

Analysis on the Origin of the Dharma Protector Panjarnata (the Lord of Pavilion) and Its Artistic Features

Taking the Thangka of Panjarnata Collected in the Potala Palace as an Example

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Abstract—As an important part of the Tibetan Buddhism, the Esoteric Buddhism has been keeping a mysterious color in the long history and has become enduring. Till now, people can find the relics or the picture or statue of the Buddha related to the Esoteric Buddhism, or musical instruments used by Buddhist, or ancient books and records of ritual, or the precious Yidam of Vajrayana and Thangka of dharma protectors in every corner of Tibet. All of them have shown the Esoteric Buddhism is obviously prevailing in the Tibet region. On the basis of the exquisite and precious Thangka of Panjarnata in the Esoteric Buddhism collected in the Potala Palace, this paper tries to explain the relevant history of the dharma protector Panjarnata and the artistic value of its Thangka. However, the Esoteric Buddhism is the highest level of Buddhism, so it is difficult for common people to explain its secret in detail. We aim at exploring its value from the perspective of artworks and better providing the communication platform for the research on the precious Thangka collected in the Potala Palace.

Keywords—Panjarnata; Thangka; the Potala Palace

I. INTRODUCTION

In The History of Buddhism in India and Tibet, it records, “People in Tibet believed in this religion from Nyatri Tsenpo in the past and it had been passed down for twenty-six generations. When it was passed down to the 27th generation Latuotuori Zanwang, the Karandavyuha Sutra, the Sutra of Confession and the moulage of om mani padme hum (the six-syllabled Sanskrit mantra particularly associated with the four-armed Shadakshari form of Avalokiteshvara) appeared very unexpectedly. The Buddha appeared first in the Yongbu Lagang Palace.” [1] The dissemination of Buddhism on the snow-covered plateau has developed enormously since then. In the history of more than one thousand years, Buddhism has become the major ideological school and mainstream consciousness in the Tibetan area. The Buddhism originates from India. At the earliest, it absorbed the quintessence of various religions including Hinduism that were prevailing in the ancient India at that time. In addition, it combined with its unique ideology and became a distinct religious sect. The all-inclusive deity system, the rigorous logic and the tolerance of

the worldly affairs related to leniency and so on have become the important parts of Buddhism. The all-inclusive deity system of Buddhism or the so-called dharma protectors have become the most mysterious link that is most difficult for people to explore. After the Buddhism is disseminated enormously in Tibet, the mysterious deity systems are brought to the snow-covered plateau by people and gradually combine with the local religion and the ritual of worship ceremony, so the deity system of Tibetan Buddhism with the characteristics of Tibet appears. For example, in the Discussion on the Doctrine of Sects of Tibetan Buddhism and the Esoteric Buddhism, it records, “In order to stand firm in Tibet, the Buddhism has conformed to the habits of belief of local Tibetan people at that time, and some contents for consecrating and sacrificing in the local religion are included in the lower three secret laws of Buddhism.” [2] When the Buddhism has been in a period of great prosperity and form various flourishing sects of Buddhism, different sects invite and embrace the dharma protectors from India at that time, or subdue the original and local deities in Tibet and let them become the dharma protectors of Buddhism sects, in order to let them assume the responsibility of protecting the proper dharma and lustrating the evil. On the basis of the precious Thangka of the Panjarnata from the Sakya of Tibetan Buddhism collected in the Potala Palace, this paper is designed to explain the origin of this dharma protector, the dissemination in Tibet and the artistic features of Thangka.

II. THE ORIGIN OF MAHAKALA (DHARMA PROTECTOR)

First of all, the meaning of the dharma protector in the Tibetan Buddhism is recorded in the Deities and Ghosts of Tibet in this way, “According to the shared idea of different sects of the Tibetan Buddhism, dharma protectors protect Buddha dharma from the harassment of demons; the maintenance of the perfection of Buddhist doctrines has been confirmed as the responsibility of important deities, and these deities are dharma protectors.” [3] The Panjarnata mentioned here is also an important part of the various dharma protectors in Buddhism. According to the record in the Origin of the Dharma Protectors in Tibet (བོད་རྒྱུང་ལུང་མཁའ་ལག་གི་ལོ་རྒྱུས།), “Mahakala is

