. Wu and Shu adopted it as well, though on a somewhat smaller scale and organized a bit differently.[27]

The military and civilian agricultural colonies of the Wei were subordinate to separate administrative structures. At the beginning of the Wei period, the military agricultural colonies were probably organized similar to colonies under the Han. In A.D. 223, approximately three years after the founding of the Wei, a bureau of revenue (<u>tu-chih shang-shu</u>) was created. The military agricultural colonies were placed under the general jurisdiction of this bureau, and more specifically, under

the direction of the colonel for revenue (tu-chih hsiao-wei).[28] Subsequently (or perhaps simultaneously--the exact order of these developments is not entirely clear), two additional offices, the general of the palace gentlemen for the bureau of revenue (tu-chih chung-lang chiang) and the chief commandant of the bureau of revenue (tu-chih tu-wei), were established, resulting in a set of offices which seems to have paralleled that of the civilian agricultural colonies.[29]

In addition to the military agricultural colonies under the jurisdiction of the officers of the bureau of revenue, there may have been also some subordinate to the regional inspectors (tz'u-shih). Such is the suggestion of Nishijima Sadao who deduces this possibility from the cases of two regional inspectors who both led troops and reclaimed land.[30] But, as Nishijima confesses, agricultural colonies are mentioned in neither of these cases. However, an instance in which a regional inspector exercised control over agricultural colonies (it is not stated whether they were military or civilian) allows Nishijima to conclude that it was not at all impossible that the regional inspectors exercised such authority.[31] The evidence is nonetheless scant, so Nishijima's conclusion must remain speculative.

The military agricultural colonies were composed of discrete units modeled perhaps on the Han system. When

Teng Ai established military agricultural colonies in the Huai River region, he organized them in encampments (ying) which were comprised of sixty men each and were established every five li.[32] A similar system, modeled expressly on the military agricultural colony system, was established in 275 by the Chin. In this case, slaves replaced the soldiers in cultivating and they were organized in colonies (t'un) of fifty, each colony being headed by a major (ssu-ma).[33]

The military agricultural colonies were worked under a form of sharecropping. According to Fu Hsüan of the Chin dynasty, soldier-cultivators who provided their own oxen worked the land on a 50/50 basis, while those who used government oxen worked on a 60/40 basis.[34] Teng Ai, in his proposal to establish military agricultural colonies in the Huai River basin, estimated that 40,000 men could provide a yearly surplus of five million hu of grain.[35] If we assume that each man was to pay in half of his yield, that would mean an average total yield of 250 hu per man. Teng noted that because water was plentiful in the Huai River basin, the area was about three times as fertile as West China, and Fu Hsüan stated that because of the intensive agriculture practiced on Wei agricultural colonies, they produced more than ten hu per mou.[36] At a yield of ten hu per mou, each man would have been cultivating about twenty-five mou, and he would have been

retaining 125 hu (one-half of 250 hu) for his own needs. Such an amount is considerably more than would be necessary for an individual, but would be about right for a small family, though there is no reason to suppose that there were any families on the colonies proposed by Teng. This does suggest, however, that some military agricultural colonies could consist of family units, and at least in the case of Wu, we find explicit reference to "military families" (ping chia) forming military colonies.[37] Nishijima Sadao in his masterful article on the Wei agricultural colonies, expresses the opinion that these families were the beginning of the hereditary military families of a later period.[38]

The military agricultural colonies generally followed the Han pattern of military agricultural colonies. They were established in areas of strategic importance, and those serving on them functioned as soldier-cultivators. On the other hand, it has been suggested that the civilian agricultural colonies of the Wei were more closely related to the Han system of imperial fields (kung-t'ien) than to the Han system of military agricultural colonies.[39] This is only partly true. Like the imperial and official fields of the Han, the civilian agricultural colonies formed an important part of the fiscal foundation of the empire by providing income in the form of land rents collected from the people who worked the land as tenants, and like the

imperial fields they comprised a system which was separate and independent from the local administration. But, there was an important difference in that the Wei civilian agricultural colonies were organized generally along the lines of the military agricultural colonies, and they had been established in order to supply Ts'ao Ts'ao's armies as well as general governmental needs.

Ts'ao Ts'ao initiated the system of civilian agricultural colonies at Hsü in A.D. 196, where he had relocated the Han emperor and the Han capital because the original Later Han capital at Lo-yang had been devastated by fighting. Ts'ao's action was taken in response to a proposal by one Tsao Chih, an inspector of the Forest of Feathers (yü-lin chien), a type of imperial guard, to establish agricultural colonies in order to cope with a severe food shortage which was confronting Ts'ao's armies.[40] Thus, the initial impetus for the creation of the colonies was primarily strategic.

Establishment of the agricultural colony at Hsü followed the suppression of the Yellow Turban rebellion, and the government utilized land and property confiscated from the Yellow Turbans and other bandit groups to create the agricultural colony.[41] Land for this and subsequent colonies probably also came from land that had been abandoned by peasants fleeing the various armies and bandit groups that were ravaging the countryside. Members of the

peasantry were recruited to cultivate the land, and some of them may even have been former Yellow Turbans whom the government wished to settle on the land in order to pacify and exercise strict control over them.[42] It is not altogether clear whether service on this initial civilian agricultural colony was voluntary. Given prevailing conditions, it is not at all unlikely that many persons would have been willing to work on the colony since they could be confident of obtaining a means of livelihood and security. It is relatively certain, however, that as the system was expanded people were conscripted rather than recruited for the civilian agricultural colonies. We find persons being quite unhappy at the prospect of participating in an agricultural colony and absconding at the first opportunity, which led the government to adopt a policy of relocating only those who were willing.[43]

When Ts'ao Ts'ao created the civilian agricultural colonies, he also established a separate administrative structure to direct it. This administrative structure was not only distinct from that of the military agricultural colonies, but it was also separate from the commandery-prefecture local government administrative structure.[44] Three offices were established: general of the palace gentlemen for the supervision of agriculture (tien nung chung-lang-chiang) with a rank of 2,000 piculs; the chief commandant for the supervision of agriculture

(tien nung tu-wei) with a rank of 600 or 400 piculs; and the colonel for the supervision of agriculture (tien nung hsiao-wei) with a rank of "equivalent to 2,000 piculs." Under the latter officer, there were also created assistants to the colonel (hsiao-wei ch'eng).[45] Other than this, we know little about these offices, their duties, and their relationship to the rest of the bureaucracy. We are informed by the "Treatise on the Various Officials" of the Continued Han Records (Hsu Han chih) that the jurisdiction of the colonel for the supervision of agriculture was similar to that of the general of the palace gentlemen for the supervision of agriculture, but we are not told what that jurisdiction encompassed.[46] After the initial success of the agricultural colony at Hsü which produced a million hu of grain the first year, these offices were instituted throughout the various commanderies and principalities.[47]

From other scattered references to these officials, we can somewhat fill in our picture of them. The general of the palace gentlemen for the supervision of agriculture and the colonel for the supervision of agriculture appear to have held positions similar to that of the commandery administrators. The rank of the generals was the same as that of the administrators, 2,000 piculs, and the rank of the colonels was only slightly lower at "equivalent to 2,000 piculs." Another indication of the similarity of

these positions is that the generals were granted the authority to recommend persons for office the same as commandery administrators and principality chancellors.[48] Further, when the agricultural colony officials were abolished at the end of Wei, the generals and colonels were converted into commandery administrators, indicating some sort of equivalency.[49] Finally, according to the "Treatise on Geography" of the _History of the Liu Sung Dynasty_ the state of Wu at one point divided Wu commandery, making the western portion of it, now called P'i-ling, subordinate to a colonel for the supervision of agriculture. Subsequently, in 281 when the Chin abolished the colonels, it was changed to be P'i-ling commandery.[50]

Similarly, the chief commandants for the supervision of agriculture were equivalent to prefects and prefectural chiefs. Their ranks, 400 or 600 piculs (the difference presumably is related to a difference in the size of their jurisdictions), were somewhat lower than that of a prefect (1,000 piculs), but slightly higher than that of a prefectural chief (300 or 400 piculs, depending on the size of the prefecture).[51] Another indication of the equivalency of the prefectural chiefs and the chief commandants is that in at least a couple of cases the state of Wu converted prefectures into the bailiwicks of chief commandants for the supervision of agriculture, and subsequently the Chin dynasty restored them as prefectures.[52]

Previous writers have noted that the generals of the palace gentlemen and the colonels for the supervision of agriculture did not have their administrative seats in the same places as the administrators of the commanderies to which they were assigned.[53] Generally, however, these writers have assumed that geographically the jurisdictions of the generals and colonels were co-terminous with those of the commandery administrators. The reference, however, to splitting off a portion of Wu commandery and placing it under the jurisdiction of a colonel for the supervision of agriculture suggests that their jurisdictions were mutually exclusive. Such a conclusion is further suggested by the case of the chief commandants for the supervision of agriculture. The fact that they were given charge of entire prefectures which then ceased to be called prefectures suggests that an entire portion of a commandery might be removed from the jurisdiction of the commandery administrator and be placed under the authority of agricultural supervision officials. In one case of conflict between a commandery administrator and a chief commandant, the latter clearly did not consider himself to be under the jurisdiction of the former, and when the administrator punished the chief commandant for misconduct, the administrator found himself dismissed from office.[54]

The chief commandants were probably placed in charge of a certain number of agricultural colonists; one source

mentions the establishment of two chief commandants who were in charge of 600 colonists, thus making 300 apiece.[55] This seems an awfully small number, when one considers that the chief commandant was in charge of an entire prefecture. This case may be exceptional (though there were some prefectures so small as to have only a few hundred households), or it may be that a chief commandant's bailiwick included non-colonists as well. The colonists were probably broken down into smaller units of fifty which were headed by a major.[56]

The cultivators of the civilian agricultural colonies were allotted land by the officials for the supervision of agriculture. Little is known about how this was accomplished, but from the references that exist, the land was surveyed and then people were assigned to it.[57] There is no indication of how much land was allotted. Cultivators on the civilian agricultural colonies were probably granted larger amounts of land than those on the military colonies since they did not have to engage in soldiering. Whether they were given additional amounts of land in proportion to the size of their family is also not clear, although this did occur in at least one case of non-colony land distribution.[58] Oxen were also let out or even given to those colonists who did not have them.[59] Colonists probably also received tools and grain.

In return for their land, tools, oxen, and so forth,

the civilian colonists paid a portion of their harvest to the government. After the system was first established at Hsü, there was some debate over how this rent should be assessed. Initially, cultivators paid grain into the government in the form of a rental on plow oxen that the government let out to them.[60] This presumably was done because boundary lines were difficult to determine as a result of all the fighting.[61] Tsao Chih was critical of this method. He pointed out that in years of good harvest, it did not allow for increased revenue, and it would be disadvantageous to the cultivator in the event of a flood or drought. After some discussion Ts'ao Ts'ao adopted for the civilian agricultural colonies a sharecropping pattern of rent-paying.[62] As this system was developed, it provided that those colonists who used government-provided plow oxen should pay sixty per cent of their harvest to the government, while those who furnished their own plow oxen would pay only fifty per cent.[63]

Aside from the rental that they paid to the government, the colonists apparently were exempt from obligations. This is not specifically stated in the sources, but it is implied in the decree of Hsien-hsi 1 (A.D. 264) which abolished agricultural colony offices "in order to equalize government service."[64] Equalization of government service would not have been necessary unless the agricultural colonists were enjoying some sort of exemption. The

existence of this exemption is also suggested by an incident in which a chief commandant was suspected of harboring absconders.[65] Were colonists indeed exempt, then people would wish to join the colonies in order to escape service and taxation. This does not mean that civilian colonists were not conscripted on occasion, but when they were, the official in charge could be severely criticized.[66] The granting of such an exemption would have been to the government's advantage, since it would have encouraged people to abandon the protection of the powerful families upon whom they had come to rely during the turmoil of the fighting at the end of the Later Han and have made them once again productive from the point of view of the state.

Government policy encouraged the development of intensive agriculture on the agricultural colonies.[67] The agricultural colonies were well suited to the practice of intensive agriculture because of their organizational structure, which allowed for close supervision of the cultivators. This was important not only from the standpoint of being able to make certain that the cultivators were applying themselves to their fields, but it also made it possible for government officials to instruct the cultivators in new techniques.[68] Exemption from government service would also have allowed the civilian colonists to devote all their energies to cultivation, thereby increasing their productivity. The government also undertook

irrigation projects, many of which were directly related to agricultural colonies.[69] The use of oxen in plowing was encouraged. The government let out oxen or sometimes granted them outright to persons working on the agricultural colonies, and it took steps to foster the raising of oxen and prevent their slaughter.[70] Even the differential land rent would have encouraged cultivators to raise their own oxen in order to gain a lower rate.[71]

The goal of the civilian agricultural colonies was to provide a solution to the fiscal crises facing the restored Han court at Hsü by bringing land and people back into production. More specifically, they were intended to provide supplies for Ts'ao Ts'ao's armies as he undertook pacification of the empire. The initial effort, the agricultural colony at Hsü, was a roaring success, in large part due to an abundant harvest.[72] This initial success stimulated Ts'ao to establish other civilian agricultural colonies throughout the empire and to create an administrative structure--the offices for the supervision of agriculture--to administer them.[73] Such was the success of the civilian agricultural colonies that, when Tsao Chih, the proponent of the system, died at an early age, Ts'ao Ts'ao enfeoffed Tsao Chih's son in honor of his father's achievements.[74]

In A.D. 264, however, a decree was issued abolishing agricultural colony officials "in order to equalize govern-

ment service." The generals of the palace gentlemen for the supervision of agriculture and the colonels for the supervision of agriculture were converted into commandery administrators, while the chief commandants were made into prefects and prefectural chiefs.[75] The following year, the Wei same to an end and was replaced by the Chin dynasty.

If the civilian agricultural colonies had shown so much promise, then why had they been apparently abolished? By the end of the Wei, the agricultural colonies had long been in a state of decline. It is significant that contemporary observors placed this decline as beginning from the Huang-ch'u reign period (A.D. 220-227).[76] The Huang-ch'u reign period marked the reign of the first Wei emperor, Ts'ao P'i, the son of Ts'ao Ts'ao. Ts'ao P'i had set aside the last Han emperor, Emperor Hsien, and established himself as the emperor of the Wei dynasty. In order to accomplish this, it was necessary for him to gain the support of a number of powerful families and of members of the bureaucracy. High officials were supplied with rental oxen and households of cultivators.[77] The officials for the supervision of agriculture were allowed to engage in commercial activities and to employ the colonists under their jurisdiction in such activities.[78] Other officials had begun to arrogate agricultural land to themselves.[79]

On the other hand, conditions in North China had grown

more stable than when the system was first instituted, and the circumstances which had called the system into being had largely abated. Moreover, the year before abolition of the offices for agricultural supervision, the Wei armies had defeated the state of Shu, and the movement toward the reunification of China had begun. Under these conditions, the existence of the offices for the supervision of agriculture became unnecessary, and from the point of view of the Ssu-ma family, which was preparing to supplant the Wei and was concerned with achieving a unified state structure, the existence of such a dual administrative may have been considered unwieldly and inefficient. Moreover, the existence of such a large body of corvee-exempt people must have begun to seem undesirable now that the people on the agricultural colonies were well ensconced and there was little need to ply them with incentives to remain. Thus, Ssu-ma Chao, who dominated a weak Wei ruler, may have pressed for an end to the offices of agricultural supervision as a step in creating the necessary preconditions for the creation of a strongly centralized government for his own dynasty.[80] The importance of this to the Ssu-ma was underscored by the reiteration of the decree in A.D. 266, a year after the Chin dynasty was founded.[81]

Whatever the reason for doing away with the offices, and there have been a number of reasons advanced by scholars,[82] this does not necessarily mean that the agricul-

tural colonies themselves were abolished, as many have assumed. Although the Records of the Three Kingdoms record under Hsien-hsi (A.D. 264), "This year, [the emperor] abolished the agricultural colony officials (t'un-t'ien kuan) in order to equalize government service...," it says nothing about eliminating the colonies themselves.[83] Similarly, other accounts which have a bearing upon the matter record the abolition of offices concerned with the agricultural colonies and the restoration of commanderies and prefectures, but they significantly say nothing about doing away with the agricultural colonies themselves.[84] Instead of being abolished along with the offices for the supervision of agriculture, the civilian agricultural colonies were placed under the control of the commandery and prefectural administrations, a point which will be developed in the next chapter. Although the civilian colonies were eventually done away with, that occurred somewhat later under the Chin dynasty and was linked to creation of the system of land ownership (chan-t'ien chih-tu) which was established by the Chin.

Although the system of agricultural colonies provided the financial underpinnings of the Ts'ao regime, they were not the only source of revenue. Persons who were not colonists had to pay taxes, and a word should be said about these. For the tax system initiated by Ts'ao Ts'ao in

Chien-an 9 (A.D. 204) departed from the prevailing system under Han in significant ways. During the Han, the major taxes that the peasant had to pay were a head tax and a land tax. The former was levied on the individual and the rate varied according to age, while the latter was levied as a portion of the yield.[85] Under Ts'ao, however, this was changed.

According to the new tax structure established by Ts'ao, individuals were no longer required to pay a head tax. Instead, a household tax of two bolts of pongee and two catties of silk floss were to be levied on the entire household. It has been estimated that this amounted to an increase of as much as 467 cash over the Han rate for an average household of five.[86] Concerning the land tax, Ts'ao originated a levy per mou. Rather than taking one-thirtieth of the yield as had been done throughout most of the Han, the government now collected a flat rate of four sheng of grain per mou.[87] This may compared with the Han rate, which at an average productivity of 3 shih per mou would have come to 10 sheng per mou. The reduction in the land tax would have largely offset the increase resulting from the household tax.

The changes instituted by Ts'ao were significant, and they established the basic pattern of taxation for succeeding regimes. The reasons for the changes are not hard to guess. A head tax such as that imposed under the Han

requires an accurate census, while a land tax based on yield requires a comprehensive land survey which distinguishes holdings according to productivity. In the unsettled conditions prevailing at the end of the Han, such accountings would have been difficult to complete. It would have been simpler to have merely counted households and estimated total size of landholdings. Perhaps, the changes also indicate a de-emphasis in the importance assigned to these taxes as a source of revenue because of the success of the system of agricultural colonies established earlier. However, since we do not know amounts of revenue produced by each system, we can only speculate that this was the case.

The agricultural colonies are the most obvious example of the use of land tenure and utilization policies to alleviate fiscal difficulties and to solve social and economic problems. The Han system of military colonies was established to meet the fiscal difficulties resulting from the necessity of supplying large numbers of troops in the frontier regions. Military colonies were also briefly used to good effect to solve similar problems in the interior of the country during the turmoil that attended the restoration of the Han at the beginning of the first century. Similar conditions toward the end of the second century induced Ts'ao Ts'ao once again to employ agricul-

tural colonies in the interior, but with some variations.

The agricultural colonies which Ts'ao Ts'ao established, first at the restored capital of Hsü and then later throughout the country, were manned by civilians who were exempt from government service rather than by the soldier-cultivators of the Han system of agricultural colonies. In this way, persons who had commended themselves to locally powerful families for protection during this period of internecine conflict were induced to work on the colonies, depriving the potentially disruptive powerful families of an important source of their strength. At the same time previously abandoned land was resettled and brought back under cultivation, making both the peasants and the land once again productive from the standpoint of the central government. The success of this measure enabled Ts'ao to take care of his more immediate fiscal problem of supplying his armies and his government while simultaneously solving some of the serious social and economic problems that had been brought on by the upheaval of the latter part of the second century. Given conditions existing at the end of the Han, one cannot fail to be impressed by the success of the agricultural colonies in achieving these goals.

Notes:

[1]Descriptions of conditions at the end of the Han may be found in the following: Ch'i-yun Ch'en, Hsün Yüeh (Cambridge, 1975), pp. 1-83; Rafe de Crespigny, The Last of Han (Canberra, 1969); Chin Fa-ken, Yung-chia luan hou pei-fang ti hao-tsu (Taipei, 1964), pp. 1-57; Etienne Balazs, "Political Philosophy and Social Crisis at the End of the Han Dynasty," in Chinese Civilization and Bureaucracy, trans. H. M. Wright (New Haven, 1964), pp. 187-225; Paul Michaud, "The Yellow Turbans," Monumenta Serica, XVII (1958), 47-127; Oobuchi Ninji, "Okin no ron to Gotobeidō," in Seikai Rekishi (Tokyo, 1970), V, 23-52.

[2]The second half of the term, i.e., t'ien, of course means "fields," "arable," and so forth. The first half of the term does not, as one might expect from the various English renderings given the binome, mean "military," "garrison," or anything of the sort. The basic meaning of the term, at least as it is being employed here, is "an assemblage," "a group," from which probably derives another meaning, "a village" (Juan Yuan, Ching chi tsuan ku, [Taipei, 1975], 13.175a). T'ang Ch'ang-ju explains t'un as meaning "assembled" (t'un chü) ("Nan-ch'ao ti t'un, ti, pieh-shu chi shan tse chan-ling," Cklttt, p. 271). Literally, the term t'un-t'ien means something like "grouped fields."

[3]*Cs* 26.783-784; Lien-sheng Yang, "Notes on the Economic History of the Chin Dynasty," in *Studies in Chinese Institutional History* (Cambridge, 1961), p. 163.

[4]*Hs* 49.2286, 69.2987.

[5]*Hs* 49.2286, 69.2987-2988.

[6]*Hs* 24B.1173; Nancy Lee Swann, trans., *Food and Money in Ancient China* (Princeton, 1950), pp. 307-308.

[7]*Hs* 69.2986.

[8]*Hs* 69.2987.

[9]*HHs* 1B.50. The colonies to which Kuang-wu refers were established in the interior rather than on the frontier.

[10]*HHs* 87.2893.

[11]*HHs* 1B.50, 20.737, 22.780, 24.831, 35.1193; Wan Kuo-ting, *Chung-kuo t'ien-chih shih* (Nanking, 1933), p. 121.

[12]Data found on the bamboo strips concerning the colonies are discussed briefly in Michael Loewe, *Records of Han Administration* (Cambridge, 1967), I, 56.

[13]*Hs* 96A.3784, 96B.3912.

[14]*HHs* 6.261, 87.2885 & 2894.

[15]*HHs* 6.261.

[16]*HHc* 24.3564.

[17]Ch'en Chih, "Ts'ung Ch'in Han shih-liao k'an t'un-t'ien chih-tu," Cklttt, pp. 81-82.

[18]Ibid., p. 82; Hs 49.2286, 96B.3922; HHs 16.611; Henri Maspero, Les documents Chinoise de la troisieme expedition de Sir Aurel Stein en Asie Centrale (London, 1953), p. 49; Michael Loewe, I, 70.

[19]Hs 49.2286.

[20]Ch'en Chih, pp. 86-87, relying upon figures given in the bamboo strips, gives averages ranging from something over 14 mou per person to a little over 24 mou per person. In his famous series of memorials seeking the establishment of agricultural colonies, Chao Ch'ung-kuo says that each person would be granted 20 mou of land (Hs 69.2986).

[21]See Appendix II regarding the amount of land that a Han cultivator would have required in order to support a family. In discussing the Wei-Chin period, Nishijima Sadao has asserted that there were two types of military agricultural colonies--one in which the soldier-cultivator lived together with his family and another in which the soldier-cultivator was not accompanied by his family. The former is linked by Nishijima to the appearance of hereditary military families, an institution which did not yet exist during the Han (Nishijima Sadao, "Gi no tonden sei," in Chūgoku keizai shi [Tōkyō, 1970], pp. 349-351). It may be, however, that a similar situation

existed during the Han despite the lack of hereditary military families.

[22]For descriptions of conditions at the end of the Later Han, see the various works cited in footnote 1 of this chapter. For the references to cannibalism, see Skc 1.14 and Tctc 62.1990.

[23]Chin Fa-ken, pp. 75-110.

[24]The two types of colonies are denoted by the terms min-t'un ("civilian colonies") and chün-t'un ("military colonies"). These are designations adopted by modern writers and no such distinction was made at the time. These terms provide a useful way of distinguishing the two types of colony and have therefore been adopted here, but it should be remembered that both were essentially military organizations.

[25]Chang Wei-hua, "Shih lun Ts'ao Wei t'un-t'ien yü Hsi Chin chan-t'ien ti mou hsieh wen-t'i," Lsyc 1956.9 (September, 1956), pp. 34-35.

[26]Skc 28.775-776.

[27]Skc 35.925, 48.1161, 54.1276, 56.1307, 57.1336; Chang Wei-hua, p. 35.

[28]Nishijima Sadao, pp. 311-313; Yü Shih-nan, Pei-t'ang shu-ch'ao (Taipei, 1971), 61.9a-b; Tpyl 142.6a; Cs 37.1082; Tfyk 483.7b; Chang P'eng-i, Wei lueh chi pen (Shensi, 1924),

2.5a.

[29]The evidence concerning these offices is meager in the extreme. Only the colonel of the bureau of revenue is specifically mentioned as having charge of military agricultural colonies (Tpyl 142.6a; Pei-t'ang shu-ch'ao, 61.9a-b). Reference is also made to the general of the palace gentlemen of the bureau of revenue and the chief commandant of the bureau of revenue, but only their ranks and not their duties are given (Tt 36.206b). The Ch'ing scholar Hung I-sun in his Table of Offices of the Three Kingdoms, basing himself on these references (he does not specifically cite the Tt 36.206b reference, though he has obviously used it) plus two other passing references to generals of the palace gentlemen that do not refer to the duties of the office (Skc 2.60 n. 2, 23.671) concludes that all three offices administered military agricultural colonies in a manner similar to the administration of the civilian agricultural colonies by the offices in charge of agriculture (tien-nung kuan) (Hung I-sun, San-kuo chih-kuan piao, in Pu-pien, II, 2759). Chang P'eng-i, 2.5a, also describes the general of the palace gentlemen as having charge of military agriculture, a conclusion which we may assume was derived in a manner similar to that of Hung, since Chang gives no explanation.

[30]Skc 15.482-483, 27.739-740; Nishijima Sadao,

pp. 314-315.

[31]*Skc* 15.463. The text simply says that the regional inspector expanded existing agricultural colonies.

[32]*Cs* 26.785; Lien-sheng Yang, p. 169.

[33]*Cs* 26.787; Lien-sheng Yang, p. 173.

[34]*Cs* 47.1321; Jordan D. Paper, "The Life and Thought of Fu Hsüan (A.D. 217-278)," Diss. University of Wisconsin, 1971, p. 68.

[35]*Skc* 28.775-776; Jordan D. Paper, p. 71.

[36]*Skc* 28.775-776; *Cs* 47.1321; Ten *hu* would have been about three times the average yield per *mou* during the Han.

[37]*Skc* 26.725.

[38]Nishijima Sadao, pp. 349-350.

[39]*Ibid.*, p. 298.

[40]*Skc* 1.14 & n. 1; *Cs* 26.784-785; *Tctc* 62.1990.

[41]*Skc* 16.490, n. 1; Chang Wei-hua, p. 32.

[42]*Skc* 1.14, n. 1; *Cs* 26.784; Chao Yu-wen, "Ts'ao Wei t'un-t'ien chih shu-lun," *Lsyc* 1958.4, p. 33.

[43]*Skc* 11.334.

[44]Yü Cheng-hsieh, "Wei tien-nung shuo," *Kuei-i lei kao*, 11.41a-42b; Kuang Li-an, "Ts'ao Wei t'un-t'ien k'ao," *Ta-lu tsa-chih*, XXXI.3 (August, 1965), 31-32;

Yuan Shih-hsing, "Ts'ao Wei t'un-t'ien chih yü Hsi Chin chan-t'ien chih," Cklttt, p. 134.

[45]HHc 26.3591.

[46]Ibid.

[47]Skc 1.14, n. 1; Cs 26.784.

[48]Skc 23.672.

[49]Skc 4.153.

[50]Ss 35.1040.

[51]HHc 28.3622.

[52]Ss 35.1031 & 1040.

[53]Chao Yu-wen, p. 35; Chü Ch'ing-yuan, "Ts'ao Wei t'un-t'ien," Shih-huo III.3 (1936), 42; Kuang Li-an, p. 32. This conclusion has been based upon Skc 9.291 n. 1. A similar situation existed during the Han with regard to the commandery administrators and the commandery commandants (later called chief commandants) who directed the troops in a commandery. They sometimes had separate administrative seats and overlapping jurisdictions, which resulted in friction between the two offices (Jack L. Dull, "A Study of the Han Dynasty Prefecture," M.A. Thesis, University of Washington, 1959, pp. 16-21).

[54]Skc 15.469. The reference in this case is to a "chief commandant of agricultural colonies" (t'un-t'ien

tu-wei), which would seem to be a different office from the chief commandant for the supervision of agriculture (tien-nung tu-wei). Most writers have considered them to be the same, though without proof or explanation. All the references to the former are for the period of Ts'ao Ts'ao's hegemony at the end of the Han. The title was perhaps adopted when the civilian agricultural colonies were first established, and then later changed to chief commandant for the supervision of agriculture as the system became established and regularized.

[55] Skc 15.469.

[56] Cs 26.787; Lien-sheng Yang, p. 173.

[57] Skc 11.339, 22.651.

[58] Skc 16.512.

[59] Skc 1.22; Cs 47.1321.

[60] Skc 16.490 n. 1.

[61] Chao Yu-wen, p. 36.

[62] Skc 16.490 n. 1.

[63] Cs 47.1321, 109.2823-2824.

[64] Skc 4.153. The quoted phrase reads 以均政役. Nishijima Sadao has shown that the graphs 政 and 征 are cognate; if such is the case here, then the phrase should read "in order to equalize taxation and corvee" (Nishijima

Sadao, p. 347).

[65]Skc 15.481.

[66]Skc 28.761.

[67]Cs 47.1321.

[68]Skc 1.22.

[69]Skc 1.32, 7.230, 15.463; Wang Chung-lo, Wei Chin Nan-Pei-ch'ao Sui ch'u-T'ang shih (Shanghai, 1961), pp. 94-95.

[70]Skc 16.513 n. 1, 21.610-611, 22.513.

[71]Chao Yu-wen, p. 36; Kuang Li-an, p. 32.

[72]Skc 1.14, 11.339, 16.489 & 490; Tctc 62.1990.

[73]Skc 1.14 n. 1; Tctc 62.1990.

[74]Skc 16.490 n. 1; Cs 26.784.

[75]Skc 4.153.

[76]Skc 12.388-389.

[77]Cs 93.2412.

[78]Skc 12.388-389.

[79]Skc 9.284.

[80]This interpretation follows those of Nishijima Sadao and Yuan Shih-hsing. (Nishijima Sadao, pp. 335-336; Yuan Shih-hsing, p. 138.)

[81]Cs 3.55.

[82]Kuang Li-an, "Ts'ao Wei t'un-t'ien k'ao," Ta-lu tsa-chih XXX.4 (August, 1965), 35, attributes the demise of the agricultural colonies to the rise of a new group of powerful families who were granted colony lands and took advantage of the situation to engross land. He says that many of the people became the dependents of these families and began to cultivate for them. Yuan Shih-hsing, p. 138, believes that the colonies were ended because increased exploitation of colonists caused increasing numbers to abscond and to resort to uprisings. Moreover, he asserts, the dual administrative structure was inappropriate under conditions prevailing at the time and there were disadvantages to having so many persons exempt from corvee. T'ang Ch'ang-ju, "Hsi-Chin t'ien-chih shih shih," in Wei Chin Nan-Pei-ch'ao shih lun ts'ung (Peking, 1955), p. 265, says that the system was abolished in order to curry favor with the powerful families. Chang Wei-hua, p. 36, says that the system broke down under excessive exploitation by the government and encroachment on colony land and cultivators by powerful families.

[83]Skc 4.153.

[84]Cs 15.460; Ss 35.1030, 1040.

[85]For more detailed descriptions, see Chapter III and Appendix II.

[86]Skc 1.26 n. 1; Yoshinami Takashi, "So So seiken

seiritsu no zentei," Seikai Rekishi (Tokyo, 1970), V, 71.

[87]Skc 1.26 n. 1.

CHAPTER V

THE CHIN DYNASTY--ATTEMPTS AT THE LIMITATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF LAND

In A.D. 265 members of the Ssu-ma family and their followers set aside the Wei ruler and established the Chin dynasty. Ssu-ma Yen ascended the throne as Emperor Wu. The Ssu-ma family had been a powerful force in the Wei government for some time and their usurpation was not a hastily conceived affair. Rather, they and their supporters had taken pains to carefully lay the groundwork for the new regime. For example, adherents of the Ssu-ma family had already begun to compile a law code for the new dynasty at the initiative of Ssu-ma Chao while the latter was still in the service of the Wei court.[1] In a similar way, the Ssu-ma family seems to have laid the groundwork for their land and taxation policy while they were still serving the Wei.

When the offices in charge of the civilian agricultural colonies were abolished in A.D. 264, the Ssu-ma family held effective control of the government, and it is likely that the abolition was initiated by Ssu-ma Chao and his supporters.[2] Two years later, after the Ssu-ma family had usurped the throne, a similar decree was issued, again ordering the conversion of agricultural officials into

commandery and prefectural officials.[3] Reiteration of this measure has caused some consternation among scholars who have offered various interpretations of why a second decree was necessary.[4] Most probably the second decree was issued simply to affirm that the policy that had been initiated under the Wei would be carried out by the Chin as well.[5]

Many scholars have understood the decrees of 264 and 266 as involving abolition of the civilian agricultural colonies.[6] There is no doubt that the <u>military</u> agricultural colonies were continued into the Chin. In a memorial submitted in A.D. 278 (<u>Hsien-ming</u> 4), Tu Yü, a Chin official and noted classical scholar, described military agricultural colonies along the southern frontier with the state of Wu, which at this point had not yet been reduced by Chin. Tu's memorial also makes it clear that these military colonies were still under the control of the bureau of revenue officials.[7] But precisely what happened to the <u>civilian</u> agricultural colonies at the beginning of the Chin is not very clear.

At the end of the discussion of the agricultural colonies of the Wei period, in the previous chapter, it was suggested that the decrees of 264 and 266 did not actually abolish the agricultural colonies, but simply abolished the offices in charge of them and placed them under commandery and prefectural jurisdiction.[8] The

decrees say nothing about doing away with the civilian agricultural colonies themselves, as one might reasonably expect had the colonies themselves been ended. Rather both orders declare only the end of the offices in charge of the colonies.[9] This fact by itself, of course, is hardly conclusive. There is further indication, however, that the civilian agricultural colonies were continued into the Chin.

