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Title: Image and Imagery - Making Buddha

Abstract

The paper emphasizes on what makes the image of the *Buddha*. When an artist takes

refuge in the Triratna or 'Three Jewels' or 'Triple Gem', the artist honors Buddha

(enlightened being), Dhamma (Buddha's teachings) and Sangha (assembly) and is

reminded of their qualities. The artist now diligently works to develop or emulate

these qualities and prepares to translate them visually. By taking refuge in 'Triratna',

understanding the marks of Buddha, paramis (perfections), boddhicitta (the mind

dedicated to enlightenment), *mudras* (hand gestures), iconographic guidelines, colors

and having acquired the skills needed, an artist lays the foundation for creating the

image of the Buddha. The image of Buddha is then, nothing but 'Dhamma'

personified.

Keywords: Buddha, Iconography, Triple Gem, Painting Buddha, Buddhist Artist

Main text:

"If one wishes to honour one's favourite saint or deity, one should recollect his or her good qualities and getting inspiration from these, try to emulate them in one's life. This alone constitutes true veneration" (Khin. 2017, pp.129).

Vakkali! What is there to see in this vile body?

He who sees Dhamma, Vakkali, sees me;
he who sees me sees Dhamma.

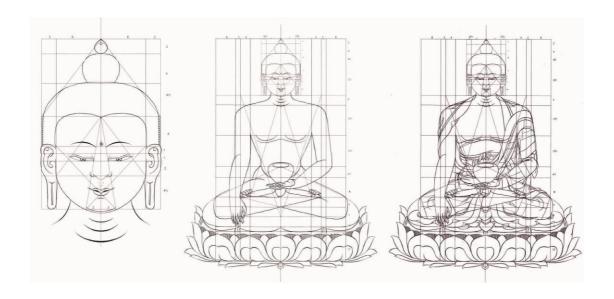
Truly seeing Dhamma, one sees me;
seeing me one sees Dhamma."

(SN 22.87 Vakkali Sutta, Translated from the Pali by Maurice O'Connell Walshe. *The Buddha visits the Ven. Vakkali, who is sick*)

"The Buddha disappears, the Law remains", - words which were spoken by the Exalted One himself at the time of his entering into Nirvana (Roerich, 1925, pp.5).

The paper consists of the following parts-

- Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha-Triratna in Buddhist Art
- Becoming a Buddha
- Origin of Buddha's image
- Thirty two Lakshana and eighty Anuvyanjara (Marks of a Great man)
- Eyes and Mudras
- Grids and iconography
- Painting Buddha
- Buddha from birth to mahaparinirvana
- Role of an artist.



"Buddhism is not a religion, it is a system of philosophy coordinated with a code of morality, physical and mental. The goal in view is the extinction of suffering and death" (Khin, 2017, pp.39).

Gautama Buddha taught Buddhism as a way of life. After attaining enlightenment, Buddha gave his first sermon at Deer Park in Sarnath, Northern India. There he delivered the Four Noble Truths; the truth of suffering, the truth of the origin of suffering, the truth of the cessation of suffering and the truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering. The Eightfold Path or Arya Ashtangika Marga, as shown by Gautama Buddha, that leads to cessation of suffering, includes practicing sila (morality), samadhi (mastery over mind) and panna (total purification of mind by wisdom and insight). He stated that suffering could be eradicated by eliminating its causes, which are ignorance, craving and aversion.

Buddhist Paintings are visual depictions of Buddhist themes and help us to choose the path of righteousness. They explain how we are responsible for our own happiness and sufferings. The episodes from the *Life of Gautama Buddha, Buddhas* of the past, present and the future, the *Boddhisattvas*, the Buddhist teachings of *Dhamma*, the 547 morality based stories related to the previous lives of Buddha called *Jataka* Tales, collection of sayings of the *Buddha Dhammapada*, *celestial beings*, *deities, mandalas* and other symbolisms became subjects in which 'Morality' found itself intricately woven and visually depicted though the medium of Painting.

According to Lhadrepa & Davis (2017) "All art achieves one of two purposes: either wisdom or worldly aims." Since Buddhist art imparts wisdom, it is hence

considered to be supreme. The accumulation of merit resulting from depicting the Buddha and sacred symbols makes art supreme. For art to be considered supreme, the artist and patron must have devotion to the Three Jewels, should have taken refuge in the Three Jewels, and generate *Bodhichitta*.

The artists, therefore, practicing the supreme arts, whether ordained or not, are no ordinary worldly beings. These artists must have, in their previous lives, accumulated a great deal of positive *karma* (*kamma*) and as a result will quickly attain enlightenment in future lives. However, if the artists practice supreme art to acquire wealth, praise, or fame, or for any other worldly reason, it is a great downfall and a source of negative karma (Lhadrepa & Davis, 2017, pp. 68).

Talking about the patrons and artists, they say that if the patron's commission art, images of *Buddhas* and religious symbols for business and profit, and even the artists produce these artworks simply for financial gains, the real meaning of supreme art is lost if both the patron and the artist consider material gain to be more important than the refuge (Lhadrepa K. & Davis C., 2017, pp. 69). If the faith and the refuge in the Three Jewels are developed, then the proper meaning of the patronage and practice of the supreme arts is maintained. Hence it is important for both the artists and patron to realize that the purpose of creating the Buddhist art is to accumulate merit for oneself and all sentient beings. When the patron makes offerings to the artist with a pure mind and a happy heart, he creates good virtues for himself or herself. Likewise if the artist executes the task given by the patron with full commitment, dedication and joyance, he or she accumulates good virtues as well.

Let us understand what does it mean by being devoted to the *Triratna* or 'Three Jewels' or 'Triple Gem' for anyone, particularly the artist. When one takes refuge in the *Triratna*, one honors *Buddha*, *Dhamma* and *Sangha* and is reminded of their qualities. The seeker or the artist now diligently works to develop or emulate these qualities. The qualities and characteristics of *Buddha*, *Dhamma* and *Sangha* are the foundations for creating the image of the *Buddha*. It benefits, the artist involved in the process of creating the image of *Buddha*, as well as it becomes an integral part of the complete image of the *Buddha* itself.

