CHAPTER – 3

ROOTS OF MODERN ART IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR;

Term ‘Modern Art’:-

“The modern Indian Art situation is a strange one indeed. Although it has certain similarities with the modern art situation in the rest of the world, the dis-similarities are not few. But to understand these we have to grasp the modern Indian cultural situation.

The changes that have modernized Indian Society started with the British rule in India. To make their hold on India secure, the British improved the country’s communication system, introduced uniform laws, critically examined its social flaws, scrutinized its religious postulates and spread through their new educational, system ideas of scientific materialism. These effected fundamental changes in the fabric of our culture. Improved communication led to the mobility of population and the breakdown of old social exclusiveness. The new laws rationalized justice, social and religious criticism which led to social and religious reform. The new education cut at the roots of various conventional concepts and attitudes, and coming through the medium of English, led to a certain cultural alienation of the educated.
This was probably what the British wanted while the disinterested among them wanted the modern Indian to reject those portions of his past as were impediments to his material progress, the interested ones wanted him to reject it altogether, so that his intellectual allegiance to them would be complete. They tried to force this in certain ingenuous and impolitic ways. They made a frontal assault on certain sacrosanct notions the Indian had of their culture; they doubted its antiquity, were chary of conceding any originality to its features and tried to argue that both in the field of literature and art some of its special characteristics were of Greek or of quasi-Greek extraction. They found the art of the country deficient in naturalism and barbaric in iconography, although the intricacy of its ornament sometimes forced their reluctant admiration. On top of this, they poured scorn on the oddities and contradictions of its religious customs and tried either, through calculated neglect or destructive criticism, to defoliate its cultural scene.

Such a thorough going onslaught had, however, the contrary effect, while it doubtless irked the conventional Indian, it infuriated the Indian intellectual, who was committed to modernization and, at the same time, roused the indignation of a number of cultivated foreigners, who were enthusiastic students of Indian culture, ‘Together they took it upon themselves to correct this misreading of Indian cultural history and to
rehabilitate its image. They were highly perceptive and learned; they established the antiquity of Indian culture on solid historical proofs, they demonstrated that the Greek contact with India was short and superficial, and they highlighted the country literacy systems to show that the truth, enshrined in those were perennial and deep. They explained their cultures in art in all its subtle iconographical details. In short, they took of an opposite position.

The modernization of India is still, unfortunately, caught within this confrontation of westernization on one hand and its corrective opposite, Indianization on the other. Till the time British ruled India, this also came under the shadow of the colonialist – nationalist confrontation of the political arena, leading to much obfuscation of issues. Some argued that westernization was a British device for impoverishing India materially and spiritually; others held the opposite view saying that it was inevitable for India’s progress in the context of the world western situation and still others on the facts of our cultural history; and so engrossed were they in these facts that they lost contact with the local realities before them.

When the British left India, and the country became free, one would have thought this confrontation would be over since almost all Indians were agreed on the fact that in the modernization of India, certain
similarities with the west were inevitable. But this has not happened; on the other hand, this confrontation has ingrained itself in the mind of every Indian driving him into a sort of cultural schizophrenia.

Many of the indecisions of modern India probably derive from this, whether it be in the field of education, administration, literature or art; there is, on the one hand, a great desire to keep abreast with the west and emulate its models, and, on the other, to revive old principles and preserve national identity. Stupendous speculative superstructures are built on these desires but the existing situation goes abegging. We discuss endlessly the question of the media of education but are careless about its content, we hold forth volubly about the virtues of literacy but are callous to what it is the vehicle of, we analyses the basic purpose of administration in seminars and conferences but both in the change and the practice, and in literature and art we pile up ‘isms’ and ideologies, traditional and non-traditional, without as much as asking ourselves the most basic questions.

