

RUNJEET SINGH

ARMS & ARMOUR FROM THE EAST



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I

JAAM-DHAR (DEMONS TOOTH) KATAR

DECCAN (SOUTH INDIA)
17TH CENTURY

OVERALL 460 MM
BLADE 280 MM

An important 17th century Indian katar (punch dagger) from the Deccan plateau, possibly Golkonda ('shepherd's hill'), a fort of Southern India and capital of the medieval sultanate of the Qutb Shahi dynasty (c.1518–1687).

This rare form of Indian katar is the earliest example known from a small group, examples of which are found in a number of notable collections. These include no.133 in Islamic Arms & Armour from Danish private Collections, dated to the early 18th century. Probably Deccani in origin, the arabesques on the blade have Shi'ite calligraphy. The features of this fine katar are closely related to the katar published here.

Another example is published by Ricketts and Missillier; no.226, dated by the authors to the 19th century. It is decorated with enamel and described as coming from Lucknow. Elgood 2004, interestingly points out the relationship between Lucknow and Hyderabad, both being Shi'ite states and linked by marriage.

A third and fourth example are published by Elgood 2004, p.162 (no.15.39) and Egerton (no.388), from Deccan and Lucknow respectively. Both are late 17th or early 18th century and again follow the design of the katar in this exhibition.

The heavy iron hilt has intricate piercing and thick silver sheet is applied overall. These piercing, suggestive of flower patterns, softens the austerity of the design which can be related to architecture, for example the flared side bars have tri-lobed ends. The architectural theme continues into the lower bar which connects to the blade; this has five cusp-shaped arches forming an arcade, which Elgood (2004) notes is similar to Muslim architecture, which began to be adopted by the Hindu court in the Royal centre at Hampi in the mid-16th century. The very unusual zoomorphic grip has stylised elephants or makara. The piercing is particularly impressive here because the grip is over 10 mm thick.



2

DECCANI KATAR

DECCAN PLATEAU (INDIA)
17TH CENTURY

OVERALL 580 MM
BLADE 310 MM

A large and early example of a Deccani katar from the 17th century.

The blade is forged from wootz damascus, and shows a complex pattern commonly referred to as 'watering' due to its appearance of swirling waves. The heavy blade is armour piercing, with a swollen diamond section tip and a strong central spine.

Though more restrained, the blade has the narrow multi-ribs for which Tanjore katars are well known. A closely related blade can be found on a katar in the Metropolitan Museum, New York (no. 36.25.904) illustrated in Elgood 2004, p.147.

The Metropolitan Museum katar and the one being considered here share a number of features including the very similar leaf shaped motif on the brace extending from the hilt. This detail is commonly found decorating regional architecture.

The hilt is constructed of two unusually long side bars, an indication that this is a transition piece and follows the same design as the Pata or gauntlet sword. The cross grip comprises a pair of swollen bars and the hilt is covered with applied silver gilt sheet.

This katar is unusually large and has great presence, it is an academic object exemplifying the rewarding challenges which the study of Indian weapons still presents.





3

KUTCH KATAR

WESTERN INDIA
19TH CENTURY

OVERALL 505 MM
BLADE 320 MM

A distinctive 19th Century Indian Katar from Sind or Kutch, described as a 'Garsoee Katar' by Egerton.

A heavy and large example, with an armour piercing steel blade with swollen diamond shaped tip, the lower part having a flat central panel and two tapering sides with sharp edges. The forte is chased with a central blossoming flower with large scrolling leafy stalks, decorated with thickly applied gilt-silver. The hilt is decorated in the same manner, with repeating six-petalled flowers linked by leafy stems, in a style frequently seen on richly decorated objects from all over India.

The hilt shape is the most characteristic feature on this form of Katar; the eye immediately drawn to the rhomboidal grip which provides a comfortable hold. It has pronounced flattened corners which are chased with leafy stems, and the surface of the grip pierced and chased with flowers. The side bars curve in and out of the central grip, where a large sculpted flowering bud waits to blossom on either side. Then there is the V shaped bar which connects to the blade, and the intriguing subtle hooks modelled into the inside of the top and side bars.

Nobody knows the origin of the intriguing hook like rose thorns that project on the inside of the frame of the hilt which are unique to these katars. Since they serve no apparent purpose they have to be decorative.

Provenance

Late R.Wagner Jr collection (USA)

Published

Pinchot, 2014, p.51, fig.3-113.





4

KANDYAN KNIFE

CEYLON
18TH CENTURY

OVERALL 290 MM
BLADE 170 MM

Robert Elgood has described this Ceylonese Piha-Kaetta, or Kandyan knife from the 18th century as arguably the best example of its type known.

The characteristic rhinoceros horn grip scales with cast and chased gold and silver mounts are carved on both sides with a pair of beasts having simha heads (one head incomplete) and bird like bodies. An arched gold pommel-cap, pierced and chased with delicate Ceylonese scrollwork inhabited by two pairs of entwined birds. A large shaped, pierced and scrolling silver bolster, with attractive gold floral decoration.

The slightly re-curving blade has a gentler angle than most daggers of this type, double edged over half its length and is covered with foliate engraved silver. H.R.Robinson notes (de Silva, 1975, p.150) that Kandyan knives may have some relation to the Kukri knife form, the shape of the example here certainly seems to have taken some influence from the Kopsis blade.

In its original fluted wooden scabbard completely covered in silver with filigree locketts and two central bands, the chape embossed with scrolling foliage and kirtimukha protective mask head on either side.

The only other known example of a Ceylonese knife with a similar blade is in the Metropolitan museum of Art, New York (36.25.786a, b) and is illustrated (unfortunately sheathed) in Stone's glossary simply under 'knife' see no.19, p.365. The potential importance of this unusual variant is still being debated by academics.

Provenance
Late R.Wagner Jr collection (USA)

Exhibited
Higgins Armoury Museum,
Worcester, MA (USA),
September-December 1994

Published
Pinchot, 2014, p.57, fig.3-138.





5

NASRID STYLE "EAR" DAGGER

SPAIN
19TH CENTURY

OVERALL 350 MM
BLADE 210 MM



A scarce Nasrid style ear-dagger, Spain, 19th century.

A heavy straight blade, with a long flat 50mm spine on one side, and a shorter 20mm ricasso on the other. The blade forte is flat, and the blade ground into a flattened diamond section. The forte and grip strap are richly decorated with fine gold damascene koftgari in the form of cartouches containing pseudo-calligraphic inscriptions in loose foliated kufic script, and panels of scrolling leafy tendrils.

The hilt has elephant ivory grip scales engraved with geometric motifs and quatrefoils, pinned with brass rivets; the integral ivory ears are decorated with small panels of carved inscriptions. Both ears have small gilt-iron pommel caps. Overall a deep yellow glossy patina to the ivory.

The Italian States, particularly Venice, and Spain, employed the Stradiotti as mercenaries who brought this weapon with them and made it popular. Laking comments that fine and splendidly-enriched examples exist in public and private collections; however, I think it is safe for us to presume that most existing examples are already known, and few are left to be discovered, for this reason, the high quality example shown here is an exciting discovery.

A portrait owned by the Royal collection of the young King Edward VI wearing a dagger of this type hangs in Windsor Castle. See Laking (p.56, fig.836).

The dagger takes influence from the famous Nasrid period ear dagger in the Real Armeria, Madrid No.G361 (Laking, p.290-3) which is associated with Muhammed XII (called Boabdil) and the battle of Lucena in Southern Spain 888 AH/1483 AD.

Two similar daggers exist in the collection of the late Signor Ressiman, now in the Bargello, Florence see Laking (fig. 828b & 828d). These daggers are decorated in a similar way, with very fine damascene koftgari, and the grip scales being carved in the same 'Hispano-Moresque' manner.

Pseudo Arabic and Latin inscriptions exist on the famous Nasrid period gilt parade helmet which is set with enamel devices in the Metropolitan Museum, New York no.1883.413 (see J.D. Dodds, p.294-5).