Buddha

Gautama Buddha defined a *Buddha* as follows: "A *Buddha is one who, having discriminatory knowledge of the entire field of suffering, understands the arising and passing of all miseries, is completely free form mental defilements, is pristinely pure and will not be reborn.*" Buddha is not the name of any particular person or a sect, but a set of attributes or qualities or characteristics – the nature of *Buddha* (Khin, 2017, pp. 139) describes the following qualities of Buddha as: Lord (*bhagava*), conqueror (*jina*), valorous (*mahavlra*), omniscient (*sabbannu*), truth-discoverer (*tathagata*), possessor of ten strengths (*dasa-bala*), one having exhausted all defilements (*vkhinasao*), highly compassionate (*maha-karuniko*), free from passion (*vita-rago*), free from aversion (*vita-doso*), free from delusion (*vita-moho*), free from craving (*vita-tanho*), truth-perceiver (*sacca-dasssl*), *nibbana*- perceiver (*nibbana-dassl*), Dhamma-bodied (*Dhamma-kayo*), and others. When venerating the *Buddha*, an artist should express:

Namo tassya Bhagwato arhanto samma sabuddhasayya-

Salutation to the one who is *bhagava* (an exalted being), *arhant* (liberated being), *samma sambuddha* (self-enlightened being of surpassing magnitude)!

This recognition means that one honors the qualities of enlightenment, whether possessed by *Gautama Buddha* or for that matter any other *Buddha* or *Buddhas*- of past present and future. One does not revere any particular person, but all people who have attained or will attain enlightenment (Interview with Master Locho, a renowned master Buddhist artist in the Himalayan tradition of *Thangka* painting).

Dhamma

Person who becomes a *Buddha* teaches *Dhamma* as follows: This is *sila*, this is *samadhi*, this is *panna*.

Sila includes Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood;

Samadhi constitutes of Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration; and Panna constitutes of Right Thoughts and Right Understanding.

The basis for *samadhi* (*control of the mind*, *leading to one-pointedness*) is Sila or virtuous living. *Panna* (*wisdom*) can be developed, by one, only when the *samadhi* good, *hence*, *sila* and *samadhi* are the main prerequisites for *panna*. By *panna* is meant the understanding of *anicca*(impermanence), *dukkha* (discontentment) and *anatta* (egolessness). *Hence* if *sila*, *samadhi* and *panna* is diligently practiced, the

Four Noble Truths (Truth of suffering, the Truth of origin of suffering, the Truth of extinction of suffering and the Truth of path leading to the extinction of suffering.) would be comprehended and *nibbana* would be realized. When morality, concentration and wisdom (*sila, samadhi and panna*) are properly combined in practice, one is sure to reach the goal of enlightenment or in other words, when one makes efforts and practice in right direction, one receives *Dhammadhatu*, *Bodhidhatu*, and *nibbanadhatu*(the vibration of *Dhamma*, *Bodhi* or enlightenment, and *nibbana*respectively) of the Buddha (Khin, 2017, pp. 76).

"The word "Buddha" means a person who is fully enlightened. "Dhamma" means nature. Hence, "Buddha-Dhamma" means the nature of an enlightened person." (Khin, 2017, pp. 38) Fully enlightened beings have the nature of being free from craving, aversion, and delusion. When one practices Buddha-Dhamma, one is actually working to develop in oneself the nature of a Buddha-to attain freedom from craving, aversion, delusion, and the means by which one develops this nature is the practice of sila, samadhi, panna. Thus in order to make an image of the enlightened being, an artist must have the understanding and wisdom of the Buddha-Dhamma, that is of sila, samadhi and panna. An artist must strive to have a calm and pure mind with least amount of craving, aversion and delusion.

According to Master Locho, A Buddhist painting is considered incomplete, if it is unable to communicate the teachings of *Buddha* i.e. the *Dhamma*, especially the 'Morality', which is the essence of Buddhism. An artist who creates these paintings must be familiar with the *Dhamma* and how to translate and transmit 'Morality' through visually depicting *Dhamma*. Only when the artist can assimilate *Dhamma*, he or she can depict *Buddha*, which is nothing but *Dhamma*depicted visually. A Buddhist artist is then, the one who is skilled in his art and engages in *Dhamma* to depict it visually.

Sangha

The *Sangha* comprises of those who practice *Dhamma*. Like *Buddha* and *Dhamma*, *Sangha* is also characterized by universal qualities such as: *Ahuneyyo*- Being worthy of invitation; *Pahuneyyo*- Worthy of hospitality; *Dakkhineyyo*- Worthy of offerings; *Anjali-karaniyo*- Worthy to be saluted with folded hands; *Anuttarampunnakkhettam*

- Field of merit per excellence ; Danto, santo- Temperate, tranquil ; Virajo, vimalo - Free from passion, spotless and Nippapanco - Composed, not diffused.

When one takes refuge in the Triple Gem, when one honor *Buddha*, *Dhamma* and *Sangha*, one is reminded of their qualities and works towards imbibing or developing these very qualities. "If one wishes to honour one's favourite saint or deity, one should recollect his or her good qualities and, getting inspiration from these, try to emulate them in one's life. This alone constitutes true veneration" (Khin, 2017, pp. 129).

Becoming a Buddha

In order to begin the process of bringing the image into this world, it is important to understand how one becomes a *Buddha* and how this process varied as new schools of Buddhism emerged. This understanding is of utmost importance for the artist.

Buddhas are all compassionate, glorious, and enlightened beings. Gautama Buddha is the fourth of the five Buddhas to arise in the world-cycle, which is known as a Bhadda-kappa which is considered to be an auspicious world-cycle. Kakusanda, Konagamana, and Kassapa are the Buddhas that existed before Gautama Buddha. There also have been innumerable Buddhas who arose in earlier world-cycles and preached the very same Dhamma that gives deliverance from suffering and death to all matured beings.

Many eons ago, a hermit by the name of *Sumedha* was inspired by *Buddha Dipankara* (who was *Samma Sambuddha*)—and took the vow to make all the necessary preparations to become a Buddha in the course of time. *Buddha Dipankara* made a prediction that after accumulating perfections for many eons, *Sumedha* would become a *Buddha* by the name of *Siddhartha Gautama*. *Dhuvam buhhho bhavissasi* was the declaration given by the Buddha *Dipankara* to *Sumedha*. Buddha *Dipankara* also blessed at the same time the wish of a Brahmin girl, *Sumitra* and made a prediction that she shall in many lives, when *Sumedha* would be born as *Siddhartha Gautama* of the *Shakya* Clan, would be his wife by the name of *Yashodhra*. She would learn the technique of *Vipassana* from *Siddhartha Gautama* and get liberated from the cycles of birth and death.