divided into seventy-five kinds of deity systems, and the common such as the six-armed Mahakala, the four-faced Mahakala, Maning, Panjarnata and four-armed Mahakala, etc.”[4] In the Deities and Ghosts of Tibet, it records, “According to the classification method, it is thought there are seventy-two or seventy-five kinds of the figure of Mahakala in the Tibetan image-making literature.” Obviously, the Panjarnata belongs to Mahakala (ནག་པོ་ཆེན་པོ་འཛམ་གཏིན་པོ།). The approximate period when the dharma protectors of this kind were disseminated to Tibet was the after-revival period of the Tibetan Buddhism. It is recorded in the Origin of the Dharma Protectors in Tibet, “The four-faced Mahakala was first disseminated to Tibet by Nian Lotsawa (གཞན་ལོ་སྟོན་པ་ལྷ་མོ།). Nian Lotsawa Damazha stayed in India for seven years, during which he practiced all the rituals of this Mahakala with great concentration. Before long he returned to Tibet via Burang (བུ་རྩེ་དང་།) with five hundred merchants.”[5] After returning to Tibet, Nian Lotsawa gradually spread the ritual related to the four-faced Mahakala to Tibet and became an important dharma protector of Tibet. It is recorded in the Origin of the Dharma Protectors in Tibet, “Nian Lotsawa passed on to his disciple Kavudama Gyaltzen (ཁུ་བུ་དམ་མཁུ་མ་མཚན།), who passed on to Sacha Gunganib (the head of the five Sakya progenitors). Since then, in the Sakya, the Panjarnata is called the large Mahakala, while the four-faced Mahakala is called the small Mahakala. The two Mahakalas are respected as the major dharma protectors of the Sakya.”[6] Besides, the four-faced Mahakala has a tremendous influence on the other sects of the Tibetan Buddhism such as Nyingma and Kargyu. The four-armed Mahakala was first brought in Tibet in Ga Lotsawa and gradually became the important Yidam of all sects. For example, it is recorded in the Dharma Protectors in Tibet, “Abayya Ghusada (ཨ་བུ་ལྷ་མོ།) in India passed down to Ga Lotsawa (ཀ་ལོ་སྟོན།) in Tibet. Ga Lotsawa passed it down to Gongtang Lama Xiangzunzhuizhaba (གུང་ཐང་ལ་མ་འཛམ་གཏིན་ལཱ་མཚན་གྲགས་པ།), who handed it down to the great stylite Linbajiare (ལྷོ་བོ་མཚན་ལཱ་མཚན་པ་ལྷ་མོ།). In the period of the first Dalai Lama Gengdunzhu, the special danapati relationship appeared.”[7] It also became the important Yidam deity of Kargyu and Gelug. The above four-faced Mahakala and the four-armed Mahakala and the Panjarnata discussed in this paper belong to the series of Mahakala. Nevertheless, after being brought in Tibet, unlike other Mahakalas mentioned above, the Panjarnata neither was disseminated widely nor became the dharma protector worshiped by all sects of the Tibetan Buddhism. It has a direct relationship with the practice ritual of the whole Esoteric Buddhism, and it is difficult for ordinary person to correctly explain the secret of the ritual in Esoteric Buddhism, so we can only rely on some simple written records to solve relevant problems.

How was the Panjarnata as the unique dharma protector worshiped by the Sakya in the Tibetan Buddhism spread to Tibet? It is recorded in the Penance Beacon — the Biography of the Great Lotsawa Rin-chen Bzan-po (ལོ་སྟོན་པོ་ཆེན་པོ་འཛམ་གཏིན་པོ་དཀའ་བློ་རྒྱུད་རྒྱུ་མཚན།) written by Gugeqitang Babaiyixi (གུ་གེ་ཉི་མཚན་པ་དཔལ་ལཱ་ཤེས།), “Miwutong (མི་ལུ་ཐུང་།) (a figure of a dharma protector, often in the shape of a short person) suddenly appears. The Mahakala who holds Ganzhi (གན་མི།) (hardwood clappers or Damu, the musical instrument used by

