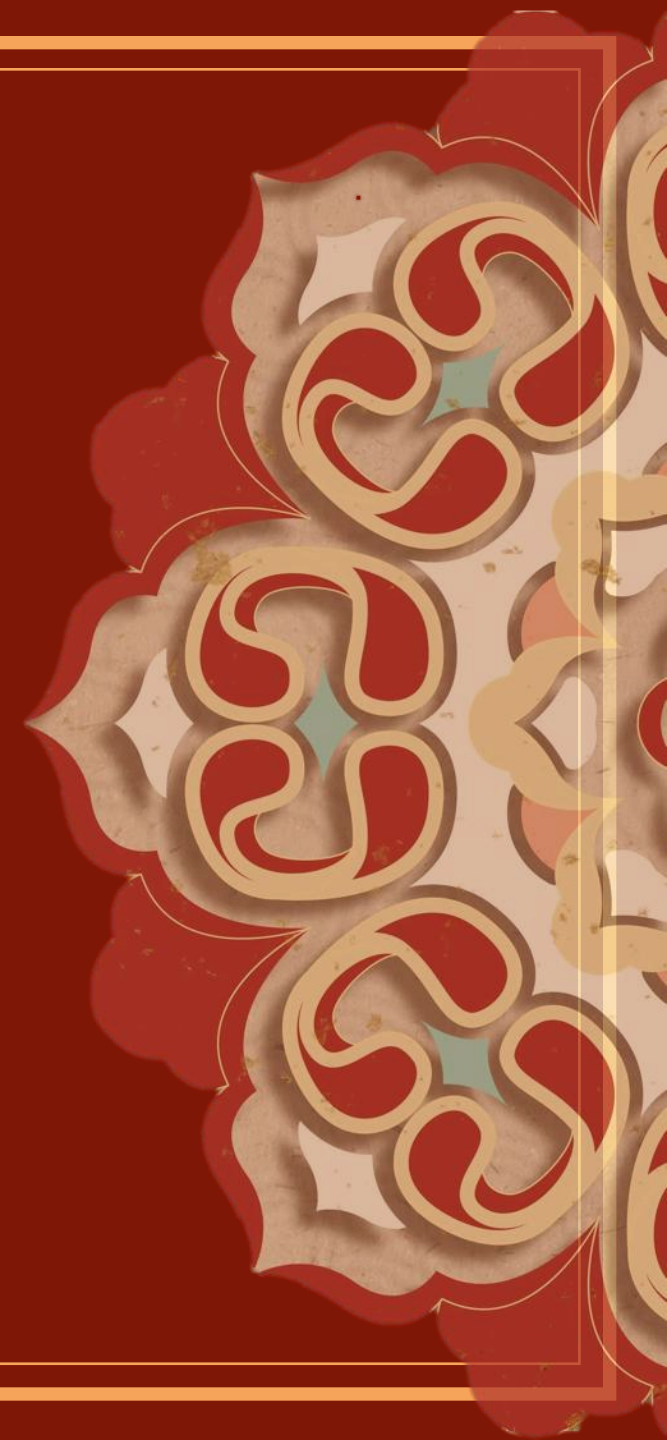




T i b e t

# THE STORY OF THANGKS



# Lu Family Collection

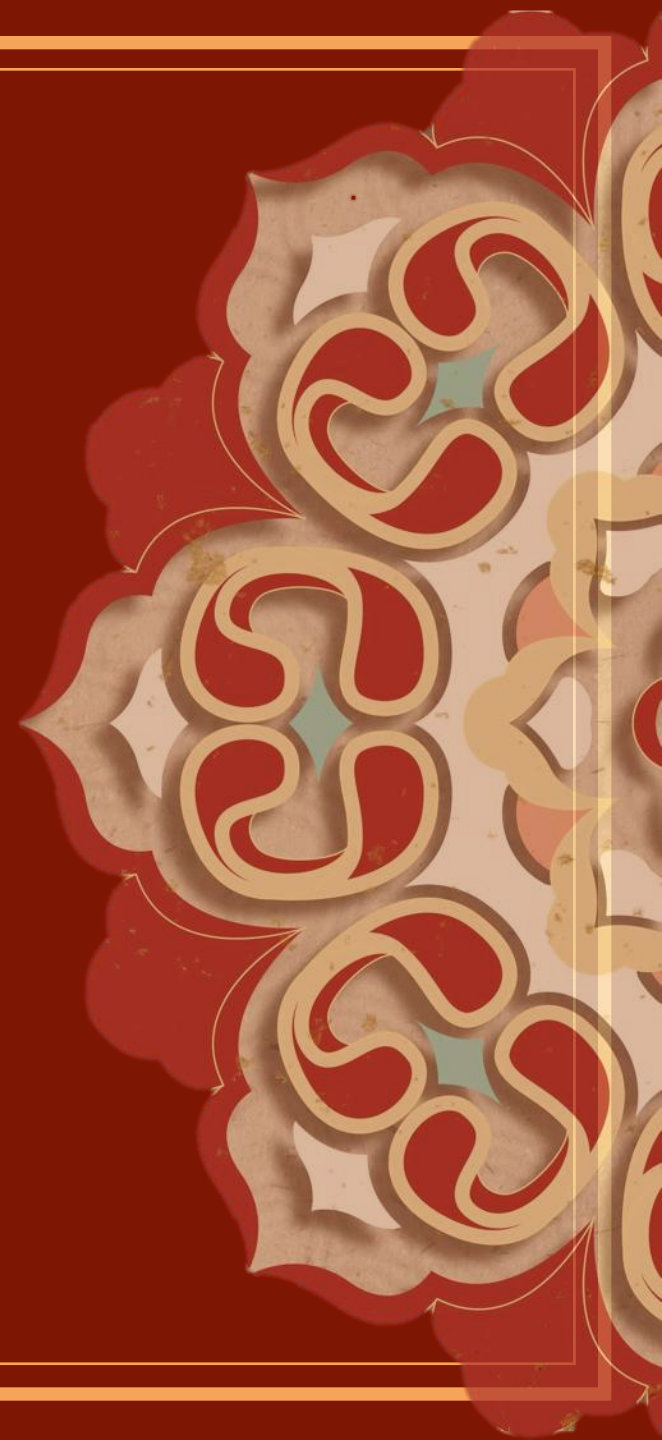
Born in Beijing and shaped by the cultures of both East and West, Rick Lu has spent a lifetime bridging worlds. Educated in Canada and rooted in the mining industry, Mr. Lu's professional journey over the last three decades has taken him across Asia's landscapes, from the high plains of Tibet, Mongolia to the rugged beauty of Sichuan and Qinghai.