Through the practice of ten *paramitas* or *paramis* (virtues leading toward perfection), a *Bodhisattva* (beings that are on the path to become *Buddhas* but have delayed their enlightenment in order to help others) sets oneself on the path to become a *Buddha*. *Paramis* are defined as qualities or attributes that one must perfect to reach the final goal with ones practices. The goal is understood as the stage of total purity of mind, in order to serve all beings. These ten *paramis* eventually eradicate all impurities in the mind, help one to dissolve the ego, bring one closer to ones *Dhamma* goal and finally helps in seeking enlightenment.

The ten *paramis* are as follows: *Dana-parami*: Virtue in alms-giving (or generosity) ; *Sila-parami*: Morality ; *Nekkhamma-parami*: Renunciation ; *Panna-parami*: Wisdom ; *Viriya-parami*: Perseverance ; *Khanti-parami*: Patience ; *Sacca-parami*: Truthfulness ; *Aditthana-parami*: Determination ; *Metta-parami*: All-embracing love and *Upekkha-parami*: Equanimity.

In these ten *paramis* we see elements of the Five Precepts (Abstinence from killing, stealing, speaking lies, sexual misconduct and use of intoxicant substances) and the Noble Eightfold Path. Apart from these ten *paramis* mentioned above that are important for a *Bodhisattva* to become perfect in order to become *Buddha*, there are also ten hindrances to enlightenment. Below mentioned are the four stages of enlightenment based on how, by eliminating particular hindrances, one acquires a certain degree of *Buddha hood*.

A *Buddha* is considered to be a fully enlightened being; also called as *Arahant* in *Pali*, and has eradicated all the following ten hindrances to enlightenment that are mentioned below:

- 1. Sakkāya-ditthi The belief in a permanent personality, ego.
- 2. Vicikicchā Doubt, extreme skepticism.
- 3. Sīlabbata-parāmāso Attachment to rites, rituals, and ceremonies.
- 4. *Kāmacchando* Attachment to sense desires.
- 5. *Vyāpādo or byāpādo* Ill-will, anger.
- 6. *Rūparāgo* Craving for existence in the Form world [heavenly realms]
- 7. Arūparāgo Craving for existence in the Formless world [heavenly realms]
- 8. *Māna* Conceit.
- 9. *Uddhacca* Restlessness.

10. Avijjā - Ignorance.

(from Anguttar Nikaya 10.13).

An *Anagami*, (non-returner) has completely eradicated the first five hindrances and never returns to earth or any other world and such a person is re-born to a heavenly realm and attains enlightenment from there.

A *Sakadagami*, (once-returner) has eradicated the first three hindrances and greatly weakened the fourth and fifth; attachment to sense desires and ill-will, therefore such a person will be re-born to either the heavenly or human or realm and will hence attain enlightenment there.

A *Sotapanna*, (stream-entrant) having eradicated the first three hindrances, will be reborn no more than seven more times and re-birth will either be as a deva or a human in a heavenly realm.

With the birth of the *Bodhisattva* as King Vessantara in his 547th birth, *Bodhisattva's* preparatory period came to an end. He excelled in generosity- gave away his kingdom, his wife and children, and all his worldly possessions, for the consummation of his solemn vow taken before the Buddha *Dipankara*. The next existence was in the *Tusita* (celestial plane) as the glorious deva *Setaketu*, until he got his release from that plane of existence and thereafter took conception in the womb of queen *Maya*, the queen of King *Suddhodana* of Kapilavastu, a place near modern Nepal (VRI, n.d.)

In the Mahayana tradition, seeds of becoming *Buddha* are present in the six perfections. When one pays homage to *Boddhisattvas*, one is actually requesting their blessings in order to perfect one's cultivation of the six perfections. When one cultivates *bodhicitta* (the mind dedicated to enlightenment), one is cultivating the five DhayaniBuddhas (*Vairochana*, *Ratnasambhava*, *Amitabha*, *Amogasiddhi* and *Aksobhya*, who are purified and perfected form of the five contaminated aggregates form, feeling, perception, volition and consciousness). When the mind is pure these five aggregates are transformed into five *Celestial Buddha* or *Dhayani Buddhas* or *Five Jinas*. The 'State of Buddhahood' is the culmination of the practice of the six basic perfections.

The six perfections are: *Dana parami* - the perfection of giving; *Shila-parami* - the perfection of morality; *Kshanti-parami* - the perfection of patience; *Virya-parami* - the perfection of energy; *Dhyana-parami* - the perfection of meditation and *Prajna-parami* - the perfection of wisdom. Of these six perfections, the perfection of wisdom, is the crown of six perfections as it transforms the practice of generosity, morality, patience, energy and meditation into perfections. Perfection of wisdom, in the Mahayana tradition means, the penetrative, direct understanding of emptiness.

Perfection of six perfections results in the accomplishment of merit and knowledge. Merit is attained by the perfection of generosity, morality, patience and energy whereas the knowledge is attained by the perfection of meditation, wisdom and energy. Merit and energy results in two fold being of Buddha hood- form dimension and Truth dimension. The form dimension of Buddha takes the form of Terrestrial body (Nirmanakaya) and the Celestial body (Sambhogkaya) whereas the Truth dimension (Dharamkaya) is beyond name and form. Terrestrial form is the earthly manifestation of Buddha hood and manifests as Historical Gautama Buddha and other enlightened beings. Celestial body is manifested to spiritual advanced and manifests as heavenly *Buddhas* such as *Amitabha* and *Aksobhya* and others. The Truth dimension or the *Dhammakaya* is the absolute; the unity of all things and beings, all phenomena unmanifested. It is beyond existence or nonexistence, and beyond concepts. It is synonymous with perfect enlightenment, beyond all perceptual forms. As such it is also sometimes synonymous with the concept of *sunyata*, or "emptiness."

The *Trikaya* doctrine is a *Mahayana Buddhist* concept and dates back to about 3rd century AD, when the theory about the nature of the *Buddha* was formalized. It may be noted that *Hinayana*. *Mahayana* and *Vajrayana* are the three schools of Buddhism that emerged and influenced the Buddhist iconography and art. As Buddhism traveled to all parts of Asia it combined with the already existing cultures of those regions as well as got influenced by these cultures. One sees the varying depiction of *Buddhas* as the three schools developed. The varying images of Buddha we see in different countries is also because in the regions and countries it traveled to, it influenced the cultures of those areas and was also influenced by those cultures.

