

the middle of the eighth to the middle of the ninth century as explaining the presence of this Tibetan painting. He has also lucidly discussed the relation which links the art of Buddhist Tibet, in spite of its marked and strangely persistent peculiarities, closely with Chinese art. My remarks may hence be confined to the technique and iconography of the painting.

The picture, which is preserved complete together with its frame of dark green silk, is painted in tempera on strong close-woven linen. The colours have generally darkened and in places have been rubbed off, leaving whitish patches or the cloth bare.⁶⁷

The subject is the goddess Tārā, the Śakti or female emanation of Avalokiteśvara. The goddess, represented in her usual form as a beautiful young woman, is seated in the centre on a variegated lotus which floats on the blue water of a lake. She sits with her right knee raised and the left leg bent across. The right hand with palm turned outwards in the *varā-mudrā* rests on the right knee, the left is at the breast, both holding long curving sprays with a conventional blue lotus at the end. The pose of the body slightly inclined to the right is balanced by the head leaning in the opposite direction. The sinuous line of the whole figure conforms to a characteristic tendency of Tibetan art. The flesh had been gilded, but this gilding has almost entirely worn off.

The goddess wears a dark red skirt and stole spangled with gilded flowers. Her knees are covered with elaborately ornamented caps. Rich jewellery decks neck and breast. Above her black hair bound with scarlet fillets is set a five-leaved tiara with a high-peaked crown. A nimbus of very dark green, now almost turned to black, sets off the head, while behind the figure is shown an oval vesica with a rayed border of rainbow-like colours.

On a dark cloud above the goddess's head appears the small figure of a Buddha seated in meditation with the alms-bowl in his lap. On either side of him, on praying mats carried by dark green clouds, sit two black-haloed saints wearing the peaked hoods of Lamas. Along the sides of the picture are ranged eight subsidiary forms of Tārā, differentiated by varying colours of flesh and dress. Their pose is the same as that of the central goddess; the right hand rests on the knee, holding a flask, and the left raises a long-stemmed blue lotus.

Interspersed between these subsidiary Tārās are shown six scenes of deliverance from Calamities similar to those represented on the sides of certain Paradise paintings, such as the one in Plates I, II. Not all are intelligible; but we may note in the middle one on the left a man being pushed over a cliff into the lake. In the scene opposite on the right he is seen calmly kneeling on a lotus, flame-encircled, while another man on the cliff above looks on in astonishment. In the left bottom corner are seen three men pursued by different animals, and to the right of them a barge-like boat sailing on the lake, with a fourth man kneeling in prayer. The men throughout these scenes are shown in Chinese secular costume such as is often seen in our Jātaka banners.

While these figures clearly point to a Chinese model of the scenes, the demonic deity in the centre of the foreground shows characteristic features of truly Tibetan taste. His squat dark blue figure sits sideways on a yellow horse, brandishing a scarlet club in his right hand. His hair is a flaming mass streaming upwards; a man's bleeding head hangs from his saddle-cloth. It is impossible to mistake here a conception of that monstrous type which Tibetan Buddhism under the influence of Tantra doctrines absorbed from India and under that of its own demon worship has always greatly cherished.

⁶⁷ Owing to these causes the reproduction of the painting has presented considerable technical difficulties.

Hence some of the details mentioned cannot be made out in it quite as clearly as in the original.