Similarities And Differences Between Han China And ?Mauryan/Gupta India

During the classical period, ?Han China (206 BCE-220 C) and Mauryan/Gupta India (320 BCE-550 CE) empires had developed many ?similarities and differences in methods? of political control. Although these empires are hundreds of miles apart and they share commonalities of allowing religion to control parts of their politics but in different ways. They also share the ideas of social hierarchy where based on class determines many outlooks on life in the empire, but implementing it was different. Lastly, they share a similar way of how they raised their empires but they differ in how each one fell.

The first and most prominent similarity is that both Han China and Mauryan/Gupta India dynasties used religion as a way to control the political aspects of everyday life for their citizens. Following the Qin Dynasty, Wudi “Martial Emperor” of the Han Dynasty came to power and in ways perfected the way the Chinese empire was built in their eyes. The Han empire focused all their attention into making the government as Confucius as possible, Wudi changed the idea of civil service through Confucian principles with over 130,000 employees and 18 ranks of employments. Wudi also set up Confucian themed schools which taught formal examinations of law, history, literature, and Confucianism for the positions. However, not everyone had the same opportunities to do well on these placement exams, meaning mostly poor people would end up doing the dirty work in the civil servant industry, while wealthy citizens had the money to advance to higher ranks of employment. The Han’s idea of civil service turned into a power 1 vacuum for social hierarchy to rise in China.

However, in India, where religions including Jainism, Taoism, Buddhism and Hinduism all had different effects on the political system. Jainism and Buddhism created the caste system in the government which did more harm than good, while Hinduism more so controlled many aspects of life in India because of the idea of karma as well as cause and effect of one's actions. However, like the Han dynasty, their were also Hindu schools, Mahayana (Greater Vehicle) School and Hinayana (Lesser Vehicle) School. Gupta made Hinduism a privileged religion but 2 also allowed people to practice other faiths, keeping the empire intact. “The Guptas actively used the gods and practices of Hinduism, particularly in their devotion to Vishnu and Shiva, to extend their legitimacy not just as kings but as universal rulers.” Although they had all the power and 3 control, they themselves had to use Hinduism in order to make sure their citizens believed that what they were doing was what God wants them to achieve. This offends led to misuse of power among the leaders of the empire of favoring certain people in the caste/hierarchical system. From Wudi view of civil service lead to a systematic social hierarchy among his empire, where these test would in reality favor wealthy families who could spend more on resources to help their child be as successful as possible in jobs like nobles, scholars, and state officials. While poor families did not have the same opportunities leading to jobs like farmers, artisans and merchants. The Han empire was not shy in favoring the wealthy classes more than the poor because most of the taxes used to support the government and military was taken from the merchants, while food was taken from the farmers. “Han altered the Qin system of leveling social classes by instituting uniform rules for different segments of society -- aristocrats as well as commoners. Under the Han, the upper ranks of society were taxed at lighter rates and exempted from most forms of corporal punishment.” In Wudi’s mind, his idea

was that because 4 the wealthy had vase amounts of money and power that if they cut taxes and punishments, they would be loyal to the Han empire if things were to go south.

Just like Han China, Mauryan/Gupta India also used the idea of a social hierarchy but if a slightly different way. Instead of basing hierarchy off of literature, India created a caste system which in return allowed certain groups a particular set of jobs, however unless they were considered untouchables or slaves, they had the opportunity to move up in the ranks. “One of the caste system’s chief functions was to absorb and acculturate people of divergent languages, ethnicities, and religious practices into an integrated social whole.” Gupta’s idea of making his 5 empire integrated was in his mind the best thing to becoming more successful and expansive, however, in reality it was to categorize people into positions based off certain criterias. However, one of the social orders did not fit in the typical caste system, guilds were a sub-caste of the Jati because it was not based off of social integration rather the evolution of trade.? Where a person would only associate with someone of the same occupation, which leads to intermarriages in order to keep their trade secrets valuable among Indian society.

After Alexander the Great died suddenly, the vase land that he had conquered was distributed among three of his men, Selcucus Nikator was selected of being in charge of the land in and around India. However, as time progressed Nikator lost mostly all of his power as leaders in India slowly began to rise causing a power vacuum to push him back to Mesopotamia allowing Indian empires and dynasties like Mauryan, Ashoka, etc. to take over. Each empire had a different view on rising religions and government structure, Mauryan “developed political systems ranging from republics to centralized monarchies whose rulers were accored god-like status” while Ashoka was the grandson of Chandragupta, fought many wars to expand his rule 6 towards the south, he also converted to Buddhism and started to run his empire the “right way” when he's rigne shows where the right way was obscured. “Ashoka’s regime represents an attempt to construct a moral order...the ultimate end of this process was the development of religious civilizations.” Once the Mauryan empire ended the Gupta empire rose to power with 7 one major similarity of Hinduism, which then started controlling more of the political aspect of things.

