

CHAPTER-IV

EVOLUTION OF THANGKA ART AND ITS TRANSFORMATION

Tibetan art is best known by its thangkas or scroll-paintings which are hung in temples or monastery or occasionally carried in processions or religious festivals as well as occasion. The term thangka is deduced from Tibetan ta' an ka or t' an sku, meaning something that is rolled up to be specific, a rolled up image or a painted iconostasis. ¹ Thankas or Thangkas are paintings or, occasional embroidered pictures, usually called "banners" by the Europeans. They first came into use about the tenth century. ² Before that time painting was mostly enclosed to process on the walls of temples or monasteries or in caves. Most of the thang-kas are perhaps date from the seventeenth century to nineteenth century. A few are earlier, if we can judge by comparing colours and techniques. These thangkas are hung in the temples and at family alters in homes. They are also carried by the lamas in religious exodus. They portray a deity, groups of deities or scenes from the life of Buddha, or the saints. Mostly they delineate stories which the lamas use to depict their sermons. ³

The most popular term thangka has actually replaced its two other names, ras literally: cotton' rasbris and rasrimo i.e. design or painted on cotton, both resembling to the Sanskrit word *pata*. ⁴ Aesthetically the thangkas are impressed by decorativeness, bold colouring and air of naïve astonishment. But the real paint is their content, the difference of religious phenomenon, the search to manifest a deeply complicated mystical world through these figures' symbolic qualities. Tibetan painting can be discerned at two distinct levels. First, the purely visual level; where it pleases the eye with luminosity and decorative harmony, without regard to the contest. Secondly and may be more importantly, at the level where it should influence any student of religious experience and mystic art. Among the factors that add to the ability and define the particularity of Tibetan art are the thoroughness of its overall

conjecture, the severity of its grotesque imagery and concurrent translucence of its stable modes, and the coalescence of seemingly perverse impulsive forms within the same composition. In these view art reflects religion to such an extent that might be said that Tibetan art itself is the most direct and rhetorical form of expression that Tantric Buddhism has exhibited. Ichnographically and, by definition, visionary, the art of Tibet is also characterized by a peculiar redundancy suggestive of psychic departments. This quality typically reverberates the enlighten of art, but in the Tibetan adherence it also refers to one of its most direct aims: the creation of models for visualizing meditation. The inspirational spectacle of art becomes control to the aesthetic exertion for it is a religious motive that enlightens the art of Tibet and a religious goal of transformation that it seeks to achieve.⁵

The Historical background of Thangka art

Tibetan thangkas are, primarily if not exclusively religious in dalliance as well as in style. It is due to the utmost protectiveness of Tibetan art and due to the inaccessibility of Tibet. Ideas did not travel easily into Tibet but once a style or technique concentrated Tibet from some other country or expressed their itself, the concept remained without any change for centuries. Two religious subjugation Tibetan art and culture, viz., its native Bon-pa and Tantrik Buddhism commenced from eastern India. Both the religions were polytheistic and, thus, grew up a large Tibetan assemblage which helped the develop of sculpture and painting apart from the diversity of Buddhas, Buddhist deities and other minor deities the Bon-pa spirits of nature and several guardians of the directions and mountains also figure in Thangka paintings. A Tibetan thangkas or scroll painting on cloth has enticed the endeavour of the world. More and more art historians and archaic dealers are taking greater frolic in the history of Tibetan art. In India there has grown up settlements of Tibetan art. In India there has grown up settlements of Tibetan refugees at Dharmasala, Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, sub-

Himalayan Darjeeling and Karnataka in South India. In many such centres, big research organization and study centres associated with Tibetan religion and culture have increased. They have conserved and rescued many good and old thangkas which are attainable for study and research. The greatest of these from the point of view of history of Tibetan painting are of the Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok, Sikkim. Being icon paintings, Thangkas are bound by iconography, coalescence and propitious subject matter and design as well. Even the landscape of the back ground becomes a motif and is never exercised realistically. In the making of Tibetan painting, Indian, Nepalese and Chinese components have also played momentous parts. This was due to the marriage of the Tibetan emperor Srong-btsan-gampo in 630 A.D. with a Chinese and a Nepalese princes and the advent of Dipankara Srijnana Atisa, a scholar from Bengal in 1042 A.D. Both these events have been accountable for the progress of cultural ties between Tibet and the lands mentioned above.⁶

The cultural heritage of Tibet, which is primarily religious, looks suddenly upon the world as something ascendant among the entire Buddhist sect. This is not because of the irresistible squeeze of a cultural flowed out to endure at all costs and by any means, but it is on the whole mainly due to its fascinating feature or substance. Earlier to the introduction of Buddhist to Tibet in the sixth century A.D. cultural and artistic life was already fully progressed. Buddhism mainly at stake with the palliation of human suffering cropped up as a new creed out of the landscape of India. It was more like a new interpretation of Hinduism pervaded with new components, which impulse spirit into it. It was really dissolution of two diverse creeds, and so when it was finally brought to Tibet it was already syncretistic in form, which again became fused with the old Bon-po religion in the land, and the interpretation of Buddhism that sprang up was ultimately to be known as Lamaism. Lamaism supposes that man is part of nature and not its master. It was irresistible, and therefore only natural, that Lamaism attentive all that the new creed brought with it, such as, theological exercises, the

deities and their virtue, including their symbols, religious objects or ritual equipage, such as mandalas and the depiction of deities known in Nepal as *paubhas* and in Tibet as *thangkas*. Hindu philosophy and principals were scrutinized in detail. It became more rhetorical and packed with symbols of manifold deities provided in various colours and became more glamorous as works of art. It became the monopolistic object of worship of monks and the lamas, because ritual or liturgy became more specialized, intricate and technical as it requisite the theological wisdom of the masters to perform them. The practice of painting sacred portraits of deities with their *mudras* (gestures) and virtues in symbols for the intension of worship, as the simulacrum of power and consciousness was also taken up. When the practices extend Tibet portrait painting of deities was exalted: the sacred paintings became art of works that became worthy aesthetically. The whole Indian tradition and purpose of producing holy pictures of divinities were taken up in Tibet with the art work transformed with, however the same motive reserved. The *thangkas* either represented the power virtue of a single central deity or gave accounts of episodes particularly in the life of the Buddha or of other deities or of significant historical statuesque in the manifestation and progress of Buddhism in Tibet. The original format of having a single central deity in the painting was not alternative. In the course of time a diversity of *thangkas* flourished on various subjects with different objectives. The single deity in a *thangka*, the protective deity, was to have retinue deities. And with the elevation of different Buddhist sects were arose many traditions in sacred paintings, with various techniques parts of Tibet.

It is not within the destination of this brief work on *thangkas* to imprint on the several artistic traditions of the various Buddhist sects of Tibet. This work focuses mainly on the wide portrait of *Thangkas* in general to give an extensive view of the various *thangkas*, their intension and use, and how they are forward. The scroll painting of sub- himalayan Darjeeling region influenced by the Tibetan *thangka* culture but later all the *thangkas*

simulate the style of Tibet in their making style. the six tradition of thangkas are (a) kadam tradition, (b) valri tradition, (c) menri tradition, (d) khenri tradition,(e) karma ghardi tradition and (f) dopal tradition.⁷ Among all the school of tradition the kadam or kadampa tradition were rightly eminent and obtained for their proper and earnest religious contemplation. The most evident teaching of that tradition was the teaching on Bodhichitta. Like everywhere else religion shaped the national, social and unconnected life, which was duly formed around Buddhism. Buddhism provided stability to sub- Himalayan Darjeeling society. It gave dictation to the development of art in sub- Himalayan Darjeeling, which is basically religious. The monasteries actually became the centre of religious art, maintained by the patrons of art and culture, the nobility of Tibet. Painting possessed a special position among all the arts and crafts of sub- Himalayan Darjeeling. Painting grew along with sculpture, moreover in making masks, because it was the conclusive medium through which the highest ideals of Buddhism were brought alive and invited. Sacred paintings such as mandala or thangka, and simulacrum of consciousness, became actually 'physical support'. They were commissioned, worshipped, kept and intended. Some are not painted but printed, embroidered as brocade, or even woven like carpets, but these are very rare.⁸

In the Hindu tradition it was the master who went into desolation for a period of time for his physical and theological sanctification and to meditate on the diagram and intention of preparing a *mandala*. He had no need for a professional artist or painter: he alone must know how to make the art work because he is accounted as the master with the expertise. With the sacred paintings of deities or sculpture there flourished professional artists separated from the masters of the *mandalas*, who ostensibly also had to purify themselves and also meditate on the deity they were to paint. The essentials for the *mandala* masters and artists preparing consecrate sculpture or paintings were the same: they had to purify themselves physically and theologically first and meditate on the artwork they were to anticipate. There is a probability

since almost everything had been taken from India, that these necessities were also used in Nepal and Tibet in ancient times to the lamas or monks. Over the years this requirement prevail to have been given up, and the work of painting sacred scrolls of deities had been passed on to professional artists, at first, may be, only to those who had been commenced in the *Vajra Yana* (Tantic) system, but in the course of time even house painters, who did figurative paintings on buildings also took up painting thangkas.

In Sub- Himalayan Darjeeling ostensibly very few artists now follow the requisite rituals of sanctification and visualization in meditation of the deities they are to paint. There are unique art forms or subjects, such as the deities belonging to the four classes of Tantrics, in which the painters are requisite to undergo ritual commencement. They had to be induced into Tantrism before they are assumed to paint deities belonging to the four classes of Tantrics. The reality that in the history of Tibetan art there are very few paintings stimulated by Yogic glance implicate that visualization of deities in meditation was not common among the professional painters. This mainly due to the fact that it needs particular wisdom of meditation and conjecture in which only the lamas, the teachers and monks are learned. The Buddhist monks, lamas or gurus, intimate with imagination and meditation are usually not artists or painters, notwithstanding now those with artistic propensity are trained also in the art of thangka or mandala painting. In the fifteenth century the master *Gong-dkar-ba-Ken unam ugyal*, the *Karma-pa-chos-d Bying-rdo-rje* (1604-1674) and *Si-tu Pan-Chen Chos-Kyi byulng gnos* (1700-74) were such masters, whose paintings were occupied in high dignity. There are unique purpose when ordinary painters, probably, because they were the only ones attainable, were yield to paint thangkas after being ritually induced, in particular, in the preparation of the 'Day Thankgka' (*Nyin thang*), a painting that to be ritually benignant had to be accomplished within one day. These Day Thangkas, which usually delineate the goddess white Tara, were sanctioned yearly for the great religious leaders long life.

In India it is the guru who arranged a mandala; he was not sanctioned to prepare it, and if ever there was a desire the accomplished painting was simply given free, and whatever indemnification or gift dedicated was completely discarded. Mandala was not for sale nor communicated or exchanged for other things. But this indictment for a mandala is very sparse. And on the whole they were made for a follower who was ripe to be commenced into the mandala worship. In Tibet however the thangka painters were compensated handsomely. There was usually a covenant between the painter and the person giving the commission on the minimum fee to be paid. The payment somehow, that the benefactor made to be artist was accounted not as payment but as a holy offering, a kind of religious 'ransom payment' (shi you), which approved the patron then to solicit the blessed image to his home. Tibetan painters generally have fresher who bested them in their work and in this process whatever special techniques they are accepted on to their follower. But among sub- Himalayan Darjeeling painters there have appeared a few, but talented artists, who never employed assistants and are rather very secretive about their work and techniques until they died. Many special techniques in this manner were lost. Ostensibly this secretiveness is in fact also true of many Tibetan artists and intellectual doctors, astrologers and other specialists, whose knowledge, if they had been accommodated to pass on to others would have greatly availed the entire people of the Sub- Himalayan Darjeeling region and the whole world.⁹

The tradition of calico painting (pata chitra) has been immensely ancient in India among the various religious sects for amplification of schismatic preaching's through the ocular media among the masses. Among those, the Buddhist and the Jaina preachers figure prominently. It was a common contemplation among the religious ecclesiast to carry rolled-up pata chitras with them on their missions.¹⁰ When a thangka was sanctioned the patron had to enlighten the painter exactly which deities he wanted to be delineated. Very often the patron embellishes a design on a sketch prepared by a lama showing the method and relative

circumstances of each figure in the painting. With this design the job of making the formation was facilitated with the artist simply allocating position to each figure and laying out the background landscape. Sometime the defendant could often no design and there were no names of the figures to be painted, but it was left to the artist to diagram a suitable layout. If the painting had many figures the artist must visualize from the defendant, which deities were to be considered as subservient or minor. This occurred if the composition was new. Otherwise there were fixed models to be pursued set up by Buddhist iconography, canonical authority and artistic tradition, usually familiar to thangka painters, who could only from memory or according to set instances. There is very little span for originality in thangka painting for the artist. Religious paintings are usually the same in other persuasion as they are incessantly revolved over and over again unless a new subject crops up. For most artists painting thangka simply pursued virtuous authority or fixed set up rules or tradition. The only area where he could apply his sagacity is in the figurative parts, such as landscape adornment in details of the painting. But even this often became irrevocable. In spite of tradition and general restriction on distinguished evolution of their originality or expressiveness some master painters occasionally found ways to manifest their creativity, originality or artistic bent, such as in bio-graphical or expository paintings. The great masters of course always have their distinguishable signatures prudence for colour schemes or the fine depiction of facial features, rendering an ordinary background or landscape into something resonant and extraordinarily beautiful or monumental. These majestic masters often earned the renown of being ‘devinely emerged artisans’ (*sprul pa’ilha bzo*).

