



WHAT ARE THANGKAS?

The Tibetan Buddhist cosmology is full of various forms of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, deities and other elements. Buddhist scriptures contain descriptions of these in text form. A thangka painting describes various aspects of the Buddhist cosmology in a pictorial manner by using intense colors and incredible fine details to describe the deities and the other elements.

Although thangkas are incredibly colorful and beautiful, for Tibetans the decorative aspect is only secondary. People use thangkas as a guide during prayers and meditation. For example, the Green Tara is the deity to which many people offer praise and meditate on for protection and compassion. Having a thangka of the Green Tara in front of one during the recitation of mantras or during meditation helps to visualize all her aspects which make her perfect.

A thangka painting is an integral part of the Tibetan Buddhist culture. Most Tibetan homes will have one or more thangkas, usually as a part of the altar. Thangkas come in various sizes from the huge ones found in monasteries, to others measuring only a few inches found in many humble homes. Many Tibetans are nomads and live in tents. That perhaps explain why Thangkas are painted on scrolls that can be easily rolled up during travel.

HOW CAN YOU HELP THIS PROJECT, TCEF OR THE TIBETAN CAUSE?

- Purchase one or more of the Thangkas on display. Most of this money will go directly to the artists to continue with this beautiful work. Part of it will go to TCEF to meet expenses related with this tour.
- Purchase something from our mini Tibetan bazaar - set up exclusively to help raise funds to meet expenses related to this project.
- Make a donation to TCEF to undertake similar projects aimed at raising awareness of Tibetan culture here in the West. After the Thangka Artists, we next hope to bring three Tibetan Women Carpet weavers on a similar tour.
- Pick up a Sponsorship brochure or talk to Karma about sponsoring the education of a Tibetan child in need.
- Join our mailing list and receive TCEF newsletters free, also feel free to recommend friends/relations who you think might be interested.
- Let us know about any person/organization that may be interested in hosting a similar event
- Visit www.savetibet.org, site of the International Campaign for Tibet that works to promote human rights and democratic freedom for the people of Tibet.



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Tibetan Thangka

ARTISTS EXHIBITION



TOUR 2005

WHY ARE THE THANGKA ARTISTS TOURING THE COUNTRY?

Following the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1959, around a hundred thousand Tibetans followed His Holiness The Dalai Lama into exile. The Tibetans in exile headed by His Holiness The Dalai Lama have set up a Government in- exile, established numerous monasteries and schools, and try to keep their identity and the Tibetan culture alive. The visiting Thangka artists are from the Tibetan community in exile in India. This tour is aimed at raising awareness of Tibetan art and culture here in the West. It will provide the artists opportunities to share their art and culture with many interested Americans.

WHO IS PROMOTING THIS EVENT?

This project is being promoted by the **Tibetan Children's Education Foundation (TCEF)** in collaboration with the **Feathered Pipe Foundation**, Helena, MT. This project is also supported by the **Montana Artists Refuge**, Basin, MT, where the Tibetan Thangka artists will be in residency for much of July, the **Holter Museum of Art**, Helena, MT that is holding a two month long exhibition on Contemporary Tibetan Thangka Paintings this Summer and the **Donald & Shelley Rubin Foundation**, New York, that funded travel related expenses for this project.

The Tibetan Children's Education Foundation is a non-profit corporation dedicated to the preservation of Tibetan culture by supporting Tibetan schools and school children- in- exile from their homeland. TCEF was chartered by a group of Montanans, all of whose lives have been enriched in some degree by the Tibetans, their religion or culture. Currently the focus of our activities are finding sponsors to support the education of needy Tibetan children, raising awareness of Tibetan art and culture here in the West and working on other projects vital to Tibetan children's education.

WHO ARE THE VISITING TIBETAN THANGKA ARTISTS?

All three visitors are master Thangka Artists selected from an initial pool of ten that responded to our advertisement. Brief biographies are as follows:

TSETEN DORJEE



Tseten took private lessons in Thangka Painting from the late Ven. Ngawang Norbu and later did his formal Thangka Painting studies at the Gyudmed Tantric Monastery, Mysore, India between 1980 -1986. Over the years he has developed into one of the best exponents of this art in the world today with commissions from His Holiness The Dalai Lama and the Royal Family in Sikkim. He has traveled outside of India for thangka commissions and has painted thangkas in Nepal, Bhutan and Munich, Germany. Tseten is also a gifted teacher and has been teaching now for nearly 10 years. He is on the faculty of the Naropa University Sikkim Program as a Thangka Painting instructor.

Besides his love and expertise in this traditional art, Tseten is also a successful entrepreneur and co-owns a full service travel agency that organizes tours and treks in Sikkim. He is also the founder director of a non-profit that provides medical care, education and clothing to the needy in the area.

GYURME SONAM



After a preliminary four year study, Gyurme did his formal studies in Thangka Painting at the Tibetan Thangka Painting School, Dharamsala that is run by the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamsala between 1987 -1992. After his graduation, Gyurme has completed numerous challenging commissions from top Tibetan Buddhist Monasteries in India like the Mindrol-ling Monastery at Dehra Dun and the Sherab-ling Monastery in Himachal Pradesh. His commissions included huge wall murals over 60 ft. long. Apart from his commissions in India, Gyurme has also exhibited his work in France in 2004. Currently he is the founder teacher of a Tibetan Thangka Painting School at Dharamsala, India and his personal goals center around his wish to transmit his knowledge to younger students and raising awareness of Thangka Painting and its spiritual relevance in today's world.

NGAWANG CHOEPHEL



Ngawang was born in 1970 and had his early education at Legshey primary school, in Jampaling Tibetan settlement, Nepal. He studied Thangka Painting under the famous thangka master Gyen. Sangye Yeshe at the Thangka Painting School, Dharamsala between 1987 - 1992 and graduated at the top of his class. Since then, Ngawang has completed many challenging and complex thangkas for individual patrons and various Buddhist monasteries in India , including Sherab-ling Monastery in Himachal Pradesh, Neychung Monastery, Dharamsala and the Korean Buddhist Temple at Bodh Gaya. Ngawang is currently a free lance thangka painter, but has also taught this art to both Tibetans and non-Tibetans.