

A SHORT STUDY OF THE ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF DIFFERENT STYLES OF BUDDHIST PAINTINGS AND ICONOGRAPHY

The history of art is described in the manuscript, 'Shes bya-kun-Khyab', written by Kong-sprul-yon-tan-rgya-mtsho, in which it is stated, that long ago during the golden age, when the longevity of man started decreasing from a lakh, there was a King named Hjjigs-thul. The King was a pious ruler who ruled in accordance with the principles of religion, and the longevity of man increased to a lakh. At that time a Brahmin boy died suddenly. The boy's father complained to the King, saying that the boy's death, was due to the fault of the King, who did not rule in accordance with the principles of religion, and that the father would commit suicide if the boy's life was not returned. The King took the father to Yama, Lord of death, and requested for the boy's life. Yama declared that the boy was fated to die, and since he had nothing to do with his death, the boy's life could not be returned. A war was waged between Yama and King Hjjigs-thul, during which time Brahma appeared, and said that Yama was not responsible for the boy's death. Brahma asked King Hjjigs-thul to do a drawing of the boy on the ground, and thus brought back the boy's life.

The first drawing, was the drawing of the boy on the ground, by King Hjjigs-thul. Since then there was a continuity of good artists.

In the manuscript, 'Hdul-ba-lung', it is stated that until the Mahaparinirvana of Lord Buddha, there were artists who drew human beings, who could be mistaken for real. After the Mahaparinirvana of Lord Buddha, for a hundred years there were several such artists.

During the time of Lord Buddha, King Bimbisara of Magadha and King Utayana of Sgra-sgrog (Ceylon) were pen friends. King Utayana sent a priceless gift of a coat of mail to King Bimbisara. The latter, could not find a suitable return present to send, and so he asked an artist to paint a portrait of Lord Buddha on cloth. The artist found it impossible to paint the portrait, due to the brightness that radiated from Lord Buddha's body. The artist finally did the portrait, looking at the reflection of Lord Buddha in a pond.

This painting of Lord Buddha is called, 'Thub-pa-chhu-lon-ma'.

While Buddha was preaching in Ser-skya, the wife of the householder Ming-chhen, who was listening to the Buddha's teachings, sent

her maid Rohita to collect her jewellery from the house. Rohita was reluctant to go as she wished to hear Lord Buddha's teachings, but as she had no alternative but to obey her mistress's orders, she went to get the jewellery. On her way back, she was hit by a pregnant cow and killed, but before she breathed her last, she took refuge in the Lord Buddha, having great faith in him, with the result she was re-born as a princess to the King of Ceylon. Her birth was accompanied by a miraculous rain of pearls, for which reason, she was named, Princess Mutig-khri-shing. When the Princess grew up, she heard about the Buddha and his teachings from traders going to India, and having faith in Him, she sent a letter and a present.

Lord Buddha sent the Princess, as a return present, a painting of himself on cloth, which an artist traced from the spiritual ray of light that radiated from His body, on the cloth. This painting is called, 'Thub-pa-hod-zer-ma'.

These two paintings, were the models from which later paintings of Central and Eastern India evolved.

A householder named Dad-sbyin, invited Lord Buddha and his disciple for a feast. As Buddha did not attend the feast, the householder Mgon-med-zas-sbyin, (*ANATHA PINDADA*) thought that if Buddha was not present to sit at the head of His disciples, it would be most improper, and the gathering would not look majestic. Mgon-med-zas-sbyin requested Lord Buddha, to be allowed to make an image of Lord Buddha from precious jewels, to represent Him at the feast. Permission was granted and he made several Buddha images.

When Buddha went to heaven to preach to His Mother, the King of Gsal-Iden, (Banaras) made a sandalwood image of Lord Buddha. Later when Buddha returned to earth, this sandalwood image took six steps to welcome Him. Buddha directed the sandalwood image to go to China for the benefit of the people there. The sandalwood image flew to China, which is there till this day, and is called, 'Tsandan-Gi-Jobo' (The sandalwood Jobo). In China many paintings were done of this Jobo, and such paintings are known as, 'Se-thang'. These are two of the earliest images.