Different Stages for preparing of Thangka

There are six explained steps pursued in Thangka painting and followed in an orderly and systematic method. (a) The first step entangles the prolonging of the canvas on a wooden

structure, followed by the formulation of the painting periphery, the diagram or composition by sketching or by what is called ‘metastasis’ actually known as tracing and laying down the elementary coats of paint and the principal appeal of paints and finally the finishing touches.

(b) The textile is a canvas, cotton of a very fine fabricate which had to be cleansed and dried. Other fabrics used or linen, silk and even leather and occasionally paper¹¹ A cloth of the requisite size, to be painted on, is first approved and then sewed on to a improper wooden frame along all its four sides, the structure itself is generally about as thick as an ordinary pencil.¹² The wooden frames are known as stretchers.¹³ (c) This lightly framed cloth is then sewed out and laced firmly on to a larger wooden structure (*than-sgron*) with a stout thread running between the outer border of the cloth and the strong exterior frame in a zigzag inclination. The cloth for painting on (*ras-gzi*), which is generally a type of light canvas, must not be too thicker sturdy, for paint peels off and cracks easily on such a underneath. The most compatible cloth is a close woven pure white poplin or cotton. Unpatented white silk is also deliberated very suitable. For every large thangka which cannot be made out of one fragment of cloth, a number of pieces of the materials are associated together by stitching very closely so as not allow the join to spoil the countenance of the thangka.

After the cloth has been set up in the frame, it is ready to be behaved. (d) First, a thin layer of animal or yak-skin of fairly weak manliness is practical as a foundation (*rtsa-gdan*) and left to dry. This is to confine the paint from being submerged into the cloth, from cracking, and from losing its true colour.¹⁴ (e) The fabric is then expansion with lime (*sadkar, dkar rtsi*) appeased in water, so that it becomes completely doused and inundated with it, by spreading it two or three times on both sides of the material. (f) When the lime has thickened and dried, any permeable that may be left is dispelled by rubbing the cloth with a smooth content such as a glass or conch-shell or smooth stone until the grain of the cloth is hardly perceptible.¹⁵ (g) The main instructions are then marked – the border (*mtha'-thig*), a central

perpendicular *tshansthig*), the two diagonals (*zur-thig*), and any other essential instruction lines. (h) A rough drawing (*skya-ris*) of the deity – the basic structure, face and hands – is then made with a charcoal pencil. This then gone over with a brush immersed in black ink. The black outline drawing is called *snag-ris*. The most principal lines are the diagonals, which consecrated the vertical and horizontal axes. These lines ordain the accurate centre of the canvas about which the artist can plan his formation of the diagram. This actually marks the centre of the main figure, in relation to which all the other figures are arranged. From the religious point of view the correct dedicated of the vertical and horizontal axes is significant. The physical forms of the details to be drawn have to be perfectly oriented in relation to the central axis. This is ostensibly conclusive since a mistake here could influence the precision and hence the religious value of the thangka. (i) The marking of the four borders follow with the artist leaving sufficient position on the terminal for the brocade structure which is sewed on when the thangka painting is accomplished. The canvas is now ready for sketching. If the permitted design is simple and common, such as the single figure of the Buddha or Tara, it is likely that the artist has a ready copy of the painting which only has to be removed on the canvas by tracing. If the design is more intricately, and the upholder could not give any earmarked instructions is left to the painter to decide on the design itself. If the painting involves many figures there is a need to apportion greater or smaller position for the different figures, which reclines again on their consequence. Usually the artist decides the size of the main figure in the centre and proceeds to apportion smaller areas in the form of ovals or circles for minor figures. The artist usually starts sketching from the top down to the bottom after doing the central figure. Thangka painters usually are accustomed with the Buddhist iconometry and traditional artistic exercise, and hence they are respected as being familiar or enlightened with proportions, configurations and characteristics of deities. The forms can be delineated with the head with a rectangle, the face with an oval structure. The abdomen

pursued, then the arms and legs. The robes, together with other garments or ornaments completed the elementary drawing. The basic method is pursued in sketching minor figures. And (j) finally the artist draws the halo, the aura or aureola of the body and the seat for each figure. Contended with his figures he surrounds them with sketches of delightful landscape and ornaments, clouds, mountains greenery lakes, waterfalls and scenery (*yul-snan*). And lastly he adds details, such as flowers, jewels and propitious animals as offerings.¹⁶

Different Techniques for Preparing Colour

There are two essentially various types of paint in the Sub- Himalayan Darjeeling Palatte:

1. Mineral Pigments.
2. Organic dyes or lakes.

These paints are in the main forwarded by the artists themselves: on the whole by mixing aniline with the size ligature, and the pigments themselves to generate another colour. This method is intricate and time-consuming. The artist puts ground aniline into a paint post and adds a little ward size sufficient to make it somewhat soggy. He squeezes and Kneads lumps and stirs the composition to the firmness of dough. He adds a little more warm size and mixes it with the 'dough' until it becomes a thick identical liquid. Again the artist cascade just sufficient size into the mixture to bring the paint to the right thickness, for painting. The ideal consistency is like buttermilk. The composition is tested and when it verify favourable it is then instantly presented on the canvas for there is always, as often occurs, the chances of the mixture getting dry. And when this happens he can resemble it by constantly adding size melting and trample it again. Mixing and heating the paints is something the artist and his conducive have to do from time to time to confine them from congealing.

Thus just sufficient size is obligatory: if there was less size it could dry swiftly and if it did not dry after a very long time it means that there was too much size. And if it was effortlessly grazed off the canvas it means more glue is essential. And if the paint on the canvas is well organized or glossy this means there is too much binder. The appropriate paint is generally matte in countenance. This is the conventional way of preparing paints for thangkas. It is not only intricate, time swallowing, but exhausting. Although now oil paints of great diversity are attainable in the market the traditional method of preparing a canvas is still practical and apparently particular colours still forward in the traditional method.¹⁷

After this several coloured paints are used to paint in the back ground panorama of water, rocks, hills, clouds and so on, completion one colour at a time. The light colours (skya-tshon) are drawn in the first and then the dark (tsho-tshon). Then the central image is painted. The lotus throne is drawn first, then the cloths, and finally the body.¹⁸ At first the colours were timbered from minerals or vegetables; the painter must be careful to dose the time in which the colours are satiated according to the greater or lesser thickness and luminosity of the shades he wishes to obtain. Together with the lime, a little gluten is mixed with the colours and makes the mixtures more lasting. The ascendant colours are: lime white (*sa dkar*, *dkar rtsi*), red (*dmar po*), yellow (*serpo*) acquired from arsenic (*ba bla*) or sulphur, green (*yan gu*) obtained from vitriol (*span-ma*), vermilion (*li k'ri*) obtained from carmine, blue (*snon po*) from lapis lazuli (*vaiduryaj*), indigo (*mt'in*),¹⁹ black made from soot of pine wood,²⁰ *li-khri* for orange, a dark red dye for maroon, rams for dark purple; and grangser-cold-gold²¹. Gold is numerous used for backgrounds and ornaments; the use of silver is rarer. Sometimes anomalous articles are used, following similar Indian methods; for example tradition has it that in a temple of central Tibet a thangka was conserved, which had been painted by an Indian master with blood out of his own nose.²² Most of the paints which are mineral or organic in nature are readily comprehensible in the various regions of Tibet. The

green and blue colours are ground from minerals rocks of found near Lhasa, the yellow arrives from the presidency of khams. The reds are compiled of oxides of mercury and vermillion is exotic from India and China. Gold is fetched from Nepal and lac from the lac insect of India and Bhutan. The minerals are ground, and then compound in several ratios with water, glue, chalk and lac or alum to pay the several degrees of manliness and shading. The plants and vegetables are boiled afore being ready with the requisite amount of glue.²³ Two varieties of adhesive (*spyin*) are used for artistic motives and both are made from leather, hence named it *ko-spyin* or 'leather-glue'. Of the 'clean' variety, the glue used in painting etc. is called *iha-spyin*. The leather used in making the clean variety of glue must be threshed circumstantially and be free from oil, dirt or hair. The leather glue cannot be used for particular types of work such as, e.g. on paper or cloth which are to be used for in sacred fillings for statues because of the difficulty of fungous growth or offensive by worm. Individual adhesive is used for this intension, made from a medicine plant, called *dbanpo lag-pa*.²⁴ The brushes used are pine twigs restrained at one finish, into which goat or rabbit hairs are compacted to the requisite thickness. A compass made of two pieces of incise bamboo is required also in order to get the correct assessment of the figures on the canvas, according to the canonical rules. After studying under the guidance of a lama artist, the student monk prepares the canvas and puts the outline on the canvas from transfer dotted lines.²⁵

Painted on cotton, more occasionally on canvas, usually rectangular in shape, a *thangka* is always rolled up from the bottom. Generally *mandala-thangkas* are square. The painted surface called *melon* or mirror is bordered by Chinese silk or brocade.²⁶ In order to simplify appropriate display two round wooden rods are attached to it, one at the top, called *thang shing* and the other at the bottom, called *thang-thong*. The *thangka* is constantly requisite to be rolled from the bottom upwards. Caps made of gold, silver or bronze are behoove on to the ends of the rods. A *hjah-Tshon* (rainbow) is provided around the *thangka* compatible, i.e., the

painted surface, to exemplify a barrier between the holy realm of the thanka proper and the impure world outside, analogous to the condition of a boundary wall (*sima*) around a monastery. The rainbow is generally tri-coloured, made of the red, yellow and blue ribbons (*gong-shem*). At the bottom of a proper thanka, a brocade patch, on which a skydragon or lotus is embroidered, is fixed to suggest *thang-sgo* (an entrance) to the holy incumbency. In order to save the thanka from dust, smoke, dirt, etc. a *zhat-khebs* (silkenveil) is provided over it.²⁷ In Sub- Himalayan Darjeeling, as a matter of fact, thanka is done by a joint endeavor mainly by a group of artisans or at least by two artists – the master artist makes the diagram and collaborator painter applies the colours on it. The artists are mostly laymen and they work under the supervision of the lamas. These artists diverge from place to place and work for several monasteries. The back of the paintings however comprises invocatory mantras, the Buddhist religious formula and sometimes stupa design and propitious hand prints of a lama. After the entirety of the thanka the immolation or ceremony of *prana-pratistha* is accomplished. The fifth Dalai Lama mentions a large thanka in his biography and he also records the names of the artists. The Tashilunpo monastery also overwhelmed a large appliqué thanka which was ritually hung on a wall twice a year. Such large appliqué thankas were usually highlighted to the ostensible at annual occasion. The colours used in sub- Himalayan darjeeling thankas have also some symbolical meaning. Each colour of the deity laid down in the thanka is ascertained by ritual instruction. Thankas are usually painted in gouache technique. The use of thankas became exoteric in Tibet with the expansion of Indian gnosis in the country that was deriving its sustenance from the Tantra texts. Enlightened from the art of Indian scroll paintings or patachitras and their Nepalese counterpart *paubas* or *prabhamandalas* the Tibetan thankas contemplate the images and symbols of supremacy as well as eternity or the lives of the saints in effulgent colours. The

plan of the thangka, the iconography, the depiction of colours and lines are ascertained by the instruction of ceremonial texts, the Indian works on iconometry.²⁸

These paintings, whether thangkas or frescoes on the temple walls, are oft known by the name on *ZinK'ams*; this word is a translation of the Sanskrit *Ksetra*, i.e. *BuddhaKsetra*, the “realm of the Buddha”, those ideal circle where the heart of the elect, once manifestation has erased from them the stains of samasarc presence partake of the glance of a Buddha, the miraculous projection of supreme truth, proportioned to the considering soul’s ripeness. These realms of the Buddha are generally called heavens, but the name is illegitimate, since one does not ascension to them only after death. Every mystical plane has it allusive projection, manifested, as in a mysterious writing, by the figures of the gods; the commence reads into them the clandestine instructions which will yield his regeneration. Or else the gods are a traditional image of the forces with which the foresighted must recognize himself, in order to be, as soon as he has submerged their miracle working power, in a condition to generate miracles, defeat fiends and conquer that unfathomable world whence evil sprouts for universe and for men. Tibetan painting is stimulated by this atmosphere. With the single exclusion of the lives of saints, it nearly always puts before us the symbols of theological planes; for this reason it conserves, largely, the stiffness of geometrical models. The exemplar of the mandalas rules the development of sub- Himalayan Darjeeling painting; in the centre of the mandala looms the symbol of a mystical sphere or of a particular moment of cosmic evolvment, while all around the consecutive concomitant unfold through which that light of theological force are usually transformed into psychical energies and into the changing evolution of material fact; equally in the other thangkas, round the figure of the god or of the saint staying the centre, the attendant and follower shine forth like a mystical rose, which evolves the irradiation of truth and the theological link uniting those who have been introduced into the same mystry.