6

CHILANUM

DECCAN PLATEAU (INDIA)
16TH–17TH CENTURY

OVERALL 380 MM
BLADE 280 MM

This long, slender, elegant 17th century weapon from the Deccan plateau of south-west India is called a chil anum. This wonderful piece of workmanship is made from a single piece of steel and has a sensuous profile like a goddess in her 'tribhanga' or triply flexed pose.

The distinctive hilt has an attractive pommel with an acorn shaped finial. A lower bulbous knob and a larger one of similar shape sits in the centre of the waisted hilt.

The re-curving blade is cut and chiselled at the forte in the shape of two ferocious Makara or Yali with extending trunks. The thick strong blade is deeply fluted further highlighting the skill of the maker.

An almost identical example is in the Metropolitan Museum, New York (no.36.25.751) illustrated by Elgood, 2004, p.179 (no.16.36).





7

HEAVY CHILANUM

DECCAN PLATEAU (INDIA)
16TH–17TH CENTURY

OVERALL 400 MM
BLADE 290 MM

An early and characteristic Indian dagger from the Deccan plateau that is an adaption of the classical 'chillanum'.

A double-edged recurved tapering steel blade with multi-fullers running the entire length. An eye shaped hand guard with Persian inspired drooping bud terminals and pierced and multi-lobed border. An open-work section above the guard with the hilt of waisted form and grip having a central ball with spiral decoration. An elegant winged pommel and a top bulbous finial. A slender finger-guard with lotus bud terminal. The blade strap and the hand guard still having some gilded-silver applied sheet.

Four similar daggers are in the Junagarh Fort Museum, Bikaner; captured at Adoni in 1689. See Elgood, 2004, p.178 (no.16.33-16.34).



8

VIRABHADRA BICH'HWA

KARNATAKA (SOUTH INDIA)
18TH CENTURY

OVERALL 310 MM
BLADE 170 MM



An 18th century south-Indian left-hand dagger known as a 'Bich'hawa', literally 'scorpion sting', due to the shape of the blade.

The bronze hilt, rich in its Hindu imagery, tells the story of how Daksha, Shiva's father-in-law, offended Shiva by not inviting him to a sacrifice that Daksha had arranged to perform. Shiva's wife, Sati Devi, attended uninvited and was so humiliated by her father she committed suicide by jumping into the sacrificial fire. Enraged by this, Shiva plucked and thrashing a matted lock of his hair on the ground created Virabhadra, his personified anger, sending him to punish Daksha which he did by cutting off Daksha's head in battle.

After Shiva was petitioned by the other gods he agreed to replace Daksha's head, and because it could not be found, it was replaced with the head of a ram as seen here.

The bronze hilt is constructed in a tiered 'trikula' arrangement, a form of construction found in many south Indian temples. At the apex sits a prominent Nandi bull, elegantly modelled, with his front right leg tucked behind, and the front left leg resting on its own hoof. The tail and rear legs tucked to the right. Nandi is Shiva's vehicle and in south Indian temples is usually found facing the linga in the main sanctuary or corridor leading to it. On the hilt he sits on a pedestal flanked by two small Shiva lingams with petal arches, and a large Shiva lingam shrine to his front. Nandi symbolises dharma or religious duty and virility and strength. His divinity is confirmed by the fact that he is sheltered by a five-hooded cobra or naga. The multiplicity of hoods emphasise the snakes extreme poisonousness and power, placed in the service of Shiva who traditionally wears a snake round his neck.

The top tier of the knuckle guard has two crowned figures sitting astride another Nandi bull, both with tall crowns, one holding a shield and the other a staff or other similar object; sheltered by seven snakes, with a perched parrot either side.

The middle tier has multi-armed Virabhadra standing in a wide stance, again with a tall crown, holding a sword in one hand an elongated shield in the other. The profile shows him holding two further objects, possibly a bow and arrow. He can be seen wearing traditional wooden paduka sandals, and a garland. By studying other Virabhadra bronzes we can translate some of the stylised features in the hilt casting, particularly the garland that Virabhadra is shown wearing. Harle and Topsfield (p.52, no.63), illustrate a 16th-17th century bronze sculpture showing Virabhadra with a garland of skulls, and a large decapitated head between his legs.

The lowest tier of the hilt shows Daksha sitting in a lotus position. The profile of the knuckle guard is multi-lobed, and the rear of the hilt has a three headed cobra budding from a small lotus at the top, and a small Ganesh sitting beneath a pair of arches, with his trunk to his left and right palm held up.

The elegant double edged blade is forged from Indian 'crystalline' Damascus crucible steel, which has a tighter grain structure than 'wootz' steel.

Indian representations of the gods employs an extremely precise iconography which with further research particularly of temple architecture, may lead to the discovery of the precise origin of this dagger and extend the period in which these were made and used.



9

BUGIS KERIS

INDONESIA
18TH–19TH CENTURY

OVERALL 335 MM
BLADE 280 MM

A handsome and complete Keris dagger from south-western Sulawesi. The original timber scabbard covered completely in thick sheet silver, with the shaped throat having clean lines and sweeping curves with an unusual snake head belt loop.

The ivory hilt sculpted as a stylised Garuda, 'the Devourer' who has the torso and limbs of a man and the talons, wings and head of an eagle and serves as the vehicle of the Hindu God Vishnu. Deep and fine undercut foliate carving, the hilt has a rich patina and sits on a copper mendak with applied decorative wirework.

The ganja and straight blade have an attractive pamor; tight silver laminations on a dark grey background.

A group of similar Bugi hilts are illustrated by Ghiringhelli (p.81-83).





10

STILETTO DAGGER

GOA? (INDIA)
LATE 19TH CENTURY

OVERALL 370 MM
BLADE 220 MM

A late 19th century Indian stiletto dagger; the hilt of elephant ivory carved in the form of a naked dancer or celestial apsara. The lady stands on a circular pedestal wearing a happy smile and little else apart from a gold and green belt, large earrings set with red corals, bracelets and gold ankle bells. Her hair (with a painted red flower and green stalk), is elaborately plaited and adorned with a chotli (the decoration at the back of the head) and she wears a tika on her forehead set with coral and malachite. Her ears are also set with two small malachite stones. No doubt she took a lot of trouble with this ensemble and she is clearly pleased with the effect. Her left hand clutching a flask closely to her bosom and her right hand holding a garland.

The turned bolster and the blade are of European style and form, the forte cut with four chevrons and precisely decorated with gold damascening in a European style. The lower section of the blade is double edged and of flattened diamond section. The velvet clad wooden scabbard (velvet now worn) complete with matching chape and throat piece, the chape having a central fleur-de-lis motif.

The patina on her shapely bottom suggests that the lady has been much handled.







11

MARWARI HORSE KHANJAR

RAJASTHAN (MARWAR, INDIA)
18TH CENTURY

OVERALL 375 MM
BLADE 260 MM



An impressive 18th century khanjar (re-curved dagger) from Rajasthan with the hilt in the form of a Marwari pony.

The iron hilt is covered with thick silver-gilt sheet and set with 23 turquoises and 3 rubies. The modelled pony is fully bridled and the mane swept to one side, elaborately tied in the Rajput manner. The inward curling ears an interesting feature that distinguishes this animal as a Marwari pony.

The re-curving blade displays a pattern welded damascus pattern, sometimes referred to as 'mechanical damascus' a steel produced by several metal pieces of differing composition forge-welded together and twisted and manipulated to form an attractive pattern. A raised central spine, hollow ground central panels and a swollen tip, certainly made by a master craftsman.

A later, probably 19th century, wooden scabbard covered with nicely faded and aged green and red silk velvet.

On occasion Indian makers would sometimes produce sword and dagger sets, or the same maker or workshop would make a number of different items in the same manner. The dagger offered here is almost identical in style and decoration to that of a sword shown in the well-known book *Splendeur Des Arms Orientales* (H.Ricketts & P.Missillier, p.143, no.247); and to a dagger published by R.Hales (p.44, no.95). A second silver hilted example is published by Hales (p.40, no.89).



