

Students of Thangka painting celebrate graduation in Shanghai

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, THE UNITED STATES, December 19, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Thangka, a traditional style of Tibetan painting was in the Chinese news recently as scholars, artists and entrepreneurs from all over China gathered in [Jinze](#) town in Shanghai, on December 16 and 17 to celebrate the graduation of the first class of Rangtang Jonang Intangible Cultural Heritage Center.

Sixty students from Rangtang have spent eight years working on the techniques of Thangka painting and could be future ambassadors of the cultural heritage that is unique to Rangtang county, in the Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan province.

In 2016, the Rangtang county government decided to bring local culture out from the Plateau and established an intangible cultural heritage learning center in the Qingpu district of western Shanghai. The non-profit organization's goal is to preserve the inheritance of skills and arts such as Tibetan medicine, sculpture and the scroll paintings known as Thangka

The graduation ceremony held at the center represents an important achievement in the student's hopes for a career in the world of art as well as a way of preserving their unique culture and improving the lives of people in Rangtang

Rangtang county is a picturesque region of clear water and green mountains with a population of around 40,000 people that suffers from deep poverty. Thanks to government support of local Tibetan culture, many masters of folk arts have regained the confidence in their traditional skills and attracted young people to pass them onto, as well as investors



Bingqiao Mei, director of the Jinze Art Center said that that Jinze town in Shanghai first invited the students eight years ago, to escape the cold winter of Rangtang that freezes pigments and makes painting impossible. She said that many young people in Rangtang were taught the traditional art skills as a way to support themselves.

Professor Xie Jisheng Director of the Sino-Tibetan Buddhist Art Research Center praised the students ability in what is a challenging art form as being better than that of graduates from China's academies of fine art. "The originality and ingenuity they have displayed is beyond words," he said.

Zhang Songren, a well-known curator, said the value of Thangka paintings far exceeded their commercial value. "It opens up a world that has greater depth, greater breadth than modern society and that is opening up a civilization, not just opening up a business," he said.

Thangkas are Tibetan Buddhist scroll artworks painted on cotton or silk. The religious paintings that can be traced back to the tenth century A.D. and typically depict a Buddhist deity, scene or mandala. Thangka schools have been growing in the Tibetan areas of Sichuan in recent years helping many young people out of poverty.

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