The aesthetic value of the colours as well as Thangka art

The main object of these paintings is to simplify for their beholders repulsion from the plane of *samasaric* presence to those blessed spheres. For this contention they are often called *mt'on grol*, which means “*liberation through sight*”: they yield the liberation of the beholder, if he looks on them with consecrate eyes and piercing mind. They must not be deliberated as overwhelmed of a magical power, thanks to which their mere existence suffices to transport us in the beatific worlds they illustrate. Nothing comes to pass which has not been performed through a perfect participation of our in most being, capable of transforming us into several beings. For these paintings arouse like the texts of the Great Vehicle or of the adamantain Vehicle. It is essential, in order to read their mysterious language, it is also obligate to live their meaning. Then a consubstantiation with the plane they illustrate takes place; the mediator becomes concord with the object of his mediator, so that in those areana he is reborn on the miraculous lotus. For this reason Sub- Himalayan Darjeeling painting rather than religious, might be called liturgical, both because it was born as a ritual component and because of the invocation which the artist must execute before painting. In its schemes it follows the gesture of Tantric liturgy, which is a texture of scholastic and spiritual subtleties; it is a generation not to fancy but of the inclination, a ceremony act or an represented theological handbook: the thangkas conserves the stiff modeland the geometrical symmetry of both, and are bound to their encouragement to such an propagation that, when the meaning of the picture is not explicit, exponential inscriptions are added. This painting finds its artistic work only in the polyphony of colours which deflect and follow one another like the notes of a adjunct. But in this art nothing is left to chance, and even colours are not of the artist’s choice; they are strictly prescribed by theology.

Often gold takes the place of this polychrome, introduced by ideological links into colours and Buddhas; the Buddhas or *Bodhisatvas* are not illustrated according to their appropriate colour, but are all uniformly golden. In the case of some deities, *Amitava* for precedent, the golden colour is endorsed by literary usage, although in the *mandala* the colour belonging to him is red. The *Amitayurdhuyana sutra* says: “Now he shows himself as possessing a excellent body’ filling the whole sky, now he assumes a body, filling the whole sky, now he engrafts a body which seems small, sixteen to eighteen cubits in height. This body, in which he shows himself, always has the colour of pure gold”. For other deities golden colour is effortlessly exnarrated, as gold is not only the symbol of purity but also of truth and this since the distant times of Brahmanic utterance. Gold shares these properties with diamonds; the *vajrasana*, the place where the Buddha performed supreme consciousness that is where he trickled back into the *dharmakaya*, beyond human fortuitousness and sinfulness, is *Suvarnavarna*, “gold coloured”. In other words concomitant of cosmos from the first principal which is utmost enlightenment and a shining light, is accordingly expressed, as we already saw, through a subtle symbology of colours; the first methods by which that light becomes embodied, its first reaching out towards the world, as the algebrical notion of the whole, is illustrated by white in *Vairocana*’s figure; next come blue, yellow, red, green, to which assemble as many symbols, the images of *Aksobhya*, *Ratnasambhava*, *Amitava* and *Amoghasiddhi*, the five supreme Buddhas abstrusely called “the five mystical families”, because living beings and things which are in the cosmos belong constrainedly to one group or the other, that is they are in syntony with this or that expression of cosmic power and of its working. Colour then has an elementary honour and meaning of its own; in the case of deities it is not chosen turbidity, it is the symbol of an abstract which through its suggestions must be overwhelmed by the contemplator to the spread of becoming recognized with it. With the exclusion of the latest thangkass, over which the breath of Chinese painting

has passed, the Tibetans, never not once the specimen of Indian mandalas, have thus deliberated painting as a projection of the ethereal world: are even, empyreal outline beings; these figures are not bodies but quintessence, an afflatus breathing through the universe, not cosmos itself. Therefore the line which flashpoint and diagram their form, with no endeavor on the artist's part to express by chiaroscuro and the reciprocity of light their plastic agglomeration, has a magical measure; it assimilates the sign drawn in the air by a magician's wand; it explains, in arena concealed to human eyes, incorporeal countenance, magical symbols of those planes operating, with their invisible universal, in the "becoming" of the worlds. These lines cut into space, which is an image of the void, the boundaries of a templum and sequestrate that brief surface on which appeal will cause the divine emergence to condescend. Line is the indispensable component of those pictures: this is so true that *Iha bris* "to write gods", or *rimor bkod pa* "to dispose into lines" is the Tibetan term for "to paint", while in India, by calling painting *citra*, pre-eminence was given to colour, its difference and analogy. A linear type of painting, it gives us the scheme of things, not things themselves; it is nearly a discernible reflection of the magic atmosphere in which the people of sub- Himalayan Darjeeling have always lived. Fearing nature, in which supernatural forces are mystical in ambuscade nature, in which occult energy are hidden in ambush, they have expelled its symbols in order to maintain themselves from nature by operating on and through the symbols.²⁹

For the colours of *mandala Mahavairocana-sutra* states that *mandala* should be painted in five colours viz., interior of the mandala in white colour pursued by red, yellow, blue and black. In the *Kalacakra-tantra*, the four components – air, fire, water and earth are recognized with four several colours, viz., white and yellow, red and blue or black individually. In tantric Buddhism, instances to five colours are repeatedly met. These colours were symbolic – black symbolises killing and anger, white denotes rest and thinking, yellow

stands for protecting and supporting, red is for subjection and summing and green stands for virtue.³⁰

In Tibetan painting we find a great diversity of colours, and a free and seemingly accessible use of various colours for one and the same design. We envisage landscapes and clouds in “possible” but also from a naturalistic point of view “impossible” colour structure, in colours practicable perhaps only in a dream or in a glance, so that we commenced to seek the cause which gave enhancement to an art of this kind. This cause is to be found in the scheduled of Mahayana and Vajrayana. Significant aspect which dominated the creation of art were: the elementary conception of the transience of the emerged world, the relativity of all values, and the clearness of all discernable and created exposure against the imperceptible but translucent back ground of the ecumenical void. The world is seen as a exposure of forms created of individual impermanent components, forms which are themselves transient and hence illusive. The world that seems to our eyes can be observed by the inner eye in its past, present and future stages. The utility of the colours is relative and synthesis itself to the spectacle of the moment and not to external reality. Likewise, meditations – on remote lands of the Buddhas and the heavenly realms of the Bodhisattvas open up to the artist a legendary world of divine spheres to be proficient in a super sensuous way, spheres which he then tries to delimitate in transparent colours. At an early date the large number of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, deities and saints was fixed in iconographic text books. Their countenance is clearly explained in terms of form, dimension and colour, as well as applicable symbolism. The adopted special symbols of deities, the positions of the hands, the positions of the body, as well as the colours are the intimate identification marks recognizable by those induced into the mysteries of *vajrayana*. The sub-himalayan darjeeling art prove that, this art often has a implicit back ground of many individual levels, repeatedly transcending the boundaries of what is represent-able. Anything beyond those boundaries – the theological content, the

meditative stage, the empirical satisfied and the degree of persuasion is manifested as far as feasible by symbols of structure, equipment and colour. The religious art therefore aims not at laying assertion to impeccable aesthetics or originative elegance or solicitation of form but, by observing a accurately formalized iconography, aims at making discernable religious, meditational, purely theological and legendary article so that the introduced may in turn alleviate them. The works of art serve theological discipline and realization; they are objects for a ritual of invocation and veneration of deities and therefore fulfil a totally several operation from that of decoration or art for arts' sake. The thangkas functioned as support or imagination of the deities whose attributes the induced strikes to develop within himself.³¹

Scroll painting was one of the most exoteric process of painting in ancient India. But it is a living practice in many region of India even today. Due to the transitory nature of cloth, on which paintings were rendered, no instance prior to that of the 15th century A.D. has endured. But our ancient and medieval literature and silpa texts clearly state the entirety of scroll painting in all ages. Indian scrolls were known as '*Citrapata*' or the '*Pata*' and the subject matter was always long descriptive stories from the epics and the puranas or connected the life of the Buddha, the *Jataka* tales.³² It is well known that Tibetan culture is in a large measure extract from India. The Tibetans, when they came in concretion with India for the first time, had no civilization at all; they were held in subservience to a shamanic and magical religion, they had neither an alphabet, or art, nor literature; they lived in tents and roamed with their gaggle and herds on the high lands. Becoming transmuted to Buddhism, the Tibetans welcomed all they could quadrate of the exalted culture which raised them out of darkness into the light. Owing to their deficiency of cultural traditions and also to the esteem felt by all assign for their masters, they took good care not to change anything in the teachings they were receiving from India and China. It was not feasible that Tibet should replication the perception of China, where Buddhism, on being conveyed, was constrained to

concur to the country's culture and to undergo its impression in many ways, to the expansion of accomplishing with native traditions and adapting itself to Chinese psychology. In the country of snows Indian culture, commenced together with Buddhism, was not taught and lives over again in a new and original customs; rather it was meticulously conserved and protected. Many centuries were needed before the Tibetans imbibing India's and China's bewilderment could pursue their own avenue and listen to their own motivation. Thus the thangkas too are not an unprompted creation of Tibetan competence; they are a type of art sharpened, together with other ideas, from India, and which, only in course of time, received the imprint of their genius.³³

Scholars are categorically of vindicated opinions about the provenance of the Tibetan thangka. One school defendant a logical perfection of tracing the origin from the Ajanta frescoes through manuscript precedent of the pala-sena period of Bengal later recreated by the Nepalese idiom to Tibetan temple-hangings. The representation of the palm-leaf manuscripts of Bengal in the 11th-12th Century both rhetorically and technically have no doubt played a vital role in the presentation of scroll-paintings of Nepal and Tibet, to be tangible in the northern and central Asiatic countries.³⁴ The remarks of Tucci in this regard are also interesting to note. "It has been generally stated that Tibetan painting is derived from Bengal through Nepal. This opinion rests on the authority of a native tradition, rather recent as to its literary formulation, but in fact derived from ancient memories transmitted by that succession of oral teachings, from master to disciples, which defies silence of centuries."³⁵ That Bengal assumed an significant place in the sphere of painting and sculpture is also observed in a Tibetan text named Pog-Sam-Jom-Zam of the 11th century which states "In painting and sculptures the Bengalis excel, next follow the Newars, then come the Tibetans and lastly the Chinese."³⁶ Another group expressed that the Tibetan painting is an off shoot of Chinese art progressed in a particular earmarked approach.

