



Appliqué from Sacred Citadel

TIBET MAY HAVE BEEN ONE OF THE MOST ISOLATED places on the face of Earth a hundred years ago, but if you go back a thousand years it was an important port of call. Tibet lay at the centre of a web of political and social interaction involving trade, religious fervour and artistic development. The Silk Route carried trade and ideas from the East to the West and back again. Designs and patterns travelled this well-treaded route. Many originated in Sogdania in the Tarim basin and found their way westwards to Egypt, Syria, Rome, and eastwards through the Gangsu corridor into China. The Chinese and later the Mongols, Uigurs, and Tanguts made political alliances under the guise of religion and bartered for horses with Tibetans. The currency was silk. Huge quantities of silk ended up in the storehouses of Tibetan monasteries. They provided enough material for an unending stream of appliqué thangkas and temple banners. When the communists invaded Tibet, the remnants still filled the vaults of the Potala Palace and the Jokhang. As brocade was labelled with bourgeois decadence, they tossed bale after bale onto what must have been the most costly bonfires ever to light up the night skies for weeks. Until that time, Tibetans were so replete with precious textiles that they never felt a need to make any themselves.

Appliqué is an ancient technique widely used in Central Asia over the last two thousand years. The earliest examples are the saddle covers used by the marauding Huns. The celebrated Dunhuang caves were filled with

appliqué silk and brocade banners. In Tibet and Mongolia, the technique was used mostly to make thangkas (religious wall hangings) or other religious works of art that could be stored by rolling up the items.

Sacred Citadel is working with a handful of trained Tibetans who are spread over the Himalayas. While preserving its religious applications, Sacred Citadel places orders with these settlements to make appliqué items for less spiritual purposes. Bed Covers, Cushion Covers, Wall Hangings, Curtains, and other Fashion Accessories made of different kinds of silk are objects that convey a little of the grandeur that has survived the turmoil of the centuries.

There are so many patterns to choose from, but you can also place an order according to your requirements. Besides the soft furnishings, one can also have a warmth and soft feel of the beautiful Tibetan rugs/carpets, hand woven by the Tibetans by using the Merino wool yarn from New Zealand. There is a wide choice available at Sacred Citadel, or place an order according to your colour and size specifications.

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