12

MARBLE KHANJAR

MUGHAL (INDIA)
17TH–18TH CENTURY

OVERALL 340 MM
BLADE 220 MM

A scarce form of Indian 'Khanjar' dagger with a marble hilt carved in the form of a sheep's head.

The re-curved blade is forged from wootz damascus steel, and has a raised central V shaped spine. The off-white patinated stone hilt is thoughtfully carved and the face has a lifelike manner, with large drooping ears (one partly broken) and large eyes. The top of the head has a stylised fleece pattern in a pleasing rosette arrangement. The back of the head has a rising neck collar that provides a comfortable position for the thumb to sit when the dagger is held point down.

Sheep as opposed to rams heads are a rare subject matter for zoomorphic Mughal carved hilts but there is a fine example in the Al Sabah Collection (LNS 73 HS) carved in grey nephrite with yellow sapphire eyes which is attributed to 'Deccan or Mughal, second half of the 17th century'. Another with a hilt in the same style illustrated in *Islamic Arms and Armour* from Private Danish Collections is dated 15-18th centuries (p.176, no.140).



13

KHANJAR

DECCAN PLATEAU? (INDIA)
17TH CENTURY

OVERALL 360 MM
BLADE 230 MM

An unusual and very attractive Indian 'Khanjar' dagger from 17th century Deccan.

The highly polished and colourful chalcedony grip has a large silver pommel cap with a pierced border and spiralling turban pommel finial. The base of the grip has a silver band of stylised flowers and an eye shaped crosspiece terminating in a pair of bud-shaped terminals. Beneath this is a further crosspiece with drooping parrot-head finials. The finely watered steel blade of Indian crystalline wootz is recurved with a raised central V shaped spine.

Published
Islamic and Oriental Arms and Armour; R.Hales, 2014, p.56, no.114.





14

BARA JAMDADU

GOLKONDA (INDIA)
18TH CENTURY

OVERALL 1000 MM
BLADE 800 MM

An unusual Indian sword, with a Katar hilt and European tapering double-edged blade.

Described as a 'Bara Jamdadu' by Stone (p.93), both being Indic (Indo-Aryan) words, 'bara' being the word for 'large' and 'Jamdadu' probably a revision of the word 'Jamdaar' meaning Demons tooth.

This weapon appears to be influenced by both katar and pata (gauntlet sword). The design of the hilt can be seen to be similar to Tanjore katars from the 16th and 17th centuries. See a group depicted by Holstein (vol. I, pl. XVIII) which are now in the Metropolitan Museum. Many of these earlier katars have grips with a swollen centre, and a gap between two outer bars, the bars linked by means of spinning wheels. This later example has three fixed spools, and a pierced fleur-de-lis either side. The cupped arching knuckle guard to which the shaped blade straps are joined are also similar in form. All gold-damascened overall with a repeated design of interlaced and punched quatrefoils.

Two hinging silver wrist-mounts provide lateral bracing against the forearms, making the sword a much more practical weapon, the blade forte incised 'KNEGT' between pellets and an anchor mark on one side and 'IN SOLINGEN' between similar marks on the other.

Provenance

Late R. Wagner Jr collection (USA)

Published

Pinchot, p.70, fig.4-27





15

GOLD SHAMSHIR

PUNJAB OR RAJASTHAN (INDIA)
18TH–19TH CENTURY

OVERALL 930 MM
BLADE 810 MM

A gold decorated Tulwar hilted Indian Shamshir from the late 18th or early 19th century.

The hilt profusely decorated with gold koftgari in silhouette floral patterns on a dark background with large flower heads having two rows of petals. The upper grip has a reverse gold pattern, with negative floral designs on a gold background. The heavily curved blade of high contrast crucible wootz damascus steel has a dark black and grey background with swirling silvery carbides. Wooden scabbard covered in green silk velvet. A gold cartouche containing an inscription and a further line of calligraphy running down the length of the blade.

Two similar swords with the same cartouche are illustrated in Islamic Arms and Armour from Private Danish Collections (p.195 and 202).



16

CHISELLED TULWAR

RAJASTHAN (INDIA)
18TH–19TH CENTURY

OVERALL 910 MM
BLADE 790 MM

A late 18th or early 19th century Indian shamshir sabre with chiselled and chased iron tulwar hilt in floral scroll and foliate interlace arrangements, all done in a style that suggests the craftsman was influenced by silver work from Kutch.

Delicate quillion bars, with large rounded quillion terminals, a knuckle guard chased with a leafy stalk and a makara finial. The hilt has a pronounced cant which is a feature seen on various northern tulwars, but frequently on 17th or 18th century tulwar swords from Sind. A large pommel disk with a floral border and further central sunburst disc with a bulbous finial.

A highly polished, heavy, wedge shaped steel blade of considerable curvature, housed in a contemporary velvet covered wooden scabbard with silver chape.







17

SILVER SHAMSHIR

KUTCH/CALCUTTA? (INDIA)
17TH–19TH CENTURY

OVERALL 810 MM
BLADE 740 MM

A fine Indian shamshir sword with chased silver hilt and en suite scabbard with an earlier blade circa 17th century.

The silver hilt of pistol grip form with swollen central grip and bud shaped quillons is completely overlaid with fine and deeply wrought floral scrolls, scabbard fittings to match. The floral work is in a looser arrangement than typically found in Kutch silver but retains the general form. It is known that several Kutch silver workers settled in Bombay (see Dehejia, p.128) and so this may be an explanation of the change in an otherwise consistent style. The leaves on this example are thicker and curl to a rounded end. This can be compared to a calling card case from Calcutta that Dehejia illustrates (p.80, no.16). Of note Dehejia also states that the most famous Kutch silversmiths originally belonged to the mochi or cobbler caste who manufactured leather shields and armour plates (p.127-128).

The blade of high quality Wootz crucible steel and is probably an ancestral blade of an earlier date (circa 17th century), a worn Persian inscription would support this theory. Wooden scabbard covered in yellow velvet.







18

ZAFAR TAKIYA SALAPA

MYSORE? (INDIA)
18TH CENTURY

OVERALL 710 MM
BLADE 600 MM

A rare Indian Zafar-Takiya short sword (literally 'cushion of victory'). It was used by high ranking men as part of court or durbar dress. The hilt would be used to rest the hand or wrist while the owner sat on the floor cross legged.

It has a broad, curved blade double-edged from the point in below the yelman, forged from pattern welded damascus steel. Steel hilt entirely covered in thick sheet silver; quillons each with rounded terminal, recurved tapering knuckle-guard with scrolled finial and recurved cushion-shaped pommel of circular section tapering towards the tips. Later wooden scabbard covered in faded purple velvet with shaped silver chape.

It is difficult to place this sword geographically, but a portrait of Tipu Sultan (ruler of Mysore 1782-1799) in the British Library (ref. Foster 28) shows him wearing a sword with unusual rounded quillons of similar form.

A similar example is in the Jaipur royal collection, see Elgood (2015), no.89, p.131.

TIPU SULTAN
SWORD

MYSORE (INDIA)
18TH CENTURY

OVERALL 920 MM
BLADE 780 MM

A magnificent Tipu Sultan sword from the late 18th century. Tipu Sultan (1750-1799) ruled Mysore until he was killed during the British assault on Seringapatam in 1799.

The tiger-head pommel cast, chased and engraved Gilt- bronze, precisely stamped with small repeating circles and chased with the bubri tiger stripe pattern that Tipu was so fond of, considered to be the Royal mark (see Stronge, p.56). Pronounced ears, and large bubri shaped eyebrows. The horn grip of octagonal form with four applied gilt bronze concentric disks with large bronze gilt quillon block, again with small repeating circles and bubris in a rosette arrangement. The quillon terminals in the shape of large tiger paws with sharp claws, langets shaped into an ogival point. A golden chain links the tigers head to and one of the quillons.