Since 2000, Mr. Lu and his wife Vivian have devoted themselves to collecting the rich and intricate treasures of Tibetan art—thangkas, relics, and artifacts that echo centuries of spiritual and cultural heritage. His travels through High Plateau have deepened his connection to the stories behind these pieces, enriching a collection that celebrates tradition, craftsmanship, and the sacred.



# Tibetan Thangkas

*A unique and profound art form*



Tibetan Thangkas are a unique and profound art form that combines spirituality, cultural heritage, and intricate craftsmanship. These traditional scroll paintings serve as visual aids for meditation, teaching tools, and symbols of devotion in Tibetan Buddhism. Thangkas often depict deities, mandalas, spiritual scenes, or historical events, rendered in vivid colors and meticulous detail.

Crafted on cotton or silk, Thangkas are mounted on brocade frames, making them portable and practical for use in temples, monasteries, or personal altars. Beyond their aesthetic appeal, they hold deep spiritual significance, with each element imbued with symbolic meaning and designed to guide practitioners on their spiritual journey.

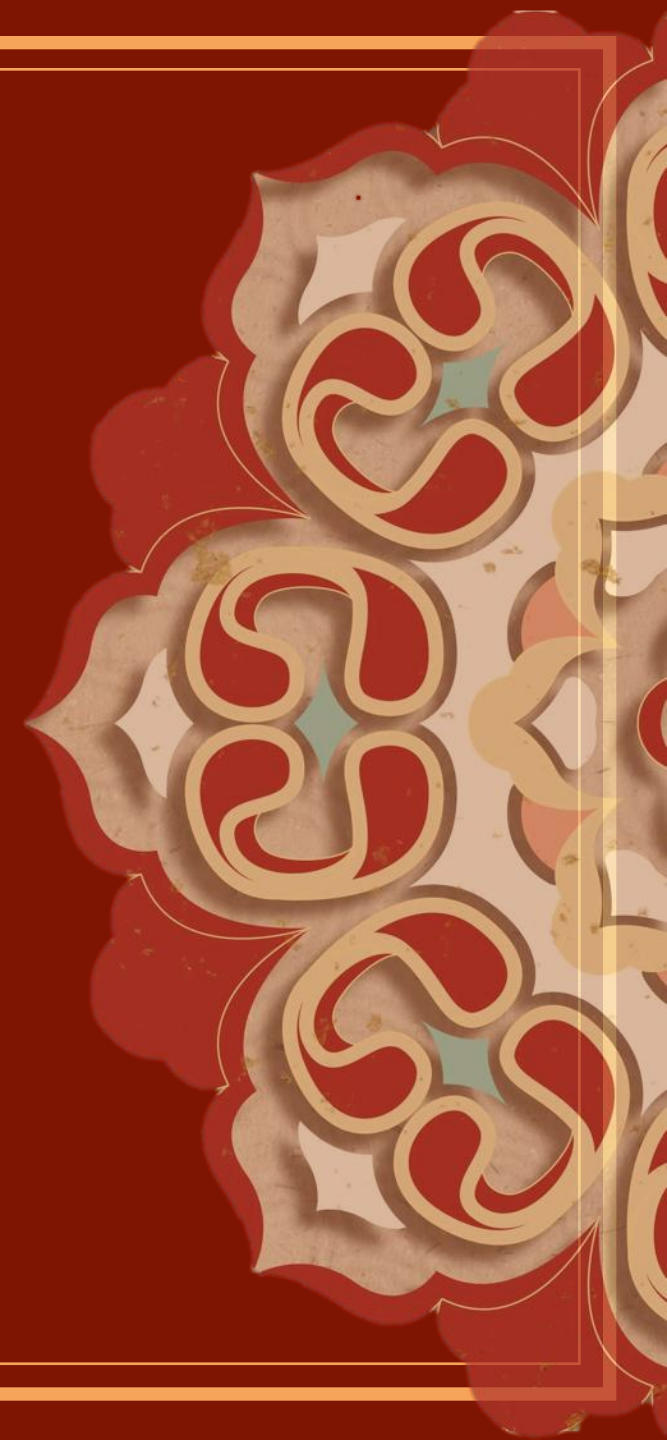
The creation of a Thangka follows strict guidelines rooted in Buddhist iconography and religious texts, reflecting the harmony between artistic precision and spiritual intention. These works are not merely paintings but are considered sacred objects, capable of inspiring contemplation, invoking blessings, and fostering a deeper connection to the divine.





