

The Gods of War

Sacred Imagery and the Decoration of Arms and Armor



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and the
Decoration of Arms
and Armor

Donald J. LaRocca



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Introduction

From the armory of God, where stand of old
Myriads between two brazen mountains lodged
Against a solemn day, harnessed at hand,
Celestial equipage; and now came forth
Spontaneous, for within them spirit lived,
Attendant on their Lord.

Milton, *Paradise Lost*

Religious beliefs have often inspired the content of artistic expression, at times supplying the themes that infuse not only the art but also the spirit of an age. Through artistic invention sacred concepts take on concrete form both in works devoted to worship and in those intended for nonreligious uses. In this regard, sacred imagery is one of the few themes, perhaps the only truly universal theme, that manifests itself in the form and ornamentation of armor and weapons from cultures around the world.

Although much of the decoration on arms and armor is simply ornamental, the inclusion of religious symbols usually imparts a specific message. Such symbolism appears in many forms, including figural depictions of particular gods, saints, and spirits, as well as religious or talismanic emblems, words, and phrases. The ornamental techniques employed vary from simple ink-block printing on fabric to elaborate embossing and chasing on copper, steel, and gold. Etching and engraving, inlay in gold and silver, and wood carving were all used to create the sacred messages that a warrior might choose to convey through his martial accoutrements. These spiritually imbued arms were seen as objects of considerable

importance, and sometimes of reverence, by their makers, users, and viewers. The evocative, often intricate decoration, although perhaps mysterious in form and content to us now, would have been clearly understandable and potent with meaning to its original audience.

The religions discussed in this brief survey include Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Shintō, Christianity, Islām, and Sikhism. They are represented by objects from India, Indonesia, Tibet, China, Korea, Japan, the Middle East, and Europe. The choice of these various religions and cultures was dictated solely by the resources of the reserve collection of the Metropolitan Museum's Department of Arms and Armor, from which the entire selection of objects was drawn.

Hindu India

Hinduism is considered the world's oldest active religion. Also known in India as *sanātana-dharma* (the eternal religion), it comprises a wide variety of regional beliefs and worship traditions. Unlike Buddhism, Christianity, Islām, and Sikhism, the Hindu religion has no historical founder and no single creed.



Plate 1. *Katar* with the ten avatars of Vishnu, checklist no. 3

It is based on a rich and complex mythology involving a large pantheon of gods and goddesses and on a shared reverence for a number of sacred scriptures of great antiquity. The earliest among these writings, and the earliest text of any of the current world religions, are the Vedas, an extensive compilation of hymns and rituals dating from about 1500 B.C. and later. This was followed by the Upanishads, a philosophical interpretation of the wisdom of the Vedas. Augmenting the scriptures are epic poems in which the gods and goddesses are vividly portrayed. From about the middle of the first millennium B.C. comes the first great Sanskrit epic, the *Rāmāyana*, which concerns the battle for supremacy between the gods and demons. Composed about the same period was another famous Sanskrit poem, the *Māhābhārata*, a vast compendium of mythic tales involving the dynastic struggles of gods and men. Also of primary importance among the Hindu texts are the *Purānas*, which present the legends of the gods. They serve as guides to the worship of various gods, especially such prominent deities as Vishnu and Shiva.

Plate 1

The *katar* is a unique form of Indian dagger, in which the grip is perpendicular to the blade. It was wielded in the right hand, as an independent weapon, or in the left hand, in conjunction with a round shield. Two narrow upright flanges, often bearing fine ornamentation, protect the sides of the hand and wrist. Within the limited confines of these flanges the decoration of this *katar* depicts one of the most expansive areas of the Hindu pantheon: the ten incarnations (*avatāras*) of Vishnu.

Vishnu as the universal savior is one element of Hinduism's *trimūrti* (supreme triune deity), which also encompasses Brahmā as the creator and Shiva as the destroyer. In order to sustain mankind or defeat a great evil, Vishnu periodically manifested himself on earth in a physical form, or avatar. The number of Vishnu's avatars has evolved over time, but one of the more widely accepted groups comprises the ten avatars represented on this *katar*. Here the avatars are displayed in two vertical rows, with five shown on each of the upright handguards, in

the order in which they are said to have appeared on earth through the ages. From top to bottom they are: 1. Matsya (the Fish), 2. Kūrma (the Tortoise), 3. Varāha (the Boar), 4. Narasimha (the Lion), 5. Vāmana (the Dwarf), 6. Parashurāma (Rāma with the ax), 7. Rāmachandra (or Balarāma, brother of Krishna), 8. Krishna, 9. Buddha, and 10. Kalkin (the Horse or Mounted Warrior), who is yet to come.

The first four avatars, with animal attributes, may represent the early incorporation of indigenous folk deities into the Hindu religion through their association with Vishnu. Similarly, the inclusion of Buddha, as the ninth avatar, represents a response to the rise of Buddhism, which coexisted with Hinduism in India for over a thousand years. The tenth avatar, Kalkin, is expected to come with fire and sword at the end of the present age, when civilization will have reached its nadir. Vishnu, in this guise, will purge the earth of evil and prepare the way for a new beginning.

Plate 2

Early Hindu goddesses were usually perceived merely as the consorts of certain gods or as female expressions of their sacred energy (shakti). Later many goddesses developed into powerful, independent deities, who became and remain the object of fervent devotion. One of the better known of these goddesses is Durgā, a fierce and invincible demon slayer, whose image on this ornate spearhead is shown astride a tiger and brandishing a trident and a sword.

Durgā is often considered to be the wrathful manifestation of Mahādevī, the Great Goddess, also known simply as Devī. Through manifestations, or projections of their divine essence, the gods and goddesses created variations of themselves with different powers, attributes, and names, which were suited to meet the demands of specific crises or adventures. Devī is seen as the universal mother and by some accounts is the ultimate source of all Hindu goddesses. She is widely revered in her Durgā form and in her benign manifestation as the goddess Pārvatī, wife of Shiva (see fig. 1, checklist no. 2).

The most famous episode among the Durgā legends involves the goddess's destruction of Mahisha,



Plate 2. Spearhead with the image of Durgā, checklist no. 1

the mighty buffalo demon who had vanquished all the male incarnations of the gods. Angered by their defeat, the gods pooled their fury into one fiery emanation, which resulted in the creation of Durgā,



Plate 3. Three sacrificial weapons, checklist nos. 6–8

an invincible warrior in the form of a beautiful young woman. They bestowed their own weapons upon her, and, thus armed and riding the lion steed of Devī, she was easily able to kill Mahisha and many other demons. Durgā is frequently depicted with many arms in order to accommodate the sacred weapons given to her by the gods. On this spearhead, however, she is shown with only two arms, in which she bears the trident of Shiva and a sword.

Because of her stature as an undefeatable warrior, the worship of Durgā became an important means of seeking divine assurance for success in battle. The ritual of her worship included the ceremonial consecration of individual weapons and their

veneration as minor deities. The use of Durgā's image in the decoration of this spearhead may be seen as a sign of homage to the goddess, as an invocation of her prowess, and as a means of sanctifying and therefore empowering the weapon in her name.

Plate 3

Just as Durgā was a manifestation of the focused anger of the gods, so too was the goddess Kālī (literally, "the black one") an emanation born of the wrath of Durgā. Kālī is worshiped both as the most blood-thirsty member of the Hindu pantheon and, conversely, as the most life affirming. The goddess's dichotomous nature as destroyer and savior is implicit in

these three sacramental weapons, which were used in the ritualistic slaughter of animals offered to her as sacrifices.

Kālī is said to have sprung fully formed, in the midst of battle, from the forehead of an enraged Durgā. The very image of death, with dark shriveled skin, wild disheveled hair, a wide gaping mouth with bared fangs, clad only in a necklace and skirt made from the body parts of her opponents, and driven by an insatiable lust for their blood, she is the consummate destroyer. She also appears as the personified rage of other, usually benign, goddesses, including Pārvatī, Satī, and Sītā. In some episodes of Kālī's legends her fury reaches such dangerous proportions that it can be quelled only by the death of her husband, Shiva. In effect, he sacrifices himself to Kālī by appearing as a corpse at her feet amid the carnage she has wrought, so that in recognizing him she will realize the impact of the destruction she has caused.

From Kālī's role as the ultimate agent of death there evolved the other fundamental aspect of her persona, that of the universal mother, the ultimate source of life. As such she is the principal deity of Shaktism, the worship of the transcendent female generative forces that are the font of all life and stability in the universe. Although wild and deadly, with a mouth reddened by blood, this Kālī can also be young and beautiful. In her resides the complete life cycle, from the creation of existence out of the void to its inevitable return to nothingness.

The worship of Kālī, like that of the other Indian goddesses who are revered for their generative powers, regularly includes blood sacrifice, which was once carried out with weapons such as the three examples shown here. The largest of the three, a top-heavy sword known as a *rāmdāo*, was used to decapitate sacrificial buffalo in commemoration of the slaying of the buffalo demon, Mahisha, by Kālī's progenitor, Durgā. The two lighter swords, of the type called either *kartrī* or *churī*, were intended for smaller animals such as goats. The eye engraved on each of the three blades signifies the presence of the goddess as she watches over the sacrifice. The hump-like projection above the eye on the back edge of

the *rāmdāo* represents the tasseled hat of the defeated buffalo demon. The hat is sometimes also seen in paintings of Durgā, floating above her head as she battles demon armies, as a symbol of her victory over Mahisha. Animals sacrificed during worship are thought to have been liberated instantly from the painful cycle of rebirth to which Hindus believe all living creatures are bound. The sacrifices are intended to nourish the goddess and to secure from her the blessings of life.

Plate 4

Far from being cold and aloof, the gods and goddesses of Hindu India exhibit a broad range of conflicting human emotions: joy and anger, compassion and envy, jealousy and love. Moreover, like their human devotees they produce offspring. One of the most significant of these divine children is the son of Shiva, known in southern India as Subrahmaṇya but more familiar elsewhere in India as Kārttikeya, Skanda, or Kumāra. He was born to combat demons and to command the heavenly armies, functions he fulfills in the great Hindu religious epics. Thus he is generally regarded as the Hindu god of war. Like the other major deities, Subrahmaṇya rides a supernatural animal, or *vāhana* (literally, "vehicle"), which in his case is the peacock Paravāṇi. The most popular deity in southern India, Subrahmaṇya was elevated there to the level of supreme god, outranking even his father, Shiva. It is likely, therefore, that the boldly sculptural peacock hilt of this unique south Indian *katar* was intended to refer to the war god by depicting his steed, Paravāṇi.

In sculptures of Subrahmaṇya and Paravāṇi from southern India, the peacock is frequently shown with one or more cobras in its beak and another clenched in its talons. These images of Paravāṇi subduing serpents probably symbolize Subrahmaṇya's role as the defender of the gods. Similarly the peacock on the hilt of this *katar* holds in its beak a pair of cobras by their tails, almost as if they were reins for its divine rider. Paravāṇi is said to have been created as a result of a battle between Subrahmaṇya and the giant Sura. During the fight Sura changed himself into



Plate 4. *Katar* in the form of Paravāṇi, checklist no. 5

a tree, which Subrahmaṇya split in two with his spear. The two halves were transformed into the peacock Paravāṇi and a rooster, both of which became enduring symbols of the god.

This *katar* comes from a small group of highly distinctive southern Indian weapons that were salvaged from the remains of the former royal armory in Tanjore (Thanjavur) in the mid-nineteenth century (see also fig. 2, checklist no. 9). Like the *katar*, other weapons in the group prominently feature religious symbols, such as the *chakra* (discus) of Vishnu and the *pāsha* (noose) of Shiva. The majority of the surviving Tanjore pieces are divided between the Madras Government Museum and The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Hindu Indonesia

With the maritime expansion of Greater India, Hindu settlements were introduced into the Indonesian archipelago by the first century A.D. and were firmly established by the fourth century. The Hindu kingdoms of Indonesia grew and continued to flourish over the next thousand years; however, a gradual Islamization of the region, which started in Sumatra, was under way by the thirteenth century. When the last Hindu dynasties of Java fell in the sixteenth century, much of the Hindu nobility emigrated to Bali, taking with it a rich literary and religious legacy and making Bali the center of Hindu culture and religion in Indonesia.