Before Lord Buddha attained Nirvana, he instructed that an image of Himself be made, to act as his representative, so that religion and His teachings, may flourish unhampered and undestroyed by heretics. Rahula made the image, 'Thub-pa-gangs-chan-mtsho', from several precious Naga jewels. This image is now under the ocean.

The Gold Indra, told Bishva-karma to make an image of Lord Buddha, from gems he had collected of Gods, men and demons. Bishva-Karma made three images of Lord Buddha-one, at the age of eight, one, at the age of twelve, and another at the age of twenty-five. The former two he was able to make, by asking Buddha's nurse as to how tall Buddha was at the respective ages. The image at the age of twenty-five, was taken by Indra to heaven. The two other stayed many years in Uddiyana, and in the land of the Nagas and in Buddha Gaya. Later, at the time of King Devapala, the image of twelve was taken to China, and the one at eight, to Nepal. Ultimately, during King Srong-Btsan-Gampo's time, his Chinese Queen, Kong-Jo and his Nepalese Queen, Khri-Btsun, brought into Tibet, the two images. The image of Lord Buddha at eight, is in the Lhasa Gtsug-lag-khang, and the one at twelve is at the Ramo-chhe-gtsug-lag-khang. These two images are considered to be very sacred, as they were blessed by Lord Buddha.

After the Mahaparin irvana of Lord Buddha, there were only very few human artisans, who could make good images of Gods. Hence many Gods took the form of men, and helped human artisans, to make beautiful images of Lord Buddha.

About eighty years after the Mahaparin irvana of Lord Buddha, there lived three Brahmin brothers in Magadha. The eldest made an image of Lord Buddha from precious stones and a Temple, the second collected earth from eight sacred places in India, and erected an image of Lord Buddha in Rajgir, and the third, made an image of Lord Buddha, at the age of thirty-five from powdered sandalwood, Goshir-sha (the best kind of sandalwood) and several precious jewels. This image is known to be a perfect replica of Lord Buddha, and is called, 'Mahabuddhi'. Several patrons made unique and precious images in Magadha.

During Ashokas' time, eight Chortens in eight religious pilgrimage centres were built by Gnod-sbyin, (demi-god artisans) and during the time of Nagarjuna, Naga artisans made several Buddha images. Images made by Gods, Nagas and demi-gods, were made in such a way, that even after several years, they could be mistaken for real. The images made later, were alike, except that they did not have the effect of looking real. Later, several artisans, made several images from their own imaginations, and thus, many styles evolved in images. In Magadha, during the reign of King Sangs, rgyas-phyogs, there lived an artisan-called Bhimbisara. In Manu, during King ngang-tshuls' time, there lived an artisan named, Sigdari, and during King Devapalas' reign, there lived an artisan, Warendra Deman, who had a son named, Bedapalo,

who settled in Bengal. These artisans were extremely good in painting and making images.

From the first, there evolved the image style of Central India, from the second, there evolved the image style of Western India' and from the third' there evolved the image style of Eastern India. Bedapalos' style of painting was most popular in Magadha, and was known as the Central Indian style.

In Nepal the older style of images was the Western Indian style, but later, the style became that of Eastern India. In Kashmir, the original style of images was the Western Indian style, but later, came the influence of a great artisan named, Hesaraja, from whom evolved a completely new style, prevalent to this day called, the 'kha-che-ma' style. In Southern India the art of making Buddha images became widespread. Now-a-days, however, much of the skill is lost, and there is a general decline in the art.

Of all the styles, only the Southern style did not reach Tibet. In Southern India the style of three masters, Jaya, Prajaya, and Bijaya became popular.

During the reign of King Srong-btsan-sgampo, there were many self evolved images, such as the principle images of Khra-'Brug temple, and most precious eleven headed Avalokiteshvara in the Lhasa Tsuklag-khang.

During the reign of King Khri-srong-lde-btsan, many images were erected, and one such image, is the Buddha image in Samya monastery, known as, 'Jobo-byang-chhub-chenpo'.

