



*Special thanks to:
Sukbir S Kaath who dropped the seed of collecting to my soul.
To Davinder S Toor for watering and feeding this new plant for years.
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To my wife who was patient enough to wait to taste the first fruit.*

FOREWORD

Many public and private collections of antique Indian arms and armour are to be found in countries which formally colonised India, principally Britain and France. Russia did not colonise India and therefore her contacts were either diplomatic or restricted to the relatively few traders and travellers who ventured there. Consequently Indian weapons and arms are seldom encountered in Russia, and Anton Bartholomew (Varfolomeev) is to be congratulated for being in the vanguard of open-minded collectors whose curiosity and aesthetic appetites have been stimulated by the art of the sub-continent. The borders of "India" are historically mercurial, and we usually refer to the "sub-continent of India" in order to avoid confusion with the current Republic of India. In exactly the same way "Russia" has been defined as the USSR, the Commonwealth, Confederation and currently the Union State. However in this foreword I will use the words India and Russia in their general (of political) sense. India is only one quarter the size of Russia, and yet it contains a huge variety of languages, religions and cultures. It has been subject to successive invasions since the beginning of recorded history. It has both absorbed and informed its invaders, and it has been informed by them in turn. It was the birthplace of the Indo-European group of languages. Its highly complex history has resulted in the huge diversity found in India today, and in the heterogeneous nature of the antique arms and armour which so fascinates us.

Antiques tend to increase in scarcity with the passing of time. The older an object is the lower will be the survival rate. So it is with Indian arms and armour, those of the 19th century are more common than those of the 18th century, and so on until one comes to the 14th century and earlier when very little survives at all except for archaeological material. India covers such a vast area and has been fought over by so many armies on so many occasions that there remains a huge legacy of weapons and armour both in India and spread around the world either as spoils of war or as souvenirs. Many armories can now be visited in India, many collections are on permanent display throughout Europe, and yet the study of these objects is really still in its infancy. The number of books devoted specifically to Indian arms and armour probably does not exceed 50, and many of these are so fundamentally flawed or outdated that they do not serve us well. There is however a growing interest in and awareness of the subject, and there are signs too that Indians are also awaking to the subject of their old arms and armour. Academic research requires a good working knowledge of Indian written languages, but empirical knowledge can be forwarded by observation.

The Anton Bartholomew collection focuses on pieces of both historical and aesthetic value. The Sikhs, who fought valiantly against the British Raj during the 19th century and earlier, are represented by a splendid top (helmet). A fine 18th century steel bow has impeccable provenance to the Kishangarh armoury, whilst a 17th century mail and plate shirt is known to have come from Bijapur to the Bikaner armoury, and was used at the siege of Adoni in 1689. These artefacts are all directly connected to their provenance, and they bring history alive in a very tangible way. For sheer quality of craftsmanship and beauty of design, execution and finish it would be hard to find a better Indian sword khanda than item No. 7 which would have been carried by a Rajput or Marhatta noble. Indian armourers and smiths produced weapons and armour made from the finest watered steel (wootz).

This was produced from very early times using highly specialised techniques that required a sophisticated understanding of metallurgy which is only now beginning to be fully understood.

In order to convert iron into steel it is necessary to add carbon. Indian metallurgists achieved this by devising the crucible method, whereby iron was placed in a ceramic crucible together with organic material which when heated over a prolonged period would turn to carbon and diffuse with the iron. It was then allowed to cool slowly resulting in a cake of crucible steel (wootz). This precious and expensive material was widely exported and it enjoyed an excellent reputation. It was also the material favoured by Indians to make their finest indigenous arms and armour. Being such an expensive commodity wootz tended to be used in sites where it could be seen, areas which were to be obscured by decoration would mostly be made from softer iron, and the joins between the 2 materials (lap welds) can often be observed. Many pieces made from wootz can be seen in this collection.