The Indian blade of pattern welded or mechanical Damascus steel, there is a sharp back edge on the distal third of the blade known as a "yelman" and takes its shape from early central Asian swords, and the later evolved Turkish kilij sword.

The original wooden scabbard is covered in dark green velvet and fitted with bronze gilt locket, chape and suspension loop, all profusely decorated with matching bubri motifs and punched circular patterns.

This sword shares many features found on known and published Tipu and Tipuesque swords. The grip on the example offered here has an octagonal form, much like several others, specifically a tiger hilted sword in the British Museum (see Archer/Rowell/Skelton, no.33).

Then there is the fabulous bejewelled Tipu sword from the collection of the late Robin Wigington, (see Bonhams, Islamic and Indian Art, 21st April 2015, lot 157 and Wigington 1996, p.142, no.1), Wigington describes the pommel 'a gem-set gold pommel taken from the sceptre of Tipu's coronation regalia'. As well as several stylistic similarities of the jewelled sword and the sword in this exhibition, of specific and important note are the tiger paw quillons which appear on both examples. The paw feature is repeated in Tipu's throne and can be seen in a watercolour now in Powis Castle, Wales (see Stronge, p.17, no.8); also throne elements of a head and two paws that were taken in the storming of Seringapatam and mounted as a trophy, are now in the Royal collection, (RCIN 67212) see Stronge, p.54 no.56.

This paw feature suggests that the sword offered here is one of importance, and its striking similarities to the ex-Wigington jewelled sword suggest that the same maker made both.









20

'MOHAMMED'S LADDER' SHAMSHIR

PERSIA AND INDIA
18TH CENTURY

OVERALL 980 MM
BLADE 840 MM

A very fine Indian Shamsir with a Persian kirk narduban 'ladder' blade. A 'kirk narduban' or 'Laddered blade' is a blade of high quality Wootz steel with approximately forty mechanically created distortions of the crystalline structure, called steps, which are located at regular intervals, and compact the 'watering' pattern into narrow linear bands between the edge and spine of the blade. Figiel 1991 (p.70) suggests that the use of a sword, particularly one with 'Mohammed's ladder' in a holy war, would ensure entry to paradise.

The blade is of Persian manufacture, made by the celebrated swordsmith 'Mohammed Kazim Shirazi' (Mayer p.73 and p.48). The striking wootz pattern of silver and grey wavy and motley lines on a dark background result in the kirk narduban pattern being clearly visible on both sides. Two gold inlaid cartouches containing inscriptions, a further band of inscriptions and a magic square.

The cartouches read:
Help from God with an early victory.
The Work of Mohammed
Kazim Shirazi, made for
Mohammed Xedmaktar.

The hilt has a two piece ivory grip- the ivory having a beautiful glossy patina, the iron pommel cap decorated with thick gold koftgari in floral patterns, with the iron cross guard decorated with gold koftgari and covered on all sides with low-relief Islamic calligraphy.

The Cross Guard reads:
In the name of God,
Compassionate and Merciful,
we look for help from him.
Help from God and Early Victory.

The Quillons read:
Oh the Compassionate,
Oh the Gracious,
Oh the Bounteous,
Oh the Benevolent,
Oh the Guide/Oh the Reasoning,
Oh the Friend and Oh the Merciful,
Allah, Mohammed.

The leather on the scabbard is renewed but the high quality steel mounts are original. This sword is evidence that wootz blades of the highest quality are still available on the market today.

Known works by Mohammed Kazem Shirazi include:

- ¹. Leo Figiel collection - lot 2016
Butterfields & Butterfields - Persian
Shamsir with tulwar hilt, bearing an
inscription showing it once belonged
to Fateh 'Ali Shah Qajar.
- ². The Wallace collection, London
(see Mayer p.48), an Indian tulwar for
(Sarkar-i) Mir Murad Ali Khan Talpur
(no.1503).
- ³. Splendeur Des Armes Orientales,
Missilier & Ricketts (p.129, no.215) -
Tulwar style hilt with Persian blade,
purportedly belonging to a ruler of Sind.
- ⁴. Jodhpur Fort Armoury -Shamsir; blade
Shiraz first quarter of the 18th century.
Hilt possibly Kotah, 20th century.

My thanks to Dr Elgood for alerting
me to the fourth example by the
maker Shiraz which is catalogued
in his forthcoming catalogue:
*Rajput Arms and Armour. The Rathores
and their Armoury at Jodhpur Fort.*





21

GOLD & RUBY SAIF

ARABIAN GULF, BAHRAIN?
19TH–EARLY 20TH CENTURY

OVERALL 920 MM
BLADE 790 MM



A gold mounted 'Saif' sword from the Arabian Peninsula. A single edged wootz damascus blade probably of Indian origin with a cartouche containing an inscription to one side:

'amal-e kazima' 'Work of Kazima'.

The hilt of Arabian form with upward pointing pommel and grip with repousse and filigree decoration is entirely clad with gold. The bud quillons and forte are mounted with gold. A golden chain knuckle guard set with a ruby is attached to the pommel and to one of the quillons.

The wooden scabbard is clad in leather stitched with gold wire. The gold mounts are decorated in repoussé with floral and geometric patterns. The locket has the traditional 'agrab' or scorpion motif, and the chape lozenge panels of gold.

A similar sword is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (M.294-1976) and illustrated by North, see p.31, no.25b. It also has a trade blade and is ruby mounted. It is said to have been presented to Lord Athlone by Sheik Iza of Bahrain in 1928.



22

GOLD & PEARLS

BAHRAIN OR OMAN
EARLY 20TH CENTURY

OVERALL 920 MM
BLADE 795 MM

A gold and pearl mounted 'Saif' sword from the Arabian Peninsula, probably Bahrain or Oman.

A single edged blade probably of Indian origin and a hilt of Arabian form with the pommel at a ninety degree angle to the grip. The hilt entirely clad with gold, with repousse, chased and filigree decoration.

The wooden scabbard en suite with gold cladding decorated in repoussé with floral and geometric patterns. A band of stylised calligraphy below the locket which has the traditional 'agrab' or scorpion motif, and the chape having traditional lozenge shaped decoration. Complete with the original gold and red coloured baldric or 'haback'.

The scabbard is set with twenty polished white pearls. Elgood (1994) p.84 quotes HH Sultan Ghalib Al Qu'aiti; that the shaikhs of Bahrain and the Sultan of Oman occasionally used pearls to decorate arms.







23

NOMAD SABRE

IRAN

MID-13TH-MID-14TH CENTURY

OVERALL 970 MM

BLADE 860 MM

An important sword which provides a crucial missing link between the proto-sabres used by Eurasian steppe nomads in the sixth to the twelfth centuries and the fully developed western Asian forms of the later fifteenth century. It was probably made for a nomad horseman probably in north eastern Iran during the reign of the Ilkhanids (1256-1353). See Komaroff/Carboni/Pinchot, p.13, fig.7 and p.272, no.136.

The gently curving blade has a swollen yelman with a false edge of 220mm (approximately 230mm), a feature that can be seen on Indian swords all the way into the 19th century, it gives the blade superior balance and thrusting capabilities.

The long tang would have given the sword impressive mechanical strength; it probably would have had grip scales of horn or wood. The original pins and three large iron studs still remain and a separate ovoid shaped cross guard of crucifix form with a central ridge.

Exhibited

The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256-1353 held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art from November 5, 2002, to February 16, 2003, and at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art from April 13 to July 27, 2003.

Published

The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256-1353, p.13, fig.7 and p.272, no.136.



24

BHUTANESE SWORD

BHUTAN
18TH–19TH CENTURY

OVERALL 585 MM
BLADE 445 MM

A high quality silver and gold mounted Bhutanese short sword. The hilt has a pommel cap made of pierced and gilded silver, the top having a gold dragon surrounded by silver scrollwork. The front panel has a gilt half-moon flanked with two gaping monster heads and a lower ju-i shaped cloud, all set in silver scrollwork. The rear panel has a honey comb window pattern with interlocking Y shaped motifs. The faceted wooden grip is tightly wrapped in silver braided wire and there is a beaded rim at the top and bottom. A short silver collar between the hilt and blade.