Primarily a sacerdotal means of invocation, thangkas are the ocular tools of the mystical and symbolical world through which Lamaism finds its manifestation. The native religion of Tibet was Bon, emerged on the worship of demons and shamanistic practices. According to the tradition Buddhism was commenced into Tibet in the 7th Century A.D. In India at that time *Mahayana* Buddhism had mingled with yoga doctrine, *Mantrayana* (doctrine of spell and charm) and above all *vajrayana*, the tantric dogma which commenced the worship of *prajna* or *Sakti*, *mantras*, *tantras*, mystic realizations, psychic exercises, etc. This fusion of Tantric Buddhism and Bon religion emerged to the origin of Lamaism. With the introduction of profound Buddhism by several schools such as *vajrayana*, *Mantrayana*, *Kalachakrayana* and the subsisting Bon religion the lamas manufactured number of new gods, peaceful and dreadful in their pantheon and dedicated to the artists of Tibet, a vast treasury of subjects for their work.³⁷

The scroll, as a means of fable, was so exoteric in India, that the architrave, on the Torans of the Great Stupa of Sanchi, belonging to the Sunga period has ends, of a scroll. The middle section shows the worship of the 'Bo' tree as though a section of the scroll has been unrolled for manifestation. This is till now the rare lithic representation of the painted scroll.³⁸ In the words of Benjamin Rowland, "It is possible that these long horizontal panels terminating in tightly woven spiral volutes were transferred to stone of popular picture scrolls partly unrolled or exhibition."³⁹ Roughly woven cloth is the general carrier for scroll painting in India. Though details vary from region to region, the technique is practically the same all over the country. It is surprising that after a lapse of over a millennium, the method of production and the materials used is scroll painting upto this day is the same as described in the eminent 'Silpa text'. The Pancadasi of Madhavacharya references four stages of cloth presenting viz., Dhauta or washing the fabric, Ghattita or the fabric is burnished smooth, Lancita or the drawing of figure is corroborated and Ranjita or colours are flushed in the

drawing according to the needs of iconography and other necessities of painting. Due to the transitory nature of cloth scroll existant examples date back only to 14th Century A.D. The earliest exemplar is not a true scroll but a cloth manuscript of the Jaina work *Dharmavidhi Prakarana Vrttisahita* datable to a period between 1351 to 1353 A.D. The real rolled scroll is the one illustrating the poem “*Vasantavitasā*” dated 1451 A.D. The disparity between Eastern India and Western India techniques subsisted in the material used in priming. While, Bengal and Orissa used clay and cow dung paste for filling in the pores of cloth, Western Indian artists used rice or wheat paste for the objective.

Thangka art of Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling region and the influence of other region

Painting on cloth is a living art in Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling. It is encourage both by religious organization and royal and magnific circles. Scrolls are in exact both by Buddhist and Hindus. Considering all these factors we can easily say that scrolls are also the unique art in Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling. Usually scrolls are termed as Pata, Patacitra, Torana or Paubha in Nepal. Another diversity which is basically religious in subject matter and Tibetan in encouragement is known as Thanka or Tanka. The Puranic scrolls are long and narrow and are kept rolled up when not in use. They are brought out and exhibited in temples on individual festival days connected with a certain deity around whose hearsy the subject matter of the scroll is formed. Such scrolls have a great oldness in the Indian subcontinent. Ancient Sanskrit literature is also full of instances to such long scrolls which were demonstrated for education as well as amusement. The details of technique of painting of scrolls in Bengal had been collected by the administrator turned historian, Sir Gurusaday Dutt of the Bengal Civil Service.

The use of cloth scrolls in ancient India is vouchsafed by the following sigificant works. The *SamyuttaNikaya* mentions *Dussa Patta* or scrolls painted on cloths. The term Dussa or

Dushya has been alluded as a indelicate cloth or for scrolls in common. According to V.S. *Agarwala Dussa* survives in contemporaneous simple Hindi as Dhussa to mean coarse or heavy cloth. The *Visuddhimagga* also refers to indelicate cloth as a ground or carrier for painting. Allusion to cloth painting are more productive in the Sanskrit texts which are not only in the shape of technical literature but are also works of literature where there are imperceptible reference to scroll painting. Cyloneze text Mahavamsa clearly refers to stories being told by means of cloth scrolls. The *Kamasutra* of *Vatsayana* acknowledges cloth painting as a certain kind of painting governing in the classical period. In the *Dutavakyam* of *Bhasa Duryodhana*, the *Kaurava*, refers to the scene of *Draupadi* being pulled by her hair, painted on a scroll.⁴⁰ *Krsnatita* – being narration in nature was exetoric as a subject matter for long scrolls as found from the *Mahavasya* of *Patanjali*.⁴¹ The 6th Century A.D. work *Mudraraksasa* mentions to scrolls depicting punishment in hell which were steered along for show associated by versified narration to admonish the masses of their doing.⁴² *Visakhodatta*, the author of *Mudrarakshasa*, refers to another kind of painting, probably of a folk and popular character. Such paintings called *Yamapatas* were attained on textile scrolls and negotiable with themes of a narration instructive nature, showing the results of Karma in the other world. *Buddhaghosa*, the extended Buddhist scholar and divine of the period under investigate, also refers to similar kind of painting of which he gives the name ‘*Charanacaritas*’ which composed of scenes of happy and unhappy destinies of men after death with accurate labels joined to them and shown in blond galleries. There can be no doubt that these *Yamapatas* or the ‘*charanacariatas*’ are the ancestors, in form, meaning and presentations of the *Patacitras* that were extensively current in Eastern India even in the nineteenth century and insist even today. No contemporaneous example of *Yamapatas* or *Caranacaritas* attained perhaps on brittle materials, has endured to this day. But this was

clearly a folk art of racial and religious importance and of wide popular request, an excursive school of intense and great educative measure for the rural masses.

The immeasurable popularity of scroll painting in India is not only narrated in religious and secular literature of the ancient times but some indirect instances of this art to be seen in other forms of art. From India along with Buddhism it might have also expansion to central Asia where Indian culture and art were resolutely formed. A piece of wall painting from Central Asia in the early centuries of the Christian era shows a female figure holding a hanging cloth scroll in her hand on which her life of the Buddha had been painted. Such an embodied instance of scroll painting in its true form leaves no room for doubt about the popularity of this art, not only in India but even beyond its frontiers where even Indian art and culture were firmly commenced. The art of painting faced a setback in India after the Islamic victory of the several regions. But the process of narrating lives of great men though painted scrolls insisted in the Islamic period also as observed by the Ghazir Patas of Bengal in India. It is quite feasible that in the ancient times the art of scroll painting also implanted Iran from Central Asian art centres attached with the Indianised Buddhists. And being an advantageous mode of religious communique was also accepted by the followers of Islam. Hamza Nama paintings of the period of Akbar, the Mughal emperor of India also instituted a similar intension through a similar medium. The only distinction to be noticed in the Hamza Nama paintings is that they do not form one single long rolled but each has been cut up in exclusive individual pieces, 1400 in number. The height of these pieces about 26" conform to the normal height of Indian scroll even today.

During Islamic rule to the 19th Century, scroll painting on cloth continued in Rajasthan, Bengal and South India. But the contents were reciprocal from Buddhist to Hindu, Islamic or secular and romantic tales. But in the mountainous regions the Buddhist affairs were

painted. The flow of Indian culture migration is observed into separate and individual periods. Indian culture never came in such direct and close contact with those of other Asian countries before the Kusana and Pala periods. In both the periods, we find the missionary inclination of the Buddhist was accountable for the spread of Buddhism and Indian culture. The contacts that were began in the Kusana period and initiate in the Pala period, pursued till emergence of Islam on the Asian scene. A long with the Buddhist religion structure of art like architecture, sculpture and painting were also instigated in the countries of Central and South-east Asia for the circulation of religious notions and stories combined with the life of the Buddha. Extant instances and local traditions testify to the vogue of scroll painting also in the above religions during long period of Indian contacts. Nepal, Tibet has conserved this art in the area lying in the north of India.⁴³

Central Tibet, since the beginnings of its art, was mainly influenced by Nepal, as surviving monuments show, this, as we have notice, can be explained many ways. Painting, having surpassed the Himalaya, took up its domicile in Tibet, where an insurmountable religious tradition caused it to endure through the centuries, conserving it from those deflect which in India were alerting custom and schools. That art stimulated the painters of thangkas and enhanced the walls of chapels with its colours. In Central Tibet, frescoes and thangkas carry into an artistic world. An art exceptionally hieratic, a trustworthy and schematic regeneration of the meditations rules (*sadhana*), which instructed how to visualize the images of the gods without the test profane intrusion. Therefore the artist's whole capability consists in retouching details. The lama had to interfere again to vitalize the painting, i.e. to cause the ethereal spirit to get down into it and to bless it. Therefore if the painter was a layman, he always worked under the lama's watchful eyes, and could not acquittal iconographical patterns. But man cannot surrender forever to the tyranny of abstract notions, closing his eyes to life. Notwithstanding religion denied the world any appreciation, reducing everything to a

vain shadow, not even Tibetans could neglect, in their art, the world of men: in no country are paradise and angelic glance adequate to forget life. Thus little by little, by a natural method of maturing, we see in Tibetan painting the series of saints and deities, previously managed in files, one after the other like a coloured psalm, replaced by scenes of human life. It is no longer the ascetic wrapped up in the stillness of concern, meanwhile shifted to other theological spheres, made alien to the world, comfortable in his sanctity, but on the inverse the success of righteousness, his earthly life. The chronicles, smeared in Tibet with great affection, have their resemblance in these thangkas, which are pictorial reproduction of their contents. Thus by the degrees, the cold and impractical lines of the *mandala* and the hieratic, meditating figures of early thangkas were put back by a flimsy human smile. The earth, of which there is no trace in earlier paintings, now seems as the artists saw it under their own eyes. In the primitive thangkas man had but the second place: he was put in the back ground or in a corner, obstructed like an alien. But now man enters as an actor, the saint, whose life is dedicated, takes his fellow men along with him, his friends and enemies, followers and antagonists, evoking that entire world in which he had performed his task as a master, a propagandist and an envoy.

The thangkas then become projections of the earth, but as they are inspired by biographies written in monasteries, promenade life predominates. Space too is widened and expanded; in the oldest thangkas it seems often as if painters could not bear expanse to be void; figures are cumulated one another, in the ever and anon they place traditional trees, little flowers suspended in mid-air, arabesques; thus in Tibet we incessantly see that dislike of void which is one of the most continual features of ancient Indian painting, where the images are squeezed with the same affluent fancy as the wild growths of a forest⁴⁴.

The area of painting constructed large-scale room decoration and murals at one end of the scale and the form of scrolls, the thangkas, within the monasteries. The temples were most numerous painted. Columns, capitals, prizes and architecture were adorned in colours on a red ground, with holy symbols, calligraphic lettering, flowers, intertwining lives and dragon design. Art is a technique of visualization or mystic apperception of secret fields of forces, feasible delightful states – the resulting glance relativism all exotic laws of images, colour and form. That is why the handling of colour in Tibetan works of art is oft preternatural, highly imaginative, and fantastic and visionary, landscapes, these, sky and often assemble more to the inner picture of an all – transforming glance than to an external realistic picture of nature. According to the several techniques engaged the thangkas can be serial under four heads:

- Thangkas painted in colour – also from printing blocks;
- Gold paintings, either on gold ground or red ground with line drawing in gold and colouring;
- Painting in black ground, monochrome with white or gold, or polychrome with confined use of iconographic figurative colours;
- Pure embroidery or appliqué techniques, sometimes with redundant painting.⁴⁵

In the printed thangkas the artists work is confined to colouring the drawing. He discovery the accession ready-made in the wood cut printed on the linen; if any newness is to be found, it belongs only to the author of the drawing, the one who envisioned and drew the composition, which was then cut on the wooden block.

To the second group belong the thangkas having a golden background; they are called gsert'an, "*golden thangkas*". They are of several types; sometimes on a uniformly gold-colour background, the figures are drawn in black with clear-cut lines which run fleet and

twisting; at other times, against this same background, an image stand out in the centre, with its elastic colours, it manifest the indifference of that yellow gold and seems to founded out of it like an glittering flower; or else the gold is spotted with small red, blue and black touches, efficiently distributed so as to give relief to the dresses of the gods and goddesses, or spattered with flowers which import to the picture an immensely bright and festive air. Tibetans also deliberated gsert'an the thangkas having an identical red background, against which the figures are coloured prevailing with gold. The artist moves within these patters and cannot redemption them. Although these thangkas are bound to an accurate technique, the artist often accomplish beautiful influence through the efficient analogy used in arranging against a identical background abrupt spots of colour and tracing the winding interaction of lines. For this cause gser t'an are much prized by the Tibetans.⁴⁶ Gold ground is generally used for images of the Buddha, who is said to "shine like a mountain of gold." Gold silk and painted gold ground progressed separately of tantric theory and are the result of what materials are attainable along with the inventiveness of the artist and the assistant of wealthy donors. Red ground arranged with the iron oxide or vermillion, is all accurate for all deities that are classified in Buddhist tantra as caliber deities.

