

# Why did the Classical Empires Fall?

	Han	Western Rome	Gupta
<b>Time</b>	220ce	476ce	550ce
<b>Economic</b>	Scholar and government officials were often exempt from taxes and peasants often fled tax collectors to these estates. As a result, a severe reduction in tax revenue financially crippled the empire. Long distance trade did decrease, but the Chinese were quite self-sufficient and were not severely hurt by this.	The rich landowning class often resisted paying their taxes and when the tax collectors did approach, they were driven away by the landowner's private armies. Also the church land was not taxable. As the empire declined, so did the trade because of unsafe roads and because it relied on economic interdependence. The drop in tax revenue and inflation crippled Rome's economy.	The government had great difficulty raising enough taxes to pay the army to protect its borders.
<b>Political</b>	The government was unable to check the power of the large private estate owners. The emperor heavily relied on the advice of his court officials and was often misinformed for their personal gain.	The government had trouble finding bureaucrats who could enforce the laws. Power struggles for the throne plagued the empire. From 235 to 284ce, 25 out of 26 emperors died a violent death. The divisions of the empire into two sections allowed the eastern portion remain stronger, while the western portion weakened.	The regional powers of the Guptas allowed them to keep much of their administrative power. They eventually grew more powerful than the central government.
<b>Social</b>	The population increase led to smaller family plantations and increased difficulty of the peasant class to pay taxes	Plagues dramatically reduced the population, in particular the farming population.	
<b>Nomadic Invasion</b>	The Xiongnu invaded, but only after the empire had already fallen. Nomadic invasions took place because the empire was no longer providing them with what they needed.	The Roman army could not defend against the movement of such nomadic groups as the Ostrogoths, Huns, and Visigoths in 476ce.	The government was too weak to defend against the nomadic invasions of the White Huns.