Originally the Nepalese style was most popular in Tibet, later a reincarnation of Manjushree, Sman-bla-don-grub-shabas was born in Lhobrag-sman-thang, Southern Tibet, who went to Tsang and learnt art from Rdo-pa-bkra-shis-rgyal-po. At that time he saw the painting, called 'Sithang; which he had painted in his former life, when he was an artist in China. The recollection of this painting, brought back his former life to memory, and he painted a great thanka, 'Sman-thang-Chen-Mo' with which he established a new style. Two schools resulted from this master, one from his son and the other from his pupil.

In a place called Gong-dkar-sgang-stod, south of Lhasa, lived an artist, named, Mkhjen-btse-chhen-Mo, who started a new style. Sman-bla-don-grub-shaba and Mkhjen-btse-chhen-, mo are considered as two of the greatest artists of Tibet.

Another new and beautiful style was started by Sprul-sku-byihu, whose colours surpassed those of the former two, Later, Gtsang-pachhos-dbyings-rgya-mtsho, started the Sman-gsar school of painting. Subsequently, many other style evolved which were absorbed by the three early schools.

Artist, Tul-ku-nam-mkhah-bkra-shis of Yar-stod, south of Lhasa, believed to be the reincarnation of Karmapa-Mi-bskyod-Rdo-Rje, learnt to paint from Skal-ldan-shar-phyogs-pa-dkon-mchhog-phan-bde, who lived in Ae, in south Tibet. He learnt the Sman-thang style of painting. Later he copied the Inidan style of line drawing the images, and for the background and colours, he followed the Sithang style of Chinese painting that was prevalent in China, during the reign of Emperor Taming. This style of painting is known as the 'Sgar-bri' style.

Tulku-nam-mkhah-bkra-shis, Chhos-bkra-shis and Kar-shod-karma-bkra-shis, were responsible for the spread of the Sgar-Bri style of painting.

Tulku Slehu-chhung-pa and Pad-ma-mkhar-po, are famous in making images.

Karma Shid-bral was known for making images of the Sgar-bri style. In recent times this style is lost.

The most well known in making images during the time of the Fifth Dalai lama, were Har-dar and Tulku Bab-phro. In Hdod-dpal (Government craft centre in Zhol below the Potala) they followed their style of making images.

In the manuscript, 'Limabrtag-pahi-rab-byed-smra-ba-hdod-pahi-kha-rgyan', by Hbrug-pa-padma-dkar-po, a brief description is given of Buddhist images made in India, Tibet, Mongolia and China. In India the images were classified according to the different regions, North, South, East, West and Central India.

The images made in Central India were made of bronze, Zikhyim, red bell metal, white bell metal, red bronze, Bodhi tree, clay of Nagas and stone.

Zikhyim was found in the river beds of Sindhu, in Western India, and since it appears like red gold, it is often known a red gold. The zikhyim contains seven precious Naga jewels, and hence it is like the wishing jewel. Although the basic colour of the zikhyim is of a glowing red, on close examination, it radiates the colours of the rainbow. The

rainbow colours are more distinct when the juice of a certain virulent poison (Tsen-duk) is applied on the zikhyim.

In the manuscript, 'Rje-bdag-nyid-chhen-po-sogs-sku-brnyan-lo-rgyus', by Rje-shes rab-rgya-mtsho, relating to images, it is stated that zikhyim contains several precious jewels. If the zikhyim is real, when the poison Tsen-duk is applied five rainbow colours appear. There are also natural copper alloys found under-ground, of which some are identified as zikhyim. Artificially manufactured zikhyim is prepared by melting gold, silver, copper, iron, Kar-tho, white and black lead, and quick silver.

In the manuscript, 'Gtam-tshogs', by Hjigs-med-gling-pa, it states that there are two types of zikhyim—one is red gold and the other is prepared by adding seven precious jewels to the molten metal. In zikhyim that is prepared, the joins between the various metals can visibly be identified, and when placed in the shade rainbow colours radiate, like the Lhasa Jobo Rinpoche. In the Fifth Dalai Lamas writings, Volume 'Dza; it is mentioned, that the Lhasa Jobo Rinpoche was made from ten jewels of human beings and Devas.