The treatises on bureaucracy in the History of the Chin Dynasty and the History of the Liu Sung Dynasty mention that at the beginning of the Chin there was a bureau of agricultural colonies (t'un-t'ien ts'ao) under bureau of state affairs. This office was new with the Chin, and it existed alongside the bureau of revenue which, of course, was in charge of the military agricultural colonies. But, when the treatise lists the various bureau under the bureau of state affairs for the middle of the T'ai-k'ang reign period, the bureau of agricultural colonies has been replaced by a bureau of agriculture.[10] The bureau of agricultural colonies was very short-lived, lasting only about fifteen years from the beginning of the Chin until sometime in the T'ai-k'ang reign period, which lasted from A.D. 280-290. This raises questions concerning why the bureau was created in the first place and why it was done away with when it was.

It has been suggested that the bureau of agricultural

colonies was in charge of military agricultural colonies.[11] However, since the bureau of revenue continued to have control of the military colonies, it is most unlikely that another bureau of equal rank would have been created to take over administration of some of the military colonies as well. Rather, it is plausible that this office was established to form the central government organ charged with general oversight of the civilian agricultural colonies which had been placed under the local jurisdiction of the commandery and prefectural officials. That such was the case is suggested by the apparent simultaneity of the abolition of the various officials for the supervision of agriculture and the creation of the bureau of agricultural colonies. But why did the Chin establish this office and then abolish it after such a short period? The reply to this question requires us to resort to informed speculation.

When the Chin abolished the officials for the supervision of agriculture, it was probably interested in eliminating a dualistic administrative system, and it probably did so with the intention of eventually ending the system of civilian agricultural colonies. At the time the Ssu-ma family established the Chin dynasty, however, the whole of the Chinese empire was not yet under its control. Although the state of Shu in the Southwest had been eliminated, Wu in the Southeast had not. The civilian

agricultural colonies had been an important source of grain supply under the Wei, and the Chin leadership was perhaps reluctant to deprive themselves of this valuable institution until they were successful in reducing Wu. So, while they proceeded with their plans to unify local administration, they allowed the colonies to continue to exist to help meet the needs of state and army. They also created a high level office to oversee the continuing function of these colonies, which had been placed under commandery and prefectural officials. From the beginning they meant this office to be only temporary and planned to eliminate it once the need for the civilian colonies had passed. When Wu was finally overrun in A.D. 280, this need ceased to exist, and the bureau of agricultural colonies was abolished sometime thereafter by Emperor Wu.

If the foregoing is correct, then the question of what became of the civilian agricultural colonies naturally arises. A not insignificant amount of land and a substantial number of people were tied up in the civilian agricultural colonies. The fate of both land and people was determined shortly after the conquest of Wu when the Chin put into effect a comprehensive land policy. This policy comprised three parts: limitations on the amount of land commoners could hold, limitations on the amount of land that officials could hold, and an allocation of land which was probably drawn from the civilian agricultural colonies

and perhaps other sources as well. Let us examine each of these aspects in turn.

Chin Land Policy: The Chin land policy has been the subject of a great deal of disagreement and debate. Indeed, some have even questioned whether the system was actually instituted. This disagreement is a result of a lack of data concerning the system. The primary source of information on the system includes a summary of the decree promulgating the system which appears in the treatise on economic affairs in the History of the Chin Dynasty and some references in collectanea dating from the T'ang and Sung dynasties which for the most part simply repeat, though with some variation, the material found in the History. There are some other scraps to be found here and there, but aside from a single quotation from a portion of the Chin law code, there is nothing which contributes significantly to our understanding of the system and the degree to which it was carried out.

There should be little doubt, however, concerning whether the system was actually put into practice. Reference to one portion of the system outlined in the decree occurs in a fragment from the Chin law code. This is in a T'ang dynasty collectanea, Writings for Elementary Instruction (Ch'u hsüeh chi), compiled at the beginning of the eighth century. This work contains a quotation from

Precedents of the Chin (Chin ku shih) which refers specifically to that portion of the land policy dealing with the assignment of land (k'o-t'ien).[12] This is of some significance since the Precedents apparently served as administrative guidelines for the Chin bureaucracy.[13] The inclusion of the land assignment system in these guidelines indicates that the Chin government put its land program into operation. The extent to which it was in reality carried out throughout the empire is, of course, another question which cannot be readily answered on the basis of the evidence available to us. It is interesting to note, however, that the age categories established by the decree promulgating the land system are also found on a census register dating from the end of the Chin period, lending further support to the conclusion that the system was indeed effectuated.[14]

Inclusion of the land assignment system in the Precedents has led some scholars to assert that the system existed from the beginning of the Chin. They are brought to this conclusion by the treatise on law in the History of the Chin Dynasty which says that when Ssu-ma Chao was king of Chin under the Wei, he was concerned by the disorder and confusion in the laws; so, he directed one Chia Ch'ung and a number of other officials to edit the different law texts and compile a definitive version. From this effort, in addition to a corpus of laws, statutes, and so forth, the Precedents were produced in thirty fascicles.[15] Because

this work was completed in 267, two years after the founding of the Chin, and was adopted by the Chin as its legal code, some writers have assumed that since the land assignment system was included in the Precedents, it must have existed from the beginning of the dynasty.[16] At first glance their conclusion seems sound enough, but upon closer examination it is found to be an edifice constructed on a weak foundation.

One of the most glaring weaknesses in positing existence of the system of land assignment from the beginning of the Chin is that it is contradicted by the economic treatise of the History of the Chin Dynasty which indicates rather clearly that promulgation of the system occurred sometime following the conquest of Wu in 280.[17] If such is the case, and there is no firm reason to suspect that it is not, then the land assignment system could hardly have been in operation from the very beginning of the dynasty. But how then to explain inclusion of the system in the Precedents?

In order to understand inclusion of the land assignment system in the Precedents, it is necessary to keep in mind two points concerning the Precedents. First, in describing the work of Chia Ch'ung and the others, the History of the Chin Dynasty makes it plain that their efforts involved the law codes and commentaries of earlier periods. Ssu-ma Yen's purpose was to have Chia's group

produce a body of law which would serve as the basis of the Chin legal system. Since the land assignment system did not exist in earlier periods, it could not have been included in the Precedents compiled by them. Second, the Precedents produced by Chia and his colleagues were composed of thirty fascicles. Yet, the bibliographical treatise of the History of the Sui Dynasty records the Precedents of the Chin as having 43 fascicles,[18] indicating that during the course of the dynasty additional material was incorporated into the Precedents. This is precisely what one might expect of a body of regulations which were meant to be applied in day to day administration: as new policies were adopted, they would then be incorporated into the Precedents. It is probably safe to assume that this is what happened in the case of the land policy adopted under Emperor Wu of the Chin, and that the quotation from the Precedents which appears in the Record of First Studies was drawn from the later, fuller version of the Precedents.

In fine, it can be said with some confidence that the Chin land policy was instituted during the reign of Emperor Wu (r. 265-290) sometime after the conquest of Wu in 280. After it was promulgated, the policy was written into the Precedents, thereby providing the officials responsible for administering it with the necessary set of regulations for putting the policy into operation. Although from the available evidence we can be fairly certain that the policy

was effectuated, there are no data which indicate how extensively the policy was applied. Data are sufficient, however, to describe the land systems established under the Chin land policy, and it is to a delineation of them that we now must turn.

The Limitations on Land (chan-t'ien): The Chin land policy stated that a male might own (chan) 70 mou of farmland and that a female might own 30 mou.[19] The verb "chan", which is here rendered as "to own," is a crucial term in the understanding of the policy, and it has long been the source of some disagreement among students of the subject. It is clear from its usage that the term is a technical one, and its appearance in law codes to indicate the possession of land suggests that it has a precise value.[20] The original meaning of the term as given by the Han dynasty lexicon, the Shuo-wen chieh-tzu, is "to examine an augur,"[21] which helps us little. During the Han period the term came to mean "to report" in connection with reporting one's holdings to the government for tax purposes.[22] It was also frequently used during the Han with the meaning of "to register." For example, in the History of the Later Han Dynasty we find the emperor bestowing one grade of rank on "vagrants who are undocumented and wish to register."[23] There are other cases in which the term clearly means to be registered in a specific locality.[24] From the context,

it is certain that what is meant is that people were registered (chan) with local officials, and their names entered on some sort of census record for the purposes of taxation and government service. The term is also used in connection with farmland,[25] and given its meaning in other contexts, it seems logical to interpret it as denoting the registration of land. Thus, use of the term "chan-t'ien" during the Han has been explained as land that has been registered with the government, as a result of which possession is recognized.[26] Given this background, we may now venture to explain the significance of the term in connection with the Chin land policy.

Quite obviously "chan-t'ien" cannot mean the distribution of land to the people as some have suggested.[27] Rather, it denotes legally recognized ownership of land. That is to say, it refers to the land that one owned by virtue of having that ownership recognized through registering one's land with the central government.[28] This meant in effect a sort of trade-off between the landowner and the government: by registering his land with the government, the landowner obtained official recognition of his possession of the land and presumably some sort of guarantee of his right to it;[29] but, by registering his land, a person then also made it subject to taxation based on the amount reported. In effect, then, the Chin land law promulgated by Emperor Wu recognized holdings only of

specified amounts of land for both commoners and officials. For all practical purposes this amounted to the fixing of limits for individual landholdings, since possession of any land beyond the amounts established in the land law would not have been admitted. What happened to such excess land is unclear, though it was probably confiscated by the government or sold to others whose holdings were below the allowable limits.

The land law promulgated by Emperor Wu established different amounts for males and females. According to the decree, "A male [may] own (chan) 70 mou of farmland, and a female 30 mou."[30] This meant that a married couple could hold 100 mou of land, precisely the amount that had long been considered the ideal holding for an individual family. This may reflect the influence of Ssu-ma Lang, the elder brother of the man who was considered the founding ancestor of the Chin dynasty, Ssu-ma I.[31] As we have seen (above Chapter II), Ssu-ma Lang had once proposed reviving the well-field system under the Wei, and his ideas concerning land policy may have been shared by other members of the Ssu-ma family.

Nevertheless, the Western Chin allowances may have gone beyond those of the well-field ideal. Although a couple would at most have been able to jointly own 100 mou, larger families may have been able to own more. There is no indication that the amounts allowed referred only to

heads of household, as has been asserted,[32] and families of several persons could conceivably have held rather substantial amounts of land. The government may have been willing to permit this in order to bring more land under cultivation and as a concession to powerful families which already controlled large blocs of land. Such a policy may have seemed desirable in light of the apparent severe decline in population at the end of the second and the beginning of the third centuries which would have resulted in some lands being unutilized.[33] The Chin seems to have favored a policy of extensive agriculture,[34] and this may have been reflected in allowing families to hold large amounts of land. By setting limits, however, and by reaffirming the 100 _mou_ ideal, the government reserved the option to pare the allowances later should it find such a course desirable.

In addition to establishing limits on land for commoners, the Chin also fixed the amounts of land that could be held by officials. The amount that an official could hold was determined according to his rank. The relevant passage reads:[35]

> Let officials from rank one through rank nine each hold land (_chan-t'ien_) according to his status: Those of the first rank [may] hold 50 _ch'ing_, the second rank 45 _ch'ing_, the third rank 40 _ch'ing_, the fourth rank 35 _ch'ing_, the fifth rank 30 _ch'ing_, the sixth rank 25 _ch'ing_, the seventh rank 20 _ch'ing_, the eighth rank 15 _ch'ing_, and the ninth rank 10 _ch'ing_.

These amounts are obviously substantially more than those allowed commoners, the quantity of land allowed an official of the ninth rank being ten times that of a commoner. This situation is in part a reflection of the growing stratification of society during this period, a trend which was manifested in the formation of systems of social and official ranks and the decline in upward mobility.[36] It also represents a compromise with the growing power of the aristocratic official clans and perhaps a bid to ensure their support for the Chin dynasty. But there was another aspect to this measure. Although it was in essence a recognition of an existing situation, that is, the accumulation of large amounts of land by certain powerful families, it in effect also asserted the authority of the central government to establish limits on those holdings. At the time, the government probably had this "authority" only so long as it chose not to exercise it, and it was perhaps the realization of this fact that led the Chin to establish such generous limits.

The compromise nature of the limits is also apparent from the subsequent section of the land law. The first part of this section provides:[37]

> Further, each may, according to his rank, shelter (<u>yin</u>) his relatives and family. At the most this will extend to the nine degrees of relations and at the least to the three generations.[38] Imperial agnates, "state guests," the descendants of former worthies, and the sons and grandsons of <u>shih</u> also similarly [have this privilege]."[39]

"Sheltering" one's relatives and family meant that by virtue of one's position he could gain for them exemptions from taxation and corvee. Powerful individuals had been able to gain such exemptions for family members, relatives, and others. This was a serious problem from the point of view of the central government since it meant that people were escaping their tax and service obligations. Elimination of such exemptions would no doubt have been difficult for the newly established dynasty and would have cost it the support of some locally powerful notables.

In addition to sheltering relatives and family, holders of official rank were also granted the privilege of sheltering specified others. The second part reads:[40]

> Furthermore, they may shelter persons as "food and clothing guests" and as "farmer-guests" (i.e., tenants).[41] The sixth grade and up may shelter three persons as "food and clothing guests," the seventh and eighth grades two persons, and the ninth grade and the bearers of the imperial chair, the trackers, the marshals of the heralds, the marshals of the Yu-chi marksmen, the marshals of the strong crossbowmen, the gentlemen of the forest of feathers, imperial guards serving at large in the palace, foot- and horse-guards armed with mace and ax, imperial bodyguards-at-large armed with javelins, and sharpshooter foot- and horse-guards, each one person.[42] Of those who may have "farmer-guests," officials of the first and second ranks may not have "farmer-guests" in excess of [fifteen] households,[43] the third rank ten households, the fourth rank seven households, the fifth rank five households, the sixth rank three households, the seventh rank two households, and the eighth and ninth ranks one household.

The sheltering of guests was also a serious problem for the central government. Under Ts'ao Ts'ao's regime,

guests had been exempt from taxation and service.[44] During the Wei, a system of exemption somewhat similar to that of the Chin seems to have been carried out. According to the authors of the History of the Chin Dynasty, the Wei granted numbers of guests to officials from ministers on down according to position.[45] These guests were exempted from government service, and persons who were not particularly keen on performing such service sought to become guests in order to escape it.[46] This was a continuing problem for the central government, for it deprived the government of manpower resources. The exemptions for guests could not simply be abolished, since to have done so would have alienated some very powerful elements at a time when the newly founded dynasty was attempting to consolidate its position. As with the graded limitations on the amounts of land that officials could hold, the Chin opted for a middle course. By deciding not to eliminate the exemptions for guests entirely, the government assured itself the continuing support, or at least the passive acquiesence, of powerful persons and families. But, by establishing some limits on the number of guests that a person could have according to his rank, the government declared its authority to restrict the number of guests a person could control so that at some later time it could eliminate them entirely if it wished. This, it was never able to do.

The Chin, as with other regimes during the early

imperial period, followed a dual policy of extending control over the free-floating fiscal and manpower resources necessary to the formation and maintenance of a strong state and of expanding and improving those resources. The efforts at restricting the land and guests under the domination of powerful individuals and their families may be viewed as the effectuation of the policy of extending control. We now turn to consideration of the measures adopted by the Chin to improve its resource base through the manipulation of land tenure.

The Land Assignment System: The History of the Chin Dynasty, after giving the land limits for male and female commoners, says that commoners were to be "k'o-ed land" according to age and sex. Exactly what is meant by this, in particular by the term "k'o," has long been a matter of controversy. Leaving the word "k'o" untranslated for the moment, the pertinent passage reads:[47]

> In addition, [primary] able-bodied males (ting-nan) are to be k'o-ed 50 mou of arable, [primary] able-bodied females 20 mou, secondary able-bodied males half that [of a primary able-bodied male], and [secondary able-bodied] females will not be k'o-ed. Males and females aged 16 through 60 constitute the primary able-bodied (cheng ting). Those aged 13 to 15 and 61 through 65 constitute the secondary able-bodied (tz'u ting). Those aged 12 and below or 66 and above constitute the young and the elderly and do not work.

Clearly, in order to understand the purport of this measure it is indispensible that we first briefly examine the

meaning of the word "k'o." Much of the disagreement over the interpretation of this passage hinges on the understanding of this term.

One of the basic meaning of "k'o" is "to levy, to assess," particularly with reference to taxation and corvee. For example, the Sung dynasty work on phonology, the Kuang yün, gives this as one of the meanings of k'o.[48] Some scholars have, consequently, interpreted "k'o" in the present context as meaning "to tax," and have explained this passage as meaning that of the seventy mou that a male could hold, only fifty were taxed.[49] A variation of this interpretation is that in addition to the seventy mou he was allowed, a primary able-bodied male cultivated another fifty mou, the total yield of which went to the government.[50] Both interpretations take "k'o" in the sense of "to levy," and the discrepancy between the two derives from differing understandings of the significance of the phrase "in addition (ch'i wai)," a point which will be taken up shortly.

Although there is no certain evidence on this point, the likelihood that either of these two explanations is correct is quite slim. Concerning the first, to have taxed only fifty mou of an allowed seventy mou seems unnecessarily complex--it would have been easier to have simply reduced the rate on the entire seventy mou.[51] Moreover, this interpretation assumes that the fifty mou

figure refers to a portion of the seventy mou, that is, that the fifty mou and seventy mou amounts in fact denote the same land. However, the use of "in addition" in the text indicates that the fifty mou were apart from the seventy mou. This would appear to lend credence to the second interpretation. But if the second version were correct, it would mean that the government considered a single man capable of cultivating 120 mou (50 + 70) and a man and his wife of farming 170 mou (70 + 50 + 30 + 20) between them. These totals are so much at variance with the amounts thought appropriate for an individual household, in particular the 100 mou ideal, that the validity of the second interpretation is likewise doubtful. Moreover, since many persons possessed no plow oxen and had to plow by hand, the mere feasibility of their cultivating that much land is questionable.[52] By extension, the definition of "k'o" in this case as meaning "to levy" is also open to question.

Besides meaning "to levy," k'o also means "to allot" or "to assign," and understanding it in this sense provides the solution to understanding the use of "k'o" here. The possibility that k'o t'ien means "to allot or assign land" was first suggested by Lien-sheng Yang.[53] However, rather than understanding this passage as speaking of an actual distribution of land, Professor Yang takes it to establish minimum amounts of land that an individual was expected to

work. Thus, a primary able-bodied male was expected to cultivate fifty *mou* of land, a female twenty *mou*, and a secondary able-bodied male twenty-five *mou*. Although Professor Yang has surely hit upon the proper meaning for "*k'o*" in this case, he has failed to understand the full import of what was involved. More than simply setting minimum amounts of land that persons should cultivate, the government undertook an actual allocation of land.

In trying to understand what occurred, it is important to remember that the allocation of land took place following the subjugation of Wu. At that time, a major demobilization of the armies was decreed, and a small peace-time army was spread throughout the commanderies.[54] This meant that a fairly sizeable group of able-bodied men had been released and were in need of employment. At this time also, the civilian agricultural colonies were abolished as described earlier, meaning that some arable land became available for government distribution to the recently discharged soldiers. In addition, there was the arable that had been abandoned by peasants fleeing the ravages of warfare or that for some other reason had ceased to belong to anyone and therefore in theory had reverted to government control. The assignment of land by the Chin government was probably intended to ensure continued production from this land and to provide settled occupations for the newly demobilized soldiers and their families, as well as any

other landless and rootless persons. As such, the measure was presumably a one-time affair, with the land being granted outright to the peasant and his family. In this regard it differed from the later Northern Wei system of equal land allotments which provided for return of the land upon the death of the holder and its redistribution to others.

The land assignments, as well as the land limitations, were related to the promulgation of the Chin tax system. This fact suggests that the purpose of the land assignments was to ensure government revenues by providing the people with the wherewithal to pay taxes. But more than this, by guaranteeing that everyone had at least fifty _mou_ to cultivate, the land assignments in effect did establish a minimum amount of land that each person was to cultivate, as was posited by Professor Yang. In this regard the land assignments sought to achieve the earlier ideal of maximizing land and labor. This ideal was mixed with that of the well-field ideal of equalizing the amounts of land held through both the distribution of land and through the limitations that were imposed at the same time the distribution took place.

The taxes that the Chin peasant was expected to pay were of two kinds: a household tax (_hu tiao_) and a land tax (_tsu_). The household tax had been first established by Ts'ao Ts'ao, who required each taxable household to pay two

bolts of pongee and two catties of silk floss.[55] These amounts were increased by one bolt and one catty respectively by the Chin for households headed by primary able-bodied males. Households headed by primary able-bodied females and by secondary able-bodied males paid half this amount.[56] As for the land tax, a peasant who was assigned fifty mou paid four hu of grain, a rate of eight sheng per mou.[57] This rate was substantially higher than the four sheng per mou rate that was established by Ts'ao Ts'ao, though it was still lower than the Han rate, which at one-thirtieth the total yield would have calculated out to be ten sheng per mou on land producing three hu per mou, the figure given by the Han writer Chung-ch'ang T'ung.[58] Considerably reduced rates were to be paid by the non-Chinese peoples living in the border regions who were not assigned land.[59]

The Chin government land tenure system was the most comprehensive yet undertaken. A single measure sought to regulate the land holdings of all classes of society in such a manner as to ensure that everyone had a minimum amount of land to cultivate, and it specifically linked this regulation by limitation and assignment to the tax system. It was an ambitious effort indeed, which naturally raises the question of the degree to which it could actually be effectuated. As was noted in the discussion of the Precedents, the enabling legislation, as it were, to carry out effectuation of the measure was established, demon-

strating the government's determination. Yet, approximately ten years after the measure was promulgated, Su Hsi, an official in the bureau of bandit suppression, submitted an opinion to the chancellor, Chang Hua, in which he noted that many persons were roaming about and were without occupation or land. In reality, claimed Su, there had been no assignment of land.[60] Even if allowance is made for some exaggeration on Su's part, it is clear that enforcement of the assignment of land was sketchy at best.

The Eastern Chin: If the Western Chin land system were meant to strengthen the government, it required an already partly centralized government of some strength to enforce it. This it did not have. Within two decades of the promulgation of the system, the strength of the ruling center was vitiated by power struggles involving court factions and princes of the royal family. These struggles, which eventuated in the demise of the Western Chin, began with an attempt by Empress Chia, consort to Emperor Hui, to manipulate the succession. She had no son of her own, and when Emperor Hui's son by a concubine was established as heir apparent, she managed to have him put to death. With this as a pretext, one of the imperial princes led troops into the capital at Loyang, put the empress to death, and took charge of the government. The following year, in 301, he set aside Emperor Hui, a half-wit, and

took the throne for himself. This led to a series of power struggles among the royal princes which became known as the "Revolts of the Eight Princes." In these struggles, each of the princes attempted to establish either himself or his candidate on the throne in a series of internecine battles centered primarily about the capital. Such struggles, of course, had a deleterious effect on the conduct of government.

Sensing impending disaster, many persons began to migrate out of the central Chin area to either the Northwest where a rather prosperous Chinese separatist regime had been established or to the south of China into the area roughly covered by the former state of Wu. In 313 Emperor Huai of the Chin was assassinated by some non-Chinese, and in 317 they destroyed the Chin dynasty in the north. When this occurred, a prince of the royal house, one who normally would not have been heir to the throne, declared himself Emperor Yüan of the Eastern Chin dynasty, which he established in the south of China.

Under the circumstances there is little wonder that the land system decreed under Emperor Wu was not widely carried out. Because of this, and because of the turmoil resulting from the internecine power struggles among the ruling groups and the depredations of the non-Chinese, the problems that Emperor Wu had sought to solve with his land system remained. Indeed, not only did they remain, but

they were intensified under the new southern regime by the continuing turbulence and the dislocation resulting from massive migrations of persons into South China.

The influx of persons from the north created serious problems for the regime in the south. The immigrants scattered throughout the south, establishing commanderies and prefectures in exile, and many were not settled on the land. Moreover, the tax structure was not yet well developed and agriculture was rather primitive.[61] Government control was weakened, which allowed powerful families, many of whom had come from the north, to monopolize land.[62] In addition, the weakened government control and undeveloped tax structure allowed some persons to escape government service and the payment of regular taxes.[63] This was compounded by the fact that the émigrés (ch'iao-jen) from the north technically remained registered in their original commanderies and prefectures in North China rather than in those in which they now actually resided, and thus they owed their tax and service obligations to administrative units which in fact were no longer controlled by the Chin. In order to cope with this situation, the Eastern Chin on several occasions instituted "determinations of residency" (t'u tuan).[64] In this way, the émigrés were registered for tax purposes in the areas where they now resided,[65] the result of which is supposed to have been an increase in the wealth of the state.[66]

Besides carrying out determinations of residency in order to assert control over the fiscal and manpower resources that could be furnished by the northern émigrés, the Eastern Chin government continued or adapted some of the measures of the Western Chin. For instance, it continued limitations on the numbers of "farmer-guests," "food and clothing guests," and so forth that a person could have.[67] An example of the adaptation of the Western Chin system was a proposal made by Ying Chan as he prepared to assume simultaneously several offices, including inspector of Chiang province and general for the pacification of the South. Ying proposed that certain officials assign cultivation (k'o t'ien) in varying amounts according to the level of their jurisdictions. Thus the official in charge of an inspectorate (tu tu) would assign cultivation of 20 ch'ing, that in charge of a province cultivation of 10 ch'ing, a commandery 5 ch'ing, and a prefecture 3 ch'ing of land. The purpose of these assignments was to put idle functionaries to work and to provide revenue for the offices specified.[68] Although the system proposed here obviously differed from that of the Western Chin, the underlying concept of assigning specific amounts of land in order to ensure a minimum amount of cultivation was still the same. There is, however, no indication that Ying's proposal was actually carried out.

In examining the land tax system of the Eastern Chin,

we are blessed with more complete information than exists for the Western Chin. This blessing is not unmixed, however, for the data are rather inconsistent.[69] But, the inconsistences are by no means insurmountable, and it is possible to glean an understanding of how the land tax must have operated.

There are no data referring specifically to the Eastern Chin land tax prior to A.D. 330, and it may be assumed that in the period following the fall of the Western Chin the Eastern Chin continued to levy the land tax in the same manner as the Western Chin. In 330, on the other hand, Emperor Ch'eng decreed a new form of land tax. The "Treatise on Economic Affairs" of the History of the Chin Dynasty says, "In Hsien-ho 5 Emperor Ch'eng for the first time surveyed the commoners' fields and took one-tenth [of the yield]; on the average this amounted to 3 sheng of husked grain (mi) per mou."[70] In 362 the levy was lowered to two sheng per mou.[71] This does not mean, of course, that a land tax was now to be levied for the first time; rather, the tax was for the first time levied on the basis of a government survey of the commoners' fields.[72] This method of levying the land tax marked a departure from the Western Chin system in which the land tax was levied according to the amount of land that a person had himself registered with the government.

The references to the survey and land tax decreed by

Emperor Ch'eng are fraught with problems. Given what is known about the average yields during this period, an average of three sheng per mou for a tax of one-tenth the yield is incredibly low. During the Han the average yield was upwards of three hu (= 300 sheng) per mou, and in some parts of China at the beginning of the Chin it reached over ten hu.[73] We can safely assume that the average Chin yield lay somewhere between these figures, which makes the three sheng figure seem even more absurd.

A possible solution to the problem is suggested by the section of the History of the Sui Dynasty that deals with economic affairs. In discussing the Eastern Chin tax system, this work states that the land levy amounted to two tou (= 20 sheng) per mou, an amount that is exactly ten times the amount said to have been collected after the reduction of 362. It has been suggested that tou here is a mistake for sheng, since the forms of the handwritten graphs during this period were very similar and were sometimes mistaken for one another.[74] The supporting evidence for such a conclusion in this case is contradictory, and permits one to argue just as reasonably for an opposite conclusion.[75] The most important evidence in support of the conclusion that tou is a mistake for sheng are the passages just cited. Yet, if the character sheng can be misread as tou, then the reverse is equally possible. Moreover, the tendency to misread tou as sheng in this case

would have been stronger since that would have made the Eastern Chin rate seem close to the 4 sheng per mou rate established by Ts'ao Ts'ao. But if one considers that Emperor Ch'eng initiated a levy of one-tenth, then the 2 and 3 sheng rates cannot possibly be correct, and the 2 tou of the History of the Sui Dynasty must be taken as accurate. Moreover, it must be assumed that the average levy per mou after Emperor Ch'eng initiated the new levy was 3 tou per mou, not 3 sheng per mou, and that this was later reduced to 2 tou per mou and not 2 sheng. Since such a rate was well higher than most previous land taxes, one might fairly ask whether such an interpretation is plausible.

There are two points that should be remembered in considering the plausibility of the 3 tou per mou rate. Firstly, 3 tou of husked grain were equivalent to 5 tou of unhusked grain.[76] At a rate of one-tenth the yield, the average yield would thus have been 5 hu (= 50 tou) of unhusked grain per mou, a figure that is well within the limits of the average yields mentioned previously. Secondly, the reign of Emperor Ch'eng, indeed most of the Eastern Chin, was a period of turmoil. The government was faced with bandit uprisings, such as that of Su Chün who captured the Eastern Chin capital in 328, and with the threat of rampaging northern non-Chinese peoples. Moreover, many in the Eastern Chin government were from northern

China and cherished hopes of recovering the north from the non-Chinese conquerors. To meet these exigencies, the government would have required substantial revenues, and the simplest way to have obtained them would have been to increase the tax rate. A precedent for this move is to be found in Emperor Kuang-wu of the Later Han. At the beginning of tha Later Han when Emperor Kuang-wu was attempting to bring the country under control, he temporarily set the tax rate at one-tenth. Once he had adequate reserves he lowered the tax to its former one-thirtieth rate.[77] Similarly, the rate at the beginning of the Former Han had been one-tenth. This was later lowered to one-fifteenth by Kao-tsu, the first Han emperor.[78] Significantly, a one-fifteenth rate on an average yield of 5 hu per mou would have produced an average revenue of approximately 2 tou per mou. This is, of course, the same as the reduced rate (assuming the 2 sheng to be a mistake for 2 tou) established by Emperor Ai of the Chin in A.D. 362, which suggests that the Eastern Chin emperors may have been quite aware of the measures of their Han predecessors and have been consciously imitating them.

In 377 under Emperor Hsiao-wu, the Eastern Chin did away with the land tax based on a land survey, and in its place established a land tax in the form of a capitation of three hu of hulled grain per adult male.[79] No reason is given for the elimination of the survey system, though

we may conjecture that it was probably due to the difficulties associated with conducting an accurate survey under unsettled conditions. The model for the capitation may have been provided by the example of a separatist regime in southwestern China which had been reduced by the Chin in 347; the leadership of this regime instituted an apparently successful capitation of three hu on all adult males, with adult females being levied half that amount.[80] There is no evidence that the Eastern Chin system made a similar differentiation of tax burden according to age and sex, although it is quite possible, given the example of the Western Chin tax system and of the Chin separatist regimes in the Southwest and in the Northwest.[81] In 383 the capitation was raised to five hu and apparently remained there until the end of the Eastern Chin.[82]

There is no evidence that the Eastern Chin ever attempted to adopt a comprehensive land program similar to that of the Western Chin, or that it ever tried to continue the Western Chin system, at least after 330. There was a proposal to assign land for cultivation, but it differed from the system established under Emperor Wu, and in any case there is no evidence that it was ever adopted. Given the conditions existing at the time, there is small wonder that the Eastern Chin rulers never attempted any sort of comprehensive land policy. The difficulty of such an

undertaking was clearly adumbrated by the problems of obtaining a complete census and of carrying out a land tax based upon land surveys. The influx of northern émigrés made the former nearly impossible, and the abolition of the latter demonstrated that it too was not without problems. The adoption of the capitation in 377 suggests that the problems relating to the survey exceeded those of the census.

In examining the Chin land system, it must be noted that it marked an important shift from previous systems. Whereas the Han imperial fields and the Wei agricultural colonies involved the assignment of land to people with the purpose of extracting a land rent from them, the Chin system assigned land to people with the intention of ensuring that they would be able to meet tax obligations. This is particularly clear in the case of the Western Chin which initiated its land program and tax system as part of the same measure. Another important difference between the Chin system and those of previous regimes was that the land that was assigned did not revert to the government upon the death or departure of the cultivator; it became his private holding. Allowing this land to be privately owned may have contributed in part to a growing problem of the monopolization of land, since once land became private and alienable the tendency towards concentration would have become more pronounced. Concentration of land would have been

especially common as conditions made it increasingly difficult to enforce the limitations established under Emperor Wu. This tendency may in part account for the abandonment of permanent assignment of land by the Northern Wei when it established the system of equal land allotments.

Conceptually, the systems instituted under the Western Chin were an attempt to extend throughout the empire a single set of land systems which would serve to create a resource base from which the government could derive manpower and revenue. This it did by limiting the amount of land one could hold with the hope of ensuring the availability of land for everyone. This was an important step in creating the conditions necessary to support a free peasantry which could provide the central government with men and money. But the Western Chin was not content with simply trying to create the necessary condition--the availability of arable land--for the existence of a free peasantry. Through the land assignments it sought to make certain that those who were capable did in fact work the land, for ensuring the availability of land would serve no purpose if the land were simply to lie idle.

The Western Chin land system had little chance to prove its worth. Prevailing conditions and factional struggles deprived the central government of the strength and the opportunity to make the new measures completely

operational. Less than forty years after the system was promulgated, the central government was forced to relocate itself in South China. There is no evidence that the Eastern Chin ever attempted to institute land measures similar to those carried out by the Western Chin. This was not because the fiscal needs of the southern regime were any less. But the Eastern Chin, as with the regimes that succeeded it in the South, was never strong enough to carry out such measures. Instead, it contented itself with modifying the tax system in an effort to make the collection of taxes easier. The tax rate was raised, a device many governments fall back on when they are faced with fiscal crisis. Rather more innovative was the transformation of the land tax (tsu) from a levy according to amount of land owned into a capitation. This was done in order to simplify tax collection, and it provided a precedent for later dynasties which collected the tax either as a capitation or as a household levy. As we shall see, this form of taxation soon produced problems of its own.

Notes:

[1]Cs 30.927; Nishijima Sadao, "Gi no tonden sei," in Chūgoku keizai shi (Tokyo, 1966), p. 335.

[2]Ibid., pp. 335-336.

[3]Cs 3.55.

[4]Nishijima Sadao, p. 336; Kuang Li-an, "Ts'ao Wei t'un-t'ien k'ao," Ta-lu tsa-chih XXXI.4 (August, 1965), 35; Okazaki Fumio, "Gi no tonden saku," in Nambokuchō ni okeru shakai keizai seido (Tokyo, 1935), p. 192; Miyazaki Ichisada, "Shin Butei no kochōshiki ni tsuite," in Ajiashi kenkyū (Kyoto, 1957), I, 191-192.