A straight single edged blade of traditional form shows a pattern which indicates that the bright steel was made by means of a technique known as 'hair-pin folding'.

The scabbard of wooden core is covered with thick silver sheet with a beaded scabbard mount and gilt scrollwork. There is a large central panel with gilt bands and W shaped motifs all containing chased scrollwork and floral patterns. An integral loop, decorated with gold scrolls, holds a red canvas strap used to secure the sword to the belt of its owner.

See LaRocca, no.73, p.171 for a similar sword.





25

TWO THAI DHA

NORTHERN THAILAND
RATTANAKOSIN PERIOD
19TH CENTURY

OVERALL 1180 MM
BLADE 620 MM

Two large ceremonial swords from northern Thailand from the 19th century. Both hilts are as long as the blades, and have wooden cores covered with silver sheet, nine panels of repoussé and chased floral and geometric designs separated by silver rings with large bulbous pommel of segmented decoration. Flame profiled curving blades of identical shape.

A similar, but shorter sword is in the National Museum, Bangkok, illustrated and described by Panchaphan as a Lanna-style sword. It is presumed Panchaphan is referring to the Kingdom of Lan Na, which was an Indianised state centred in present-day Northern Thailand from the 13th to 18th centuries. See Panchaphan p.134.



26

THAI 'NARAI HOK' SPEAR

THAILAND
AYUTTHAYAN PERIOD
18TH CENTURY

OVERALL 2220 MM
BLADE 400 MM

A fine example of a Thai spear known as a 'Narai Hok'. The name probably originates from arguably the most famous Ayutthayan king, Narai Ramathibodi III, 1633-1688, who reigned from 1656-1688. These spears are usually mounted on bamboo shafts, this example is hardwood which provides superior strength, and is carved to imitate the natural beauty bamboo has to offer; a distinctive triangle carved at each notch. Another unusual feature is the inlay of mother of pearl at the top of the shaft beneath the spear head.

The heavy iron socket has two cut and pierced bands, the central area has silver floral decoration in a lozenge formation, and the ends have chiselled arches in a style commonly found on Thai decoration. There is a striking square iron guard cut and pierced and decorated with silver damascening.

The heavy blade, which has a square base with silver decoration, flares towards the point.

An example of a 'Nari Hok' with hardwood shaft is in the National Museum, Bangkok, and is illustrated in the catalogue 'Heritage of Thai Culture' by the Ministry of Education Fine Arts Department, 1993.









27

THE LANCE WITH FIVE POINTS

TIBET
17TH–18TH CENTURY

OVERALL 530 MM
BLADE 230 MM

An important five-bladed spearhead from Tibet which matches the description of a spear in Nebesky-Wojkowitz's classic book, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Deities*. Page 15 contains a discussion of weapons carried by protective deities and the list contains 'the lance with five points'.

There appears to be no other similar spear known and it is plausible that this is the one mentioned by Nebesky-Wojkowitz. It was probably made to place in the chapel of a protective deity, where arms and armour were often deposited as votive objects. Nebesky-Wojkowitz also identifies the term of 'mdung' to describe the lances used by oracles.

The five near identical blades individually resemble a spearhead in the Metropolitan museum, see LaRocca, p.176. The spear heads are relatively flat in profile, double edged with a slight medial ridge and rounded tip. All decorated with striking gold flames on a dark background and ju-i shaped clouds sit at the base of each blade. Each head is connected to a square section arm covered in sheet silver. A two-stage russet iron socket with a faceted gilt knob. Displayed on a custom made wooden red shaft and metal base.

My thanks to Donald La Rocca for pointing out the Nebesky-Wojkowitz reference.





28

STEEL & GOLD AXE

JAIPUR (INDIA)
19TH CENTURY

OVERALL 435 MM

A small and slender 19th century Axe from India. The steel head is profusely decorated with fine and precise gold koftgari in the form of 'tarnishan' or true inlay, on a blued steel background, a style synonymous with Jaipur. The gold work on the faces extends from central symmetrical flowers and flowering blossoms surrounded by leafy stalks in an overall 'Arabesque' style. Top and bottom edges having entwined kundalini snakes. A small flat hammer opposite the axe blade is decorated with a multi-petalled flower; also in gold inlay. A tapering wooden haft, the end with a small, turned brass cap with precise knurled pattern.

See Hales, p.305, no.736 for a similar example.





29

ZAFAR TAKIEH

RAJASTHAN
19TH CENTURY

OVERALL 550 MM

A 19th century Zafar Takieh of all-steel construction. This one does not conceal a blade as many do, but is heavy enough to be used as a mace. The crutch pommel terminates in a detailed Makara head, with gaping mouth, up-curved snout and a ribbed chin. An applied cut and pierced collar sits on the tubular body, and the object is decorated with silver koftgari in floral patterns. A wide flat base provides a stable and elegant base for a dignitary to rest his arm and conduct his duties with pomp and glory.





30

ZAFAR TAKIYAH GUPTI

DECCAN (INDIA)
18TH CENTURY

OVERALL 700 MM
BLADE 450 MM

An 18th century object from India known as a Zafar Takieh (see Stones glossary p.683). Literally translated to Throne of Victory, said to have been used as 'darbar' (court) object. This example is all-steel with an asymmetrical faceted support that forms the pommel and terminates in a makara head with a gaping mouth. The support unscrews from the tubular body in a clockwise direction to reveal a long square section stiletto blade. A similar example is in the Nasser D.Khalili collection of Islamic Art, and illustrated in the book 'The Arts of War' by David Alexander, 1992, p.198, no.133.









31

PAINTED TORADAR MATCHLOCK

MUGHAL INDIA
17TH CENTURY

OVERALL 1960 MM

A fine 'Toradar' or 'Banduk' matchlock musket from 17th century Mughal India, the tapering barrel with scale-like punched dot design over most of its length, retained by plaited silver wire bands. The slightly flared muzzle, ramrod and breech are thickly decorated with gold, the breech with a design of birds, flowers and foliage.

A copper fore-sight, tang, side-plates, trigger, pivoting pan-cover, and original steel ramrod all decorated en-suite. Fully painted timber stock with panels of black and olive green floral patterns on a cinnabar red background.

Another painted Mughal matchlock is illustrated by Ricketts and Missilier, p.107, no.178.

Of particular note is a portrait of Shah Jahan by the artist Payag, dating to circa 1630-35, and now in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin (library no. 7B.28), it shows the Mughal Emperor holding a similar hunting gun with painted stock (see Elgood 1995, p.140).



32

INDIAN TORADAR MATCHLOCK

JAIPUR (INDIA)
18TH CENTURY

OVERALL 1480 MM

An Indian 20-bore matchlock 'toradar' or 'bandook' with chiselled and gilt decoration. With tapering, two-stage, sighted steel barrel, retained by silver wire barrel bands. The slightly flared muzzle and breech are chiselled with foliate designs in relief, thickly covered in gold. The breech has two bands of Devanagari inscriptions, surrounded by chiselled and gilt panels of flowers inhabited by a brace of peacocks seated beneath a cypress tree which stretches along the barrel to the muzzle, providing a sighting rib. Steel butt mount with horn butt-plate, pricker retained by silver chains, sling loops and original steel ramrod.

Provenance

R. Wagner Jr collection (USA)

Exhibited

Higgins Armoury Museum,
Worcester, MA (USA),
September-December 1994







33

LANTAKA CANNON

PORTUGUESE MACAU OR GOA
16TH CENTURY

OVERALL 1760 MM
BORE 450 MM

A large bronze south-east Asian 'Lantaka' breach loading swivel cannon.

The general form takes that of a traditional Lantaka, with a 'Sangka' (swivel) attached to the trunnions (projecting lugs on both sides of the lower barrel), enabling the cannon to be located securely into a base or carriage. The cannon can then be manoeuvred laterally as well as up and down. Lantaka were intended for use on merchant vessels travelling the waterways of the Malay Archipelago and this important example must have been used on a large ship of significant status.