# THE HISTORY OF TIBET

- Tibet Origin
- Native Religion Bon
- Buddhism Enters
- Theocracy
- Splendid Culture



## ***At the Starting Point of a Historical Journey***

The Tibetan people will tell you that they are descendants of a monkey and a demone:

### **In the 5th century BCE**

The prince Shenrab Miwo founded the indigenous Bon religion of the Tibetan Plateau. Bon believes in the animistic principle that all things have spirits and worships natural elements such as the heavens, earth, stars, lightning, hail, mountains, rivers, plants, birds, and animals. Bon practices were carried out through shamans, who were traditionally hereditary positions passed down within noble families.



### **In the 7th century CE,**

Songtsen Gampo unified the plateau, and Buddhism was introduced to Tibet.

Buddhism (Buddha Dharma) was founded in the 6th century BCE by Siddhartha Gautama, a prince of Kapilavastu (modern-day Nepal), who is revered as the Buddha (the Enlightened One).



### **In the mid-9th century CE,**

Tibet entered a period of political fragmentation and division lasting 400 years. While this was the worst political era, it was the golden age for the development of Buddhism, which flourished from then on.



### **In the 13th century CE,**

Tibet adopted a unique system of governance combining political and religious authority, known as theocracy.

### **In the 16th century CE,**

The title of Dalai Lama was conferred by the Mongol leader Altan Khan. The Dalai Lama became Tibet's spiritual leader and its highest political ruler.

### **In the 17th century CE,**

The title of Panchen Lama was conferred by the Mongol leader Güshi Khan.







# TIBET ORIGIN

Celestial Motion Diagram (90x65)

The diagram of celestial motion represents not only the Tibetan Buddhist cosmology but also hints at the origins of the Tibetan people. The Thangka illustrates the movement patterns of ten celestial bodies—Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and others—across the vastness of space.