Black ground paintings are opus in which the ground preparation for the canvas is of a black colour or the background of the composition is painted black. This variety of painting, with its distinctive and recognizable aspect, has an early historical element and ritual by that practitioner. The Buddhist tantric system mentions four tantric activities that assemble to four various colours: white for peaceful activities, yellow for activities of enhancement such as wealth and health, red for activities requiring prevalence or speed in their performance, and black for resentful activities, as illustrated by black ground paintings. The origin of the style can be dated in the several tantric texts of the 9th to 12th centuries. Conventionally, the iconographic subject for these paintings is confined to wrathful deities. These deities can be

either custodians, such as *Mahakala* and Sri Devi, or meditational models, such as Vajrabhairava and Hevajra, as long as they are wrathful or semi-resentful in countenance.⁴⁷

The exercise of thangkas made of appliqué work (stuff cut out and sewn on another material) called *sgos sku, t'ags su bskrum pa, ap'anc'en* is very ancient in Tibet. Decorated thangkas were initiated from China.⁴⁸ There are very massive thangkas of more than hundred feet long, which are exercised only during the religious occasions. The technique in making them is called “appliqué” and they are usually made with a single deity. Thangkas of this kind are called Kangdsa; they are not amassed like the Gonkhang thangkas, for they are desired to be ‘on the move’.⁴⁹

Different categories of Thangka

Thangkas can also be grouped according to their illustrate kernel under the following subject headings:

- Historical or visionary representations;
- Representations of the theological legacy and hierarchy;
- Representations of meditative karnel;
- Mandals and extraterrestrial diagrams;
- Imaginative representations.

In the first element we find the representations from the life of the Buddha, the saints, the Arhats, the yogis and the siddhas, and legends of saints or stories of Tibetan kings.

The second group is repeatedly found as wall paintings in monasteries as well as in many thangkas. There are the pictures showing the line of gurus, the founders of a clique or precept tradition. These paintings mirror, as it were, of the theological lineage or succession the sect or doctrinal tradition illustrated there. This is why these representations of the

sequence comprised not only the teachers but also the distinctive profound eternities and guardian deities of an individual school.

The third group comprises the large number of pictures of meditative karnel, representing Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and profound deities. The meditational images are aids to practice of particular aspects of the profound teachings and the features of the deities, as well as to meditation on the ideals of Mahayana Buddhism usually.

Under the fourth group mandalas are illustrated in a closed form. These mandalas are profound meditation sketch embodying a particular doctrine or some practical facet of a doctrine. This doctrine is to be presumed through prosperous pictorial meditation proceeding from the centre of the picture. The mandalas thus purvey the inner methods of interpretation – theological contents to be methodically performed though yoga. These contents are comprised in the mandalas, coded in a wealth of symbolism, and are desired to achieve a step-by-step sanctification of awareness through growing conversance of the theological values of the secret doctrine.

The fifth group constructed all paintings of fanciful type. The visionary pictures, in most cases on black ground, are of an extremely profound character and most stealthily protected in Tibet against the eye of the inexperienced. The paintings from the temples of the guardian deities are forms, to this day, the ones whose real importance and intimate energy remain most clandestine from us.⁵⁰

The aesthetic significance of Thangkas

Ever since the Buddhism rooted in Tibet, the tradition of narrating thangkas might have been prevalent around in the area where Buddhism expanse. It was about 10th century hitherward tantric Buddhism was inchmeal being progressed in Tibet. The tradition of

Thangka painting was just outset in Tibet and now is not enclosed only within Tibet and Tibetan community but those who accepted the Tibetan Buddhism learnt this art so as Tamangs, Sherpas, Thakalis, Yolmos, Manangeys and Newars are the examples. Most of the Thangka viewer simply think that Thangka is an art of the Buddhist monk other else nothing but, the Buddhist scholar of higher conceptuality admire it with entire dignity accounting mystic force of Lamaistic deities. In accordance with the religious culture, the Thangka to be laid down at the worship room fumigate with holy water weathering mantras to animate Thangkas mist-ice power and puts khada (a two feet long silk cloth) on it. Since then the aficionado use the bow his/her head before it at the time of worship particularly in the morning time.⁵¹

Thangkas were in usual mainly for the lay people. Domination of a thangka was predominantly stimulated to avoid suffering in life caused by troubles, diseases, or hindrances. Tibetan religious educator, the lamas, when advented by people, who brought their problems to them for a solution, generally expressed or recommended the commissioning of a holy painting, the thangka, to remove physical or mental hindrances (bar chad sel ba) or to vindicate the necessity for a long and healthy progressive life (Zhabs brtau). It is firmly supposed that it would earn them merit, if they have in their domination an image of a deity as an object of worship, which could give rise to future advantages and happiness. In Buddhism 'merit-making' motivates and brace up people to do well to others, to earn credits for future profits or happiness. This usually led to an exalted situation in life or emanated or executed to pleasure result. This merit making primarily based in the faith in the law of karma, the law of equivalence of indemnification or retribution. Linked up with merit making, of doing good for others, for the palliation of their suffering is the commissioning of a holy painting for deceased comparative. The thangka is accepted in the name of the deceased, which is imagined to generate the obligate situation for the happy regeneration of

the deceased. Such thangkas were called skyes rtags or signs of good rebirth, and have to be made within seven weeks soon after the death of the deceased when he or she has not yet been reborn. Wondering lamas or teachers, known as bla-ma-mani-pa, brought thangka with them, which they exercised to represent Buddhist teachings to their disciple. In Buddhist exequial departure or in a marriage party thangkas were also boasted in public. In the march of lamas they steered thangkas called srid-pa-ho during religious festivals. Some monasteries have their own individual thangkas of their exceptional deities. Thangkas are symbols made up of a complicated of symbols and therefore they do not only represent a deity, its powers or virtues, but give narration of the deity's life. A thangka impersonate hence wisdom, and also the dynamic in every being of becoming or attaining Buddha hood. On the whole thangkas for the lay people are meant to make them eliminate endurance in their earthly life.⁵²

Another motive of the thangka is to teach and may be styled as educational. These thangkas highlight life history of a saint, monk or a church-dignitary, the chief aim of the patas being awakening people towards their advising. The travelling mendicants roaming from one place to another delineate the lives of saints and their teachings by visible images illustrated in the thangka. The, audio-visual exercise of narrating the thangka remind of us of a very old tradition once current in India. Mankhaliputta Gosata, a contemporaneous of Buddha and Mahavira whose ancestral profession was that of a travelling minstrel used to roam about with scroll paintings and explain the stories illustrated there, disseminating consciousness among people.⁵³

The art of Sajorani (Darjeeling), like her philosophy and religion, is mythical and metaphysical rather than representational; endemic and social rather than separate which has managed to hold itself from a various area to a several quality. The art of Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling is insight and tradition. It is also the metaphysical reality that in its expressive

form or image becomes approachable to man for his remembrance, worship and artistic treatment. The Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling's art accordingly reveals the transcendent reality in the manifoldness of the remarkable world, in life in all its levels, reaches and sweeps. It embodies a sense of the intertwining enthusiasm and voluptuousness of life abstractly and concentrated. It is at once fleshly and symbolic, replete and poised. The love of the stature and enrichment of man, the thought and power of God, the delight and suppleness of women are all disciplined and restrained in various scroll painting and thangka of Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling and decoration by a serenity and harmony that come from supernatural myth and meta-physics.⁵⁴

The polarity of the masculine and feminine appearance of all affairs in the universe and the human mind which is administrated by Indian rumination underlies the mythopoeia and pictorial outlook on life in India, and the progress presentation in her art and craft of durability and movement in nature and brutishness and tenderness in human character as rhythms or accents of presence. This actually, interprets the strange combination of opposites, of classical balance and harmony with pliancy and abandon, in several paintings and art.⁵⁵ The scroll painting and also thangka of Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling has produced idolised, inpalpable, yet thrilling figures that miraculously blend masculine reverence and caliber with feminine passion and emotionalism, figures the sub-ordinate human personal attributes, to an abstract and supernatural type. Many several communities and cultures of Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling region with a similar metaphysical reality, the more genuine because it is so simple and universal and also nature oriented.

The traditional contemporary pattern of Thangkas in Sub- Himalayan Darjeeling

The Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling thangka art, through the intelligence, beauty and diversity of its tradition has been the efficient and fitting vehicle for the spread of Himalayan culture abroad. Scenes from the jatakas and Avadanas, the Ramayana, the Harivamsa and the Mahabharata could not have been so patiently and magnificently carved by foreigners on thousands of lintels of java, Burma, Cambodia, Tibet and other part of Asia had these not been symbolic, metaphysical episodes admissible to all peoples. The several monasteries, temples represent symbolic replicas of the Universe, with a regular and definite hierarchy of worlds and planes of life, as envisioned in the cosmology of the motherland. The various temple of Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling region, (for example, Bokar Ngedhon Choekhor ling institute of Mirik, jumbulind Gumba of Mirik, Ghoom monastery in Darjeeling, Pasupati Mandir in Darjeeling, Hanuman Mandir of tiger-hill region, and Sinchel Simha Devi Sthan etc.) show the same disposition of sanctum. Sanctorum, antarala and mandapa, sikhara or steeple as in the motherland and their diversity traditional arts, scroll painting embodying common symbolic principles which represent man's immolation or reintegration with the universal or cosmic man. The several art or scroll painting, thangka which was influenced by the central Asia, China, Nepal, Tibetan art. It was the art of the Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling that spread Sub-Himalayan myth, metaphysics and folk culture and also dharma. Now a day it led to the astonishing improvement or opulence of the regional style also.

Along with the images, symbols and motifs of several scroll painting, wall painting and thanka, many Indian holy books have also kneaded Asian cultures. The most significant are the epics, the jatakas. The puranas, the Agamas and the tantras, and such single text as the Sadharma – pundarika, the prajna-paramita, the Lalitavistara, the sraddhotpada, the Abhidharmakosa and the sutralamkara. It is only through religion and scholasticism,

literature and art that one can reach the soul of India, the underlying motivation of the constructive epoch of her history and its relation to the exterior life. The kingdoms and empires are significant in Indian history not merely for their political integrations but equally for definite universal myths, values, and norms that they executed and elongated scholastically. Not entwined in infeasible dogmas, revelatory creeds and doubtful legends these were able to entice and win over many foreigners.⁵⁶

The Himalayas offer great opportunities for artistic research: they have always been crucial significance in relation to the progress of religious art of India as well as the Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling region. The Sub-Himalayan order of art, the design of several monasteries, and the symbolism of the components of nature are all focussed in thangka art. Religion is the encouragement of all vital art. The Indians did not admire and worship the Himalaya as only because they were beautiful, majestic and wonderful, but chiefly because within their inner consistency they conserved the worshipful source of life, the fount of purity which made India a prolific, progressive and holy land. The common prayer of humanity, “Give us this day our daily bread”, - the first boon which the Christian asks of his heavenly father, conveys the thought which inspired Indian worship at the great Himalayan well of life.⁵⁷

The artist of Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling who grapple to implant into the inner querencia of traditional thought has first to clear the ground of many inadvertence, misconception and historical incompatibility – for traditional thangka art, through very old in itself, is from a western point of view a new subject of study. It is hardly more than fifteen years since it began to arise from the category of entomology and to be taken solemnly into account by modern art critics as belonging to the demesne of aesthetics, from which are usually substract all the art of native peoples of this region. Ruskin, in the mod-Victorian era, brought his

heaviest artillery to bear upon it, and ascribed to the devil and his myrmidons all the notions of the Hindu Sculptor and painter as he understood them.⁵⁸

Though the beauty of the Thangka – paintings obliged admiration, the people of Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling who thought, to be illustrated as an off shoot of the early traditional concept and therefore distantly associated with Tibetan art. The thangka art of Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling are contained, in a depreciatory sense, implying a period of depreciation in which the creative inspiration of China was lost and Indian art regressed to its own primordial nature.