the Panjarnata) in both hands is in a blue funk. The Yidams of Hevajra and Chakrasamvara appear gradually and clearly from it. The great lotsawa asks them to assume the responsibility of guarding the Buddha dharma. Since then, the great lotsawa Rin-chen Bzan-po often sees the Panjarnata himself, and before long invites and welcomes the dharma protector in Tibet which is located in the snow-covered plateau. He has made great contributions to carry forward Buddhism.”[8] With the dissemination by the great lotsawa Rin-chen Bzan-po, the Panjarnata gradually becomes prevailing in Ali. However, it takes a relatively long period of time for the dissemination of the dharma protector in the core area of Tibet. After entering Tibet at that time, the master Attisha had a dialogue on Buddha dharma with the great lotsawa Rin-chen Bzan-po who was nearly ninety years old in Tolin Monastery of Ali. After three years, the master Attisha led his disciples to leave for Ü-Tsang, “when they came to the peak of Zhongwula (འབྲོང་རྒྱུ་ལ།) (within the territory of Sakya), he looked at Wenbu Mountain (the place in which the Sakya Monastery was located) and said two Mahakalas (མ་ལྷ་ལྷ་ལ།) (Auspicious Mahakala) would be born and carry forward Buddha dharma in this place, and they should be the Yidam of the Panjarnata and the four-faced Mahakala.”[9] Obviously, in about the 11th century when the master Attisha entered Tibet, he did not disseminate the Panjarnata and relevant rituals in Sakya. However, the five masters of Sakya and the initial inheritors of the Sakya all obeyed the inheritance of new esotericism of the great lotsawa Rin-chen Bzan-po in Ali. For example, it is recorded in the Biography of La Lama Yixiwo written by Zhaba Jianzan, “The disciples of the great lotsawa are Jiexia (ཇི་ཇི།), Zajiaba (རྩ་ཇི་ཇི།), Zengba (ཇེང་ཇི།) and the five masters of Sakya.”[10] It is described in the Origin for the Religious Development in Tibet, “Kun Gunque Jiebu was born in the year of the wooden dog in lunar calendar used by the Zang nationality (in 1034 A.D.) and the birthplace was Yalongda. He heard about the initial approach to become a Buddhist believer in the old esotericism from his father and his elder brother Kun Ruoxierecuicheng (ཁུ་རུ་མི་རུ་ཅུ་ཅི་ཅེང་།) and then learned the new and old esotericisms and quantity theory from lotsawa and Pandita such as the masters of the new esotericism Zhuomi Sakyaesi (ཇུ་མོ་སྐུ་ཤེས།), lotsawa Bari (བའི་ལོ་སྟོན།), lotsawa Mang (མཚན་ལོ་སྟོན།), lotsawa Burang (བུ་རྩེ་ལོ་སྟོན།) and Nankuba (ནག་མཁུ་ལོ་སྟོན།).”[11] It is evident that the lotsawas mentioned in the record have a relationship with the great lotsawa Rin-chen Bzan-po in Ali, so this paragraph is completely conformed to the above records. We can make an assertion that the establishment and the worship of the sole dharma protectors in the various Sakya including the Panjarnata should originate from the great lotsawa Rin-chen Bzan-po and has achieved great development in the period of the five masters of the Sakya.

III. THE EVOLUTION OF THE ARTISTIC FORM OF THE PANJARNATA



Fig. 1. The Panjarnata in the early period.

With the continuous advancement of the artistic research on the Tibetan Buddhism, people have systematically classified the statue building in Buddhism, the form, school and style of painting. For example, the statue building has been in total divided into the style in the Gandhara period, the style in the Swart period, the Indian style, the Nepalese style, the Kashmir style and the early Tibetan style and the Central Plain style, etc. The characteristics of statue building can reflect the contents of painting at that time. In other words, the contents shown by statue building and painting in a certain period should supplement each other. The statue building and the painting in Ali area in the 11th and 12th centuries had been affected by the Kashmir style at that time. It is recorded in the History of Painting in the Tibetan Buddhism, “The art of painting in western Tibet was once prosperous between the 10th century and the 13th century and revealed an explicit regional features. The influence of Indian art is seen, but more obviously, it was permeated by the Kashmir painting style.”[12] Specifically, it is the same for the forms of artistic presentation of the Panjarnata, and the same technique of expression exists. For example, on the form of artistic presentation, the Panjarnata in the early period was shaped into the appearance with ferocious features by people to the utmost extent, such as “Patron saints are important deity of the dharma protectors in Tibetan Esoteric Buddhism. He has a fat and short stature and looks fierce, with a big head, blue skin and wears a tiger-skin skirt and holds a skull bowl and iron rod.”[13] The narration of the description has not achieved the academic rigor, but according to the attached picture in “Fig. 1”, we can clearly see the description of the Panjarnata in about the 12th century was obviously influenced by the mainstream school or style of art