Wootz, when treated with dilute acid, reveals its constituent parts which can be seen as a "watered" pattern. This is an intrinsic property of the material. Another method of producing "watered steel" is mechanically, by taking 2 or more bars of iron or steel which have different carbon contents, and forge-welding them together to form a single mass. The barrel of gun p. 31 in the collection is made from mechanical "Damascus twist" steel, and the pattern can clearly be seen near the breech between 2 panels which are decorated with gold. Steels of different carbon contents have etched differentially to reveal the precise method of construction.

Perhaps the most commonly employed decorative technique seen in the Anton Bartholomew collection is koftgari. There are 2 distinct methods of koftgari decoration. The first is where the koftgar (decorator) makes fine, multiple and regular cuts at an oblique angle across the iron or steel surface to be decorated. He then hammers fine drawn gold (looti) or silver wire onto the prepared ground, and it is the closing cuts which crimp the underside of the softer metal and hold it to the surface. The decoration is then polished. This method is sometimes called false-damascening or counterfeit-damascening in order to distinguish it from the second type of koftgari which is true inlay. True inlay (zarnishan or tarnishan) is where the koftgar cuts away the ground to be decorated and undercuts the edges, he then hammers gold or silver into the channel or area to be filled, and the soft metal is held in place by the undercut edges. A variation of this technique called afaifi is where only the background of the design is cut away and inlaid, leaving the design showing in negative silhouette. It sometimes seems as though there is no end to the Indian craftsman's skill and ingenuity. Unique to India is a method of setting jewels into steel or jade, which is called kundun. Kundun work is carried out by using gold leaf or fine foil of the purest carat. This is compressed in situ using steel tools, and by intense pressure alone it fuses into a solid mass. It is a technique commonly used in India but not found elsewhere.

There is an infinite variety of shapes and forms to be found in the arms and armour of India. The materials from which they are made are also boundless, as are the skills and ingenuity shown by their manufacturers. If the audience is susceptible it is difficult not to be seduced by the sheer beauty and diversity of the weapons in the collection, or by the diverse techniques employed by the craftsmen who produced them. Their history is the history of India, in all its complexity. The closer we look at the exhibits, the more we see; and the more we see the more we understand and the more questions we ask. Fortunately there is no end in sight to this process, and it is to be hoped that the collection will inspire many more people with the same passion as Anton Bartholomew.

Jonathan Barrett

FIGH ◊ PRAY ◊ LOVE

Ever since I fell under the spell of Indian culture at the age of twenty-five, it has been difficult for me to imagine my life without its extraordinary beauty and charm. The objects in this collection seem rather to have found me than the other way around, and I am grateful to be their temporary guardian. Each time I attempt to understand the creative forces that brought them to life, I find inspiration, and evidence of the inextricable connection between the religion, ethics, and art of these bygone cultures and eras. This text is not academic in any common sense of the word; it is rather feelings turned into language. The sheer sensuality of Indian art can scarcely be expressed in dull words; the rhythm and lyricism of poetry or music is more suited to the task. Believing works of art to be invisible and existing beyond the boundaries of sense perception, which is the only way I can view the weapons here, has led me to pen to this essay. And so we begin:

Violence pervades our lives; the 20th century was clearly the bloodiest in all of history. Material progress, which should have come up with novel solutions to hunger and craved borders by lifting man up into the sky on jetliners, has in some measure come to our service by creating vaccines and medicines that help us live longer, eliminating age-old illnesses, and giving us nuclear power; but it has also come to the service of evil, laying waste entire cities and taking tens of millions of lives. How is this possible? How is it that mankind's most important discoveries are used for evil and turned into weapons of murder ??? In our age of enlightenment, where we unwittingly wince at the news so full of violence and twisted cruelty the word WEAPON itself has become a synonym of darkness and destruction.

Was it always this way?

India has been home to many great religions, poets, and warriors and is one of the few truly antihulterian civilizations. Perhaps we may find answers amongst the ascetics and saint-kings...