Ruskin's impression dissuaded when art teaching was made a part of our educational programme in India. School of art were to vignette, less violently, but more successfully, the iconoclastic propaganda of Aurangzeb and bring the light of south Kensington to shine upon the darkness of Indian imagination. The same impression ruled for more than half a Century in the administration of our national art museums.⁵⁹ The essential and all important attribute of Indian art – its livingness is still regarded either with insufferable scepticism or with aloofness as a disadvantageous and rather annoying subject. But it has been usually acknowledged that India for many centuries was the centre of a dynamic aesthetic stimulate which immensely affected the whole art of Asia. Probably, when the study of traditional thangka art has grown out of its infancy, we shall also discover that it had a far greater dominance upon other art like Tibetan scroll painting, Chinese art and western art than we are now affectionate to admit.⁶⁰

The local folk tradition of Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling helps to discover the inner thoughts and motives of traditional thangka art. All the dynamic impulse of art come from a people's efforts at self-realization, as they are influenced by their mode of life, religious thought and by the impress they derive from their environment. It will, therefore be our chief

motive to trace some of the most vital impulse in Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling art to their fountain head and connect them with Indian life and thought – which closely related with the nature's component. Ruskin's charge against Indian artists was that they had wilfully seated up and put separately the entire volume of the world and had thrown a veil over the whole exhibition of creation. It would be nearer the mark to say that artist of thangka painting of Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling tried so passionately to perforate through the veil of natural appearances and used the forms of art to illustrate their philosophy of life, it is sometimes hard for those who cannot read their symbolic language to follow their line of thought and to understand their objectives. Though art is to some extent a universal language, so much so that great artists in all countries do not often need an imitator between themselves, a critic who misunderstands an artist's aims and fails to ensue his line of thought is not likely to form a just perception of his aesthetic achievement.⁶¹

The interpretation of Sub-Himalayan artistic symbolism is not an easy matter, because several literature of Buddhist religion, and Sanskrit literature, so far gives very little clue to the meaning of it. At least scholars of thangka art in the west and asia have not yet brought to light much clear information on this point. This may be because the study of Indian art is still so young. It must be said, however that Buddha text, Tibetan literature which enlighten the meaning of thangka and scroll painting. The Indian poet whom European men of letters were not showed to admire regards nature with the same eye as the artist they could not understand. But after all, the definitive is not the only or the surest method of analyzing art. It is rather by living in the atmosphere in which art grows and by opening one's mind to the dominance of its environment that one comes instinctive to a true understanding of it. To accept, as Ruskin did not whole people deliberating shut their eyes to the beauties of nature, and were wholly impassive to the impression of their environment, is to render oneself incompetent of entering into the spirit of their art, for no artistic movement, so long – lived

and so closely bound up with a people's life as that of India, ever subsisted, or could exist, which had not its deepest root in the influence made upon the human mind by the theological and material environment in which that art was constructed. A people who are inanimate to impressions from their own environment create no art, for they lack the motive power which is behind all art excogitation.⁶² In the 11th Century thangka painting in western Tibet began to draw inspiration from Kashmiri School of painting when the great monk – Scholar Rinchen – Sangpo brought Kashmiri artist's to Tibet. However, this dominance diminished as Buddhism began to wane in India, as well as Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling also, with the result that Nepalese styles prevailed. From the 14th Century, Chinese styles also had some influence on thangka painting, but by that time, a distinctive Tibetan style that combined the different influences had risen. During the centuries that followed, several schools of painting arose which endure until today. Thangka painting is a form of religious painting. Buddhist's use the images of deities and mandalas for several techniques, of meditation. Some of them also represent the history of a wise person or a king and particularly represent the different component of nature. Each deity has a different grid of measurement, enabling the image to be exact according to the ancient holy geometry of Thangka. Not only measurement but symbols, colours and positions have significant meaning so to understand a thangka, one must learn its symbolism. Referring to the importance of symbolism, Rene Guenon once said: "True symbolism, far from being artificially invented by man, is inherent in nature itself; or rather (that) the whole of nature is nothing but a symbol of transcendent realities."⁶³ To discover the expression of nature, which always made the deepest influence upon the mind of the people of Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling, if we look the traditional painting then we can see the majestic mountain tree, and monsoon are inter-related with each other: Take only a rapid observation of Indian literature, and scholar will find that all Indian poetry and mythology point to the Himalayas as the centre of the world and as the throne of the great Gods or if we

will follow the life of Modern India and joint the certain stream of pilgrims wending their way from cloister to cloister you will find that the decisive goal of Sadhu and Sannyasin or monks is up the strenuous Himalayan slopes. For those who shrink from such long and laborious pilgrimages of different parts of India offer an easier form of sadhana. It would be curious actually if such deep and abiding influence as the mystery and ostentation of the Himalaya obviously made upon the Indian mind had found no reflection in Indian religious art and specially the art of Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling also. But it is not too much to say that the feeling of awe and solicitation which their majesty stimulated gives the key-note to the elucidation of Indian art and special reference to Sub-Himalayan thangka art. Here is the chief clue to the meaning of Indian symbolism. Religion is the encouragement of all vital art.⁶⁴ Several form how a text on philosophy is written in a book an image will portray the same message, but in a different way; it ostracizes the time that it takes to read a text and it radiates its meaning in a flash, in a blink, bringing out the substance of timeless and the reality of its entirety. Symbolism and form in Thangka go beyond ordinary visual figurations, representing the primary theological substance of things. Notion such as vacantness, temporality and charitable consciousness and are per instance represented by the positioning of the deity, number of heads, legs and arms, the instruments it holds, jewels, flowers, mudras (hand positions) and so forth.⁶⁵ In Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling if you see properly a Thangka, it is obligatory to consider the painting. This is why it is foremost that the painter does his work with dedication and skill for he or she holds a great responsibility. Very several from other contemporaneous art, thangka does not allow creative freedom; a good thangka painter will sketch it and paint it as a geometrical figure – though, a holy symbol. But it is only implementing for traditional thangka art. But now a day's artist of various thangka and also scroll painting is too much liberal, because they allow creative freedom in their artistic work. The artists are using their generous notions in the art work for commercial impetuous. They

have used several chemical colours, such as radium colour, and also used the high caliber velvet, silk cloth, radium colour, distemper they have used only because the shininess in night. But here is one question emerge that why they have used different chemical colour alternatively of natural colour? The only cause is that the long lastingness of thangka art and also scrolls paintings. The artist's are using their generous conduct though a secular course. They intimate the pattern of thangka for several religious avenues. To do such work of deep studies, intentness, trained skills and patience, if requires the painter an especially theological insight as motivation. It takes many weeks more often a few months or even years to do one single complete and correct thangka. The thangka painter's work must become his or her theological practice, because its satisfaction with the work will not come directly or spontaneously after the end result, but it will transform his or her mind during the methods if it is practiced as a meditation without anticipation. Thangka after all is not only an art; it is a path.⁶⁶ The Thangka that portrays the wheel of life, the mechanism of *samsaric* self-imprisonment – it is said that Buddha himself made this thangka for a known king of his time, and so the first thangka was formed. The Thangka portrays the God of Death, who holds the wheel with his claws. This is very interesting, because what death holds in its claws represents life. This formed how it is eternalized by the cycle of death and rebirth. This uniformity we can find also in Hindu religion. In the centre is a rooster representing pleasure and attachment, a pig representing opaqueness, and snake, hatred. Each one bites the tail of other, representing that one leads to the other. Out of ignorance one pleasure, causing affection and affection can cause hatred and so the whole human drama begins. The plot generally starts as a pretty love story which with time lovers becomes attached to each other, increasing their fear of loss, and if not returned according to their anticipation they are easily hurt and anger arises, jealousy, pleasure and a total misunderstanding of the true nature of affairs which is now clouded by those poisons of the mind. The whole story effortlessly

becomes a rolling snowball, getting bigger and denser. It becomes so stubborn to get out of this cycle. Around the centre of the wheel are the six main spokes of the wheel, which depict the six dominions where a being reincarnates – hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, humans, semi gods and gods. The Buddhist explain the hell beings experiencing dreadful suffering all the time; their bodies being chopped off, being burned and eaten by demons and so forth. The hungry ghosts are greedy beings, with a mouth so small that not even a needle can go through; they have a long neck and an inestimable stomach. Whatever they eat tastes spicy. These creatures are mostly represented with their mouths on fire. They are also always suffering from the extremes of temperatures in their dominion. Humans suffer from four elemental sufferings: birth, old age, sickness and death. Other main suffering from a human being is envisaged of enemies or the loss of loved ones; they also mainly suffer from displeasure of not getting what they want or not wanting what they have. Even though, it is said in Buddhism that human life is the most valuable of all; humans have the greatest effective to find liberation, because they are not too low nor too high in the dominion, they can find a path to sangfroid more easily.⁶⁷

This Thangka delimitate the Buddha in *Bhumisparsa Mudra* (Earth Touching Posture). The right hand, with palm turned inward, touches the ground with tips of the outstretched fingers. The manner of sitting is that *Vajra* (Thunderbolt/diamond), that is, the two legs are firmly locked with the soles perceptible. The seat is created of three components: moon or white, sun or green and lotus or blue. Moon stands for *sambritisatya* (relative truth), Sun for *paramartha satya* (absolute truth) and lotus for a *nupaliptata* (non-attachment). The throne rests on white lions and buff components. The white lion stands for *dasabala* (the ten strengths which the Buddha overwhelmed) and the elephant for *prati-sambhida* (correct comprehension or logical analysis). The frill of the mat depicts a tree, probably *kalpalata* (wish granting tree). The top piece of alter is *ratnachhattra* (expensive parasol) which

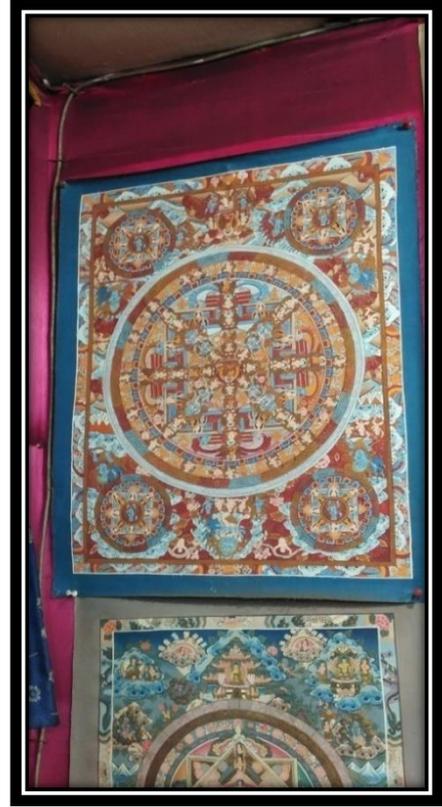
protects all life from the tribulation of *Klesa* (suffering). Just below the parasol is Garuda, the giant bird with human limbs, represented in grey. The *garuda* or the heavenly eagle depicted the first *paramita*, that is, *dana* (charity). The three components of the sat moon, sun, and lotus are represented in white, green and blue. Sun is usually shown in some shade of yellow. The colour scheme and the assignment of animate and amassed objects strike a balance distinctive in the records or Mahayana iconography. The characteristic Tibetan style of obstruction with so many *Buddhas*, *Bodhisattavas*, deities, men, animals and other motifs, recalling remote as well as close relations is inexistent in this set of five thangkas. The colours and landscapes please the aesthetic cravings of the Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike.⁶⁸ The Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling's thangka painting has not met so far with the same perception as that received by its Tibetan, Nepal and Chinese counterparts. In a way this is not surprising; as collections of oriental art are rich of too many modern thangka painters have little novelty and are so sub-servient to the rules of iconography that they are hardly able to give separate forms to their own fancy. They follow a certain number of fixed patterns, but are hardly able to display any creative power. All this is true to a particular extent. The thangka painting of Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling is imbued with a spirit of serene simplicity and a devout and native grace which not occasionally suggest a natural rapport with the Chinese primordial. In fact the visions unfolding before the artist's wondering eyes are the same and we are course, it is true that the exalted and grace of Chinese is not equaled, on the whole by the thangka painter of Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling and many schools follow the hieratic models of Indian theme which is associated to the nature, so closely that they produce into a sort of expression and existent of conventional manner. Even with the best artist, the weight of iconographic tradition is dominant to such an extent that the figures holding the centre of a picture are as flat and stationary as if they were copied from bloodless models. But it is a very rare case that we have seen the behaviour of artist. It is, however, the

manner in which the artist of Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling treats colour that should concern our attention and the worth of their work lies in the skill and consciousness with which they grade their shades and place them near one another, conferring to the whole the sparkling life a rainbow. The merit of this kind of painting is not completely in its artlessness and in the mastery of colour; nor should we overlook the ingenuousness of its religious inventiveness which bestows on every picture the character of a divine invocation. The pattern of the thangka painting of Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling reproduces the traditional soul of traditional manner like a mirror in which the people of Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling can realize what they have learnt from China, Nepal or Central Asia, Tibet and what they have created on their own implantation.⁶⁹ If we sincerely see the specimens of thangka art then we can see highlighted in the images they present the culture and the theological history of a people who lived for ages and are still living under the possession of religion. Thus, this thangka art (which is influenced by Tibetan, Chinese, Nepal and other part of Asia) is an unfolding panoramic vision of Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling soul, its religious life and its history. For this reason the meaning of these traditional thangka arts of this region cannot be grasped fully unless we discern them in their own environment. We must, therefore, be intimate with at least an outline of their theological background of their progress.⁷⁰ In the Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling areas where traditional thangka art continues to enjoy that unbroken tradition and viability it once overwhelmed in Tibet. It is in this area along the frontiers of adjacent section of Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling that a good portion of traditional manner of thangka art survives. The traditional art of Thangka has been exposed to the same set of influences and inspirations as that in Tibet. But the metamorphosis in art styles appears to have been carried out in the Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling region. If it is possible to speak of groups (a la Tucci), on the evidence of shared characteristics in the case of Traditional Tibetan art, it is not even possible to refer to these groupings of stylistic influences in the art of Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling.⁷¹ During the