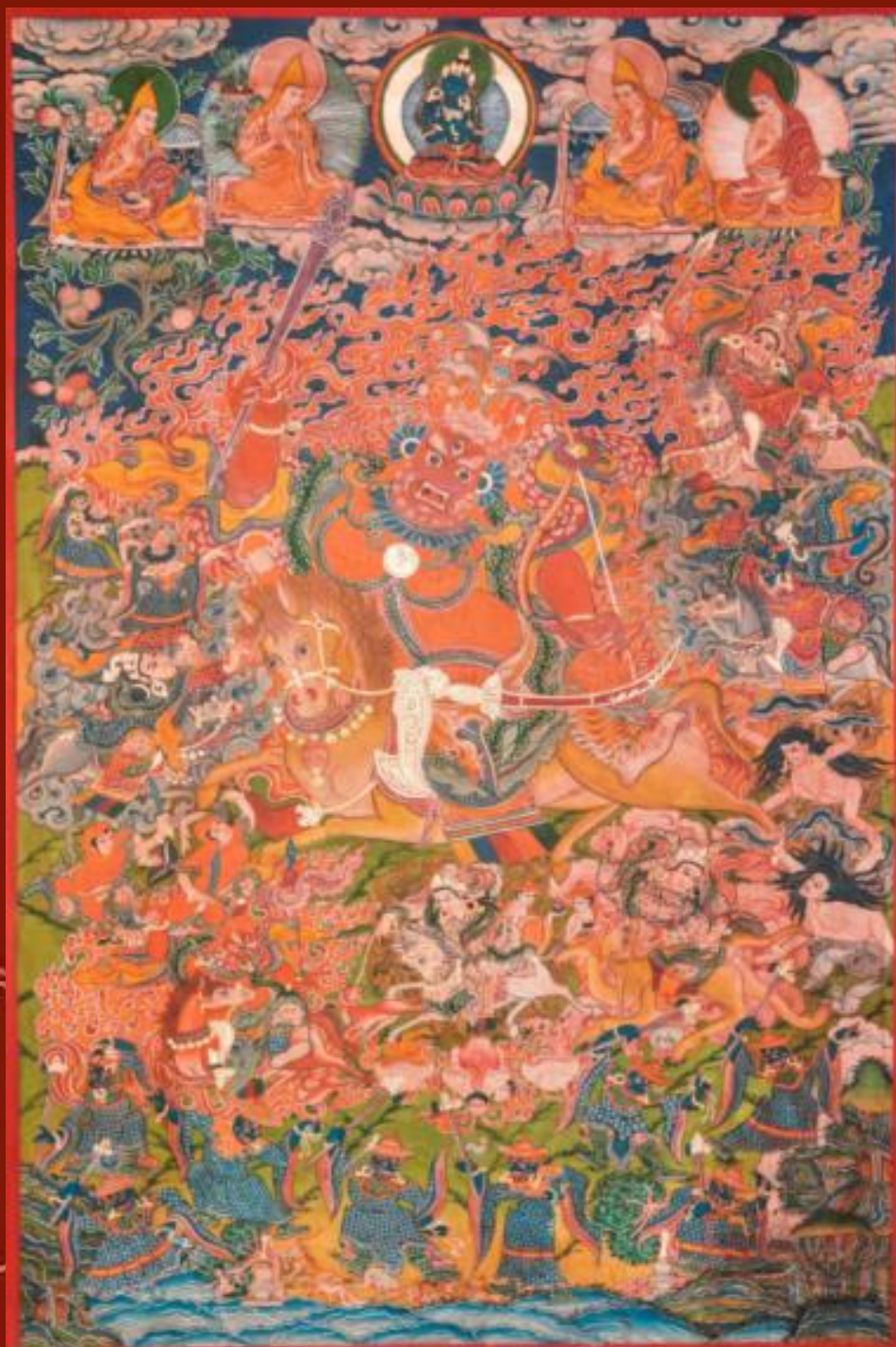


Fine lines divide the diagram into twelve sections, representing the twelve celestial palaces, while twelve different colored shapes within a circular representation of Earth signify the twelve small continents and the twelve earthly branches.

The five colors—red, yellow, blue, white, and black—symbolize the five fundamental elements: fire, wind, water, earth, and space. Their intricate interweaving not only forms the universe but also gives birth to individual life.







# NATIVE RELIGION BON

Carrying Uma Bao (80x50)

This refers to the Red Yaksha Protector, a deity originating from the spirits of Tibet's indigenous Bon religion. Initially the leader of many demons, this figure was subdued by Buddhism and transformed into a protective deity.







# BUDDHISM ENTERS

Guru Padmasambhava (90x70)

The central figure is Guru Padmasambhava, one of the most legendary figures in Tibetan Buddhism. He came to Tibet from India in 763 CE to propagate Buddhist teachings and is considered the actual founder of Tibetan Buddhism. Revered as the "Precious Guru" by later generations, he holds an exceptionally exalted status on the snowy Tibetan Plateau.

He was later honored as the lineage founder of the "Nyingma" school (the Red Sect). This school is colloquially known as the Red Sect because its monks traditionally wear red hats.







# THEOCRACY

Master Tsongkhapa (75x65)

From the perspective of modern Tibetans, no one in history is considered more important than Master Tsongkhapa (1357–1419). He was a religious reformer who founded the Gelug school, which later became the most prominent school of Tibetan Buddhism. Due to their yellow hats, this school is also known as the "Yellow Hat Sect" (Yellow School). Both the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama hail from this tradition.







# SPLENDID CULTURE

## MEDICAL

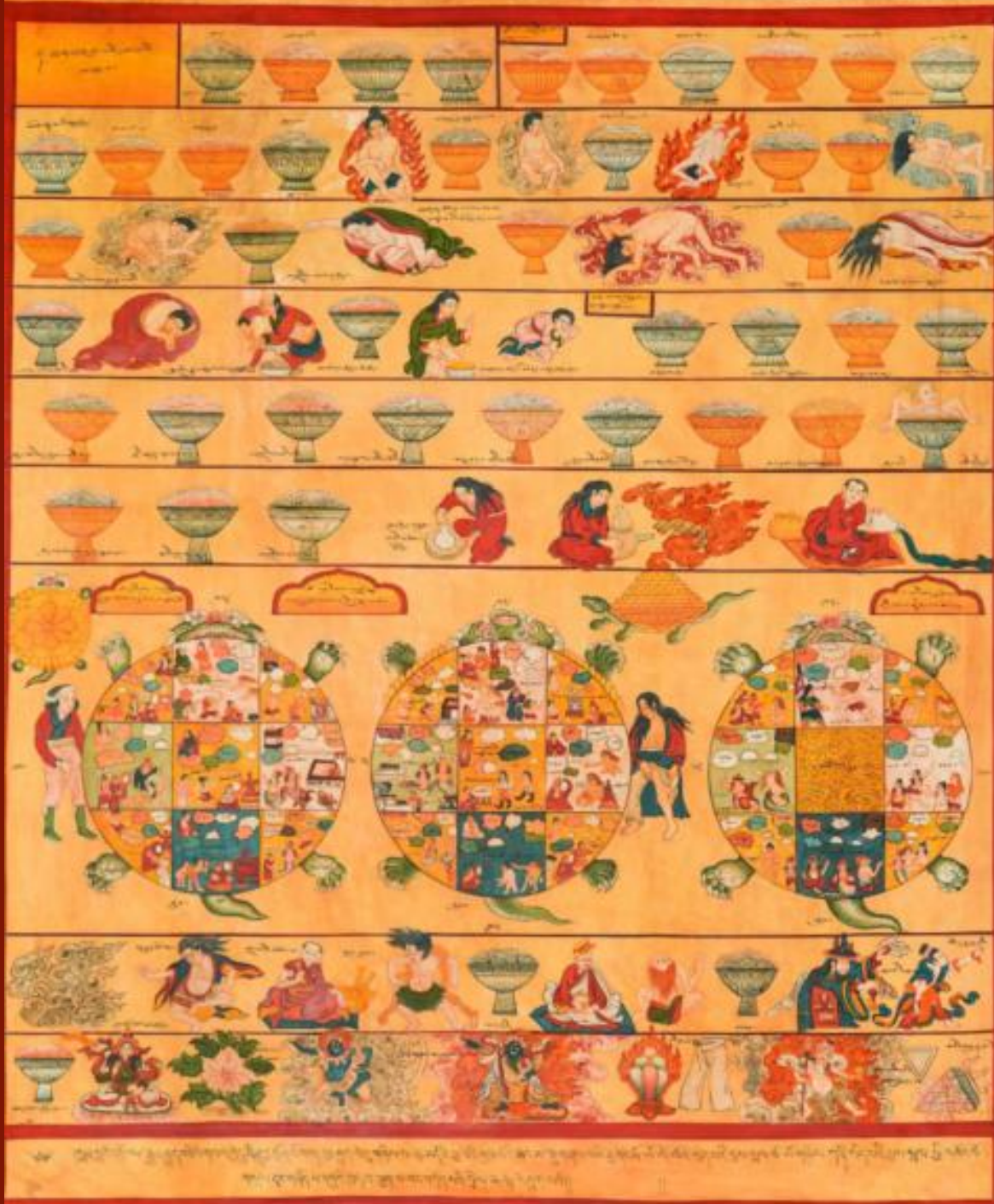
### Human Energy Channels (65x45)