[5]If this interpretation is correct, it would serve to support the assertion that the Wei measure emanated from Ssu-ma elements in the Wei government who were laying the foundation for the government that they were planning to establish.

[6]For example, see the references in n. 4 above. Nishijima Sadao gives what appears to be convincing evidence of this abolition by showing that eight commanderies were created in 266 in areas formerly held by Shu or under the jurisdiction of officials for the supervision of agriculture. His evidence, however, refers only to the administrative jurisdictions involved and says nothing about the colonies themselves (Nishijima Sadao, pp. 336-337).

[7]Cs 26.739.

[8]I am not the first to suggest that the civilian agricultural colonies were not abolished by the decrees of 264 and 266. Yoshida Torao has also asserted that the civilian colonies were continued into the Chin (Yoshida Torao, Gi Shin Nambokuchō sozei no kenkyū [Tokyo, 1933], p. 40). His conclusion, however, is based upon Fu Hsüan's memorial (Cs 47.1321). As has been pointed out by Nishijima Sadao, this passage clearly refers to military and not civilian agricultural colonies (Nishijima Sadao, p. 369).

[9]The fact that neither of the passages that record the two decrees mentions elimination of the colonies lends support to the suggestion that it was only the offices that were abolished. Had the colonies themselves been eliminated, it seems likely that at least one of the texts would have mentioned that fact. The relevant passages read as follows: [咸熙元年]是歲,罷屯田官以均政役,諸典農皆為太守,都尉皆為令長 (Skc 4.153) [泰始二年]十二月,罷農官為郡縣 (Cs 3.55).

[10]Cs 24.731; Ss 39.1235.

[11]Nishijima Sadao, p. 371.

[12]Hsü Chien, Ch'u hsüeh chi (Taipei, 1972), 27.657; Lien-sheng Yang, p. 145.

[13]Hori Toshikazu, Kindensei no kenkyū (Tokyo, 1975), p. 51.

[14]Lionel Giles, "A Census of Tun-huang," T'oung pao XVI (1915), 468-488.

[15]Cs 30.927.

[16]Yü Hsün, "Yu chan-t'ien k'o-t'ien chih k'an Hsi-Chin ti t'u-ti yü nung-min," Cklttt, p. 192; Chang Wei-hua, "Shih lun Ts'ao-Wei t'un-t'ien yü Hsi-Chin chan-t'ien shang ti mo hsieh wen-t'i," Cklttt, pp. 170-172.

[17]Cs 26.790.

[18]Sui shu 28.966.

[19]Cs 26.790.

[20]Henri Maspero, "Les termes designant la proprieté foncière en Chine," in Études historiques (Paris, 1967), pp. 196-197.

[21]Ting Fu-pao, Shuo-wen chieh-tzu ku-lin (Shanghai, 1937), 3B.1385a.

[22]Hiranaka Reiji, "Shindai no jishiten ni tsuite," in Chūgoku kodai tensei to zeihō (Kyoto, 1967), p. 51.

[23]HHs 2.96 & n. 7, 106, 114, 121 & 123, 3.129, 136 & 137, 5.212 & 220, 6.256.

[24]HHs 3.147, 5.224.

[25]Hsün Yüeh, Ch'ien Han chi (Taipei, 1974), 8.3a-4a,

28.1b.

[26]Nishijima Sadao, "Kandai no tochi shoyū sei," Shigaku zasshi 58.1 (June, 1949), pp. 36-37.

[27]Yüan Shih-hsing, "Ts'ao-Wei t'un-t'ien chih yü Hsi-Chin chan-t'ien chih," Cklttt, p. 139; Wang T'ien-chiang, "Hsi-Chin ti t'u-ti ho fu-shui chih-tu," Cklttt, pp. 214-215.

[28]Nishijima Sadao demonstrates that the term chan-t'ien had this meaning during the Western Han, but, arguing on the basis of Hsün Yüeh's substitution of chan for ming (the term used by the History of the Former Han Dynasty), he asserts that by the end of the Later Han "chan" simply meant "to possess" and no longer carried any of the idea of "to register." This seems unlikely since we find the term appearing as late as A.D. 129 in imperial decrees from the Later Han (HHs 6.256). Moreover, it occurs with this meaning in a yüeh-fu poem by Pao Chao (d. 466) (Hsiao T'ung, Wen-hsüan [Hong Kong, 1973], 28.618). Although by Chin times, chan appears to have largely (but not completely) fallen out of use as a transitive verb meaning "to register," it should still be understood as meaning possession by virtue of registration with the government. See also Chu Chun-sheng, Shuo-wen t'ung-hsün ting sheng, cited in Ting Fu-pao, Shuo-wen chieh-tzu ku lin (Shanghai, 1937), 3B.1385a-b.

[29]Existing data are too scanty to allow us to ascertain

whether the landholder under this system had the right of ownership or merely of usufruct.

[30] Cs 26.790; Lien-sheng Yang, p. 179. I understand nan-tzu 男子 and nü-tzu 女子 in this case to mean simply "male" and "female." Nishimura Gen'yū believes that the terms refer to a commoner head of household (Chūgoku keizai shi [Kyoto, 1970], p. 81). Nishijima Sadao, however, has shown that nan-tzu refers simply to "males" in contrast to "females," and he notes that it sometimes refers to non-office-holding male commoners (Chūgoku kodai teigoku no keisei to kōzō [Tokyo, 1961], pp. 252-263). The term perhaps has that more limited meaning here, since subsequently in the decree there are different amounts of land established for persons with official rank. In any event, nan-tzu seems in this case to refer merely to a male commoner, since none of the more age-specific terms used in connection with the land-assignment system are used here. Cf. Hori Toshikazu, Kindensei no kenkyū (Tokyo, 1975), pp. 61-62.

[31] Ssu-ma I was given the title of emperor posthumously when the Ssu-ma family ascended the throne. The throne was first occupied by Ssu-ma Yen as Emperor Wu. Ssu-ma Yen was the son of Ssu-ma Chao who was the younger brother of Ssu-ma Shih. Ssu-ma Shih was Ssu-ma I's eldest son.

[32]See n. 30. Nishimura Gen'yū, Chūgoku keizaishi kenkyū (Kyoto, 1970), p. 81.

[33]Chang Wei-hua, "Shih-lun Ts'ao-Wei T'un-t'ien yü Hsi-Chin chan-t'ien shang ti mo-hsieh wen-t'i," Lsyc 1956.9, p. 38.

[34]Cs 47.1321.

[35]Cs 26.790; Lien-sheng Yang, p. 180.

[36]On these developments see especially Mao Han-kuang, Liang-Chin Nan-Pei-ch'ao shih-tsu cheng-chih yen-chiu (Taipei, 1966). Mao discusses the chan-t'ien system and its relationship to the political power of the official aristocracy on pp. 270-272. See also David G. Johnson, The Medieval Chinese Oligarchy (Boulder, 1977); Donald Holzman, "Les débuts du système médiévale de choix et l'Impartial et Juste," Mélanges publiés par l'Institute des Hautes Études Chinoises, I, 387-414; and Hori Toshikazu, p. 46.

[37]Cs 26.790-791; Lien-sheng Yang, pp. 180-181.

[38]There is much disagreement over what constitutes the "nine degrees of relations (chiu tsu)," though clearly it comprised a fairly large number of people including, at least according to one interpretation, maternal relatives and in-laws. A good discussion of some of the differing explanations of the term may be found in Ch'ü T'ung-tsu,

Han Social Structure, ed. Jack L. Dull (Seattle, 1972), p. 294 n. 198. The "three generations" refer to ego, ego's father, and ego's son.

[39]"State guests" refers to representative descendants of previous dynasties (Lien-sheng Yang, p. 180 n. 110).

[40]Cs 26.790-791; Lien-sheng Yang, pp. 180-181.

[41]"Food and clothing guests" (i-shih-k'o) may have referred to persons or poor relatives of the master who served as domestic servants in the master's household. "Farmer guests" were tenants who worked on a sharecropping basis. See Etienne Balazs, "Le traité économique du 'Souei-chou,'" T'oung-pao XLII, 3-4 (1953), 189 n. 59.

[42]These officers are all imperial guards of one sort or another. Some are mentioned in the "Treatise on Officials" of the History of the Chin Dynasty (Cs 24.741). See also Lien-sheng Yang, p. 180 n. 112, and Robert des Rotours, Traité des fonctionnaires et traité de l'armée, reprint (San Francisco, 1974), I, 246 n. 4.

[43]The text says "fifty," but this must surely be an error. "Fifteen" is more reasonable in light of the limits set for the lower ranks.

[44]T'ang Ch'ang-ju, "Hsi-Chin t'ien-chih shih shih," in Wei Chin Nan-Pei-ch'ao shih lun ts'ung (Peking, 1962), p. 41; Hori Toshikazu, pp. 53-54.

[45]Cs 93.2412. It has been argued that this did not involve an actual grant of guests so much as a recognition of the existing control of large numbers of guests by the families of such officials (Hori Toshikazu, pp. 53-55). However, since the bestowal of "rental oxen" was also involved, more than mere recognition of guests already controlled seems involved. The pertinent passage reads:
魏氏給公卿已下租牛客戶數各有差，自後小人憚役，多樂為之。
貴勢之門動有百數，又太原諸部亦以匈奴胡人為田客，多者數千。
which may be translated as follows: "The Wei granted rental oxen and guest households to [officials from] minister on down, the numbers for each varying [by rank]. From this point on, of those little people who shirked service, many were pleased to be such [i.e., to be guests]. The noble and powerful families began to have [guests] numbering in the hundreds. Furthermore, in the various divisions of T'ai-yüan commandery, they also made Hsiung-nu and barbarians into farmer-guests. At the most these numbered several thousand." When Emperor Wu occupied the throne, he decreed a prohibition on the recruiting of guests" (Cs 93.2412). As noted in Chapter IV, the oxen and guests involved in these bestowals probably came from the agricultural colonies, in which case the guests originally would have enjoyed service exemption. Apparently they retained this exemption as guests of the officials,

since the text notes that those who had no desire to serve sought to become guests of noble and powerful families. This passage confirms that there were no restrictions on guests until the limitations declared by Emperor Wu.

[46]Cs 93.2412.

[47]Cs 26.790; Lien-sheng Yang, p. 179.

[48]Ch'en P'eng-nien, et al., ed., Sung-pen kuang-yün (Taipei, 1974), p. 420.

[49]Wang Wen-chia, Chung-kuo t'u-ti chih-tu shih (Taipei, 1965), p. 176.

[50]Yü Hsün, p. 196; Yüan Shih-hsing, p. 140.

[51]Of course, the government could have been trying to increase the amount of land in production by making a portion of it tax exempt.

[52]At the present stage of our knowledge of the agriculture of early imperial China it is difficult to know just how much land a person was able to cultivate. The amount would of course have varied from area to area according to soil type, cultivating practices, implement types, motive power, and so on. Nonetheless, it is possible to offer some preliminary comments on this matter which should give us some inkling regarding the capabilities of a farmer of this period. In turn, this knowledge, tenuous as it may be, ought to contribute to a better understanding of the

Chin land program.

The "Treatise on Economic Affairs" of the History of the Former Han Dynasty contains a pair of references to the amount of land a peasant in this era was able to cultivate. In a memorial presented to Emperor Wen, Ch'ao Ts'o asserted that a family of five was unable to cultivate more than 100 mou of land (Hs 24A.1132; Nancy Lee Swann, trans., Food and Money in Ancient China [Princeton, 1950], p. 162). Since Ch'ao used the smaller 100 pace mou, this amount was in fact equal to only 41.67 of the 240 pace mou; this would have been equal to about 4.75 acres or about 1.92 hectares. Ch'ao is no doubt guilty of some overstatement, so such a family may have in fact been able to cultivate rather more land than Ch'ao stated.

During the reign of Emperor Wu, a certain Chao Kuo introduced new techniques of cultivation which included teaching people who lacked oxen how to pull a plow effectively using human labor (Hs 24A.1139; Swann, p. 189). As a result, when a large number of men were used (the exact figure is not given) it was possible to cultivate 30 (240 pace) mou (= 3.42 acres or 1.38 hectares) per day; a small body of men could cultivate 13 (240 pace) mou (= 1.48 acres or 0.60 hectares) in a single day.

For those who had oxen, Chao introduced new implements and methods of plowing that enabled three men to cultivate 500 mou of land per year. This figure seems rather high,

and although it is not explicity stated, what is probably meant is that the plowing was done by the three men and the two oxen, while others took care of the planting. Even so, 500 _mou_ seems excessive. It should be noted, however, that Chao's techniques required highly trained cultivators and special implements. The results obtained by using his methods, therefore, were probably far above those of the average peasant and should not be taken as representative.

A sixth century agricultural work, the _Ch'i min yao shu_ quotes the _Cheng lun_ of Ts'ui Shih, a Later Han figure, as saying that using Chao's methods a single person using a single ox could plow and plant 100 _mou_ in a day (Chia Ssu-hsieh, _Ch'i min yao shu_, 1.4, in Yang Chia-lo, ed., _Tsa-chia nung-chia teng san-shih chung_ [Taipei, 1967]). This figure seems incredibly high when compared with the figures given by Ts'ao Ts'o. Moreover, in the next line the author of the _Ch'i min yao shu_ says that in his own time it took six men and two oxen to plow and plant 25 _mou_ in a single day (_ibid_.). A passage in the _History of the Northern Wei Dynasty_ seems to suggest that a person using an ox could cultivate about 22 _mou_ per day (_Ws_ 4B.108-109; see the discussion of these passages by Nishimura Gen'yū, pp. 108-109).

According to Tenny Frank, the noted Roman economic historian, a farmer in ancient Rome had about all he could

handle with a farm of five to eight acres (The Cambridge Ancient History [Cambridge, 1930], VIII, 337). And Hsiao-t'ung Fei in his study of a village in Yunnan province conducted in 1938-39 found that the average family of 5.4 persons could only cultivate 1.05 acres (= 9.2 Han 240 pace mou). Fei also noted that in the same village a buffalo could plow 0.46 acres (= 4.04 Han 240 pace mou) in a day (Hsiao-t'ung Fei and Chih-i Chang, Earthbound China [Chicago, 1945], pp. 64, 72). Fei's figures refer to rice cultivation, which is labor intensive, so they are not really comparable to the figures for the early imperial period which are concerned primarily with millet. The survey conducted in China under the direction of John Lossing Buck in 1929-1933 reveals that the average farm size in North China (the wheat-growing region) was 5.63 acres (= 49.39 Han 240 pace mou) and in South China (the rice-growing region) was 3.11 acres (= 27.28 Han 240 pace mou) (John Lossing Buck, Land Utilization in China [Shanghai, 1937], p. 272).

Now, what can we deduce from these examples? First of all, the figures regarding the land cultivated using Chao Kuo's methods can be safely discounted as perhaps being exaggerated and as certainly referring to a special case which cannot be considered representative of peasants in general during this period. Second, although the figures given in the Ch'i min yao shu and the History of the

Northern Wei Dynasty seem to suggest that plowing amounts in excess of 100 mou should have presented no problems for the average peasant, it must be remembered that the peasant had not only his own land to work, but he had to help with that of his neighbors as well. The Ch'i min yao shu specifically states that it took six men to plow and plant 25 mou per day using two oxen. Assuming that six men represented the manpower of three households, it would have taken them twelve days to complete the plowing and planting for all three, assuming each household held 100 mou. A similar situation would have obtained in the case of Chao Kuo's plow pullers. Consequently, the need to help one's neighbors in working their land in exchange for help on one's own land during peak periods such as planting and harvesting would have restricted the amount of land that a peasant could have cultivated for himself. (The importance of labor exchange in a peasant society is well described by Hsiao-t'ung Fei, pp. 36, 64-65, 144.)

Clearly, peasants such as those described by Ch'ao Ts'o would have had enough difficulty farming 100 (240 pace) mou; the idea that they might have been able to cultivate 170 mou seems the fruit of optimism run amok. And it is doubtful that the others would have been able to do significantly better. In sum, it is unprobable that the Chin government would have expected a peasant family to cultivate 170 mou, since it appears that they would have

had difficulty utilizing the land completely. This, together with the importance attached to the 100 mou figure makes it likely that a couple was allowed only 100 mou.

[53]Lien-sheng Yang, p. 137.

[54]Cs 43.1227.

[55]Skc 1.26 n. 1.

[56]Cs 26.790.

[57]Ch'u hsüeh chi, 27.657.

[58]HHs 49.1656.

[59]Cs 26.790.

[60]Cs 51.1431.

[61]Sui shu 24.673; Balazs, p. 135.

[62]Cs 121.3041; Wang Wen-chia, p. 182.

[63]Cs 127.3170. Curiously, this situation may not have necessarily resulted in a decline in government revenues. Unregistered persons made voluntary contributions of undetermined amounts to the government which ultimately were supposed to have exceeded the regular imposts (Sui shu 24.674; Balazs, pp. 135-136).

[64]Cs 7.183, 8.208, 75.1986.

[65]Han Kuo-p'an, Nan-ch'ao ching-chi shih t'an (Shanghai, 1963), pp. 94-96.

[66]Ss 2.30.

[67]Sui shu 24.674; Balazs, p. 136.

[68]Cs 70.1860.

[69]The problems concerning these data are ably discussed in Balazs, pp. 192-194 n. 64 and Lien-sheng Yang, pp. 142-144.

[70]Cs 26.792; also Cs 7.175. Yoshida Torao (p. 58), basing himself on the reference to this measure in Sui shu 24.673-4, says that it dates from the reign of Emperor Yüan, the first Eastern Chin ruler. He is quite mistaken and appears not to have seen the Cs 7.175 reference which dates the measure specifically.

[71]Cs 8.206.

[72]Lien-sheng Yang, p. 185 n. 141.

[73]See Appendix II. The ten hu figure is given by Fu Hsüan (Cs 47.1321; Paper, p. 71).

[74]Lien-sheng Yang, p. 142 n. 116; Ho Ch'ang-ch'ün, "Sheng tou pien," Lsyc 1958.6, pp. 79-82.

[75]The pertinent passage in the History of the Sui Dynasty reads as follows:

> As for the arable, a mou was taxed 2 tou of unhusked grain (mi); the general rate was probably such. As for mensuration, for the tou, 3 tou were equivalent to one present tou; for weight, 3 liang were equivalent to 1 present liang; for ch'ih, 1 ch'ih 2 ts'un were equivalent to one present ch'ih. (Sui shu 24.674)

The corresponding passage in the T'ang dynasty collectanea, T'ung tien reads:

> As for the arable, a mou was taxed 2 sheng of unhusked grain; the general rate was probably such. As for mensuration, for the sheng, 3 sheng were equivalent to one present sheng.... (Tt 5.29c)

The Sung time collectanea, the T'ung chih, contains the same reading (Tc 61.737c), but another collectanea from the same dynasty, the Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei has the following version:

> As for the arable, a mou was taxed 2 sheng of unhusked grain; the general rate was probably such. As for mensuration, for the tou, 3 tou were equivalent to the present tou.... (Tfyk 487.10a)

The T'ung chih version was probably copied directly from the T'ung tien and thus does little to resolve the question of whether tou or sheng is correct. The T'ung tien version may have been copied directly from the History of the Sui Dynasty, or it may have derived independently from the same or a different source than that used by the compilers of the History, though since the two texts are nearly verbatim it seems likely that the T'ung tien version comes from the History. The discrepancy between the two could be due to a dittographical error on the part of later copyists working on the History, so that in the former case tou became sheng or in the latter sheng became tou. But how then to explain the anomaly of the Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei version? The compilers of the Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei were all important scholars, many of whom had previously gained

valuable experience in compiling the T'ai-p'ing yü-lan, another famed collectanea, and they were extremely careful to include only authoritative material (Ssu-yü Teng and Knight Biggerstaff, An Annotated Bibliography of Selected Chinese Reference Works, revised edition [Cambridge, Mass., 1950], pp. 114-115). Given this meticulousness, the occurrence of both tou and sheng in the Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei version of this passage probably resulted from an attempt by the compilers to correct what they perceived to be an error. This emendation most reasonably involved changing the "2 tou unhusked grain" of the version in the History of the Sui Dynasty to read "2 sheng of unhusked grain," since to have changed the "...for the sheng, 3 sheng were equivalent to one present sheng..." to read "...for the tou, 3 tou were equivalent to one present tou..." would have involved no change in meaning. The change was no doubt made so that the text would agree with the History of the Chin Dynasty which states that in A.D. 330 Emperor Ch'eng initiated a survey of the arable belonging to commoners and levied a tax of one-tenth the yield which amounted to an average rate of 3 sheng per mou, which rate was lowered to 2 sheng per mou in A.D. 362 (Cs 7.175, 8.206, 26.972). Since these rates are close to Ts'ao Ts'ao's 4 sheng per mou, which the Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei also cites, it apparently did not occur to the compilers that the History of the Chin Dynasty could be wrong and that the History of

the Sui Dynasty version might be correct.

The passage in the History of the Sui Dynasty that discusses the tax systems of the Eastern Chin and the Southern Dynasties is corrupt. My understanding of the text agrees with that of Koga Noboru, "Namchō sochō kō," Shigaku zasshi 68.9 (1959), pp. 58-60, except that Koga believes sheng should be read in place of tou.

[76]Lien-sheng Yang, "Numbers and Units in Chinese Economic History," in Studies in Chinese Institutional History (Cambridge, Mass., 1961), p. 83 n. 30; Ho Ch'ang-ch'ün, "Sheng tou pien," Lsyc 1958.6, p. 85.

[77]HHs 1B.50.

[78]See Chapter III, pp. 92, 133 n. 63; Ch'en Teng-yüan, Chung-kuo t'ien fu (Shanghai, 1937), pp. 53-57.

[79]Cs 9. 227. This tax applied to all "from dukes and princes down," excepting those on government service who were exempted.

[80]Cs 121.3040.

[81]Cs 26.790, 121.3040; Lionel Giles, pp. 468-488.

[82]Cs 9.232.

CHAPTER VI

THE SOUTHERN DYNASTIES

Conditions under the Eastern Chin established the pattern for southern China for approximately the next 170 years. This period saw the south ruled by a succession of four different regimes--the Liu Sung, the Southern Ch'i, the Liang, and the Ch'en--which were quite short lived, lasting anywhere from 22 to 58 years. The ephemerality of these regimes, of course, made it difficult if not nearly impossible to create a strong central government capable of formulating and carrying out consistent and thorough land policies. This weakness at the core was exacerbated by other developments which had a strong impact on the development and effectuation of land policies. The southern governments were faced with recurrent incursions by the northern non-Chinese peoples, a challenge necessitating substantial resources of manpower and supplies, particularly grain. Local control over the area ruled by the Southern Dynasties was often tentative. This was in some measure a result of the problems created by the existence of a large and powerful émigré element able to escape the control of local officials, a problem touched upon earlier. As in the case of the Eastern Chin, the Southern Dynasties attempted to deal with this problem through determinations

of residency (t'u tuan). Another problem which was at once a result and a cause of weakened government control was growing manorialism. The importance of this problem is such that it requires some additional comment.

The development of manor-like estates in southern China did not appear all of a sudden. It was instead the fruit of developments which had their roots in the Later Han dynasty. In the latter half of the second century, as local effectiveness of the central government was eroded by factional strife within the government itself, the ravages of the armies of the competing factions, and the depredations of messianic rebellion, large and powerful families began to coalesce in order to protect family members and adherents. In many cases this took the form of the construction of family fortresses surrounded by family holdings. Within these fortresses family members, usually under the leadership of an outstanding or powerful family member, could defend themselves against marauding bandits, non-Chinese attackers, or even, as in some cases, the efforts of dedicated officials.[1] To such families were attracted many persons who had not the wherewithal to protect themselves and who wished to enter into some sort of dependent relationship with these families in order to gain the protection these families and their resources could offer. These people comprised the tenants, the servants, and the personal armies of such families, and in

many cases their status can best be described as semi-free.[2]

As might be expected, these families sought to control large amounts of land. In some cases this land was probably commended to a powerful family by a person wishing to place himself under its protection. In other cases land may have simply been purchased outright or, what seems to have been common during the Southern Dynasties period, wasteland was taken over or reclaimed by powerful families and maintained as the private property of the family; more will be said about this shortly in connection with government efforts to limit such holdings. Although monopolization of land by the powerful was hardly a problem new with the Southern Dynasties, the problem seems to have become more serious then, and it acquired an additional feature in that much of land taken over by these families was not arable but was natural resource lands such as mountains, marshes, ponds, and forests, lands that heretofore had always been considered to belong either to the imperial household or to the central government. These lands were often absorbed or made into estates and villas, many of which were apparently of enormous size and quite capable of economic self-sufficiency.[3] This meant that substantial amounts of revenue-producing land were slipping out of the grasp of the government with a concomitant decline in income. This landed wealth combined with the large numbers of dependents--tenants, servants, and others--that such families

often gathered about them meant that they often constituted rather formidable regional power centers that, while not necessarily posing an active threat to the central government, could perhaps prove at least passively hostile and uncooperative.

The striking degree to which the problem of monopolization of land during the Southern Dynasties period involved natural resource lands was probably due to several factors. Economic breakdown and the reversion to a natural economy stimulated a desire for economic self-sufficiency on the part of many large and powerful families.[4] In order to satisfy this desire it became necessary for a family to acquire land which produced all the different commodities that it was likely to use, though, as one might anticipate, this was not always easily accomplished.[5] This tendency surely abetted the rise of manorialism just described. Besides the desire for economic self-sufficiency, the general atmosphere of the Chiang-nan region, the core region of the Southern Dynasties, was one of extravagance.[6] Families created extensive and marvelous estates with orchards, parks, and pavilions, where family members sometimes went into retreat to engage in philosophical contemplation.[7] The tendency toward non-involvement in the political life of the day by members of many of the more powerful families, the penchant for abstruse philosophical discourse, and the popularity of landscape themes in poetry

and painting contributed to a desire to possess lands in which the powerful could construct and conduct their retreats.[8] The lands most suitable for such activities were the very mountains, forests, streams, lakes, and marshes that had long been considered the natural resource lands belonging to the imperial household and to the central government. Finally, the prevalence of the problem of the monopolization of natural resource lands under the southern domains was due also in part to the nature of the topography of the territory under their control. The Southern Dynasty capital of Chien-k'ang was situated on the Yangtze Delta plain, which though flat enough, was (and still is) covered by innumerable streams and lakes, that naturally came into the category of natural resource lands. South and west of the capital was a mountainous region with few areas of level land, mostly along river bottoms. Clearly, most of the lands within the borders of the southern states were of the types normally classified as natural resource lands, so, if a powerful clan wished to extend its holdings, it was quite likely to be guilty of encroaching upon government property.

The response of the southern governments to this encroachment was initially quite severe. The first effort to cope with this problem was probably undertaken by the Eastern Chin in 336 under Emperor Ch'eng. Under a law known as the "_Jen-chen_ Statute" from the day on which it

was decreed, "[Persons] monopolizing mountain land and marshes are to be tried according to the laws on banditry. All those illegally taking land worth one chang [of pongee] are to be executed in the market-place."[10] The severity of this regulation seems curious since only 19 years previously Emperor Yüan had apparently relaxed the prohibitions regarding the mountains and marshes.[11] This relaxation may have been a temporary measure designed to accomodate the influx of émigrés from the north who had difficulty obtaining land in the south.[12] Little is known about the 336 Jen-chen statute--how rigidly it was enforced, how extensively it was carried out, or, indeed, whether it was observed at all. In 413, Liu Yü, soon to become founder of the Liu Sung, submitted a memorial to Emperor An of the Chin in which he described the monopolization of natural resource lands by the wealthy and powerful. He seems to have considered the culprits to be primarily émigrés since the solution he proposed was an extension of the determinations of residency.[13] A dozen or so years later we find many powerful persons and imperial favorites in Kuei-chi marking off sections of natural resource land for themselves. According to the History of the Liu Sung Dynasty, the grand administrator of Kuei-chi was able to restrain them "with the law," though it does not say what law he was enforcing when he did this.[14] Perhaps it was the Jen-chen statute. By the

beginning of the Ta-ming reign period of the Liu Sung (that is, about 457), however, the Jen-chen statute clearly had already been a dead letter for some time. The regional inspector of Yang province addressed the throne:

> Although there are long established statutes concerning the prohibitions on the mountains and lakes, popular custom is followed and the statutes are abondoned and not observed. People burn off the mountains and fence off the waters, thereby reserving the benefits for their own families. Recently the decline and laxity have daily grown worse. The wealthy and powerful monopolize the ridges and possess them. The poor and weak have nothing to rely on for fuel [that is, they cannot go into the woods to gather firewood]. The same is true of the fishing and gathering areas. This is truly the severe calamity of an injurious administration, and it is what those who conduct government should eradicate and bring to an end. I request changes in the established statutes and a new explication of the standing regulations.[15]

Obviously in the intervening years the Jen-chen statute had at best been observed in the breach.

The severity of the regulations, which made the illegal acquisition of natural resource land worth one yard (chang) of pongee a capital offense, was thought to be the primary source of the problem. Because the regulations were so restrictive, they were difficult for the people to observe. And since they were difficult to observe, people fell into the habit of ignoring them.[16] Once this had gone on for several generations, a family might have become well ensconsed on what was legally natural resource land subordinate to the government. Consequently, noted another official in response to the remarks of the

regional inspector from Yang province, to attempt to enforce the Jen-chen regulations vigorously again could prove very difficult. Instead, he proposed some changes in the law which would allow those who held such land and who had made improvements on it to continue hold the land under a system of limitations:

> Any mountains that were regularly burned off by ancestors to plant groves of bamboo, timber, firewood and fruit trees, and the fishing weirs and mullet and loach farms along the dikes, lakes, rivers and sea that they have continually built up or repaired should be permitted and not taken back. Persons of the first and second official ranks should be allowed to hold three ch'ing fifty mou; the third and fourth ranks, two ch'ing fifty mou; the fifth and sixth ranks, two ch'ing; the seventh and eighth ranks, one ch'ing fifty mou; and the ninth rank and commoners, one ch'ing.[17]

Under the proposed set of regulations, those who already possessed natural resource land would not receive any additional land except to the extent that the amount that they already held fell short of the permissible limits. However, if a person exceeded these limitations by so much as a foot (ch'ih), he would be prosecuted under the statutes on banditry for illegal seizure. This proposal was adopted by Emperor Hsiao-wu, who at the same time abolished the Jen-chen statutes.[18]

The new limitations were a retreat masked as an advance. Although the government appeared to be directing an attacking salvo at those who had been engrossing natural resource lands, it was in fact covering its retreat from

the former position--the Jen-chen statute--which outlawed the possession of natural resource land entirely. By doing so, the Liu Sung government was tacitly admitting that it could not oust people from the lands that they had engrossed. Moreover, the manner in which the limitations were drawn up make it patently obvious that they were being aimed not at poor peasants who might have squatted on some small portion of forest land in order to eke out a living, but at persons holding official rank, viz. the wealthy and powerful. Another aspect of the limitations, one that is more difficult to assess at this point, is that they may have been directed at the émigrés from North China. Both the regional inspector from Yang province (a member of the imperial family) whose comments led to proposal of the limitations, and the official who proposed them were southerners and may have been motivated by a regional bias to restrain the northern interlopers. Finally, it should also be noted that while the regulations amounted to a backing off, they also were a holding action. For although they allowed the powerful to retain the lands they had already engrossed, they also simultaneously reasserted the right of the government to control and dispose of those lands as it saw fit. Finally, by granting title to these lands, the government could make the persons holding them liable for paying taxes on them.

The new regulations fared no better than the earlier

statute. In 463, only about six years after Emperor Hsiao-wu had proclaimed the new limitations, he felt constrained to issue another decree in which he noted that although not much time had passed since his earlier decree, already natural resource lands were everywhere being engrossed, and he ordered his officials to investigate rigorously and to make the regulations clear.[19] Little if any lasting effect seems to have come from this, however, since when the first emperor of the newly founded Southern Ch'i dynasty ascended the throne in 479, one of his officials called upon him to suppress monopolization of the natural resource lands by the powerful.[20]

Nothing is known about how effectively limitations were administered under the Southern Ch'i, if indeed there continued to be any. In 508, however, under the Liang dynasty, which had succeeded the Southern Ch'i some seven years previously, we find a rather curious situation. In a decree issued in the ninth lunar month of that year, Emperor Wu laments the fact that the natural resource lands have been closed off to the commoners and that they are not enjoying the benefits of these lands. But what is surprising is that according to the emperor it is not engrossment by the powerful and wealthy which is denying the people access to these lands; it is the government that has placed them off limits. "Government" may have simply been a euphemism for "powerful families," since

many local officials came from such families. In any case, the emperor decreed that the restrictions on these lands should be eased so that the commoners might enjoy their use.[21]

Does this mean then that the government had been so successful in asserting its control over these lands that it had been able to halt engrossment by the powerful? This is not likely. It may be that Emperor Wu, whose birthplace in the north had been overrun by the Northern Wei, was sympathetic to the plight of the émigrés and thought to make land more readily available to them under the guise of "sharing the benefits with the people and showing kindness to the commoners."[22] Some, however, seem to have thought that the emperor's generosity did not go far enough, for some thirty-three years later he censured those who had been encroaching on natural resource lands. He ordered that the limitations, presumably those established in 336, be enforced and that violators be dealt with according to military law (chün fa), though commoners could freely avail themselves of the natural resource lands for collecting firewood and for gathering and trapping.[23] Interestingly, this effort was directed against engrossment by officials as well as by private individuals.

The degree of success of the Southern Dynasties in restricting the amount of natural resource land people

could possess and in dealing with the engrossment of such land is unknown. The lack of reference to subsequent measures directed at halting encroachment on natural resource lands could perhaps be interpreted as an indication that government efforts were successful. But then again it could also be due to lacunae in the historical materials or to government preoccupation with more pressing matters such as the rebellion of Hou Ching and the threat of the Northern Wei armies.

Although the frequent references to engrossment of natural resource lands and of government attempts to control this engrossment are quite striking, what in many ways is even more conspicuous is the absence of reference to attempts to limit the engrossment of arable land. This is especially so in contrast to earlier periods when engrossment of arable land seems to have been considered the more serious problem. This may in part be because most of the arable land in the south was either in the plains region near the capital and other major centers or in river valleys where officials were able to exercise close control to prevent engrossment of arable land. Secondly, as suggested earlier, natural resource lands made up a greater proportion of the land under the control of the Southern Dynasties than it had under previous regimes. If someone were to expand his holdings in order to increase his wealth, he would be most likely to engross

such land. And finally, the greater frequency of the engrossment of natural resource lands was probably also to some degree the product of the growth of eremitism and the popularity of landscape literature, as mentioned previously.