Great Mother Devi in many of her incarnations carries a gleaming sword in her hands. Smashing down the demon Mahisha when in the form of Durga or slaking her sword in the awful guise of Kali, she uses awe-inspiring weapons to vanquish EVIL everywhere and in all its manifestations, cutting through either the flesh of the hideous demons of ignorance and anger or destroying the very universe so that life may begin anew. This is what we mean when we say FIGHT.

It is interesting to note that the universe's powerful energies as both a constructive and destructive force have been associated in India with the feminine. The worship of these forces in female incarnation is the essence of Hinduism. Thus the word PRAY escapes our lips.

This seems paradoxical at first glance, considering that the role of a woman in Indian society is very restricted and sometimes seems sublimated and even demeaning in the eyes of those from the West. This religion, which has existed for thousands of years, should contain an



explanation of the female position. Somewhat illustrative are words from our own Western culture like mankind, human, and Mensch (man in German), which morphologically relate to the masculine. Nature, on the other hand, has always been associated with the feminine. Nature is endowed with feminine characteristics in bearing and giving life, and yet is also pitiless in bringing death and chaos. Man and mankind remain masculine, and as long as he is a civilization-builder, there will be the mortal duel with nature for survival. Worship of, and the struggle to conquer, nature highlight the Hindu cultural tradition of intertwining worship and suppression of the feminine. In building lingams (phalli representing the god Shiva) where he resided, a man proclaimed the masculine creative principle had prevailed over the primordial chaos of the surrounding world. In making it fructify, he attempts to provide well-being both for himself and his children.

Eroticism and sensuality; both of which are found throughout Hindu art, are linked first and foremost to the carnal beauty of the feminine, which they revere as a subject of admiration and religious devotion. Miniatures of Divine Krishna and mortal rulers making love were a method of expressing the divine beauty of this act. Attaining the Absolute through the unification of the masculine and feminine in all its carnality is reflected in Tantric study.

What is this, then, if not LOVE?

All three aspects of the life of warrior as an ideal MAN who is to FIGHT, PRAY, and LOVE are fused together in Indian culture, for seeing the universe as a constant battle between order and chaos, a play of energy in the endless dance of life and death, makes any of these three acts divine.

Battle is the meaning of a warrior's life either in war or in peace, the latter being the time when he instead goes out to hunt wild game. The masculine apparently still enjoys the hunt in its appetite for sports. One only need glance at a sculpture of the mythological monster Yali in combat with a mace-mortal to appreciate what the struggle between man and the wild means (the animal's tail turns into a stylized bough to symbolize both flora and fauna). All of man's strength and hope for victory in this confrontation lies on the edge of his blade. Divine steel places the vanquished monster at his feet. And just as surely a gold and jewel-encrusted blade will command respect from subjects and inspire love in the heart of another sublime Flower with a capital F (for "feminine") inconspicuous in her perfection as the Virgin.

Let us imagine a gleaming, curved, and sharp steel blade. With what epithets may we endow it? Lethal, predatory, formidable, blood-thirsty...and it has always seemed to me this war right and fair, as blades of bygone centuries were at home with death, blood, and battle. The refined and intriguing damask-steel blades of India fit this description to a figurative 't. But even more remarkable is the tradition of decorating their hilts with flowers, ram heads, camels, goats, and parrots. Of course, in the Mughal tradition horse and occasionally





elephant heads are found, but the aforementioned list is much more traditional. Wouldn't you agree that the animals on this list aren't particularly blood-thirsty or combative? Indeed, entire dynasties of Indian warriors have borne the name of the lion (Singh), and dozens of rulers have readily referred to themselves as tigers. In light of India's ancient history, its religion, symbolism, and sophisticated art, it is difficult to imagine how flora and fauna which are regularly depicted in gold on steel, carved into gems, and cast in silver and gold then adorning in jewels and enamel could be happenstance. Do these symbols have any sacred force? Adorning weapons with religious and magical symbols and talismans that were to ensure victory over the enemy and secure the peace is a universal practice. In the Islamic traditions, swords are engraved with battle-cries to Allah or the Prophet, surahs from the Koran, Bedah magical squares, and other symbols, and Russian, Catholic and Orthodox swords and armor were adorned with motifs to the Virgin Mary, etc.

