



ASIA COLLECTION
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII LIBRARY

HIMALAYAN BUDDHIST ART THANGKA PRINTS

ASIA COLLECTION
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII LIBRARY

A SHIVA ORIENTAL PUBLICATION

Asia

F0

X

N8193.3

M3H55

v.3

ॐ नमो भगवते

HIMALAYAN BUDDHIST ART

Volume 3.

Himalayan Art is largely religious and expresses the faith and ideals of people. Art of the Himalayas has its origins along the 'Silk Route' - northern India, Tibet, Sikkim, Bhutan, Nepal, other parts of Central Asia including China and Iran. Himalayan Art and culture have in fact a blending of Hinduism and Buddhism.

Buddhism was founded in the 5th century BC by prince Gautama, the Buddha, born at the foothills of the Himalayas. After his death, charming stories of his life (often featuring animals) were illustrated, but Buddha himself was represented only symbolically. The Buddha image developed in the 1st century AD and soon there evolved a pantheon of other Buddhas and Bodhi-sattvas, who were assigned symbols and characteristics as represented in their art.

Vajrayana, the most important school, of Buddhism was mainly responsible for Tantrism in the Himalayas, relying on magical formulae (Mantras) and magical ceremonies (Tantras). It also introduced pantheon of goddesses (Taras) and other Gods, demigods, Siddhas, Arhats etc.

Thangkas are traditional Buddhist scroll paintings drawn on cloth. Himalayan art is popularly expressed in these thangkas. They are wonderful compositions with geometrical arrangements (Mandalas) and are steeped in Oriental tradition. Yet they are full of colour and fantasy.

Buddhist Religious Thangkas generally depict Jataka tales which recount events in past lives of the Buddha. They also depict stories from lives of other Buddhist saints.

It has not been the practice with the Buddhist artist to create something new which expressed his own ideas, but to preserve the continuity of the old traditions. As a rule, there was no attempt to depart from the conventions. It would have been disrespectful to his religion to do so. Moreover it may also diminish the spiritual efficacy of the image. Craftsmen were trained as apprentices in monasteries where they worked mainly by copying well known images of the deities and scenes. But they seldom signed their thangkas and bronzes. Therefore Buddhist art is almost always anonymous.

Some of the thangkas depict terrifying scenes - details portraying bodies disintegrating, ejecting blood, skeletons; dead creatures and various mutilations of the body. They represent mystical motifs and unearthly scenes.

Tantric thangkas depict siddhas, gods, goddesses, demons, apsaras, yoginis in various asanas (poses).

Tantrism stands for Mahamudra, the esoteric doctrine propounded to free the living beings more quickly from Samsara (wordly ills).

In Hindu Tantrism, the female is regarded as the active element of the partnership and is called Shakti. In Buddhist Tantrism on the contrary, she is regarded as the passive partner, called prajñā. When the Buddhist deities are pictured in union, the female symbolises the absolute while the male represents the upaya or the expedient by which beings are liberated. Tantric thangkas are believed to ward off the "Evil Eye" maleficent influences, prevent disease like small pox, Cholera, plague and mental depression etc.

This selection is made to represent thangkas showing various aspects of their imagery and treatment, in Himalayan Buddhist Art. The selection has been made out of a large collection of thangkas so that details of the themes are reasonably discernable even after considerable reduction in size from the originals.

A brief description of the plates is given below. Original Tibetan text in calligraphy is printed above the English translation.

དཔུས་སུ་འཕགས་པ་ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེན་པོ་བཞུ་གཅིག་ལལ་དང་། རྟེན་
 དུ་དང་གི་གཡོན་མས་ཤིན་པའི་དུ་རྩེ་རྩེ་སེམས་དཔལ་དང་། རྩེ་བོ་རྩེ་དཔལ་
 ལྷན་ཅུ་ཉེ་ཉ་དང་། རྩེ་བཞུན་སྒྲོལ་མ་དང་། གཡམས་གཡོན་དུ་ཕྱག་རྩེ་
 དང་དྲུ་འཇམ་དབྱངས་། གཤམ་དུ་ཆེ་ལྷ་རྒྱལ་གསུམ་བཅས་བཞུགས་སོ།།

AVALOKESHVARA

Avalokeshvara with 8 arms, embodiment of compassion of Lord Buddha in blessing posture. Gods and goddesses are showering flowers from heaven.

བལ་བའི་བྱིས་ལུགས་ཀྱི་ལྷ་འདི་བོད་དུ་ཡོངས་གྲགས་མ་མཆིས། །
 རྟེན་དུ་རྟེན་པ་སངས་རྒྱལ་ཀྱི་འདྲ་སྒྲུབ་བཞུགས་པ་དཔག་ན་ནང་པ་སངས་རྒྱལ་བའི་
 ཡི་དམ་ཞིག་བཞུགས་དཔ། དབྱང་པར་འཆོལ།།

KALACHAKRA YAB-YUM

Mystical form of Divine body of the Yab with seventy four arms, embracing his Sakti with twelve arms. The practice (Sadhana) of the awakening of the Seed, making use of all activities of body, speech and mind in the process of transformation.

'The world is pervaded by Bliss, which pervades and is itself pervaded'.

3

DAKINI (RED)

This figure is not commonly found. The 'dakinis' are exalted class of fairy-like spiritual beings, themselves commonly chosen as tutelaries by neophytes in Tantric Buddhism. There are four chief Dakinis - Vajra (Divine) Dakini, associated with the eastern direction; the Ratna (Precious) Dakini, of the southern direction; Padma (Lotus) Dakini of the western; and Karma (Action) Dakini of the northern direction. This dakini is known as Padma (Lotus) Dakini.



Separate prints in genuine raw silk frames are also available.
All prints are available in full size posters showing greater details - size 20"x30" app.



འཕགས་པ་སྤྱན་རློབ་སྐྱོད་པ་འཕགས་པ་འཕགས་པ་འཕགས་པ་

AVALOKESHVARA



བཅའ་པོ་འཇིགས་ཀྱི་ལྷ་པོ་ལྷ་པོ་

KALACHAKRA YAB-YUM



ཐཱན་ཏྲ་ཏཱ་ར་ཡམ་ཡུམ་།

THANTRA TARA YAB-YUM



འདྲ་སྒྲུ་འདི་བོད་དུ་ཡོད་པ་གྲགས་པ་མེད་པ་ལ། རང་པ་མདས་ཀླུ་པ་
དང་བོན་པོ་གཞིས་ཀྱི་རང་མས་སྒྲུ་འདི་ཡིན་དཔྱད་པར་འཆོལ།

A DEVI FROM TIBET



བུ་ལ་པོ་འི་བྱེད་ལྷ་མ་གྱི་ལྷ་མོ་བུ་ལ་པོ་འི་བྱེད་ལྷ་མ་གྱི་ལྷ་མོ་

DAKINI (RED)

ASIA COLLECTION
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII LIBRARY