But, before we come to these, we need to make a brief survey of the historical facts of the modern Indian art situation. The big change that ushered a new situation in Indian art was the breakdown of the old craft guild system, although communities of craft men still practice their craft. But their role in society is no more central, they are not sculptors and
painters and architects, and even in their own small fields, they survive as the relics of an earlier age. This breakdown was the result of the decline in state patronage of the Mughals and their vassals and the various Hindu and Muslim Kings and Chieftains in different parts of India. The early British rulers of Indian Painting and Sculpture, although they paid to Indian handicrafts certain grudging compliments. And since they always wanted to remain in this country as ruling aliens, they did not make any concerted effort to understand its cultural facts, but held on tenaciously to their Victorian ideals. The new princelings of India had, at this time, no marked tastes or preferences; they adopted sheepishly the norms and ideas of the new rulers.

So, the old type of palaces and Chhatris stopped being built, the miniatures stopped being painted, temples with figurative sculpture were rarely commissioned. The new rulers were done with figurative sculpture, so these were rarely commissioned. The new rulers wanted something else, Victorian constructions with gaudy mouldings, mantelpieces, painted marble-effects on walls, chandeliers, garden statues, fountains, portraits, and landscapes. Craftsmen brought up within an environment of restricted professional practice were not the equal of these; and, wherever they tried their hands at these did clumsy, if meticulous, work; Even the foreign artists who executed Commissions in this country were not of the
first rank and this did not matter very much at that time of depreciated sensibility. So, to meet the new needs internally a new kind of artist had to be trained and the Government set up art schools. They were modeled on the lines of the Victorian art schools, out of contact with this country’s traditions. They taught in academic realist manner which was designed to produce illustrators, block engravers, portraitists, landscapists and painters of genre pictures for a very limited situation. Certainly, they were not the institutions that could effect any great artistic regeneration or change.

The artists of the old craft tradition got swept into the fields of functional and decorative arts and subsisted precariously. The new artist whom the art schools trained were not drawn from them and did not, after training, get into a situation of secure patronage; they were Individual pactitioners, whether painters or sculptors, or designers; they had to seek their public through personal initiative.

The nationalist opinion in India looked upon the functions of these art schools critically. They disapproved of their deadpan realism, their lack of contact with the country’s art tradition, their disinterest in even such changes as awareness taking place contemporaneously in the west, and therefore, looked around for an alternative”.
Roots of Modern Art in Kashmir

The origin of modern art in Kashmir came as a result of the sociopolitical upheaval which was caused by Pakistan tribal attack, so it is a post-Independence feature. By 23rd Oct, 1947, Pakistani organized armed Afreedi tribal had already crossed the Jammu & Kashmir state boundaries, thus inflicting miseries in the form of murder, loot, rape and arson on Baramulla and Sopore towns and had infiltrated into the several villages in Shalateng at the outskirts of Srinagar. The peaceful and lively atmosphere of the city was turned into unrest by the coming of hordes of refugees. The spontaneous mobilization of peace brigades rallied into the lanes and by lanes and thoroughfares of the city so that a peaceful tradition could be sustained. There appeared to be an intellectual upsurge which felt the need for cultural channelization and emotional impetus of the peace movement that would set in order the cropped up situation and boost the morale of the Peace Brigades. The heads of Emergency Administration thought this outlook as an immediate need of the hour. Way back in 1941, the literatures, writers and poets had already tried to carve a niche for themselves in socio-political set up by establishing a state unit of Progressive Writers Association. Its first meeting and formation took place in the ancestral residence of late Sh. Prem Nath Pardesi, a reputed short story writer. Besides the host, Sh. Pardesi, the
founder members present were Ramanand Sagar, Veer Vishishwar, Shahid and Som Nath Zutshi.