This depicts the basic concepts of the human body in Tibetan medicine. Tibetans believe that the human body has a central energy channel with seven chakras (energy centers) aligned along it. From top to bottom, these chakras are: Crown Chakra (Top Chakra), Third Eye Chakra (Brow Chakra), Throat Chakra, Heart Chakra, Navel Chakra, Sacral Chakra (Reproductive Chakra), Root Chakra (Base Chakra).

In spiritual practice, opening and harmonizing these energy channels and chakras is believed to promote longevity and well-being.





# SPLENDID CULTURE

## MEDICAL



In the 17th century, the Fifth Dalai Lama assembled the best artists from all over Tibet to create the "Tibetan Medicine Series Thangkas", consisting of 80 paintings based on Tibetan medical texts. This is the 66th Thangka, which focuses on diagnosing illnesses by examining the characteristics of urine, such as its color, steam, odor, foam, and sediment.





# SPLENDID CULTURE

## *PHILOSOPHY*

Spaho (90x65)

Also known as the "Wheel of Life," this artwork represents all aspects of time, space, and geography. "Spaho" carries the meaning of "the cycle of life and death," where "Ho" is a Tibetan term borrowed from the Chinese word for "painting."

In Tibetan legends, Spaho is the deity who governs time and is the creator of the snowy Tibetan Plateau. This Thangka reflects the Tibetan people's profound contemplation on the relationship between time and existence.







# SPLENDID CULTURE

## ASTRONOMY

Spaho (90x65)

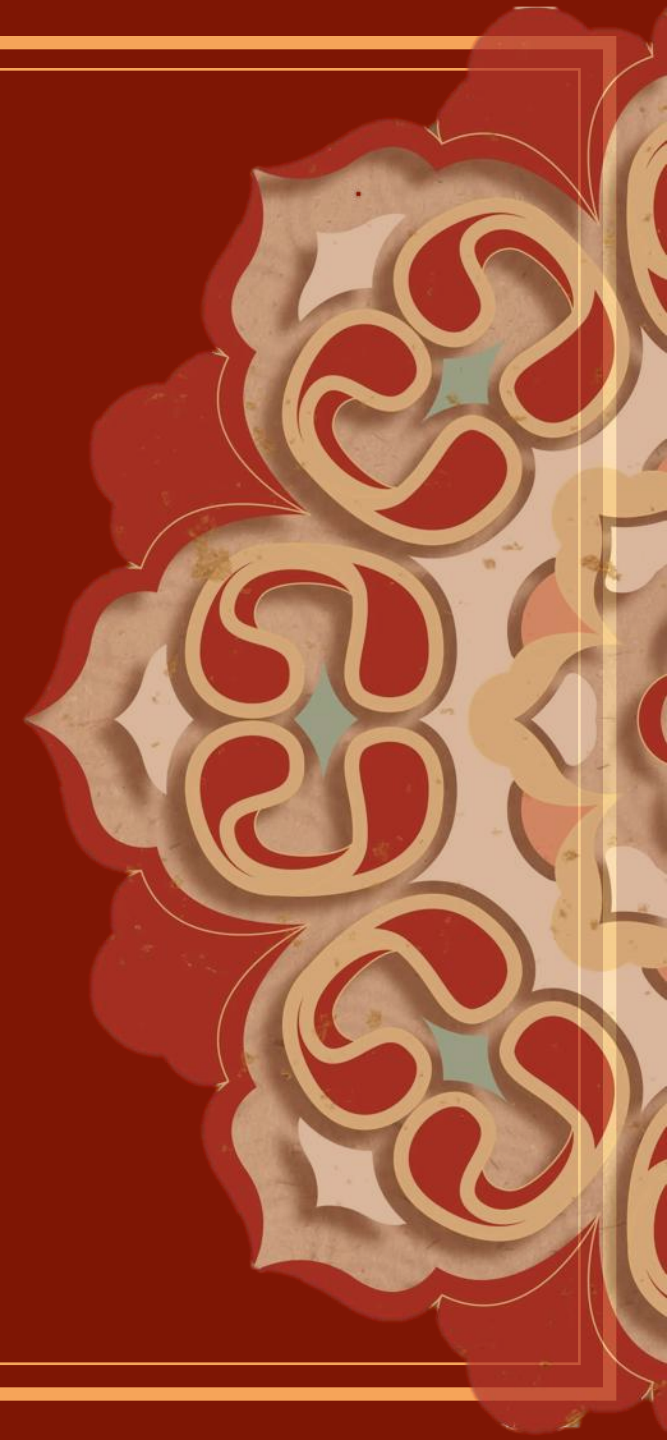
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# ICONOGRAPHY AND SYMBOLISM