Plate 5

The kris, with its sinuous, snakelike blade, is the most characteristic weapon of Indonesia. Considered from early times to be imbued with great spiritual power, it is still an integral part of Indonesian culture. Figural kris hilts are associated in particular with Bali, where the traditions of Hindu art continued uninterrupted despite the influence of Islām, and with nearby eastern Java. Although the identity of some hilt figures is uncertain, many appear to be inspired by characters and episodes from the *Māhābharata* and the *Rāmāyana*. The profound impact of these great literary epics on Indonesian



Plate 5. Kris hilt representing Arjuna, checklist no. 14

life, from as early as the tenth century until the present day, cannot be overestimated. The finely carved wood hilt of this kris has been thought to represent Krishna, an immensely popular Hindu god and a key figure in the *Māhābharata*. It seems more likely, however, that it depicts Krishna's companion Arjuna, prince of the Pāndava family and the most renowned epic character in Indonesia.



Plate 6. Kris stand in the form of Bhima, checklist no. 16

The plot of the *Māhābharata* revolves around the dynastic struggles of two princely families, the Pāṇḍavas and their cousins the Kauravas, and the gods who assist them. In the Indonesian retelling of

the *Māhābharata* and in the cycle of tales derived from it, the role of Arjuna, as leader of the Pāṇḍavas, is vastly expanded. He is transformed from a foil for the gods into the predominant hero of the story cycle.

In Indonesian culture he came to be regarded as the paradigmatic hero, representing the perfect combination of masculine beauty, virtuous behavior, and matchless strength in battle.

The details of this kris hilt are a compendium of iconographic details that identify and illustrate Arjuna's *alus* nature, the ideal qualities expected of a great hero. His noble status is signified by his head-dress, which includes an upturned hairstyle (*gelung*), known as *gelung supit urang* (shrimp style), and elegant ceremonial ear coverings (*sumping*). The inclination of his head and serene facial expression are intended to convey humility and composure. The narrow and elongated shape of the eyes indicates noble birth and great personal refinement. Draped over Arjuna's left shoulder and wrapped around his body is the sacred thread (*upavīta*), a symbol of religious initiation, which here, in the form of a snake, implies Arjuna's divine lineage. With his right hand he makes a symbolic gesture, possibly the *varamudrā* (boon-granting gesture), while the position of his legs suggests the half-lotus posture, or *vīrāsana*, which means, appropriately, the "attitude of the hero."

There are several episodes in Arjuna's career in which he engaged in the meditative and ascetic practices suggested by the figure on this hilt. The resigned melancholy and deeply reflective demeanor that suffuse this piece, however, may be intended to convey Arjuna's contemplation of the great truths revealed to him by Krishna as recounted in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, the best-known section of the *Māhābhārata*. Here it is told that, on the eve of the decisive battle with the Kauravas, Arjuna expresses his wish to die rather than shed the blood of his own family in the pursuit of temporal power. In the dialogue that ensues between the deity and the hero, Krishna instructs Arjuna in the proper ways in which he must fulfill his duty in life (dharma) and thereby achieve union with god. Placing his faith in Krishna's teachings, Arjuna is able to overcome his misgivings and lead the Pāndavas to victory.

Plate 6

After Arjuna, Bhīma is the most famous of the five Pāndava brothers, all of whom remain familiar fig-

ures in Indonesian popular culture. Bhīma is seen here in the form of a carved-wood kris stand. The respect with which krises were always treated extended to the careful attention given to them even when they were not being worn. The weapons were stored in fitted bags, custom-made boxes and chests, and on wall-mounted display boards, as well as in kris stands. The use of three-dimensional sculptures as kris stands, however, was limited to the islands of Bali and Lombok.

Bhīma is renowned equally for his great strength and for his unbridled ferocity on the battlefield. Although he is a great hero like Arjuna, he altogether lacks his brother's refined qualities. Their contrasting personalities are made clear by the way Bhīma's physical characteristics differ from those of Arjuna, revealed by a comparison of the previous kris hilt and this kris stand. Bhīma is invariably burly and stocky, his legs set in a wide, ungraceful stance. Arjuna, however, is always shown as slender and long limbed. The wild ferocity symbolized by Bhīma's large, bulging eyes is diametrically opposed to the classic beauty and gentility represented by Arjuna's narrow, elongated eyes. In the same way, Bhīma's broad nose is a sign of his coarseness. However, his noble status, like Arjuna's, is conveyed by his hairstyle and the ornaments behind his ears.

Bhīma's other distinguishing features are his long, talonlike thumbnails (*panchanaka*) and the sacred garment (*kain poleng*) worn about his waist. Only Bhīma and his half brother, the monkey general Hanumān (famous for his role in the *Rāmāyana*), share the *panchanaka* with the wind god, Batara Bayu, whose spiritual sons or incarnations they are. The *panchanaka* serve Bhīma as terrible weapons with which he rends his opponents to pieces, especially in the Bratayuda, the final battle of the great war with the Kauravas. The *kain poleng*, likewise an attribute of Hanumān, is sometimes checked in colors representing Bhīma's emotional travails. The gesture made by Bhīma's left hand is also symbolic; a variation of the *mustimudrā*, it has several connotations, including that of holding a mace or club, which probably refers to the iron club that is Bhīma's characteristic weapon.

Plate 7

The kris held in Bhīma's right hand is fitted with a sumptuous hilt of cast gold, set with a variety of gemstones, and probably dates from the mid-nineteenth century. The subject of the hilt can be identified as Bhīma's spiritual father, Batara Bayu, the Indonesian version of the Indian wind god, Vāyu. Batara Bayu is closely linked with Indra, the god of storms, who is the spiritual father of Arjuna. Thus the fraternal relationship between Bhīma and Arjuna may be seen as an earthly reflection of the celestial relationship between Batara Bayu and Indra. Batara Bayu is worshiped not only as the wind god but also as the bringer of health and prosperity and hence symbolizes protection against evil. He is recognizable by his characteristic broad grin, large mustache, and *panchanaka*. In his right hand he holds a representation of the bejeweled vessel that contains life-giving holy water (*toya mreta*), an important element of many Balinese rituals, especially those related to spiritual and physical purification. In the context of this hilt, the holy-water vessel may also symbolize the deep spiritual self-awareness (*dewa ruci*) into which Bhīma was initiated by Batara Bayu. As Bhīma's mentor in this pursuit he is known as Prabhu Guru Bayu (Bayu the Majestic Spiritual Teacher).

Front cover

This cast-gold and gem-encrusted kris hilt is particularly noteworthy for the quality of its fluid modeling and crisp sculptural detail, features suggesting that it was made as early as the sixteenth or seventeenth century. The subject represented is thought to be Rāhvana, also known as Dasamuka, the evil antagonist of the *Rāmāyana*. The oldest of the Sanskrit epic poems, it is still revered throughout India and Indonesia.

Rāhvana was a mighty demon (*rākshasa*) and the ruler of the kingdom of Ngalenka (Sri Lanka). Like the buffalo demon, Mahisha, he gained nearly matchless powers through the practice of severe ascetic devotions to Shiva, which enabled him to defeat and humiliate the gods on several occasions. Because a human champion was needed to combat Rāhvana, Vishnu agreed to manifest himself on earth,

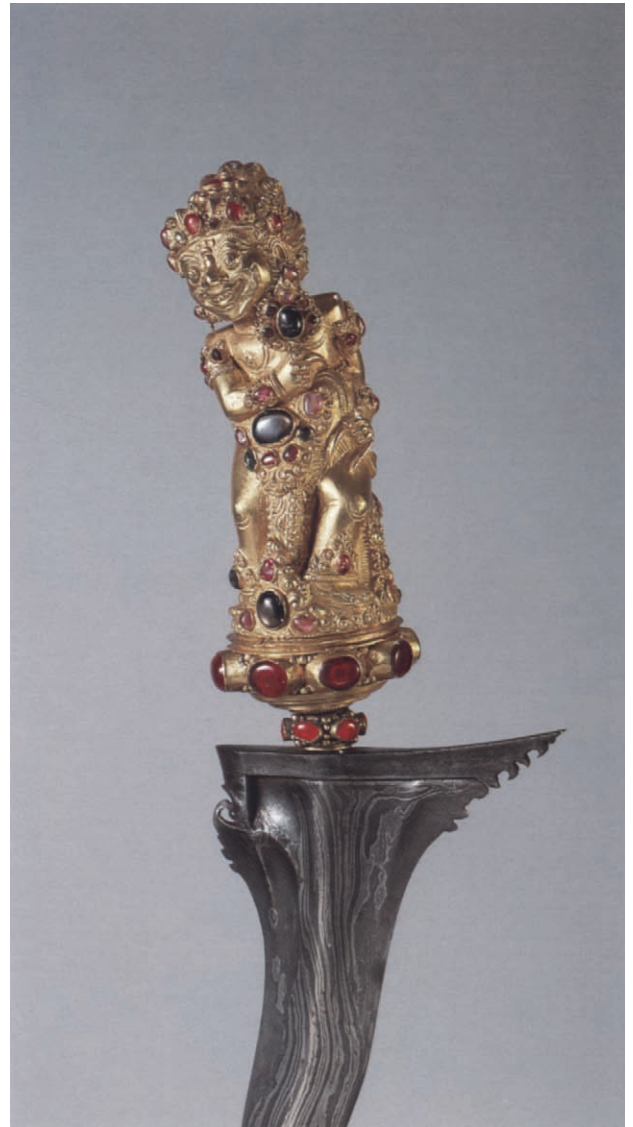


Plate 7. Kris hilt representing Batara Bayu, checklist no. 11

in his seventh avatar, as Prince Rāma. After a series of adventures Rāma attacked Rāhvana's kingdom with the help of an army of monkeys and bears, led by Bhīma's half brother, Hanumān. Like Bhīma, Hanumān had inherited from Batara Bayu great strength, the ability to leap immense distances, and other fabulous powers. He plays a major role in the climactic battle with Rāhvana's demon army, to the extent that, in some Indonesian versions of the tale, it is Hanumān, not Rāma, who ultimately kills Rāhvana.

On the hilt Rāhvana is recognizable as a demon by his round bulging eyes with large pupils, coarse features such as his broad flat nose, and prominent fangs. His kingly status is signified by his royal crown, abundant jewelry, and elaborate and intricately patterned costume. In his right hand Rāhvana holds his sword, called Kicandrasa, possibly representing the weapon given to him by Shiva as a reward for his devoted worship.

Buddhism

The many complex varieties of Buddhism found throughout Asia and in other parts of the world share a common origin in the spirituality of Siddhārtha Gautama (ca. 563–ca. 483 B.C.), who was born in the Himalayan foothills of Nepal. According to Buddhist tradition, as a young man Siddhārtha renounced the privileges of his princely rank to seek self-knowledge and an understanding of the nature of existence. After achieving his spiritual epiphany, which for Buddhists represents the seminal moment in world history, he became known as the Buddha, meaning the Enlightened or Awakened One. For the rest of his life he wandered as a missionary, spreading his philosophy through public preaching, guidance of his disciples, and the establishment of several monastic communities. None of the Buddha's teachings were recorded during his lifetime. After his death, however, they were gathered and codified into the Sūtras. Within a few centuries, through posthumous veneration of his person and the places and events associated with his life, the Buddha came to be considered a divinity.

As Buddhism spread, it developed into three principal schools. The more traditional school, known as Theravāda or Hīnayāna, moved southward through India and into Sri Lanka and mainland Southeast Asia. The largest, Mahāyāna, spread to China, Korea, Japan, and parts of Indonesia. The third development, Vajrayāna, became predominant in Tibet and Mongolia and was also influential in Japan as Shingon Buddhism. Through interaction with Hinduism the pantheon of Buddhist gods grew rapidly, especially in the Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna schools. In China Taoist

philosophy and religion coexisted with and contributed important elements to Buddhist practices. In Japan the Shintō religion became intimately involved with Buddhism, while essentially remaining an independent tradition. In the practice of *honji suijaku*, Shintō deities were identified as the indigenous incarnations of Buddhist deities, allowing the gods of each faith equal veneration.

Plate 8

The central decorative feature of this intricate eighteenth- or nineteenth-century Sino-Tibetan saddle is the *kīrttimukha*, or Face of Glory, a glowering mask that recurs in various forms throughout the religious ornament of Tibet, China, India, and Indonesia. According to one story, the *kīrttimukha* was a lion-headed demon created by the supreme Hindu deity, Shiva, and served both as his doorkeeper and as a manifestation of his divine power. The *kīrttimukha* motif spread with the expansion of Hinduism and, like many other aspects of Hindu belief and art, was eventually incorporated into the Buddhist tradition and widely disseminated by it. In both religions it symbolizes the beneficence of divine authority and protection from spiritual and physical dangers. The *kīrttimukha* was used ubiquitously as an auspicious sign to ward off evil.

