



VAJRADHARA



BUDDHA ŚĀKYAMUNI

# **THE BUDDHIST PAINTINGS AND ICONOGRAPHY**

**ACCORDING TO TIBETAN SOURCES**

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In *Bkash-rgyur-hdul-ba-lung*, it is stated that until the Mahaparinirvana of Lord Buddha, there were artists who drew human beings that could be mistaken for real. After the Mahaparinirvana of Lord Buddha, for a hundred years, there were still several such artists in existence.

During the time of Lord Buddha, there were two great kings, Bimbisara of Magadha and Udayana of Sgrasgrog (Vatsa). Both were contemporaries of Lord Buddha in the 6th century B.C and were close friends. King Udayana sent a priceless gift of a coat of mail to king Bimbisara which could ward off the effects of weapon, poison, fire etc. The latter could not find a suitable return (present) and was depressed. Then his Prime Minister Dbyar Tsul (Varshakara) suggested that since Lord Buddha was residing in his kingdom and as he was the most precious jewel in the three worlds, it would be a fitting present if a painting of Lord Buddha was presented to king Udayana (U-tra-ya-na). Therefore, Bimbisara requested Lord Buddha to permit him to draw his portrait on cloth. The artist found it impossible to draw the portrait, due to a brightness that radiated from Lord Buddha's body. The artist finally finished the portrait, looking at the reflection of Lord Buddha in a pond. This painting of Lord Buddha was called 'Thub-pa-chhu-lon-ma' which means Buddha's portrait made from the reflection in water.

While Buddha was preaching in Ser-skya (Kapilavastu), the wife of the house-holder Ming-chen (Mahanama) was listening to Buddha's teachings. She sent her maid Rohita to fetch her jewellery from her house. Rohita was reluctant to go as she too, wished to hear Lord Buddha's teachings, but as she had no alternative but to obey her mistress' order, 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 Lord Buddha, having great faith in him. As a result she was reborn 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 (a creeping plant of pearls). When the princess grew up, she heard about the Buddha and his teachings from Magadhan traders coming to ceylon. Having great faith in the Buddha, she

sent a letter and a present. As a return present, Lord Buddha sent her a painting of himself on cloth, which an artist had drawn from the spiritual ray of light that radiated from his body. This painting is called 'Thub-pa-hod-zer-ma' which means the portrait of Buddha made on cloth from the rays that emanate from him. On seeing the portrait, the princess was overwhelmed by deep faith in Lord Buddha and as a consequence, she perceived the truth. This painting was a model of aesthetic perfection. Later paintings of Central and Eastern India evolved from it.

Once a house holder named Dad-sbyin invited Lord Buddha and his disciples for a feast. Since the Buddha could not be present at the feast, his disciple Mgon-med-zas-sbyin (Anatha Pindada) thought that it would be most improper and the gathering would not look majestic. Therefore, Anatha Pindada requested Lord Buddha to allow him to make an image of the Lord 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-Idan (Kashi), Gsal-rgyal (Prasenajit), made a sandalwood image of Lord Buddha and when the Lord descended 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 image flew to China and is there till this day. It was called 'Tsan-dan-gyi-jobo' (Sandalwood Buddha). In China many paintings were done of this Jobo, and such paintings were known as 'Se-Thang'. These were the earliest of Buddhist paintings.

Before Lord Buddha attained Nirvana, he instructed that his image be made to act as his representative so that his teachings may flourish unhindered by heretics. Rahula made the image 'Thub-pa-gangs-chan-mtsho' from several precious Naga's jewels.

Once, Indra told Vishwakarma to make an image of Lord Buddha from gems collected from gods., men and Asuras. Vishwakarma made three images of Lord Buddha of the age of eight, twelve and twentyfive years. 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 twentyfive was taken by Indra to heaven. The two other stayed for many years in Uddiyana and in the land of Naga's and in Bodh Gaya. During king Srong-btsan Gampo's time (617-641 A.D.) his Chinese queen Hun-shin-kun-ju and his Nepalese queen, Bal-sa Kri-btsun, brought these two images to Tibet. The image of Buddha at eight is in the Lhasa Gtsug-lag-khang and the one at twelve is at Ramo-che-gtsug-lag-khang. These two images were considered to be very sacred as they were blessed by Lord Buddha himself.