Government Lands: Although the situation under the Southern Dynasties with regard to engrossment of land and government limitation of holdings differed from that of earlier periods, in other respects the governments of the southern states continued the measures adopted by their predecessors. The most obvious example of continuity, albeit continuity with change, is to be found in regard to official lands--that is, the agricultural colonies and the imperial lands. Agricultural colonies continued to be utilized throughout the Eastern Chin-Southern Dynasties period to meet military needs. Emperor Yüan of the Chin had greatly stressed the importance of agricultural production, and he required soldiers not on some important military duty to engage in cultivation and supply their own needs.[24] Subsequently, we find garrison officials establishing agricultural colonies to meet the needs of their garrisons.[25] Nevertheless, it appears that it was difficult to maintain the agricultural colonies as a going concern, and frequently the garrisons along the northern frontiers of the southern states derived their provisions

from the interior of the country, sometimes requiring special levies in order to support the transportation of the grain.[26] The hardships created by the need for labor to transport such provisions resulted in proposals to establish military agricultural colonies in order to mitigate the distress suffered by the commoners who had to perform transport service.[27] All in all, however, military agricultural colonies, that is to say colonies on which the cultivation was performed by soldiers, do not seem to have been as widely used by the southern states as they were by earlier governments. This is perhaps not so surprising as it might seem, since the original application of the system had been primarily on the northern frontier as a part of the defense network against the incursions of such non-Chinese peoples as the Hsiung-nu and the Ch'iang.

Curiously, given the endemic warfare of the period, civilian agricultural colonies may have been more common than the military colonies. Such, at any rate, is the impression conveyed by the sources. Under Emperor Yüan, the general of the rearguard, Ying Chan, submitted a memorial in which he referred to the agricultural colonies that had been established by Ts'ao Ts'ao at the suggestion of Tsao Chih and Han Hao. Ying proposed that the agricultural offices which had been abolished at the beginning of the Chin be re-established to administer civilian

agricultural colonies in the manner of the Wei. Under Ying's proposal, the first year the people would retain the entire income from the land they cultivated, the second year they would submit a portion to the government as taxes, and in the third year they would become liable for corvee and taxation.[28] Unfortunately, there is no indication whether Ying's proposal was in fact adopted; the sources are silent on this point, though the manner of its inclusion in the History of the Chin Dynasty and in some of the more important collectanea suggests that it was actually put into operation.

The agricultural colonies were considered important as a means both of stimulating and increasing agricultural production and of meeting the fiscal needs of government, local as well as central. Toward the close of the Eastern Chin and at the beginning of the Liu Sung we find them being adopted by the heads of local administrative units in order to meet these needs. When agriculture began to stagnate in the principality of Kuei-chi at the end of the Chin as people began to engage in commerce and manufacturing, for example, one of Prince Ssu-ma Tao-tzu's officials proposed the establishment of agricultural colonies as the best method of fostering cultivation and increasing revenues.[29] At the beginning of the Liu Sung, we find colonies established in Hsüan-ch'eng commandery to provide for commandery expenses.[30] But more than

simply establishing colonies to provide for their needs, the civil administrative districts--the provinces, the commanderies, and the prefectures--began to usurp the income from agricultural colonies which had originally been earmarked for state and military expenses.[31]

In some cases, the agricultural colonies of the Southern Dynasties were quite like their predecessors and in fact were built from the remains of the earlier colonies. The most prominent example is the Shao Reservoir, site of one of the more important of the civilian colonies established under the Wei. A considerable amount of land had been reclaimed as a result of the construction of this reservoir.[32] On several occasions it fell into desuetude, probably a victim of the ravages of warfare (it was hard by the site of the Fei River Battle of 383), and the throne ordered its repair in order to increase production.[33] It is uncertain whether agricultural colonies were re-established at the reservoir, though the compilers of two collectanea, the T'ai-p'ing yü-lan and the Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei, clearly thought so since they included the decree of Emperor Kao of the Southern Ch'i ordering repair of the dam under their sections on agricultural colonies.[34] Such inclusion is probably warranted since Emperor Kao referred to the example of the Wei colonies and may have wished to emulate it.

In contrast to colonies such as those at the Shao

Reservoir, there were others of a type that was original with the Southern Dynasties. These colonies were not concerned with the cultivation of arable land but were mountain colonies which were engaged in harvesting the products of the natural resource lands. The appearance of such colonies was only natural given the physical setting of the Southern Dynasties. These colonies were located in mountain and marsh lands and were probably instrumental in opening up these lands.[35] Not all of these colonies were established by the government; there were privately established colonies as well. The government attempted to control these latter, however, since they had the effect of closing off access to natural resource lands.[36]

The imperial lands (kung t'ien) were also an important source of revenue for the administrations of the Southern Dynasties. The manner in which these lands were exploited, however, had changed significantly from the Han dynasty. No longer did these lands simply provide income for the imperial household. During the Later Han, the income from these lands accrued to the central government in general as the fiscal systems of the imperial household and the central government were combined. Toward the close of the Later Han, the empire was thrown into turmoil and the central government experienced administrative breakdown. Under these conditions the government of Emperor Hsien was hard pressed to find the

means to pay the salaries of its officials. To meet this problem, the emperor ordered the distribution of imperial fields to officials in amounts varying according to their ranks; the income from these lands was to serve as their salaries.[37] This appears to have been the beginning of the Southern Dynasty system of emolument lands (lu t'ien), though the course of transformation from this ad hoc measure undertaken by the Later Han to the developed system of emolument lands that is found during the Liu Sung period is not entirely clear.[38]

An important step in the development of the emolument lands was the creation of "sustenance lands" (ts'ai-t'ien). These lands were established under Emperor Hui of the Western Chin dynasty during the first year of the Yüan-k'ang reign period (291-292). The amount granted varied according to the office, with the higher offices receiving greater amounts, of course. For example, the highest offices, that is those of the first rank, received ten ch'ing of sustenance land together with ten husbandmen (t'ien-tsou), who presumably were to cultivate the land for them.[39] How far down the bureaucratic hierarchy this system extended is not certain. The lowest figures mentioned by that section of the History of the Chin Dynasty which deals with the bureaucracy are six ch'ing and six husbandmen, the amounts received by an imperial court grandee and a few others.[40] Whether lesser amounts

were granted to lesser officials is uncertain, though not at all unlikely, since under the Liu Sung there was a similar system for commandery and prefectural officials.[41] This land did not become an official's private possession and therefore presumably was not counted within the limitations according to official rank that were established under Emperor Wu of the Western Chin. When an official left office, he turned his sustenance lands over to his successor. If the new appointee took office after the Beginning of Summer (li hsia, usually sometime in early May) when it was too late to begin cultivation, he was supplied with rations sufficient for a year.[42]

The sustenance lands provided the salaries of Chin officials. On the other hand, the operating expenses of local officials, as distinct from their salaries, may have come from another type of land known as "bureau lands" (fu-t'ien). There is but a single reference to this type of land, so it is difficult to understand clearly its nature and purpose. The amount involved, 100 ch'ing, suggests that it was intended to provide a substantial amount of income, certainly more than was thought necessary for an individual official's income.[43] This seems particularly so when we compare the amount of this land, which was that of a regional inspector, with the amounts of sustenance land granted much higher officials. Lack of additional evidence prevents a clearer

understanding of the bureau lands, and it is possible that this is a unique case designed to meet the exigencies of extraordinary times since this was the period when Fu Chien was pressing southward with his armies.

Although the Chin system of sustenance lands may not have extended so far down the administrative hierarchy as to encompass local officials, the Liu Sung system of emolument fields most certainly did. Under the Liu Sung system, the salaries of many local--provincial, commandery, and prefectural--officials were paid from emolument fields in the area where they served. In addition to their salaries, they also received miscellaneous supplies from this land.[44] There is little question that the ground used for emolument land was imperial fields. Three episodes clearly suggest this was the case. At the end of the Eastern Chin the prefect of P'eng-tse, the famous poet T'ao Ch'ien, ordered that the imperial fields all be planted in glutinous millet. His wife and son, however, insisted that non-glutinous rice also be planted, so T'ao ordered the planting of 50 mou of rice.[45] That the family members could offer opinions as to what sort of grain should be planted suggests that the income from these imperial fields went to the prefect and his family.[46] In 421, Emperor Wu of the Liu Sung ordered an increase in the imperial field allotment of officials whose salary rank was fully 2,000 piculs (chung erh-ch'ien shih).[47]

And in 457 Emperor Hsiao-wu restored (when they were abolished is not known) imperial fields attached to the offices of local officials.[48]

Not all officials received their income from emolument fields, however. Sometime toward the beginning of the Liu Sung an emolument tax began to be levied. Similar to the Eastern Chin land tax following the revision of 377, the emolument tax was levied in the form of a capitation at the rate of 2 hu per adult male.[49] Whereas under the Chin system of sustenance fields if a new appointee assumed office after the Beginning of Summer he was supplied with rations for a year, under the Liu Sung system the cut-off date was Mang-chung (the first part of June), about a month later. In a variation on the method of the sustenance fields, if the office changed hands prior to this time, the income from this tax went to the departing official. On the other hand, if the new appointee assumed office after this date, then the income for that year went to him. Toward the end of the Yuan-chia period (424-453) this system was changed, and the income was divided between the two according to the number of months that each held office.[50]

The reference earlier to the restoration of the imperial fields by Emperor Hsiao-wu reveals a curious situation concerning the emolument fields and emolument taxes during the Liu Sung: they appear to have been

subject to frequent reduction or cancellation later followed by restoration, especially during the reigns of Emperors Hsiao-wu (r. 454-464) and Ming (r. 465-472). Thus in 457 we find the restoration of imperial fields just mentioned. The following year Emperor Hsiao-wu restored the emolument taxes for the commandery and prefectural officials and included allowances for relatives.[51] As in the case of the imperial fields, it is not known when these emolument taxes had been cancelled. In 460, Emperor Hsiao-wu ordered a reduction of the salaries of commandery and prefectural officials, and then two years later he restored them.[52] The 460 reduction may not have involved a reduction also of the emolument taxes--the sources are silent on this point--and the government may simply have been redirecting the revenue from the emolument tax to more pressing needs. In 465 the notorious Emperor Fei the Former reduced by half the emolument taxes that paid the salaries of provincial, commandery, and prefectural officials.[53] Two years later Emperor Ming restored the imperial fields of the commanderies and prefectures, but the following year again reduced by half the emolument taxes paying their salaries.[54] A few years later, we find a reference to Emperor Hsün's restoring the emolument fields for the commandery and prefectural fields.[55] All of this is very confusing because the information is incomplete. There are frequent references to the restora-

tion of imperial fields, emolument taxes, and emolument fields, but little is said about their cancellation. Nonetheless, the information that we do have is sufficient to demonstrate that, as with the land tax, the government was not adverse to abrogation when it thought it necessary.

Although no reasons are given for these frequent changes in the imperial fields and the emolument taxes, they are not hard to guess. The Sung government was faced with a number of problems. The currency was in absolute chaos, and changes with regard to it occurred with a frequency that rivaled that of the emolument taxes and imperial fields.[56] Moreover, military expenditures were particularly great as the government was faced with the twin threats of rebellion within the country and invasion from without. On top of all this, the government needed to mollify the general populace to ensure that they did not become restive and add to the difficulties of the government. This meant that the government had to declare frequent remissions of tax payments as a form of relief to peasants hit by natural disaster and as a general demonstration of the emperor's generosity and affection for his subjects.[57] This naturally cut deeply into government revenues, thereby exacerbating the problems of the government. The situation at one point became so desperate that in 466 the government called for contributions of money and grain from the people, in return for

which it granted them land in frontier commanderies and prefectures that had been ravaged by the fighting and abandoned.[58] To help meet this fiscal crisis, the government no doubt found it expedient to cut official salaries, and indeed, we find in the History of the Liu Sung Dynasty the statement that since the increase of military activity official salaries and stipends had been ended.[59]

This sort of manipulation of imperial fields and official salaries must have had an adverse effect upon the institution of imperial fields. For under subsequent regimes--the Southern Ch'i and Liang, and the Ch'en--there is little reference to the imperial fields, and what references there are indicate their decline. For example, a decree by Emperor Wu of the Liang in 542 noted that a large amount imperial fields had been taken over by the powerful and wealthy who then rented them out to the poor at exorbitant rates.[60] And forty years later, a decree by the last Ch'en ruler suggests that at least some imperial fields had fallen into desuetude.[61] It seems that the imperial fields were declining in importance.

The Southern Dynasty policies and practices concerning government-operated agricultural lands reveal many features that are reminiscent of the Han period. Reliance upon such lands to meet a substantial portion of government fiscal needs is in itself redolent of Han practices. The difference is, of course, that while under the Han the

income from the imperial fields went to the imperial household and later to the central government, under the Southern Dynasties it was used to pay directly the salaries of local officials. But even this practice was similar to the *ad hoc* measure carried out under Emperor Hsien. Agricultural colonies do not appear to have been utilized quite so widely as during former periods, and in many cases the income from them seems to have gone to local officials to meet the fiscal needs of local government rather than going to the central government. There were some military agricultural colonies, but they were not nearly so widespread as under previous regimes. An important application of agricultural colonies which was new with the Southern Dynasties was in the exploitation of natural resource lands. Quite often these colonies were private rather than government.

Government Promotion of Agriculture: The promotion of agriculture (*ch'üan nung*), as we have seen, had long been considered an important function of the government and of the emperor himself. Every spring the emperor personally plowed a ritual furrow in the sacred field (*chi t'ien*) to mark the beginning of the agriculture season.[62] Great importance was attached to this ritual, for in the words of Emperor Wu of the Southern Ch'i, "Cultivation of the Sacred Field is the way in which we manifest reverence,

and personal performance of it is the way in which we lead the people. We revere the former models and personally grasp the 'sharp plow' to complete the business of the 1,000 mou [of the Sacred Field] so that the Six Grains may be expected, morality can be spread, and sincerity may everywhere increase."[63] These ritual plowings were frequently accompanied by decrees exhorting farmers to work diligently, bestowals of the rank of "diligent cultivator" on outstanding farmers, and bestowals of seed grain on those who had none.[64] There were occasionally other symbolic acts which were meant to stress the importance of agriculture. For example, in 458 the grand provisioner ceased the slaughter of oxen during the third lunar month because it was an important month for agriculture.[65]

An important aspect of the program of promoting agriculture was providing peasants with the wherewithal to pursue farming. This involved grants of land, tools, and seed to those who needed them. Although all of these were quite important, the most basic was, of course, land. For a peasant without land is like a siren without a song. Throughout the Southern Dynasties period grants of land were made to peasants who were without land, whether it was because they were simply poor[66] or because they had been displaced as a result of warfare and banditry.[67] An important purpose of these bestowals was to try to

"maximize the return from the land,"[68] but that was not their only goal. Another was to encourage peasants to settle down if vagrant or to take up residence in areas where there was much abandoned or unreclaimed land.

The governments of the Southern Dynasties had several reasons for wanting to settle peasants on the land. An obvious reason was that it is considerably easier to tax and conscript a peasant who is engaged in productive activity and who has a fixed residence. For this reason the government was sometimes willing to forgive persons who had absconded, provided that they would return to their home areas and settle down within a certain period. To assist them in doing this, the government made farmlands and dwelling plots available to those who returned.[69] Even if the government did not feel so generous as to grant fields and dwelling plots, it might grant tax remissions to those who would return to their own homes and land.[70] A second reason for settling peasants was to assist in the opening up of new lands and in the populating of areas where land had been abandoned.[71] People were also relocated in order to achieve a balance between population and land by taking people from areas where land was in short supply and moving them to places where there was a surplus of arable.[72] A final reason for settling peasants, whether through relocation or by encouraging them to return to their former farmsteads,

was probably the desire on the government's part to remove a dissatisfied element, one that was a potential source of bandits or manpower for rebel armies. This possibility could not have been far from the minds of administrators in an era in which banditry was endemic and in which rebellions, such as those of Su Chün and Sun En, had come close to overthrowing the reigning dynasty.[73] Indeed, the seriousness of the problem was such that even the rebel Chou Ti, in order to pacify displaced persons who had lapsed into banditry, distributed land to them.[74]

An important feature of the grants, one made with an eye toward the promotion of agriculture, was government assistance in the form of seed grain and food rations, which were given to peasants who had run short or who were being granted land on which to settle. Such gifts in conjunction with the plowing of the Sacred Field have already been mentioned. Other grants were presumably bestowed on any peasant who had been forced by straitened circumstances to consume his seed grain. Vagrant peasants who were being given land to cultivate in the hope of turning them into productive members of society, or peasants who were being relocated to take up cultivation of newly reclaimed land, could hardly be expected to have a store of seed grain that they could bring with them to their new farmstead. Thus we find the government granting

or lending seed grain in conjunction with grants of land.[75] We may assume that as with previous dynasties the government also furnished farming implements to those who needed them.

Throughout the early imperial period of China's history an important part of the policy of promoting agriculture was the reclamation of land. This generally may be said to have comprised two sometimes overlapping parts--the opening up of hitherto uncultivated land and the development of irrigation systems. These policies were continued by the southern rulers, who frequently ordered officials to direct the opening up of new land.[76] Although in many cases this land was probably mountain land or along the river bottoms, we now also find land being reclaimed from lakes.[77] Work on irrigation projects included both the repair of existing systems and the development of new ones. The most famous of those rapaired was, of course, the Shao Reservoir system. Repair of this enormous system was ordered by Emperor Wen of the Sung in 430.[78] Apparently the work was not completed, for approximately fifty years later Emperor Kao of the Southern Ch'i again ordered renovation of the system.[79] Other systems which had fallen into desuetude were ordered repaired as well.[80]

Besides land reclamation and irrigation projects, the government apparently also concerned itself with

directing what sorts of crops ought to be planted. Since cultivators often received seed from the government and since officials frequently directed the reclamation of land, it is only logical that they should have advised the people on what to plant and have sought to reform poor cultivation practices. Our information is still meager on this aspect, though there are examples of the emperor ordering the planting of specific crops such as wheat[81] and directing officials to rectify situations such as people pursuing dry-land cultivation in areas better suited to paddy farming.[82]

Promotion of agriculture with its goal of maximizing land and labor played an extremely important role in Southern Dynasty agrarian policy. Indeed, one has the impression that despite their brief life spans and the enormous difficulties they faced in their efforts to establish stable regimes they devoted more to this facet of agrarian policy than did previous, more enduring regimes. The impression is subjective, as impressions are wont to be, but it is nonetheless important enough to require some additional comment. First, however, it is necessary to examine briefly the land tax system of the Southern Dynasties.

<u>The Land Tax</u>: It is probably something of an understatement to say that the tax systems of the Southern Dynasties

are at best imperfectly understood. Because information on the system is lacking, it has been assumed that the Liu Sung, the Southern Ch'i, the Liang, and the Ch'en simply followed the tax system of the Eastern Chin without significant modification.[83] It has also been suggested by Ma Tuan-lin, compiler of the 13th century collectanea General History of Institutions and Critical Examination of Documents and Studies (Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao), that the poll tax (tiao) and the land tax (tsu) were combined during the Eastern Chin-Southern Dynasties period.[84] The frequent references in the annals of the dynastic histories of this period to cancellations and temporary reductions of the land tax, however, show unequivocally that they continued to be separate, and the problem of the nature of the Southern Dynasties' land tax remains.

At the end of the preceding chapter (pp. 212-213) we saw how the Eastern Chin replaced its land tax based upon levies per mou with a land tax levied in the form of a capitation of 3 hu per adult male, which rate was raised to 5 hu in 383. This rate was probably continued by the Liu Sung, though there is no direct evidence on this point. The History of the Liu Sung Dynasty does record a levy of 60 hu of hulled grain for primary males and 30 hu for secondary males, but as Yoshida Torao has correctly pointed out, this rate was not extended to the

general populace but was limited to a particular class of persons which may have comprised hereditary military families.[85] Since the dynastic histories are generally good about recording changes in the land tax, the lack of such a reference in the History of the Liu Sung Dynasty probably means that we may assume that the Liu Sung simply continued to levy at the same rate and in the same form as the Eastern Chin and that the Southern Ch'i, Liang, and Ch'en followed suit.[86] This is admittedly tenuous in the extreme, but until further evidence is uncovered or intensive research on the tax system of the Southern Dynasties has been undertaken it is probably the best that can be done.

If our difficulties in understanding the system seem great, they may not be nearly so great as the difficulties that beset the governments of the southern regimes trying to collect the taxes. First of all, there were the problems of obtaining an accurate census in order to have a basis on which to collect the taxes. This was especially crucial since now the land tax was a capitation rather than a levy per unit amount of land. The problems of the census, especially with regard to the émigrés and the determinations of residency (t'u tuan), during the Eastern Chin have been described already. Similar problems were faced by the governments that succeeded the Eastern Chin, and determinations of residency continued to be

carried out by them. These determinations were limited to specific provinces rather than applied to the country as a whole, so the revenue that was recovered through them was limited.[87] Thus, a significant section of the populace continued to be exempted from paying taxes, in addition to the usual number of absconders. The émigrés of Southern Hsü Province, for example, were taxed for the first time only in 454.[88] And to these must be added those who through fraudulent census reporting were able to raise their official social status thereby gaining tax and service exemptions.[89]

If the government did not have problems enough trying to run down all the people who legally should be liable for taxes, it also had difficulties collecting from them when it was finally able to find them. Throughout the annals of the dynastic histories of this period are recorded cancellations of land tax owed from as long as three years previously. A case in point is the cancellation in 462 by Emperor Hsiao-wu of the land tax owed in Southern Yen Province for the year 459.[90] And this is by no means an isolated example.[91] The fact that taxes were so frequently past due and that the government despaired of collecting them indicates that the southern administrations experienced severe problems in their tax systems. These difficulties may in turn have made them more willing to order cancellation of payment of

taxes when that seemed appropriate.

Earlier, in the discussion of the land tax during the Han period, it was noted that with respect to the land tax social stability and long-term economic growth often took precedence over short-term fiscal needs, and that the government frequently ordered full or partial abrogation of the land tax as a form of relief when natural disaster struck, on special occasions, and when people were relocated to begin farming in new areas. During the Southern Dynasties similar tax abrogations frequently occurred. The land tax might be cancelled to commemorate special occasions such as the accession of an emperor to the throne or a limited cancellation might be decreed when the emperor toured a particular area.[92] The latter sort of cancellation perhaps could also be considered a form of relief designed to reimburse some of the extra expense incurred by the people of the area in hosting the emperor's visit. Cancellations were also ordered when a famine or drought occurred.[93] In such cases, remission might apply only to the affected region and not to the country as a whole.[94] The land tax might also be cancelled in order to promote agricultural production. We find, for example, cancellations being decreed in conjunction with the plowing of the Sacred Field.[95] Tax exempt status was also granted to lands newly opened up in order to stimulate reclamation, a policy used most notably by the Ch'en.[96]

The impression that one has of the role of the land tax under the Southern Dynasties is that it was not very much different from that during the Han. True, it was collected in an entirely different manner, being a flat rate capitation rather than being levied according to the amount of land that one owned. Yet, the importance assigned it as a means of producing revenue for the state fisc seems to have been no greater than under the Han, for as under the Han we find that it was frequently abrogated. It almost seems to have been created with the purpose of cancelling it in order to demonstrate the generosity and concern of the emperor for his subjects. This seems particularly so when we note that cancellations of the land tax were considerably more frequent than cancellations of the poll tax.[97]

<u>Summary and Conclusion</u>: The Southern Dynasties were faced with a set of conditions which threatened their very existence. These included weakened government control as power devolved into the hands of powerful local notables, continuing warfare and unrest requiring heavy government expenditures, deepening economic decline evinced in growing manorialism coupled with the rise of a natural economy, and fiscal crisis exacerbated by the existence of a large émigré population which was exempt from the payment of taxes and the performance of corvee.

In tackling these problems, the southern regimes fell back on variations of methods adopted by previous dynasties, viz., measures intended to affect the distribution and utilization of land. Paramount among those measures affecting the distribution of land were the limitations according to rank on the amount of natural resource land that could be held by an individual. These limits were generous, which meant that the cumulative holdings of a family could still be quite substantial. These limitations, therefore, were more of a holding action than an aggressive effort to contain the engrossment of land by the powerful. What is particularly striking about this period is that no measures seem to have been directed at restricting the amount of arable land that one could hold. This may simply mean that the Chin limitations continued in force, but it also is a reflection of the proportionately greater prevalence of natural resource lands in the south and of the greater interest in owning such lands as a means of attaining economic self sufficiency and in creating villas, mountain retreats.

The Southern Dynasty rulers continued the policies of their predecessors in relying upon government-owned lands to produce an important portion of government revenues. Military agricultural colonies, while adopted by the Southern Dynasties, do not appear to have been so important as under previous regimes. Civilian colonies

may have been more prevalent than their military counterparts, and during this period they came to be used as a means of stimulating and increasing agricultural production as well as of meeting the fiscal needs of government. A new development under the Southern Dynasties was the establishment of civilian colonies by local administrative districts to meet their fiscal needs and to promote agricultural production. Another new development under the Southern Dynasties was the use of colonies to open up forest and marsh lands. Imperial lands continued to be a source of revenue, though the manner in which they were exploited had changed. Instead of simply being rented out with the rents being paid into the imperial fisc, though this also occurred, they were assigned to officials in amounts graded according to rank to provide their salaries. In such cases these fields, known as emolument fields, did not become the private possession of the official and had to be surrendered when the official left office.

As in previous periods, promotion of agriculture constituted an important part of government land utilization policy. Indeed, it may have received more emphasis than measures dealing with the limitation of land holdings and the distribution of land. The southern regimes attached sufficient importance to the promotion of agriculture that it was allowed to take precedence over the well-field ideal of equitable distribution of land.

In 542, for example, when Emperor Wu of the Liang ordered a crackdown on powerful families who were engrossing imperial lands and then renting them to the poor at exorbitant rates, he specifically exempted those powerful families who provided the poor with seed grain and assisted them in cultivation.[98] For the Ch'en, the desire to increase the amount of land under cultivation was great enough that the government permitted reclamation of unlimited amounts of land and exempted such land from taxation.[99] In these cases, principle yielded to expediency, as the southern governments struggled to cope with a deepening fiscal crisis.

The land tax during this period underwent an important change, being transformed from a levy per unit area of land into a capitation. As in earlier eras, the land tax was subject to frequent cancellation as a means of stimulating agriculture, of offering relief to disaster-stricken peasants, and of manifesting the emperor's generosity and concern for his subjects. The fact that land tax remissions far outnumbered remissions of other kinds of taxes leads one to surmise that the income that collection of it yielded was not considered so important as the increased production that cancellation of it might produce.

The efforts of the Southern Dynasties amounted to pruning a rotten tree "that cannot so much as a blossom yield." Beset by severe problems, the rulers of the

south resorted to methods that, though effective in an earlier period, were no longer appropriate or adequate to deal with the problems that confronted them. Drastic and innovative measures were required, but the best they could come up with were modifications of measures suitable to regimes of greater vitality and stability. This failure is particularly striking when contrasted with the sweeping innovations of the Toba Wei government in North China. Moreover, it largely places the Southern Dynasties outside the mainstream of historical development in this period insofar as land policy is concerned. We must look instead to the non-Chinese regimes in the north, especially the Northern Wei, to find the continuation of those developments.

Notes:

[1]On the development of these private fortresses and their influence on the rise of manorialism see Chin Fa-ken, Yung-chia luan hou pei-fang ti hao-tsu (Taipei, 1964), pp. 76-110. For manorialism in the Wei-Chin period, see Ho Tzu-ch'üan, "Wei Chin shih-ch'i chuang-yüan ching-chi ti ch'u-hsing," Shih-huo I.1 (1934), 6-10, an abridged translation of which appears in E-tu Zen Sun and John DeFrancis, Chinese Social History, reprint (New York, 1972), 137-141.

[2]I have described these dependent groups in a ms, "Notables, Officials, and Local Society During the Later Han," pp. 64-85. See also, Ch'ü T'ung-tsu, Han Social Structure, ed. Jack L. Dull (Seattle, 1972), pp. 127-159.

[3]An interesting description of such an estate is to be found in Hsieh Ling-yün's famous rhapsody, "Dwelling in the Mountains" (Ss 67.1754-1772), a translation of which appears in Francis A. Westbrook, "Landscape Description in the Lyric Poetry and Fu on Dwelling in the Mountains of Shieh Ling-yün," Diss. Yale, 1973, pp. 177-337. Good, albeit brief, discussions of these estates and their economic life are those by Han Kuo-p'an, Nan-ch'ao ching-chi shih-t'an (Shanghai, 1963), pp. 69-80, and T'ang Ch'ang-ju, San chih liu shih-chi Chiang-nan ta t'u-ti so-yu chih ti fa-chan (Shanghai, 1957), pp. 55-73

and "Nan-ch'ao ti t'un, ti, pieh-shu chi shan tse chan-ling," Cklttt, pp. 271-292.

[4]Han Kuo-p'an, pp. 77-79; T'ang Ch'ang-ju, San chih liu shih-chi, pp. 71-73.

[5]Yen Chih-t'ui, for example, noted that, although a family might be able to provide for itself in most respects, it was unlikely to have a salt well (Yen Chih-t'ui, Yen-shih chia hsün [Khcpts ed.], 1.15-16; Ssu-yü Teng, trans., Family Instructions for the Yen Clan [Leiden, 1968], p. 16).

[6]Yen Chih-t'ui, I.16; Ssu-yü Teng, p. 17.

[7]Michel Strickmann, "The Mao Shan Revelations: Taoism and the Aristocracy," T'oung Pao LXIII.1 (1977), 1-64, describes the philosophical and contemplative activities of a number of the members of the southern aristocracy. See especially pp. 31-39.

[8]On the landscape poetry of this period, see the dissertation by Francis Westbrook cited in n. 3 above and John D. Frodsham, "The Origins of Chinese Nature Poetry," Asia Major, N.S. III.1, 68-103. For nature painting during this period consult Osvald Sirén, Chinese Painting: Leading Masters and Principles (New York, 1956-58), I, 26-37 and especially Michael Sullivan, The Birth of Landscape Painting in China (Berkeley, 1962), pp. 74-162.

[9]John Hanson-Lowe, "The Topography of China," in John Lossing Buck, *Land Utilization in China* (Shanghai, 1937), pp. 92-100.

[10]*Ss* 54.1537; *Tt* 1.12b & c; *Tfyk* 495.12b-13a. The *Sung shu* version reads 占山護澤 ("[People] holding mountains and appropriating marshes...."), which differs slightly from version found in both the *T'ung-tien* and the *Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei*, which are the same. The latter seems more appropriate in the context, and I have followed it. In interpreting the phrase 水土一尺以上 I have followed T'ang Ch'ang-ju, "Nan-ch'ao ti t'un," p. 284.

[11]*Cs* 6.148; *Tfyk* 493.8a.

[12]T'ang Ch'ang-ju notes that the émigrés had to compete with the already established southerners for available land and that they were at a disadvantage in this competition (T'ang Ch'ang-ju, *San chih liu shih-chi*, p. 61 and "Nan-ch'ao ti t'un," pp. 286-288.

[13]*Ss* 2.29-30.

[14]*Ss* 57.1583. Han Kuo-p'an opines that the "law" (*fa*) that the grand administrator applied here was one of the Six Articles (*t'iao*) instituted by Emperor Wu of the Han (Han Kuo-p'an, p. 51). The regional inspectors were charged with enforcing these regulations, and under the first they were to check to see "whether the fields and

dwelling plots of the powerful clan and magnates have exceeded the regulations (chih)" (Hs 19A.742, n. 1; Yü-ch'uan Wang, "An Outline of the Central Government of the Former Han Dynasty," in Studies of Governmental Institutions in Chinese History, ed. John L. Bishop [Cambridge, Mass., 1968], p. 27). Han's conclusion is open to question, however, since there is no evidence that these articles were still in force under the Liu Sung and, even if they were, that they now fell within the purview of the commandery administrators as well as that of the regional inspectors. Considering the revisions in the legal codes of the post-Han period, it is highly unlikely that these articles were still in force.

[15] Ss 54.1536-7; Tt 1.12b.

[16] Ss 54.1537; Tt 1.12c.

[17] Ss 54.1537; Tt 1.12c.

[18] Ss 54.1537; Tt 1.12c.

[19] Ss 6.132.

[20] NCs 28.520.

[21] Ls 2.48.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ls 3.86-87. This is the only reference I have seen to prosecuting engrossment of natural resource land under military law. A somewhat similar provision is found

during the Northern Chou: "[Chien-te 4]/8 on a kuei-mao day, [Chou] entered the borders of Ch'i. The cutting of trees and the destruction of young grain shoots were prohibited; violators were to be prosecuted according to military law" (Ps 10.362). The difference is, of course, that the Northern Chou measure applied to members of an invading army while the Liang measure was aimed at the civilian population. Why the Liang should have thought it necessary to resort to military law in this case is unclear. Those involved were mostly officials, and perhaps the offenses of such persons were normally dealt with under military law.

[24] Cs 26.791-2; Tt 2.19a-b; Tpyl 333.3a-b; Lien-sheng Yang, "Notes on the Economic History of the Chin Dynasty," in Studies in Chinese Institutional History (Cambridge, Mass., 1961), p. 181.

[25] Cs 26.792; Lien-sheng Yang, pp. 185-6; Tpyl 333.3b.

[26] Cs 26.792; Lien-sheng Yang, p. 185; NCs 44.773-4.

[27] NCs 44.773-4; Ls 22.354, 28.414.

[28] Cs 26.791-2; Tt 2.19a-b; Tpyl 333.3a-b; Lien-sheng Yang, pp. 182-4.

[29] Ss 42.1311.

[30] Ss 47.1412.

[31] Ss 2.29.

[32]According to the T'ang dynasty commentator on the History of the Later Han, Li Hsien, the Shao Reservoir irrigated 10,000 ch'ing of arable land. The dam was first raised by Sun-shu Ao, minister of the state of Ch'u during the Ch'un-ch'iu period (HHs 76.2466 & n. 1).

[33]NCs 6.463; Tpyl 333.3b; Tfyk 503.16b-17a.

[34]Tpyl 333.3b; Tfyk 503.16b-17a.

[35]Ls 52.759.

[36]Ss 47.1412; Ls 3.86-87.

[37]HHc 28.3633 & n. 4; T'ang Ch'ang-ju, San chih liu shih-chi, p. 65, n. 2.

[38]T'ang Ch'ang-ju, San chih liu shih-chi, p. 65, n. 2.

[39]Cs 24.762.

[40]Cs 24.728, 729, 730.

[41]Tt 19.11a; Whtk 65.585.

[42]Cs 24.726, 727, 728, 729, 730.