On the saddle the *kīrttimukha* appears in the center of the large gilt-copper plaques mounted on the front and back, and also in the center of the uppermost pierced and chiseled iron border. It is surrounded by a rich array of equally meaningful sacred attributes, including, on the upper border, the triratna, or the Three Jewels. This symbol represents the triple foundation shared by all Buddhist sects: Buddha, the Enlightened One; dharma, his teachings; and sangha, the community of believers. Flanking the Three Jewels is the image of a dragon holding a pearl, a popular motif with roots in Taoist China. In Buddhism the pearl or single jewel stands for faultless purity and, therefore, the infallible truth of the religion's doctrine. The dragon acts as the jewel's heavenly guardian.

In the center of the lower pierced border is the *cintāmaṇi*, or Wish-Granting Jewel, another example

of the jewel motif frequently encountered in Buddhist art. It typically appears either as a cluster of elongated orbs or as a single tear-shaped sphere surrounded by an aureole of flames. The *cintāmaṇi* is an augury of material prosperity and a symbol of the fulfillment of all wishes through the Buddha. The related concept of salvation attained through the teachings of the Buddha is represented by the pair of diminutive deer that flank the *cintāmaṇi* and refer to the Deer Park at Sarnath, near Benares, in

northeastern India, where Siddhārtha Gautama was said to have preached his first sermon.

The pierced borders of this saddle are reminiscent of Chinese metalwork but the embossed plaques call to mind the workmanship of eastern Tibet, suggesting perhaps that the saddle is composed of elements from both countries. The highly concentrated use of complementary religious symbols on a luxurious object of this kind, however, was not unusual in the decorative arts of either imperial



Plate 8. Saddle with a *kīrtimukha* motif, checklist no. 21

China or theocratic Tibet. The images can be appreciated individually, in the full depth of their meaning, or for their overall effect, simply as a compilation of talismanic ornament.

Plate 9

The *kirttimukha* also figures on the pommel of the hilt of this sword, made in Tibet or China in the fourteenth or fifteenth century. The shape and overall decoration of the hilt are Tibetan in nature, although several of the ornamental details—such as the scrolling foliage, spiral patterns, and zigzag motifs—show a distinctly Chinese influence. The handguard at the base of the grip takes the form of a mask composed of bulging eyes and a feline nose enveloped in stylized clouds. This mask has an upper jaw, complete with teeth and fangs, but no lower jaw—characteristic features of the *kirttimukha*. Here the mask may represent a protective deity manifested as a stylized lion, an animal with sacred connotations in Buddhist tradition. Frequently depicted in Tibetan and Chinese art in the role of a guardian, the lion is an appropriate attribute for the guard of a sword hilt.

Plate 10

Various types of textiles have long been used as the basis for armor in many different cultures. By far the most typical method of utilizing cloth for armor involved forms of quilting. Quilted armor generally consists of an envelope of fabric that is stuffed with a shock-absorbing padding, which is stitched in place. Far more unusual is armor made up of layered fabric. The defensive quality is achieved by placing many sheets of cloth one atop another so that the material is thick enough to absorb a blow, deflect an edge, or turn away a point, while still allowing relative freedom of movement. Both methods are employed, although layering predominates, in this very rare fabric armor from Korea, the strength of which is spiritually augmented by a series of protective Taoist and Buddhist symbols (see back cover).

The tunic of this armor is composed of thirty layers of a tough hemp fabric, skillfully cut and sandwiched together to give an overall thickness of



Plate 9. Sword with a *kirttimukha* motif, checklist no. 24

less than one inch. The brim, earflaps, and neck flap of the helmet are quilted in a conventional manner. The helmet is reinforced by a finial with four radiating bands made of tinned iron. Written in ink inside the tunic and the helmet are the names of three



Plate 10. Fabric armor with Buddhist and Taoist symbols, checklist no. 19

members of the Kim family, who presumably once used the armor.

The most prominent decorative feature of this armor is the series of five Taoist symbols stamped in ink at the front and rear of the skirts, at the shoulder blades of the tunic, and on the earflaps and neck flap of the helmet. These represent the *Wu-yüeh* (Five Mountains), which were revered as having the

power to maintain universal peace and stability and to influence the destiny of humanity. Each symbolic mountain was associated with one of the five directions—North, South, East, West, and Central—and with a particular existing mountain. Over time, however, the direction and the mountain with which each symbol was identified changed repeatedly. As amulets the symbols, with their associated directions and mountains, had specific protective powers that were especially appropriate when used in the decoration of armor. The Eastern Mountain guaranteed long life, the Southern Mountain protected from harm by enemies or by fire, the Central Mountain gave relief from fatigue, the Western Mountain ensured against injury by the sword, and the Northern Mountain safeguarded against the perils of water, such as drowning or shipwreck. Also Taoist are the five columns of *fu-lu*, magical talismans in the form of stylized Chinese characters, that appear on the front of the waistband. They are believed to have the power to ward off evil spirits and to give protection from various types of harm or misfortune.

The decoration of this armor invites further divine protection through a Buddhist invocation, which is repeated four times on the helmet and once on the rear of the waistband. The invocation consists of six characters in Siddham, one of the Sanskrit-derived alphabets reserved for sacred literature in China, Korea, and Japan. The source of this invocation may be a *dhāranī*, a type of short *Sūtra*, which contains mystical knowledge in the form of symbolic syllables. One likely possibility is the *Ushṇīshavijayādhāranī*, which was widely used for its protective properties. This *dhāranī* is named for the goddess Ushṇīshavijayā, who, along with Amitābha and Tārā, is one of the three deities of long life in Vajrayāna Buddhism.

Plate 11

In Japan the peace and stability that characterized the Edo period (1615–1868) allowed armorers and their patrons to indulge in and experiment with many elaborate styles, both historical revivals and new designs, creating armors intended for ceremonial purposes and not for use in battle. These armors



Plate 11. Helmet representing one of the Seven Gods of Good Fortune, checklist no. 30



Plate 12. Two *tengu* masks, checklist nos. 37, 38

were often equipped with eccentric or representational helmets, which invoked a staggering variety of religious and naturalistic themes.

The tall conelike skull of this helmet portrays the most notable physical trait of Fukurokuju, one of the *Shichi Fukujin* (Seven Gods of Good Fortune). Fukurokuju's name means "luck-prosperity-longevity," the three universal ideals of Taoism. He is, in fact, sometimes considered to be an incarnation of Lao-tzu, the legendary Chinese founder of Taoism. Fukurokuju is usually depicted in a humorous and playful vein. His angry expression on this helmet, however, is reminiscent of another of the *Shichi Fukujin*, namely Jurōjin, the god of health and longevity, whose characteristics are frequently confused with those of Fukurokuju. The helmet probably represents a com-

bined form of the two deities. By the seventeenth century, when this helmet was probably made, Fukurokuju and Jurōjin were often merged into one deity, referred to by either name, to make room among the seven gods for Kichijōten, goddess of domestic well-being. The remaining Gods of Good Fortune are: Benzaiten, goddess of art, beauty, and wealth; Bishamonten, god of wealth; Daikokuten, god of limitless prosperity (see checklist no. 29); Ebisu, god of fishing, food, and honesty; and Hotei, a treasure-laden Zen priest. Together the *Shichi Fukujin* served as accessible providers of personal good fortune and longevity, whose aid could be sought informally, rather than in a ritualistic context. They represent a uniquely Japanese combination of Shintō, Buddhist, Taoist, and folk beliefs.

Plate 12

Another dramatic feature of Japanese armor of the Edo period is an elaborate mask, known as a *sōmen*, that covers the entire face. Various types of simpler armored masks, usually protecting only part of the face, had been developed for practical use during the more violent Muromachi period (1333–1573). Masks embossed with human features are thought to have been made as early as the fifteenth century. However, during the Edo period armorers gave free rein to their imaginations—as they did when making representational helmets—and created masks in forms ranging from fierce gods to comical folk characters.

These two *sōmen* vividly portray the faces of *tengu*, the embodiment of powerful and usually malevolent spirits who, in Japanese folk beliefs, inhabit the woodlands of high mountains. There are two principal forms of *tengu*, both of which the *sōmen* depict: the *Karasu Tengu* and the *Ko no ha Tengu*. They are typically represented as having human bodies, wings, and sometimes talons in place of hands and feet. The *Karasu Tengu* has a birdlike head complete with a strong, sharp beak. The *Ko no ha Tengu* has a human face, distorted by an enormously long nose. The mask representing the *Karasu Tengu* is made of leather, embossed and lacquered to simulate iron, and trimmed with hair. It can be worn in three configurations: as a full face mask (*sōmen*), with the brow piece removed (*mempō*), or with the brow and the beak removed (*bōate*). The *Ko no ha Tengu* mask is made of embossed and lacquered iron.

The *tengu* have had a long and varied history, throughout which their attributes and cultural significance have continued to evolve. First mentioned in Japanese literature in the tenth century, *tengu* are featured in a vast number of legends and folktales. They are credited with many powers, including supernatural strength and the ability to fly, to assume other forms, and to take over humans through possession. One of their main aims is the subversion of Buddhism. *Tengu* plague people by abducting children for short periods, by burning down temples and houses, and by assaulting those who enter or in any way profane their sanctuaries. Occasionally, how-

ever, *tengu* appear as benevolent spirits who protect certain individuals or temples.

Particularly pertinent in reference to the two masks shown here is the desire of the *tengu* to cause war, by possessing men and inciting them to fight or by appearing on the battlefield themselves. *Tengu* are considered to be masters in the use of all types of weapons, able to defeat all but a few of the mortals who dare to oppose them in a trial of arms. They are also closely associated with the *yamabushi*, mountain-dwelling monks known for their martial prowess, whose guise the *tengu* frequently assume.

Plate 13

The symbolism conveyed by a representational helmet and face mask could be enhanced by the use of a detachable crest (*maidate*), usually mounted on the front of the helmet just above the brim. Crests are sometimes made of iron, but more frequently they combine delicate materials such as leather, papier-mâché, or gilt and lacquered wood. Crest designs of the Edo period include a wide range of family heraldry (*mon*), naturalistic renditions of plants and animals, and sacred imagery. These same decorative themes are also featured on embossed iron breastplates of the period. The relatively broad surface of a breastplate afforded a skilled armorer ample room to display his talents as a metalworker and his inventiveness as an artist.

This crest and breastplate share a common sacred theme: the invocation of the war god Hachiman through the display of the characters representing his name. Hachiman, one of the principal Shintō deities (*kami*), was among the first indigenous gods assimilated into the Buddhist pantheon in Japan. By the late eighth century he was officially accorded the Buddhist title Daibosatsu (Great Bodhisattva). He was identified as the deified spirit of the legendary Emperor Ōjin (r. 270–310) and as the particular patron of the Minamoto clan, founders of the first shogunate, both factors that may have contributed to the development of his status as the god of war. Hachiman was considered the protector of the state in times of strife and was revered as a personal protector by individual samurai of all ranks. Temples dedicated to



Plate 13. *Maidate* and breastplate bearing the name of the god Hachiman, checklist nos. 32, 39

Hachiman were built throughout Japan, where he is worshiped in both Buddhist and Shintō rites.

The delicate lettering that bisects the center of the crest gives the god's honorific title, Hachiman Daibosatsu. The embossing in the center of the breastplate presents the two characters for Hachiman alone, vibrantly simulating in metal the bold and fluid brushstrokes of a master calligrapher. An inscription on the breastplate indicates that these two characters are the work of Myōchin Munesuke, who embossed the plate prepared by his relative, Myōchin Morisuke. These men were members of the famous Myōchin family of armorers, makers of sword fittings, and metalworkers, who proudly traced their skills through generations of master craftsmen active from the twelfth to the eighteenth century.

Plate 14

Reverence for Hachiman, or simply Buddhist piety, may be expressed by this crest representing the finial of a *shakujō*, the symbolic staff carried by wandering Buddhist monks. In his incarnation as Sōgyō Hachiman, the god appears in the form of a tonsured Buddhist monk holding a *shakujō* in his right hand. The use of the *shakujō* spread with Buddhism from India into China, Tibet, and Japan. The jingling sound made by its loose rings served to announce the presence of monks seeking alms, who were prevented from speaking by a vow of silence. The noise was thought to warn insects and small animals of a monk's approach, lest they be accidentally crushed underfoot, and to ward off more dangerous animals. The *shakujō* was also used to perform exorcisms and in other ceremonial contexts. The number of rings is of symbolic significance. Wandering monks carried a *shakujō* outfitted with four rings, while six rings, as on this crest, were considered appropriate for a Bodhisattva, such as Hachiman.