The very unusual open 'boat shaped' breach would have accepted a pre-loaded breach block (now missing), but in its hollow state is visually striking and the entire breach area is decorated with beautiful floral mouldings. The midsection of the barrel is hexagonal and rest is smooth, two rows of decorative V shaped panels point towards the muzzle. The barrel has a stylised dragon spine with protruding spikes. Quite distinctive wide breach slots, and a scrolling loop (for carrying?) on one side. A pot shaped cascabel sits at the end.

The cannon takes the overall shape of a dragon (naga), the muzzle is in the form of the dragons head with gaping mouth, scaled cheeks and a central crest, while the rear of the cannon has a scaled curled tail.

A pair of birds sit on the 'sangka' above the trunnions, a feature identical to a breach loading cannon in the Brunei museum, see Shariffuddin/Wells plate XLVI, p.41 and p.21. At the time of publication the authors were not aware of the exact origin of the museum's cannon, but state it was purchased from Sipitang in the southern part of Sabah, outside of Brunei.

A bronze swivel cannon with similar boat shaped open breach and moulded decoration is currently in the Shoko Shuseikan Museum, Kagoshima, Japan (see Turnbull 2003, p.111 and p.209). It is likely to be one of two Portuguese cannons that were presented to Ōtomo Sōrin Yoshishige (1530-1587) by the Portuguese in 1551 (see Lidin, p.156 and p.249). Sōrin was a Japanese feudal lord (daimyo) of the Ōtomo clan, one of the few to have converted to Roman Catholicism, and a great admirer of European firearm technology.

The other cannon is said to be in the Yasukuni Shrine in Chiyoda, Tokyo, Japan, both dated to the 16th century and nicknamed Kunikuzushi 'Destroyer of Provinces'. Their use by the Japanese is well documented well (see Turnbull 2005 p.20-21), as is the relationship of the Portuguese and Sōrin (see Lidin p.157, 173-177).

The Kunikuzushi cannon that were presented to Sōrin were probably made in the Portuguese Royal foundries at Maccau or Goa, and the striking similarities between them and the Lantaka cannon shown here suggest they were made at the same location and to a similar design.

Set on a custom made contemporary stand.







34

BAJOU-ZUTSUJAPANESE, EDO PERIOD
19TH CENTURY

OVERALL 520 MM

A very fine and richly decorated example of a Japanese Tanegashima (matchlock musket), this short version is called a bajou- zutsu (horse pistol) of 4 monme calibre and was designed for use from horseback. The lavishly decorated iron barrel is held in a plain Kashi (red oak) stock by two bamboo mekugi (pegs) and a dougane (stock ring), it has a udenuki-ana (rectangular slot for a sling) lined with silver. The Jiita (lock plate), hibasami (serpentine), dougane (stock ring) and hizara (pan tray) are all highly decorated with scrolling karakusa (arabesques) inlaid in silver.

The iron barrel is similarly decorated in the Kaga style with gold and silver nunome (overlays) depicting a rain dragon writhing amongst clouds, it is signed by the artist in gold along the top of the barrel 'Kaga ju letsugu tsukuru' meaning it was decorated by letsugu living in the province of Kaga (modern day Ishikawa Prefecture).

The Japanese tanegashima was based on the snap matchlocks that were produced in the armoury of Goa in Portuguese India. The first documented introduction of the matchlock to Japan which became known as tanegashima was through Portuguese traders who took shelter from a storm in 1543. The name tanegashima came from the island where the Portuguese first landed, the lord of the Japanese island Tanegashima Tokitaka (1528–1579) purchased two matchlock muskets from the Portuguese and put a swordsmith to work copying the barrel and firing mechanism. Within 6 months he had reputedly produced 600 copies. Within a few years the use of the tanegashima revolutionised warfare in feudal Japan, culminating most notably at the battle of Nagashino in 1575 when Oda Nobunaga used 3000 gunners in his devastating victory over Takeda Katsuyori.







35

KOREAN QUIVER

KOREA
JOSEON PERIOD
18TH OR 19TH CENTURY

OVERALL 940 MM
DIAMETER 63 MM

A scarce Korean quiver of octagonal box construction made from bamboo covered with shagreen and fitted with brass mounts. The bottom of the case has four rounded half-ball brass feet and the main body has two brass collars with suspension rings, the collars having chased scrolling decoration. Two dragon squirrels are carved from wood and sit next to each suspension collar. The top has a hinged lid, with a carved grotesque face of a war dog.

See Boots (1931), plate 10, for similar Korean quivers.

Korean arms & armour are exceedingly rare. Boots writes that he made a trip to Japan, acting upon the suggestion made in Griffin's book on Korea that a large collection of military antiques were taken back to Japan by Hideyoshi's officers and were in the possession of the imperial household. He found on his visit that the entire collection had been destroyed in the great earthquake of 1923.



36

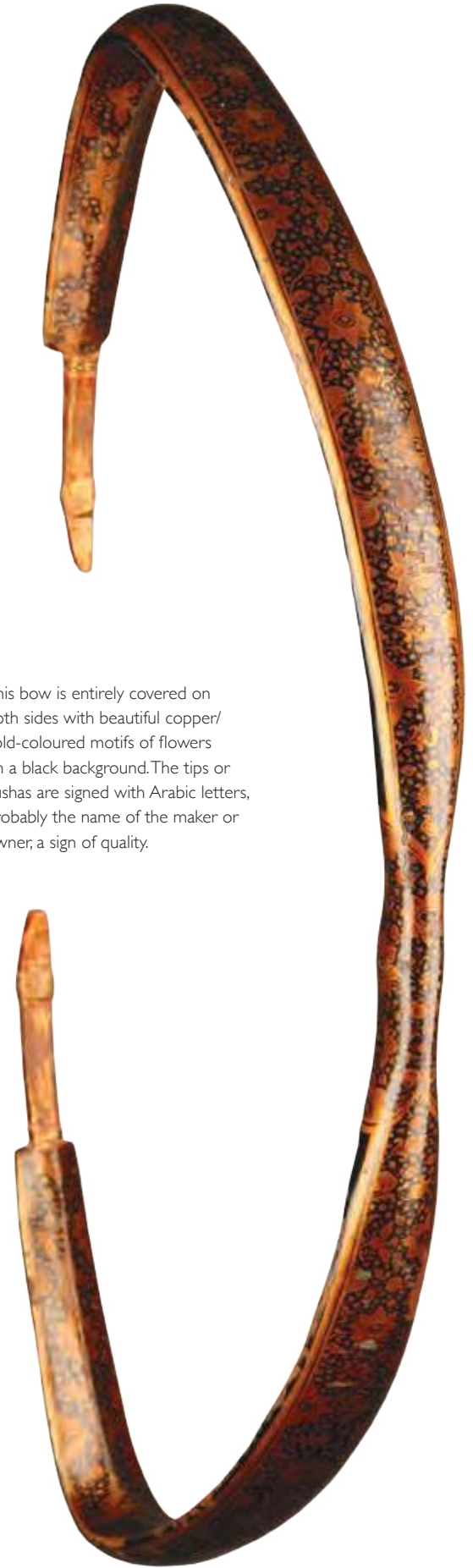
INDIAN 'KAMAN' BOW

MUGHAL INDIA
17TH OR 18TH CENTURY

OVERALL 580 MM

A very fine late 17th to early 18th century Mughal lacquered composite bow. It is made of buffalo horn, sinew, and wood (mango or rain tree) glued together. It invariably is covered with birch bark (or other materials), and then lacquered. Sometimes referred to as a 'reflex bow' due to the natural un-strung position the bow takes, or a crab bow, again due to its shape.

This bow is entirely covered on both sides with beautiful copper/gold-coloured motifs of flowers on a black background. The tips or gushas are signed with Arabic letters, probably the name of the maker or owner, a sign of quality.



