

The Tibetan Empire, spanning from 618 to 841, is known to be one of the greatest Buddhist hierarchies in history. As you explore this fascinating topic, you will come across various distinctive features of Tibetan society, which you can compare to other societies listed in the chapter. Additionally, the development of Buddhism in the empire is an essential aspect that shaped the culture and social norms of the Tibetan people. So let's dive in and explore the overview of the Tibetan Empire, the development of Buddhism in the empire, and the distinctive features of Tibetan society.

The Tibetan Empire, also known as the Tubo Empire, was one of the most powerful empires of Asia during the 7th to the 9th centuries. It was a vast empire that encompassed territories from China, Nepal, and Bhutan to the western Himalayas. The Tibetan Empire was founded by Songtsen Gampo, who was the first ruler to unify the Tibetan tribes and establish a centralized government. He introduced Buddhism to Tibet and built many monasteries and temples, including the famous Jokhang Temple in Lhasa. The empire's golden age was during the reign of his grandson, Trisong Detsen, who expanded the empire's borders, built many forts, and established diplomacy with neighboring countries. The Tang dynasty of China acknowledged the Tibetan Empire as its equal, and the two empires maintained peaceful relations for several decades. The Tibetan Empire declined in the 9th century due to internal conflicts and external pressures from neighboring kingdoms. Despite its decline, the Tibetan Empire left a lasting legacy in the region, including its unique form of Buddhism, which has influenced the development of Buddhism in East Asia. The Tibetan Empire also left behind a rich cultural heritage, including literature, art, and architecture, which are still celebrated and studied today. (Uebach et al. 2019)

The development of Buddhism in the empire was a significant aspect of the religious and cultural evolution of Asia. According to S. Kim, the spread of Buddhism in the empire was a result of a complex interplay between various factors such as trade, politics, and religion. The establishment of Buddhism in the empire was a gradual process that started in the early centuries CE, and it gained momentum during the reign of Emperor Ashoka in the third century BCE. Ashoka's patronage of Buddhism helped to spread its teaching across the empire, and he sent missionaries to various parts of the world to promote Buddhism. This led to the spread of Buddhism not just in the empire but also in countries such as Sri Lanka, China, and Southeast Asia. The popularity of Buddhism in the empire can also be attributed to the religion's ability to adapt to local customs and practices. For instance, the Mahayana school of Buddhism developed in the empire, which allowed for the incorporation of local

deities and customs into Buddhist practices. The development of Buddhism in the empire was also impacted by the interactions between Buddhism and other religions such as Hinduism and Jainism. The interactions between these religions led to the development of new schools of thought and the creation of new practices. In conclusion, the development of Buddhism in the empire was a complex process that was shaped by various factors such as trade, politics, and religion. The spread of Buddhism in the empire helped to promote cultural exchange and the diffusion of ideas, which had a significant impact on the development of Asia as a whole. (Kim)

Tibetan society has several distinctive features that set it apart from other societies. One of these is the strong influence of Buddhism on their culture and way of life. As Anand notes, "Buddhism is the core of Tibetan identity and culture" (Anand 23). This is seen in the high regard for spiritual leaders such as the Dalai Lama, who are seen as not just political leaders but also as religious authorities. Another characteristic of Tibetan society is their nomadic and pastoral way of life. Many Tibetans are traditionally nomadic herders, and their culture and customs are shaped by this lifestyle. This includes a strong sense of community and a deep connection to the land that they inhabit. Finally, Tibetan society is known for its unique art and architecture, particularly in the form of intricate mandalas and thangkas, which are religious paintings that are used in meditation and other spiritual practices. Overall, these distinctive features contribute to the rich and diverse culture of Tibetan society.

In conclusion, researching the Tibetan Empire of 618-841 is a fascinating and educational task for any student interested in history and culture. This society's distinctive features, including its strong Buddhist hierarchy and unique pyramid structure, make it a valuable case study in understanding the complexities of ancient civilizations. By creating a pyramid of this society, students will gain a deeper understanding of its social and political systems, as well as its contributions to the broader historical narrative. Through careful research and analysis, students will not only learn about the Tibetan Empire but also develop important critical thinking and analytical skills that will serve them well in future academic pursuits.

## Work Cited

S Kim. "The Korean Buddhist Empire: A Transnational History, 1910–1945. By Hwansoo Ilmee Kim. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2018. 358 pp. ISBN  
...."<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-asian-studies/article/korean-buddhist-empire-a-transnational-history-19101945-by-hwansoo-ilmee-kim-cambridge-mass-harvard-university-asia-center-2018-358-pp-isbn-9780674987197-cloth/EA8B6CBF777EBDD1BC6BA284FEC93EF3>

D Anand. "A contemporary story of “Diaspora”: The Tibetan  
version."<https://www.utpjournals.press/doi/abs/10.3138/diaspora.12.2.211>

"Notes on the Postal System (slungs) in the Tibetan Empire in the 7th–9th  
Centuries."[https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=hS2RDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA449&dq=1.+Overview+of+the+Tibetan+Empire+&ots=uK4ezwDgGy&sig=Vm\\_VNfb3DnWI-OturKsuMnttRuU](https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=hS2RDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA449&dq=1.+Overview+of+the+Tibetan+Empire+&ots=uK4ezwDgGy&sig=Vm_VNfb3DnWI-OturKsuMnttRuU)