



sentient beings from samsara. Thus, it brings merit not only to the believers but for the painters as well.

5.1.1.4. Wood Painting

Shing tshon (Shing means wood and tshon means colour painting) is done on the wooden structure. The outside walls of the temples, monasteries and farm houses are normally whitewashed while the wooden structures are painted with varied patterns and symbols often in accordance with different names accorded to different parts. These are bow, phana, pem, choetsi, norbu and bagam. Although the choice of colours may vary from one painter to another, often depending on the choice of the owner or main architect, the style of paintings are generally uniform. Paintings on the walls depict the traditional patterns like flowers, traditional symbols, eight lucky signs or *Tashi Tagye* (eight lucky signs), and the four lungta signs of *Tag Seng Chung Druk* (Tiger, Snow Lion, Garuda and Dragon).

The painting of the Four Friends is popular on the walls. Some walls are also painted with phalluses. In order to paint on the wooden walls, the method called 'pounce and spray' is used. A painter uses an outline of a pattern or the design on a piece of paper to be painted on the walls. The outlines have pricked holes through which a powdered colour contained in a cloth is pressed to produce dotted pattern of the original patterns on the paper. The painter then traces these outlines to paint.

5.1.2. Clay Sculpture

Jimzo is a traditional art of sculpture making of the images and objects of worship and veneration using clay as a principal material. The art of sculpting in Bhutan probably dates back to 7th century when first Buddhist temples like Kyerchu and Jampa Lhakhang were built to keep the statue of Jowo Buddha Maitreya. The art was widely promoted during the time of *Terton* (treasure revealer) Pema Lingpa (1450-1521). In

Bhutan, *jimzo* was codified and included as one of the thirteen traditional arts and crafts of Bhutan by the 4th Desi Gyalse Tenzin Rabgye in the late 17th century. Since then the art of sculpting has been maintained and passed from teacher to students over many generations until today.

Bhutanese *jim zop* (sculptors) are known for the quality and intricacy of creating delicate clay sculptures. They practise sculpting as a pious act since it is based on the iconographic principles of Buddhist art. It is very important to adhere to the rules that prescribe the precise measurement of the body structure in relation to the limbs, postures, eyes, ears, fingers and nose and the body tints, garments and ornaments.

5.1.2.1. Religious Statues and Ritual Objects

Sculptors make clay statues, ritual objects and *tsha tsha* (miniature clay stupa) and clay masks worn during festivals. Numbers of exceedingly fine and intricate religious sculptures and ritual objects made of clay can be seen in every temple, monastery, and the dzongs of Bhutan. These clay sculptures vary in sizes, varying from tiny statues to over twenty feet. There are clay sculptures of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, various deities, gods, goddesses and prominent religious figures which depict the foundation of faith, worship and reverence for the Buddhists.





5.1.2.2. Types of Clay used in Sculpting

Clay is the basic material for making sculptures. A special kind of clay can be found deposited in small quantities between mud and gravels usually in marshy areas. Sculptors use the best quality clay as the images and objects they make must stand against the change of weather for generations.

Clay is processed into three different forms; *tsha dam*, *kong dam*, and *jin dam*. Each one is used for a specific purpose.

Tsha dam is made by mixing clay powder with *daesho* (paper made from daphne plants) in the ratio of 7:3. If paper is not available, pulps made from the raw bark of daphne plant are used as substitute. This mixture prevents the mud from disintegrating when dried. *Tsha dam* is used for moulding the basic structure of the statue.

Kong dam is prepared in the same way as *tsha dam*, but by adding more water to make the clay relatively thinner and softer. *Kong dam* is applied over the basic structure moulded from *tsha dam* to give proper shape to the statue. Generally the proprietor adds any or all of the seven precious substances (gold, silver, and turquoise, and coral, pearl, bronze and any other precious stones) to *tsha dam* and *kong dam* in order to increase the aura of the statue.

Jin dam is applied as the final and finishing touch to the statue. To prepare *jin dam*; the clay powder is mixed with water and then stirred thoroughly until it turns into a thin paste. It is then filtered with the help of a thin cloth. The thin filtered paste is collected in a utensil and then placed on fire until the water component is evaporated. What is left in the pot is a very fine powder. This powder is then mixed with daphne papier mache to give it the binding strength which prevents the clay from cracking. This mixture is again mixed with water and stirred and applied to give the final touches to the statue.