at that time, such as the curve of the main part is excessively stiff and little tension exists for the facial expression, which were exactly the same as the Kashmir style in the 11th and 12th centuries. But the style of shaping and depicting was considerably different from that in the later period of the Tibetan area. The formation of this unique artistic style must have certain historical origin. Geographically, the interaction between Ali and the nearby Kashmir became very smooth, and the communication of ideology and culture and art between them never stopped in hundreds of years. In particular, Tibetan rulers, headmen of nobility and various people with good and honest virtue at that time directly invited skillful craftsmen in Kashmir and Nepal to make exquisite art treasures in Tibet, or directly brought artworks from Kashmir. For example, it is recorded in the Penance Beacon — the Biography of the Great Lotsawa Rin-chen Bzan-po, “the great lotsawa thinks the result that I can learn so much esotericism in Mahayana now undoubtedly originates from my parents. To show the gratitude for the love and care received from childhood from his parents, he wants to make a Yidam statue for his late father in Kashmir. He carried twenty-liang gold and leaved for Kashmir. The statue maker Pidaga (ཕིད་ག) in Kashmir was asked to build the Yidam statue of the father (the same size as his father’s) of the great lotsawa. After completion, the Yidam statue was loaded and worshipped on the carriage and was taken back to Tibet. The finger of the Yidam was knocked off by the cliff by way of the broken bridge of Masang Gala because of the narrow mountain road. It was enshrined and worshiped in Kazi after reaching Ali.”[14] The figure of Buddha has been worshipping in the Kazi Monastery in Ali till now and is called “Kazi Awareness” (མཁའ་རྩེ་འོ་པོ་ལོ་པོ་). We can see the great lotsawa had invited the famous skillful craftsmen in Kashmir at that time to build the precious statue that we can see with our own eyes today. Besides, common points can be found in the mural of Guge Torin Monastery of Ali, which has the same style of statue building. Therefore, specifically speaking, the image depiction of the Panjarnata has also experienced the same changes. Under the influence of the great lotsawa Rin-chen Bzan-po, the ritual of the Panjarnata and the technique of depicting his figure were disseminated in Ali area, but the dissemination was still affected by the thick Kashmir artistic style.



Fig. 2. The stone-carved Panjarnata.



Fig. 3. The stone-carved Panjarnata.

According to the technique of expression, we can conclude the gradual formation of the after-revival period of Tibetan Buddhism has disseminated the forms of artistic presentation of the Panjarnata in the western Tibet with the obvious Kashmir to the core area of Ü-Tsang, like other deities disseminated in Tibet. As shown in “Fig. 2” and “Fig. 3”, it has gone through a large-scale transfer geographically, but it seems the artistic form shown by it is difficult to get rid of the Kashmir style. After the Panjarnata was disseminated to the core area of Tibet, especially the rapid formation of the Sakya in Tibetan Buddhism, the dharma protector rapidly formed a unique approach of artistic expression in the core area of Tibet.