However, despite these stylistic variations, the guidelines and iconography has largely been preserved and can be traced back to its Indian roots.

To motivate mankind to develop the *paramis*, perfections, qualities or attributes have been the essence of Buddhist paintings. The Buddhist art depicts the stories related to the past and present lives of *Buddhas*, *Boddhisattvas*, *paramis* or qualities that each of the images posses the Buddhist Philosophy. It is these *paramis* that are indeed the foundation of the development of the Buddhist pantheon. *Buddha's* and *Boddhisattvas* and depiction of other Buddhist themes remind us of the qualities the deities are filled with to become enlightened. One aspires to look upon these deities and cultivate these *paramis* or perfections or qualities or attributes until one becomes filled with these qualities and become enlightened- this is seen to be one of the most elevating and benefitting purposes of creating the images in Buddhist Art.

Origin of Buddha's image

During the passing away of Buddha or the *mahaparinirvana*, as he laid down underneath the twin *sala* trees, many devotees were flocking in large numbers to pay their respects with flowers. Gods too showered celestial flowers and celestial sandalwood powder and the divine musical instrument began to be played along with the divine songs. The *Buddha*, then said to *Ananda* (Buddha's disciple) as he attended the *Buddha*:

"Ananda! A Buddha is not honoured by such showering of flowers, or the sounds of musical instruments and celestial singing! The Buddha is honoured when some monk, or nun or lay meditator establishes himself or herself on the path of the bounteous Dhamma, and begins to live a life of truth and purity. Ananda, let the people take note of this!" (Khin, 2017, pp. 127).

On another occasion, *Ananda* (*Buddha*'s disciple) asked the *Buddha*, about what must be done with His dead body to which the *Buddha* explained that the devotees would prepare a mound (*stupa*) on the remnants of the body after it is consumed by fire and would then honor it with flowers, incense, garlands etc. By these acts they will purify their minds to an extent as well as would be blessed with

happiness and would be reborn in a happy word (Khin, 2017, pp. 127). The *stupas* along with some other symbols like the feet, the palms of the hand, a *Bodhi* tree, the *Dhamma*- wheel, a parasol- were used as symbolic representation of the *Buddha*.

The origin of drawing an image of Buddha goes back to two main Indian traditions.

"The image of the Sage, Taken from a Reflection in Water." (The story of King Utrayana)

"The Radiant Sage." (The request of Princess Pearl Throne)

1. The tradition of drawing from King *Utrayana*

King *Bimbisara* wanted to present his ally, King *Utrayana*, with a painted portrait of their beloved teacher, Lord *Buddha*, but the artist could not draw while looking at him directly as he was so overwhelmed by the sight of Buddha's radiant body. When it came to *Buddha's* notice, *Buddha* took the artist to the bank of a clear and limpid pool where the *Buddha* sat by the bank of the pool while the artist sketched from the reflection on the water's surface. In this painting the central image of *Buddha* depicts extraordinary signs and marks of a *Buddha* and is surrounded by the twelve links of dependent origination. *Utrayana* received the gift with great respect and enshrined it and he and his followers were converted to Buddhism.

The style that originated from this image became known as "the Image of the Sage Taken from a Reflection in Water" (Lhadrepa & Davis, 2017 pp. 41).

2. The tradition of drawing from Princess Pearl Throne

A princess was born in *Sinkhara* (modern Sri Lanka) at the time when *Buddha* was in *Sravasti*. She was called as Pearl Throne as a shower of pearl fell from the sky at the time of her birth. On hearing some merchants singing praises to *Buddha*, Pearl Throne summoned the merchants, who explained that they were singing praises to *Buddha*. She wrote a letter to Buddha asking for something that she could use as an object or her devotion and projected the light of his body onto a canvas and told some artists to trace his portrait from the reflection. Above the image were written syllables, in gold letters, of the benefits of devotion and refuge in the 'Triple Gem' and the symbols of the twelve links of dependent origination. On receiving this painting, Princess Pearl Throne enshrined this painting and later attained Buddha hood. This is

how the style of drawing known as the Radiant Sage came about (Lhadrepa & Davis, 2017, pp. 41-43).

The origins of Buddhist sculpture in India began in India when one of *Buddha's* wealthy patrons, *Anathapindika*, while making daily offerings of the midday meal to *Buddha* and his disciples realized that *Buddha* was not always available because of his religious duties. Therefore, he requested *Buddha* his permission to commission a statue to be placed on his seat to which the *Buddha* agreed, and the statue was made by divine artists and was called the Precious Teacher. On other occasion, after *Buddha* became enlightened, he went to give sermon to his mother who was in the *Trayatrimsa* heaven (Realm of thirty three Gods) after she had passed away. Since *Buddha* was at the *Trayatrisma* heaven for three months, king *Udayana* missed him deeply and commissioned his artists to create *Buddha's* image. It is said that when the *Buddha* returned to the human realm, this statue, known as the Sandalwood Lord, took six steps in welcome. These were the world's first two statues of *Gautama Buddha*, and the many statues, thereafter, followed this model (Lhadrepa & Davis, 2017, pp. 43).

Thirty-two Lakshana and eighty Anuvyanjara (Marks of a Great man)

The *suttas* or scriptures or any other related literature such as biographies are of immense use in making an initial composition in the mind of the artist. The artist should be well trained and familiar with the related scriptures or *suttas* or any treatises with guidelines. An artist works with the wisdom that is acquired by him or her or works under a master artist or a monk with sufficient understanding about the subject. *Lakkhana Sutta* gives an account of the thirty two special marks of the Great Man (*mahāpurisa lakkhanāni*) which signify that their possessor will be either a world emperor (*Cakkavatti*) or an *Arhant*, a fully enlightened Buddha, one who draws back the veil from the world. He will become a wheel turning righteous monarch of the law, conqueror of the four quarters who has established the security of his realm and is possessed of the seven treasures, if he keeps to the household life. These seven treasures are: the Horse Treasure the Elephant Treasure, the Woman Treasure, the Jewel Treasure, the Householder Treasure, and, as seventh, the Counselor Treasure. The *sutta* states that these marks are entirely due to good deeds done in former births and can only be maintained in the present life by goodness. The *kamma* committed by

Buddha in the previous lives as human lead him to be reborn in the heavenly state and from there being reborn on earth; He acquired these thirty-two marks as a result of committing these wholesome virtues. These virtues that became the cause for these thirty- two marks are as follows:

It is said, in the description of the Buddha in *Asvaghosa's Sutralamkara*, "the thirty two *lakshana* and eighty *anuvyanjara* adorn him and make him resemble a painting."