37

NUT-CUTTER

SOUTH INDIA
LATE 18TH CENTURY

OVERALL 150 MM

A beautiful late 18th century bronze betel cutter from South India in the form of an apsara or celestial female with the cutter handles represented as her legs and wings. She has an elegant head and face with large eyes, her hair in a bun or konde with a centre parting.

These specific cutters are called vandun giraya meaning 'worship cutter'. When the cutter is closed and at rest, she holds her folded hands in anjali-mudra, out in front in supplication to a supreme being. When the handles are opened the object comes to life. Her wings open and her hands rise to her forehead as if she is accepting a blessing bestowed by her God.







38

**MUGHAL
DAGGER HILT**DECCAN (INDIA)
17TH CENTURY

OVERALL 125 MM

Said to have been Shah Jahans favourite colour; a dark green jade hilt from a Mughal Khanjar dagger; carved in pistol-grip form with floral motifs across the rounded pommel and quillons.

A small group of daggers with similar Jade hilts are the Al-Sabah Collection, Kuwait National Museum, see Keane and others (2001, p.122-133, fig 9.31-9.33).



39

CHINESE JADE DAGGER HANDLE

CHINA
12TH–17TH CENTURY

OVERALL 125 MM

A rare Chinese jade dagger handle. The light green grey stone is flecked with brown, with the central area having a complex network of reddish brown veins. The hilt is of baluster form and has curled quillons with smaller curls at the pommel in a typically Chinese manner.

Hales (2014) notes that many Mughal jade hilts conventionally date from the late 17th to the early 19th century and are of a closely similar form to this hilt. He suggests that this Chinese hilt may represent the source of the Indian tradition, and adds that Chinese jades can be difficult to date. Expert opinion on this piece ranges from Southern Song to late Ming (circa 1120–1640) which therefore pre-dates the Mughal hilts in question.

Published

Islamic and Oriental Arms & Armour;
R.Hales, 2014, no.57, p.23.



40

BUSHU TSUBA

JAPAN
EDO PERIOD
18TH–19TH CENTURY

LENGTH 70 MM
WIDTH 67 MM
THICKNESS 5 MM

A Japanese openwork Bushu tsuba (sword guard), with beautiful dark brown patina. All iron, modelled in the form of a stout horse, his head bowed and one front leg raised. Excellent detailing of facial features, mane and tail. A twisting rein extends from the bridle to the tail. Complete in wooden storage box. An almost identical example is pictured by Murtha p.16 & p.17.

41

RITUAL MASK

ARUNACHAL PRADESH/TIBET
18TH CENTURY

OVERALL 400 MM

A polychrome papier-mâché ritual mask, depicting Zam the young, or Zam the old, both divinities present at the Choskor Festival usually in the presence of the death heads (kiengpa) or of the defied form of King Jeipuh who would partake in the Yak dance.

In this example he is baring fangs and has enflamed facial hair; a snub nose, bulging eyes, and is surmounted with a single large skull. For closely related examples, depicting different emotional affects, see Pannier, p.54-57, no's 5, 6 and 7.





42

BHUTANESE ROYAL GUARD'S SHIELD

BHUTAN
LATE 19TH CENTURY

OVERALL 490 MM

A Bhutanese royal guard's shield from the late 19th century. Made from rhino hide, it has a black lacquer finish, with a bright red rolled border. The natural hide texture preserved under the lacquer. Mounted with four brass bosses, and a silver coloured ad-chand (half-moon) with surya (sun) to represent 'method' (upaya) and 'wisdom' (prajna). Centrally anointed with a red tilak dot for protective luck. The rear with original woven pad, leather straps and iron rings.

Near identical shields can be seen being carried by the bodyguards of Ugyen Wangchuck, the future first king of Bhutan, in a photograph dated 1905 (see Schicklgruber & Pommaret, p.225).

A similar shield is also kept in the Royal Armouries, UK, currently on display in case 2 in the Oriental Gallery (No. XXVIA. 107); and another in the Metropolitan museum, New York (No.36.25.630) see Stone, fig.69, p53.



43

TWO CANE SHIELDS

TIBET

15TH–18TH CENTURY

OVERALL 600 MM & 630 MM

Robinson, p.162 notes that shields were not generally used in Tibet, so these examples are a rare find; two large domed cane shields (sba phub). Constructed of a thick rod of cane, tightly coiled into a spiral. The rods are completely wrapped with thin split cane, which holds them together. Both have central iron bosses, one larger than the other. The surfaces are painted red with almond shaped cartouches in black. A similar example is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (2005.1.45), see LaRocca, p.94, no.25.



K HOOSHAL DHUNJEE & SONS

Painter and Shieldmaker S.

Dhulgarwada street

CITY AHMEDABAD,

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY

INDIA

44

SIGNED DHAL SHIELD

GUJARAT (INDIA)
19TH CENTURY

OVERALL 430 MM

A beautifully painted 19th century Indian 'Dhal' shield from Ahmedabad, Gujarat. The convex shield, with rolled edge, is made from treated animal hide and the entire surface painted. The centre has discs of floral patterns, with an outer sunburst in gold. The main area of the shield has a deep-red repeating floral patterns on a black background. The outer rim painted with a thick off-white to match one of the central discs and surrounded with another sunburst. Four brass bosses seated on a textile base so as not to damage the painted surface.

The rear is painted red, with a gold border, and scattered gold circular decoration. Iron rings, and a red silk covered pad with brocade border.

Signed by the maker:

Khooshal Dhunjee & Sons
Painter and Shield Makers
Dhalgarwada Street
City Ahmedabad
Bombay Presidency
India

A similar shield was presented to the Prince of Wales 1875-76 by the Nawab of Balasinor, Bombay Presidency (The Royal Collection, RCIN: 38128), see Clarke 1910 / Elgood 2008.

45

PERSIAN OR CAUCASIAN HELMET

18TH CENTURY

HEIGHT 660 MM
DIAMETER 205 MM

A very unusual Persian or Caucasian helmet Khula Khud, the one-piece iron bowl raised from a single piece, and divided into 12 arcade segments with sunken and gilded borders supporting another inverted row above. The bowl is surmounted by an unusually large conical mount retaining much original gilding, with a square section spike. Three plume sockets of robust construction are fitted to the front of the helmet, together with an adjustable nasal bar with palmette-shaped finials decorated in gold with protective Qur'anic inscriptions. The long camail comprises iron links with copper rivets, some decorative brass links, and applied gilt silver rondels with embossed with qur'anic inscriptions.

The place of manufacture is uncertain, and the helmet does not conform to known and expected types. However the camail is of a type closely associated with both Ottoman and Caucasian helmets, and may provide a starting point for further enquiry.

The upper nasal reads:

'Ya Ḥafīẓ'

(recited as one of the attributes of God; translation: O, guardian/protector!)

The lower nasal reads:

'Naṣru min Allah wa fathun qarīb'.

Translation: victory comes from Allah and an imminent conquest is near (soon happening).

The camail rondels read as:

'Ya Qaḍi al-Hajat'

(also one of the attributes of God, translation: O, bestower of desires);

'Ya Ḥafīẓ'; and

'Naṣru min Allah wa fathun qarīb'.

A similar example is in the reserve collection of the National Museum in Krakow (no.5447).





46

AKODA NARI BACHI

JAPAN
MUROMACHI PERIOD
1333–1573

HEIGHT 170 MM
DIAMETER 270 MM

An interesting late Muromachi period (1333-1573) multi plate akoda nari bachi (helmet bowl) circa 1520. Made from 28 individual long triangular iron plates iron riveted together in a symmetrical fashion. Each plate is formed with a standing suji (flange) to give strength and rigidity. The top of the bowl is finished with a four stage tehen kanamono (decorative metal fixture) in copper, gilt and silver and finely engraved with scrolling karakusa (vines). The front plate is applied with three shinodare (arrow shaped fittings that were originally added for strength). The surface of the helmet bowl now has a beautiful russet iron patina with the external rivet heads finished flush.