IV. OVERVIEW ON THE EXQUISITE THANGKA COLLECTED IN THE POTALA PALACE — THE PANJARNATA

Around the 11th century, with the widespread dissemination of Buddhism in Tibet, except for a large number of ancient books and records of esotericism, the statue building that reflected the statue building of Buddhism and the painting size was also disseminated to Tibet ceaselessly and became the theoretical basis of building and depicting fine works of art related to Buddhism such as Buddha, Bodhisattva, Yidam and Dharma Protectors. The theoretical basis integrated with the aesthetic standard of the Tibetan nationality and became the complete theoretical system of statue building and painting with Tibetan characteristics. For example, it is recorded in the *Deities and Ghosts of Tibet*, “We must list a relatively important ranking of figure of Mahakala according to Ratnasambhava Buddha and Suka Jieza, works of statue building in Tibetan language.”[15] It has laid a powerful theoretical basis for the development of local artists and the rapid formation of the school of art with Tibetan characteristics. Around the 15th century, under the enormous promotion that Buddhism was in a period of great prosperity, the schools of art that were skilled in expressing the Buddhist color appeared in succession. Particularly, the appearance of Master Manla Dunzhu (མཎཌ་དྲུག་མཉེན་གྱུ་བ།) and Master Gangdui Qinqinmu (གང་དྲུག་མཉེན་གྱུ་བ།), who were called the “Two Most Respected Masters” (ཉི་ལྔ་རྣམ་གཉིས།) in the Tibetan painting history, enhanced the art of painting of the Tibetan nationality to another level. On the basis of concluding the experience of predecessors, the two masters established the unique schools of art of their own before long. The Master Manla Dunzhu established the famous School of Mantang, while Master Qinqinmu was skillful at painting and statue building and established Qinqinmu School of painting. The fifth Dalai Lama frequently mentions the School of Mantang is proficient in shaping the still image (ཞི་བ།) of Buddhism, while the School of Qinqinmu is skillful at painting ferocious image (རྒྱུ་ལོ།). Obviously, the depiction of the dharma protectors or ferocious image in the Tibetan Buddhism is recorded in the *Deities and Ghosts of Tibet*, “On the basis of the priesthood of dharma protectors, they are often depicted into gremlins that have ferocious appearance, wave weapons and tread Buddha dharma and are hostile to Buddha dharma.”[16] The School of Qinqinmu is superior. In addition, Master Qinqinmu inherited the Sakya of Tibetan Buddhism, so it is evident that his disciples and he have the unique means artistic expression in depicting the dharma protectors of their own sect, especially the Panjarnata. For example, in the temple of dharma protectors in the Gongga Qude Monastery where maintains the handwritten painting of Master Qinqinmu and in the Practice Hall that holds the dharma protectors of Buddhism, the depiction of eight Mahakalas has an extremely exquisite craftsmanship and is praised by countless descendants. Nowadays, it has become the textbook of Tibetan painters in painting ferocious images of the Tibetan Buddhism.

In the 17th century, various sects continued achieving a great development under the munificent religious policy of the fifth Dalai Lama. In this period, fine works of art of all schools appeared constantly, adding to the glory of the world of treasure for the whole Tibetan nationality. The exquisite

Thangka, the image of the Panjarnata preserved in the Potala Palace is also one of the myriad art treasures at that time.

First of all, the Thangka of the Panjarnata has followed the painting techniques of Zongba Sect, which is the famous branch of the Sakya. The Sakya is divided into three sects, namely Caba (ཚང་པ།) Sect, Zongba (རྫོང་པ།) Sect and Eba (ཇེ་པ།) Sect. The way of depicting the Panjarnata in the three sects is the same in general, and the only difference exists in the shape of the corpse under the foot of the Panjarnata. In Zongba Sect, the corpse under the foot of the Panjarnata is heavenward (མེ་རྒྱུན་ལོ།), but in other sects, the corpse under the foot of the Panjarnata faces the ground. Another point, according to the decoration on both sides of the hardwood clapper (གཞི།) held by the Panjarnata in both hands, when the hardwood clapper is painted by the Zongba Sect, the decoration on both sides should be Cintāmaṇi depicted in this Thangka, while it was painted into vājra by the Eba Sect.

We can see from the specific Thangka that the grounding of Thangka has adopted the traditional black grounding (ནག་ཐང་།). The major Yidam of Panjarnata is depicted via an explicit measurement of “Miwutong”. It is recorded in the Cintāmaṇi of Size, a famous Tibetan theoretic classic of painting and statue building written by Manla Dunzhu, “The size of the ferocious image of Miwutong is that the face is one full face size (a method of statue building measurement that divides the length of the face shaped into the size of the width of twelve fingers in the theory of painting and statue building in the Tibetan nationality), and the heart, the belly, the mouth and the lip are one face size respectively. The thigh is one full face size and covered by the paunch, and the shank is also one face size. The forehead, the neck, the knee and the heel are the size of three fingers (མིང་གསུམ།) respectively. The length is six face sizes respectively. The chest has one face and the width of it is the width of eight fingers, and the width of the arm, the elbow and the palm is one face size respectively in “Fig. 4”. “[17]



Fig. 4. The size of the Mahakala.