In the halls of the Victoria and Albert Museum, one may encounter depictions of the very same flower found on sections of Indian cloth both carved into stone panels and inlaid with gold into the hilt of a talwar dated from the 17th to the beginning of the 18th century. These works are the height of the decorative and applied arts of the epoch of the Mughal Empire. To be sure, the Mughals were Muslims and worshiped the Persian style, but their primary figurative motifs were Indian in origin, just like the shape of their weaponry and decorative architectural motifs, etc. Should a botanist see this flower, he invariably will recognize it as a hibiscus (*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* in Latin and *Jalolomon* in Hindi). We see this flower everywhere depicted on the jade hilts of khatvans and steel armor.

This flower is noticed repeatedly as one of the attributes of the Mother Goddess Devi and is used everywhere as an offering in rituals of worship to Durga, one of Devi's manifestations. Incarnated as Durga, Devi is the protectress of warriors, the invincible goddess brandishing many weapons in her arms. She kills the demon buffalo Mahisha with her trident and decapitates Chanda and Munda with her sword.

She gives weapons to righteous warriors. The Marathi people believe that Durga, when in the form of Bhagavati, bestowed a sword on their leader Sheraj that annihilated all of his enemies. In Hinduism, the red hibiscus flower also symbolizes the fertile womb of Kali—the goddess and destruction, who is shrouded in the color

of a stormy sea and clothed in chopped-off arms and adorned with garlands of skulls. The fierce, terrible, and insatiable Kali is the goddess of the battlefield. As a result, we may conclude with some certainty from the flowers decorating Indian weapons that they are a symbol of offering (sacrifice) and worship to the patron goddesses of war (in Devi's guises of Durga and Kali). Let us examine how this conclusion may apply to other patterns utilized in the decoration of Indian arms.

The cult of the Slee Mother is one of the oldest on the earth and originated in the ancient agricultural cultures of the Fertile Crescent. The great goddess was considered to be a source of rain and fertility, a vessel of heavenly measure. The name of the goddess Kali corresponds to the Nostratic *kala*, meaning 'jar' or 'pot'. This makes sense, as during the Neolithic and Bronze Ages the image of the jar also symbolized a receptacle for precious liquids. Often jars of this period took the form of the female figure or were decorated with pictures of falling rain. In India, the jar is still hailed with the feminine.

According to Ariel Golan, jars have been associated with the image of the goddess because their neck is round when you look at it from above and the circle was her symbol. Along these lines, ancient Hindus represented this shape in the hilt of the talwar, their sword of choice. Robert Elgood, in his *Hands Arms and Ritual*, writes about this, referring to this shape on hilts of early talwars, back when the disc still represented to Indians a bowl (or jar), referred to as a *kalasha*. The similar shape of the yoni also comes to mind, which symbolizes the Mother Goddess. If these ideas are valid, then what becomes possible is that a mystical force merged a talwar's tang to theommel of the hilt. This could easily find reflection in the merging of the yoni and the lingam, an ancient and powerful religious symbol for Hinduism, the symbol of adacta, the unification of the feminine and masculine in the form of Shiva and Shakti.

In Hindu religious traditions, the jar is still as integral to the concept of Devi. In many images of Devi she is holding a parrot as a symbol of fertility (many Hindu khatvans traditionally have hilts shaped like a parrot's head). As a result, the meaning of these symbols we encounter when studying Hindu weapons seems to refer us to ancient cults worshipping the Mother Goddess as a symbol of fertility.

Ariel Golan has come to some interesting conclusions in this regard in his book *Myth and Symbol: Symbolism in Prehistoric Religions*,



published in Jerusalem in 1991. According to his theory, undulating lines on jars created during the early agricultural period symbolized not only divine moisture but also sacred human hair in so far as the inhabitants of the Fertile Crescent often had wavy hair. So, it is perhaps this early link to fertility that caused so many deities straddling headwear for men and women to emerge out of the world's religions. Another of his conclusions is related to the symbolism of the shape of ram and goat horns, in that perhaps this is why the lines undulate, their spiral shape symbolizing the link between these animals and early fertility cults. We find some tenuous corroboration of this hypothesis in ancient Egyptian spring festivals dedicated to the rebirth of plant life and worship of the constellation Arctis (the Ram). Later, these rites of renewal were transformed by the Christians into Easter and required a lamb for the table.