Prem Nath Sadhu alias ‘Pardesi’ was working with state custom’s Department and was stationed as Mahaldar at Chattabel custom Post. Two of them, the great unsung patriot and martyr Shri Somnath Bira and Sh.P.N.Kachru, went with an order from the Chief Emergency officer, late Sh.G.M.Sadiq. Sh.Pardesi’s services were thus requisitioned and two of them laid the basic nucleus for cultural propaganda in a hotel just near the Palladium Talkies, where the emergency headquarters of the administration was housed. It was only after a week’s time that the song of Pardesi, Kadam Kadam Badengi, Hum Mahaz Par Ladenge Hum, marsh ally tuned and led by comrade Pran Nath Jalali spread like jungle fire and changed the heart and soul of each and every man of the peace brigade, who marched the alleys and gangways of the city of Srinagar city. In no time the neighbourhood of Srinagar, Sopore and Baramulla towns became the graveyard of the tribal invaders, and then the towns were liberated. Few works which actually belonged to the category of propaganda posters, were prepared by Khosa and Kachru who prominently hung and displayed outside the façade of Palladium National Headquarters where these victory illustrations were witnessed by masses in thousands; every day.
In order to accommodate the newly arisen army of the Peace Brigades, the Emergency Administration acquired the entire area of the Exhibition grounds. This was done in order give an organized form to this spontaneous upsurge. Also they requisitioned an extensive wing of barracks in order to accommodate the National cultural front, and other theoretical talent like late Mohan Lal Aima, Pran Kishore, Late Shamji Bakaya and Dwarika Nath Bakaya who were joining the front. From the neighbouring village like Badgam Tehsil two professional folk singers lead by Abdul Gani Namtahali and Habibullah Rabab Nawaz. Sh.Somnath Khosa, the commercial artist and father of well known artist K. Khosa and Kachru also joined them and started working in the cultural front. Late Sh. Somnath Khosa had come to Punjab University mission from Lahore to illustrate a book on Kashmir. During the time of partition his house and studio was looted, ransacked and burnt down. In Jan. 1948, an unassuming and quiet person, weaving a close-collared long coat, tight pyjamas and a tight fitting turban dropped in the cultural scene, his name was Pandit Dina Nath, Nadim Mahjoor, Arif along with Nadim constituted the board of Front poets. During these very days ‘Pardesi’ brought in his writer colleague late Pt. Som Nath Zutshi.

Thus the National Cultural Front became a combination of writers, artists, poets, actors, musicians and singers. During the lifetime of the
front whatever art and literature was created, was primarily of political and propagandist nature and without any creative and aesthetic appeal. Looking at that period of creation, nothing can be spotted as a piece of creative aesthetic value equipped with either traditional or modern contribution. The other sections of literature, at the most, become primary class drawing masters, having learnt basics from a local technical school. Those who stuck to their tradition where kept at bay over the out skirts of Pandit society.

The treating of aspiring artists with detestation, the social reactions had already created difficulties for clearing a tolerant, a respectable place amongst so called ‘Respectables’ but otherwise, in reality a petty clerical society.

A strong group of English theosophists in India, led by Annie Basent and Octavian Hume, who were deeply involved in Indian culture and philosophy, was joined by an English artist named E.B.Havell who became a strong protagonist of the rich Indian traditions of art and culture. He took charge of the Principal ship of Calcutta School of Art in 1905. There was only one student, Abanendranth Tagore, who understood and followed Havell’s rich concept of Indian culture.

From Nov. 1947 to May 1948, seven months of intense and enthusiastic efforts to organize and nurture an ideally produced
movement of art seemed to reduce to a few political slogans, around which the entire intellect was regimented in order to fill up the sectarian demands and day to day political slogans. The net result was a junky of bundle of some propaganda posters with some political slogans contributed by the political wizards. Tradition, ideals, technique, aesthetics and universality of values in art seemed to be looking out into the abysmal darkness of regimented and mundane opportunities. The contribution to artistic values was nothing but the production of degeneration.

The other most disgusting feature was treating artists as social diminutives in Brahmamic society where an artist was considered a low being, termed as ‘Rangsaaz’. Those who tried to wash off such terminology amongst their clerical society, would he from the refugee camp, which housed the people from Sopore and Baramullah, who had left behind their homes and hearths due to the marauding onslaught of Pakistani tribal’s.