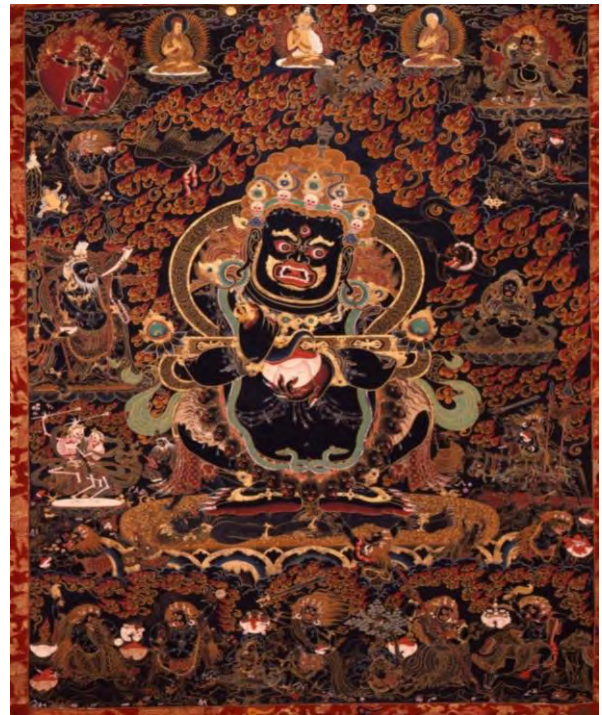


Fig. 5. The Thangka of Mahakala collected in the Potala Palace.

The shaping size of this kind of Miwutong or short person is recorded in the Aloka Sutta of Yidam Size written by the Master Jumipang (འཇུ་མེ་པམ།), “The size of Miwutong is that the face, the heart, the belly and the shank are one face size respectively. The thigh is one face size but covered by the belly. The size of the forehead, the neck, the knee and the foot are the size of three fingers and one face size in total. The entirety is six face sizes (ཞལ་ཚད་དུག་པ།) in general.”[18] The Panjarnata depicted on this Thangka in “Fig. 5” has completely followed the changeless shaping size, namely the generally-said “three face sizes”. The whole body is divided into three parts and is in an abnormal shape. The head occupies one part and is divided into three parts, and the size of the mouth occupies one part. It is distinctive from the previous shaping style of the Panjarnata with features of the western Tibet or the Kashmir style.



Fig. 6. Part of the Thangka.