After the Mahaparinirvana of Lord Buddha, there were very few human artist who could make images of Gods. Hence, many Gods took the form of men and helped human artists to make beautiful images of Lord Buddha.

About eighty years after Lord Buddha, there lived three Brahmin brothers in Magadha. The eldest made a temple and an image of Lord Buddha from precious stones, the second collected earth from eight sacred places in India (Lumbini, Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, Rajgir, Sravasti, Sanshyg, Nalanda and Kushinagar) 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 the best powdered sandalwood (Goshir-sha) and from several precious jewels. This image was known to be a perfect replica of Lord Buddha and was called Mahabuddhi. Several patrons made unique and precious images in Magadha.

During Ashoka's time (273 B.C. to 236 B.C.) eight chortens (stupas) were built by Gnod-sbyin (demi-god artisans) in eight pilgrimage centres, and during the time of Nagarjuna 58 B.C., 78 A.C., or 120 A.C. (400 years after Buddha according to Tibetan sources), Naga artists made several Buddha images. Images made by Gods, Nagas and demi-Gods were made in such a way even after several years they could be mistaken for real. Images made later did not have the same effect of realism. Several artists made several images from their own imagination and thus many styles were evolved. In Magadha, during the reign of King Sangs-rgyas-phyogs, there lived an artist called Bimbisara, in Marur, during king Ngag-tshul, there lived an artist named Sigdari, and during King Devapala's reign, there lived in Bengal an artist Warendra Deman (Dhiman) and his son Bedapala. These artists were extremely good in painting and making images. From Bimbisara, there evolved the image style of Central India, from Sigdari, there evolved the image style of Western India, from Warendra Deman evolved the image style of Eastern India and from his son Bedapala, the image style of Magadha and Central India.

In Nepal, images of the old Western Indian style were used but later the style of Eastern India was adopted. In Kashmir, the original images were that of the Western Indian style but later a completely new style was brought in by the great artist Hasuraja, which to this day is called 'Kha-che-ma' or Kashmiri style. In Southern India the art of making Buddha images became widespread and styles of three masters Jaya (Rgyal-ba), Prajaya (Gzhan-las-rgyal-ba) and Bijaya (Rnam-par-rgyal-ba) became popular. However, much of the skill was lost and there was a general decline in the art. Of all the styles, only the Southern style did not reach Tibet.

There were many self-evolved images at the time of King Srong-btsan-gampo. Such as the principal images of Khra-hbrug temple of Yarlung in Southern Tibet and the most precious eleven-headed Avalokitesvara of Lhasa Gtug-lag-khang. During the reign of king khri-Srong-Ide-btsan (740 to C. 798) many images were erected and one such image was the Buddha image at Bsam-yes monastery known as 'Jobo-byang-chhub-chenpo'.

The Nepalese style was the most popular in Tibet. Later on Sman-bla-don-grub-shabs (1440-A.D.) of Lho-brag-sman-thang in Tibet, who was regarded as an incarnation of Manjushri, went to Tsang and learned the art from Rdo-pa-bkra-shis-rgyal-po. He saw the painting called 'Sithang' which he had painted in his former life in China. The painting brought back his recollection of his former life as an artist and he painted a great Thangka called 'Sman-thang Chen-mo' with which he established a new style. His son and pupils established two schools of arts. Besides, Mkhyen-btse-chen-mo of Gong-dkar-sgong-stod in south of Lhasa also started a new style. Sman-bla-don-grub-shabs and Mkhyen-btse-chen-mo were considered two of the greatest artists of Tibet.

Another new and beautiful style was started by Sprul-Sku-byi-bu, whose colour surpassed the former two. Another artist Gtsang-pa-chos-dbying-rgya-mtso (1645 - A.D.) started the Sman-gsar school of painting. Subsequently, many other styles were evolved which merged into the three early schools.