Purely Shintō in its inspiration is a crest (fig. 7, checklist no. 33) made in the form of a *gobei*, the ancient ceremonial wand that is a central element in Shintō ritual. The traditional *gobei* is a staff adorned with pleated paper or cloth streamers, which are usually white but may also be black, silver, gold, or



Plate 14. *Maidate* in the form of a *shakujō*, checklist no. 36

other colors. The *gobei* is used to perform ritual purifications of individuals as well as of votive offerings and is imbued with protective powers. As a prelude to worship the *gobei* draws the attention of the god to the shrine and during the ritual represents the presence and power of the divinity itself.

Plate 15

Similar in function to the crest is the *sashimono*, an insignia mounted on a vertical pole, which is held by a bracket attached to the backplate of an armor to make the symbol visible above the wearer's head. *Sashimono* usually take the form of a square or rectangular banner decorated with the heraldic device (mon) of a particular family or clan. Three-dimensional *sashimono* with deeper symbolic meaning such as the present examples are more rarely found. These two



Plate 15. Two *sashimono* in *vajra* form, checklist nos. 42, 43

works depict variations of the *vajra* (thunderbolt or diamond), one of the oldest and most powerful symbols in the Hindu and Buddhist religions. In a Buddhist context the *vajra*, through its association with the indestructibility of diamond, symbolizes the unshakable and eternal nature of Buddhist beliefs. The diamond's clarity and brilliance embody knowledge and truth, while its purity represents the concept

of perfect emptiness, which is seen in Buddhism as a fundamental aspect of enlightenment.

The smaller of the two *sashimono* depicts a *toko-sho*, a *vajra* composed of two quadrangular spikes projecting symmetrically from the top and bottom of a stylized central lotus. The *vajra* and the lotus are frequently combined to symbolize the masculine and feminine elements of nature, a composite

that can also be interpreted as a representation of supreme truth. Among its many other symbolic connotations, the *toko-sho* embodies the concept of centrality, a belief in the universal oneness of all things through the Buddha. The triple-pronged *sashimono* represents a type of *vajra* known as a *sanko-sho*, which symbolizes the Three Mysteries, a fundamental concept of Esoteric Buddhism. The Three Mysteries—categorized as thought, word, and act—are considered the basis that underlies the understanding of all reality. When used as liturgical objects both of these *vajra* forms play an important part in Esoteric Buddhist ritual practices. As *sashimono* they may have been worn by adherents of the Shingon school, which is a derivation of Vajrayāna (diamond vehicle) Buddhism.

Plate 16

The symbolic significance of the triple-pronged *vajra*, as well as its shape, made it an appropriate choice for use as the hilt of a sacred sword (*ken*), as demonstrated by this extremely rare example of an Esoteric Buddhist ritual object in the form of a *ken*. The blade dates from the late Heian or early Kamakura period (late twelfth to early thirteenth century), and the gilt-copper *vajra* hilt was probably made in the early Nambokucho period (mid-fourteenth century). In Buddhist iconography the sword represents the defense of religious doctrine and the defeat of falsehood and evil. It is an emblem of intelligence and, by extension, of the victory of spiritual knowledge, which opens the path to enlightenment. Combined with a *vajra* hilt it signifies the sword of wisdom (*e-ken*), one of the major attributes of Fudō Myō-ō, also referred to as the Great Immovable One. Fudō was the most popular of the Five Great Kings of Light (*Go Dai Myō-ō*), deities of Hindu origin who were assimilated into the Japanese Buddhist pantheon in the ninth century.

In the Shingon school of Esoteric Buddhism, Fudō is a manifestation of the Supreme Buddha

Plate 16. Ritual dagger in the form of a *ken*, checklist no. 27



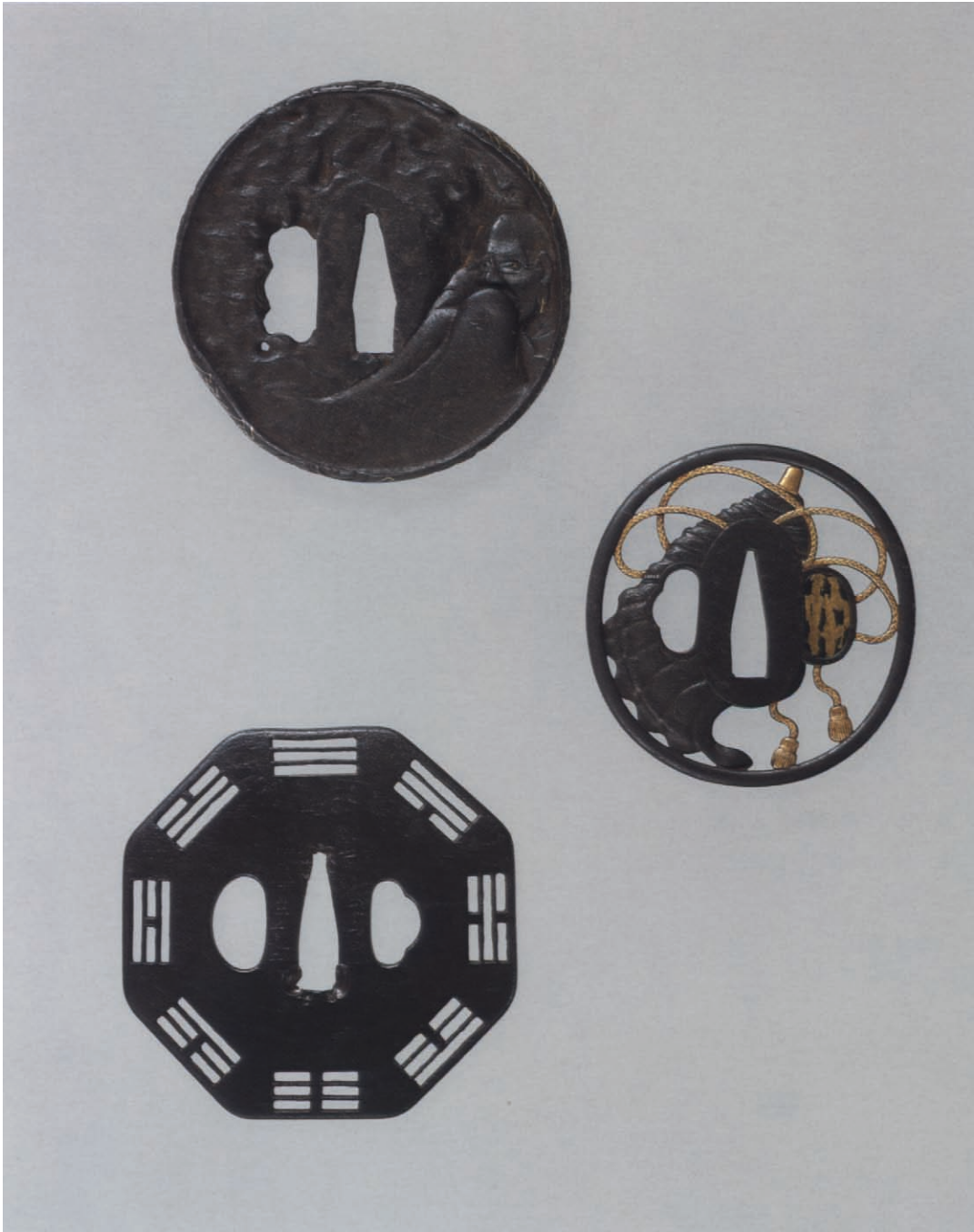


Plate 17. Three *tsuba*, checklist nos. 25, 28, 44

(Dainichi Nyorai), created to fight evil and champion righteous causes. He is also considered to be the first of the twelve buddhas who receive the souls of the dead and guide them to the eternal care of Dainichi Nyorai. It is possible, therefore, that this *ken* was made for use in a Shingon ritual devoted to Fudō. Images of Fudō frequently appear in the decoration of Japanese armor and weapons. He is usually shown surrounded by flames, holding the sword, point upward, in his right hand, and the rope (*kensaku*), with which he binds and nullifies evil, in his left hand.

Plate 17

The individual elements of the hilt of the Japanese sword are unique in the history of edged weapons in that they are intended to be seen both as functional parts of the sword and as independent works of art. The most prominent of these elements is the *tsuba*, the disklike guard that separates the base of the blade from the top of the grip. The decoration of *tsuba* encompasses a wide range of themes: naturalistic scenes, secular stories, and, as these three *tsuba* reveal, religious symbolism.

The first *tsuba* is made of iron, chiseled in high relief and damascened with gold. It depicts a famous episode from the life of Bodhidharma, known in Japan as Bodaidaruma or Daruma, traditionally regarded as the twenty-eighth patriarch of Buddhism in India, who founded Ch'an Buddhism in China during the sixth century. Ch'an Buddhism, which developed out of the meeting of Indian Buddhism and the indigenous Taoism of China, was introduced into Japan, where it was known as Zen, in the ninth century and flourished there after the twelfth century. This *tsuba* shows Daruma engaged in the legendary practice of *zazen*, a form of motionless and thought-free meditation, which he is said to have maintained, in perfect stillness, for nine years. He is frequently portrayed in this contemplative state on *tsuba* and in other Japanese artworks.

A conch shell entwined with tasseled cords, executed in pierced and chiseled iron with silvered and gilt highlights, is presented on the second *tsuba*. The conch shell is one of the Eight Glorious Buddhist

Emblems, or the Eight Auspicious Symbols, which represent the veneration of the Buddha. They appear both in the context of religious rituals and as decoration for objects of everyday use. The conch shell signifies victory and represents the dissemination and the strength of Buddhist doctrine. These meanings evolved in part as a result of the military use of the conch as a signaling trumpet. In this capacity, and as a ritual object, the conch is closely identified with the *yamabushi*.

The third *tsuba*, which is also made of iron, is pierced along its hexagonal perimeter to produce the bold silhouettes of the eight trigrams (Chinese, *pa-kua*; Japanese, *hakke*) said to have been created by the Chinese emperor Fu Hsi, who reigned in the third millennium B.C. The trigrams provide the foundation of the *I-Ching* (Book of Changes), a renowned Chinese source of wisdom that combines Taoist and Confucian ideals and is used as a guide to prophecy, divination, and statecraft. The eight symbols are composed of unbroken lines, representing the yang (the male principle, or heaven), and broken lines, representing the yin (the female principle, or earth). The pattern found on this *tsuba* is an arrangement of the trigrams attributed to Fu Hsi himself, known as the precelestial ordering. Each trigram is subject to various levels of interpretation and can signify an essential element of nature, such as thunder, water, or wind; physical and emotional traits, including power, satisfaction, and flexibility; talismanic animals; seasons of the year; and points of the compass. In addition, when displayed on an object such as this *tsuba*, the trigrams serve as potent auspicious symbols and convey respect for ancient wisdom.

Christianity

The basis of Christian belief is that Jesus Christ, as the only son of God, was born into the world two thousand years ago to provide recompense for the sins of mankind by his own death and to open the path to eternal salvation by his subsequent resurrection and ascension into heaven. Despite the missionary efforts of the disciples of Jesus and their followers, Christianity spread only slowly and with difficulty

from Palestine and the Near East to Greece and Italy until 313, when it was recognized legally as a religion by Emperor Constantine the Great (d. 337). Constantine's action encouraged the diffusion of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire, including much of Europe. It was from Europe during the age of exploration and colonization that Christianity was transmitted in the East as far as Japan and in the West as far as North and South America.

Plate 18

In addition to functioning as essential military side arms, daggers were worn by all classes of society as a part of everyday dress in medieval and Renaissance Europe. They were used as tools, as eating utensils, and as a ready means of self-defense. Daggers were generally carried in a sheath at the belt and varied greatly in size. The amount and type of decoration

displayed on a dagger depended entirely upon the taste and means of its owner. Few, however, exhibit images as elaborate and detailed as the Old Testament subjects that adorn the carved wood grips of these two examples. The Old Testament was adapted by early Christians from the Tanakh, the most sacred teachings of Judaism, to provide the scriptural foundation for the advent of Jesus Christ as told in the New Testament. The events and characters of the New Testament are seen in the Christian tradition as the divinely ordained culmination and fulfillment of the Hebrew scriptures. Therefore, figures and scenes from both testaments often occur in the decoration of weapons such as these daggers.