The specific modeling of the Panjarnata is recorded in the Ritual Sutra of Food Supply for Mahakala, “The body is in black (སྒྲ་མདོག་མཐེང་ནག), with one face and two arms. The right hand holds tomahawk (གྲི་གུག) and the left hand holds the bowl that is made of human cranium and filled with blood (མཛོད་པ་ཁྲག་གི་གང་བ་ཐུགས་ཀར་སྒྲེང་འོག་ཏུ་འཛིན་པ།). The changeable hardwood clapper (གརྟེན) is carried under the two arms. It has three eyes and blood flows in the mouth that makes it look fierce. The blond hair bristles up and the head is decorated by five skulls. The keyūra decoration on the body is fifty bleeding human heads. The body is decorated by six kinds of bones of the dead and viper. It wears tiger-skin skirt and is surrounded by all kinds of ribbons and stands on the corpse (མིའུ་ཐུང་གལ་བའི་འདུག་སྒྲེང་སྒྲིམ་རྩི་ལྷོང་ན་བཞུགས་པ།).”[19] It is the content of praying ritual for the Panjarnata and has narrated the image of the Panjarnata in detail. The depiction on the Thangka in “Fig. 6” also coincides with its image. The Miwutong namely the image of short person is presented incisively and vividly from the shape, size and the unique pattern of manifesting the dharma protector. In addition, the exclusive ferocious and angry image of the dharma protector is revealed to the fullest under the foil of color. Except for the major Yidam of the Panjarnata, the Yidam of the Sakya, the inheritor of the sect (ལྷ་རྒྱུད) and the fixed attendants of the panjarnata have been painted from top to bottom. The forms of them are widely different and visual. Poluo Liuzhi (ལུ་ལོ་ལྷོ་མཚོ་གཞི་ལྷོ་ལྷོ) (a famous Buddhism scholar of the ancient India) is in the midpoint of the upward side. Caqin Luosai Gyatso (ཚ་ཚ་ཚ་ལྷོ་གལ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ), the famous inheritor of Caba Sect of the Sakya (?) is on the left side. The hoary-headed sthavira on the right side is Gunga Ningbu (ལ་མཚན་ལྷན་དགའ་ལྷོང་པོ།), one of the five masters of Sakya. The one below the master Caqin Luosai Gyatso is Namu Tiannv (ལྷ་མོ་ནག་མ།). The one on the right side correspondingly is the four-armed Vajradhara. A special dharma protector of the Sakya, namely the Shri Chitipati, is painted below the Namu Tiannv. Moreover, various kinds of beast of prey are depicted around the major Yidam Panjarnata, and they are vivid, as natural as though it were living. For example, it is recorded in the Ritual Sutra of Food Supply for Mahakala, “On the right side of the major Yidam, there are myriad black giant eagles circling in the air (གཡམས་ན་བྱ་ནག་འབྱུང་ལྷོ་གཞོག་ལྷོར་བྱེད་པ།); on the left side, there are myriad black wild dogs are ready to move (གཡོན་ན་ཁྱེ་ནག་འབྱུང་ལྷོ་ལང་ཞིང་བྱག་པ།); myriad beasts of prey behind the major Yidam move back and forth in anger (བྱུག་ན་ཅེ་སྒྲུང་འབྱུང་ལྷོ་གཡམས་ཞིང་བྱག་པ།); in the front, several people look up at the sky and howl (མདུན་ན་མི་ནག་འབྱུང་ལྷོ་གནས་དུ་འོ་འདོད་འབོད་པ།), and the roc above poses like soar”[20], and assorted animals that represent the atmosphere of terror appear more vividly in the Thangka, just like the above-mentioned record. On the top edge of the left side of Thangka, the Yidam of the Sakya, namely the Budong Baoguan Deity, exists, standing in the flaming fire of wisdom. It is recorded in the Ritual Sutra of Food Supply for Mahakala, “The Budongguan Deity stands in the flame of wisdom (མི་བསྐྱེད་པའི་ཚོད་པན་ཅན། ཡེ་ཤེས་ཀྱི་མེ་འབར་བའི་དབྱེས་ན་བཞུགས་པ།),” [21]. A two-armed cyan and one-braided deity (ཨི་ཀ་རྩོ་འམ་རལ་གཅིག་ལ།) (a dharma protector in the Dzogchen of Esoteric Buddhism) is painted on the left. The image of the dharma protector is recorded in the Ritual Sutra of Food Supply for Mahakala,