- BUDDHA
- BODHISATTVA
- DHARMAPALA (PROTECTORS)
- LAMA
- OTHERS

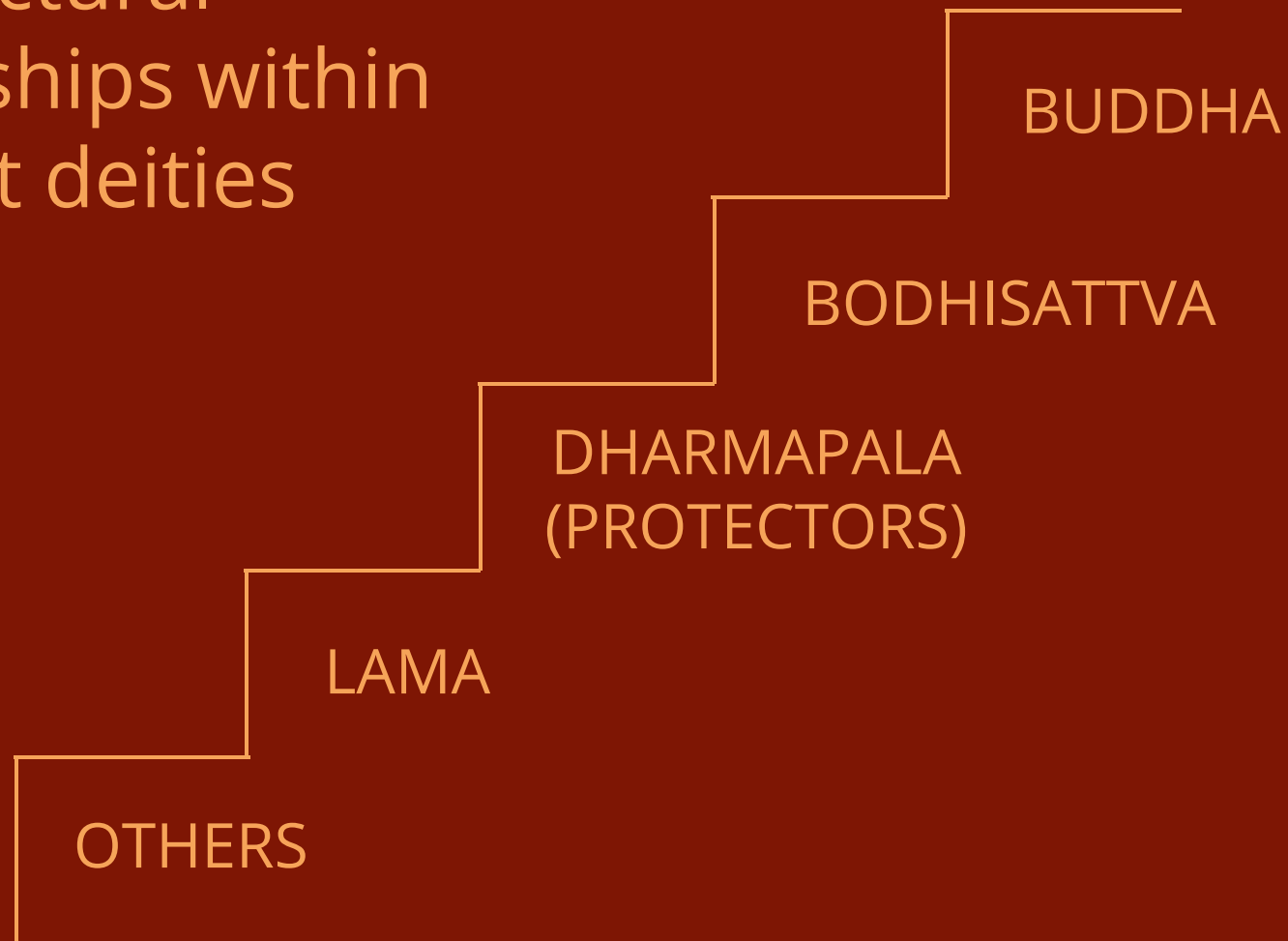


# The structural relationships within Buddhist deities





# The structural relationships within Buddhist deities





# BUDDHA (ENLIGHTENED ONE)

SIDDHARTHA GAUTAMA (65X45)

Shakyamuni Buddha is seated in the lotus position upon a lotus throne, with his two disciples, Maudgalyayana and Sariputra, standing respectfully on either side.







# BODHISATTVA (compassion to all beings)

AVALOKITESVARA (65X45)

One of the significant manifestations of Guanyin Bodhisattva. To help all sentient beings escape the suffering of samsara, Avalokiteshvara's body split into a thousand parts, transforming into the Thousand-Armed Avalokiteshvara. This form symbolizes the ability to use countless hands to save sentient beings, embodying profound compassion and empathy.