[43]Yen Keng-wang thinks that the fu-t'ien may have been imperial fields (kung-t'ien) which provided the salary of Huan Shih-sheng when he was regional inspector of Chin Province (Chung-kuo ti-fang hsing-cheng chih-tu shih--Wei-Chin Nan-Pei-ch'ao ti-fang hsing-cheng chih-tu [Taipei, 1963], pp. 388-389). The amount involved--100 ch'ing--suggests, however, that it was intended to do more

than merely provide an official's salary.

[44]Tt 19.111a; Whtk 65.585. Officials having parents and grandparents over seventy years of age were also given grants of cash.

[45]Cs 94.1461; Ss 93.2287.

[46]Yen Keng-wang, p. 388.

[47]Ss 6.119.

[48]Ss 6.121; Ns 2.61.

[49]Sui shu 24.674. In addition to the 2 hu of hulled grain, each adult male was also levied 8 feet of pongee and 2 liang 3 fen of silk floss as part of the emolument tax. Adult females were levied half this amount. Previous scholars, e.g., Yen Keng-wang, have overlooked this reference and failed to associate it with the references to t'ien-lu in the annals of the History of the Liu Sung Dynasty. They have mistakenly assumed that t'ien-lu (田祿) denoted the income from the emolument fields (lu-t'ien 祿田) (Yen Keng-wang, p. 389).

[50]Whtk 65.585. I must confess that the logic of this system prior to the Yüan-chia change quite escapes me. It would seem more rational if the system operated in opposite fashion so that the person holding the office for the greater number of months would receive the income for the entire year. Is there an error in the text here?

Perhaps rather than reading 此前去官者則一年秩祿皆入前人，此後去官者悉入後人 it should be 此前去官者則一年秩祿皆入後人，此後去官者悉入前人. Another possibility is that the pre-Yüan-chia system was intended to encourage a departing official to be diligent in seeing to it that the fields were cultivated.

[51]Ss 6.121; Ns 2.61.

[52]Ss 6.126, 129; Ns 2.64.

[53]Ss 7.143; Ns 2.69.

[54]Ss 8.162, 163; Tctc 132.4145. The Tzu-chih t'ung-chien has 租 rather than 祿, as do most versions of the Sung shu. I follow the editors of the Chung-hua shu-chü edition in emending the text to agree with Hsü Sung, Chien-k'ang shih-lu (Taipei, 1975), 14.6b.

[55]Ss 10.194.

[56]On the problems of the currency at this time, consult Hao I-hsing, Pu Sung-shu shih-huo chih, in Erh-shih-wu shih pu-pien, reprint (Taipei, 1974), II, 4279-4287 and Li Chien-nung, Wei Chin Nan-Pei-ch'ao Sui T'ang ching-chi shih kao (Peking, 1958), pp. 66-81.

[57]For tax remissions, see Ss 6.110, 111, 112, 115, 123, 125, 129, 131 & 134, 8.159, et passim.

[58]Tctc 131.4108-4109.

[59]Ss 8.164.

[60] Ls 3.86.

[61] Ch'en shu 6.106-107.

[62] The plowing of the ritual furrow is discussed by Tu Yu in Tt 46.264a-c, Homer H. Dubs in HFHD I, 281-283, and Derk Bodde, Festivals in Classical China (Princeton, 1975), pp. 223-225.

[63] NCs 3.51. The "sharp plow" refers to the "Liang ssu" poem of the Book of Odes (Legge, IV, 603-605). 畛 is probably a mistake for 畞 mou. For similar remarks on the importance of plowing the Sacred Field, see the remarks by Emperor Wu of the Liang in Ls 3.66.

[64] Ss 6.113-114, 9.184; NCs 3.51-52; Ls 3.66-67.

[65] Ss 6.121.

[66] Ss 5.87, 6.113 & 133; Ls 2.56, 3.86; Ch'en shu 5.82-83.

[67] Ss 5.100.

[68] Ss 5.101.

[69] Ch'en shu 3.51.

[70] Ss 8.159; Ls 3.85, 88-89.

[71] Ss 5.97, 6.133, 54.1532; Ch'en shu 5.78-79, 82-83.

[72] Ss 54.1532.

[73] The biographies of Su and Sun are found in

Cs 100.2628 and 2631 respectively. Sun came from a long line of Taoist adepts and his uprising had religious implications. Su's uprising was directed at Yü Liang, the current power at court, and was a manifestation of factional strife among high ranking officials.

[74]Ch'en shu 35.483.

[75]Ss 5.91, 6.133, 82.2095; Liang Hsiao-yüan ti, "Ch'üan nung ling," in Hsü Ching-tsung, Wen-kuan tz'u-lin, 695.5b, in Shih yüan ts'ung shu (n.p., 1911), ts'e 48.

[76]Ss 5.92; NCs 28.520; Ls 3.66-67, 87.

[77]Ss 67.1776.

[78]Ss 51.1465; Tt 2.18a.

[79]NCs 6.463; Tpyl 333.3b.

[80]Ss 5.92, 81.2074-2075.

[81]Ss 5.92; Ch'en shu 3.51.

[82]Ss 5.92.

[83]Wang Wen-chia, Chung-kuo t'u-ti chih-tu shih (Taipei, 1965), p. 206; Yoshida Torao, Gi Shin Namboku chō sozei no kenkyū (Osaka, 1933), p. 49.

[84]Whtk 10.108a-b.

[85]Ss 92.2266; Yoshida Torao, p. 50.

[86]See the table in Koga Noboru, "Namchō sochō kō," Shigaku zasshi 68.9 (1959), p. 70. Chou Chin-sheng seems

to believe that the Ch'en reinstituted taxation by the *mou* (*Chung-kuo ching-chi shih* [Taipei, 1959], III, 536). His evidence, however, is ambiguous. He cites a passage from *Ch'en shu* 5.79 which reads 有能墾起荒田,不問頃畝少多,依舊蠲稅 "Those who are able to reclaim wasteland, no matter whether the number of *ch'ing* and *mou* is great or small, are to be exempted from taxes as formerly." There is nothing here that proves his point, and the other passages he cites indicate only that there was a land tax (*tsu*), a point that was really never in doubt.

[87]*Ss* 6.120; *NCs* 14.255-6; *Ls* 2.37; *Tt* 3.21c.

[88]*Ss* 6.116.

[89]Ochi Shigeaki, "Namchō no koseki mondai," *Shigaku zasshi* 68.9 (August, 1960), pp. 940-968.

[90]*Ss* 9.129.

[91]Similar cancellations are recorded in August of 459, and in 487, 489, 490, 574 and 577 (*Ss* 6.129; *NCs* 3.53, 55, 58; *Ch'en shu* 5.87, 90-1).

[92]*Ss* 6.110, 131, 134.

[93]*Ss* 6.123; *Ch'en shu* 5.87, 97.

[94]*Ch'en shu* 5.97.

[95]*Ss* 6.125.

[96]Ch'en shu 5.82-83, 6.106, 107.

[97]For example, of eleven cancellations recorded in the annals of Emperor Hsiao-wu of the Sung (Ss 6), all involved remission of the land tax. This does not mean, of course, that there were no remissions of other taxes, but the overwhelming proportion was of land tax.

[98]Ls 3.86.

[99]Ch'en shu 5.79. Although the text does not specifically say so, the exemption was probably for a limited period only.

CHAPTER VII

THE NORTHERN WEI AND THE FOUNDING OF THE SYSTEM OF EQUAL LAND ALLOTMENTS

It is one of the paradoxes of China's history that the most thorough-going set of agrarian reforms of the early imperial period was carried out by a conquest dynasty of nomadic origins--the Toba Wei. This becomes even more striking if one keeps in mind that not all of these reforms were instituted under the ruler best noted for his policy of sinification, Emperor Hsiao-wen (r. 471-500). It is true that the most prominent portion of this body of reforms, the system of equal land allotments (*chün-t'ien chih-tu*), was initiated under his aegis; but other highly significant measures were adopted by some of his predecessors.

Some writers have asserted that the Northern Wei land policies, in particular the system of equal land allotments, had their origins in Hsien-pei institutions in Central Asia or in pre-Wei Toba policies.[1] Marxist writers in particular, anxious to fit what they consider to be elements of primitive communism in the system of equal land allotments into their conception of historical development, have stressed the influence of Hsien-pei

tribalism on the system.[2] Yet, as will be shown, the Wei rulers, rather than introducing new elements from without, built upon long-established Chinese patterns and models in devising their land utilization and distribution policies. The result was the somewhat curious situation in which a conquest dynasty in North China made itself the heir and transmitter of a hoary Chinese tradition of land tenure and utilization policies and infused it with a new vitality, while under the Chinese regimes in the south that tradition was mostly dormant.

The adoption of policies that were traditionally Chinese was not new with the Northern Wei. A number of the non-Chinese states of North China that preceded the Northern Wei also instituted policies to promote agriculture that followed Chinese precedent. For example, under the Former Chao the slaughter of oxen for sacrifices other than imperial sacrifices was prohibited.[3] The Later Chao dispatched commissioners to travel throughout the country to oversee and promote agriculture and sericulture.[4] Likewise, under both the Former and Later Yen agriculture and sericulture were promoted.[5] Significantly, these measures were often in conjunction with others concerned with sinification.

One does not have to search far for the reasons behind the differences between the land policies in the north and the south of this period. One factor was the relative

survivability of the respective regimes. Southern regimes, as noted at the beginning of previous chapter, were characteristically short-lived, whereas the Northern Wei lasted nearly 150 years, almost three times as long as the longest surviving southern dynasty. It thus had more time to consolidate its hold over the territory under its sway, thereby strengthening its ability to act. It is not without significance that the system of equal land allotments was not instituted until nearly one hundred years after the founding of the dynasty. In addition, the Northern Wei was favored by a lack of a large body of powerful local elites, such as existed in the south, who could effectively thwart efforts at effectuating a comprehensive land policy. This is not to say that there were no powerful local elites nor that they did not present the government with problems,[6] but they were not nearly so prevalent as in the south since many of the more powerful of them had already fled to the south where they bedeviled the efforts of the regimes there.

In addition to being in a position of greater strength vis-à-vis local elites, the Northern Wei government was confronted with a situation which at the same time made a comprehensive land policy both desirable and possible--a decline in the population of the North with a concomitant increase in the amount of uncultivated land.[7] This situation placed a considerable amount of land at the

government's disposal, making it easier to carry out a distribution of land to those who needed it than was possible in the south. Since such population as there was was not always evenly distributed upon the land, the land/labor ratio was not everywhere as favorable as it might have been. Therefore, in formulating land policy, Northern Wei officials were interested in bringing as much land as possible back into cultivation. As far as demographic policy was concerned, this meant stimulating population growth and achieving a more even population distribution. The former is beyond the scope of the present study,[8] while the latter is closely related to Northern Wei land policy since the government used land distribution as a means of encouraging population shifts in order to achieve a more favorable land/labor ratio.

Besides depopulation, the Wei government had to deal with the related problems of census fraud and tax collection. In this regard the problems faced by the north were somewhat similar to those of the south, but the solutions that were tried were quite different. As in the south, persons sought to (or perhaps were forced to) establish dependent relationships with powerful local notables. Such dependents in this way escaped the obligations that they normally owed the government--taxes, corvee, and the like--though not always to their advantage, since their patrons might turn out to be even more exacting.[9] Others

became nuns and monks, thereby escaping tax and corvee obligations.[10] The government was understandably anxious to re-enroll these people on the census rolls, since only in this way could it begin to tax and conscript them. To this end a number of investigations of local census records were conducted in order to ferret out those who were not registered.[11] Under Emperor Hsiao-wen, a new system of local administration--the famous three chiefs (<u>san chang</u>)--was established as a comprehensive solution to the problem, though with mixed success as we shall see.

A third problem which the Wei government had to address was that of the engrossment of land. This problem had existed ever since private ownership of land came into existence and was one whose solution eluded every dynasty during the early imperial period. The pattern of engrossment appears to have been pretty much the same as before, with powerful magnates arrogating land for their own use.[12] The details of how this was accomplished are unclear, though it was probably in a manner similar to that under previous regimes. The net result, in any case, was that the poor were being deprived of land and thereby of their means of livelihood and of paying taxes, an intolerable situation from the government's point of view.

The two solutions that Northern Wei administrators finally evolved for dealing with the problems of depopulation, tax collection, and engrossment were the system of

equal land allotments and the three chiefs system. The former sought to bring as much land under cultivation as possible and to ensure that it was cultivated efficiently. The latter was meant to establish an effective system of government control at the lowest levels of local government in order to achieve effective collection of taxes and to assure enforcement of the system of equal land allotments. Both of these measures were adopted under Emperor Hsiao-wen quite some time after the founding of the dynasty, and their institution constitutes the primary topic of this chapter. Before examining them, however, we need to take a look at some of the measures taken under the earlier rulers of the Northern Wei in attacking these problems, most particularly those concerned with the promotion of agriculture. For, although the Toba may have had pastoral roots, the Wei rulers, like many Chinese rulers before them, stressed the importance of agriculture as the basis of the well-being of the polity and sought solutions to social, economic, and fiscal problems in measures that essentially constituted agrarian reform.

The Promotion of Agriculture: In devising policies directed at the promotion of agriculture, the Northern Wei rulers borrowed several pages from the books of the rulers of earlier dynasties. Like the earlier rulers, they carried out relocations of people, distributed land to

those they relocated and to others who needed it, gave out tools and other necessities of production, encouraged the use of oxen for plowing, undertook irrigation and reclamation, dispatched officials to oversee agricultural production, and adopted a policy of attaching greater value to agriculture than to commercial activities. Yet, though the Northern Wei rulers adopted many of the measures and policies of their predecessors, they did not necessarily do it in the same manner nor with the same goals in mind. A good example of this is the Northern Wei policy of relocation.

The Toba had begun a policy of relocation prior to establishing the Wei dynasty. This policy was carried out primarily in the southern half of the area controlled by them, that is, mostly in northern China in the area of the state of Tai where the Toba rulers had earlier been enfeoffed by the Chin.[13] After the foundation of the Northern Wei dynasty by Toba Kuei (Emperor Tao-wu) in 386, the policy of relocations became an important device in strengthening Toba hegemony. Under Emperor Tao-wu, large numbers of people, mostly non-Chinese, from conquered areas were resettled in the surrounding environs of the Wei capital at P'ing-ch'eng. This was done in order to "fill up" the capital area, and these people were granted farmland.[14] Emperor Tao-wu's successors continued this policy, and in 413 we find Emperor Ming-yüan resettling

war captives near Ta-ning and giving them land and agricultural implements.[15] These relocations were no doubt carried through with several goals in mind besides simply "filling up" the capital region. Since those involved were from conquered regions, the Wei rulers probably thought to locate them where they could keep a close eye on them, a purpose similar to that of the Ch'in and Han empires when they forced members of powerful families to settle near the imperial tombs and the capital. In the Wei case, however, quite substantial groups of people, numbering in the tens of thousands, were involved, many of whom are specifically said to have been artisans, so the Wei rulers must have had other objects in mind as well. One, perhaps, was the construction of the capital. Another was most certainly to provide a revenue base and food supply for the capital region. During this early period the Toba were still in the midst of asserting their hegemony over North China and their revenue needs were still quite high. Thus, they may have been seeking to establish a secure tax base, a matter which will be examined further when the Wei tax system is discussed.

The policy of relocations was continued down into the reign of Emperor T'ai-wu (r. 424-452) who finally brought all of North China under Toba control. While those involved in the earlier relocations were largely non-Chinese, the relocations of Emperor T'ai-wu were

probably composed mostly of Chinese from the areas that he conquered. Many of these people were resettled in the area surrounding the Northern Wei capital at P'ing-cheng.[16] Not all relocations were about the capital, however. Captured non-Chinese and Chinese alike might be settled in several different provinces.[17] Others might be shipped off to the northern frontier where they were presumably settled to serve as something of a bulwark against incursions by other non-Chinese peoples such as the Juan-juan, an irony which must have amused some of the Toba Wei's Chinese subjects.[18]

The arbitrary nature of the relocations and the fact that the relocated people came from recently subjugated areas has led some to opine that those who were relocated were not free persons.[19] It is clear that some did indeed slip into a status beneath that of the ordinary commoner. We find, for example, that some of those relocated were made into "encampment households" (ying-hu).[20] The function of these encampment households is not entirely clear, though they probably engaged in farming in order to supply the needs of the army.[21] The fact of their ignoble status is attested by a reference to "encampment households" being manumitted (mien) and made commoners.[22] On the other hand, references to the distribution of land to "new people" (hsin-min), that is, people newly relocated, suggests that such persons had no special social status.[23]

They were simply commoners unfortunate enough to have resided in a conquered area who were forced to move in order to meet the needs of state.

Reference has been made to the distribution of land to those who were resettled. These distributions of land on a per capita basis (chi-k'ou shou-t'ien) are extremely important, for they were the initial efforts of the Toba in using the techniques that were incorporated into the more comprehensive and elaborate system of equal land allotments that was adopted under Emperor Hsiao-wen in 485. Obviously, then, if we wish to understand the origins of the system of equal land allotments, we must examine the per capita allotments.

Unlike the later system of equal land allotments which was applied throughout most of the Toba realm, the per capita land allotments appear to have been limited largely to the immediate area of the capital and to Ta-ning. There is no indication that the same sort of distributions occurred when people were moved to other areas,[24] though some provision must have been made for supplying such persons with the means to support themselves. The per capita allotments, then, were probably a special measure connected to the early Wei policy of settling the Toba people in the capital region. It has been suggested that those receiving land under this policy stood in a special relationship to the government and were

taxed at a rate different from that of ordinary persons.[25] This is suggestive and certainly plausible, but there is no evidence to support such a conclusion. No doubt they were taxed more effectively because of their location near the center of government, but there is no reason to suppose that their obligations were any heavier.

How the per capita allotments were applied, that is, how the land was actually distributed, is a question of burning interest for this study. Unfortunately, the data are meager in the extreme. All we have are such tantalizing tidbits as: "Moved more than 20,000 families to Ta-ning and distributed land on a per capita basis."[26] Sparing as the information here conveyed may seem, it is not valueless. First of all, it tells us that families and not just individuals were involved in the relocations. This suggests, therefore, that families were the object of the distributions, which is what one might rightly expect from the phrase "per capita distribution of land" (chi-k'ou shou-t'ien). The phrase literally says "count the mouths, give out the land," the implication being that the amount of land that a family received depended upon the number of people in the family. What is not clear, however, is precisely how much and what sort of land was being distributed. Nor do we know what sort of qualifications--age, sex, and the like--might have been attached to the distributions. It seems unlikely, for example,

that a family consisting of husband, wife, and two small children would receive as much as a family with a couple of boys in their late 'teens. It may be that the amounts were similar to those granted under the later system of equal land allotments, though this is simply speculation. The absence of mention of mulberry fields and of a requirement that the land be returned to the government upon the recipient's death--two important features of the system of equal land allotments--should be enough to caution against trying to read too much of the later system back into the distributions of the earlier period. Since there is no evidence to the contrary, it is probably safe to conclude that: 1) the land granted under these distributions was held by the recipient and his family in perpetuity; 2) the amount varied according to family size and to the age and sex of the family members; and 3) the land involved was grain land.

Besides receiving land, the relocated people also received the necessary means for working the land. Again the Northern Wei followed the example of the Chinese regimes which had preceded it. For example, as we have noted earlier (Chapter III), when persons were relocated during the Han dynasty, they were often furnished with farm implements and other forms of assistance. This pattern was followed by the Northern Wei at least in the case of those who were resettled at Ta-ning.[27] Although

the History of the Northern Wei Dynasty is silent with regard to grants of tools to those relocated in the capital area, we are probably safe in assuming that at least some of them received tools as well as land. In the case of the Ta-ning resettlements, the persons moved were non-Chinese war captives, and some of them may have had whatever implements they possessed destroyed or lost in the fighting. Others may not have had any in the first place, having engaged in herding rather than planting. Some were artisans and merchants.[28] While most of these probably were moved in order to fill up the cities, others were probably given farmland and implements and put to work tilling the soil.

An interesting feature of Northern Wei policies regarding the promotion of agriculture is the attention that was paid to providing peasants with oxen for pulling plows and carts. This was not limited to relocated persons, but also frequently concerned peasants in general. Although persons in earlier periods, notably Chao Kuo during the Han, had been concerned with problems of the motive power used by peasants in plowing, the Northern Wei attention to the efficient use of oxen seems unique and perhaps is a reflection of their pastoral heritage. The earliest reference to the government's providing plow oxen comes in connection with the relocation of people in the capital region during the reign of Emperor Tao-wu. The

people who were newly resettled there, we are told, were furnished plow oxen along with their per capita allotment of land.[29] Those resettled at Ta-ning during the reign of Emperor Ming-yüan perhaps also received plow oxen since at that time Northern Wei forces captured some 20,000 head of oxen in conquering the people whom they relocated.[30] Since these people were furnished with agricultural implements, perhaps the government at the same time redistributed the oxen to them for use in plowing.

Such distributions of oxen were limited in their effect. Of somewhat greater impact was a measure instituted in about 444 by the heir apparent, Toba Huang, who at that time was acting head of state.[31] Huang ordered that officials in the capital region were to direct people to conduct a labor-for-oxen exchange. Under this order, families owning plow oxen would plow 22 _mou_ per ox for families without oxen. In return families without oxen would hoe seven _mou_ for the families providing the oxen. This ratio of approximately three to one was to be taken as a standard, so that if an ox-owner plowed, say, seven _mou_ for an elderly household without oxen, they would requite him by hoeing two _mou_.[32] This was certainly an ingenious though complex method for achieving efficient use of oxen and increasing the productivity of households that could not afford an ox.

Although Toba Huang's labor/oxen exchange had a

broader impact than the distribution of oxen to the relocated, it was still limited to the capital region. Emperor Hsiao-wen, however, some twenty years later undertook to extend the benefits of such a measure throughout the country. Families having more than one ox were to lend one to those who did not have any; what compensation might have been due the ox-owner is not stated. The chief local officials--provincial shepherds, commandery administrators, and prefects--were charged with seeing that the decree was obeyed, and the penalties could be quite stiff if it were not. Members of a family refusing to lend oxen were barred from office for life, while officials who failed to enforce the order could be dismissed from office.[33] There can be little doubt that the Northern Wei government was earnest about achieving the most efficient use of available beasts.

As with the regimes that had preceded it, the Northern Wei made irrigation and reclamation integral parts of its policy of promoting agriculture in order to increase the amount of land under cultivation. The measures instituted by Toba Huang were directed toward this end, and we read that as a result of those measures the amount of arable land was greatly augmented, though where and by how much is not stated.[34] A good idea of the importance assigned to reclamation in general and irrigation in particular is to be had from a memorial submitted to Emperor T'ai-wu

sometime in 444-445 by Tiao Yung. Tiao was made garrison commander (chen-chiang) of the garrison at P'u-ku-lu, situated on the Yellow River near present-day Ling-wu in Ning-hsia. When he arrived at his post, Tiao discovered that the irrigation complex there was in decay. The canals were badly silted and the swiftly rushing waters of the Yellow River had caused numerous cave-ins, the result being that the water could not flow into the canals. In an area which lacked sufficient rainfall, this was a critical problem. To solve this problem, Tiao proposed construction of a large new system of canals which would draw water from a different part of the river. Tiao estimated that the project would require 4,000 men and sixty days and that once completed it would irrigate more than 40,000 ch'ing of private and government land. This proposal received an enthusiastic reply from the emperor, who said that when there was something which ought to be done, merit lay in completing the project; therefore, what need was there to limit the number of days the project was to take?[35] This was no isolated example. Emperor Hsiao-wen in 488 ordered the repair of irrigation canals in several specified areas, and the following year he ordered all provinces and garrisons (chen)[36] having paddy fields to repair their canals and ditches and sent technicians to direct the work.[37]

The dispatching of technicians to oversee the repair

work on the canals points to another aspect of Northern Wei promotion of agriculture, namely, the matter of government oversight of agricultural production. Encouragement of agricultural production had traditionally been considered an important part of the duties of local officials.[38] The close official attention paid to the details of agricultural production was a logical product of the fundamental importance attached to agriculture by the governments of early imperial China and the Northern Wei in particular. This attention was extended down to the individual peasant. In his order instituting the oxen/labor exchange, Toba Huang also stipulated that the amount of land that each family had been exhorted to plant was to be clearly recorded along with the number of family members. In addition, a placard was to be set up at the head of the fields with the name of the cultivator in order to facilitate evaluation of the achievements of the individual cultivator.[39] In a decree issued in 443, Emperor T'ai-wu (Toba Huang's father) emphasized the importance of local officials' encouraging and overseeing agriculture and sericulture.[40] This importance was re-emphasized by Emperor Wen-ch'eng in 455 when he sent thirty officials on a tour of inspection of the provinces and commanderies. One of their charges was to check for peasants not engaged in farming and arable land going uncultivated. Based upon these and other criteria an

official's suitability for promotion or demotion could be determined.[41] And in 485 when Emperor Hsiao-wen decreed establishment of the system of equal land allotments, he directed the officials charged with putting the system into operation to encourage and oversee agriculture and sericulture as well.[42] Again in midsummer of 492 he reiterated the importance of agriculture for good government and dispatched officials to see to it that were no layabouts wasting time that they should be spending in weeding the fields.[43]

Northern Wei rulers, like those before them, were quite concerned that the people applied their energies properly. To this end certain activities might be prohibited as being detrimental to agricultural production. A case in point is Toba Huang's prohibition of drinking liquor and various forms of theatricals.[44] Related to these measures were the Northern Wei efforts to prevent people from abandoning agriculture in order to enter the world of merchants. Toba Huang included such a restriction in his order, which seems to have covered just about everything necessary for turning the people into industrious and efficient farmers.[45] Emperor Hsiao-wen decreed in 472 that artisans, merchants, and enterainers should all take up farming, and at the same time he ordered provincial and commandery officials to direct the people to plant more vegetables and fruits.[46]

A significant feature of government promotion of agriculture was the determination of minimum amounts of land assignments, a practice adopted during the Western Chin (see Chapter V). It was also an important feature of Toba Huang's order which directed that individual households were to be enumerated, their members counted, and the amount of land each was exhorted to plant was to be recorded.[47] The text does not reveal what the amounts were or on what basis they were determined. This is not the case, however, with the amounts set by a decree of Emperor Hsiao-wen in April of 477. This decree was prompted by an epidemic which the previous year had killed off over half the oxen, dealing a severe blow to cultivation. Now that the agricultural season was beginning, the emperor sought to move the peasantry to greater efforts in order to increase their productivity. As part of this effort, he fixed forty mou as the amount that a primary adult male should cultivate and twenty mou as the amount for a secondary male, amounts that were somewhat less than those established under the Western Chin system. Thus, believed the emperor, men would have no surplus labor and the land would have no untapped benefits.[44] How long this measure continued in force cannot be known, but it constituted an important rung up the ladder toward creation of the system of equal land allotments, the establishment of

which Emperor Hsiao-wen decreed in 485.

The System of Equal Land Allotments: On a ting-wei day of the tenth month of the ninth year of the T'ai-ho reign period (485/11/6), Emperor Hsiao-wen, we may be sure with all the solemnity befitting such occasions, issued the following decree:

> It has been fifteen years since we succeeded our father on the throne. Whenever we examine the records of the former kings, [we see that] they governed the common people so they were able to accumulate much and the people were greatly pacified. In later ages, these principles gradually fell into decay, and the wealthy and powerful engrossed the mountains and marshes, while the poor and weak despaired of a single dwelling plot. This reached the point that it allowed the land to have untapped resources while the people had no spare wealth. Some died contesting over farmland, while others abandoned their occupations because of starvation. But if we wish to have the empire pacified and the commoners living in abundance and contentment, how is it to be attained? Now, we hereby dispatch commissioners to make a circuit of the provinces and commanderies, and with the provincial shepherds and commandery administrators to equally distribute the farmland of the empire, with return and redistribution of the land to be determined according to life and death, and to promote and oversee agriculture and sericulture so as to make thrive the basis for enriching the people.[49]

With this decree the emperor inaugurated the most comprehensive single measure regarding land distribution and utilization up to his time.

Emperor Hsiao-wen's decree was prompted by a memorial submitted by Li An-shih, an official in the central government.[50] Li's memorial was concerned with a particular

problem rather than general questions of land distribution and utilization. Specifically, he was addressing the problems of the concentration of land in the hands of the powerful as a result of its being abandoned by persons who were forced by starvation to leave their houses in search of food. In the classic form of those discussing problems relating to the land, he began with a reference to the well-field system and the importance of seeing to it that the poor had land. He then noted that through the years powerful clans had gradually taken over the abandoned land, and now that the descendants of those who had abandoned it were beginning to return,[51] numerous lawsuits were being fought over ownership. Because of the strength of the supporting evidence on both sides, these cases were dragging on with the result that good arable land was going uncultivated and mulberry was rotting and remaining unpicked. The problem, Li said, was how to make families enjoy rich harvests and stores so people would have sufficient economic resources to use. In his opinion, although it would be difficult to restore the well-field system and its system of mulberry lands (see above Chapter II), he nonetheless thought that equality of distribution of land should be restored so that labor and occupation might be balanced, the "little people" might obtain the benefits of a livelihood, and the powerful would not have any surplus land. In this way, there would be no "selfish"

benefits and equality would be spread among the masses. As for the contested land, a time limit for decision ought to be set, and in cases where the length of time involved made it difficult to clarify ownership, the land ought to go to the current occupant. Wei Shou, compiler of the History of the Wei Dynasty, tells us that Emperor Hsiao-wen greatly approved of Li's memorial and that later the system of equal land allotments originated from it.[52] This latter comment suggests that Li's memorial, the date of which is not known, may have been submitted sometime prior to the actual creation of the system of equal land allotments.

In his memorial Li sought four things: an equal distribution of land, a return to production of mulberry and grain land which had fallen out of use, an efficient application of labor, and an end to the wrangling over ownership of land. There is no way of knowing, other than Wei Shou's remark, the degree to which the system of equal land allotments was a direct outgrowth of Li's memorial; nor do we know what role, if any, Li might have played in designing the system. Nevertheless, the system was clearly meant to address the first three of the problems Li wished to solve, and the basic premise of the system--government control and distribution of land--neatly obviated the fourth. What then were contents of the system?

Emperor Hsiao-wen's decree establishing the system of equal land allotments, which is recorded in the "Economic Treatise" of History of the Northern Wei Dynasty,[53] begins by establishing age and sex qualifications for receiving grain land. A male fifteen years of age and up was to receive 40 mou of grain fields, while a married woman received 20 mou. These amounts were based on the best land, which did not have to lie fallow. In the case of grants of second-grade land (i.e., land which had to lie fallow every other year), the amount was doubled, and in the case of third-grade land, it was trebled by grants of "doubled lands" (pei-t'ien) in order to compensate for differences in fertility. Slaves were to receive land on a similar basis. When a person became old (the upper age limit appears to have been 70 years)[54] and no longer liable for taxes, the land was to be returned for redistribution. Return and redistribution of land was to take place during the first lunar month of each year, so even though a person had died or had turned seventy, his family could retain use of the land until the beginning of the following year.

The implication of this system of distribution and redistribution of grain land is that it was all controlled by the government. Nothing is said, however, concerning how the government was to take possession of grain land already owned by people. This fact suggests that the

government had no intention of enforcing the system everywhere, Emperor Hsiao-wen's grandiose declaration "to equally distribute the farmland of the empire" notwithstanding. Probably it was meant to be carried out only in selected areas.

While the grain lands were to come under government control, this was not the case with mulberry lands. These lands were not to be accounted among the land that had to be returned for redistribution. Like the grain fields, however, there was a fixed allotment--twenty _mou_--of mulberry land that an individual could hold. In a portion of the decree which appears to deal with the disposition of mulberry land already in the hands of people at the time the system was first adopted, anything in excess of twenty _mou_ could be counted as part of a person's "doubled fields" allotment. This excess, however, had to be turned over to the government upon the death of the holder. The excess could not be used to fill out a person's grain land allotment, though if his mulberry allotment were short it could be completed with grain land at a rate of two _mou_ of grain land for one _mou_ of mulberry land, a clear indication of the relative value assigned to the two types of land.

For males (no provision is made for women), free or slave, who did not already have mulberry land, the government provided twenty _mou_ and assigned each recipient to

plant fifty mulberry trees, five jujube trees, and three elm trees.[55] If the area were unsuitable for growing mulberries, each person would be granted one mou and assigned to transplant elms and jujubes. The recipient was allowed three years in which to complete the planting of these trees; if he failed to meet this deadline, the government would take back the unplanted land. Since twenty mou were more than sufficient to plant the assigned number of trees, a person was permitted to also plant additional mulberry and elm, or he could plant fruit trees. However, such trees could not be planted on grain land and those who did so were to be prosecuted and have all their land reclassified as returnable, which amounted to a subtle form of confiscation. This measure was no doubt in part intended to prevent people from trying to convert returnable grain land into non-returnable mulberry land, though the primary impetus behind it was probably to assure adequate grain production.

As already mentioned, the mulberry lands were not included among the lands which had to be returned to the government for redistribution, but were considered hereditary property of the family. The amount held depended on the current membership of the household. This is to say, if there were two adult males in the household, then the family was allowed forty mou of mulberry land. If one of them were to die, however, then the family could sell off

the excess to someone whose mulberry lands did not total twenty <u>mou</u>. But any individual whose holding was exactly twenty <u>mou</u> was allowed neither to purchase additional mulberry land nor to sell off any that he held. The latter provision was no doubt intended to ensure a minimum amount of cultivation in the spirit of the Western Chin land assignments, while the former would have prevented the concentration of holdings.

Besides the mulberry lands, in hemp and flax growing areas males who had attained tax-assignment age, viz. fifteen, were to be granted ten <u>mou</u> of hemp land and their wives, five <u>mou</u>. This land was to be treated in the same way as the grain land with regard to its return and redistribution. Moreover, slaves were to be granted this land in the same way as free persons, a provision which applied to the mulberry fields as well.

A fourth type of land that was granted was dwelling plots (<u>chai</u>). Any family that was going to put up new dwellings would be granted one <u>mou</u> for every three persons on which to build, while one <u>mou</u> would be granted for every five persons in the case of slaves. A <u>mou</u> was a rather generous allotment for the construction of a small dwelling, so people over fifteen years of age, male and female, were each assigned to plant one-fifth of the plot in vegetables. The government evidently did not want to see any land going to waste.

These amounts of grain land, "doubled lands," mulberry land, hemp land, and dwelling plots were meant to apply in areas where there was a balance between land and people. For areas where there was an imbalance, special provisions were made. In areas where the amount of available land was limited, the government sought to encourage adult males to relocate. Persons who were willing to relocate to areas where land was plentiful were allowed to do so freely. In such areas where the amount of cultivable land outstripped the ability of the inhabitants to utilize it, the government would "let" (chieh) to them as much land as they could farm. But if a person were unwilling to move from an area of land shortage to one of land surplus the government took another tack. In such cases, the recalcitrant person would have his mulberry land counted as part of his regular grain allotment, which meant that he would receive only 20 mou of grain land (assuming that his mulberry allotment were complete).[56] If this measure failed to ensure adequate land for everyone in the area, then the allotments of "doubled lands" would not be granted. And if this should still prove inadequate, then the allotments for wives would be reduced.