The red bell metal is of a clear red colour with a yellowish tinge, whereas the white bell metal is basically white containing a yellowish tinge. The red and white bell metal found in Liyul (Khotan) were considered to be the most valuable materials used for making images in ancient times, the reason being that their very existence was due to the blessings of the past four Buddhas. In the manuscript, 'Gtam-tshogs', by Hjigs-med-gling-pa, it states that the red and white bell metal, found in the hills of Ceylon and Liyul (Khotan) are considered as the most precious materials for making images, due to the blessings given by the six Buddhas on the hills of Ceylon, or the blessings given on the hills of Khotan, by the past four Buddhas. Nothing definite has been stated. It is said that, bell metal is artificially prepared by melting equal quantities of nine metals, such as gold, silver, copper, iron, tin, zinc, zil, bronze and lead. The Buddha image, the body of which is made of white bell metal and the cloak of red bell metal, is identified as 'Thub-pa-zang-thang-ma'. The same has been stated by Hbrug-Pa-Pad-Dkar. However according to rje-shes-rab-rgya-mtso, the Buddha images made in Central India, the bodies of which are of yellow bell metal and the cloaks of red bell metal, are known as 'Thub-pa-zang-thangma'.

Images made of red copper can be easily distinguished. It is believed that whom-so-ever touched an image made from the branches of a Bodhi tree, is freed from taking the form of, a hungry ghost, a hell

being or a beast. This being the result of prayers of the Buddha Sakya Thub-pa. There are images made from the soft clay of the Nagas and white marble. Hjigs-med-gling-pa states that the Nagas gave the soft clay to Nagarjuna. According to Rje-shes-rab-rgyat-mtsho, Nagarjuna went to the land of the Nagas and brought the soft clay. Thub-pa-klu-hjim-ma and Ha-shang-klu-hjim-ma of Ngo-mtshar-lha-khang, in Amdo, and several other images were made from the soft clay of the Nagas. Images were made from the painting, 'Thub-pa-hod-zer-ma' (the potrait of Lord Buddha on cloth, which the Buddha sent to the Princess of Ceylon, Mu-tig-khri-shing) In making such an image, the body is made slim. The crown on the head is horizontal, the nose is high, long and the tip is sharp. The arch of hair in-between the eyes and in the centre of the forehead is absolutely parallel to the tip of the nose. The space between the eyes is narrow and the lips are beautifully shaped.

The Lhasa Jobo Rinpoche is classified amongst this type of image.

Images were also made from the painting 'Thub-pa-chhu-lon-ma', (the potrait of Lord Buddha sent by King Bimbisara of Magadha to the King of Ceylon).

The King of Gsal-lden (Varanasi) made a sandal image of Lord Buddha of which many reproductions were made. Images made in this form are well shaped and proportionate. The clothes are well draped, and the folds are evenly spaced. The hands are supple, and the heels are fairly thick. The face is of a longish oval shape. These images have been mistaken to be made in Bukhara and Khotan. The 'Thub-pa-gser-gling-ma', made in Rtse-thang in Southern Tibet is classified amongst this type of image-made in the form of the sandalwood Jobo.

The images of Bodhisatvas have a relaxed posture and are never stiff. The face is handsome with good features, and the body is proportionate. The plaited hair bound on the top of the head is in an upright position, adorned with ornaments. Ornaments of some images are made from precious Naga gems.

Images of Khro-bo (Deities which appear in the form of angry mood or fierce mood) are neither made stiff nor too curved in posture. Some images have no thrones, whereas others have thrones beautifully shaped and ornamented, supported by figures of men with great physical strength or figures of Lions. In the manuscript, 'Gtam-tshogs', by Hjigs-med-gling-pa, it mentions that in India, when the first Khro-bo images were being made, only very few were made because at that time the Tantric teachings were kept in great secret.