The figure at the center of the hilt on the left is the young Israelite hero David, who holds the head of the giant Goliath in his left hand and Goliath's sword in his right. David's nudity—he is unclothed



Plate 18. Two daggers with Old Testament figures, checklist nos. 45, 50

save for a cloak draped across his chest and one shoulder—symbolizes his youth and innocence at the time of his single combat with Goliath, the champion of the Philistine army. The climax of their fight is recounted in the Old Testament: “As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground. . . . David ran and stood over him. He took hold of the Philistine’s sword and drew it from the scabbard. After he killed him, he cut off his head with the sword” (1 Samuel 17:48–49, 51). This story of a boy armed only with a sling defeating a giant warrior came to stand for Christianity triumphing against great odds through the power of faith. David also represents an important link between the Old and New Testaments, for he is a direct ancestor of Jesus in the genealogy outlined in the Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 1:1–17). Like David, the lion’s head and the rams’ heads at the base of the hilt are symbols of strength and courage.

The dagger hilt to the right depicts Adam and Eve, the first man and the first woman, who were created by God to inhabit the Garden of Eden. They are shown in one of the fundamental episodes of the Bible, generally referred to as the Fall of Man. The carver has chosen to show, in a tightly spiraling composition, the moment at which Adam and Eve, having lost their state of innocence, first perceive their nakedness and, with anguished expressions, cover themselves with fig leaves. Satan, in the form of a serpent, has tricked them into eating an apple from the tree of knowledge, against God’s command. The serpent’s head, with an apple in its mouth, can be seen emerging from the foliage above Adam’s shoulder. The large fox at the base of the grip reinforces the theme of deception by representing cunning and guile. In the Judeo-Christian tradition the disobedience of Adam and Eve constituted the original sin, for which they were expelled from the Garden and which caused all humanity thereafter to suffer disaffection from God. Jesus is referred to as the New Adam because of the belief that only

through the sacrifice of his death on the cross was mankind redeemed from the guilt of the original sin and restored to God’s grace.

Plate 19

The crucified Christ as Savior and Redeemer is boldly represented in the etched decoration of one half of this German breastplate. On the other half a soldier kneels in supplication before the cross, his hands clasped in prayer. From his hands there wafts a tasseled banderole bearing a plea to God for the preservation of his honor and an expression of the hope of eternal salvation: O GOT EREREI HOFNONG (Oh God, Honor[?], Hope), followed by the date 1580. Phrases of this type, known as *Stossgebete*, are found sporadically on German armor and weapons made throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The figure bears the arms of an infantry officer—appropriately so since the breastplate is of the type and quality made for officers serving on foot or in the light cavalry.

The cross, through its association with the Crucifixion of Jesus, became the central image of Christian iconography, symbolizing the sacrifice of Christ, the promise of spiritual salvation, and the Christian Church itself. The term “Christ” is derived from the Greek and Latin for “anointed one,” which is equivalent to the Hebrew term “Messiah.” “Christ” became synonymous with Jesus through the establishment of belief in him as the divine king and savior anointed by God, whose coming was foretold in the Hebrew scriptures. Jesus as depicted on this breastplate shows many features typical of devotional Crucifixion images venerating him as the Christ. Atop the cross is a small scroll inscribed INRI, an abbreviation for the Latin phrase “Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum” (Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews), which, according to the Gospels, was placed there by order of Pontius Pilate, the Roman provincial governor who passed sentence on Jesus. Jesus wears the crown of plaited thorns, made by the soldiers to mock him before the Crucifixion. The Crown of Thorns symbolizes the Passion, the final cycle of events in the life of Christ, from his entry into Jerusalem until his death on the cross. The crowned head of Jesus is surrounded by a



Plate 19. Breastplate with Crucifixion scene, checklist no. 53

nimbus, radiant beams of light signifying divinity. At the foot of the cross appear a human skull and bones. In addition to standing as a general symbol of penitence and the transitory nature of life, the skull and bones represent the hill on which the Crucifixion took place, which was known as Golgotha, meaning “place of the skull.” According to one apocryphal legend, the Crucifixion occurred on the spot where Adam’s bones were buried, in affirmation of Christ’s mission as the New Adam.

Plate 20

The core of the New Testament is the story of Jesus as told in the Gospels (literally, “good news”) written in the first century by Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, who are known collectively as the Four Evangelists. Matthew is often represented as a winged man, Mark as a winged lion, Luke as a winged ox, and John as an eagle, symbolism derived from the visionary imagery described by the prophet Ezekiel in the Old Testament (Ezekiel 1: 4–11). The Evangelists were venerated not only as the writers of the Gospels but also as important patron saints. It is in the latter role, specifically as patron saint of the Republic of Venice, that the painted image of the winged Lion of Saint Mark appears on this late-sixteenth- or early-seventeenth-century helmet.

Mark (d. ca. 74 A.D.) was an early follower of Jesus and is recorded as having accompanied both Saint Paul and Saint Peter on missions to spread Christianity in the Near East and Italy. He was most closely associated with Peter, the foremost disciple of Jesus, and is said to have served as his interpreter, translating his sermons from Hebrew into Greek and Latin. The Gospel of Mark is thought to be based on Peter’s own recollections of the life of Jesus. Mark is traditionally regarded as the founder and first bishop of the Christian community in Alexandria, which is considered the site of his martyrdom. There his remains were cherished as holy relics until the early ninth century, when they were brought to Venice and interred in a new cathedral bearing his name. According to Venetian legend, Mark was returning to Rome from Aquileia at the request of Saint Paul

when his ship was forced by a storm to seek shelter amid the lagoons and islands that would later be the site of Venice. In a dream he was visited by an angel who told him of his future martyrdom; the angel also prophesied that a great city would be founded where he was marooned and that its people would one day rescue his remains from the infidels and bring them to their city, where he would be forever honored.

The use of the winged lion to symbolize Mark dates from at least as early as the fifth century. The depiction of the lion on this helmet is typical of the representations used in conjunction with Venice: the lion is seen from the side in a crouching position, wings spread, its face impassive, its head surrounded by a halo. The open book between the lion’s paws signifies Mark’s Gospel. Here, as in many such depictions, the pages of the book bear the phrase *PAX TIBI MARCE EVANGELISTA MEUS* (Peace be with you, Mark, my Evangelist). These are the words said to have been spoken by Jesus to Mark in a vision that appeared to the Evangelist on the eve of his martyrdom in Alexandria.

The helmet is a cabasset, a type worn by infantry and light cavalry from the mid-sixteenth century through the seventeenth century. Surviving examples of painting on armor are unusual, although this decorative technique is known to have been used from at least the thirteenth until the early seventeenth century. This helmet was undoubtedly made in northern Italy for a nobleman in Venetian service, and is one of a small group of cabassets similarly painted with the Lion of Saint Mark.

Plate 21

The grip of this superb late-nineteenth-century sword hilt is a miniature sculpture in the round of the Virgin Mary. Revered as the mother of God, Mary is the object of the greatest devotion in the Christian tradition after Jesus. The basket guard surrounding the grip is a splendidly executed low-relief sculpture that depicts the archangel Michael vanquishing Satan.

The hilt was modeled by the sculptor Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse (1824–1887) and was carried



Plate 20. Cabasset with the Lion of Saint Mark, checklist no. 46

out in gilt bronze by the goldsmith Lucien Falize (1842–1897) in Paris about 1882. It was commissioned by Gaston, Prince of Béarn and Chalais, whose coat of arms and motto, *DEI GRATIA SVM QVOD SVM* (By the grace of God I am what I am), appear on the hilt at the feet of the Virgin. Mary’s status as the Queen of Heaven is conveyed by the sword pommel, made in the shape of a crown of lilies placed above her head. Lilies, which symbolize purity and the Virgin’s calling as the mother of Jesus, are one of Mary’s most frequently depicted attributes.

According to Béarn family tradition, the hilt represents Mary as Our Lady of Victory. This is one of the several forms in which Mary is invoked to

meet special needs. Here it refers to her as the divine protector and patron of soldiers entering battle. The image of victory is vividly expressed by the presence of Saint Michael, the leader of the heavenly armies in the fight against the forces of evil. He is often depicted, as he is here, above a plummeting figure of Satan. The image is based on a passage in the Revelation of Saint John, the last book of the New Testament: “And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads

the whole world astray. He was hurled to earth and his angels with him” (Revelation 12:7–9).

Religious symbolism is frequently encountered in the decoration of arms made in Europe until well into the seventeenth century. The type of evocative sacred imagery found on this hilt, however, is almost without parallel in late-nineteenth-century weapons. The

prince of Béarn was deeply devoted to the cult of Our Lady of Lourdes, which was founded on a widespread belief in the miraculous appearances of the Virgin Mary to a peasant girl in the town of Lourdes, in southwestern France, in 1858. Prompted by this faith, he commissioned several works of art on the subject of the Virgin Mary, including this exceptional sword.



Plate 21. Sword hilt with the Virgin Mary, Saint Michael, and Satan, checklist no. 55



Plate 22. *Chār-āina*, checklist no. 56

Islām

The religion of Islām (meaning “submission” to the will of God) originated in seventh-century Arabia with the teachings of the Prophet Muḥammad (ca. 570–632). Muslims consider Muḥammad to be the last holy prophet of Allāh (God), in a succession beginning with Adam and including Abraham, Jesus, and other figures from the Judeo-Christian tradition. Islamic doctrine is based upon the series of revelations received by Muḥammad between 610 and 632, which Muslims believe were the words of God communicated to the Prophet through the angel Gabriel. Transmitted orally by Muḥammad to his followers, the content of these revelations was codified after his death in the Qur’an (literally, “recitation”), the sacred scriptures of Islām. Although it met with initial resistance from local tribes, Islām spread rapidly, by voluntary conversion and by conquest, throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Large parts of India were Islamized beginning in the eighth century. In the same century Muslim armies began the occupation of Spain, portions of which remained Islamic until the end of the fifteenth century. By the seventeenth century areas under Islamic religious and political control stretched from the southern Philippines across southern Asia and the Middle East through Turkey and into central Europe.

Plate 22

Although the representation of figures is not strictly forbidden in the Qur’an, the avoidance of images as objects of devotion was apparent in Islamic practice almost from its inception. Turning away from the usual forms of sacred iconography, Islamic artists relied on the words of the Prophet Muḥammad to inspire and to give literal shape to their designs. As a result, calligraphy in Islamic lands developed into a fine art, becoming in the process the principal form of religious ornament, adorning objects both sacred and secular in nature.

A wide variety of Qur’anic passages and pious invocations appear in the decoration of Islamic arms and armor. The holy phrases used in this way functioned as expressions of piety, as powerful defenses in the form of talismans, or simply as visually pleas-

ing ornament. One of the inscriptions most frequently encountered on armor and weapons is a passage from the second sūra (section or chapter) of the Qur’an, known as the Throne verse (*ayat al-kursi*), which begins, “God—there is no god but He, the Ever-living, the Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist” (2:255). Both verbally and as an inscription this sūra was used to invoke divine protection and to ensure eventual entrance into paradise.

Another section of the Qur’an often employed in military contexts is the sūra of Victory (*sūrat al-fath*, 48:1–29). Several of its verses fill the central cartouches and wide borders of this Indo-Persian armor for the torso, known as a *chār-āina*. *Chār-āina* in Persian is literally “four mirrors,” a term applied to armor of this type because it is usually fashioned of four circular or rectangular steel plates reminiscent of early mirrors of polished metal. This example, however, is made of four hinged panels of hardened leather, probably buffalo hide, painted red, gold, and black. Although buffalo-hide shields were made in India until the nineteenth century, a *chār-āina* in this material is rare, if not unique.

The sūra of Victory extols the triumph of those who believe in God and the Prophet, from the time of the early campaigns of Muḥammad and his followers until the anticipated ascendancy of Islām over all other religions. The first six verses of the sūra are not included on the *chār-āina* but probably appeared on a matching helmet or shield that no longer survives. This part of the sūra refers to the events surrounding the conquest of Mecca by Muḥammad in A.D. 628 (A.H. 6) and begins on the triumphant note, quoted on innumerable examples of Islamic arms and armor, “Surely We have granted thee a clear victory.” The section of the sūra painted on the *chār-āina* begins in the large central cartouche of the front panel: “God’s are the hosts of the heavens and the earth. God is mighty and wise.” From the central cartouche the inscription runs clockwise around the border of the front panel, continuing in the central cartouche and the borders of the panel at the left side, and progressing in the same manner around the back until it concludes in the panel at the right side with the last line of the sūra: “God has



Plate 23. *Pata* with Qur'anic inscriptions, checklist no. 62

promised such of them as believe and do good, forgiveness and a great reward." The wearer of the *chār-āina* was literally enveloped in the word of God.