# DHARMAPALA (PROTECTORS)

YAMANTAKA (90X65)

Means "Lord of Death." It has nine faces, thirty-four arms, and sixteen legs. Among the nine faces, one is that of a water buffalo, seven are fierce and wrathful faces, and one is the face of a Bodhisattva.

The overall meaning of the painting symbolizes the eradication of obstacles and demons, the attainment of supreme accomplishment, and ultimate liberation.







# DHARMAPALA (PROTECTORS)



SAMVARA (90X65)

Chakrasamvara has four heads, twelve arms, and two legs, each hand holding various ritual implements. Typically, the center is blue, symbolizing space and primordial wisdom. Hevajra is able to help beings achieve rapid accomplishment.





# DHARMAPALA (PROTECTORS)

GUHYASAMAJA (90X70)

Three-head, Six-arm, two-foot, sits as padmasana (also known as the lotus pose, is a yoga asana where you sit cross-legged with each foot on the opposite thigh).







# DHARMAPALA (PROTECTORS)

HEVAJRA (95X70)

Hevajra has eight heads, sixteen arms, and four legs, holding a kapala bowl that symbolizes wisdom (skull cup used as a ritual implement). Sixteen hands each hold a kapala bowl representing wisdom, with each bowl containing different deities and animals.







# DHARMAPALA (PROTECTORS)

Green Tara (90X50)



Guanyin Bodhisattva manifested as 21 forms of Tara. It is also said that Guanyin, out of compassion, wept, and from the tears of her right eye emerged Green Tara, while from the tears of her left eye emerged White Tara.

According to Tibetan Buddhism, Green Tara is the earliest and most important form of Tara. Green represents life and hope, symbolizing the creative force of continuous existence and regeneration for humanity.





# DHARMAPALA (PROTECTORS)

VAJRASATTVA (75X50)

"The essence of the diamond" or "the indestructible Bodhicitta." He is the most powerful and effective deity for eliminating all negative karma.

Vajrasattva has one face, two arms, and two legs, with a halo of light in the shape of a moon behind him. In his left hand, he holds a vajra bell, placed at his waist, and in his right hand, he holds a vajra scepter, held at his chest.







# DHARMAPALA (PROTECTORS)

SIX-ARM MAHAKALA (100X70)

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Mahakala, also known as the Great Black One (Sanskrit: Mahakala).

The six-armed Mahakala is the chief of all protector deities. He has a black-blue body, wears a crown of five skulls, and tramples upon the white Ganapati (the Elephant-Headed Deity, also regarded as the King of Wealth). Ganapati, originally ferocious, was subdued by Mahakala.







# DHARMAPALA (PROTECTORS)

TWO-ARM MAHAKALA (90X65)

One-head, Two-arm, was a war deity in Hindu, becomes a chos skyone (protector) in Tibet, and beloved by Tibetan people.







# DHARMAPALA (PROTECTORS)

NANDIKESVARA (Other name Ganesha) (80X65)

Great Joyful Deity, Elephant-Headed God of Wealth

It is said that he is the son of the Indian deity Shiva, later converted to Buddhism to protect and support the faith. In Thangka art, the Elephant-Headed God of Wealth has the body of a human with an elephant head, one face, twelve arms, and is seated on a treasure-spouting mouse, symbolizing his ability to bestow blessings, prosperity, and wealth upon sentient beings.





# DHARMAPALA (PROTECTORS)



The Baoxiang Pavilion is located within the Forbidden City in Beijing. Inside the pavilion, six rooms house Thangka paintings of six protector deities, with three Thangkas in each room, and each Thangka depicting three protector deities.

This Thangka is one of them. In the center is the six-armed Harumagala (Mahakala), also known as Great Black Tara. On the left is the National Protector, with a blue-black body, riding a black bear. On the right is the Noble Protector, with a red body, stepping on a white corpse.







# DHARMAPALA (PROTECTORS)

Palden Lhamo (90X60)

Shridevi is depicted with one head, two arms, and two legs, or sometimes with one head, four arms, and two legs, with a face bearing three eyes. She rides a three-eyed yellow mule, with the third eye located on the mule's hindquarters.





# DHARMAPALA (PROTECTORS)

YAMANTAKA (90X60)

The transformation of Vajra Vairochana is commonly depicted with a red complexion, one face, two arms, and two legs, or sometimes with four faces, six arms, and two legs.

His attire is a blend of Bodhisattva garb (luxurious jewels) and protector attire (terrifying skulls). Under his feet, he treads upon a prone human figure, beneath which lies a prone cow. These are key distinguishing features for identifying him.





C



## DHARMAPALA (PROTECTORS)

VAISHRAVANA (90X60)

Vaisravana has one head and two arms, wearing a red battle robe. In his left hand, he holds a treasure-spouting mouse, and his mount is a white lion with a red mane.







# LAMA

## VIRUPA AND HIS DISCIPLE (80X80)

In the 11th century, the Indian Mahasiddha Virupa transmitted the esoteric teachings of Hevajra to his Tibetan disciple Dombipa. This lineage became the primary source of the Sakya tradition (known as the "Flower Sect"). The monasteries of this sect are characterized by walls painted with red, white, and blue stripes, which is why it is colloquially called the "Flower Sect."