Sprul-sku-nam-mkh'a-bkra-shis (1500 - A.D.) of Yar-stod in the south of Lhasa, believed to be the incarnation of Karmapa Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje, learnt the Sman-thang style of painting from Skal-Idan-shar-phyogs-pa dkon-mchog-phan-bde of Ae, in South Tibet. Later he copied the Indian style of line drawing of images, and for background and colours he followed the Sithang style of Chinese painting that was prevalent during the time of the emperor Tai-ming. This style of painting was known as the 'Sgar-bri' style. Sprul-sku

Nam-mkah'a-bkra-shis, Chos-bkra-shis and kar-shod-karma-bkra-shis were responsible for the spread of the Sgar-bri style of painting. Sprul-sku Sle-hu-chung-pa and Pad-ma-mkhar-po were famous for making images. Karma-shid-bral was known for making images of the Sgar-bri style but this style is lost now. During the Fifth Dalai Lama's (1617 - 1682 A.D.) time, Hor-dar and Skul-sku Bab-phro were famous for making images. Their style of making images was followed by Hdod-dpal (government craft centre in Shol, below potala).

Hbrug-pa-padma-dkar-po (1527 to 1592 A.D.) gave a brief description of Buddhist images made in India, Tibet, Mongolia and China. In India the images were classified according to the different regions of north, south, east, west and central India 1. 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 was known as red gold as it appears like red gold. Zikhyim contains seven precious Naga's jewels and was like the wishfulfilling jewels. The real colour of Zikhyim is a glowing red but on close examination, it radiates the colour of a rainbow. Rainbow colours were more distinct when the juice of a certain virulent poison (Tsen-duk) was applied on Zikhyim.

Rje-shes-rab-rgya-mtso relating to images, stated that Zikhyim contains several precious jewels. Real Zikhyim radiates five rainbow colours when the poison Tsan-duk is applied on it 2. There were some natural copper alloys found underground which were identified as Zikhyim. Artificially manufactured Zikhyim was prepared by melting gold, silver, copper, iron, kar-tho, white and black lead and quick silver.

Hjigs-med-gling-pa (1729 - 1798 A.D.) states that there were two types of Zikhyim - red gold, and the other was prepared by adding seven precious jewels to the molten metal 3. In artificially prepared Zikhyim, joints between the various metals could be visible and when placed in the shade, rainbow colours radiated like the Lhasa Jobo Rimpoche. In the biography of the Fifth Dalai Lama, it is mentioned that the Lhasa Jobo Rimpoche was made from ten jewels of human beings and Devas 4.

Red bell metal was red in colour with a marked yellowish shade and white bell metal white in colour with a distinct yellowish shade. Red and white bell metals found in Liyul (Khotan) were considered to be the most valuable materials for making images in ancient times as it was believed that the very existence of these materials was due to the blessings of the past four Buddhas. Hjigs-med-gling-pa again states that red and white bell metal found in the hills of Ceylon and Liyul (Khotan) were considered as the most precious materials for making images as the hills of Ceylon were blessed by the past four Buddhas. There were, however, variations in the art of casting metal. According to some, artificial bell metal was prepared by mixing equal quantities of nine metals of gold, copper, iron, tin, zinc, zil, bronze and lead. The body of the Buddha image made of white bell metal and the cloak of red bell metal was called 'Thub-pa-zang-thang-ma'. This was also mentioned by Hbrug-pa-pad-dkar. However, according to Rje-shes-rab-rgya-mtso, the Buddha image of central India, the body of which was of yellow bell metal and the cloak, of red bell metal, was known as 'Thub-pa-sang-thang-ma'.

Images made of red copper were easily distinguishable. It was believed that Lord Buddha through his prayer had made that whoever touched an image made from the Bodhi tree would be freed from taking rebirth in the three lower worlds of beasts, hungry ghosts and hell. There were images made from soft clay of the Nagas and white marble.

Hjigs-med-gling-pa states that the Nagas gave soft clay to Nagarjuna (four hundred years after the demise of Lord Buddha according to Tibetan sources). Similarly, Rje-shes-rab-rgya-mtso mentioned that Nagarjuna was invited to the land of Nagas and was presented with soft clay. Several images like 'Thub-pa-klu-hjim-ma' and 'Ha-shang-klu-hjim-ma' of Ngo-mtsar temple in Amdo were made from the soft clay of the Nagas. There were images made from the soft clay of the Nagas. There were images made from the Thangka painting 'Thub-pa-hod-zer-ma' (the portrait of Buddha on cloth) which Buddha sent to the princess Mutig-khri-shing of Ceylon. In this image, the body was slim, the crown on the head was horizontal, the nose high, long and the tip sharp. The point between the eye brows was absolutely parallel to the tip of the nose. The space between the eyes was narrow and the lips were beautifully shaped. The Lhasa Jobo Rinpoche was classified amongst this image.

