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### Research and Writing: Chapter 9

It seems that the history of Tibet is a collective story, influenced by its many surrounding entities and recorded in various different ways. The Tibetan Empire was a burst of cultural beauty, military might, and religious passion wrapped up in one society. Although its story is lesser known, we can certainly look back and appreciate the glory of what was the Tibetan Empire.

The empire emerged from the region of the great Asian steppe, placing it in a precariously prosperous position in this historical era. The region's inhabitants were nomadic, with pious and superstitious beliefs. They were of various ethnic origins, coming together as a collection of clans with their leaders, similar to what is described as the Khan screen in this week's chapter. There were no great hierarchical distinctions originally, only the clan "elites" and the common merchants/traders/herders.

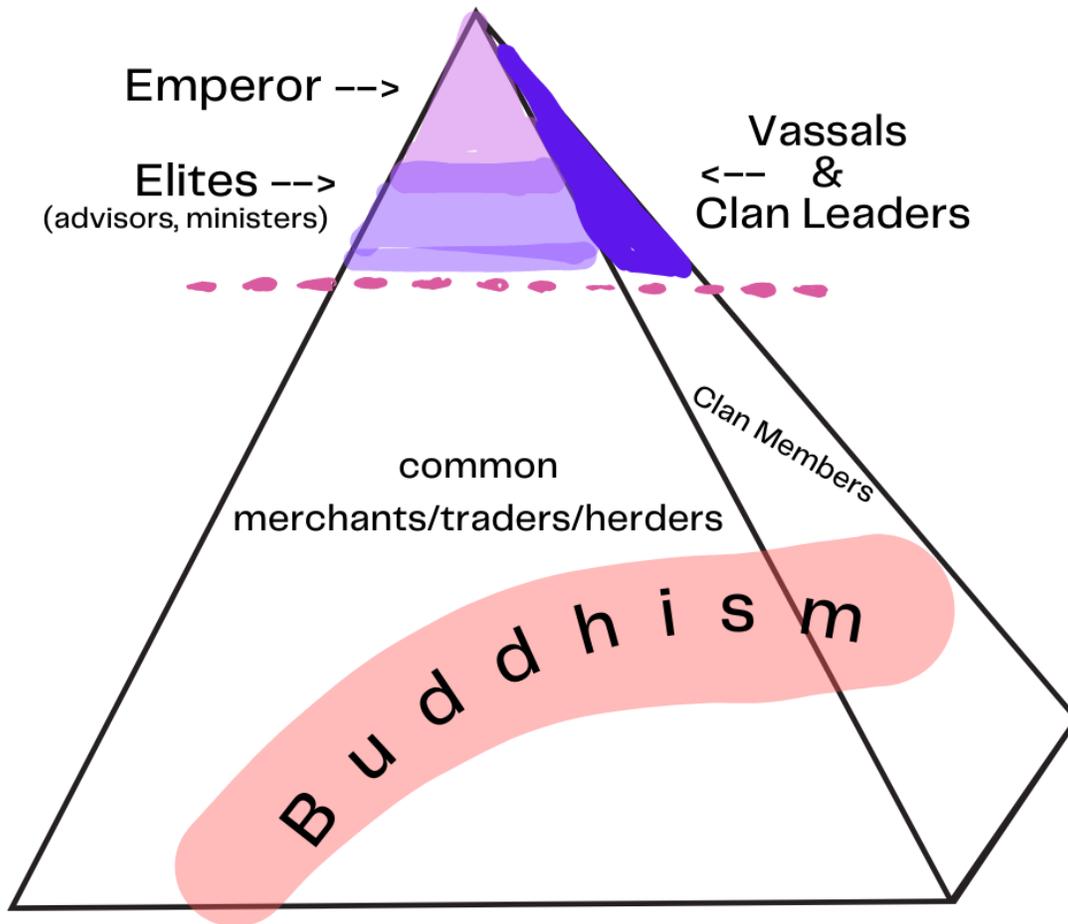
As this group became more established and certain leaders became more prominent, there was a consistent struggle for power. This led to the attempted expansion of their territory – which became quite successful. As they moved along and began to conquer peripheral lands, their territory grew along with their hierarchy. The first emperor of the Tibetan Empire was known as Songtsen Gampo, who is known for various innovations and empirical advancements for the Tibetans. In historical accounts, it is described that Songsten had a chief advisor and minister,

indicating a tier of elites. (Vuckovic) Additionally, his reign was marked by military power, as he challenged many of the surrounding kingdoms and clans; his military strength was on the forefront of his political “campaign,” making his warriors place higher in the cultural pyramid. This hierarchical layout could be compared to that of other Asian empires like the Song and Tang Dynasties.

In an effort to expand further, the Tibetans pushed its borders toward the Tang and Qiang Dynasties, resulting in a series of wars. As this was going on, civil wars were being fought simultaneously between power hungry vassals and former clan leaders. We see here that although on the top of the period there is the emperor and his elite ministers and advisors, the vassals and clan leaders can be seen on the back end of the period holding a kind of influence over the cultural screen as well.

In an effort to quell the war, there were instances where some Chinese princesses were sent to marry the Tibetan emperor or his sons. This is where we see the introduction of Buddhism into the cultural screen, which we know plays a large role in shaping the customs and beliefs of the Tibetan Empire, even beyond its glorious empire into the modern era with Tibetan Buddhism. (Vuckovic) The Buddhist ideologies interacted with traditional Tibetan “Bon,” which are their cultural superstitions and beliefs; this shaped the bottom of the cultural pyramid and the beliefs of the commoners.

# Tibetan Empire



Works Cited

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Vuckovic, Aleksa. "The History of the Tibetan Empire and Its Dazzling Rise to Prominence." Ancient Origins Reconstructing the Story of Humanity's Past, Ancient Origins, 10 Feb. 2021, <https://www.ancient-origins.net/ancient-places-asia/tibetan-empire-0014913>.