Plate 23

Sometimes the nature of the inscriptions on a piece of armor or a weapon indicates an allegiance to a

particular religious sect. A noteworthy example of such sectarian decoration occurs on this gold damascened gauntlet sword (*pata*), which is dated A.H. 1126 (A.D. 1712) and was probably made in one of the Islamic sultanates of the Deccan region of south-central India. The choice of inscriptions makes it clear that the owner of this *pata* was a Shiite, rather than a Sunni, Muslim. The majority of Muslims adhere to the Sunni (literally, "one of the path") tradition. Shia (literally, "followers") constitutes the largest divergent group within Islām. It became the predominant form of Islām in Iran, southern Iraq, and parts of India during the sixteenth century.

The *pata*, like the *katar*, is an edged weapon unique to India. Its use apparently originated with the Mahrattas of the western Deccan and eventually spread through much of India (compare checklist no. 9). The hilt of the *pata* consists of a bulbous steel shell that encompasses the hand and flares out into a cuff over the forearm, extending nearly to the elbow. The *pata*, again like the *katar*, is held by a transverse bar gripped with the fist. The rigid gauntlet of the hilt makes the long, flexible double-edged blade essentially an extension of the forearm. It also holds the hand and wrist in a fixed position, unlike any other sword form, requiring all motions with the blade to be made from the elbow and shoulder.

The gauntletlike hilt of this *pata* is decorated in two ogival cartouches on its spherical portion and along its perimeter with three inscriptions that are characteristically Shiite, particularly when used in combination with one another. The phrase at the bottom edge of the gauntlet cuff is from the Qur'an (sūra 61:13): "Help from God and a victory near at hand." The title of this sūra, the Ranks, or Battle Array (*sūrat al-saff*), indicates its theme—the exhortation of believers to fight for God. In it Moses and Jesus are cited as precursors to Muḥammad in the struggle for the true faith. Running along the border on the sides of the gauntlet is a pious invocation that is used in Sunni as well as Shiite contexts: "There is no young hero (*fatā*) like 'Alī and no sword like *Dhū al-fiqār* (the Sword of 'Alī)." The 'Alī referred to is the cousin and son-in-law of Muḥammad, who was the fourth caliph to succeed him, following Abū



Plate 24. Barong with talismanic symbols, checklist no. 59

Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Uthmān. Shiites consider ‘Alī the first legitimate successor (imām) of the Prophet; in both the Shia and Sunni traditions he is revered as the model of chivalrous heroism in the defense of the faith and is called the Lion of God. In the ogival cartouches, along with the date, is an excerpt from a popular Shiite prayer to ‘Alī known as the *Nādī ‘aliyyan* (Call upon ‘Alī), named for the first words of its opening line, “Call upon ‘Alī, the manifester of miracles.”

Plate 24

Dhū al-fiqār, or the Sword of ‘Alī, is the key element of the decoration and symbolism of this barong, a single-edged short sword from Jolo Island in the Sulu Archipelago of the southern Philippines. A stylized depiction of *Dhū al-fiqār*, inlaid in silver, is shown in the center of the barong blade. It is recognizable by its characteristic forked tip, here rendered as two curved prongs.

Also known as the Sword of the Prophet, *Dhū al-fiqār* was originally the name of one of the personal weapons of the Prophet Muḥammad, which later belonged to his son-in-law, ‘Alī. Following Muḥammad’s death *Dhū al-fiqār* attained legendary status, its ownership conferring legitimate temporal

and spiritual power. Representations of the sword came to symbolize the victory of Islām and to serve as powerful talismans. The forked tip with which *Dhū al-fiqār* is invariably depicted seems to have resulted from interpretations of a dream the Prophet was said to have had prior to the battle of Uhud in 625. In the dream he reportedly described the tip of his sword as having a notch or dent. Later, artists represented this as a sword with two points, making it the standard iconographical form found throughout the Islamic world in works of art and on flags, armor, and weapons such as this barong.

The barong is a type of sword unique to the Islamized peoples of the southern Philippines, the Moros. It is distinguished by a heavy single-edged blade of elliptical shape and a gracefully curved pommel that resembles the stylized head of a cockatoo or parrot. The finely carved ivory pommel, silver grip, and plentiful silver inlay decorating the blade of this barong suggest that it was not intended for use in battle but rather as a sign of social status.

Inlaid in Arabic in the center of the *Dhū al-fiqār* motif is the word “Allāh.” Surrounding it are numerous groupings of letters and numbers. These are not intended to be read per se, but were probably chosen in accordance with formulas derived from an

Arabic book of talismans. Belonging to the gray area between magic, folk beliefs, and religion, talismans were published in Arabic books as early as the fourteenth century and are still used in some parts of the Islamic world today. Each letter and number in such a system has a mystical significance. Arranged in specific combinations, sometimes in conjunction with Qur'anic passages and other pious phrases, talismans are believed to ward off various dangers. The most common form of talisman is written on a paper, which is folded up, placed in a small container, and worn as an amulet. Talismanic formulas and motifs were used on various types of objects and were often incorporated into the decoration of Islamic sword blades. This barong, however, appears to be unique in terms of Philippine weapons because its decoration combines talismanic inscriptions and the *Dbū al-fiqār* motif.

Sikhism

The Sikh religion was founded in northern India by Guru Nanak (1469–1539), who began his ministry about the year 1500. All Sikhs consider themselves disciples of Guru Nanak and the nine Gurus who succeeded him. Sikhism is monotheistic, centering upon a belief in one God as the inexpressible font of all creation. Although it has roots in Hinduism and Islām, Sikhism is not directly derived from either. Sikhs minimize the importance of external rituals and focus on seeking a personal, internal union with God. Their main guide in this quest is the *Adi Granth*, or *Granth Sabib*, an extensive compilation of hymns and sayings attributed to six of the Sikh Gurus, a group of bards at the Sikh court, and several non-Sikh saints. It is this holy scripture that forms the core of Sikh spirituality.

Plate 25

The chakra, meaning both wheel and discus in Sanskrit, is a weapon form of great antiquity. Its use is recorded in the *Rigveda*, a religious text written in India between 1200 and 800 B.C. In the hands of celestial warriors it also figures prominently in both the *Rāmāyana* and the *Māhābharata*. The chakra became the familiar weapon and symbolic attribute

of several Hindu gods, chief among them Vishnu, and was later itself personified as a minor deity. In a more earthly context, this weapon was used sporadically throughout central and northern India for many centuries. It is most closely associated, however, with the Punjab region and in particular with the Sikhs, by whom it is referred to as a *chakar*.

A flat steel ring with a sharp outer edge, the *chakar* is designed to be thrown with a spinning motion. According to accounts by foreign visitors and soldiers traveling in Sikh territories in the nineteenth century, the *chakar* was effective at distances as great as fifty yards when hurled by an experienced warrior. In the eighteenth century the Khalsa and the Akali Sikhs regularly carried the *chakar*. The Khalsa (literally, “the pure”) form of Sikhism was instituted in 1699 by the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh (1675–1708). Its members undergo a ritual baptism and vow to follow a strict code of ethical behavior. The Akalis (literally, “followers of God”) were famous for their fierce and warlike demeanor. During the nineteenth century the *chakar* became a standard part of Akali equipment, and it remains an integral part of traditional Akali ceremonial dress to the present day. An Akali warrior was immediately recognizable by his practice of wearing *chakars* around his neck, encircling his arms, and stacked on his conical turban, known as a *dastar bungga*.

This *chakar* is exceptional for its gold ornament featuring religious inscriptions in Gurumukhi, the written version of Punjabi originated by the Sikhs. The lengthiest part of the inscription is a quote from the *Adi Granth* (pp. 1358–59) that is a hymn by Guru Arjan (1582–1606), the fifth Guru: “Lord is protector of our forehead / Lord is the protector of our hands and body / Lord protects our soul and body / The compassionate Lord is the savior of all / The remover of fear and suffering / Nanak seeks shelter with the Lord / Who loves his devotees and protects the helpless.” This is followed by an anonymous eighteenth-century passage that lauds both Guru Nanak and his last successor, the tenth Guru: “Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh / were the perfect Gurus / Their boundless light is situated / In the city of Abchal Nagar.” The briefest element of the inscrip-



Plate 25. *Chakar* with inscriptions from the *Adi Granth*, checklist no. 65

tion is part of a phrase used in the Khalsa baptism ceremony. In a certain sense it may be said to sum

up the traditional warrior ethic of many cultures: "The victory belongs to God."

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Checklist

Hindu India

1. Spearhead with the image of the Goddess Durgā (pl. 2)

Indian, 16th century (?)

Steel, silver, and gold

L. 16 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (41.6 cm)

Rogers Fund, 1920 (20.151.5)

2. Coat of mail and plate (fig. 1)

Indian, 18th century (?)

Steel, silver, and copper

H. 47 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (120 cm)

Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935

(36.25.361)

The embossed silver plaques on the sleeves depict Shiva and his consort, Pārvati (left), and Krishna dancing with the shepherdess Rādhā (right).

These famous pairs of lovers often represent selfless love of god and the transcendence of divine love.

3. Dagger (*katar*) with the ten avatars of Vishnu (pl. 1)

South Indian, 18th–19th century

Steel, silver, and gold

L. 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (45.1 cm)

Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935

(36.25.949)

4. Dagger (*katar*)

Indian (Tanjore), 18th century (?)

Steel

L. 22 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (56.5 cm)

Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935

(36.25.1008)

The hilt in the form of a rearing cobra may symbolize either Shiva or Subrahmaṇya.

5. Dagger (*katar*) in the form of Paravāṇi (pl. 4)

Indian (Tanjore), 18th century (?)

Steel

L. 21 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (55.6 cm)

Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935

(36.25.1009)

6. Sacrificial sword (*rāmdāo*) (pl. 3)

Indian (Bengal ?), 19th century

Steel, wood, and brass

L. 35 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (90.2 cm)

Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935

(36.25.1284)

7. Sacrificial sword (*kartrī* or *churī*) (pl. 3)

Indian (Bengal ?), 19th century

Steel, wood, and brass

L. 25 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (64.5 cm)

Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935

(36.25.1285)



Figure 1. Plaque embossed with figures of Shiva and Pārvati, from left sleeve of coat of mail, checklist no. 2



Figure 2. Hilt of a *pata* in the form of a makara, checklist no. 9

8. Sacrificial sword (*kartri* or *churi*) (pl. 3)

Indian (Bengal ?), 19th century
Steel, wood, and brass
L. 25½ in. (64.8 cm)
Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935
(36.25.1286)

9. Gauntlet sword (*pata*) (fig. 2)

Indian (Tanjore), 18th century (?)
Steel
L. 47½ in. (120.7 cm)
Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935
(36.25.1540)
The hilt is embossed in the form of a makara with an elephant emerging from its jaws. The makara is a mythical sea monster, frequently depicted in temple architecture. Through its association with water, it symbolizes the unpredictable power of the elemental forces that govern life. The

makara is also the *vāhana* (vehicle) of Varuna, the lord of waters, and of the river goddess, Gangā.

Hindu Indonesia

10. Kris (fig. 3)

Javanese, 18th–19th century
Steel, gold, and wood
L. 18¾ in. (47.6 cm)
Edward C. Moore Collection, Bequest of Edward C. Moore, 1891 (91.1.899)
The scene chiseled in relief on the blade probably represents episodes from the *Mintaraga*, a popular Javanese tale about Arjuna, which ultimately derives from the *Māhābharata*. In the story the god Shiva, in the guise of a hunter, engages in a titanic single combat with Arjuna in order to test his worthiness as the leader of the Pāndavas.

11. Kris with a hilt representing Batara Bayu (pl. 7)

Balinese, mid-19th century
Steel, gold, and semiprecious stones
L. 21⅞ in. (55.6 cm)
Fletcher Fund, 1928 (28.23.2)

12. Kris with a hilt representing Rāhvana (front cover)

Balinese, 16th–17th century
Steel, gold, and semiprecious stones
L. 19½ in. (49.5 cm)
The Collection of Giovanni P. Morosini, presented by his daughter Giulia, 1932 (32.75.255)

13. Kris with a hilt representing a demon
Balinese, 18th–19th century
Steel, copper alloy, and semiprecious stones
L. 18¾ in. (47.6 cm)
Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935 (36.25.899)
The hilt depicts the demon Butha Nawasari, also known as Bhairawa-Heruka. The blade type is known as a *wedung*.