A rare feature are the two folding fukigaeshi (protective turn-back 'flaps'), which are connected to the remaining top lame of the shikoro (neck guard). Folding fukigaeshi were preferred by samurai archers as they could be pushed flush to the side of the helmet so as not to catch the bowstring.

During the Muromachi period this style of helmet bowl was considered to be the finest of all helmet designs being both strong and light it was favoured by many high ranking samurai.

A similar helmet is illustrated by I. Bottomley & A.P Hopson, p.75 and p.144.

47

TWELVE PLATE JAPANESE HELMET

JAPAN
MOMOYAMA PERIOD
1573–1615

HEIGHT 320 MM
DIAMETER 250 MM



A Twelve plate Japanese shiinomi nari-bachi from the Momoyama period (1573–1615). The shiinomi (acorn shape) helmet bowl is formed from twelve iron plates. The integral oroshi mabizashi (peak) is nicely shaped with a small indent on the leading edge that roughly conforms to the brow line of the wearer. A single tsunomoto (prong) centrally mounted allows a maedate (front crest) to be fitted while two larger iron posts protrude from each side of the bowl to allow wakidate (side crests) to be mounted.

The exterior of the bowl has been finished with cha urushi, a type of lacquer with a deep brown colour. The bowl is fitted with a graceful six lame iron hineno shikoro (close fitting neck guard), laced in purple silk odoshi (braid), with a further decorative white band to the bottom lame and lacquered in black.

The maedate front crest and the wakidate side crests give the helmet a strong Buddhist theme; depicting the hoju no tama (flaming jewel) which signifies the highest plane of enlightenment in Buddhist philosophy. The inside of the helmet bowl has a red lacquer signature of the Iwai school.

The Iwai of Nara were katchu-shi (armourers) specializing in the assembly and lacing of armour and in 1600 Iwai Yozaemon earned the trust of Tokugawa Ieyasu during the battle of Sekigahara when Ieyasu wore a specially made set of Yozaemon's armour and won a great victory. Ieyasu became Shogun (military dictator) in 1603 and afterwards the armour made by the Iwai for each successive Shogun were ritually displayed every eleventh of January in the tokonoma (alcove) of the Kuro-shonin, the room in Edo Castle where the Shogun received daimyo.

This dramatic kabuto (helmet) would have been worn in battle by a samurai of some importance at end of the Sengoku-Jidai (age of the country at war) a period of 170 years of devastating civil war which ended with Tokugawa Ieyasu becoming Shogun.

While the shiinomi shape is not considered a kawari kabuto (unique helmet) the addition of large flaming jewel wakidate make a very bold statement. During the Momoyama Period samurai who could afford it wore flamboyant helmets, like this one so they could be easily identified by friend and foe alike on the crowded battlefields of the late 16th century.





48

KOREAN HELMET

KOREA

16TH–17TH CENTURY

HEIGHT 250 MM

DIAMETER 215 MM

A large and impressive helmet, the bowl made from two iron plates joined vertically by rivets to a narrow covering strip with median ridge. The brim is fitted with a brow plate with cut-outs for the eyes, and above this is a short peak. The bowl is surmounted by an inverted cup-shaped mount, pierced for a (missing) plume tube. The helmet fittings are thickly damascened with silver; the decoration includes lotus flowers, foliage and a key pattern.

Korean helmets are seldom found outside of museums, and very little is written on the subject. We can however compare this example to an example known to exist which is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, illustrated by McKillop p.115, no.51. According to museum records it is said to have belonged to a 'Corean Prince, and was taken by the troops of the Prince of Hizen during Taiko Samu's expedition from Japan to Korea in 1594'.

49

NAMBAN KAWARI-BACHI

KOREA/JAPAN
16TH–17TH CENTURY

HEIGHT 270 MM
DIAMETER 205 MM

An intriguing Korean bowl converted to a Japanese style helmet with the addition of a *koshi-maki* (a narrow strip of metal forming the lower edge of a helmet bowl) and *mabizashi* (peak). Probably captured by troops of the Prince of Hizen during Taiko Samu's expedition from Japan to Korea in 1594 (McKillop p.115).

A four piece bowl of russet iron, joined vertically by means of riveted winged straps with a median ridge, a method that can be found on many north Asian helmets of Mongol form. The bowl is surmounted by a *tehen no kanamono* (ornamental fitting).

The *koshi-maki* and *mabizashi* (peak) probably applied in Japan, in addition to a central *tsunomoto* fixture for a *maedate* (forecrest). Around the lower part are a number of apertures for the attachment of a full *shikoro* [neck guard]. An applied openwork iron *Mon* (Japanese family crest) is an unusual feature, and is in melon (*mokko*) form. See Chapplear & Hawley, p.18.

The brim of the original Korean bowl is internally visible and can be seen to be multi-pierced for mail, a fashion not associated with Japanese helmets.

A number of Korean helmets mounted in Japanese style are preserved in private and public. Of note is a Korean helmet mounted with a Japanese *shikoro* in the Stibbert Museum, see Procacci/Robinson item 191a; another with a chain *camail* is illustrated by Żygulski, p.230.



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TIBETAN HELMET

EASTERN TIBET
16TH CENTURY

HEIGHT 195 MM
DIAMETER 230 MM

The two-piece bowl is fitted with heavy iron mounts which are pierced and chiselled with pairs of dragons entwined with scrollwork, floral motifs, and auspicious emblems. These are decorated with thick gold and silver damascening, subsequently engraved.

A pair of teardrop shaped devices at the centre of vertically applied iron bands, both contain free moving dragons which are ingeniously imprisoned within a cage-work of scrolls. Each side of the skull is fitted with a raised iron disc with scrolling foliage which has been gold-damascened; one side of the brim is fitted with five ornamental raised rivet heads deeply chiselled and gold-damascened with scrolling foliage.

The two-piece bowl is secured by means of an internal iron strip underlying each seam. Similarities can be found in another two piece helmet in the Metropolitan Museum, described as Mongolian or Chinese (1350-1450), illustrated LaRocca 2006, no. 18, p.83.

The applied decorative ironwork also provides us with important clues in order to date this helmet and relate it to known examples of Tibetan ironwork. The two side discs and five rivet heads are comparable to four harness fittings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, see LaRocca (2006), no. 133, p.247, dated 15th-17th century. The teardrop devices can be compared to two similar plaques found on horse bridles (IBIN) no's. 134 and 135, p.248-251, both plaques are undeniably beautiful, but understood not to be free moving.



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DECCAN HELMET

DECCAN PLATEAU (INDIA)
16TH CENTURY

HEIGHT 280 MM
DIAMETER 220 MM

Sold to a private collector; August 2015 and kindly included here for academic reasons.

A large Indian turban shaped helmet forged from a single piece of 'wootz' damascus steel. Set at its apex with a flattened octagonal faceted bulbous knob with a protruding spike with turned base. The rim with applied brass rivets, presumably for cloth neck and cheek guards. The top of the long nasal guard has a lobed finial with small acorn pommel, and the lower side has a larger and wider finial resembling the wide anchor shaped nasal guards found on some Deccani helmets. There is a small iron loop and hook to keep the nasal guard in the upper position. The rear of the bowl has traces of un-deciphered Arabic script.

A similar example is kept in the Welt Museum Wien, Vienna (formally Museum für Völkerkunde). See Robinson, p. 122, plate XXA.

Other comparable helmets are in the Furusiyya Art Foundation collection and are illustrated in Arts of the Muslim Knight: the Furusiyya Art Foundation Collection, of particular note are no's 315 and 317 (p.328 and 330 respectively).

In the 2015 publication, Indian Arms and Armour, Richardson and Bennett show a beautiful and similar example from the Royal Armouries collection which they state is a 'Deccani product', see p.65 (XXVIA.332). Of particular note they suggest that the Armouries example came from Bikaner; a point that should not be overlooked. We should also consider the same provenance for the helmet shown in this catalogue, and it is possible it was part of the booty taken by Maharajah Anup Singh of Bikaner when he defeated the army of the Adilshahi dynasty at the siege of Adoni in 1689.



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