In ancient Greek traditions, rams' horns were sacred symbols harkening back to the time of Alexander the Great, who in his triumphal parades wore a horned helmet. Also, chalice and rhytons would be decorated with ram heads, and satyrs and fauns would have ram and goat horns and hooves. A hypothesis exists that the spirals of Ionic capitals might be a vestigial symbol of the ram that wreathes the trumeaux of older buildings. Even should some of these ideas not be vindicated, the link between the ram and many fertility cults is nevertheless firmly established.

Turning our gaze to the Indian subcontinent, we may also note that the use of the aforementioned symbols and decoration are fairly exclusive to northern India and to some extent the Deccan Plateau, which putatively served as locations where Indo-European tribes resided. One way or another, the symbol of the ram decorates many Indian khanjars, and the scimitar is often found alongside the goat, camel, bull, and cat in many images of the goddess Kali.

According to the translation of the *Karpuradi-Stava* (Hymn to Kali) from the Sanskrit by Sir John Woodroffe, verse 19 states that the flesh of any ram, camel, goat, cat, ox or man sacrificed to Kali becomes real. Vimalanda Svami's commentary on this hymn, which was also partially translated by Woodroffe, also states that animals are the six enemies of Kali, where the goat is lust, the ram delusion (Maya), the camel envy, the ox hatred, the cat greed, and the man pride. Only a lamb may offer a human sacrifice to the goddess.

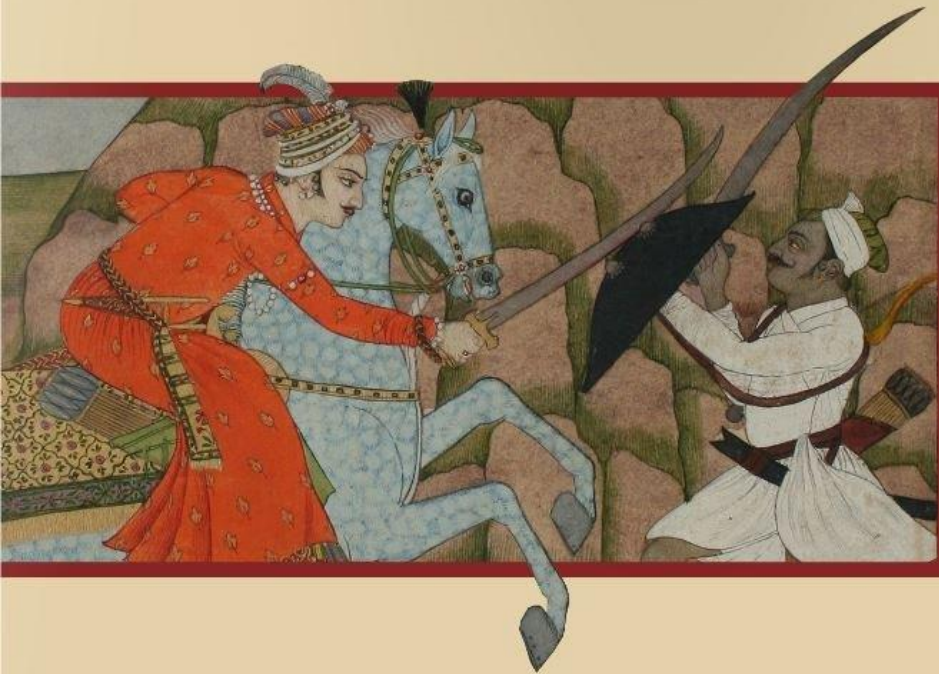
At the conclusion of this excursion, we should turn for a moment to the principle of complementarity which is central to Hindu spiritual thought, the unified energy of Shiva and Shakti that we considered earlier when discussing the *tabwar*'s pommel. Another version of the hymn relates this to the shape of the crescent moon, which is another embodiment of the Mother Goddess, and not only in Hinduism, but in Orthodox Christianity. And so, Devi is commonly holding a curved sabre, the symbol of the crescent moon. The Sûth initiation ritual uses a straight-bladed *Khanda* dipped into a jar of *amrita*, the elixir of immortality, which is then sprinkled on the convert, but should the convert be a woman, the sabre used