Figure 3. Kris with chiseled blade, checklist no. 10

14. Kris with a hilt representing Arjuna (pl. 5)
Balinese or eastern Javanese, 18th–19th century
Steel, silver, and wood
L. 17¾ in. (44.8 cm)
Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935 (36.25.1265)
15. Kris with a hilt representing a *rākshasa* (fig. 4)
Balinese, 16th century
Steel, gold, and ivory
L. 17¼ in. (43.8 cm)
Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935 (36.25.1270)
The carving of this particularly fine hilt represents a form of *rākshasa* (demon) in the characteristic squatting position often shown on kris hilts.

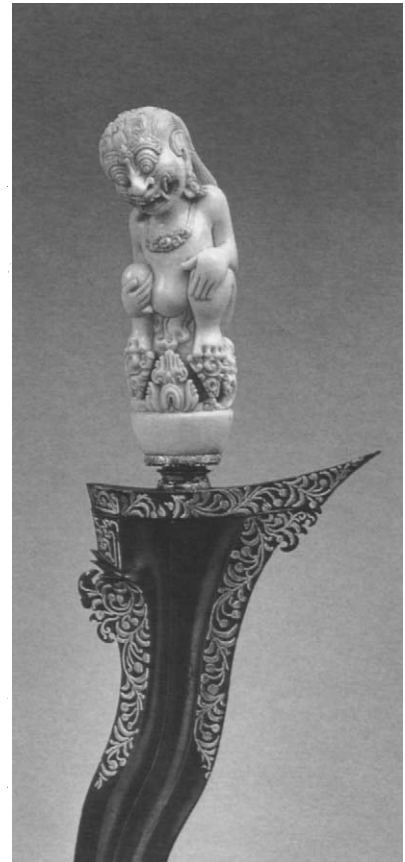


Figure 4. Kris hilt representing a *rākshasa*, checklist no. 15

16. Kris stand in the form of Bhīma (pl. 6)
Balinese, 19th–20th century
Wood and pigments
H. 23¼ in. (59.1 cm)
Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935 (36.25.1276)
17. Kris stand in the form of a seated *rākshasa*
Balinese, 18th–19th century
Wood and pigments
H. 19¼ in. (48.9 cm)
Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935 (36.25.1277)

Buddhism and Taoism: China, Tibet, and Korea

18. Dagger
Tibetan, 18th–19th century
Steel, silver, gold, wood, and ray skin
L. 18½ in. (47 cm)
Rogers Fund, 1919 (19.115.1 ab)
The hilt and scabbard are decorated with the Eight Glorious Buddhist Emblems, also known as the Eight Auspicious Symbols. These include the Parasol, the Conch Shell, the Endless Knot, and the Wheel of Law. Another popular Buddhist emblem shown on the pommel and the grip is the Wish-Granting Jewel.

19. Fabric armor with Buddhist and Taoist symbols (pl. 10 and back cover)
Korean, 18th century (?)
Hemp, copper alloy, and iron
H. 47¾ in. (121.3 cm), W. 22 in. (55.9 cm)
Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935 (36.25.10 a–c)
20. Helmet with sacred syllables in Lantsa script (fig. 5)
Sino-Tibetan, 15th–16th century (?)
Iron and gold
H. 11¼ in. (28.6 cm)
Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935 (36.25.184)

21. Saddle with a *kīrttimukha* motif (pl. 8)
Tibetan or Chinese, 18th–19th century
Wood, leather, iron, copper, turquoise, silk, and gold
L. 23½ in. (59.7 cm), W. 16 in. (40.6 cm)
Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935 (36.25.583)
22. Archer's ring with the symbols of the Eight Immortals and the Eight Treasures of Taoism
Chinese, 19th century
Palm nut (?)
Diam. 1⅜ in. (3.5 cm)
Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935 (36.25.2745)
23. Archer's ring with the Taoist symbol representing *shou* (long life)
Chinese, 19th century
Copper, gold, and enamel
Diam. 1⅜ in. (3.5 cm)
Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935 (36.25.2759)
24. Sword with a *kīrttimukha* motif (pl. 9)
Sino-Tibetan, 14th–15th century (?)
Iron, gold, and silver
L. 34⅝ in. (87.9 cm)
Rogers Fund, by exchange, and Fletcher Fund, 1995 (1995.136)

Buddhism and Shintō: Japan

25. Sword guard (*tsuba*) depicting Daruma (pl. 17)
Japanese, 18th century
Iron and gold
Diam. 3¼ in. (8.3 cm)
Signed Yoshihiro
Edward C. Moore Collection, Bequest of Edward C. Moore, 1891 (91.1.800)

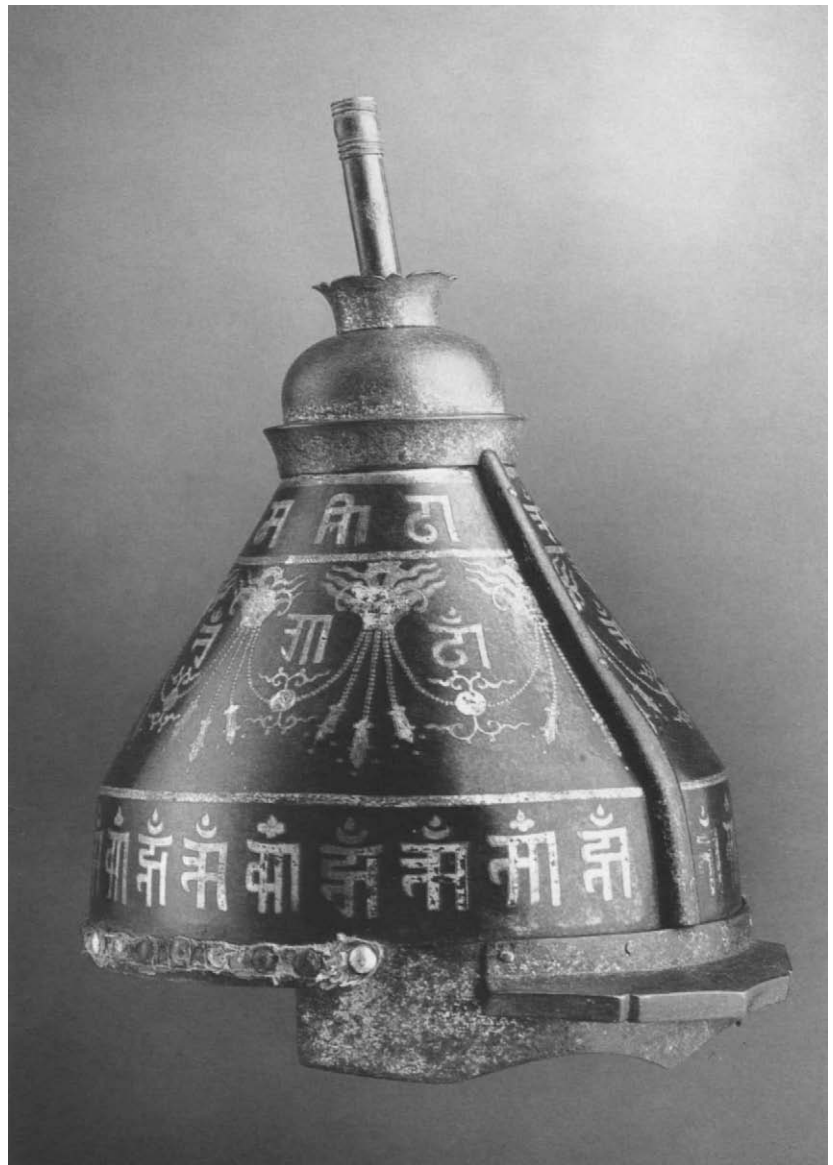


Figure 5. Helmet with sacred syllables in Lantsa script, checklist no. 20

26. Helmet crest (*maidate*) in the form of a conch shell
Japanese, 18th–19th century
Papier-mâché, wood, lacquer, pigments, and gold
L. 9¾ in. (24.8 cm), W. 4¼ in. (10.8 cm)
Gift of Bashford Dean, 1914 (14.100.136)
27. Ritual dagger in the form of a *ken* (sword) (pl. 16)
Japanese, blade, ca. 1200; hilt, ca. 1350
Steel, copper, and gold
L. 12¾ in. (32.4 cm)
H.O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H.O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.1369)



Figure 6. *Jingasa* with the image of Bunshōsei, checklist no. 31

28. Sword guard (*tsuba*) depicting a conch shell (pl. 17)
Japanese, late 18th–early 19th century
Iron, silver, and gold
Diam. 2¾ in. (7 cm)
Inscribed Masayoshi, Inshu Province
Bequest of Edward G. Kennedy, 1932
(33.40.14)

29. Helmet representing Daikokuten, one of the Seven Gods of Good Fortune
Japanese, 16th century (?)
Iron, lacquer, gold, and copper
H. 8½ in. (21.6 cm)
Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935
(36.25.130)

Daikokuten is the god of limitless prosperity. The crest of the helmet is in the form of Daikokuten's hammer, his most familiar attribute, which itself signifies wealth and prosperity. A helmet portraying another of the *Sbichi Fukujin* (Seven Gods of Good Fortune) is reproduced in pl. 11 (checklist no. 30).

30. Helmet representing one of the Seven Gods of Good Fortune (pl. 11)
Japanese, 17th–18th century
Iron
H. 15 in. (38.1 cm)
Signed Munetsugu
Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935
(36.25.163)

31. Helmet (*Jingasa*) with the image of Bunshōsei, the Taoist god of literature (fig. 6)
Japanese, probably 17th century
Iron, gold, silver, and copper
Diam. 18¼ in. (46.4 cm)
Signed Masuda Myōchin Munenobu
Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935
(36.25.197)

32. Helmet crest (*maidate*) bearing the name of the god Hachiman (pl. 13)
Japanese, 18th–19th century
Wood, gold, lacquer, and textile
Diam. 8 in. (20.3 cm)
Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935
(36.25.228)

33. Helmet crest (*maidate*) in the form of a Shintō *gobei* (fig. 7)
Japanese, 18th–19th century
Wood, lacquer, pigments, silver, and textile
H. 15 in. (38.1 cm), W. 11 in. (27.9 cm)
Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935
(36.25.240)

34. Helmet crest (*maidate*) in the form of a *kirin*
Japanese, 19th century
Copper, gold, and silver
H. 7 in. (17.8 cm), L. 7¼ in. (18.4 cm)
Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935
(36.25.242)
In Taoism the *kirin* is one of the four supernatural creatures, along with the dragon, the phoenix, and the thousand-year tortoise (Japanese, *minogame*). The *kirin* is sometimes considered the embodiment of the five elements (water, fire, wood, metal, and earth) and the most perfect animal in creation.

35. Helmet crest (*maidate*) in the form of a *minogame*
 Japanese, 18th–19th century
 Wood, lacquer, pigments, gold, and hair
 H. 12 in. (30.5 cm), W. 5 in. (12.7 cm)
 Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935 (36.25.249)
 One of Taoism's four supernatural animals, together with the dragon, the phoenix, and the *kirin*, the *minogame* (thousand-year tortoise) symbolizes the element earth. In addition it is the embodiment of longevity, as expressed by its tail of marsh grass. The *minogame* is also a companion and emblem of two of the Seven Gods of Good Fortune, Fukurokuju and Jurōjin.

36. Helmet crest (*maidate*) in the form of a *shakujō* (pl. 14)
 Japanese, 18th–19th century
 Wood, horn, gesso, lacquer, and gold
 H. 9¼ in. (23.5 cm), W. 5 in. (12.7 cm)
 Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935 (36.25.253)

37. Mask (*sōmen*) representing a *tengu* (pl. 12)
 Japanese, 18th century
 Iron and lacquer
 H. 8 in. (20.3 cm), W. 7¼ in. (18 cm)
 Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935 (36.25.263 ab)

38. Mask (*sōmen*) representing a *tengu* (pl. 12)
 Japanese, 18th century
 Leather, lacquer, hair, and silk
 H. 12 in. (30.5 cm), W. 7½ in. (19.1 cm)
 Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935 (36.25.268 a–c)

39. Breastplate bearing the name of the god Hachiman (pl. 13)
 Japanese, 18th century
 Steel, lacquer, and copper alloy
 H. 15¾ in. (39.1 cm), W. 9¾ in. (24.8 cm)
 Signed Myōchin Munesuke (embosser), Myōchin Morisuke (armorer)
 Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935 (36.25.347)

40. Chanfron in the form of a dragon head (fig. 8)
 Japanese, 19th century
 Papier-mâché, wood, lacquer, pigments, gold, and hair
 H. 21 in. (53.3 cm), W. 13 in. (33 cm)
 Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935 (36.25.499)
 Possibly made for one of the *sankin kōtai* (alternate attendance) processions that nobles were required to make to Edo at regular intervals.