There are images of three faced deities seated on lotus cushions and others seated on lotus cushions in which the lotus are 'partly opened and upright in position. In some cases the lotus is double, a row of lotus facing upright and another row turned downwards. Bordering the lotus, one above and the other below are two lines with designs to represent a chain of pearls.

Pandit Rdo-rje-gdan-pa, made the image, 'Gdan-Chhung-Ma' purely of white bell metal. The head of the image is slightly small in proportion to the body. The cheek bones are high and full.

The image, 'Thub-pa-Bdud-hdul-ma' (Buddha Image) was made in Magadha and the 'Chos-hkor-ma', in Varanasi.

Images made in East India, have a broad forehead, and the upper portion of the body is broad resembling that of a lion. The face is short and the fingers are webbed. The crown of the head (Gtsug-gtor) is placed slightly towards the back.

Most of the image in South India are made of white bell metal, and only a few were made of red bell metal. Marble images were made, exquisitely shaped and beautifully adorned with ornaments. With respect to these images the mouth is well shaped, and the space between the eyes is narrow. The upper part of the nose is slightly flat, while the lower portion is a bit high. The image is well shaped with a slight curve in posture, and the spacing between the folds of the robe is even.

The Images made in East India are placed on similar thrones as those made in Central India, except that the petals of the lotus cushion made in East India are turned slightly inwards: there is a spacing between the upper and lower lotus, and the lower design bordering the lotus has bigger gaps inbetween the designs, than the design above. Image made in Zahor (near Bangalpur in Bengal, East India) are identical in shape to others made in East India, except that the white bell metal images of Zahor are studded with gold, silver, copper: the eyes are of silver and copper and some are decorated with precious gems and adorned with pearl necklaces. Some authorities believe that these images first originated from Delhi but this is a mistake.

According to Hjijs-med-gling-pa, in Bengal images were made of white bell metal with eyes and lips of silver and gold, so that they looked lovelier than those made elsewhere. Precious stones were studded on these images to beautify them.

In Kashmir, images were not only made of white bell metal, but also of red bell metal, stone, enamel and zikhyim. Images of zikhyim, were mostly made in Kashmir. Images made in this part, have long heavy faces with thick lips. The gap between the eyes is narrow, and the tip of the high nose is slightly rounded. The posture is uncomfortable with supple limbs, and short limb joints. Several images have copper lips and silver eyes, with the tip of the crown of the head slightly depressed. The cloak is well draped with evenly spaced folds which extend fairly long. Some are adorned with pearl headdresses and pearl necklaces, while others have floral headdresses. Some are placed on thrones, whereas others are placed on lotuscushions, the petals of which are plain, large and open. Some of these images are identical to those made in Central India, the difference being that the necks of these images are thin, the cheek bones are outstanding, the shoulder and ankle joints are thin, and the heels are thick. Hjigs-med-gling-pa has stated the same except that he has not mentioned about the supple limbs.

In South India images are made mainly of red bell metal but it is possible to find some made of the soft clay of the Nagas and white bell metal. The face of these images are short with outstanding cheek bones. They are well made, being slightly on the heavy side and the gap between the eyes is slightly wider than normal. The forehead is narrow and the nose is slightly flat. In South India to find images made in an eased posture is very rare. The cloak is well draped without any chisel mark. The throne and the single petaled lotus are broad with the tips of the lotus petals slightly dented. The images are thickly gilded with gold of a reddish colour.

The shape of the images made in Betha, (Kerala) resemble those made in other part of South India, except that the cheek bones are not a prominent. Chisel mark are noticeable on the cloaks. The face is short, with fairly large eyes. The upper part of the nose is slightly dented. The lips are slightly protruding with the corners curled up. The images have a supple comfortable posture adorned with beautiful ornament and clothed with loose robes, but their finish is rather crude, especially the fingers, toes and lotus cushion. The lotus cushions have the double lotus, a row turned upright and another turned downwards with their basis touching. Most of them do not have the bordering design running parallel above and below the lotus cushion.