The sandalwood image of Lord Buddha made by the king of Gsal-ldan (kashi) was later reproduced. Images made in this form were well shaped and proportionate. Clothes were well-draped and the folds evenly spaced, hands supple and heels fairly thick and the face was a longish oval shape. These images were mistaken to be made in Bukhara and khotan. Like the sandalwood jobo, 'Thub-pa-gser-gling-ma' of rtse-thang in southern Tibet belongs to this type of image.

The images of Bodhisattvas had a relaxed posture and were never stiff. They had a handsome face, proportionate and good bodily features. The plaited hair bound on the top of the head was in an upright position, adorned with ornaments. Some of these ornaments were made from the precious Naga's gems. Images of wrathful deities (khro-bo) were neither stiff nor curved in posture. Some images had no throne, whereas others had thrones beautifully shaped and ornamented, supported by figures of men with great physical strength or by lions. Hjigs-med-gling-pa mentions that very few wrathful figures were made in India because the Tantric teachings were kept in great secret at that time 5.

Images of three-faced deities resting on fully opened lotus cushions and others on a partly opened lotus cushions but in a upright position were also found. In some cases the lotus were double, some rows of lotus facing upright and some rows turned downwards. Between the two lotus, one above and other below, were drawn two lines adorned with a chain of pearls.

Pandita Rdo-rje-gdan-pa-chenpo (Maha-Vajrasana, 11th cent. A.D.) made the image 'Gdan-chhung-ma' purely of white bell metal. The head of the image was slightly small in proportion to the body. The cheek bones were high and full. The image 'Thub-pa-hdud-hdul-ma' (Buddha image) was made in Magadha and the image 'Chos-hkhor-ma' in Varanasi.

The images made in east India had a broad forehead. The upper portion of the body was broad resembling that of a lion. The face was short and the fingers were joined together. The crown of the head (Gtsug-gtor) was placed slightly towards the back. These images were placed on the thrones as those of central India, except that the petals of the lotus cushion made in east India were turned slightly inwards. Spacing between the upper and lower lotus was filled with chain of designs, but the designs along the lower lotus had bigger gaps than the designs in the upper lotus which were compact. Images made in Zahor (near Dacca in Bangladesh) were mostly identical with others made in east India, except that the white bell metal images of Zahor were studded with gold, silver and copper. The eyes were of silver and copper; some were decorated with precious gems and some were

adorned with pearl necklaces. The belief that these images originated in Delhi and later spread to east India is a mistaken notion. According to Hjigs-med-gling-pa, images made in Bengal were of white bell metal with eyes and lips of silver and gold, and they looked lovelier than those made elsewhere. Precious stones were studded on these images to beautify them.

Most of the images in south India were made of red bell metal though there were some made of the soft clay of the Nagas and white bell metal. The face of these images was small but with marked cheek bones. The gap between the eyes was slightly wider than normal. The forehead was narrow and the nose slightly flat like that of an ancient Dravidian race. It is very rare to find south Indian images in relaxed postures. The cloak was well-draped without any chisel mark. The throne and the single-petalled lotus were broad with tips of the lotus petal slightly hollow. The images were thickly gilded with gold of a reddish colour. The shape of the images made in Betha (Kerala) resembled those made in other parts of south India, except that the cheek bones of Betha images were not prominent. Chisel marks were noticeable on the cloaks. The face was small with fairly large eyes. The upper part of the nose was lightly hollowed. The lips were slightly protruding with the ends curled up. The images were supple and in a comfortable posture, adorned with beautiful ornaments and clothed with loose robes but their finishing was rather crude, specially the fingers, toes and lotus cushion. The lotus cushions have a double lotus touching one another in upside down position. Most of them did not have the bordering designs running parallel above and below the lotus cushion. Very few white bell metal images were made in south India. Marble images were exquisitely shaped and beautifully adorned with ornaments. The mouth was well-shaped and the space between the eyes was narrow. The upper part of the nose was slightly flat, while the lower portion was slightly high. The images were made with a slight curve in posture and the spacing between the folds of the robes was even.