“The One-braided Deity (ཨི་ཀ་རྩོ་འམ་རལ་གཅིག་ལ།) has a cyan body, one face and two arms, and a rammel-made vase containing sweet dew is held in both hands in front of the chest (བདུད་རྩིས་གང་བའི་གཡུའི་བུམ་པ་ཐུགས་ཀར་འཛིན་པ།). The upper part of the body wears white cloth and the lower part of the body wears tiger-skin skirt, and the cyan braid is on the left” [22] The Pelden Lhamo is painted under the One-braided Deity and is described in the Ritual Sutra of Food Supply for Mahakala, “The Pelden Lhamo, a female deity in the desire realm, rides on a donkey with a white forehead (དཔལ་ཐུན་ལྷ་མོ་འདོད་པ་ལམས་ཀྱི་དབང་ལྷུག་མ་བོད་བྱ་པ་ལ་ཞོན་པ།), and the body is in cyan. She has one face and four arms. The first right hand holds a double-edged sword; the second right hand holds a bowl that is made of human cranium and filled with blood; the first left hand holds a spear; the second left hand holds a trident (རྩེ་གསུམ་གྱི་མགུལ་ན་དར་ནག་གི་བ་དན་འཕྱར་བ་འཛིན་པ།), the neck of which ties a black flying streamer. Viper and gold bell (སྐྱར་གཡམས་པ་ལ་དུག་སྐྱུ་འདང་གཞིར་གྱི་རིལ་བ།) are bunched on the right ear; lion and rammel bell (གཡོན་པ་ལ་མེད་གེད་དང་གཡུའི་རིལ་བུས་བརྒྱན་པ།) are bunched on the left ear. The feet are locked by iron chain (ཞབས་གཉིས་ལྷུགས་སྐྱོགས་གིས་མཛེས་བར་བྱས་པ།). The belly as thin as a lath shows the sun and the moon (ཤིན་ཏུ་རིང་ཅིང་མི་སྐྱུག་པའི་ལྷ་བའི་ཐང་ཀ་ལས་ཉི་ཟླ་འཆར་བ།). She howls among myriad Mamu (མ་མོ།) or female ghosts, dakini and flesh eaters (ཤ་ཟ།) and stands in the flaming fire of wisdom.”[23]The decoration of the Pelden Lhamo is extremely sophisticated. The above ritual sutra has also made a detailed description, and they completely coincide with each other. Five special attendants of the Panjarnata is painted under the Thangka, namely the five Buzha Sisters (བྱ་ཏུ་ལྷ་མོ་སྒྲིང་ལ།), and they are listed from left to right respectively “the first is the black yaksha (ནག་པོ་གཞོན་ལྷིན།) who has one face and two arms. The right hand holds the gold tomahawk high, and the left hand stretches to the sky and at the same time the mandala of the sun (གཡོན་ན་བ་འཕྱར་གདེང་གའི་ལག་མཐེན་ན་ཉི་མའི་དཀྱིལ་འཁོར་འཆར་བ།) and the cable that ties silk fabrics (དར་མེན་གྱི་གཤ།) appear in the palm. It wears black brocaded clothes and bright-colored skin of a person (ལྷོ་འོག་ནག་པོའི་གོས་དང་མི་སྐྱུགས་ཀྱི་གཡུང་གཞི་རྩོན་པ་ལྷག་འཛར་པ་ལྷིང་སྐབས་སུ་ལྷོན་པ།), the hair bristles up, with gold earrings on the ear. The left foot dances slightly. The second black yaksha is on the right side of the first one. It has one face and two arms. The right hand waves a gold trenchant edge (ལྷོ་ལྷོ།) and the right hand stretches to the sky and at the same time the mandala of the moon and the cable that ties silk fabrics appear in the palm. It wears black silk cloth dotted with gold spots. The hair disperses downwardly and is decorated with pearls and precious strings, and the right foot lifts. The third one on the right side of the second is the black ferocious image Yama (གཞིན་རྗེ་མ་རུང་པ་མོན་བུ་ཏུ་མདོག་ནག་པོ།). The right hand wields broadsword (ཤ་ལང།) and the left hand holds a human cranium filled with blood (the decoration of other parts is about the same like other ones). The fourth one is the black devil (བདུད་མ་རུང་པ་མོན་བུ་ཏུ་མདོག་ནག་པོ།). The right hand wields a divine rod (དམ་ཤིང།) and the left hand holds a human cranium filled with blood (the Thangka depicts the black devil holds the divine rod with two hands and the decoration of other parts is about the same like other ones). The rightmost one is the black Yama with a gold trenchant edge and spitting fire (མོན་མོ་གསར་གྱི་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་མདོག་ནག་མོ་ལ་ནས་མེ་འབར་བ།). The right hand holds a gold

trenchant edge; the left hand holds a viper between the fingers” [24]. The integrated environment depicts the cemetery where the Panjarnata live is desolate and pitch-dark and filled with the horror of death, which are manifested in the Thangka without reservation. The overall pattern of manifestation is no different from the picture of eight Mahakala left by Master Qinze and collected in the cella of the Gonggar Choide Monastery. Whether it is painted by Master Qinze remains to textual research. In brief, the Panjarnata deserves to be called a superb treasure of religion and art.

V. CONCLUSION

On the basis of the Thangka of the Panjarnata, a fine artwork collected in the Potala Palace, this paper has referred to scattered literature and researched the origin of the unique dharma protector in Tibetan Buddhism, its dissemination in Tibet and the forms of artistic presentation in the process of dissemination. Besides, some details in the Thangka of the Panjarnata collected in the Potala Palace have been analyzed emphatically. However, this paper involves the dharma protector of Esoteric Buddhism, the highest level in the Tibetan Buddhism. It is difficult for us to completely understand the mysterious and vast world of the Esoteric Buddhism. Besides, I haven’t practiced the traditional Tibetan painting techniques, so mistakes and omissions exist inevitably. I am looking forward to the instructions from masters who have a good knowledge of the Tibetan Buddhism and experts and scholars who are of great attainments in Tibetan art.

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