41. Votive arrowhead (fig. 9)
 Japanese, 19th century
 Wood and pigments
 H. 4½ in. (11.4 cm), W. 5 in. (12.7 cm)
 Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935 (36.25.2584 b)

This arrowhead was probably made as a votive gift or souvenir in connection with a shrine dedicated to Tokugawa Ieyasu, the deified founder of the Tokugawa shogunate. Inside the arrowhead carved figures represent beings whose aid could be invoked for personal protection and success in battle. In the left half are the three sacred monkeys (*Sambiki zaru*), with the text of a prayer written behind them. In the right half are the Buddhist goddess Marishiten, who was especially venerated by archers, and Tokugawa Ieyasu. Behind them are the seed syllables representing two more deities: Aizen Myō-ō and Amida Nyorai.

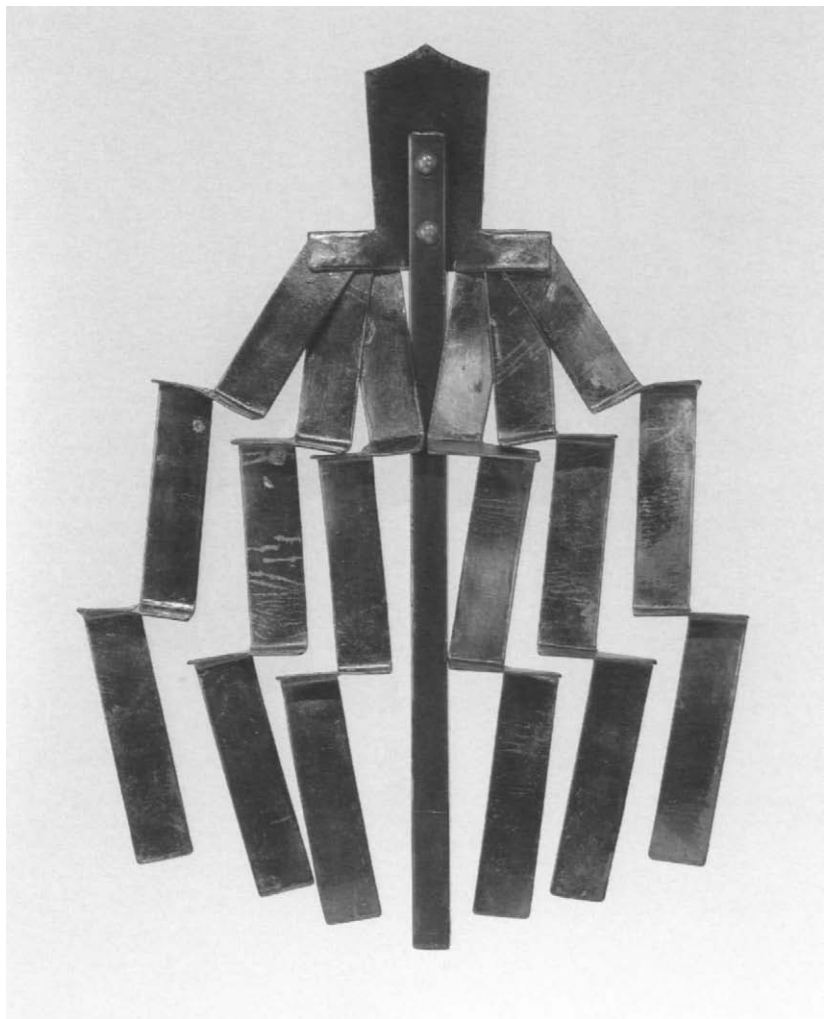


Figure 7. *Maidate* in the form of a Shintō *gobei*, checklist no. 33

42. Insignia (*sashimono*) in *vajra* form (pl. 15)

Japanese, 18th–19th century
Wood, lacquer, gold, pigments, and brass
H. 24 in. (61 cm), W. 7¾ in. (19.7 cm)
Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935
(36.25.2834)

43. Insignia (*sashimono*) in *vajra* form (pl. 15)

Japanese, 18th–19th century
Wood, lacquer, gold, and brass
H. 15½ in. (39.4 cm)
Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935
(36.25.2846)

44. Sword guard (*tsuba*) (pl. 17)

Japanese, 1698
Iron
Diam. 3¼ in. (8.3 cm)
Signed and dated Michimoto, Nagasaki, 1698
The Howard Mansfield Collection, Gift of Howard Mansfield, 1935
(36.120.82)
According to the inscription this *tsuba* was made from “foreign iron.”



Figure 8. Chanfron in the form of a dragon head, checklist no. 40

Christianity

45. Dagger with a hilt depicting David and the Head of Goliath (pl. 18)

European, 16th century
Steel, gold, and wood
L. 12¾ in. (31.4 cm)
Rogers Fund, 1904 (04.3.141)

46. Cabasset with the Lion of Saint Mark (pl. 20)

Italian, late 16th–early 17th century
Steel and pigments
H. 7 in. (17.8 cm)
Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913
(14.25.636)

47. Executioner's sword

German, ca. 1700
Steel, gold, brass, leather, and shark-skin
L. 41¾ in. (106 cm)
Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913
(14.25.1128)
The blade is etched with figures of Saint Michael, Satan, and the Virgin Mary, who are also portrayed on the sword hilt shown in pl. 21 (checklist no. 55).

48. Wheel lock from a hunting rifle engraved with the Dance of Salome and the Beheading of John the Baptist

South German, ca. 1610
Steel
L. 11¾ in. (28.9 cm)
Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913
(14.25.1387)

49. Powder horn with the Adoration of the Christ Child
 German, ca. 1575
 Staghorn and iron
 L. 8¼ in. (21 cm), W. 6 in. (15.2 cm)
 Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913
 (14.25.1454)

50. Dagger with a hilt representing Adam and Eve (pl. 18)
 French(?), 1650–1700
 Steel and wood
 L. 10½ in. (26.7 cm)
 Gift of Jean Jacques Reubell, in memory of his mother, Julia C. Coster, and of his wife, Adeline E. Post, both of New York City, 1926 (26.145.236 ab)

51. Calendar sword
 South German, 1590–1610
 Steel and silver
 L. 34½ in. (87.6 cm)
 Gift of Bashford Dean, 1926
 (26.262.8)
 The blade is etched with a calendar identifying the annual feast days of various Christian saints.

52. Archer's bracer showing Saint Sebastian, patron saint of archers (fig. 10)
 Dutch, late 16th century
 Ivory
 L. 7 in. (17.8 cm)
 Bashford Dean Memorial Collection, Funds from various donors, 1929
 (29.158.136)

53. Breastplate with Crucifixion scene (pl. 19)
 German (Augsburg), 1580
 Steel
 H. 17 in. (43.2 cm), W. 14½ in. (36.8 cm)
 Dated 1580
 Bashford Dean Memorial Collection, Funds from various donors, 1929
 (29.158.164)

54. Artillerist's rod
 Italian, 17th century
 Bronze and gold
 L. 10⅝ in. (27 cm)
 Rogers Fund, 1958 (58.94)
 The finial represents Saint Barbara, patron saint of artillerymen.

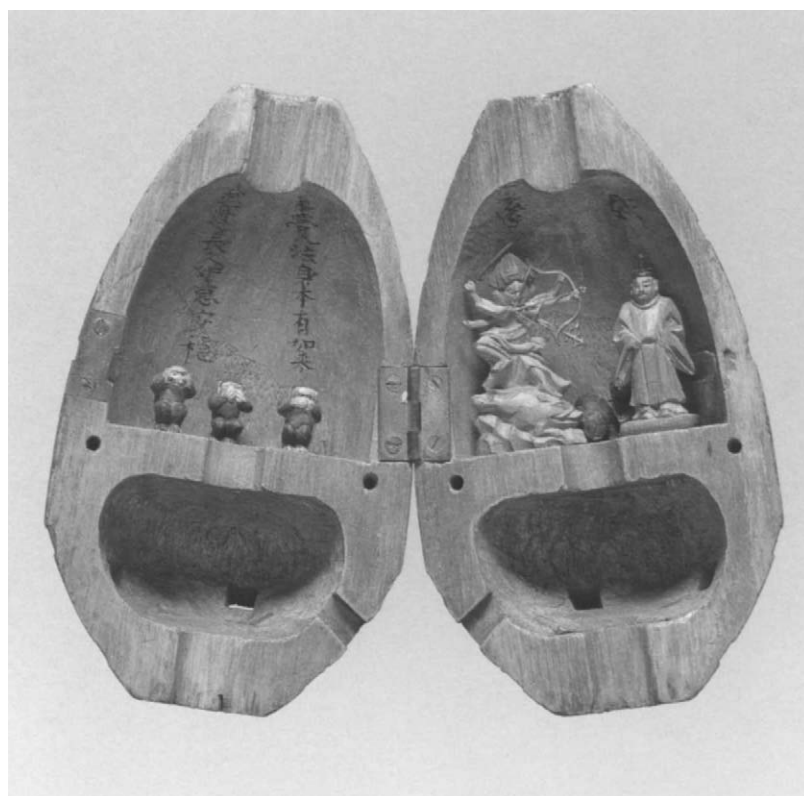


Figure 9. Votive arrowhead, interior, checklist no. 41

55. Sword hilt with the Virgin Mary, Saint Michael, and Satan (pl. 21)
 French (Paris), ca. 1882
 Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse, French, 1824–1887 (sculptor)
 Lucien Falize, French, 1842–1897 (goldsmith)
 Bronze and gold
 H. 6¼ in. (15.9 cm), W. 5 in. (12.7 cm)
 Purchase, Gift of William H. Riggs, by exchange, 1989 (1989.229)

57. Chanfron
 Turkish, 15th century
 Steel
 H. 23⅞ in. (60.6 cm), W. 8¼ in. (21 cm)
 Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935
 (36.25.509)
 Included in the decoration is a popular excerpt from the Qur'an (61:13): "Help from Allāh and a victory near at hand."

58. Dagger (*katar*)
 Indian, 18th–19th century
 Steel, gold, and silver
 L. 14 in. (35.6 cm)
 Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935
 (36.25.695)
 Inlaid in gold on one side is the Prayer to 'Alī, particularly favored by Shiite Muslims: "Call upon 'Alī, the manifester of miracles, you shall find him a help to you in adversities. All care and anxiety will clear away through the light of your greatness."

Islām

56. Cuirass (*Chār-āina*) (pl. 22)
 Indo-Persian, 18th–19th century
 Leather, iron, pigments, and gold
 H. 15¼ in. (38.7 cm)
 Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935
 (36.25.342)



Figure 10. Archer's bracer showing Saint Sebastian, checklist no. 52

O 'Alī, O 'Alī, O 'Alī." On the other side is a short quote from the sūra of Victory (*sūrat al-fath*, 48:1), "Surely We have granted thee a clear victory."

59. Short sword (*barong*) with talismanic symbols (pl. 24)
Southern Philippines, 19th century
Steel, ivory, silver, copper, and gold
L. 24 in. (61 cm)
Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935
(36.25.888)

60. Sword
Indian, 19th century
Steel, iron, silver, gold, and textile
L. 42 in. (106.7 cm)
Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935
(36.25.1316)
The length of the blade is engraved with inscriptions in the form of a talismanic scroll, which include Qur'anic quotes, pious phrases, and magic squares.

61. Sword
Indian, 18th century
Steel and silver
L. 34 in. (86.4 cm)
Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935
(36.25.1508)
The blade has a forked tip and a serrated edge intended to represent the *Dhū al-fiqār*, or Sword of 'Alī.

62. Gauntlet sword (*pata*) with Qur'anic inscriptions (pl. 23)
Indian, A.D. 1712 (A.H. 1126)
Steel and gold
Dated A.H. 1126 (A.D. 1712)
L. 52½ in. (133.4 cm)
Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935
(36.25.1538)

63. Standard head
Turkish, 17th century
Copper and gold
L. 21¾ in. (54.9 cm), W. 7 in. (17.8 cm)
Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935
(36.25.2861)
Decorated with the Muslim profession of faith: "There is no deity but Allāh, Muḥammad is Allāh's messenger."

64. Saber
Persian, 2nd half of 19th century
Steel, brass, and horn
L. 41⅞ in. (104.5 cm)
Rogers Fund, 1977 (1977.162.7)
The blade has a split tip in imitation of the *Dhū al-fiqār*, or Sword of 'Alī.

Sikhism

65. War discus (*chakar*) with inscriptions from the *Adi Granth* (pl. 25)
Indian (Sikh), 1775–1850
Steel and gold
Diam. 8¼ in. (21 cm)
Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935
(36.25.2878)