Images made in North India were made from an alloy of white bell metal and brass, giving the image a whitish shade. They were well-shaped and proportionate to a relaxed posture. The face was small with a prominent nose and the gap between the eyes was narrow. The throne and the ornaments were exquisite. Some images of this kind were also made of red bell metal. Hjigs-med-gling-pa says that most of the images in north India have a simple standing and sitting posture. In Kashmir, images were not only made of white 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 was narrow and the tip of the nose slightly rounded. The posture with supple limbs was in an uncomfortable position. Several images have copper lips and silver eyes. The tip of the crown on the head was slightly depressed. The cloak was well draped with even spacing between folds which extended fairly long. Some were adorned with pearl headdresses and pearl necklaces, while others had floral head dresses. Some were seated on thrones and some on lotus cushions, the petals of which were plain, large and open. Some of these images were identical to those made in central India, the difference being that the necks of these images were thin, the cheek bones prominent, the shoulders and ankles thin and the heels thick. Hjigs-med-gling-pa had stated the same except that he had not mentioned the supple limbs.

In Tibet, the Chhos-rgyal-Lima (Bell metal image made during the reigns of different kings) was encouraged during three different periods. It was first introduced at the time of king Srong-btsan-sgam-po (7th century A.D.). During this time images were made of Zikhyim, pure red and white bell metal. Besides, images were also made of gold, silver



and crystal glass. Some images were made in the chess board design with red and white bell metal. These images have a wide and proportionate body with a longish face and big nose. The eyelids were long, the limbs supple and the robes with few folds. Some were seated on lotus cushions which resembled those made in south India and some images were without a stand. Some images wore gowns, shoes, and were crowned with three spikes slightly bent inwards. In most cases chisel marks were visible on the robes. Images of kings were adorned with turbans and shoes with chisel carved designs. Some images were gilded with gold whereas other were polished or unpolished. Hjigs-med-gling-pa mentions that during king Srong-btsen-sgam-po's time, images were made mostly of red bell metal adorned in laymen's robes. Images of khro-bo (wrathful deities) made during this period have a less fierce expression.

The second period of Chhos-rgyal-lima was begun in the time of king Khri-srong-lde-btsen (8th century A.D.). The shape and quality of these images were like those made during the time of king Srong-btsan sgam-po, except that the faces were small and fingers badly shaped. Although the images were well polished and adorned with multicoloured ornaments with three spiked crowns, they did not have a good finish. Images of this period did not have turbans but had plaited hair loosely held on all sides. According to Hjigs-med-gling-pa, images made during the reign of king khri-srong-lde-btsen were heavily polished.

The third period of Chhos-rgyal-lima was during the reign of king khri-ral-pa-chan (9th century A.D.). The images of this period were very much like those of Central India except that they had a heavier face and relaxed posture. The eyes were of silver and copper. The Zang-thang-ma images have copper lips and silver eyes. The brass images have a poor finishing and the images made from an alloy of bell metal and copper have a darker complexion than those made during the time of the former two kings. All the images were gilded with gold.

At the time of king Ye-shes-hod and Byang-chhub-hod (11th century A.D.) of Mngah-ris-stod, images were made from an alloy of red copper and zikhyim. These images were well built with a sharp nose and were in an eased posture, resembling those made in Nepal. They were gilded with gold from Shang-shung, a province in Western Tibet. Images of this period were known as "thon-mthing-ma". According to Hjigs-med-gling-pa, these images were made from different coloured bell metal. Images made during this period were excellent in material and shape. In shape these images resembled the Chhos-rgyal-lima and were often mistaken to be made in China.