Table.1. The thirty two, major characteristics of the *Buddha* or *lakshanas*, as specified in the *Lakkhanasutta*.

S.No	Pali	English	
1.	Supatithapado	Feet with a level sole	
2.	The thapadatalesucakkanijatani	Mark of thousand-spoked wheel on the soles of his feet	
3.	Ayatapani	Projecting heels	
4.	Dighanguli	Long fingers and toes	
5.	Mudutalahathapado	Hands and feet are soft-skinned	
6.	Jalahathapado	Netlike lines on palms and soles	
7.	Ussankhapado	High raised ankles	
8.	Enimigasadisajangho	Taut calf muscles like an antelope	
9.	Thitakovaanonamanto	His palms can touch the knees	
10.	Kosohitavatguyho	Sexual organ is concealed in a sheath	
11.	Suva n nava no	Skin is the color of gold	
12.	Sukhumacchavi	Fine and unblemished skin	
13.	Ekekalomo	Body hair are separate with one hair per pore	
14.	Uddhagalomo	Body hair are blue-black and curls clockwise in rings.	
15.	Brahmujugatto	Upright stance like that of <i>Brahma</i>	
16.	Satusado	Seven convexities of the flesh	
17.	Sihapubadhakayo	An immense torso, like that of a lion	
18.	Pitantaramso	Furrow between his shoulders is filled in and they are evenly	
		rounded	
19.	Nigrodhaparima n dalo	The distance from hand-to-hand and head-to-toe is equal	
20.	Samva d dakhando	Round and smooth neck	
21.	Rasagasagi	Sensitive taste-buds	
22.	Sihahanu	Jaw is like that of lion's	
23.	-	Forty teeth	

24.	Samadanto	Teeth are evenly spaced		
25.	Avira ladanto	Teeth are without gaps in-between		
26.	Sukadanto	Teeth are quite white		
27.	Pahutajivho	Large, long tongue		
28.	Brahmasarohiravikabhani	Voice like that of Brahma		
29.	Abhinilanetto	He has very blue eyes		
30.	Gopamukho	Eyelashes like an ox		
31.	Unalomabhamukantarejata	White soft wisp of hair or <i>urna</i> in the center of the brow		
32.	Unahisiso	Head is like a royal turban		

 Table 2. Eighty minor marks were also described in some later suttas.

S.No		S.No	
1.	He has beautiful fingers and toes.	41.	The lines on his palms are rosy tinted.
2.	He has well-proportioned fingers and	42.	The Halo of light emanating from his body
	toes.		extends, around him, up to two meters.
3.	He has tube-shaped fingers and toes.	43.	His cheek cavities are fully rounded and smooth.
4.	His fingernails and toenails have a rosy	44.	His eyelids are well proportioned.
	tint.		
5.	His fingernails and toenails are slightly	45.	The five nerves of his eyes are unblemished.
	upturned at the tip.		
6.	His fingernails and toenails are smooth	46.	The tips of his bodily hair are neither bent nor
	and rounded without ridges.		curved.
7.	His ankles and wrists are rounded and	47.	He has a rounded tongue.
	undented.		
8.	His feet are of equal length.	48.	His tongue is soft and rosy tinted.
9.	He has a beautiful gait, like that of a king	49.	His ears are long, like lotus petals.
	elephant.		
10.	He has a stately gait, like that of a king-	50.	His ear holes are beautifully rounded.
	lion.		
11.	He has a beautiful gait, like that of a	51.	His sinews and tendons do not stick out.
	swan.		
12.	He has a majestic gait, like that of a royal	52.	His sinews and tendons are deeply embedded in
	ox.		flesh.
13.	His right foot leads when walking.	53.	His topknot is like a crown.
14.	His knees have no protruding kneecaps.	54.	His forehead is well-proportioned in length and

			breadth.	
15.	He has the demeanor of a great man.	55.	His forehead is rounded and beautiful.	
16.	His navel is without blemish.	56.	His eyebrows are arched like a bow.	
17.	He has a deep-shaped abdomen.	57.	The hair of his eyebrows is fine.	
18.	He has clockwise marks on the abdomen.	58.	The hair of his eyebrows lies flat.	
19.	His thighs are rounded like banana sheaves.	59.	He has large eyebrows.	
20.	His arms are shaped like an elephant's trunk.	60.	His eyebrows reach the outward corner of his eyes.	
21.	The lines on the palms of his hands have a rosy tint.	61.	His skin is fine throughout his body.	
22.	His skin is thick or thin, as it should be.	62.	There are abundant signs of good fortune on his body	
23.	His skin is unwrinkled.	63.	His body is always radiant.	
24.	His body is spotless and without lumps.	64.	His body is always as fresh as a lotus flower.	
25.	His body is unblemished, above and below.	65.	His body is exquisitely sensitive to touch.	
26.	His body is absolutely free of impurities.	66.	His body has the scent of sandalwood.	
27.	He has the strength of 1,000 crore elephants or 100,000 crore men.	67.	His body hair is consistent in length.	
28.	He has a protruding nose.	68.	He has fine bodily hair.	
29.	His nose is well-proportioned.	69.	His breath is always fine.	
30.	His upper and lower lips are equal in size and have a rosy tint.	70.	His mouth always has a beautiful smile.	
31.	His teeth are unblemished and have no plaque.	71.	Scent of a lotus flower invariably present in his breath.	
32.	His teeth are long, like polished conches.	72.	The colour of his hair is like that of a dark shadow.	
33.	His teeth are smooth and without ridges.	73.	His hair is strongly scented.	
34.	His five sense-organs are unblemished.	74.	The fragrance of his hair is like that of a white lotus flower.	
35.	His four canine teeth are crystal and rounded.	75.	He has curled hair.	
36.	His face is long and beautiful.	76.	His hair does not turn grey.	
37.	His cheeks are radiant.	77.	He has fine hair.	
38.	The lines on his palms are deep.	78.	His hair is untangled.	

39.	The lines on his palms are long.	79.	His hair has long curls.	
40.	The lines on his palms are straight.	80.	His topknot is as if crowned with a royal flower	
			garland	

Eyes and Mudras

Let us now understand how *Buddha's* eyes can be drawn as well as what qualities the hand mudras associated with Him, symbolize as both expression of eyes and mudras form an important part of *Buddha's* image.