Artist S.H.Raza was a Founder Member of Modern Art in Kashmir. In 1946 the people from all corners of the world came to Kashmir to see the political turmoil. The gentry included writer’s thinkers, intellectuals and artists. Raza too was one of the visitors who came to Kashmir to put it on canvass. S.H.Raza was a pass out of J.J.School of Art Bombay. S.H.
Raza and Triloke Kaul came into contact with each other during the movement which was initiated against Pakistani Afreeds. Bhatt and Kaul often remained busy in the movement. Bhat was a little serious in his creative work, but T.Kaul was just a beginner in the field. But once when artist Raza was busy in his painting on the bank of the river Jhelum, suddenly S.N.Bhat saw him and took him as a stranger wasting his time and material. He went to Triloke Kaul and jointly went to mock at Raza doing the seemingly trivial work. At that Raza showed them the articles and his works which were put in the exhibitions. Also he showed the books of Picasso, Van Gogh etc. etc. This puzzled them and they accepted him as an artist. Both of them joined Raza and started the work. This became a daily routine, and they too showed him their work which Raza corrected. Raza often wanted to paint the fairs in temples and both Kaul and Bhat used to accompany him wherever he went. This was the period when Sh.P.N.Kachru too joined the three some. They started carrying out art discussions daily, people made fun of this ‘trio’.

From May 1948 onwards, Kaul, Bhat and Kachru, the three loiterers of the lanes and by lanes of Srinagar city, came to be known as the “Trio” who could be seen frequently in sunny-shady alleys, canals spanned with medieval arch bridges and haphazardly surrounded by clusters and compositions of houses and hutments (Hujras) of down town
areas of Saffa Kadal and Rajouri Kadal. Alternately, the group could be spotted anywhere over the Bund skirting the river vitasta (Veth in Kashmiri). The regular passers-by were familiar with the ‘Trio’ sauntering in fits and starts anywhere between Abi-Guzar and Ram Munshi Bagh. With Sketch books in hand, they would often stop to sketch an interesting or dramatic cluster of houses, the Doongas, boats and barges, moving up and down the Vitasta river, or sometimes climbing up the Shankaracharya hill to get clear overview of cityscape, the winding Vitasta and azure expanse of the lakes. Sometimes they could be found at the top storey of a hotel in Lal Chowk in order to catch the glimpse of the people down below in their movement and action. At the end of the day, they would stay on home and till mid-night they would re-compose and re-adjust their days work over a canvas according to each ones own imagination, perception and interpretation. Next morning they would again assemble together to exchange their notes on their respective creations while walking over the Bund side. As the group was not rich enough to have a definite place of their own for these meetings, these regular meetings were termed as “walking meetings” of which regular written minutes were being maintained by Kaul. The period from June 1948 to Oct.1948, proved decisive and historical because several things happened which proved fruitful in establishing and cementing the foundations of this new born group. In the beginning of the month of June
1948, Sh. Bhat, Sh. Triloke and Sh. Kachru had a private meeting with S.S.Chauhan, the progressive and prominent Hindi writer and Sheila Bhatia, the famous play-write and stage actress of IPTA. This meeting took place at their residence No.6, Wazir Bagh, Srinagar. Their unanimous opinion resolved to forge ahead a joint movement for aesthetic and formal quest, which could not have been possible within the politically infested policies and programmes of the cultural front. Another meeting between them and the ‘Trio’ resulted in a decision to establish the organized movement. The ‘Trio’ was renamed as “Progressive Artists” Association. In June 1948, an enthusiastic young artist, S.N.Bhat, came into contact with Raza, who managed his stay with him in his neighbourhood. Raza, was an important member of the active progressive group of painters of Bombay. The group included reputed artists like M.F.Husain, K.K.Hebber, and others. This was the group that became an active member of Bombay Art society and the All India Association of Fine Arts. Raza’s presence in association with the ‘Trio’ was mainly responsible for contributing and equipping the group with post impressionism full of an aesthetics which was still repeat with eastern orientalism concepts and a respect for pictorial values as opposed to map Naturalism.
The coming of Dr. Percy Brown on this artistic scene was a boon, Dr. Brown was a great orient list, author and artist, and he too was constantly having regular strolls over the Bund side pathway of the Vitasta quite as the ‘Trio’ did. So once during these strolls, he suddenly stopped and thumped his walking stick, confronted the ‘Trio’ with his direct queries about their problems. Having understood them as young enthusiastic artists, Dr. Brown retraced his steps and conducted them into the glorious art traditions and contributions in aesthetic form of the ancient art of the Harwan Monastery and of the Terra-Cotta expressions from Wushkar temples. He precisely directed them towards the study of formalism in Harwan expressions and of the beauty of the Baroque in the Wushkar Terra-cottas.
MODERN ART MOVEMENT IN JAMMU