In Mongolia, images were chiefly made in upper Bokhara, Yugur, Khotan (Li-yul) and lower Bokhara with slight variations in their styles. During the reign of king Hulahu, upper Bokhara images were mostly made from an alloy of lead, white bell metal and red bell metal. The colour was darkish but a little lighter than the Chinese brass. The faces of these images were small and round with a sharp nose and well built posture identical to those made in Kashmir. The clothes were well draped with closely spaced frills like sea waves. The lotus cushion had a double lotus design with a large single petal, hollow in shape. There was a slight depression at the base. The cushions were circular or square, supported by Nagas, and in some cases the images were placed on rocks instead of thrones. Their 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 with the chin slightly scooped out. The cloak had numerous pleats. The fingers carried religious offerings. The thrones and cushion had Chinese characters inscribed on them. These images were made of dull bell metal by

the Muslim artisans and they resembled those made in Kashmir. Some images were gilded whereas others were not. In Yugur (part of Mongolia situated north of Amdo) the images were made from an alloy of white bell metal and silver and have a silver shade. They were also made from an alloy of lead and bell metal. The faces of these images were small, round, with a slightly flat nose and thick hair. The bodies were proportionate but the fingers and toes had a crude finishing. These images were seated in an uncomfortable posture. They were scantily ornamented and the ornaments were poorly made. The cloaks were well draped with few pleats. Most of these images were seated on a lotus cushion or thrones. The lotus cushions were similar to those made in upper Bokhara.

Images made in Liyul (Khotan) were similar to the ones made during the time of king Srong-btsan-sgam-po. The main images of Bsam-yes-dge-rgyal temple and khri-hbrug temple were believed to have been brought from Li-yul.

In lower Bokhara, images were made from an alloy of lead and bell metal. They were also made from white lead and wood. The faces of these images were badly shaped, the lower half being larger than the upper half. The eyes and mouth were small but the lips were well-shaped. The fingers were short and the feet and hands looked like those of a young boy. Robes were closely fitted with the folds and pleats evenly spaced. Most of the images were placed on thrones and on rocks. During the time of emperor Godan, when China was under the Mongolian sovereignty till the time of emperor Yesum-themer (a period of six generations have lapsed between the two), images were made from an alloy of congli (a kind of bell metal) and red bell metal, and were gilded with gold. These images were made exactly like the ones that were made in China. Images were also made from sandalwood, crystal glass, red jade, white jade, rhinoceros horn, gold, silver and Zikhyim.

In China we find two categories of images, ancient and modern. The older images were made during the reign of emperor Thang-chehu. These images were well-shaped, heavily built with long faces, slit eyes, lips perfectly shaped, nose slightly flat and hands slightly shorter. They were heavily adorned with ornaments and their clothes were loose fitting with evenly spaced folds. The modern Chinese images were made during the reign of emperor Tai-ming. These images have a flat face and long eyes. The gold colour which was used to gild these images were outstanding. The folds of the robes were evenly spaced. The lotus cushion had a double design all round and the tips of the petals were bent outward. The bordering design running parallel to the lotus above and below were evenly spaced. The base of the image was firmly sealed with the crossed Vajra design carved on it and painted with red Chinese varnish. Images of poorer craftsmanship do not have the crossed Vajra design or the red varnish. These images were known as 'Skurim-ma' and were made of brass.

According to Hjigs-med-gling-pa the older types of Buddha images in China were made during the reign of emperor Thang-chehu. These images were made from an alloy of bell metal and lead. Modern Chinese images, according to him were of two types 'Thugs-dam-ma' and 'Sku-rim-ma'. The 'Thugs-dam-ma' images were well-shaped with long faces. They were finely attired and thickly gilded with gold. On the base of these images was carved and painted the crossed Vajra and some had Chinese marks. The 'Sku-rim-ma' images were mostly made of brass and do not have good finishing. In China copies were made of 'Chhos-rgyal-lima' which can be identified only by experts.

Rjes-shes-rab-rgya-mtso states that at the time of king Glang-dar-ma, (863 - 906) many Buddhists were persecuted and many images destroyed. Some of those images were

believed to have uttered words of pain and some to have even bled. Such images were known as 'Glang-dar-khri-ma'. Reference to such images were also made by the Fifth Dalai Lama in his autobiographies 'volume Dza'.

This is only a brief account of the history of ancient Buddhist art from the materials I have so far been able to glean from manuscripts at the Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology. In future, I hope to be able to expand on this subject in greater detail.

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