# LAMA

MILA RASPA (85X60)

The Kagyu Sect (White Sect) is one of the schools of Tibetan Buddhism. The founder of this sect, Milarepa, gave teachings to hunters before retreating into the mountains. He wore white monk robes, following Indian traditions, which is why the sect is commonly called the "White Sect."







# LAMA

MILA RASPA (85X60)

In the 13th century, the Mongol emperor Kublai Khan awarded a black hat with golden trim, which led to the sect being popularly known as the "Black Hat Sect." The reincarnation system initiated by this sect was soon adopted by other schools and later expanded by the Gelug Sect (Yellow Sect), becoming the selection mechanism for the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama.







# LAMA

## BLACK HAT SECT (70X50)

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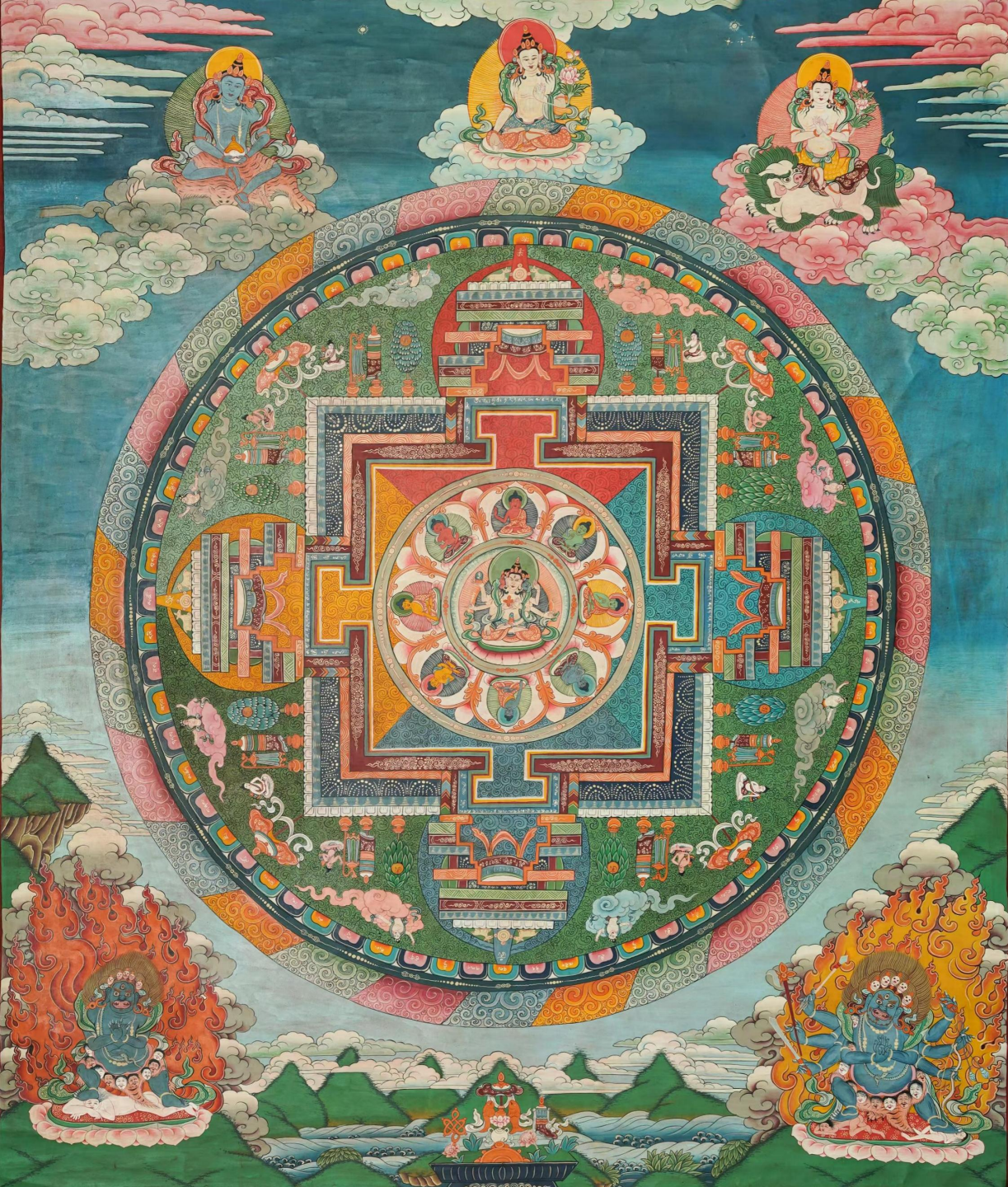
# OTHERS

PAGODA (90X65)

The pagoda and numerous Buddha statues, featuring a total of 34 Buddha images.







# OTHERS

## MANDALA (65X50)

The Mandalas are compositions primarily based on geometric shapes. A mandala refers to the palace of a Buddha, constructed in layers with circular or geometric forms from the outside to the center, with the main deity or Buddha in the center.

This Thangka represents the simplest form of a mandala.







# OTHERS

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# EMBROIDERY

DZAMHALA (120X80)

Fortune deity, Tibetan people believes this deity was born by Bodhisattva's kindness heart. One face, two arms, three eyes, sits on lotus moon.





T H A N K Y O U