Images made in North India are made from an alloy of white bell metal and brass, giving the image a whitish colouring. They are well shaped, in proportion and with an eased posture. The face is short with a high nose and the gap between the eyes is narrow. The throne and

ornaments are exquisite. Some images of this kind are also made of red bell metal.

Hjigs-med-gling-pa confirms the above and adds that most of the images made in North India have a supple standing and sitting posture.

In Tibet the Chhos-rgyal Lima (Bell metal images made during the reigns of the Kings in Tibet) was introduced in three periods. It was first introduced during the reign of King Srong-btsan-gampo, (7th Century A.D.) during whose time, images were made of zikhyim, pure red and white bell metal. Some images were made in the chess board design with red and white bell metal. Images were also made of gold, silver, and crystal. The images have wide, even, heavy and longish faces with a high longish nose. The eyelids are long, the limbs are supple and the robes have only a few folds. The lotus cushions resemble those made in South India. Some images do not have the lotus cushion or the throne. There are others made wearing gowns, shoe and three peaked crowns curved slightly inwards. In most cases chisel marks are visible on the robes. Images of Kings are adorned with turbans and shoes having chisel carved designs. Some images are gilded with gold whereas other are polished or unpolished. Copies of such images are made of brass. Hjigs-Med-Gling-Pa mentions, that during King Srong-btsan-sgam-pos' time, images were made mostly of red bell metal adorned in laymens robes. Images of Khro-bo made during this period have less fierce expressions.

The second period the Chhos-rgyal-Lima was introduced was during the reign of King Khri-Srong-lde-btsan (8th. Century A.D.) The shape and quality of the image are like those made during the reign of King Srong-btsan-gampo except that the face of the images are slightly shorter with badly shaped fingers. Although the images are well polished, and adorned with multicoloured ornament, and three peaked crowns, they do not have a good finish with a rough base. Images made during King Khri-Srong-lde-btsans' time, were made without turbans but instead, have plaited hair, falling in the front on either sides.

According to Hjigs-med-gling pa, images made during the reign of King Khri-Srong-lde-btsan, were heavily polished.

The third time, that the Chhos-Rgyal Lima was introduced was during the reign of King Khri-Ral-pa-ñan (9th. Century A.D.) These images are very much like those made in Central India, except that they have a heavier face with a more comfortable posture. The eyes are of silver and copper. The Zang-thang-ma images have copper lips and silver eyes. Images were made of brass which were badly finished

and from an alloy of bell metal and copper, giving the image a darker colouring than those made during the time of the two former Kings. All the Images were gilded with gold.

During the reigns of King Ye-shes-hod and King Byang-chhub-hod (11th. Century A.D.) of Magah-Ris-stod, images were made from an alloy of red copper and zikhyim. These images were well built, with a sharp nose, and eased posture, resembling those made in Nepal and were gilded with gold from Shang Zhung, a province in Western Tibet. Images of this period are known as 'Thon-mthing-Ma'.

According to Hjjgs-med-gling-pa, images made during the reigns of King Ye-shes-hod and King Byang-chhub-hod of different coloured bell metal and dull bell metal were known as zikhyim.

In shape these images resemble the Chhos-Rgyal-Lima and are often mistaken to be made in China. Images made during this period are excellent in material and in shape.

Mongolia can be divided into four regions, such as upper Bakhora, Yu-gur, Khotan (Li-yul) and lower Bakhora.

During the reign of King Hulahu & upper Bakhora images were made mainly from an alloy of lead, white bell metal and red bell metal. The colour is darkish and a little lighter than Chinese brass. The face of these images are short in length, round, with a sharp nose identical to those made in Kashmir and the body is on the heavy side. The clothes are well draped with closely spaced frills which resemble the weaves of the sea. The lotus cushion has the double lotus design, the petals of which are single, large, hollow in shape, and at the base where they touch there is a slight dent. There are circular and square cushions supported by Nagas and in some cases the images are placed on rocks instead on thrones. There are images made by Chinese artisans from an alloy of lead and bell metal. These images have a narrow face, stumpy body, small eyes and mouth and the chin slightly scooped out. The cloak has numerous pleats, the throne and cushions have Chinese characters written on them and figures carrying religious offerings. There were images, made by Muslims of dull bell metal which resembled those made in Kashmir. Some images are gilded whereas others are not.

