



**CHINA OVERVIEW:
A BRIEF HISTORY
OF CHINESE
DYNASTIES**

The 4 Old-World River Valley Cultures



SILK ROAD

- China to Eastern Europe
- Followed northern borders of China, India, and Persia and ended in Eastern Europe near today's Turkey and the Mediterranean Sea.



GEOGRAPHY OF CHINA

- Larger than the United States
- Climate varies
 - North
 - Temperate and cold
 - South
 - Subtropical
 - Floods and droughts
- Important rivers
 - Huang He (Yellow River) – north
 - Yangtze River – central China
- Enclosed by high mountains, hot deserts, wide oceans
- Isolated like Egypt

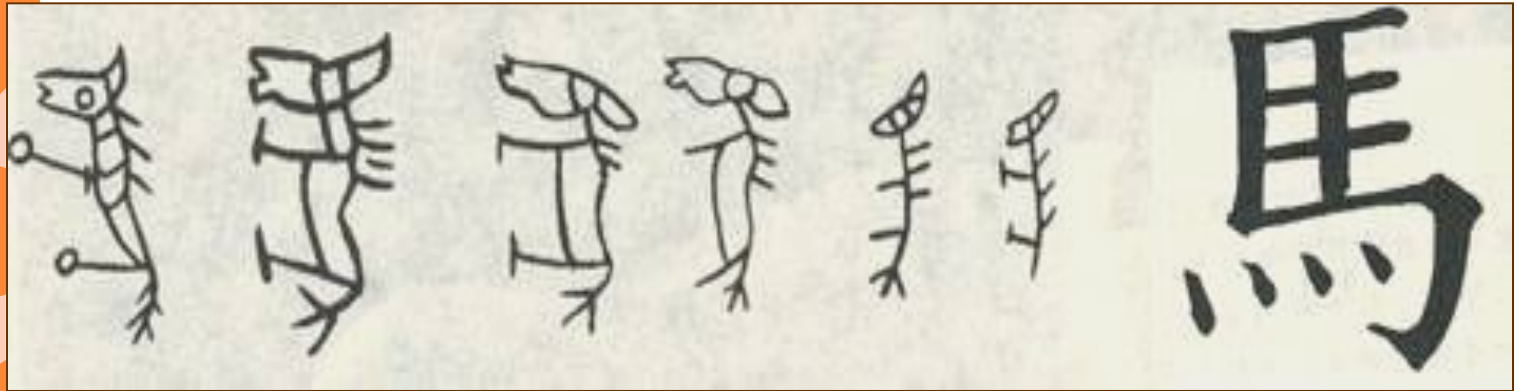


ANCIENT HISTORY

- Village settlements along Huang He River
- Farming, stone tools, weapons (bow and arrow), animal domestication, pottery
- Picture writing (oldest writing in existence)
- Now there are over 40,000 characters



The Evolution of Chinese Writing during the Shang



Pictographs



Semantic-Phonetics

WHAT ARE DYNASTIES?

- A **dynasty** is a series of rulers from the same family.
- Historically, royal rule was descended from father to son.

DYNASTIC CYCLE

MANDATE OF HEAVEN – Belief that the emperor was chosen by heaven to rule.



“T’ien Ming”

The Mandate of Heaven

- 1. The leader must lead by ability and virtue.**
- 2. The dynasty's leadership must be justified (proven) by succeeding generations.**
- 3. The mandate could be revoked by negligence and abuse; the will of the people was important.**

Start here →

A new
dynasty
comes to power.