has a curved blade. It is also interesting that the shields of Indian warriors (non-Muslims) had, in addition to round bosses—symbols of the sun—crescent moons as decorations. The symbolism of this composition is fairly obvious, in that it likely represents the divine union of Shiva and Shakti.

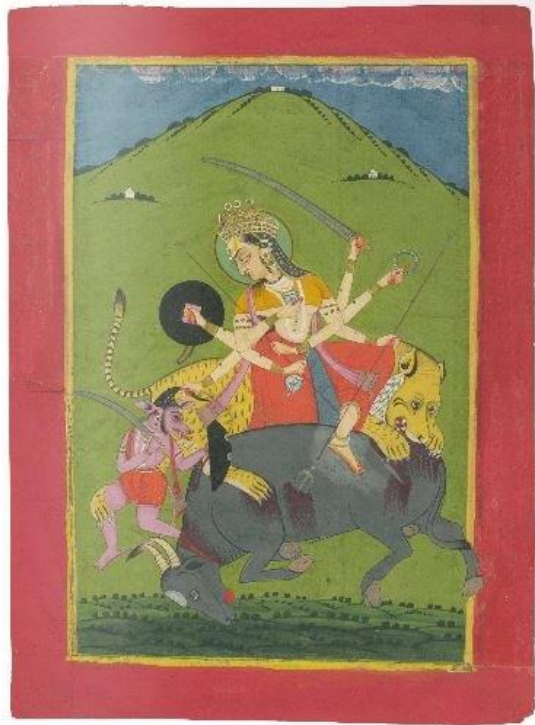
Without doubt, the aforementioned is somewhat speculative, but, nevertheless, the aspiration of the Indian warrior to honor the higher will of the great goddess on the field of valor in decorating his weapons with sacrificial symbols allows us to see his bloody trade as, in his mind, a divine act that permits her power to flow through his hand and into his blade and vice-versa. Of course, in time these symbols, which at first likely inspired feelings of divine support and safety, would simply be adored on these weapons as an aesthetic device. And so the magic of symbols slowly transformed into a sense of beauty, the very meaning of the Indian warrior's life, which is expressed by our formula of Fight—Pray—Love.

The END





FIGHT



*Indian Mughal sword shambir in the Persian manner
Probably Northern India, 18th or early 19th century*



*A very fine Indian shield Dhal
First half of 18th century*



An Indian sabre shamshir, fitted with a fine Persian blade of watered steel with the pattern called Kirk Narduban, meaning "the foxy steps" and referring to the ladder of the Prophet Muhammad. The forging of this blade is particularly well executed, leaving the 'steps' clearly defined. The hilt has a steel crosspiece, pommel and grip strap each of watered steel, and each with gold loftgari decoration (false damascene). The grips are made from two pieces of walrus ivory, and the inside face has shaped 'finger cusps' to provide a secure grip. It retains its wooden scabbard covered with black ass skin and with some 'string decoration' which is glued beneath the leather, the string providing decoration in relief. The scabbard also has a pair of hanging bands and a chape all decorated en-suite with the hilt.

Notes:

For a good account of the production of blades with the Kirk Narduban pattern see Figiel, 1991, chapter 5.

Muslims believe that the ladder of the Prophet Muhammad stretches from the Temple of Solomon on heaven, and has 100 rungs. It was ascended by the Prophet Muhammad with the angel Jibrail. The number 40 has considerable mystical significance within the Islamic tradition.