In addition to the grants of grain land, mulberry land, hemp land, and dwelling plots to the family principals--man, wife, and adult males--there were other grants of land as well. Grants to slaves have already been

mentioned. These were granted in the same manner and proportion (with the exception of dwelling plots) as those granted to "free persons" (liang min). In addition to receiving land for the slaves he owned, a person could also receive land for oxen at the rate of 30 mou per head, up to a limit of four head.[57] This meant in effect that a person could receive as much as 120 mou of grain land above his regular allotment if he owned enough oxen.

Since not every household would contain persons qualified to receive land, provisions were made for households made up completely of the underage, the elderly, the infirm, and the lame. In such households, persons over eleven years of age or persons who were infirm were to be granted half the normal allotment given an able-bodied adult male. Persons who had passed seventy years and had no one in the household who qualified for land did not have to return the land that they had been granted earlier. Presumably this meant that they were allowed to retain their complete allotment until their death when it would be returned to the government. Finally, widows who did not remarry (a Confucian virtue) were to be granted (or allowed to retain) a married woman's portion and were to be exempted from taxes.

How then were these measures meant to achieve the four goals that were contained in Li An-shih's memorial? The first goal, equal distribution of land, was to be

achieved quite simply and quite directly by handing out to everyone who was qualified by age, sex and ability specific amounts of the different types of land. In the case of grain land, equality was further ensured by measures to compensate for differences in fertility. Restrictions on the buying and selling of mulberry land and the stipulation that other types of land had to be returned to the government upon the demise or attainment of old age of the recipient would have effectively prevented further concentration of land. As for the second goal, putting land back into production, the new system was meant to accomplish this in several ways. It distributed land to those who had none, thus assuring as much land was being worked as there were people to work it. With regard to the mulberry land, if the land were not planted within a specified time, it was confiscated and given to someone else. Since this land had the potential of becoming one's personal property, this restriction was a real incentive to work the land. Another measure designed to put land back into production was the encouragement that was given to people to relocate to areas where there were not enough people to work the land. This latter measure would also contribute towards achieving the third goal--an efficient application of labor to the soil. For by relocating people from areas with a dense population and a short supply of land to areas where the opposite

situation obtained, the government could hope to achieve a more favorable land/labor ratio. This, of course, was an old device that had been used in earlier periods and had been recommended by Shang Yang. But there were other aspects of the system which were original with it. One was the granting for slaves the same allotments that were granted to ordinary commoners, which further encouraged maximum utilization of available manpower.[58] Another was the dispensing of additional land to those who had oxen. The effects of this would have been two-fold. First, the extra land would have enabled the ox owner to get the greatest possible use out of his beast. Second, it would have encouraged those who had no oxen to try to obtain one in order to increase their allotment. Finally, concerning the fourth goal--bringing an end to the bickering over ownership--by placing all grain land under the control of the government, the new system would have effectively eliminated all ground for contention. As for the other types land, any disputes would have been resolved by Li's recommendation to let the current occupants retain it, a move that was almost certainly designed to make the reforms more palatable to holders of large amounts of land.

The system of equal land allotments was meant to be nothing if not bold in its conception and comprehensive in its application. It could have effectively dealt with

the problems that faced the Northern Wei rulers, problems engendered by underpopulation, concentration of land, and census fraud. But the problem is, just how comprehensive was its application?

Certainly the system of equal land allotments was not extended to all farmland in the Wei realm. First of all, there were significant amounts of land that constituted various forms of government-administered land systems. These included the agricultural colonies and the government lands (<u>kung-t'ien</u>), which will be discussed later. Such lands were not included among those treated under the system of equal land allotments, but were administered separately and in an entirely different manner. Secondly, much of the land in areas where there was a surplus of land seems not to have been included in the system of equal land allotments. As mentioned earlier, people in such areas could "let" (on what terms is not stated) from the government as much land as they were able to cultivate.[59] Since Emperor Hsiao-wen's decree says that this applied to "<u>all</u> areas where land is extensive and people scattered," it would seem that this incorporated a very sizeable portion of the country. Moreover, it means that the system of equal land allotments would have been carried out primarily in populated areas, which of course were the very places where concentration of land would have most likely been a serious problem. And given the pattern of

the earlier per capita distribution of land, this measure may initially have been applied only in the capital region or in a few selected areas, though this cannot be known for certain. A decree issued some five years after the original decree that established the system ordered commissioners to carry out the system in conjunction with provincial and commandery officials, an indication perhaps that the system was applied in stages.[60]

Given the complexity of the system of equal land allotments, if the Northern Wei rulers were to apply it effectively, then an administrative structure capable of overseeing the system's operation was clearly needed. This need was recognized by members of the Northern Wei government, and to fill it a new system of local administration known as the "three chiefs" (san chang) was created. It is to the creation and operation of these offices that we now turn our attention.

The Three Chiefs: In T'ai-ho 10/2 on a chia-hsü day (486/3/29), Emperor Hsiao-wen ordered the establishment of the "three chiefs." The immediate impetus for the creation of these offices was a memorial submitted by Li Chung, an official concurrently serving in the palace (chi-shih-chung). According to the History of the Northern Wei Dynasty, Li was prompted to submit his memorial because of widespread census fraud. As a result of

this fraud through which many persons had become dependents of powerful notables, people were escaping their corvee obligations. In order to cope with this problem, Li proposed establishing a method of organization of the populace which was based on a system described in the Rites of Chou.[61] Under this scheme, five families would be organized to form a neighborhood (lin) and would be headed by a neighborhood chief (lin chang); five neighborhoods would be organized to form a hamlet (li) headed by a hamlet chief (li chang); and five hamlets would organized into a canton (tang) headed by a canton chief (tang chang). These chiefs would be chosen from among those in the district who were "powerful and venerable." The chiefs were granted exemptions from military service, the canton chief being granted exemptions for three persons, the hamlet chief exemptions for two persons, and the neighborhood chief a single exemption. They were, however, liable for all other obligations the same as anyone else. If a chief were able to pass three years in office without committing any grievous errors, he could be promoted to the next level.[62]

Prior to the creation of the three chiefs, responsibility for local census reporting lay with the "clan head" (tsung chu).[63] Precious little is known about how clan heads came to have this authority and how they exercised it, though it may have amounted to nothing more than the

clan head merely having the responsibility to report the number of households in his clan for tax purposes, somewhat on the order of the system found under the Han with regard to certain types of taxes (see pp. 110-111), rather than his being given any sort of quasi-political authority. In any case, the situation was ripe for fraud, and the History of the Northern Wei Dynasty says that some of these clan heads were gathering dependent families and sometimes reporting as many as thirty to fifty of them as a single household.[64] By basing the reporting on arbitrarily established groups rather than kinship groups and relying upon appointed officials rather than clan heads, Li hoped to bring such practices to an end.

The government did not rely upon the efforts of the three chiefs alone in its efforts to obtain accurate household records. To oversee the census, a number of special commissioners were appointed who traveled about the countryside checking on the work that was being done.[65] The census carried out in connection with the establishment of the three chiefs was obviously conceived of as a major undertaking and great import was attached to it.

Although there is nothing specific in Li's memorial to link creation of the three chiefs with the system of equal land allotments, it is certain that they were related. For one purpose of the chiefs was to prepare accurate household records, a necessary prerequisite for carrying

out the system of equal land allotments. If the government hoped to distribute land to the people on the basis of their sex and age, then it needed to know what those were. Moreover, Emperor Hsiao-wen linked the two systems in his decree adopting Li's proposal. The emperor saw the new structure as a means of preventing engrossment of land by the powerful and of ensuring that taxes and conscriptions for corvee and military service would be levied fairly.[66] The emphasis on the fairness of the levies is a rather important point, one which also appears in the debates among Li Chung and a number of other officials over adoption of Li's proposal, and it warrants a moment's digression.

From the discussions among Li and the other officials, it is obvious that more was being contemplated than mere formation of a new structure for local government and a thorough-going census. A new tax system was also planned, and the proposed changes evoked some opposition. Now, Li proposed putting the system into operation during the autumn when taxes were collected. Another of the discussants demurred, saying that it would create confusion and result in resentment on the part of the people. Li disagreed, saying that if the system were made operable at any other time, the people would only know the bother of conducting the new census and would not be aware of the benefits resulting from the equalization of the tax

rates. If they were aware of these benefits, then they would be more inclined to accept the new system. The outcome of establishing the proposed system, said the Empress Dowager Ming who moderated the discussion, would be that taxation would have a constant standard, levies would have regular apportionment, dependent households could be uncovered, and favoritism could be brought to an end.[67]

Although Li Chung realized the importance of a show of equitability in achieving acceptance for the system from the general populace, he was not concerned with equality for equality's sake. Rather, by making the tax and service obligations equal, he sought to strengthen government access to the free resources of money and manpower it (and all other governments) required, while at the same time weakening its primary competitors for those resources, viz., locally powerful magnates. This goal was shared with the system of equal land allotments, which sought to provide equal opportunities to all peasants to have land so that they might enjoy the equal opportunity to bear their share of the tax burden. While the government might appear to be generous, it meant for the benefits of that generosity to accrue to its own coffers.

The equal land allotments and the changes resulting from institution of the three chiefs were cloaked in an aura of equality, but underneath it all some remained more

equal than others. This is clear from some of the provisions of these two measures which obviously favored those who were already well off. The equal land allotments made land available for slaves the same as for free people, a provision which benefited the wealthy and powerful since most of the slaves were owned by them. Likewise, the provisions for grants of additional amounts of land for oxen would have somewhat benefited the wealthy and powerful, though as we have seen this would have been limited. In these cases the benefits accruing to the wealthy and powerful from these provisions were not the primary motivation behind them--that was the desire for an efficient land/labor ratio. But, the advantages were there nonetheless, and they were no doubt helpful in gaining at least a grudging acceptance for the new systems from the wealthy and powerful, the groups most likely to feel threatened by them. Finally, there were also rather substantial grants of imperial fields to holders of specified offices, which although returnable, were of greatest benefit to members of aristocratic clans.[68] More about these later.

In the case of the three chiefs a definite effort seems to have been made to win acceptance from powerful local notables. First of all, Li recommended that the position of chief be filled by "the powerful and venerable," a rubric which appears to leave the way open to bring into

these offices some of the very people whose activities they were meant to curb. Indeed, by the reign of Emperor Hsiao-ming many of chiefs did come from powerful families.[69] Secondly, depending on which of the three offices he held, a person was able to gain exemption from military service for one to three people. While this was not nearly so generous as what the powerful were able to enjoy under the previous system, it could perhaps serve as something of a pacifier to keep them from crying too loudly about their losses.

Emperor Hsiao-wen believed that other benefits would derive from the establishment of the systems of the equal land allotments and the three chiefs, and his conception of these says much about the sources of inspiration for both measures. He believed that they would provide an important means of promoting mutual assistance among the people and of caring for such unfortunates as widows, orphans, the elderly, and so forth. He also saw these new institutions as an important means for inculcating morality in the populace. These ideas are clearly derived from Mencius' description of the well-field system and the institutions delineated in the Rites of Chou, both of which the emperor and Li variously allude to.[70] It is hard to imagine that the emperor was in some way inspired by pre-Wei Toba institutions when he adopted these measures.

It is difficult for us to know how successfully the

systems of equal land allotments and the three chiefs were applied. We do know, however, that they were not enacted without difficulty. The three chiefs, for example, were unable to prevent people from taking to the road when famine struck. Census fraud occurred once again as people sought to escape taxes they could no longer afford to pay, and it was often necessary to order examinations of the household records.[71] In some cases these frauds involved active collusion of the chiefs themselves, some of whom were members of locally powerful families.[72]

It is easy to imagine similar difficulties occurring with regard to the system of equal land allotments. There are, for example, a number of cases of land being engrossed by powerful persons in the period following establishment of the system.[73] There are also a number of examples of land being bought and sold, something that normally should not have been allowed under the provisions of the Emperor's decree.[74] These have been pointed to as evidence that having once been established, the equal land allotments went into almost immediate decline.[75] This judgement, however, is based upon an assumption that may not be justified, namely, that the system of equal land allotments was applied uniformly throughout the Northern Wei realm. We have shown already that some land was under one form of direct government management or another and therefore excluded from the system. It may be that a considerable

amount of private land was exempted from the system as well. It is hard to feature Li An-shih, scion of one of the best known aristocratic families in China--the Chao-chün Lis--and husband of a woman from another of the most powerful aristocratic families of the time--the Po-ling Tsuis--would have proposed an action that would have proved detrimental to the interests of his own class.[76] We must assume, therefore, that the equal land allotments were not meant to apply to everyone or to every part of the realm. It may be that the measure was meant to apply only to specific areas perhaps where engrossment by unscrupulous petty local magnates was a problem or to selected areas chosen on some other qualifications we cannot know. In any event, the mere fact that there were sales of land subsequent to establishment of the system or that there were occasional cases of engrossment need not mean *ipso facto* that the system had broken down. After all, it must have demonstrated some measure of success in order for it to be retained by succeeding regimes for the next three hundred years as the underpinning of their fiscal systems.

Government-Administered Lands: As noted, a large portion of the land that did not fall under the system of equal land allotments was government-administered lands. These lands were of two kinds: imperial fields and agricultural

colonies. Although there is no way of knowing how much of each type of land there was or of knowing the amount of revenue obtained from these lands, they nonetheless appear to have played an important role in the Northern Wei administration. We shall briefly (the sources afford us no other choice) examine each type in turn, beginning with the imperial fields.

The imperial fields (kung-t'ien) of the Northern Wei were very different in nature from their Former Han predecessors. No longer did the income from them belong exclusively to the imperial household. True, as in the past there were natural resource lands and some arable land the income from which was meant for the imperial household. These lands might be given to relocated people and to those in need, or the restrictions on them might be eased for the benefit of the populace.[77] But the income from the imperial fields now should be thought of as going to the imperium rather than to the imperial household. That is to say, these fields were now used to produce revenue for the use of the government. In some cases this might simply come from renting these lands out, with the proceeds going (presumably) into the imperial coffers or granaries. The lands let out in areas where the amount of available land surpassed the capabilities of the resident population to cultivate it was probably considered imperial fields. Rent on these lands appears

not to have been very heavy. In 526, for example, the rent on imperial fields in the capital district was set at one _tou_ of grain per _mou_.[78] Imperial lands furnished funds to support military needs,[79] and they might even be used for military colonies.[80] The most important use of the imperial fields during the Northern Wei, however, was to provide a source of income for officials.

We noted in the preceding chapter that as early as the end of the Later Han imperial fields had been distributed to officials in lieu of salary. Although that had been an extraordinary measure, by the Liu Sung dynasty the granting of emolument lands in lieu of salary had become standard practice. In 485, with the promulgation of the system of equal land allotments, the Northern Wei adopted a similar system.[81] Hitherto officials appear to have been dependent upon their own resources.[82] Under the terms of the 485 decree, however, persons occupying selected offices were to be given imperial fields near where they served. Provincial inspectors were given fifteen _ch'ing_, commandery administrators ten _ch'ing_, attendant secretaries for administrative affairs and attendant secretaries with separate carriages eight _ch'ing_ each, and prefects and commandery assistants six _ch'ing_ each. These, of course, were the officials who dealt most closely with the populace. When they were transferred, they were to turn over their imperial fields to

their successors, and any who tried to sell the land was liable for prosecution.[83] At some point, perhaps from the beginning, recipients of such land, whatever their rank, were required to use one _ch'ing_ of this land to supply fodder, suggesting that at least a portion of the land was turned into pasture land. From the reign of Emperor Hsüan-wu on, bestowals of this land were made in perpetuity and the recipient was allowed to sell it.[84]

That the Toba Wei had to rely upon military agricultural colonies along the northern frontier as a part of its defensive network against the incursions of other non-Chinese is certainly one of the more interesting paradoxes of land policy of the period. As early as 394, before the Toba had brought all of North China under their sway, they established military agricultural colonies in the neighborhood of Wu-yüan in the northwest near the frontier of the Juan-juan people.[85] The maintenance of troops along this frontier required considerable resources of manpower and supplies, creating a hardship on the populace of the interior of the Northern Wei empire. Toward the end of the reign of Emperor Hsien-wen (r. 466-471), Yüan Ho, a venerable official who had been charged with overseeing the armies stationed in the north, reached the conclusion that for the border defense to rely upon the capital region for its manpower simply would not do as a long-term strategy. He proposed establishing an elaborate

defense system which would have involved the relocation of some 30,000 persons who would be formed into crossbow units, cavalry, and so forth. These units would be assigned oxen and would cultivate as well as defend. The plan was a thoughtful one, but was tabled.[86] The lack of an adequate supply system also bothered Hsüeh Hu-tzu who had been charged with putting down a rebellion in Hsü province in 480. Referring specifically to the examples of the military agricultural colonies of the Han and Chin periods, Hsüeh proposed establishing military agricultural colonies on imperial fields in the region. The result would be to give the state "the strength to swallow up its enemies." Hsüeh's proposal, unlike Yüan's, met with a favorable response from Emperor Hsiao-wen.[87]

The examples of Yüan and Hsüeh indicate an important feature of agricultural colonies under the Northern Wei, namely, they seem to have been ad hoc creations, established to meet specific needs, rather than a normal part of the military/fiscal administration. The fact that garrison troops along the Huai River were ordered to begin planting grain in 504 suggests that hitherto this had not been part of their duties.[88] In the same year, agricultural colonies were opened up in preparation for an attack being planned against the south.[89] Part of the reason for the lack of established system of military agricultural colonies is that there appear to have been fields attached to some

military encampments known as "encampment fields" (<u>ying-t'ien</u>) which were farmed by the encampment households discussed earlier (p. 294). This sort of land must have been fairly widespread, since we read of a man being appointed grand commissioner of encampment fields (<u>ying-t'ien ta-shih</u>) for six provinces.[90] Little, however, is known about these lands.

Finally, there also seems to have been established in 488 a system of civilian agricultural colonies. At that time Li Piao, an assistant in the imperial library (<u>pi-shu ch'eng</u>), submitted a memorial on the affairs of state. He proposed taking one-tenth of the population of each province and forming them into civilian agricultural colonies headed by agricultural officers (<u>nung kuan</u>). Under Li's proposal, which was clearly influenced by the civilian agricultural colonies of the Wei, the people would be given oxen bought with captured goods and assigned an amount of land based upon the fertility of the soil. Each would be required to pay sixty <u>shih</u> of grain per year, hardly an insignificant amount, but would be exempted from the other duties one normally had to pay. Li's proposal was enacted by Emperor Hsiao-wen, and, we are told, as a result of this and another measure proposed by Li, government and people alike benefited and even though there might be floods and drought they were not accounted disasters.[91] Nothing is said about how widely

the measure was applied, who was selected to serve on the colonies, or the source of the land. We can probably safely surmise, however, that application was spotty, the people came from among the poor and landless, and the land was wasteland. Moreover, it was quite likely adopted in areas separate from those where the system of equal land allotments was carried out, or perhaps involved persons not affected by the latter measure.

Even if a full one-tenth of the population were incorporated into the agricultural colonies proposed by Li, such colonies did not constitute the chief source of revenue for the central government, either prior to Li's proposal or afterwards. Rather, like most of the regimes which had preceded it, the Northern Wei relied upon taxation for the bulk of its income, and it is to a discussion of this that we now must turn.

Taxation: The tax system of the Northern Wei in its general outline followed the form that had been developing since the Chin. That is to say, the tax system took the household as the basic unit and all taxes, with the exception of commercial taxes and the like, were levied on that unit as a whole rather than on individual members. What had been the land tax under the Han was now a household tax levied on the entire household, regardless of the number of people belonging to it, and was paid in silk

or hemp. As one might imagine, this resulted in some very large households (hu) made up of a number of families (chia) who registered together in order to reduce their common tax burden. The land tax (tsu) too was levied on the household rather than on the land, so each household paid a specific amount irrespective of how much land it held. As in the past, the land tax was paid in grain. There was also a property tax (tzu-tiao, tzu-tsu, tzu-fu) levied on personal wealth.

Taking the last and least important first, the property tax seems to have been part of the Wei tax structure from an early period, and it may have been abolished fairly early. Very little is known about it, and one student of the taxation of the period, Yoshida Torao, has denied its existence entirely.[92] However, he is surely mistaken. For while evidence is scant, it is still sufficient to attest to the existence of the tax at least during the first half of the Northern Wei.

The first reference to the property tax is to a recision of the tax by Emperor Tao-wu in 398.[93] The other references tell us little other than that officials were sometimes remiss in collecting the tax and that it was sometimes rescinded as an act of grace.[94] Such evidence does little to disprove Yoshida's thesis that these references are to the household tax, though it does nothing to prove it either. A decree of Emperor T'ai-wu issued

in 436, however, unmistakably shows the existence of a property tax. In this decree the emperor declares:

> If there is to be a levy, the prefects will gather together the thrice venerables of the district, take an accounting of wealth, and fix the levy. They will reduce what is too much and increase what is too little. The nine grades (<u>chiu p'in</u>) will be treated equally. They may not be lax with the rich and stringent with the poor, avoiding the powerful and oppressing the weak.[95]

Evidently, then, a tax was being levied on personal wealth, the amount of which for each family was determined by the thrice venerables, a type of quasi-official. The tone of the decree, conveys the impression that the tax was not a regular one, but was collected only occasionally. We can say little else about the tax, however, except that it was probably among the fifteen miscellaneous taxes that were abolished temporarily by Emperor Wen-ch'eng in 459 and finally permanently done away with in 469 by Emperor Hsien-wen.[96] There is no reference to the tax after that date, except for a proposal to restore it at the end of the Northern Wei.[97]

Aside from the property tax and the other miscellaneous taxes, each household was levied two bolts of silk fabric, two catties of silk floss, and one catty of silk thread, plus an additional one bolt two <u>chang</u> of silk fabric which were submitted to the provincial treasury. These comprised the household tax (<u>hu-tiao</u>), which was in essence the successor to the head tax of an earlier era.

Aside from this, each household was levied twenty shih of grain as a land tax.[98] Some, following Ma Tuan-lin (13th C.), have asserted that since the Chin the household tax and land tax had been combined into a single tax.[99] The Northern Wei, however, clearly considered them to be separate since it frequently ordered separate cancellations of the land.[100]

When compared with previous eras, the early Northern Wei tax rate was fairly stiff. In 484 the rate was made even higher with the addition of a surcharge to pay for the newly created salaries that officials were to begin receiving. Prior to this, officials did not receive stipends, and many resorted to squeezing the people under their jurisdictions.[101] A system of official salaries would have ameliorated this problem somewhat, though given the nature of man, it would not have eliminated it. The surcharges amounted to an additional three bolts of silk fabric and two shih nine tou of grain. In addition, the amount of fabric paid into the provincial treasury was increased to a full two bolts. At the same time, the government ordered that the levies paid in textile goods were to be paid according to what the specific area produced--hemp or silk--and produced a lengthy list of which areas were considered to be producers of which.[102] When adjustment is made for the larger size of the Northern Wei units of measure, the total tax rate for a small

household would have been about four times that for the Ts'ao Wei period.[103] The high rate was no doubt intended to compensate for the "hidden members" of many households, but it must have fallen hard on those families who were unable to make themselves part of a locally powerful household and thereby escape the heaviest part of the tax burden. Clearly, the situation required rectification.

The needed change was forthcoming in 486. Included in his proposal for establishment of the system of three chiefs, Li Chung also proposed changes in the tax system, and these were adopted along with the system. Under the new tax structure drawn up by Li, the conjugal unit--man and wife--replaced the household as the basic unit of taxation. This was probably done as a way of putting an end to the sort of census fraud that had resulted from taking the household as the basic tax unit.[104] Each couple paid one bolt of silk fabric and two <u>shih</u> of unhulled grain. This constituted the basic rate. Single persons aged fifteen and up paid one-quarter the basic rate, while male slaves capable of farming and female slaves capable of weaving each paid one-eighth. Plow oxen were each assessed one-twentieth the basic rate. In hemp-growing regions, one bolt of hemp cloth was substituted for the bolt of silk fabric. Generally, fifty per cent of the cloth would be used for central government expenses, twenty per cent for provincial government

expenses, and thirty per cent for official salaries. In addition, there might be miscellaneous levies.[105]

The new tax system was meant to dovetail with the system of equal land allotments. People were provided with the types of land--mulberry, hemp, and grain--that they needed for paying the various taxes. Moreover, land was granted for slaves and oxen and both were taxed, though at a proportionately lighter rate. This latter provision was something of a boon for the wealthy who were more likely to own slaves and oxen; even so, we are told that they were not at all pleased by the new system.[106]

The system also received criticism from other quarters as well. Moved by a famine which occurred in the capital region in 487, the inspector of Ch'i province, Han Ch'i-lin, criticized the new grain levy as being too low and leaving the government without adequate supplies to render assistance when natural disaster struck. He recommended that the grain levy be increased and textile levy decreased in order to ensure that the government granaries were adequately supplied.[107] There is no record, however, of any action being taken on his proposal. This inadequacy of the new tax structure to provide sufficient grain revenues to cope with emergencies also brought about the proposal by Li Piao to establish civilian agricultural colonies that was described earlier. Li at the same time

proposed establishing officials who would buy grain in years of good harvest and then sell it at a slightly higher price when the harvest was poor. This, thought Li, would encourage people to work hard in the fields in order to purchase pongee to save against the day they would need to buy grain. The emperor was quite impressed with Li's proposals and adopted them both, reportedly to very good effect.[108]

The tax structure enacted under Hsiao-wen seems to have remained in effect for the remainder of the Northern Wei, despite proposals for modification. Surcharges may have been added. In 526, for example, fields in the capital area were taxed at a rate of five _sheng_ per _mou_,[109] a departure from the per capita and per household levies in effect earlier. No reason is given, and we can only speculate that it may have been an extraordinary levy.

Finally, some mention should be made of tax relief measures during the Northern Wei. By this period, tax cancellations had become a traditional method of giving relief during periods of dearth and of bestowing grace on special occasions. We find this to be the case with the Northern Wei as well. Abrogation of taxes might be bestowed on areas blessed by an imperial tour or cursed by a cataclysmic visitation.[110] In the latter case--when flood, famine, drought, or the like struck--it was generally the land tax that was cancelled. This was only

reasonable, since the land tax was paid in grain, which the peasant could eat if he did not have to hand it over to the government. Of course, this presumes he had some grain in the first place.

Another form of relief, not limited to special occasions, was the classification of taxpayers into three grades according to wealth so as to give preferential treatment to the poor. This first occurred in 434 when Emperor T'ai-wu wished to extend relief to the people who had been suffering as a result of the endemic warfare in North China and the exactions this warfare had caused. He had the people classified into three grades according to wealth. Those in the highest grade--the rich--were to continue paying taxes as before, while those in the middle category were exempted for two years and those in the bottom category--the very poor--were exempted for three years.[111] A similar categorization was made in 466 of people in the Shantung region. They had been hit particularly hard by manpower levies, and Emperor Hsien-wen was moved by their plight to order that they be divided into three categories according to wealth. Those in the upper category were required to submit their tax grain to the capital, those in the second category to important granaries in other provinces, and those in the lowest category--the poorest of the lot--could submit theirs in their home province.[112] Apparently those in the second and third

categories thereby saved some transportation expenses.

Conclusion: Even before they had brought all of North China under their sway, the Toba Wei had begun a policy of emphasizing agriculture. This policy included a number of measures designed to bring as much land under cultivation as possible. As part of their policy of relocating conquered peoples, the Toba distributed land on a per capita basis, and they frequently distributed tools, seed, and oxen as well. Efforts were made to achieve the most efficient use of available animal power possible through an oxen/labor exchange. This emphasis upon efficient utilization of animal power remained an important feature of Northern Wei agrarian policy. Irrigation and reclamation projects were encouraged and received imperial support in order to increase the productivity of land and to bring new land into production. In accord with traditional Chinese economic policy, the so-called secondary activities, industry and commerce, were discouraged. The government attempted a close supervision of agricultural activities in order to ensure that people were not lax. Following the precedent of the land assignments of the Western Chin, the Northern Wei rulers also made an effort to see to it that each person cultivated a minimum amount of land.

These various policies were infused with a concern to achieve efficient utilization of land. This was manifested

in efforts to attain the greatest possible application of labor to the soil. Measures intended to have as many people cultivating as possible, to make certain that those who were cultivating were working a minimum amount of land, and to guarantee that complete use was being made of available animal power were all demonstrations of this concern which derived from the presence of a large amount of wasteland, a scattered and unstable population, and the efforts of many to evade tax and service obligations. Even were such measures effective, the tax burden was so heavy that people would only continue to seek ways of evading it, thereby effectively nullifying any gains. Moreover, officials were unsalaried, which meant they were prone to gouging the population and to corruption. Thoroughgoing changes of some sort were the only answer.

The needed changes came within the short space of three years. In 484 salaries for officials were initiated, and the following year the system of equal land allotments was enacted. The latter incorporated many of the concerns of the earlier policies, seeking an efficient land/labor ratio and promoting the use of animal power. But even more, it attempted to promote the growing of specific crops and to promote social welfare, and it sought to further eliminate the need for local officials to rely on illegal means for an income by providing them with substantial amounts of land. Perhaps not since hoary antiquity

had China seen such an ambitious agrarian policy.

The third part of the reforms came in 486 with the creation of a new administrative structure for the lowest units of local government. These were intended to provide the basis for effective actualization of the system of equal land allotments by carrying out a complete census. As part of the same proposal, a new tax structure was established. Under the new tax structure, the tax burden on individual families was greatly reduced, but because collection was made so much more effective, we can deduce that the government quite likely did not suffer a decline in revenues and in fact may have enjoyed an overall increase. The fact that the most vocal critic of the system in the government, Han Ch'i-lin, was concerned only with a decline in the amount of grain flowing into the granaries and not with a decline in total revenue suggests that such was the case.

Although the reforms must have seemed a great benefit to the general populace, not everyone was pleased with them. We are told that the powerful and wealthy and the monopolizers were especially displeased with them. This raises an interesting question, for it will be recalled that the man who proposed the system of equal land allotments, Li An-shih, came from one of the most powerful families in the realm and had marital ties to another, and Li Chung, architect of the system of three chiefs and the

486 tax reform, was a member of the Lung-hsi Lis, another of the most politically powerful families in North China. This fact should caution us against assuming that powerful families were *ipso facto* in competition with the central government for free resources. The aristocratic families such as the Po-ling Ts'uis, the Chao-chün Lis, and the Lung-hsi Lis had been long established in their home areas, and having for generations held large amounts of land, they did not need to engross the land of peasant neighbors.

Engrossment of land was primarily conducted by a petty robber baron type of locally powerful families that were growing and seeking to expand their holdings. These were the "powerful and wealthy monopolizers" (*hao-fu ping-chien che*) who were not pleased with the new reforms. The reason they were not pleased was that through these reforms the government in large measure sought to curb their activities as a means of increasing its share of the free resources of money and manpower.

The two Lis may have had another, more ulterior motive in proposing the reforms, namely, securing the position of the aristocracy vis-á-vis these locally powerful families by placing curbs on their ability to expand their economic base. If so, the reforms may be viewed as a happy conjunction of the interests of the Northern Wei rulers and the aristocracy. This conjunction of interests perhaps was instrumental in making the reforms possible in the north

whereas they were not in the south. Of course, the relative longevity of the Northern Wei dynasty was important too. How successful the reforms were is unclear. As suggested previously, the degree of success probably varied from area to area. And perhaps it was this partial success which held out to later regimes the possibility of using the system to solve problems confronting them.

Notes:

[1]Wolfram Eberhard has pointed out that policies similar to those governing mulberry fields under the system of equal land allotments are found in Central Asia (A History of China, 2d. ed. [Berkeley, 1960], p. 143).

[2]T'ang Ch'ang-ju, "Chün-t'ien chih-tu," Cklttt, p. 354; Wang Chung-lo, "Pei-Wei ch'u-ch'i she-hui hsing hsing-chih yü T'o-pa Hung ti chün-t'ien," Cklttt, p. 293. This interpretation has been questioned by Chin Pao-hsiang, who emphasizes the importance of "class struggle" in understanding the system of equal land allotments (Pei-ch'ao Sui T'ang chün-t'ien-chih yen-chiu," Kan-su shih-ta hsüeh-pao 1978.3, pp. 10-35).

[3]Cs 103.2692. The policies and conditions under these regimes are described by Chin Pao-hsiang, p. 13.

[4]Tctc 91.2871.

[5]Cs 109.2822-2825; Tctc 90.3063-3064, 106.3356; Gerhard Schreiber, "The History of the Former Yen Dynasty," Monumenta Serica XV (1949-55), 474-476.

[6]David Johnson, The Medieval Chinese Oligarchy (Boulder, 1977), p. 116.

[7]Ws 106A.2455; Ch'en Teng-yüan, Kuo-shih chiu-wen (Taipei, 1971), I, 634.

[8]One interesting way in which the Northern Wei regime

may have attempted to stimulate population growth was by tying the salaries of local officials to the populations of their bailiwicks. An official would thus be moved to encourage population growth in his area in order to raise his salary (Ws 7B.161; Ps 3.102). A similar situation existed during the Han when the amount of population growth in his bailiwick was considered in determining an official's eligibility for promotion.

[9] Ws 110.2855.

[10] Ws 114.3039.

[11] Ws 7A.139, 7B.161, 51.1129.

[12] Ws 7A.156, 53.1176.

[13] For descriptions of the Toba policy of relocation prior to the founding of the Wei, see Hori Toshikazu, Kinden sei no kenkyū (Tokyo, 1975), pp. 99-102.

[14] Ws 2.32.

[15] Ws 3.53 records two cases.

[16] Ws 4A.84, 90, 4B.100, 102 (2 cases), 105. Ta-ning, located at present day Cho-lu hsien in Hopei province, was the administrative seat of Kuang-ming commandery during the Chin dynasty. When Toba Ko-na, the Prince of Tai, was attacked by Shih Hu in 327, he moved his capital to Ta-ning (Ws 1.10). Ta-ning served as the Toba capital until the Toba adopted the name of Wei for their dynasty

and moved the capital to P'ing-ch'eng in 398 (Ws 2.33). After the founding of the Northern Wei, Wei rulers would visit the hot springs at Ta-ning and they established a palace there (Ku Tsu-yü, Tu-shih fang-yü chi-yao [Khcpts ed], 17.772).

[17]Ws 4A.81, 4B.96, 100.