The emperor
improves
government & life
in general

Lives of common
people improved;
Taxes are reduced
Promote farming

Problems begin
Wars
Invasions, etc

Government
spending increases
Corruption starts

Natural Disasters
Droughts,
floods,
famines

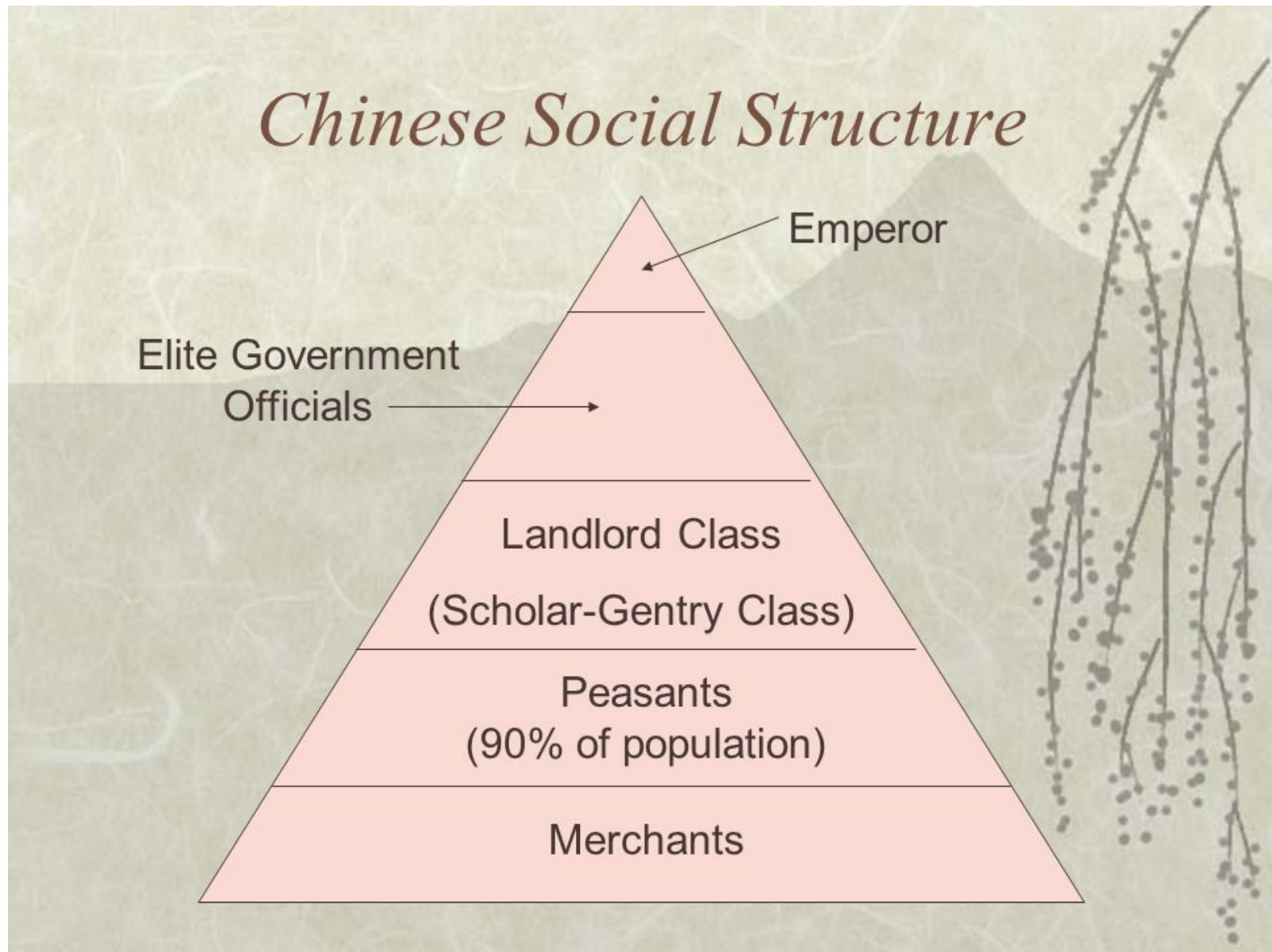
Lords loyalty starts
to lessen
Poor not happy &
start to rebel

Rebels eventually
attack emperor &
Lords abandon
emperor

Emperor is
defeated

The Dynastic Cycle

ANCIENT CHINA SOCIAL CLASSES



Han Social Hierarchy