Although most of the leaders of India had the firm belief in Hinduism as the main religion and in ways had the effects of some political control, was in one way a downfall of the Mauryan empire having too many leaders starting drastic changes once in power. While the Gupta empire started to fall when nomadic groups starts invading their lands and defined them which then the Huns declined rule over northwest India. Also as new religions came to fruition and the power of trade, certain ideas started to affect local rule in the southern regions like Pallavas, Pandyas, Cholas, and Chalukyas were stable until instillations of Muslim sultanates started in the north. Not only did it affect the government but also the citizens way of life 8 because each religion has its own sets of rules and guides to follow. Too many leaders, war, and the spread of religion was the downfall in ?Mauryan/Gupta Indian? empires.

Like the ?Mauryan and Gupta empires, the Han dynasty also acquired land that was once owned by someone else, the Qin dynasty. The idea that the Han perfected the Chinese empire, where they developed a centralized political system of rule and some administrative ideas from the Qin dynasty while incorporating more Confucian ideals of government as a moral agent. Liu 9 Bang came from a peasant background, so he did not keep systems from the Qin Dynasty that favored the wealthy. When Wudi came into power, he had to face some hardships with fighting off nomadic people, with war, gifts, and the idea of hoping they will change and adapt

the Chinese Confucian culture. There was always conflict between the west and east portion of the Han empire, and will all these conflicts, Wang Mang came into power. Wang Mang also known as the Xin Dynasty began giving back to the poor which led to further conflicts. Furthermore, the problems between the rulers, wars against nomadic people and loss of land was leading to the downfall of the Han dynasty.

In Han China, there are some similarities between them and India due to the fact that they had multiple rulers, who each had different ideas and goals for the empire as a whole and for self gain. Also laws such as the inheritance laws caused many problems in the Han dynasty because only male figures (sons) could actually take over the land from the family. As time passed, the size of land plot decreased with each generation causing even more problems because the poor had to borrow from the rich which indeedded them for multiple years. Since the rich did not have to pay much if any taxes, the government continues to squeeze every last cent from the poor, which cause a decline in revenue to build there government and military. With that being said, 10 in 9 CE Wang Mang, had the chance to overthrow the Han dynasty through a period of unstable chaos as well as an infant being the next emperor in line. Wang Mang (Xin dynasty) ideas cause major upset with the wealthy people because he was all for giving back to the poor people. This led to multiple revolts over natural disasters, famine, homelessnes, etc. between both the poor and the rich, which lead to the Han family came back into power in 25 CE.

In conclusion, both Han China and ?Mauryan/Gupta India used ideas they thought would work for their empires at the time. China continued to use the confusin religion to dictate people's future in social hierarchy centuries later until 1917. India had some political influence from Hinduism, however it was not as strictly enforced by the government as it was in Han China. Both empires had the ideas of social hierarchy put in place in there empire, however, they were enacted differently, one through schooling and tests like Han China and one through the idea of social integration like India. Both ?Han China and ?Mauryan/Gupta Indian empires rose to power both took over land that was owned by another empire, they also fell almost the same way through vase amounts of leaders wanting different things and war. With that being said, both of these empires in the end no matter what they did to try to save their dynasty/empire from falling ended up failing. However, one thing that did stick in both empires was the fact the now Confucianism (China) and Hinduism (India) is the main religion of these countries.

Bibliography

1. McInerney, Jessica. “Week 8 Notes Rome and China.” Lecture, Salisbury University, October 15, 2019.
2. McInerney, Jessica. “Week 9 Notes Silk Road and India.” Lecture, Salisbury University, October 22, 2019.
3. Sivers, Peter Von, Charles Desnoyers, and George B. Stow. ?Patterns of World History?. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.
4. Sivers, Peter Von, Charles Desnoyers, and George B. Stow. ?Patterns of World History?. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.
5. Sivers, Peter Von, Charles Desnoyers, and George B. Stow. ?Patterns of World History?. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.
6. Sivers, Peter Von, Charles Desnoyers, and George B. Stow. ?Patterns of World History?. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.

7. Sivers, Peter Von, Charles Desnoyers, and George B. Stow. ?Patterns of World History?. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.
8. Sivers, Peter Von, Charles Desnoyers, and George B. Stow. ?Patterns of World History?. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.
9. Sivers, Peter Von, Charles Desnoyers, and George B. Stow. ?Patterns of World History?. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.
10. McInerney, Jessica. “Week 9 Notes Silk Road and India.” Lecture, Salisbury University, October 22, 2019.