[18]Ws 4B.99.

[19]Nishimura Gen'yū, Chūgoku keizai shi kenkyū, 2d. ed. (Kyoto, 1970), p. 105.

[20]Ws 4B.96, 7A.135, 136-7.

[21]Cf. Yi-t'ung Wang, "Slaves and Other Comparable Social Groups during the Northern Dynasties (386-618)," HJAS, XVI.3 & 4 (December, 1953), 348 n. 19. Professor Wang renders ying-hu as "military-serving households" and says that they joined the military at the discretion of the government. This seems unlikely. In the post-Northern Wei period, the "encampment fields" (ying-t'ien) were farmed by civilians and were clearly distinguished from the military agricultural colonies (Denis Twitchett, "Lands under State Cultivation during the T'ang," Journal of the Social Economic History of the Orient II.2 [1959], 162-163). See also, Hori, pp. 105-106.

[22]Ws 8.194.

[23]Ws 2.32, 3.53; Hori, p. 106; T'ang Ch'ang-ju,

p. 333 & n. 1.

[24]Hori, p. 106.

[25]Hori, pp. 106-107.

[26]Ws 3.53.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ws 2.32, 4B.100.

[29]Ws 2.32.

[30]Ws 3.53.

[31]Toba Huang is said to have been a young man of singular abilities. He was bright, blessed with an excellent memory, and was conversant in the histories and classics. Because of his talents, his father, Emperor T'ai-wu, left him in charge of the government while he was on a military campaign in western China. Huang died in 451 when he was but 24 years old. Although he never actually ascended the throne as emperor, his eldest son, who succeeded T'ai-wu as Wen-ch'eng gave him the title of Emperor Ching-mu.

[32]Ws 4B.109, 110 n. 7; Tctc 124.3902. No reason for the odd 22:7 and 7:2 ratios, which are not exactly equivalent, is given.

[33]Ws 7B.138.

[34]Ws 4B.109; Ps 2.64.

[35]Ws 38.867-868; Tt 2.18a-b.

[36]The garrisons were military administrative districts which frequently had civilians under their jurisdiction. Their position in the administrative hierarchy was equivalent to that of the provinces. See the discussion in Yen Keng-wang, Chung-kuo ti-fang hsing-cheng chih-tu shih--Wei Chin Nan-Pai-ch'ao ti-fang hsing-cheng chih-tu (Taipei, 1963), pp. 763-797.

[37]Ws 7B.164, 165.

[38]HHc 28.3631.

[39]Ws 4B.109.

[40]Ws 4B.96.

[41]Ws 5.114-115.

[42]Ws 7A.156; Ps 3.101.

[43]Ws 7B.170.

[44]Ws 4B.109.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Ws 7A.137.

[47]Ws 4B.108-109.

[48]Ws 7A.144.

[49]Ws 7A.156. T'ang Ch'ang-ju has questioned whether the system of equal land allotments was actually established

in T'ai-ho 9. He refers to a memorial from Li An-shih (Ws 53.1176) which proposed the establishment of the system in which Li refers to system of three chiefs (san chang) as having already been established (三長既立). Since this system did not come into existence until the following year, T'ang feels that the T'ai-ho 9 dating is open to question. His doubts are further fed by a number of other passages which refer to the post-T'ai-ho 9 period and which he believes show that the system had not yet been instituted. He concludes, however, based on a decree of T'ai-ho 14/12/12 (491/1/7; Ws 7B.167) that the system was in operation at least by then ("Pei Wei chün-t'ien chih chung chi-ko wen-t'i," in T'ang Ch'ang-ju, Wei Chin Nan-Pei-ch'ao shih-lun ts'ung hsü-pien [Peking, 1959], pp. 16-20). The memorial which gave rise to T'ang's doubts also appears in Tfyk 495.15b-16b which has "the descendants are already established (子孫既立)" in place of the three chiefs. T'ang notes this, but he questions the reliability of the Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei because this section contains some serious anachronisms. However, the passage makes perfectly good sense, more so than if we read "three chiefs" for "descendants." Moreover, both the History of the Northern Wei Dynasty and the History of the Northern Dynasties (Pei-shih) are very explicit regarding the date of the decree, and the emperor states in the decree that he has been on the throne for fifteen

years, which is in agreement with a T'ai-ho 9 dating for the decree. We may confidently conclude, then, that the decree was issued in T'ai-ho 9, although the date of its actual anactment is still not certain, a point that will be dealt with later in this section.

[50]Li's memorial is translated in Denis Twitchett, Financial Administration under the T'ang Dynasty, 2d. ed. (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 210-211.

[51]The length of time that some of these people were gone from their land--apparently a matter of generations--raises an interesting question: Were not some of these people perhaps returning from the south where their ancestors had fled in order to escape the depredations of non-Chinese invaders? Given the strong desire evinced by emigrés in the south to return and the relative stability now existing in the north, such a conclusion does not seem at all implausible.

[52]Ws 53.1176.

[53]Ws 110.2853-2854.

[54]The History of the Northern Wei Dynasty does not specifically state the age at which land was to be returned. In a later part of the decree, however, in which provisions are made for households make up entirely of the young, the elderly, the infirm, and the lame--persons who would not normally qualify for land--it says with regard to the

elderly, "Those who have exceeded seventy years of age will not return what (i.e., the land) they have received" (Ws 110.2854). This would seem to imply that normally a person would have been expected to have returned his land at age seventy.

[55]Mulberry was grown to provide food for silkworms. Elm could be an important cash crop. The pods were used to make a sauce and the wood was used to make bowls, jars, and other utensils. It considered especially good for making chariot hubs (Chia Ssu-hsieh, Ch'i min yao-shu, pp. 65-66, in Yang Chia-lo, ed., Tsa-chia nung-chia san-shih chung, 2d. ed. [Taipei, 1965]). Jujubes might be dried, made into wine, or made into a paste (ibid., pp. 50-52). The raising of these trees in a nursery and the method of their transplantation is discussed by Chia Ssu-hsieh, in Chapter 32 of his Ch'i min yao-shu (ibid., pp. 49-50) which was written in the sixth century. A discussion in English with partial translations of the relevant passages are to be found in Sheng-han Shih, A Preliminary Survey of the Book "Ch'i Min Yao-Shu," 2d. ed. (Peking, 1962), pp. 61-63. The seedlings may have come from private nurseries on large estates, though it is more likely that they were supplied by government nurseries as part of a policy of encouraging agriculture.

[56]It is not stated whether this meant that mulberry

land so included became considered as land that had to be returned to the government.

[57]There is some disagreement over how the text of the decree establishing the system of equal land allotments should be correctly read on this point. The text of the History of the Northern Wei Dynasty has 限四牛, "with a limit of four head." The same reading is found in Tt 1.13a, Tfyk 495.14a, and T'ung chih 61.733c. Tctc 136.4286 and Whtk 2.39c both have 限止四牛, which also means "limited to four head." Thus, the six principal sources for versions or excerpts of this decree all agree that allotments for oxen were limited to four head. Even so, scholars, basing themselves upon a similar provision in a decree issued in 564 by Emperor Shih-tsu of the Northern Ch'i, have suggested that a copyist's error exists here. This decree appears in Sui shu 24.677 and in Hu San-hsing's gloss to the Comprehensive Mirror for the Aid of Government (Tctc 169.5240), which cites a now lost work, the Wu tai chih. In these the text reads 限止四年, "limited to four years." On this basis Hori Toshikazu (pp. 179-180) and Nishimura Gen'yū, (Chūgoku keizaishi [Kyoto, 1970], p. 122) suggest that the version in the History of the Northern Wei Dynasty should also read "four years." However, the versions of the Northern Ch'i decree in Tt 2.2a, T'ung chih 61.734b, Whtk 2.40c, Tfyk

495.18a all have "four oxen." Because of the similarity between the graphs for "ox" 牛 and "year" 年, it may be that the compilers of the History of the Sui Dynasty and the Wu tai chih or later copyists have miscopied this line. Limiting the grant of land to four years does not make sense, since an ox is capable of pulling a plow much longer than that; it would make more sense to simply require that the land be returned when the beast died. Even if one understands "four years" as referring to the minimum age at which an ox could receive land, it still does not make much sense, for an ox can begin to pull a plow at 1-1/2 to 2 years. This provision was probably intended to prevent a person from acquiring too much land simply through owning a large number of oxen. Another possibility which has been offered by Miyazaki Ichisada is that the limit on the number of oxen was meant to prevent people from turning grain land into pasture land ("Shin Butei no kochōshiki ni tsuite," in Miyazaki Ichisada, Ajiashi kenkyū [Kyoto, 1957], I, 205-206).

[58]Such a measure would surely have encouraged slave-owning. There is no way of knowing, however, whether the architects of the system were aware of this and whether they intended such a result. Such a move contradicts the general tendency toward measures aimed at the creation of a free peasantry. Was it perhaps meant to encourage slave

owners whose slaves mostly served as household servants to utilize them in a more productive occupation?

[59] Ws 110.2854; T'ang Ch'ang-ju, "Chün-t'ien chih-tu," pp. 359-360.

[60] Ws 7B.167.

[61] Ws 7B.161, 110.2855; Sun I-jang, Chou-li cheng-i (Khcpts ed.), (Taipei, 1967), 19.101; Édouard Biot, trans., Le Tcheou-li ou rites des Tcheou (Paris, 1851; reprint ed., Taipei, 1969), I, 211.

[62] Ws 110.2855.

[63] Ws 53.1180; David Johnson, p. 117.

[64] Ws 53.1180.

[65] Ws 42.954.

[66] Ws 110.2855-2856.

[67] Ws 53.1180. Too little attention has been paid the role that Empress Dowager Ming might have played in these reforms, though it may have been more important than that of the emperor. From the death of Emperor Hsien-wen in 476 (he had abdicated in favor of Hsiao-wen in 471) until her own death in 491, she played a dominant role in the government. She was Chinese, rather than Hsien-pei, and has been credited with having an influence on Hsiao-wen's efforts to sinify the Toba (Lü Ssu-mien, Liang-Chin

Nan-Pei-ch'ao shih [Shanghai, 1948], pp. 508-511.

[68]The term "powerful families" is admittedly vague in this context. Perhaps the following comments will serve to clarify the matter somewhat. During Northern and Southern Dynasties the upper strata of society (i.e., above the peasantry; the royal family is not considered here) were divided generally into three groups, the aristocratic clans (shih-tsu), the minor clans (hsiao-hsing), and the low-born scholar-officials (han-su). Society during this period was highly stratified and the position that one held in the government was largely determined by his and his family's social status. Social status was divided into nine ranks (chiu-p'in) that were officially determined by an officer appointed specifically for this purpose. Higher positions in the bureaucracy were similarly divided into nine ranks, while the lower positions were excluded from this system of nine ranks and were placed in a separate system of seven ranks. A correlation was made between social rank and official rank, so that a person from say the second rank (erh-p'in) of the social scale would enter the bureaucracy in a rank six position. Similarly, promotion to higher office was determined by one's social rank. (See Mao Han-kuang, Liang-Chin Nan-Pei-ch'ao shih-tsu cheng chih chih yen-chiu [Taipei, 1966], I, 68-85; David Johnson, pp. 19-31; Patricia Ebrey, The Aristocratic

Families of Early Imperial China [Cambridge, 1978], pp. 62-63; Donald Holzman, "Les débuts du système médiévale de choix et de classement des fonctionnaires: Les Neuf Catégories et l'Impartial et Juste," Mélanges publies par l'Institute des Hautes Études Chinoises, I, 387-414.) Important revisions in the system were made under Emperor Hsiao-wen, but the basic nature of the system remained unchanged.

Given this admittedly sketchy background, we can begin to understand some of the significance of the grants of imperial fields discussed on pp. 327-328. The offices receiving such land could not be held by a person from just any family that happened to be powerful and wealthy. Indeed, according to the figures compiled by Mao Han-kuang (pp. 334-340) the incumbents of the position of regional inspector were 67.9% from aristocratic families, 17.1% from minor clans, and 15% from low-born scholars, while commandery administrators were 73.6% from aristocratic clans, 15.4% from minor clans, and 11% from low-born scholars. Without doubt, the aristocratic clans would have benefited most from the provision to provide certain offices with imperial fields.

Finally, as described on pp. 7-8, in referring to "powerful families" or "locally powerful families" I mean those families who were able to exercise influence, generally through their wealth or coercive power, in their

own locale and did so for their own aggrandizement. The aristocratic clans were probably usually not among this group, though they certainly had wealth and exercised influence in their home area. I suspect that most of the powerful families came from the "minor lineages" or even lower down the social scale. Such families were often referred to as "monopolizers" (ping-chien), and often denoted as "hao" ("eminent," "martial," "brave"), a term which as I have shown elsewhere, is used to describe families or individuals who were seen as rivals to the authority of the government in their home area and as an actual or potential threat to order ("Notables, Officials, and Local Society During the Later Han," ms, pp. 16-24). These are the very people who were displeased by the measures adopted in 485-486 (Ws 110.2856).

[69] Ws 82.1804.

[70] Ws 110.2855-2856.

[71] Ws 12.307, 15.380; PCs 24.342, 46.639.

[72] Ws 15.380, 82.1804; PCs 24.342.

[73] Ws 27.677, 89.1925.

[74] Ws 66.1476, 71.1548.

[75] T'ang Ch'ang-ju, "Chün-t'ien chih-tu," pp. 356-367; Yoshida Torao, Gi Shin Nambokuchō sozei no kenkyū (Tokyo, 1933), pp. 88-89.

[76]See n. 68 above. Cf. Patricia Ebrey, p. 65, which contains the following statement: "With the Ts'uis (and so many of their maternal and affinal relatives) occupying positions in the higher bureaucracy, measures detrimental to the interests of the aristocratic families would have been difficult to carry out." Unfortunately, Dr. Ebrey does not comment on what might have motivated Li An-shih's memorial.

[77]Ws 6.130, 7A.152, 7B.162, 8.198, 28.691, 48.1069; Tctc 123.3881.

[78]Ws 9.245, 110.2861; Ps 4.153; Tfyk 487.14a; Tt 5.30b. Ws 9.245 gives one sheng/mou, but since all others have one tou/mou the latter must be correct. One sheng/mou would have been an extremely low rent.

[79]Ws 88.1905.

[80]Ws 44.996-997.

[81]Ws 7B.161, 110.2855; Ps 3.102. Tt 5.202b and T'ung-chih 57.700a both state that imperial fields were given to provincial inspectors and commandery administrators beginning in T'ai-ho 5 (480). The compilers of the Ch'ing period compendia, the Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng cite the former and comment only that the reference is not to be found in the History of the Northern Wei Dynasty (see Chung-kuo li-tai shih-huo tien [Taipei, 1970],

42.224b; this work is composed of the economic treatise sections of the Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng). The reference to T'ai-ho 5 is clearly an error, the result of some copyist having inadvertently written 五 ("five") for 九 ("nine"). Indeed, the T'ung-tien says elsewhere in reference to T'ai-ho 9 decree, "Lands pertaining to office began with this," which could not be true were grants made beginning in T'ai-ho 5 (Tt 1.13b).

[82]Patricia Ebrey, p. 138 n. 58; Li Chien-nung, Wei Chin Nan-Pei-ch'ao Sui T'ang ching-chi shih kao (Peking, 1959), p. 155; Chao I, Nien-erh shih cha-chi (Taipei, 1973), 14.188. Professor Ebrey errs slightly when she says that prior to 485 officials did not receive salaries. Actually salaries for officials were first established by Emperor Hsiao-wen in a decree of T'ai-ho 8/6 (484/7/13) (Ws 7A.153-154, 110.2852-2853).

[83]Ws 110.2855. These were all local officials. The inspectors were the chief officials of a province, and the attendant secretaries their subordinates. The grand administrators were the chief officials of the commanderies, and the commandery assistants were their subordinates. The prefect was the chief official of a prefecture. See Yen Keng-wang, Wei-Chin..., pp. 505-630.

[84]Tt 2.15b.

[85]Ws 2.26.

[86]Ws 4.922.

[87]Ws 44.996-997.

[88]Ws 8.198.

[89]Ws 79.1756.

[90]Ws 79.1756.

[91]Ws 62.1385-1386, 110.2856-2857.

[92]Yoshida Torao, pp. 96-98. Yoshida believes that the references to a property tax--he cites four (Ws 2.31, 3.55, 4B.96, 18.423)--are actually to the household tax, and he believes that Hu San-hsing's gloss to a reference in Tctc 159.4910 to tzu-chüan ("property pongee") as pongee paid on personal wealth is wrong.

[93]Ws 2.31.

[94]Ws 3.55, 4B.96.

[95]Ws 4A.86.

[96]Ws 110.2852; Tctc 132.4148.

[97]Ws 18.423; Tctc 159.4910.

[98]Ws 110.2852.

[99]Whtk 2.38a.

[100]Ws 3.55 (2 cases), 4A.87, 5.121, 7A.137, 7B.161, 176, 178, 184.

[101]Ws 4B.96.

[102]Ws 110.2852.

[103]Yoshida Torao, pp. 75-76.

[104]The conjugal unit was also adopted by post-Northern Wei governments. The Northern Ch'i adopted the rather descriptive term "bed" (ch'uang) to denote this unit. Chiu Pao-hsiang (p. 24) says that the reason for adoption of the conjugal unit was that the taxes were to be paid in grain and silk, and traditionally men were to farm and women were to weave.

[105]Ws 110.2855; Tt 5.30a. Concerning how the revenue was to be used, I have followed the T'ung-tien version. That in Ws 110.2855 seems to be corrupt.

[106]Ws 110.2856.

[107]Ws 60.1333.

[108]Ws 62.1385-1386, 110.2856-2857.

[109]Ws 9.245.

[110]Ws 2.31, 3.55, 4A.87, 4B.96, 5.121, 7A.137 & 152, 7B.161, 176, 178, 184.

[111]Ws 4A.83.

[112]Ws 110.2852; Tctc 132.4148. Tctc gives the date as 469.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Through the course of the early imperial period, a series of increasingly elaborate and ambitious land policies and schemes were evolved, taking as their theoretical basis the concepts of the well-field system and of maximization of land and labor that were first promulgated by pre-Han thinkers. This evolution produced its highest form with the creation of the system of equal land allotments by the Northern Wei. For approximately 300 years thereafter this system remained the basic land policy of the central government. Changes were made by each regime in order to adapt the policy to its particular needs and conditions, but this amounted to no more than tinkering and the basic outlines of the system remained unchanged. Sometime during the latter half of the eighth century it was finally abandoned.

The land policies that were developed during the Han through Northern Wei period may be considered as having four facets: land for the peasant, government lands, promotion of agriculture, and taxation. Land for the peasant may be further broken down into two elements: limitations on the size of individual holdings designed to ensure the availability of land and grants of land to

peasants to assure that everyone had land to work. Generally speaking, we may say that during the earlier part of this period these two aspects were separate and complementary, while during the latter part of the period they were combined, forming opposite sides of the same coin.

Land for the Peasant: During the Han period, there was no comprehensive policy of limitations of landholdings according to one's social status, with the exception of the short-lived measure enacted under Emperor Ai, which in any case was not intended to guarantee land to the peasant. Limitation of holdings was achieved through the enforcement of laws dealing with the "monopolization" (*chien-ping*) of land, under which action was taken against persons in particular areas who held such large blocs of that they denied it to peasants in the area. These laws, about which we know very little other than that they were enforced, do not seem to have forbidden large landholdings *per se*. Rather, they seem to have applied only in those cases in which the possession of large holdings was deemed to have deprived others of the opportunity to hold land. As for the distribution of land to those who had none, this was done on an *ad hoc* basis. Land was not distributed under a permanent system of land distribution, but in conjunction with the relocation of people and in response to natural disasters. The

single attempt to carry out a comprehensive policy of limitation and distribution of land during this period, the "royal fields" of Wang Mang's ephemeral Hsin dynasty, was an unmitigated failure.

The first attempt during the early imperial period to institute a comprehensive system of land limitation and distribution, aside from Wang Mang's ill-fated effort, was that of the Western Chin. Under the system of land limitation, a detailed body of qualifications according to age and sex was set down, and the amounts of land that a commoner could possess were determined according to them. In addition, there was a set of more generous limits established for officials, with the amounts varying according to one's official rank. Together with the limitations there was promulgated a system of land assignments under which wasteland and land made available through the abolition of the civilian agricultural colonies was distributed. The primary object of these assignments was probably the soldiers who were demobilized following the conquest of Wu, though landless peasants were doubtless included as well. Although the system of land assignment was a one-time affair, it may be considered the premier attempt to institutionalize and institute in a comprehensive manner the distribution of land.

Short-lived and faced with numerous problems, internal and external, the Southern Dynasties were never able to

impose a comprehensive policy of limitation and distribution of arable land. The Liu Sung did, however, establish limitations on the possession of natural resource lands. Loosely based on the pattern of the land limitations of the Western Chin, these limitations regulated the amount of natural resource lands one could hold according to rank. But, they seem largely to have been observed in the breach, and the rulers of the Southern Dynasties found it necessary to periodically order measures against persons who were encroaching on these lands. The limited efforts of the Southern Dynasties seem to place them on the fringes of historical development with regard to land policy. Such was not the case with the Northern Dynasties, however.

The Northern Dynasties generally followed the patterns of the land tenure and utilization policies of the Chinese regimes which had preceded them. Under the Northern Wei the most ambitious scheme to date was promulgated. The system of equal-land allotments combined both aspects of the earlier efforts at ensuring land for the peasant by providing for the limitation of size of holding and for the distribution of land to those who had none. Based upon experience gained from the distribution of land in conjunction with the relocation of people in the early years of the dynasty and building upon classical models and the examples of earlier dynasties, the Northern Wei system was particularly noteworthy for the degree to which

it attempted to achieve a balance between the distribution of land and available manpower. On paper, it and the measures that accompanied it seemed the ultimate solution to land problems, which perhaps accounts for its popularity with later regimes.

Government Lands: The policy of having lands administered directly by the government and from which revenue was derived in some form of crop-share arrangement has a venerable tradition in China. The ideological basis for such a method during the early imperial period is to be found in "ducal fields" mentioned by Mencius in his description of the well-field system. During the Han, these lands were of three kinds: the imperial fields, the government fields, and the agricultural colonies. During the Later Han, the first two became merged as the fiscal administrations of the imperial household and the central government were combined. The income from such lands was used to meet administrative expenses. Initially it was simply paid into the government coffers, but subsequently--at least as early as the end of the Later Han--these lands were parceled out to officials who directly supervised their cultivation and who used the income to pay their salaries and to meet administrative expenses. An *ad hoc* measure under the Han, such use of imperial fields became institutionalized under the Southern

Dynasties and the Northern Wei. Although there is no information on the amount of this type of land, it was clearly considered an important source of revenue. Furthermore, it served an important function in that it could be used to reward worthy subjects and to provide displaced persons with land to work.

Initially the most important application of agricultural colonies was to support troops stationed in the frontier regions of Han China, a function that they continued to have throughout the imperial period of China's history. They were not limited to these areas, however, and some were later established in the interior of the empire. This apparently was first done by Emperor Kuang-wu of the Later Han in order to meet the costs of establishing control over the empire in the wake of Wang Mang's demise. The best-known case of the establishment of agricultural colonies in the interior of the empire was that by Ts'ao Ts'ao at the end of the Han dynasty. Faced with chaos in the administrative structure of the empire, Ts'ao saw agricultural colonies as an effective means of dealing with fiscal crisis, and he began by establishing a colony complex near the capital at Hsü. Its success led to establishment of similar colonies elsewhere. These colonies, which were worked by civilians, differed from those established by the Han in that they provided revenue not only for the army, but for the general fiscal needs of

the central government as well. After the abolition of these civilian colonies during the early years of the Western Chin, agricultural colonies continued to be used as a means of meeting military expenses by governments in both the north and the south. Only the Southern Dynasties seem to have continued to use agricultural colonies as a means of producing revenue for non-military needs.

Promotion of Agriculture: Complementing the policies that were more narrowly involved with land utilization and distribution, and common to all governments of the early imperial period, were a series of measures that were directed at the promotion of agriculture. Promotion of agriculture was considered to be one of the primary tasks of the chief local officials, and on occasion special officials were dispatched to travel about the empire with the promotion of agriculture as one of their charges. This could involve a number of elements, including education, assistance, restriction of non-agricultural activities, reclamation, reward, and relocation. The best example of education that we have seen is the work of Chao Kuo during the Former Han, but it is by no means the only one. Throughout the early imperial period local officials frequently imparted more advanced techniques to the peasants in their bailiwicks. Assistance included giving or loaning grain for seed and consumption in times of dearth,

distributing farm implements to persons who had been relocated, and allowing persons struck by natural disaster to travel to areas where food was more plentiful. Restriction of non-agricultural activities usually involved efforts to turn people from the commerce and handicrafts--the so-called "secondary activities"--to agriculture, which was considered "fundamental." In some cases peasants were even prohibited from engaging in supplementary activities that were considered to be non-agricultural even though what they produced was for their own use. Reclamation included both government-sponsored irrigation projects and support for opening up wasteland. Diligent peasants were rewarded in numerous ways, the most common being the bestowal of the rank of "diligent farmer" and the remission of taxes. And relocation was encouraged to achieve a favorable land/labor ratio by moving landless peasants to regions where population was sparse and land plentiful. This by no means exhausts the list of government activities aimed at promoting agriculture.

Taxation: The fourth facet of the evolution of land policy during this period was taxation. The striking feature of the land tax during the early imperial period is how relatively light the rate was. This is no wise means that the rulers of early imperial China considered agriculture economically unimportant. To the contrary,

it is a manifestation of the importance that they assigned to it. By appearing to make the tax burden on peasants and the land they worked quite bearable, the rulers probably thought to encourage people to take up or, at least not abandon, agricultural pursuits. Similar motives no doubt underlay the frequent remissions of taxes when natural disaster struck.

Throughout the early imperial period, the most notable trend with regard to the land tax was towards simplification of its collection. Under the Former Han, the land tax was levied as a portion of the total yield, initially one-tenth, then one-fifteenth, and finally one-thirtieth. In the beginning, the individual peasant was to report the amount of his harvests so that the government could calculate the amount owed. During the Later Han, land was classified into three categories according to fertility and the tax was levied according to the anticipated yield for each category of land. Although ostensibly assessed as a percentage of yield, this tax in fact amounted to a levy based on the amount of land cultivated. Toward the close of the Later Han, during the ascendency of Ts'ao Ts'ao, the land tax was transformed into an assessment on the amount of land held, with a person paying 4 _sheng_ of grain per _mou_. Although the rate differed, this method of taxation was followed by the Western Chin. Initially, the Eastern Chin also adopted a land tax based upon the

amount of land owned, but toward the end of the fourth century it made an important change in the way the tax was collected. In place of a land tax on the amount of arable owned, one in the form of a capitation was adopted. Under this new form each male adult was to pay a fixed amount of grain, regardless of the amount of his harvest or the size of his holdings. A similar form obtained under the Northern Dynasties, though the household was taken as the basic unit of taxation for the land tax. As we have seen, this resulted in widespread tax fraud as families combined to form single households, thereby lessening their tax burden. In 486 a new tax structure, one meant to dovetail with the system of equal land allotments, was adopted in which the basic unit of taxation was a man and his wife. Obviously, it would have been difficult for several couples to pass themselves off as a single conjugal unit.

Evaluation: Having briefly recapitulated the land policies of the rulers of the early imperial period, we must now ask: What were the goals of these policies? and To what degree were they successful in achieving these goals? Unfortunately, these questions are more easily posed than answered.

At the outset we noted that the general goal of the land policies was to establish the control of the central

government over free-floating resources. But how did those who created and administered these policies conceive that they would achieve this general goal? In other words, what were the specific goals of each policy? The primary goal of the policies for assuring land to the peasant was to create the conditions that would make a free peasantry possible. To this end, these policies sought to generate conditions favorable to creation and the preservation of peasant family farms. In this respect, they sound very much like the land tenure reforms of modern times. But the latter seek to establish small family farms in order to achieve a redistribution of income and provide the economic and social foundations for democracy.[1] The rulers of early imperial China had other purposes. They wished to create and preserve a free peasantry which they then could exploit as a source of revenue and manpower.

A corollary of the creation of a free peasantry based on small family farms was the destruction or the containment of powerful local notables. If the power of such notables in a particular area overshadowed that of the central government, then they could exclude the government and dominate and exploit the peasantry for their own ends. Since in early imperial China the power of such local notables was based largely upon extensive land holdings, the government sought to circumscribe their power by limiting the amount of land that they could control. Under

the Han, the central government appears to have attempted to achieve this simply by making it illegal for a person to so monopolize the land in a particular area that he deprived others of the opportunity to own land. Other than this, there seem to have been no restrictions on the amount of land that could be held, aside from the short-lived limits established by Emperor Ai and Wang Mang. On the other hand, in later periods specific limits were established on the amount of land that could be owned according to rank. This was the case during the Western Chin and the Liu Sung dynasties.

How effective were these measures? This is very difficult to answer, largely because adequate data are lacking. Based upon what information we do have, we can say that results were mixed. These policies seem to have been most effective during the Han. This is not surprising, since the Han was the longest of the dynasties during the early imperial period and it was the strongest. It is not without significance that a recent writer has asserted that the Chinese peasant never had life better than he did under the Han.[2] There are numerous references in the Han sources to officials taking effective action against persons who monopolized land. Perhaps this, together with the assistance that the government offered peasants and the occasional distributions of land, was all that was needed to ensure the existence of a free peasantry. As

the Later Han progressed, however, such limited measures became less and less adequate. Significantly, during this period the locally powerful families grew increasingly powerful and prominent. Also, during this period we find patron-client relationships becoming more prevalent and the number of non-free social groups increasing. Attempts were made by the Western Chin to reverse the situation through the system of land assignments and through the limitations on landholdings and on the numbers of certain types of clients a person could have. These efforts were not very successful. Similar efforts were attempted by the Liu Sung, but with no better results. The most ambitious attempt in this area was the Northern Wei's system of equal land allotments, but its adoption may have been limited to very specific areas and there is no reason to suppose that it was any more successful.

The most successful body of land measures adopted by the governments of early imperial China was concerned with the direct administration of land by the government. Agricultural colonies had demonstrated their value as a means of supporting troops in the frontier regions during the Han dynasty. Their success resulted in their being resorted to in periods when other systems for producing revenue and manpower had broken down. They guaranteed to the central government the resources it needed by giving it direct control over them. Because of their effectiveness in this regard,

Ts'ao Ts'ao relied upon agricultural colonies as the basis of his fiscal system. And, although the system created under him was dismantled, agricultural colonies continued to be used throughout the early imperial period.

Besides feeding the imperial fisc, the agricultural colonies, especially the civilian colonies, had another purpose. By providing peasants with land to cultivate under a system that also afforded protection, the colonies offered an alternative to entering into a patron-client relationship with local notables during times of trouble. In this way, they served to undermine the power of such notables in the areas where the colonies were located, though their effectiveness in this regard is difficult to assess.

The success of government-administered lands was also evident in the imperial and government fields. Under the Han, these lands produced significant amounts of revenue for the imperial household and the central government, and they were probably the securest form of income the government had. In the post-Han period these lands remained an important source of income, but increasingly they were turned over to local officials to pay their salaries and administrative expenses. While this method gave local officials assured revenue, the need to adopt it was a reflection of administrative decline.

The success of measures discussed under the heading

of "promotion of agriculture" in increasing agricultural production and thereby the amount of the resources available to the central government must have depended upon the government's already having effective control over the land and the people. It would have been of little value to have introduced new techniques or have given seed and other assistance to peasants if they were the clients of some powerful notable. Likewise, what would have been the value of making an ostentatious cancellation of the land tax if the peasant was already sheltered from paying taxes by his relationship with a powerful neighbor? Nonetheless, in areas where the government was effective, the efforts at the promotion of agriculture do seem to have chalked up some important successes. There are numerous examples of officials successfully introducing new agricultural methods, of reclamation projects, and of people being persuaded to settle down and take up farming. No doubt the least successful of the devices by which the central government sought to promote agriculture was the suppression of mercantile activities.

Taxation policy likewise depended upon governmental effectiveness for its success. To successfully levy a land tax, it is necessary to carry out cadastral surveys, and to accomplish this the government must have an efficient administration in the countryside. The changes in the land tax during this period suggest that after the Han

it did not have such an administration. The tax was increasingly simplified in order to make assessment easier. The outcome was a bizarre situation in which greatly bloated households were paying an equally greatly ballooned tax prior to the tax reform initiated under Emperor Hsiao-wen of the Northern Wei.

In sum, we can say that these policies operated with declining degrees of success throughout the early imperial period. The measures to ensure land to the peasant were the most fundamental, and although it is probably something of an oversimplification, it does not seem far from the mark to say that the elaborateness of these schemes was inversely proportional to the ability of the regime enacting them to enforce them successfully. The agricultural colonies demonstrated greater success, but they were localized and could hardly be adopted as the fundamental economic and social structure of the empire. And the success of taxation policy and policies for the promotion of agriculture and the collection and expansion of resources depended upon effective government, something that was in increasingly short supply.

Notes:

[1]The family farm theory of land tenure and its relationship to democracy are discussed by R. Schickele, "Theories Concerning Land Tenure," Journal of Farm Economics XXXIV (1952), 743; Elias H. Tuma, Twenty-six Centuries of Agrarian Reform (Berkeley, 1965), pp. 9-10; and A. Whitney Griswold, Farming and Democracy (New Haven, 1952).

[2]Ning K'o, "Han-tai nung-yeh sheng-ch'an man-t'an," Kuang-ming jih-pao, April 10, 1979, p. 4.

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APPENDIX I

TABLE OF MEASUREMENTS

The following table is intended to give the reader some idea of the size of the units of measurement during the period from the Former Han through the Northern Wei. It is intended to serve as a guide only and no attempt has been made at completeness. The problems of determining exact equivalents for this period are manifold, and at the present state of our knowledge the best that can be hoped for is approximate agreement among scholars. Even if we feel reasonably certain regarding the size of official measurements, we cannot be certain that these units were in common use among the populace. There were no doubt significant regional variations also, such as were found in China even in the current century.

Our knowledge of the units of measurement for this period is not only uncertain, but it is uneven as well. Our knowledge of Han measurements is fairly complete, but for subsequent periods it is rather spotty. Therefore, the information given for the Han is much fuller than that for the later periods. Because of the limited knowledge of the later periods, equivalents are not given for every dynasty. Even so, the information given should be adequate

for a reasonable understanding of the use of measurements in early imperial China.