Buddhas eyes can be both, full open or half open. Many Buddhas, including the Gautama Buddha, are depicted with meditative eyes. These eyes are drawn with a slight upward curve and a bow in the upper eyelid. Such meditative eyes are unique for having an inward look and depict peace, benevolence, transcendence, equanimity and having equal concern for all. As stated in Dhamma- it is important to look within in order to reach nibbanna. The Buddhas, Boddhisattvas, Goddesses, celestial beings and other deities can have meditative eyes. Full open eyes are also common among peaceful male and female deities.



Mudras: *Buddha's* hands are shown in symbolic hand gestures called *mudras*. Monks also use *mudras* in practice to appeal to deities, these gestures are primarily found in Buddhist iconography. Below are mentioned the mudras used by *Buddhas*.

S.No.	Mudras	Description
1.	NPP)	Indicates benevolence, protection, peace, and
	(Mark)	dispelling of fear.
	Abhaya Mudr	a

2.		Represents the earth as being witness to
		Buddha's enlightenment at Bodh Gaya under
		the <i>Bodhi</i> tree.
	Bhumisparsha Mudra	
3.	Mon	Depicts Buddha's first sermon after his
		enlightenment in Deer Park in
	(Harry	Sarnath.Dhammachakra also means the
	Di Li Mi	turning of 'Wheel of Law'.
	Dhammachakra Mudra	22
4.		Indicates charity, giving, offering, welcome,
		and compassion.
	Varada Mudra	
5.	allo allo	Gesticulation of communication and discussion
		of Buddhist teachings and symbolizes the
		mystical gesture of Boddhisattvas or other
	Vitarka Mudra	Goddesses.
6.	v narka muara	Tu disease veneration
0.		Indicates veneration.
	Anjali Mudra	
7.	,	Gesticulation of meditation.
/ .		Secretarion of medianion.
	Dhuana Mudua	
	Dhyana Mudra	

Grids and Iconography

During the training process, an artist goes through the rigorous process of mastering the deities and their particular grids very religiously and strictly. If even one line in the network is placed inaccurately, the entire image shall be incorrect and unacceptable. Although a student needs to refer to the grids even after many years of training, a master with decades of experience gradually ceases to use the grids and draws with free hand. A student requires an intense amount of dedication, hard work, attention to details and an absolute surrender to Buddhist traditions and masters, to

master this skill. Master Locho, explains how, in order to create grids for a particular deity, *Gautama Buddha* in this case, a paper scale is needed, Using a sheet of paper, cut out a strip measuring 8 inches by ½ inch. The paper scale is now ready and one can now mark the units by using simple mathematics.

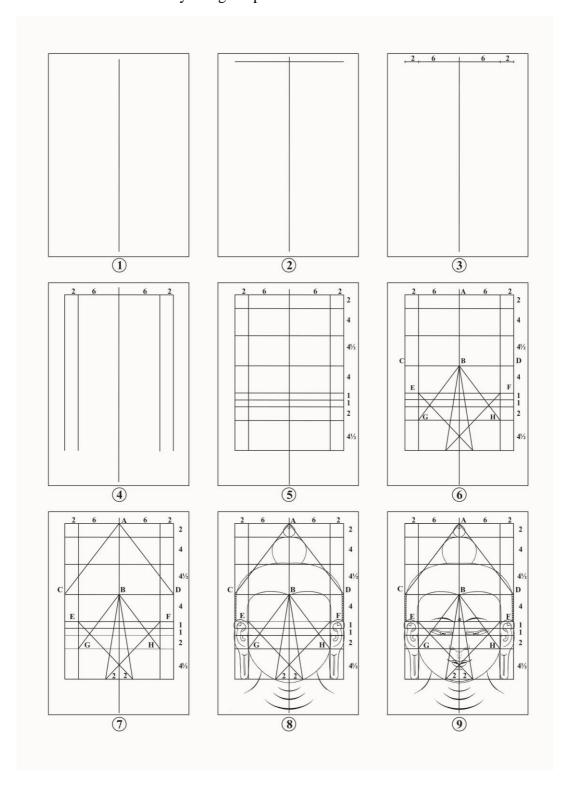


Figure 2 shows few instructions an artist follows in order to begin to draw the grids related to the drawing of Gautama Buddha.

- 1. With a ruler draw a central axis (vertical line) dividing the page equally.
- 2. Leave two inches from the top of the page, and with the help of the ruler draw a horizontal line that will cut the central axis at a 90 degree angle.
- 3. Next you will be using your paper scale to divide the horizontal line. Using the point of intersection as your starting point, mark six units on the right side of the central axis. Next use the six unit mark as your starting point and mark a point measuring two units. Repeat this entire process on the left side of the vertical line. Now your horizontal line has been divided into four sections with the central axis dividing the sections equally on both sides.
- 4. Place your paper scale on the points marked on the horizontal line and extend these points vertically down to the bottom of your page. Upon culmination of this process you should have five vertical lines running from top to bottom on the page.
- 5. Using your paper scale divide the outermost vertical lines on either side of the central axis into eight sections measuring 2, 4, 4 .5, 4, 1, 1, 2 and 4.5 units (from top to bottom) and connect the units marked on the outermost vertical lines so that you have eight parallel lines running across the page (not including the horizontal line you drew in step no. 2).
- 6. On the bottom most horizontal line mark two points measuring two units on either of the central axis and join these points to point B. Now extend two further diagonal lines joining point B with point G and H respectively.
- 7. Next connect points C and D to point A as shown in the figure.
- 8. Now your grid is ready and you can begin by drawing the cranial protuberance and the head of the *Buddha*, followed by the outline of his face and then the ears.
- 9. Continue to draw other parts, such as the eyes, nose, lips, chin and finally the neck. Finish by drawing curls of hair covering the head and cranial protuberance as shown in the figure.

Similarly grids are also created in order to create Buddha's body and thereafter apply robes (Refer to Fig 1). This process in applied to other deities including Goddesses, wrathful and other images.

Painting Buddha



After Buddha passed away, his cremated relics were divided into parts and placed under layers of bricks and stones arranged in semispherical structures called *Stupas*. *Stupa* is also seen as a formless form of Buddha. *Stupas*, *chaityas* and *viharas* are known to be the earliest Buddhist architectural structures that were elaborately

decorated with Buddhist paintings and sculptures. The *chaityas* means the worship place and *viharas* the residences or the monasteries. With the introduction of Rock cut caves in India, the wall paintings and murals reached new heights. Buddhist miniature paintings were also made on palm leaf manuscripts. *Chitrapata* or the scroll paintings were also created in order to spread the Buddhist doctrines. The paintings found at the rock cut caves at Ajanta in Maharashtra, are seen as the greatest treasure mankind has ever produced. It is from here that the tradition spread to all the countries of Asia.