India became free in 1947, but there was a peculiar state of affairs. Kashmir, along with Hyderabad and Junagarh, did not accede either to India or Pakistan. The communal situation was getting worse, and trouble was inspired in Poonch by Pakistani elements. State troops were divided in their loyalty. The result of communal tension and political uncertainty led to some very unfortunate and untoward incidents. The house was divided against itself, brother was fighting brother. In Mirpur, Poonch, Bhimber, Rajouri and Kothi, a blood drama was played by the locals, armed with Pakistani weapons and inspired by Pakistani agents and troops. In Kashmir, Muzaffarbad fell to Pakistani raiders who were advancing towards Srinagar at a great speed. In Jammu province and other adjoining areas, Hindu communalism was at its worst. The then Maharaja Hari Singh appealed to India for accession. Indian troops were dispatched.

The situation was precarious. Troops and militia could fight the external enemy, but what about the enemy inside? People were to be organized. People were fed up with the communal politics of the Hindu Sabha. They wanted peace and security; they were feeling sorry for the recent unfortunate happenings.
At this juncture, a young group of professors, students, artists and writers, came to the forefront. They were the persons who could inspire and enthuse people by their examples of service and self-sacrifice, as by their creative works. Dogri Sanstha threw its lot with the national movement, led by the National Conference and forming a united front of all the nationalist and patriotic elements of the State. “The only way”, a pamphlet, was issued by the Dogri Sanstha, defining its role and policy in the emergency situation. Support of the United front led by N.C. was its slogan. It was opposed by the communal section, but its opposition was too feeble to resist the tidal wave opposed by the people’s zeal for National security. The feelings of anger and indignation, let loose by the failure of the feudalistic system, were channelized into healthy and constructive activities. Professor Triloki Nath, Professor Ram Nath Shastri, Dinoo Bhai Pant and D.C. Prashant did a wonderful job. They were inspired by the noble example of late Dhanwantri, who understood and encouraged the aspirations of the people. Feelings of class and community were fast fading and Srinivas Shah, Paras Ram Nagar, Sansar Chand Baru, Nazir Hussain Samnani, Om Saraf, and others did all they could to create national solidarity. The younger group, consisting mainly of students, Balraj Puri, Ved Pal Deep, Ved Bhasin, Yash Sharma, Ram Nath Mengi, Prem Saraf and Nilamber Dev Sharma lent able support to the national and cultural movement. They went from place to place and
created an awakening among different sections of the people. They all belong to Dogri Sanstha, which was formed in Jammu in 1943.

In 1948, a political conference was held at Tikri, a place 33 miles from Jammu, in which Dogri Sanstha also took part. Bawa Jitto, the first play in Dogri, written by Professor Ram Nath Shastri was staged. ‘Kud’ a folk dance, was also arranged and a paintings. Exhibition was also organized. This was the first occasion in Jammu history when three different aspects of Dogra culture – music, literature and paintings were presented before the people. This was followed by big exhibition of paintings, held at Jammu in 1949. The exhibition was a collection of beautiful and rare pieces of Dogra – Pahari School, which made the people realize the rich heritage they possessed and about which they were ignorant for so long. This love for their country and their culture led to the memories of the past and a sense of patriotism in literature Sansar Chand came into contact with Shri Sobha Singh, and Allha Baksh. This was due to Sansar Chand often going to Amritsar, Lahore, and Shimla also, because art activity was at a low ebb, These artists basically belonged to the Shimla Art society or the Lahore School. It became fashionable to paint portraits and landscapes after the British manner, many Lahore artists turned their attention to this genre of painting. This trend was also encouraged by the Lahore Fine Arts society and Shimla
Art Society, one such artist of considerable popularity was S.G Thakur Singh of Amritsar. Sobha Singh was equally skilled but painted themes that were religious, mythological and emotionally rich. Others who followed this trend included Ram Lal and Sirinivas.

The art scene in Lahore during the mid 1940’s being barren in creativity, the local artists were now fired by an intense desire to accept the challenges of the new influences, whether in the arts or crafts or in other related activities.