In Yu-gur (part of Mongolia situated North of Amdo) the images were made from an alloy of white bell metal and silver, thus having a silverish colour and from an alloy of lead and bell metal. The faces of these images are short in length, round, with a slightly flat nose and thick hair. The shape of the body is perfect with an uncomfortable

posture and the fingers and toes have a crude finish. The images are scantily ornamented, the ornaments of which are badly made and the cloaks are well draped with few pleats. Most of these images do have the lotus cushion and the throne. The lotus cushions are similar to those made in upper Bakhora.

Images made in Li-yul (Khotan) are very much like the ones made during the time of King srong-btsan-gampo. The principle images of Bsam-yes dge-Rgyal temple and Khrha-hbrug temple were believed to have been brought from Li-yul.

In lower Bakhora images were made from an alloy of lead and bell metal and of white lead and wood. These images have face which are out of proportion, the lower half being larger than the upper half. The eyes and mouth are small with well shaped lips and the feet and hands look like that of a young boy but the fingers are short. The robe is closely fitted with the folds and pleat evenly spaced. Most of the images are placed on throns and on rocks. When China was ruled by the Mongols during the reign of Emperor Godan till the time of Emperor Yesum-themer (a period of six generation between the two) images were made at that time from an alloy of chongli (a kind of bell metal) and red bell metal and gilded with gold. These images were made exactly like the ones made in China. Images were also made of sandalwood, crystal, red jade, white jade, Rhinoceros horn, gold, silver and zikhyim.

In China we find two categories of images, one ancient and the other modern. The older images were made during the reign of Emperor Thang-chehu. These images are well shaped, heavily built, with long faces, slit eyes, lips perfectly shaped, the nose slightly flat and the hands slightly short. They are heavily adorned with ornaments and loose fitting evenly spaced robes.

The modern Chinese images were made during the reign of Emperor Ta-Ming. These images have flat face, long eyes, and the colour of gold used to gild these image is very outstanding. The folds of the robes are well spaced. The lotus cushions have the double lotus design all around and the tips of the petal are bent outwards. The bordering designs running parallel to the lotus above and below are evenly spaced. The base of the image is firmly sealed with a crossed Vajra design carved on it, and painted with red Chinese varnish. Some images are of poorer craftsmanship and so do not have the crossed Vajra design or the red varnish. These images are known as 'Sku-Rim-Ma', and are made of brass.

According to Hjigs-Med-gling-pa, in China, the older type of Buddha images were made during the reign of Emperor Thang-chehu.

Image were only made from an alloy of bell metal and lead. He mentions that the modern Chinese images are of two types, Thugs-dam-Ma and Sku-Rim-Ma. The Thugs-Dam-Ma images are well shaped with long faces, finely attired and thickly gilded with gold. On the base of these images is a crossed Vajra carved and painted, whereas others have Chinese marks. The Sku-Rim-Ma images were mostly made of brass and do not have fine finish.

In China copies were made of the Chhos-Rygal Lima which can only be identified by experts.

In the manuscript, 'Rje-bdag-nyid-chhen-po-sogs-kyi-sku-brnyan-gyi-lo-Rgyus' by Rje-shes-Rab-Rgyamtso, it states that Glang-dar-Ma the heretic King of Tibet posecuted the Buddhists and at that time, he mutilated the images, by cutting off their limbs. Some of these images were believed to have uttered words of pain and some bleed. Such images are known as; 'Glang-Dar-khrims-phog-Ma'. Reference to such images have also been made by the Fifth Dalai Lama in his works; Volume Dza'.

This is just a brief account of the history of ancient Buddhist Art from the materials I have so far been able to locate from Manuscripts at the Institute of Tibetology. I hope, in future to be able to expand on this subject in greater detail.

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