From the period between eighth to the twelfth century AD, the Tibetan rulers invited the Buddhist teachers and artists from the region of Bihar, India, to Tibet. They carried with them the palm leaf manuscripts, paintings and other artifacts. Artists were also invited from Kashmir to paint the monasteries and temples in Tibet that were created around the 10th century onwards. With the movement of artists, traders and pilgrims Buddhist paintings developed, evolved and flourished in Tibet. In Tibet, when these paintings were made on canvas and mounted with silk brocade, they came to be known as *Thangka* paintings; *Thangka* meaning scroll. *Thangka* paintings that emerged in Tibet, are seen as a continuum of the Buddhist paintings that developed in India. These paintings could be rolled and carried from one place to another with ease. During this process these paintings were influenced by the neighbouring styles of China, Khotan, Kashmir, Nepal and Central Asia. Tibetans became the custodians of these paintings and preserved them, for over 1000 years, especially at the time when Buddhism was at a decline in India.

The following information on the artist and creating Buddha's painting is collected from *Master Locho*, a renowned Buddhist artist trained in Himalayan tradition of *Thangka* painting. *Thangka* paintings are based on Indian guidelines and are seen as the continuum of Buddhist paintings that were created in India.

"In order to make a painting of Buddha, an artist prepares a canvas by stretching cotton cloth on a wooden frame and covering the canvas with a gesso ground. Once the canvas is prepared, the eight lines of orientation; the vertical axis, horizontal axis, and four outer borders are created. Drawings that are to be transferred to the canvas are either directly drawn on the canvas or are drawn on the paper, first, using grids and then transferred onto the canvas. After the deity and the background

are perfected, they are finalized in ink. After the application of colors, the artist begins preparations for the next important step, which is shading. Once paint is applied to the canvas, areas are outlined using natural dark inks, dyes or pigments. Gold is used to create intricate repeating designs in the brocades of the robes as well as in many other objects. Using gold in a painting is considered auspicious and is a symbolic offering to the painted deity or depicted theme. Once the sketch has been transferred to the canvas and the painting is complete, the master will "open the eyes" of the deity. The eyes are always depicted with eyes half closed, symbolizing an inward vision. It is during this final stage of the painting in which the artists give life and soul to the deities. Once the deity's eyes are completed the master or artists will write "om, ah, hum" often on the back of the painting, behind the deity's forehead, throat, and heart. The mind, speech, and body of the deity is represented by this. After this step is completed, the painting is mounted on hand woven silk brocade and a Lama or Buddhist monk consecrates it" (Master Locho).

Colors have a very symbolic meaning and color application is an integral step. There are six basic mineral pigments used to create a full-color painting. The blue used for the sky and water is commonly made from azurite, but sometimes, the costlier pigment, ultramarine (powdered lapis lazuli) is used to color these blue areas. Malachite is used to create green, while cinnabar is used to create both red and vermillion. In order to create a rich yellow pigment, orpiment is ground, and white earth (calcium carbonate or chalk) is used to create white paint (Jackson & Jackson, 1998, pp. 75-82). Large areas are generally completed first, followed by the application of lighter colors, and then shading with darker colors. When working, the artist applies one color at a time everywhere it is needed, throughout the painting. The most important areas, such as the body and face, are completed last. The following table states symbolic meaning of colors or the attribute it may represent particularly when assigned or applied to the body of *Buddha*.

Buddha	Mudra	Color	Attribute
Gautama Buddha	Bhumisparsha (earth witness)	Gold,	Radiance, Wisdom
		Chrome	
Bhaiasjyaguru	Dhyana (contemplation) and other mudras.	Blue	Master of Lapiz Lazuli. Healing

Vairochana	Dhammachakka (teaching)	White	Shining One
Amoghasiddhi	Abhaya (reassurance)	Green	Unfailingly Accomplished
Amitabha	Dhyana (contemplation)	Red	Infinite Light
Ratnasanbhava	Varada (charity)	Yellow	Precious Birth
Aksobhaya	Bhumisparsha (earth witness)	Blue	Unshakable

Buddha from birth to mahaparinirvana

We notice image of Buddha varying in its depiction when an artist draws the episodes from the life of Gautama Buddha. The episodes of Buddha's life are highly symbolic of the meaning behind his teachings and have been depicted visually in the form of paintings and sculptures by the artists, for centuries to teach the Law of the *Dhamma*. Each episode in the Life of Buddha expresses some 'Morality' when these are depicted visually and are clearly reflected in the form of his hand gestures or mudras, posture, eyes, color, robes, major and minor marks and some other features.

Although no single authenticated account of the Buddha's life survives, several Sanskrit texts are considered as reliable sources of which the *Lalitavistara*, the *Buddhacharita*, and the *Mahavastu*are significant. These sources inspire works of art in which Buddha's life was depicted into four, eight, or twelve events; other representations may include additional scenes as well. Eight Episodes form Gautama Buddha life, were particularly popular in ancient India, depicted either as separate scenes or grouped into a single composition. These eight episodes are: the Birth, the Defeat of Mara and Enlightenment, the First Sermon in *Sarnath*, the Display of Supernatural Powers, the Descent from the *Trayastrimsha* Heaven, the Taming of the Elephant *Nalagiri*, the Offering of Honey, and the *Parinirvana*or Final Extinction of the *Buddha*. Buddha can also be depicted in twelve or thirteen episodes in the Buddhist paintings that are as follows: Conception, Birth, Early Life, Young Adulthood, Renunciation, Attack of *Mara*, Enlightenment, First Sermon at Deer Park, Twin Miracle at *Sravasti*, Decent from *Tavatimsa*, Taming the Elephant, Monkey's Gift of Honey and *Mahaparinirvana* - Death

It is understood that image of Buddha during birth would look like a baby while in his adolescent as a young boy and later as a man and post *nibbana* like an enlightened being. However even when depicted as baby, young boy and a man, He

cannot be depicted as an ordinary human being as He already lived 547 former lives, as a *Bodhisattva*, before being born as Prince *Siddhartha Gautama*. In all the 547 lives He was born as a *Bodhisattva*, and fulfilled all conditions to become a *Buddha* in His 548th life born as Prince *Siddhartha Gautama*.