Some of the Lahore artists were employed in the Parsi theatre in Bombay. Allaha Baksh, Molla Rama acquired much experience as stage painters in Bombay.

Sansar Chand was the only artist who was working in Jammu at that time, as a studio Artist. His subjects mainly comprised of religious, historical and mythological themes. He got his inspiration from Sh.Sobha Singh and Allah Baksh. His works of 1940’s and 1950’s cannot be considered the work in modern idiom, but one of his students V.R.Khajuria was to become a well known modern sculptor.

In 1950’s Apurab Somnath decided to hold the Industrial Exhibition in Parade Ground. At that time there used to be numerous stalls in the exhibition, but one of the stalls was kept reserved for artists,
so that they could display their paintings. In this industrial exhibition there were also the paintings of Kashmiri artists, and which was a main attraction for the public. One of the visitors to the exhibition was V.R. Khajuria. In 1950’s. V.R.Khajuria used to do water colours and portraits etc. But in 1953 when he went to Kashmir as a Govt. employee in the Agricultural department, he came into contact with artist Nissar and G.R.Santosh, who were connected with the people who had initiated modern movement viz. S.N.Bhat, and Triloke Kaul. The above two were under the tutelage of Bhatt and Triloke Kaul, V.R.Khajuria was highly inspired by his interaction with Sh. Santosh and Nissar. During that period Khajuria did commissioned work at Premier Hotel, Kashmir, which was in tune with the modern style. In the year 1957, a spring festival was held in Kashmir in which Khajuria and a few artists from Kashmir participated. This exhibition had a great effect on Khajuria and this moment was a beginning towards modernism. Khajuria wanted to go to Baroda because that was the place where he could learn something away from traditionalism. He did not want to confine himself to water colours and either portraits, but he remained in contact with Santosh and Kaul. Khajuria went to Baroda in mid 1960’s and there he was the student of Sankho Choudhary. There he got his degree of BFA in sculpture. He was known as the key modern sculptor of Jammu province. In 1966 Vijay Gupta completed his BFA from Shanti Niketan.
Afterwards he too went to Baroda for a post Diploma and became known as a modern painter from Jammu. Then he was promoted to the post of HOD in the painting department and then was to retired as the Principal in the Institute of Music and Fine Arts, Jammu.

**LADAKH**

In Bhoti Language ‘La’ means pass and ‘daks’ means many. Thus Ladakh literally means the land of many passes. Ladakh is one of the most elevated inhabited regions of the world lying at an altitude of 2750 meters at Kargil to 7672 meters at Saser Kangri in the Karakoram.

Buddhism is said to have been introduced to Ladakh in the reign of Emperor Asoka the Great (273-236 B.C.) by Majjhantika Thera and his disciples. According to the Ladakh chronicles, “The holy men came with sacred books and spread, the message of the Buddha beyond the Indus”.

Ladakh played a very important role in the dissemination of the teachings of the Buddha and also in spreading the Buddhist art and architecture through her monasteries which were the centres of Buddhist learning and eloquent monument of Buddhist art and architecture. It is in these Buddhist monasteries and other religious structures of Ladakh that we come across the Buddhist visual and architectural art.
The Monasteries of Ladakh has been sanctuaries of Buddhist learning as well as repositories of Buddhist art and artifacts, both imported as well as indigenously created. The existing Monasteries of Ladakh fortunately posses hundreds of Buddhist artifacts from Kashmir and Tibet. The destruction of Bamiyan Buddha is still vividly etched in our memory. The colossal Bamiyan Buddha may be the last specimen in Afghanistan! However this is not the case in India. Half a dozen colossal figures of rack-cut Maitreya Buddha of 30 to 36 ft are standing high in the open air space of Kargil area of Ladakh. The three giant images of Avlokiteshvara, Maitreya and Manjushri adorn the great Monastery of Alchi, which belong to the same architectural tradition of Gandhara art of 9th to 11th Centuries.