The reader will notice a general trend throughout the period for the size of units of measure to increase. Since from the Wei period on, a household tax or capitation was levied in amounts of silk, this increase amounted to a subtle increase in taxes. The bolt of pongee that a Northern Wei peasant paid would have been longer than that paid by a Western Chin peasant. Theoretically, the increase in the length of the _ch'ih_ should have also meant an increase in the size of the _mou_, and the equivalents given for the _mou_ reflect that increase. It is unlikely, however, that any significant alteration was made as far as the individual peasant was concerned. Peasants farming land that had been handed down to them, probably registered that land in the same amounts as their fathers and grandfathers had, without any adjustment being made for increases in the size of the units of measure. The powerful and aristocratic families would have especially benefited from such a practice, because they tended to retain the same holdings over a long period of time.

HAN

Lineal measurements:

1 _ch'ih_ = 23.1 cm	1 _ch'ih_ = 23.1 cm
6 _ch'ih_ = 1 _pu_ (pace)	10 _ch'ih_ = 1 _chang_ = 2.31 m

1 pu = 1.386 m   4 chang = 1 pi (bolt) = 9.24 m

1 mou[a] = 100 pu x 1 pu = 138.6 m

1 mou[b] = 240 pu x 1 pu = 332.84 m

1 ch'ing = 100 mou[a] = 13,860 m^2

= 100 mou[b] = 33,284 m^2

A Ch'ing scholar, Yü Cheng-hsieh, suggested that the 240 pace mou was in use in the area of the former state of Ch'in prior to the reign of Emperor Wu, while the 100 pace mou was the common unit in eastern China. Under the reign of Emperor Wu, the 240 pace mou was made the standard unit for the entire empire ("'Wang chih' tung-t'ien ming chih chieh-i," Kuei-i lei kao, 3.27a-28a, in An-hui ts'ung-shu ti-san-ch'i ch'üan-shu [n.p., 1934], ts'e 52; "Mou-chih," Kuei-i ts'un-kao, [Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng ed.], [Shanghai, 1937], 10.294-295). Although Yü's theory is attractive and plausible, the evidence for it is weak. Moreover, the passage in the Discourses on Salt and Iron that attributes the change to Emperor Wu says nothing about its applying to only one part of the empire (Ytl 3.106). But this is not conclusive, and further research is needed before a final judgement on Yü's theory can be rendered.

Volume measurements:

1 yüeh   (this measurement not used after the Han)

1 ko = 2 yüeh

1 sheng = 10 ko = 199.688 ml

1 _tou_ = 10 _sheng_ = 1.997 liters

1 _shih_ (_hu_) = 10 _tou_ = 19.696 liters

Shih as a unit of volume was equivalent to the _hu_. Grain was measured in "greater _shih_" (_ta shih_) and "lesser _shih_" (_hsiao shih_); the former was used for hulled grain and the latter for unhulled grain. The ratio between the two units was 5:3. Thus, 3 lesser _shih_ of unhulled grain were equivalent to 1.8 lesser _shih_ of hulled grain. The actual amount of grain involved was probably the same, with the qualifiers "lesser" and "greater" indicating whether the grain being measured had been hulled or not.

Weight measurements:

1 _shu_ = 100 millet kernels

1 _liang_ = 24 _shu_ = 15 grams

1 _chin_ (catty) = 16 _liang_ = 240 grams

1 _chün_ = 30 _chin_ = 7.2 kilos

1 _shih_ = 4 _chün_ = 28.8 kilos

Shih used as a unit of weight is also pronounced _tan_.

WEI

Lineal measurements:

1 _ch'ih_ = 24.12 cm

1 _pu_ = 1.45 m

1 _mou_ = 347.33 m^2

1 _ch'ih_ = 24.12 cm

1 _chang_ = 2.41 m

1 _pi_ = 9.64 m

Volume measurements:

1 *sheng* = 202.3 ml

1 *shih* (*hu*) = 20.23 liters

Weight measurements:

1 *chin* = 240 grams

1 *shih* = 28.8 kilos

EASTERN CHIN

Lineal measurements:

1 *ch'ih* = 24.52 cm	1 *ch'ih* = 24.52 cm
1 *pu* = 1.47 m	1 *chang* = 2.45 m
1 *mou* = 353.09 m^2	1 *pi* = 9.808 m

Figures are not available for units of volume and weight for the Eastern Chin period.

NORTHERN WEI

Early (post-386)--

Lineal measurements:

1 *ch'ih* = 27.868 cm	1 *ch'ih* - 27.868 cm
1 *pu* = 1.67 m	1 *chang* = 2.786 m
1 *mou* = 401.299 m^2	1 *pi* = 11.14 m

Figures are not available for units of volume and weight for the Northern Wei during the period 386-495. In 495 a reform in units of measurements was carried out by Emperor Hsiao-wen.

Late (post-495)--

Lineal measurements:

1 _ch'ih_ = 29.576 cm	1 _ch'ih_ = 29.576 cm
1 _pu_ = 1.77 m	1 _chang_ = 2.958 m
1 _mou_ = 425.89 m^2	1 _pi_ = 11.83 m

Volume measurements:

1 _sheng_ = 396.3 ml

1 _shih_ (_hu_) = 39.63 liters

Weight measurements:

1 _chin_ = 222.73 grams

1 _shih_ = 26.728 kilos

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APPENDIX II

PEASANT INCOME AND EXPENDITURES DURING THE HAN

Descriptions of the peasantry during the Han generally picture them as leading a miserable existence. Such characterizations by modern writers have their origins in the statements of contemporary observers who indeed paint a dismal picture. Ch'ao Ts'o (d. 155 B.C.) in a famous memorial to Emperor Wen described the peasant as being caught in a vicious situation where he was barely able to produce 100 _shih_ of grain by spending his springs plowing, summers weeding, autumns harvesting, and winters storing. In addition he had to cut and gather firewood and had to perform corvee for the government. In spring he could not escape the wind and dust, in summer he was scorched by the sun, in autumn he was pelted by the rain, and in winter he suffered the cold; throughout the four seasons, said Ch'ao, he had not a single day of rest. Furthermore, the peasant also had to take care of his daily private affairs--sending people off and welcoming others, mourning the dead and looking after the ill, caring for orphans and raising the young. And as if all this were not enough, he had to deal with flood and drought, burdensome taxes, unseasonal levies, and government orders which might be "issued in the morning

and changed by nightfall." Consequently, he was forced to sell off his possessions at half their value, and when that had been done, to borrow money at double interest. To pay the interest, he had to sell his fields, his house, and his children.[1] Such a life could hardly be called the "good life."

Ch'ao was not the only one who so described the life of a peasant. During the reign of Emperor Wu, Tung Chung-shu also described the hardships of peasant life: their land was being gobbled up by the wealthy and powerful, tenants had to pay a rental of 50%, there was corvee and military service to be performed, and there were a land tax and a head tax to be paid. As a result, said Tung, many people were reduced to wearing "the clothes of oxen and horses" (which meant they went naked) and "eating the food of swine." Little wonder people were taking off for the mountains and forests to become bandits![2]

Finally, there is the famous description of a peasant cultivator by Ts'ui Yin of the Later Han in his piece, "On Gamblers":

> A gambler saw a farmer wearing a bamboo hat and carrying a hoe for weeding. His face was black and his hands and feet were callused. His skin was like the bark of a mulberry tree and his feet were like a bear's paws. Bending over in the fields, his sweat poured forth and mingled with the mud. So, [the gambler] addressed him, "You suffer the summer heat to plow and hoe. Salt encrusts your back, your legs are like scorched beams and your skin

> is like a piece of leather which an awl could not pierce. You stagger about on twisted feet and sore shins. I could call you a plant or a tree, but you have a body and limbs which bend and stretch. I could say you were a bird or a beast, but your form and countenance resemble a man's. How is it you received a fate so poor that your qualities are so base?"[3]

Such a person could hardly be said to living high off the hog; more likely, he was living <u>with</u> the hogs.

These descriptions have been widely accepted as giving an accurate picture of the condition of peasant life in Han China. It is obvious that people living under such conditions would hardly have been in any position to purchase land. On the contrary, according to both Tung and Ch'ao, the peasant was losing his land to the wealthy and powerful. Clearly then, the general economic condition of the peasantry could influence landholding patterns, and according to Tung at least, peasant poverty was resulting in the rise of large landholdings and the decline of small ones. But just how accurate are these descriptions really? Precisely how large a segment of the Han populace are they meant to describe?

Both Ch'ao and Tung were concerned with persuading their respective emperors to adopt particular policies which they favored, and their descriptions may have been intentionally overdrawn in order to underscore the importance of adopting their proposals. But this is not to say

that they were merely spinning yarns, only that they might have been skewing their descriptions. Ts'ui Yin's description as well is undoubtedly exaggerated. First of all, his description is meant to be literary, perhaps even satirical, and not factual. Secondly, there may be something of a "class bias" at work in his description; it is easy to imagine a gentleman, as Ts'ui Yin was, in another place or time offering a similar description of a peasant grubbing away in the fields.

Such descriptions are not without corroboration, however. There are numerous similar descriptions by other Han observers. Yet the fact remains that these descriptions are primarily qualitative and anecdotal in nature. There are, however, other data of a more quantitative nature, which, although not sufficient to completely supplant reliance on the descriptive materials, can nonetheless serve to fill out the picture we have of the Han peasant. Lest there be any misunderstanding concerning the nature of this evidence, we will first describe the sort of material that is being referred to here.

The "quantitative" data (perhaps "non-descriptive" would be a better term, since this data can hardly be considered "quantitative" in any statistical sense of the word) derive from several sources which may be divided into those which are textual and those which are archaeological. An example of the former is a mathematical text

book, the <u>Chiu chang suan shu</u>. This work contains a large number of problems which are used to demonstrate mathematical concepts. A great many of these problems refer to prices of various commodities, including various kinds of food, land, clothing, and so on, and it does not seem unreasonable to assume that the prices quoted are generally based upon actual prices prevailing when the work was written. Other price information can be found in the dynastic histories and in agricultural works. The bulk of the archaeological evidence consists of administrative records kept on bamboo and wood strips which were unearthed in the northwestern regions of China. This type also includes information concerning prices as well as information concerning food consumption. Other archaeological materials include records of land sales which give both the amounts and the prices of the land involved, and the amounts of land held by those who had to rely on government relief.

These data are of uneven quality. Yet, if they are used with care, they can reveal important information concerning the quality of life enjoyed (or suffered) by peasants during the Han dynasty. The first aspect which will be examined here is peasant income.

The primary form of income for the peasant was of course that which he derived from the grain he raised. Therefore it is necessary to determine just how much grain

he could raise, what portion of his yield he would consume, and what portion of the yield he could sell and for how much he was able to sell it. Although he may have had additional income from secondary crops, from working as a hired laborer during the off season or from other activities, because the amount of such income cannot even be guessed, it will not be considered here.

The primary grain corp during the Han was millet, though others such as rice, wheat, barley, soybeans, lesser beans (hsiao tou), and hemp were also grown.[4] According to Ch'ao Ts'o, a family of five, two of whom were able to work the fields, could plant 100 mou of land from which it could harvest 100 shih of grain.[5] A somewhat higher figure of 150 shih per 100 mou was given by Li K'uei in his description of the income and expenditures of a peasant family during the pre-Han period.[6] Thus, the yield would have been 1-1.5 shih per mou or an average of 1.25 shih per mou.

During the Later Han, Chung-ch'ang T'ung asserted that the average yield was 3 hu (=3 shih) per mou[7] or 300 shih per 100 mou, a three-fold increase over the estimates of Ch'ao Ts'o and Li K'uei. Ch'ao and Li were both giving figures for the old style 100 pace mou of the Chou, whereas Chung-ch'ang was giving figures for the Han mou which was 240 paces long. If we take the average of the earlier figures (1.25 shih) and multiply it by the difference in

the sizes of the two types of mou (2.4x), we find that the adjusted yield (3 shih) is the same as that given by Chung-ch'ang T'ung. It is probable, then, that the average yield per mou during the Han was around 3 shih. This figure gains some support from calculations made by Utsunomiya Kiyoyoshi which yield an average of 3.96 shih/mou (this and all subsequent references are to the Han 240 pace mou).[8] Utsunomiya's calculations are based upon the present estimates as well as some other contemporary estimates which are considerably higher. Ch'ao, Li, and Chung-ch'ang may have been intentionally underreporting in order to strengthen their arguments, so it does not seem unwarranted to adopt 3.5 shih/mou of unhulled millet as the average yield, bearing in mind that Utsunomiya's higher figure may be closer to the truth. By adopting a somewhat conservative figure, we can perhaps avoid giving an unduly optimistic picture of the peasant's income.

In order to determine what a peasant family's total harvest was, how much they consumed, and how much they could sell, we shall examine a hypothetical Han peasant--Ch'en Hsin-hsiung--and his family who lived toward the end of the Former Han. The household consists of five persons--Ch'en, his wife Ts'ai-chu, his son Ch'ing-yuan (age 6), his daughter P'ei-ch'i (age 13), and his father Shu-chi (age 57).[9] We shall assume that this family owned

100 mou of land that could be cultivated annually or its equivalent. Although the figures for size of family and size of landholding are arbitrarily chosen, they are based upon what was considered by Han writers to have been the norm, or at least what should have been the norm, for family and plot sizes.

With a holding of 100 mou and an average yield of 3.5 shih per mou, Ch'en's harvest would have amounted to 350 shih of unhulled millet. A portion of this would have been retained for consumption by the Ch'en family. A general idea of the amount needed for the family's own needs can be by examining the size of the monthly allotments given members of families on the military colonies in northwest China, the figures for which have been preserved on the bamboo strips. According to these, Ch'en would have required 3 shih per month; his wife, 2.16 shih; his daughter, 1.66 shih; and his son, 1.66 shih.[10] No figures are available for older persons, so we shall assume that Ch'en Shu-chi's needs were the same as his son's, though in fact they may have been less. Thus, the Ch'en family's total monthly grain requirement was 11.48 shih per month or 137.76 shih per year, which would have left 212.24 shih from the harvest. Ch'en would have had to set aside as much as another two per-cent of the total, that is 7 shih, to use as seed the following year,[11] leaving 205.24 shih. Ch'en further would have had to pay

out another 11.67 shih, one-thirtieth of the total harvest, as land tax, leaving 193.57 shih to be sold.

The price that Ch'en Hsin-hsiung would have been able to get for his grain would have depended upon where he lived and the general quality of the harvest for that particular year. Grain in the northern frontier regions went at a higher price than in the interior. The price on the frontier ran about 100 cash or more per shih for unhulled millet.[12] In years of poor harvest, the price of a shih of grain might perhaps climb as high as several hundred or even several thousand cash.[13] Conversely, in an especially good year it might plummet to as low as 5 cash per shih.[14] As a rule, however, the normal price per shih of unhulled millet in the central part of the empire was around 40-50 cash.[15] If we assume, therefore, an average price per shih of 45 cash, Ch'en could have converted his remaining grain into 8,711 cash. With this money, plus any the family might have brought in from other crops, working as laborers or the like, Ch'en Hsin-hsiung would have had to meet his yearly expenses.

The first of the expenses which Ch'en would have had to take care of, governments being what they are, was taxes. The Ch'en family would have had to pay a head tax on three of its members--Hsin-hsiung, his wife and their daughter P'ei-ch'i. The tax for an adult age 15-56 was 120 cash and for a child age 7-14 (prior to the reign of

Emperor Yuan, age 3-14) was 23 cash. Ch'ing-yuan and his grandfather were thus exempt, and the total head tax for the Ch'en household was 263 cash, leaving 8,448 cash. In addition, Hsin-hsiung would have been liable for one month of corvee service and three days of military service a year. He could have gotten out of this by paying 2,000 cash for a replacement to perform the corvee and 300 cash for a replacement to perform the military service. Having paid these, Ch'en would have had 6,148 cash.

The Han farm family was probably pretty much self sufficient. Many household goods could be made at home at little cost. The Ch'ens may have raised some poultry and perhaps even some hogs or dogs which could have put an occasional piece of meat on the table or brought in some additional cash. They no doubt raised vegetables and may also have gathered wild plants for food. The family could have caught fish at a nearby reservoir, though it may have had to pay for them.[16] The Ch'ens perhaps even raised their own fish in a small pond. Nonetheless, there were still some things that Ch'en Hsin-hsiung and his family would have had to purchase.

One of the things they would have had to buy was salt. One <u>shih</u> (=0.565 <u>bu</u>.) would probably have been sufficient to meet the family's needs for an entire year; one <u>shih</u> of salt would have cost Ch'en about 40 cash.[17] Such things as sandals and straw or rattan hats were probably made by

his wife from grass and material gathered in the neighborhood. His wife may have also woven hemp cloth from which she made clothing. If not, she could have purchased three bolts of hemp cloth, enough to make a pair of trousers, a jacket, and a robe for each member of the family, for about 735 cash.[18] After the purchases of cloth and salt the family would have had 5,373 cash.

Whatever additional expenses the family may have had are difficult to determine. There would have been expenses for such things as religious offerings and the like. For the pre-Han period Li K'uei calculated that these required 300 cash,[19] but for Ch'en, the expense was probably greater, perhaps as much as 500 cash. Ch'en may have also needed to buy an occasional tool, though this need not have been a yearly expense. We would probably not be amiss if we determined his average yearly tool cost at 150 cash.[20]

According to our calculations Ch'en Hsin-hsiung and his family should now have had 4,623 cash remaining. There would no doubt have been some unforseen expenses such as illnesses for which the Ch'ens might purchase medicine. There probably would also have been some minor expenses which have not been included in the preceding description. To allow for these, we shall deduct 25%--1,156 cash--from the remaining total. This would have left the Ch'en family with a surplus of just under 3,500 cash. What might they have done with this money?

One obvious possibility Ch'en might have considered for investing his surplus was the purchase of land. Information concerning the price of land reveals a wide range. According to the Chiu-chang suan-shu, one mou of good farmland cost 300 cash, while one mou of poor land cost 70 cash.[21] The bamboo strips reveal prices ranging from 25 to 100 cash per mou for farmland.[22] The records of four land sales, all dating from the Later Han (A.D. 81, 169, 178 & 184) reveal prices of 507, 3,100, 1,500 and 3,000 cash per mou.[23] During the reign of Emperor Wu, Tung-fang Shuo said that farmland which had been taken over to form the Shang-lin Park was worth one unit of gold (=10,000 cash) per mou.[24] In general, land prices seem to have been higher nearer the metropolitan regions than in the outlying regions, and they appear to have risen as time passed, with the exception of the figure quoted by Tung-fang Shuo, who was probably deliberately exaggerating since he was criticizing creation of the park. Except for the land referred to by Tung-fang, Ch'en Hsin-hsiung would have been able to at least afford even some of the higher priced land, and he could have bought a great deal of the lower priced land. Had he been able to save some money from a series of moderately good harvests, he would have been in good position to purchase a fairly sizeable amount of land.

Land was not all that our Han peasant might have bought with his surplus. Had he wished, he could have

invested in some livestock. The Chiu-chang suan-shu gives a bottom price of 1,200 cash and a top price of 3,750 cash for an ox, and also mentions a middling price of 1,818 cash.[25] The bamboo strips list two oxen at 5,000 cash.[26] Ch'en could have readily afforded at least one, and purchasing an additional ox would have increased his productivity. Besides oxen, Ch'en might also have purchased a hog (300 cash),[27] a sheep (150-1,000 cash),[28] a dog (100 cash),[29] a chicken (70 cash),[30] or a rabbit (29 cash).[31] His family could either have eaten them or perhaps raised them to sell.

Obviously Ch'en Hsin-hsiung and his family, though by no means wealthy, were not poor. Their total wealth may be conservatively estimated to have been around 40,000 cash.[32] We can see relatively how well off they were by comparing their wealth with government "poverty levels" for the same general period. In 48 B.C. imperial fields and pasture lands were given to the poor. Those who had wealth totaling less than 1,000 cash were also given food and seed.[33] Then in 7 B.C. and again in A.D. 2 persons with total wealth of less than 100,000 cash were exempted from paying taxes if they had suffered natural disaster.[34] In A.D. 2 persons whose total wealth did not reach 20,000 cash were also exempted from paying taxes regardless of whether they had suffered natural disaster.[35] A middle class family was considered to possess wealth totaling

100,000 cash.[36] On the basis of these figures, we can say that those with a worth of 1,000 cash or less were considered desperately poor, those with a worth of 20,000 cash or less were considered poor, and those with more than 20,000 but less than 100,000 cash, while not really considered poor, were still not thought to have enough reserves to carry them through a bad harvest and pay taxes too. The Ch'ens clearly would have been in this last category.

Ch'en Hsin-hsiung, then, was well enough off that, barring any really severe disaster which might wipe him out completely, he could have gradually expanded his holdings and increased his wealth. Were Ts'ai-chu to give birth to another son, Ch'en Hsin-hsiung could reasonably have hoped to acquire enough land that he could have left substantial holdings (i.e., more than 50 _mou_) to each. But if Ch'en can be considered to have been relatively well off, what about his neighbors whose holdings were rather less?

For comparative purposes we shall assume that the hypothetical neighbors of the hypothetical Ch'en family were of the same size and composition as the Ch'en family. One neighbor, Lin Ning, had 50 _mou_ of his own and rented another 50 _mou_ on which he would have paid a rental of one-half the yield. Assuming he enjoyed the same yield per _mou_ as Ch'en and had about the same needs (his tax bite would have been lower since the landlord would have

paid the tax on the rented land), Lin would have been able to sell 112.49 shih of grain for 5,062 cash. This is 3,649 cash less than Ch'en would have been able to earn, and it would have been a little more than the surplus of about 3,500 cash which Ch'en could have invested. Lin, therefore, could not have expanded his holdings unless he found some way to increase his surplus. He perhaps could have done this by cutting expenditures at home and by personally fulfilling his corvee obligation rather than spending 2,000 cash to hire a replacement. Had he done this, then he might have been able to build up a small surplus with which he could have bought a little land, albeit not so much as Ch'en.

Another of Ch'en's neighbors, Huang Min-lieh, rented all of his land. Since Huang owned an ox, he would have paid a rental of 50 per cent of the total yield. Because all of his land was rented, he would not have had to pay any land tax, though he, like Ch'en and Lin, would have had to set aside 7 shih of grain for seed. Assuming that Huang's needs were the same as those of his neighbors, he would have been able to sell 31.24 shih from which he could have realized 1,406 cash. Obviously things would have been tight in the Huang household. Huang would have been unable to hire a substitute to perform the corvee, though since his property would have been worth less than 20,000 cash, he would not have had to pay any head tax after A.D. 2.

Clearly, Huang would not have had any surplus capital to invest in order to increase his wealth, though he could hope for a government grant of land.

Finally, there is neighbor Hu Te-hsun who owned neither land nor ox, but depended upon his landlord for everything. His rent would have been two-thirds the harvest--233.33 shih, which would have left him with only 116.67 shih, not enough to cover the needs of his family. He certainly would have been unable to hire a substitute to perform the corvee, and he would have had difficulty meeting his head tax obligation. He and his family would probably have had to rely heavily on government relief, and they may have been tempted into practising infanticide to reduce consumption. If their situation became truly desperate, Hu might have sold his wife and children, perhaps even himself, into slavery.[37] He also would have been a prime candidate to become a vagrant (liu-min). His best hope for improvement would come from a grant of land, tools, and seed by the government.

What does all this indicate? It indicates that the situation of peasants like Ch'en Hsin-hsiung was generally good and could reasonably be expected to improve. Peasants such as Lin Ning could expect their situation at least not to decline, and by dint of their efforts they could even hope to expand their holdings. The ability to weather natural disasters would have been crucial to both Ch'en

and Lin if they hoped to continue to increase their wealth and avoid selling their land. This ability in turn would have depended heavily on government assistance in times of famine. Peasants such as Huang and Hu could have had little hope of increasing their wealth on their own, and it was probably of peasants such as these Ch'ao Ts'o and Tung Chung-shu were speaking. Their best hope would have been to receive grants of government land. A peasant such as Huang perhaps might have been able to acquire some land by reclaiming unowned land, though this would have required a great deal of effort.

It is difficult to assess what these calculations reveal concerning the general condition of the peasantry during the Han since we do not know what proportion of each type (or variations thereof) made up the total peasantry. We may reasonably expect, given the Han policy of building and maintaining a strong peasantry, that as long as government administration remained effective peasants of the Ch'en and Lin types predominated. For example, documents recovered from a tomb in Hu-pei province in 1973 show that local government granaries regularly lent seed grain to peasants with small landholdings (those recorded range in size from eight to fifty-four [100 pace] _mou_ with an average of about twenty-five _mou_).[38] Holders of very small parcels were probably dependent upon such loans every year, while holders of somewhat larger parcels probably

had to resort to them in years of poor harvest when they were forced to eat their seed grain. Inability of the government to render this assistance would have left them in very difficult circumstances. So, as administrative effectiveness declined and the government was less able to provide such assistance when it was needed, the Huang and Hu type of peasant came to predominate as those who had land found it necessary to sell it or abandon it in order to avoid starving. As this occurred, we might reasonably anticipate a growth in the number of large landholders and an increasing dependency of the peasantry on them as they began to turn to these families rather than to the government for relief. It should not surprise us then to find that this is precisely what occurred in the midst of the growing upheaval and administrative breakdown of the closing years of the Later Han.

Notes:

[1]Hs 24A.1132; Nancy Lee Swann, trans., Food and Money in Ancient China (Princeton, 1950), pp. 162-164.

[2]Hs 24A.1137; Swann, pp. 180-182.

[3]Tpyl 382.5a.

[4]Ying-shih Yü, "Han China," in Food in Chinese Culture, ed. K. C. Chang (New Haven, 1977), p. 71; Hayashi Minao, "Kandai no inshoku," Tōhō gakuhō, no. 48 (December, 1975), p. 10.

[5]Hs 24A.1132; Swann, p. 162.

[6]Hs 24A.1125; Swann, pp. 140-142.

[7]HHs 49.1656.

[8]Utsunomiya Kiyoyoshi, Kandai keizai shakai shi kenkyū (Tokyo, 1956), p. 303.

[9]The Feng-su t'ung-i gives five as the average size of a family and breaks it down into husband and wife, two grandparents, and one child (Ying Shao, Feng-su t'ung-i, cited in HHs 76.2478 n. 1). I have changed the composition of the household to include two children and only one grandparent because consumption figures are available for children while they are not for the elderly.

[10]Lao Kan, Chü-yen Han chien k'ao shih shih-wen (n.p., 1943), 2.56a & b, 2.57a & b, 2.58a; Ho Ch'ang-ch'ün,

"Sheng tou pien," Lsyc 1958.6, pp. 82-83; Ch'en P'an, Han Chin i-chien shih hsiao ch'i chung (Nankang, 1975), pp. 46-47; Ts'ui Shih, Cheng lun, in Wei Cheng, et al., comp., Ch'ün shu chih yao (Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng chien-pien ed.), 45.788. Three shih were considered the basic daily ration for an adult male, though those holding higher rank received more.

[11]This percentage is based upon that given by John Lossing Buck for millet in China in 1929-1933 (J. L. Buck, Land Utilization in China [Shanghai, 1937], p. 236). The Northern Wei agricultural work of the sixth century, the Ch'i min yao shu, gives 5 sheng per mou for good soil and 3 sheng per mou for poor soil (Chia Ssu-hsieh, Ch'i min yao shu, p. 9, in Yang Chia-lo, ed., Tsa-chia nung-chia san-shih chung, 2d. ed. [Taipei, 1967]; Shih Sheng-han, A Preliminary Survey of the Book "Ch'i Min Yao Shu," 2d ed. [Peking, 1962], p. 34).

[12]Lao Kan, "Han chien chung ti Ho-hsi ching-chi sheng-huo," BIHP XI.1 & 2, 71; Lao Kan, "Chü-yen Han chien k'ao-cheng," p. 59, in Lao Kan, Chü-yen Han chien k'ao-shih chih pu (Taipei, 1960). Ying-shih Yü, p. 83 n. 6, is incorrect in assuming that the price of grain in the frontier regions applied generally for the Han. A large amount of material related to commodity prices during the Han has been conveniently gathered in Ch'en Chih, "Han-tai ti mi-ku chia chi nei-chün pien-chün wu chia

ch'ing-k'uang," in Ch'en Chih, Liang Han Ching-chi shih-liao lun-ts'ung (Hsi-an, 1958), pp. 281-289. Unfortunately, his citations are not always correct.

[13]Hs 1A.31, 24A.1127, & 1145, 24B.1153, 69.2979, 77.3296; HHs 1A.32, 43.1459, 51.1688; HFHD, I, 82; Swann, pp. 148, 197, 321.

[14]Hs 8.259, 24A.1141; HFHD, II, 238, Swann, pp. 192.

[15]Kusuyama Shūsaku, "Shin Kan jidai no sozei seido," Rekishi kyōiku XVII (1969).6, 23.

[16]HHc 26.3625.

[17]HHs 58.1870 n. 4.

[18]Chiu-chang suan-shu (Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng chien-pien ed.), 2.33, gives a cost of 245 cash per bolt. One bolt (p'i) = 10.10 yards.

[19]Hs 24A.1125; Swann, p. 141.

[20]I have seen no examples of tool costs. However, a crossbow could cost 300 cash and a sword 600 cash (Lao Kan, "Han chien chung..., p. 71). Both of these implements would have been more costly to fashion than most farm implements. Moreover, it would not have been necessary to purchase new farm implements every year, so an average of 150 cash per year does not seem unduly low. Hsiao-t'ung Fei and Chang Chih-I in their study of Lu-ts'un village in Yunnan noted that the average household usually

had three hoes and three sickles which lasted more than ten years. Most of the other implements were of wood and presumably could be fashioned by the farmer himself (Earthbound China [Chicago, 1945], p. 73).

[21]Chiu-chang suan-shu, 7.120.

[22]Lao Kan, "Han chien chung...," p. 71.

[23]Lo Chen-yü, Chen-sung t'ang chi ku i wen (n.p., 1931), 15.26b-28a; Niida Noburu, "Kan Gi Rokuchō no tochi baibai bunsho," Tōhō gakuhō no. 8 (January, 1938), pp. 52-54.

[24]Hs 65.2849; Burton Watson, trans., Courtier and Commoner in Ancient China (New York, 1974), p. 86.

[25]Chiu-chang suan-shu, 7.111.

[26]Lao Kan, "Han chien chung...," p. 71.

[27]Chiu-chang suan-shu, 8.133.

[28]Ibid., 7.113, 8.133 & 138; Lao Kan, "Han chien chung...," p. 71.

[29]Chiu-chang suan-shu, 7.115.

[30]Ibid., 7.111.

[31]Ibid., 7.115.

[32]This estimate is based on the following:

100 mou	@	300 cash/mou	=	30,000 cash
1 ox	@	2,000 cash/head	=	2,000
1 house & plot			=	5,000*

Tools, household goods, other
livestock, clothing, etc.= 3,000
TOTAL 40,000 cash

*The bamboo strips give the prices for two dwellings and plots, one at 10,000 cash and the other at 3,000 cash (Lao Kan, "Han chien chung...," p. 71; Lao Kan, Chü-yen Han chien shih-wen, 3.84).

[33]Hs 9.279; HFHD, II, 302.

[34]Hs 11.337, 12.353; HFHD, III, 26, 73.

[35]Hs 12.353; HFHD, III, 73.

[36]Hs 4.134; HFHD, I, 272 & III, 26 n. 4.2.

[37]T'ung-tsu Ch'ü, Han Social Structure, ed. Jack L. Dull (Seattle, 1972), p. 141; C. Martin Wilbur, Slavery in China During the Former Han Dynasty, 206 B.C.--A.D. 25 (Chicago, 1943), pp. 85-88.

[38]Ch'iu Ssu-kuei, "Hu-pei Chiang-ling Feng-huang shan shih-hao Han mu ch'u-t'u chien-tu k'ao-shih," Wen-wu 1974.7, pp. 51-52. These documents, which date from the reign of Emperor Ching (r. 156-141), afford us an interesting glimpse of the lives of peasants during the Former Han. Although the documents do not specifically state that they are records of the amount of seed grain lent, there is no other plausible explanation. For the amounts of grain given to each household work out to exactly one tou of grain for every mou of land held in every case but one.

In that one case 3 shih 7 tou were lent to a household holding 30 (100 pace) mou; no explanation for the additional seven tou is given. In five cases (out of twenty-five) the portion of the bamboo slip recording the amount of grain lent is missing, but if one reckons one tou per mou, the total for all twenty-five cases, 61 shih 7 tou (=617 tou), talleys exactly with the total given on slip N. 9, the first of the series. (This assumes 24 mou for slip No. 32 which has a lacuna and a partial horizontal line preceding the number four. The line could very well be the remnants of the graph 廿 , which of course is the number twenty.) Ch'iu is mistaken in concluding that the amounts involved are too small to have been seed grain (p. 55). On the contrary, such an amount would have been more than sufficient, (see n. 11 above) especially when one considers that these records date from a period prior to the change in mou size and therefore refer to the smaller 100 pace mou.

GLOSSARY

chai 宅

chan 占

chan-t'ien chih-tu 占田制度

chang 丈

chen 鎮

chen-chiang 鎮將

chi-k'ou shou-t'ien 計口授田

chi-shih-chung 給侍中

chi-t'ien 藉田

chia 家

chieh 借

chien-ping 兼併

chin 金

chin ti li 盡地力

ch'ing 頃

ching-t'ien 井田

chiu-p'in 九品

ch'üan 勸

chün-t'ien chih-tu 均田制度

chung erh-ch'ien shih 中二千石

erh-p'in 二品

fu-t'ien 府田

han-su 寒素

hao 豪

hao-fu ping-chien-che 豪富并兼者

hsiao-hsing 小姓

hsiao-wei 校尉

hsiao-wei ch'eng 校尉丞

k'o 課

kuan-t'ien 官田

kuan-ssu t'ien 官私田

kuei-t'ien 圭田

kung-t'ien 公田

li 里

li-chang 里長

li-hsia 立夏

liang-min 良民

lin 鄰

lin-chang 鄰長

liu-min 流民

lu 廬

lu-t'ien 祿田

mang-chung 芒種

pi-shu ch'eng 祕書丞

mien 免

nung-kuan 農官

pei-t'ien 倍田

ping-chia 兵家

ping-chien 并(併)兼

san-chang 三長

sheng 升

shih-t'ien 士田

ssu-ma 司馬

ta-pu-ching 大不敬

tang 黨

tang-chang 黨長

tiao 調

tien-nung chung-lang-chiang 典農中郎將

t'ien-nung hsiao-wei 典農校尉

t'ien-tsou 田騶

ts'ai-t'ien 菜田

tsu 租

t'un 屯

t'un-chü 屯聚

t'un-t'ien 屯田

t'un-t'ien ts'ao 屯田曹

tzu-fu 貲賦

tzu-tiao 貲調

tzu-tsu 貲租

yüan-t'ien[a] 轅田

yüan t'ien[b] 爰田

VITA

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