

## Tibetan Thangka Painting

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Tibetan collection by traveller historian Rahul Sankrityayan to stay at old Patna museum.



[ref-Wikipedia]

### **About Tibetan Thangka Painting:**

- A thangka is a Tibetan Buddhist painting on **cotton, silk appliqué**, usually depicting a **Buddhist deity, scene, or mandala**.
- They could be **woven, embroidered, or appliquéd**, showcasing varied artistic techniques in their creation.
- They are traditionally stored **unframed, rolled up** when not displayed, mounted on a textile backing resembling **Chinese scroll paintings**, and often covered with silk on the front.
- Thangkas, when **treated carefully**, can last a long time.
  - However, due to their **delicate nature**, it's essential to **store them in dry** places to

**prevent moisture from compromising the silk quality.**

- While most thangkas are relatively **small**, similar to a **Western half-length portrait**, some can be exceptionally large, measuring several meters in each dimension.
  - These larger thangkas are intended for brief **displays on monastery walls** during **religious festivals**.
- Thangkas commonly **feature intricate compositions** with **numerous small figures**.
- In thangkas, a **central deity** is frequently encircled by **other identified figures** within a symmetrical composition.
  - Although **narrative scenes** are less common, they do make occasional appearances.

#### **Utility of Thangkas:**

- Thangkas were primarily designed for **personal meditation** or **instructing monastic students**.
- Thangkas serve as **vital teaching tools**, illustrating the **life of the Buddha**, influential **lamas**, **deities**, and **bodhisattvas**.
- They often include subjects like the **Wheel of Life** (Bhavachakra), a visual representation of **Abhidharma teachings**, known as the **Art of Enlightenment**.