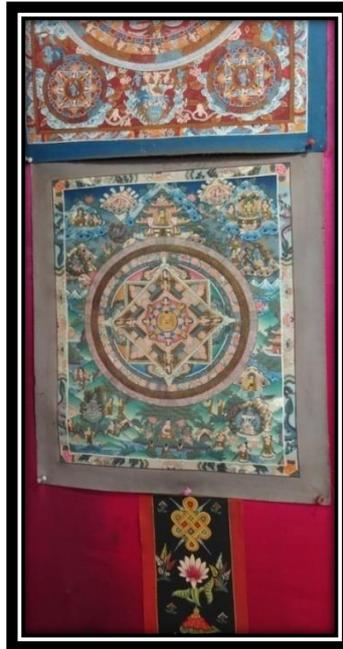
preparation of old thangka stone colour , vegetable dyes and two primary colours such as red and yellow are used in penalty. These two primary colours show the dissimilarity between the fire and life, between material and immaterial. The orange colours symbolize wisdom of the highest form of spiritedness, the blue colour suggest depth, purity and infinity, while green represent the vegetable purpose.⁷²

The Thangka art in Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling exhibit more local folk traditional manner. Since the shakya period under the Chinese impression, mountains were delimited in the shape of crags of Dolomites. But in Darjeeling region mountains are drawn in the shape of a cone, which is typically stimulated by the local Himalayan tradition. Besides there are a lot of locally inspired component which do not conform to Tibetan rules. The artists of thangka painting not only delineate the legends of the Buddha's life, they also narrate the story of the lives of the siddhas. And the pictorial composition is originally Ajantan. It should remain any trained observer of the great Bodhisattava panel.⁷³ The artist used the colour in the thangka painting which is similar to the great Boddhisattava panel in Ajanta. Here is the imitation of the Tibetan colour tradition and Indian colour tradition. The influence of Tibetan art on recent traditional thangka painting of Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling region should be a matter of interest as well as curiosity. One of the sources of modern Indian painting has been Buddhist, i.e., the Ajanta Murals. But seldom are the Tibetan encouragement mentioned. Many of the formal features of Tibetan painting were adapted by Nandalal Bose, the stylizations of drawing in particular. Nicholai Roerich produced many canvases under the encouragement of Tibetan Buddhism. There are Tibetan paintings in stature theme, composition, colouring and symbolism. But more Buddhist and Tibetan are the paintings by Lama A. Gobinda. Forthwith much interest is being manifested for Tantrik art. Excepting a few Nirad Mazumder's works, the trend appears towards fashionableness and newness. But one could hope that in not too remote a future the artist of kindred susceptibility would turn

towards Tibetan painting in their search for a new aesthetics. If one of the functions of art be to heighten cognition, it is Tibetan Buddhism's forte. That art can become a yana or carrier for man's theological integration is decidedly one of the great lessons of Tibetan art.⁷⁴ So, the thangka arts of Sub-Himalayan Darjeeling are the standardized forms in style, media and technique fixed by tradition. The artists of this traditional art inherit and bond to them more with faithful skill than with an enlighten for self-articulation.



Pic-111 & Pic-112



Pic-113

Traditional Thangka, Source: collected by researcher, from Art Emporium, Darjeeling



Pic-114 & Pic-115



Pic-116

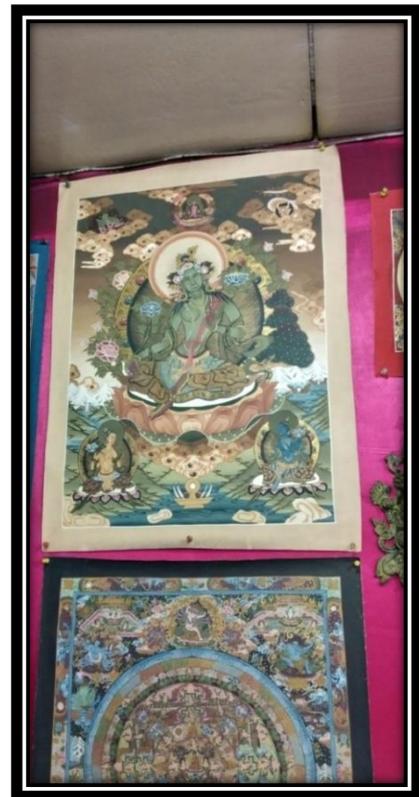
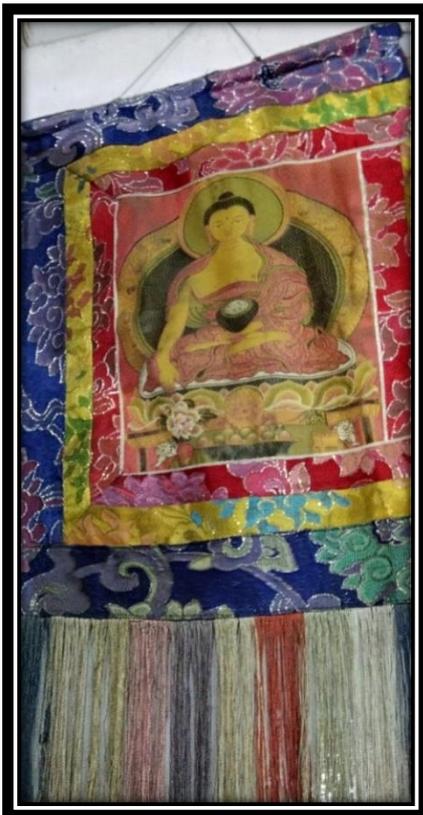
Traditional Thangka

Source: collected by researcher, from Art Emporium, Darjeeling



Pic-117

Pata Chitra, Collected from Biswa Bangla, Darjeeling



Pic-118 & Pic-119

Traditional Thangka

Source: collected by researcher, from Kalimpong Art Gallery, Darjeeling



Pic-120



Pic-121

Traditional Thangka

Source: collected by researcher, from Kalimpong Art Gallery, Darjeeling



Pic-122



Pic-123, Source: collected by researcher, from Asian Art Palace, Darjeeling

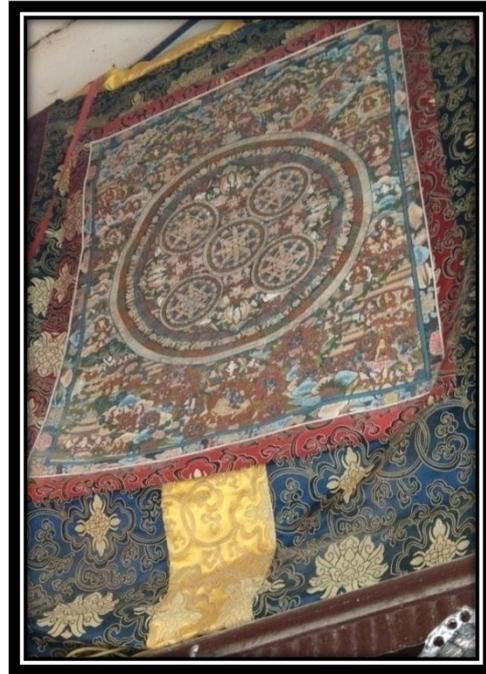
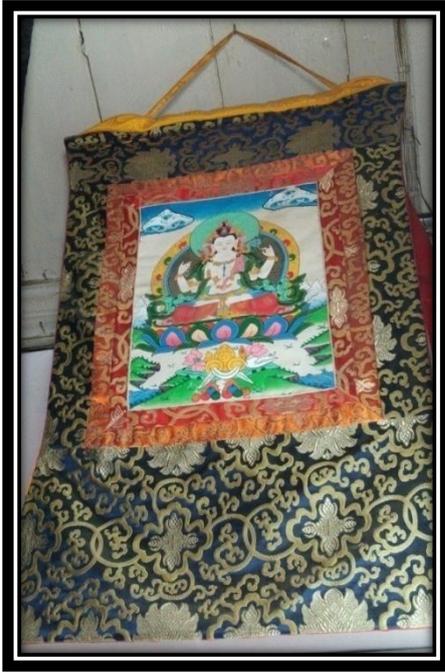