The fresco painting at Alchi, especially the miniatures, which fortunately are still intact, represent the specimens of art style which had spread to almost entire Central Asia Rinchen-b Zang-Po (958-1055) is said to have brought in sculptors and casters of statues from Kashmir. Among the cluster of white-washed, mud brick humble houses spread over the area.

**THANGKA**

(Than-Ka) roughly “picture, panting” in Esoteric and Tibetan Buddhism, a scroll painting framed in silk, which fulfils various religious functions. The themes of iconography are fixed by tradition and are based on three
principles: expression, proportion, detail. Commissioning the painting of a Thangka and the painting itself are considered highly meritorious actions. The images are painted on linen with vegetables – and mineral – based pigments. In some cases they serve as visual reminders of general Buddhist – teachings – examples are the wheel of life and depictions of the previous existences of the Buddha. In other cases Thangkas play an important ritual role …. as, for example, detail paintings of central personalities of a particular school being used in the three Refuges Ceremony. However, the most important role of the Thangka is connected with the performance of Sadhanas (meditations) where the picture functions as a support for memory in the process of visualization.

**Mandala**

Mandala means a ‘circle’ or a residence of deities of a particular Buddha family where the Lord presides the centre.

Two of adjoining shrines, Sumstek a three tired building and the Dukhang (congregation hall) belong to later style of sixteenth and seventeenth century A.D. The colours used both at Sumstek and Dukhang are mineral – colours derived from the stones. The ancient school of art tradition was discontinued in Ladakh after the creation of Sumtsek and the Dukhang, because by the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the north-west of India ceased to be a Buddhist Land.
The continuation of the traditional Buddhist art upto now Govt. of India Open Central Institute of Buddhist Studies in which traditional arts i.e. painting, frescoes, mural, wood carving, metal casting, stone are the subjects for students.

Padam Shree Tse-ring Wang-du greatest living artist in Ladakh and represent great Buddhist artistic tradition of Ladakh as well as its link with Tibet. Tse-ring Wang-du started painting in 1959 under the direction of De-wa-pa-sang, a well-known Tibetan artist from Tashi-Ihunpo, who had been invited to Ladakh by the religious Sku-gzhogs Bakula to paint a number of thangkas at monastery of spituk. Tse-ring- wang-du received his first important commission from the monastery of Likir.

Tse-ring-Wangdu’s most important wall paintings: the scrolls painted by him are too many to record, scattered as they are in various parts of the Buddhist world. However, mention should be made of the most famous one, a large thang-ka portraying Kalachakra, that painting is housed in the ‘Kalachakra Palace’ on the premises of the 14th Dalai Lama residence near Leh and won the painter an important National Award in 1977.

Nga-Wang-Tse-Ring, the greatest living sculptor of Ladakh, who from a very early age loved modeling clay figure as well as drawing. His inclinations were fostered by his father, who later-when his son was around 15-entrusted him to the most famous artists of the time: Tse-
Wang-rig-dzin. He studied sculpture for six years under that master and then assisted him for three more years until about 1959.

Around 1981, the sculptor fashioned a large image of Vajradhara for the private library of the Rin-po-che in the monastery of Stakna. The following year he started working on a huge statue of Padma-Sambhava for the Guru Iha-Khang in the monastery of Hemis Nga-Wang-Tse-Ring received the National Award for Master Craftsmen in 1983.

Thanks to artists such as Tse-ring Wang-du and Nga-Wang-Tse-Ring, Buddhist art in 20th Century Ladakh has prospered, never abandoning its traditional iconography and iconometric sources; and although some new techniques and materials have been adopted by the artists.

Of Course technical schools were opened in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh (Gilgit) but after a partition, Gilgit became part of Pakistan. In 1965 when the Academy decided to open up the Institutes in Jammu as well as in Kashmir, the political conditions had become stable in the State. In 1950s and even as the government framed various policies for the development of the state regarding industries, education and industrial education etc. little was done for the development of Ladakh. Its effect of their log is clearly visible in the art field. There are still only a few Ladakies students who completed any Degree from IMFA, Srinagar One of the exceptions is Ghulam Mustafa Kamal is one of the pioneer of
Ladakh, an alumni of Institute of Music and Fine Arts Srinagar, completed his painting course from there.