

Carter Brehm – Chapter 3 Reading Questions

1. **Trace the development of the caste system.**

- a. When the Aryans invaded India for the first time, they had little to no government and a small concept of Hinduism. Then, Chandragupta took over (and later Ashoka), and they once again could not establish any permanent work allocation system. A long time later, the Guptas invaded with strict tax laws while promoting Hinduism and saying they were appointed by the gods to rule. They also started to create certain tasks to be done. These ranged from educating the masses on Hinduism, all the way down to burying the dead. Then, they began to assign people to do those tasks, and pretty soon a basic caste system was established. Then, the people split the 5 groups into over 300 jati, or subcastes.

2. **Compare Buddhism and Hinduism.**

- a. Hinduism was heavily caste-based, and favored the people born in higher castes, because it did not promote moving between castes. It was good though, because it kept the lower castes doing their jobs in hope of a better life next time. This, however, is partially why Buddhism rose so quickly. Buddhism condemned the caste system and instead promoted everyone to achieve nirvana. Nirvana was not based on being the top of the system or being born holy enough to be one with god.

3. **Compare the caste system with the organization of Chinese society.**

- a. The caste system of India based status on religion, which stated that you stayed in the caste system you were born in no matter what, and you fulfilled the duty of that class. Also, merchants were pretty high up in the system. In China, your position in society is based on wealth for the most part. It is absolutely possible to move up and down in society, by amassing more wealth or becoming a civil servant. Also, merchants in Chinese society are at the very bottom, below the common people.

4. **Compare the political implications of Hinduism and Confucianism.**

- a. Confucianism encouraged Chinese nobles to be fair to their subjects and not abuse their power as guided in the relationships outlined in Confucianism. This allowed these nobles to rule a lot of land for a long time. Hinduism taught that you must stay within your caste and fulfill your duty, which helped the government stay in power and become a trade giant with all of the exported materials.

5. **Compare the family structures of India and China.**

- a. In both India and China, women were inferior to men. There were laws in China that heavily favored men and even put women to death for leaving their husband and punished them for not having one. However, in China, the experience for women was much better, because even women could become civil servants if they were smart enough and studied for the test.

6. **Trace the development of Ashoka's leadership approach.**

- a. At first, Ashoka was just a governor. He had little to no power and wasn't an heir to the throne. When Bindusara died, it triggered a war over who would succeed the current ruler, and Ashoka got closer to the throne. When he murdered the true heir and got his father's ministers to support him, he eventually seized control and become complete ruler.