Pic- 124

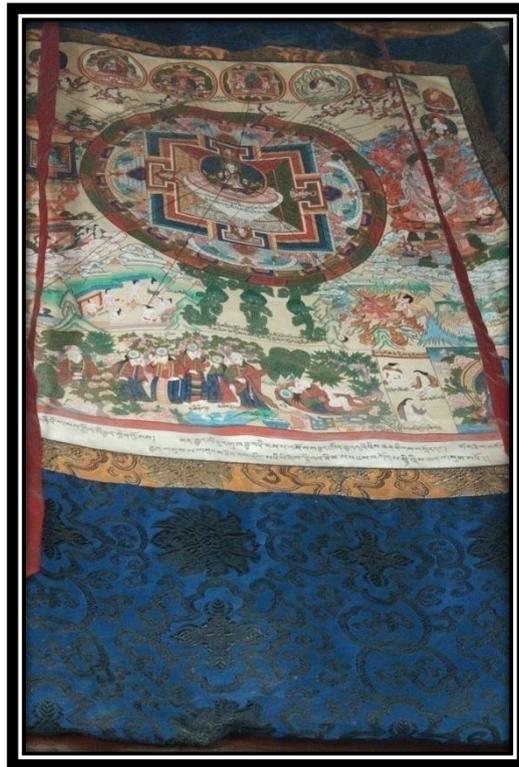


Pic- 125

Source: collected by researcher, from Asian Art Palace, Darjeeling

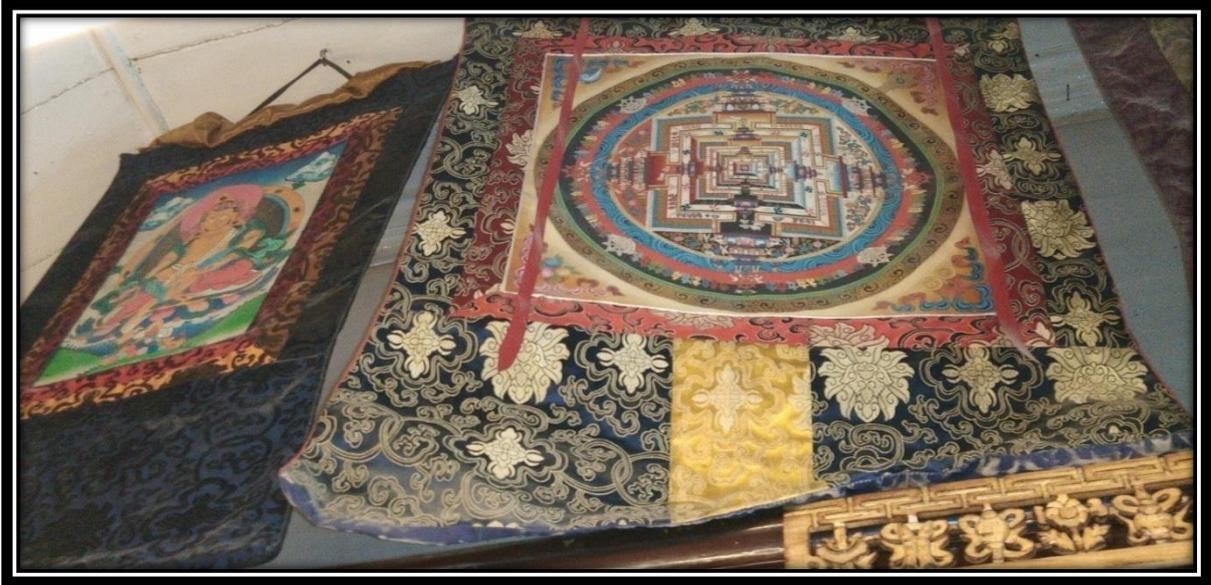


Pic- 126 & Pic- 127



Pic- 128

Source:collected by researcher, from Kalimpong Art Gallery, Darjeeling



Pic- 129



Pic- 130

Source: collected by researcher, from Kalimpong Art Gallery, Darjeeling



Pic- 131

Traditional very old thangka on the wall

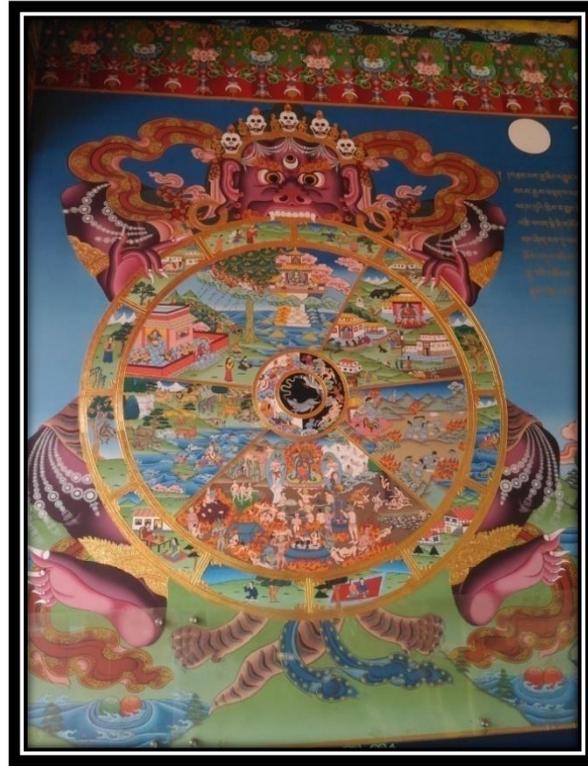
Source: collected by researcher, from Salbari Monastery



Pic- 132

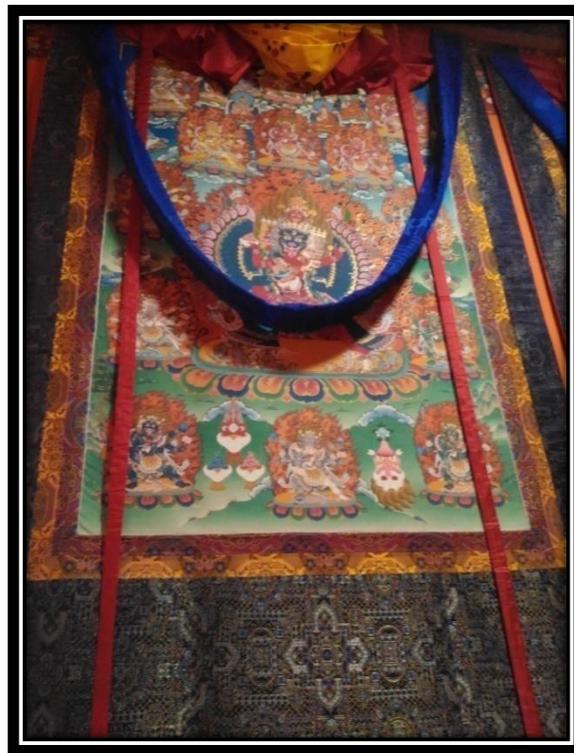
Scroll painting, ready for sale

Source: collected by researcher, from Batasia loop, Darjeeling



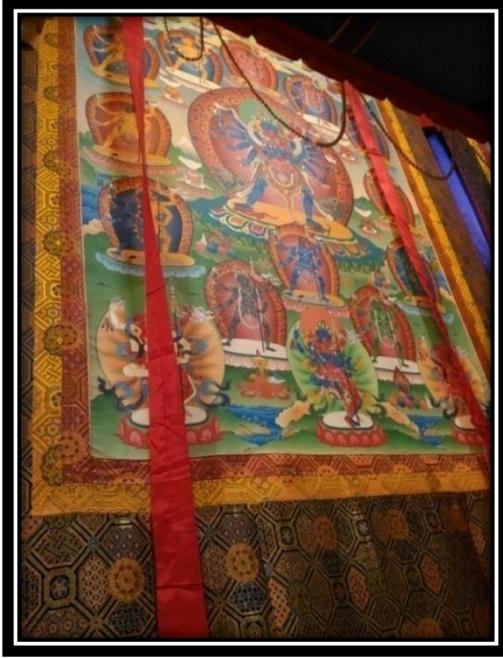
Pic- 133

Vabachakra with decorative pattern, Source: collected by researcher,from Mirik Monastery



Pic- 134

Source: collected by researcher, from Mirik Monastery

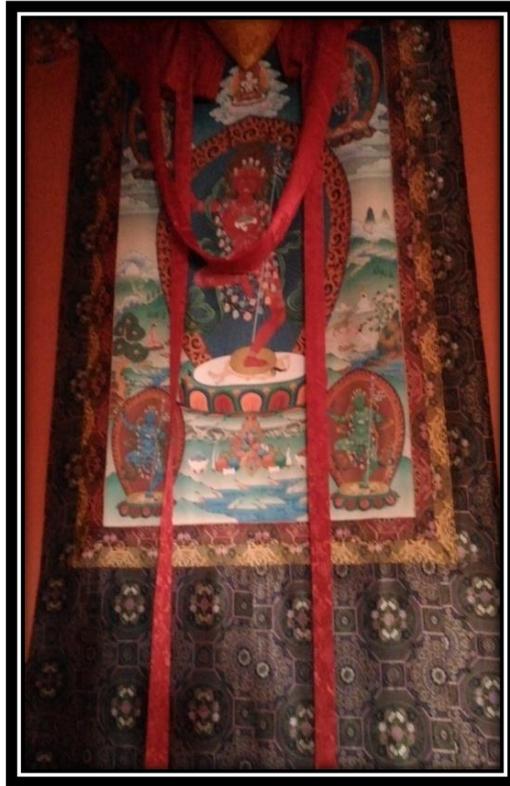


Pic- 135 & Pic- 136



Pic- 137

Source: collected by researcher, from Mirik Monastery



Pic- 138

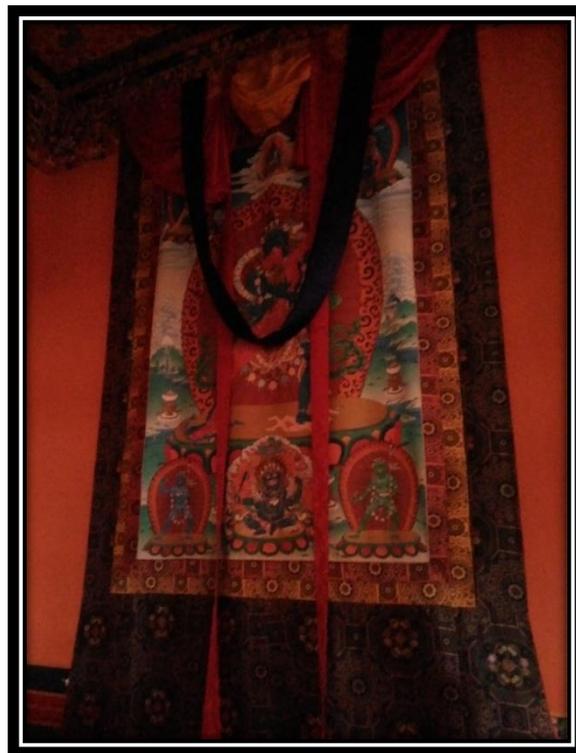


Pic- 139

Source: collected by researcher, from Mirik Monastery



Pic - 140

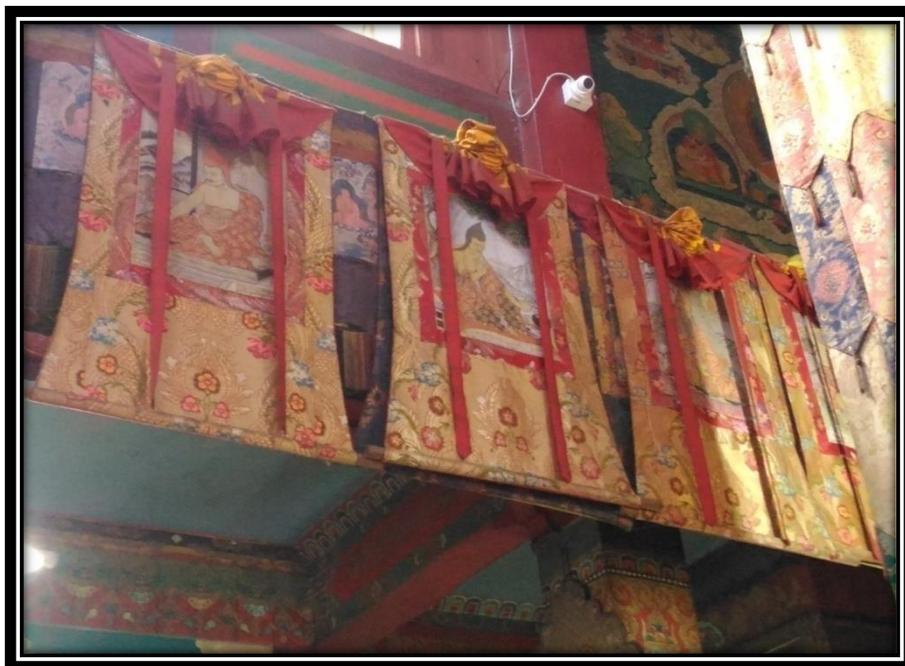


Pic- 141

Source: collected by researcher, from Mirik Monastery

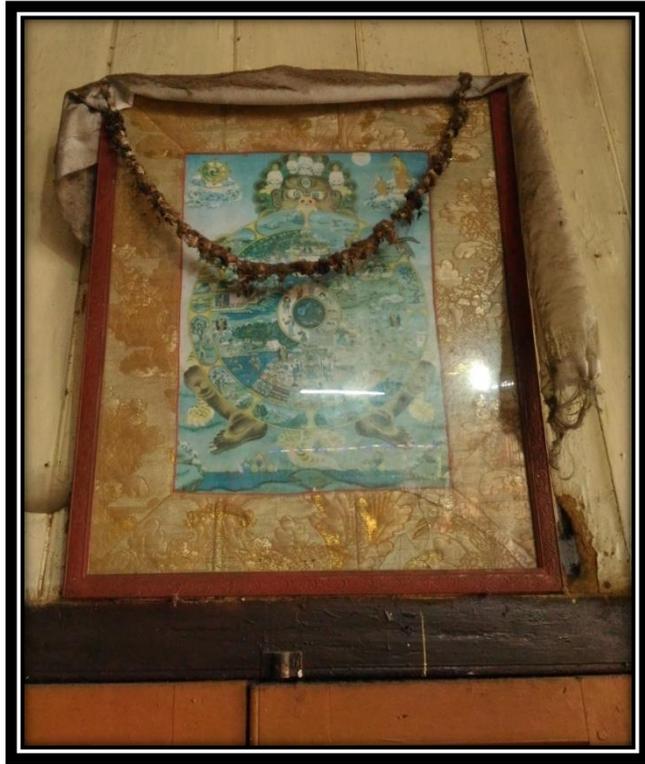


Pic- 142



Pic- 143

Traditional Thangka, Source: collected by researcher, from old Ghoom Monastery



Pic- 144

Old Thangka, Source: collected by researcher, from Ghoom Monastery



Pic- 145, Vendor waiting for customer

Source: collected by researcher, from Mirik



Pic- 146, Scroll painting of Sub Himalayan Darjeeling



Pic- 147

Thangka painting use for ritual and home decoration purpose

Source: collected by researcher, from Mirik



Pic-148

Thangka, Source: collected by researcher, from Salbari Monastery

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