An artist must always ensures that the artwork created is beautiful, divine and motivating enough to inspire the viewer or practitioner to have a dip in the holy *Dhamma* and encourage them to lead a life full of moral values. The paintings should have a clear message reflected through its visual depiction.

Role of an artist

A 'Buddhist Artist' – is a kind and a compassionate being, devoted to and takes refuge in the *Triratna* (Triple Gem- *Buddha*, *Dhamma* and *Sangha*), emulates, translates, transmits and disseminates these qualities of *Buddha*, *Dhamma* and *Sangha*. He or she is silent, anonymous, devoted and pious; he or she keeps his space and tools sacred; has acquired knowledge about related scriptures and has acquired all skills related to the creation of a painting. He or she has mastered the iconographic guidelines, grids and other steps in the creation of a complete artwork from the preparation of canvas to transfer of the drawing to the application of colors, shading and outlining, to applying pure gold details to the opening of eyes and finally to the consecration of the artwork. (It is to be noted that opening of the eyes means life and soul is given to the image and the artwork is alive after opening of the eyes and the final consecration) (Master Locho).

An artist is a medium through which the images are revealed into this world. An artist is very closely associated with his or her master. "Learning from a master is more like a natural flow where the student learns mostly by being in the company of the master." says Master Locho. A master, according to him, feels responsible to nurture and bring the best in every student. The student completely submits himself or herself to the master with utmost faith in him. Sometimes students spend their entire life in the tutelage of the master, learning and growing each day until he or she becomes the master. It takes 5 to 10 years to become an accomplished artist and almost a lifetime to become a master.

As the artist acquires skills and complete mastery over the iconography, grids, techniques of mixing colors, techniques of the application of colors and other steps in the creation of a painting from the preparation of canvas to transfer of the drawing to the application of colors, shading and outline, to applying pure gold details to the opening of eyes; to the consecration of the artwork—at each step a piece of cloth is being transformed to a divine image with the application of mineral pigments, pure gold and the artists devotion. One painting may take several days, months or years to complete and an artist can only practice his patience, dedication and knowledge.

An artist is aware of his selfless, anonymous role while he paints the image of a Buddha. An artist is also aware of his role as a creator, giving life and soul to the divine images and bringing them into this world. An artist is expected to keep his mind pure and free from any negativity. For the artists everything is sacred, hence the artists worship their tools and even meditate upon the images that are to be created. Artists can be monks or nuns or even lay people.

The mind of the artist must be pure, and in order to accomplish this, an artist must walk on the path of *Dhamma*- morality, concentration, and wisdom (*sila*, *samadhi* and *panna*). An artist must commit good deeds of body, speech and mind and by practicing *Vipassana* meditation as taught by Gautama, the *Buddha*, an artist learns to have a peaceful and calm mind. By meditating one learn to be equanimous with an understanding of *anicca* (impermanence). By developing *anicca-vijjā* (the wisdom of impermanence), an artist steps out of misery and tastes the true nature of *Dhamma*- much needed for an artist while creating images related to Buddhist themes, particularly Buddha. An artist familiarizes himself or herself with the iconographic rules and guidelines that are distinct for deities, celestial beings, Gods and Goddesses, human beings etc. An artist must master the techniques related to drawing, inking, coloring, shading, outlining, applying gold and opening of eye meaning giving life and soul to the painting. He understands that his pallet with colors is incomplete without morality that goes into creation of each of the artwork.

In order to keep his or her mind pure, an artist must abstain from killing, stealing, speaking lies, sexual misconduct, slandering, back-biting, use of intoxicant substances, anger and passion. Leading a life of living-kindness, compassion,

sympathetic joy and equanimity is important to maintain a pure and peaceful mind. To work endlessly for the benefit of all and understand that there is no "I," "mine," "my soul" and that everything is impermanent- *annica*.

An artist through his work shows the world that how rare and precious it is to obtain a human birth, so human life should not be wasted; it should be used properly. One should aim to accumulate immense merit by walking on the path of *Dhamma*, as shown by *Buddha*. It is only by walking on the path of morality, concentration, and wisdom (*sila*, *samadhi* and *panna*) and by committing good deeds of body, speech, and mind that one becomes closer to *nibbana*.

Buddhist Paintings are transformative in nature for the artists, for the patron and for anyone who views or meditates upon it. An artist and a patron have a close relationship- if it is not for the patron's support not all artworks can come into existence in this world. The Artist's, work in close proximity with the patron or patrons, who are mostly rulers, nobles, rich, groups or individuals.

Conclusion

The paper enhances our understanding on the guidelines, an artist needs to abide by as he or she creates the image of Buddha. The artist must take refuge in the *Triratna* or 'Three Jewels', which means that the artist honors *Buddha* (enlightened being), *Dhamma* (*Buddha's* teachings) and *Sangha* (assembly) and is reminded of their qualities. The artist then patiently and diligently works to emulate these qualities of *Buddha*, *Dhamma* and *Sangha*, and prepares to translate them visually. The paper also helps to develop an understanding on how these qualities of *Buddha*, *Dhamma* and *Sangha* along with other guidelines such as the 32 major marks and eighty minor marks of *Buddha*, *paramis* (perfections), *boddhicitta* (mind of enlightenment), *mudras* (hand gestures), iconographic guidelines, colors and the skills that the artists acquire with time, lays the foundation for creating the image of the *Buddha*. The image of Buddha is then, nothing but '*Dhamma*' personified. The paper is important in establishing an inseparable relationship between the patron, the artist and the artwork.

Brief Biography

Sarika Singh is a master *Thangka* Artist, teacher and co-founder of Center for Living Buddhist Art. She began her studies in the art of *Thangka* painting at the prestigious Norbulingka Institute in Dharamshala, Northern India. She completed her Masters degree in Buddhist and Tibetan studies from Punjab University, and is currently pursuing her PhD from Central University Himachal Pradesh. The 'Center for Living Buddhist Art' includes the Museum of Himalayan Arts, Buddhist Art School and a practicing Art Studio. The aim of this one of a kind center is to keep the ancient art of depicting Buddhist themes alive in our contemporary world.

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Figure Legends:

Figure 1.Image of Buddha. (Drawing by Master Locho)

Figure 2: Steps in the creation of Buddha face. (Drawing by Master Locho)

Figure 3.Painting of Buddha. (Painting by Master Locho and photo by Sarika Singh)