5.1.2.3. Process of Clay Sculpting

Clay sculpting process starts with the measurement of the space available where the statue will be kept later, or the size required by the owner/sponsor. Accordingly, the basic structural frame is made by using copper wires for smaller statues, iron or steel rods for bigger statues as support. Steel rods are wrapped with copper wire to add the value of the object. Gold and silver wires are considered the best to make the basic frame.

The frame is added with *tsha dam* while the internal part is left hollow for *zung* to be inserted later. When the *tsha dam* on the structure dries perfectly, *kong dam* is applied over it to give all the external physical features, forms and the attires. The parts such as hands and head are made separately and attached later to the body for smaller statues, though the head of bigger statues are made directly with the statue. The sculptor must ensure that the parts made separately are proportionate to the whole structure. Any part of the statue that is not proportionate to the whole body is considered an impious act of the sculptor and therefore must be avoided at all cost.

Sculpting is a tedious job, requiring the sculptor to apply the wooden chisel again and again to fill any gaps or remove the lumps over and over again. The statues are left for a long time to allow the clay to dry naturally, and to develop minor cracks which are also left unrepaired to allow air to pass for rapid drying. When no more cracks appear, it means the clay has dried up completely. The cracks are then repaired with *tsha dam* by mixing with glue. Once this is done, the sculptures are ready for final layers of finishing using *jin dam*. At this stage the sculpture is finally ready for *zung* (the inner relic).

Learners have to undergo rigorous training for several years under a master sculptor known as *Jimzo lopoen*.

As sculpting for religious purpose is considered a spiritual act, sculptors have to choose the most auspicious day and time to start a project.

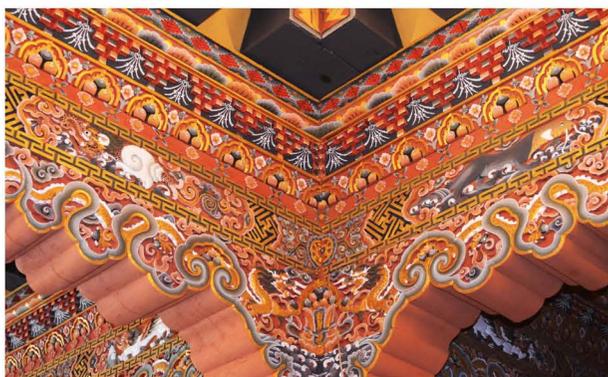
Once completed, an expert (usually a monk) will insert a *zung shing* or *sog shing* (a strut inside the statue as its backbone) and *zung* consisting of written mantras and other precious substances. Then the statue is painted using appropriate colours. Upon completion of all these steps, a *drub* or *rabney* ceremony is conducted by an accomplished lama. The painters and sculptors are highly regarded for their profession.

5.1.3. The Art of Carving

Pazo is the art of carving on wood, stone and slate. This art is evident throughout the country displayed magnificently on wooden structures of fortresses, palaces, stupas, temples, traditional houses and even on furniture. The following section describes some forms of carving.

5.1.3.1. Woodcarving

Wood has been one of the most widely used resources in the country. Some of the masks worn by dancers during the festivals, the altars in the shrine room of any house, containers like bowls and cups, sheaths and handles of knives and swords, xylographic blocks are all carved out of wood.



Choesham, Decorative Items and Furniture

Every house has a *choesham* (altar) entirely made of wood. Generally the altars will have carvings like *choetsi* and other designs such as dragons, flowers, eight lucky signs and mythological animals, on the main structure in accordance with the desires of the owner. On the upper part of the structure called *gu-chag* the altar will have the designs called *pema*, *norbu*, *bagam*, *boh* and *ngangpa*.

Cabinets, *chogdroms*, divans, decorative floral items, religious motifs like dragons, *tashi tagye* and various legendary animals are carved out of wood. The three sides of *chogdrom* (traditional portable table) are carved with dragons, flowers or other legendary animals.

Dramnyen, the traditional Bhutanese guitar is carved from wood in an intricate dragon design. The fingerboard is usually decorated with colourful traditional symbols. The hollowed sound box is covered with goatskin, and attached with either silk or nylon strings.

Masks

The Bhutanese make various shapes and sizes of masks from semi-hardwood, usually blue pine to depict the face of gods, animals and mythological figures. These carved wooden masks are used in the sacred and religious dances. Carved wooden masks are also popular as decorations in houses, dzongs, temples and monasteries.