Bibliography:

Leo S. Figiel, "On Damascus Steel", New York, 1991.





A particularly fine Sikh helmet "toga" from the Punjab (probably Lahore), first half of the 19th century.

The fluted bowl is made from watered steel (fussor). It is fitted with a pair of plume sockets, a nasal bar which can either be lowered or held up with a hook and (missing) strap, and the helmet is surmounted by a third plume socket with arm shaped base containing a later black horse's feather plume. The bowl and fittings are extensively decorated with gold inlay/ornament comprising conventional floral decoration, the flutes are filled with pairs of diminishing sized scrolls, whilst the nasal bar and plume sockets are decorated with matching chevrons. The helmet is fitted with a long camail of iron and brass rings forming a repeated diamond pattern. The backs of the shaped finials attached to the nasal bar are both covered with red paint. The precise significance of this decoration, frequently observed on Sikh helmets, has yet to be firmly established, but will inevitably encourage divine protection and/or martial success. A shaped plate decorated with inlay has been riveted at the time of manufacture across a small crack in the bowl situated above the nasal bar. This effectively restores structural integrity to the bowl. Such flaws on metalwork from the Punjab are normally to be found disguised by inlay/ornament which forms seemingly random decoration. Diameter of bowl 20cms.

Notes. The helmet compares closely with lot 22 from the trophies of the Sikh wars brought back by the Marquess of Dalhousie following his term as Governor-General of India (1848-1856) following his successful annexation of the Punjab after the battle of Gujarat in 1849. See Solesby's, 21-22 May, 1990. Compare also with Egerton item No.704.

An Indian shirt of mail and plate from a large group which were captured at the siege of Adoni in 1689 and subsequently taken as booty to the armoury at Bikaner, 17th century or earlier. The shirt comprises 2 rectangular plates at the front, one of which is engraved inside with the "Adoni" inscription, both fitted with 3 fish-shaped buckles; 2 pairs of plates which protect the sides, one of which is engraved with an inscription in Devanagari script; whilst the back comprises 3 rows of vertical lamellae, the central column being formed from plates with shaped lower edges and curved to produce a medial gutter. The mail is formed from alternate rows of solid and of spread rings which vary slightly in size, the thickest rings protecting the chest. The shirt has long sleeves and a long skirt.

Notes. These shirts were originally worn with a cotton lining padded with raw cotton or kapok, and the very long mail sleeves were sewn rucked up to the laing to facilitate mobility when fighting. A painting by Kamal Muhammad and Chand Muhammad, Deccan, Bijapur c.1680 in the Metropolitan Museum, New York No. 1982.213 shows a member of the House of Bijapur wearing a similar mail shirt which is also fitted with fish-shaped buckles (see Welch No. 208 for a reproduction of this painting). Many of these shirts were used in a historical cavalcade during the 1901 Delhi Durbar where they were photographed by Bourne and Shepherd. The extensive inscription in Devanagari script inside the front plate reveals that the shirt was taken at the siege of Adoni by Arup Singh, Maharaja of Bikaner, a general in Aurangzeb's Mughal army, who defeated the Adil-Shahi dynasty of Bijapur at the siege of Adoni in 1689. See Rickerts No. 141. The inscription is reproduced in Alexander 1992, item 100.

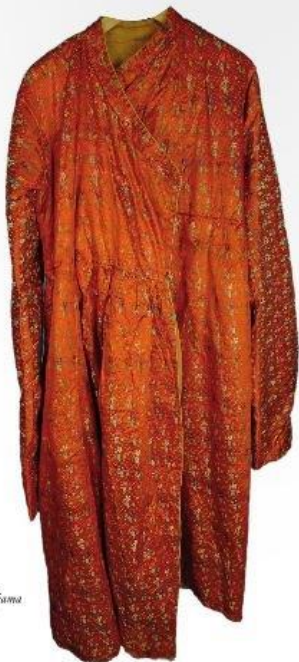




*A north indian mail shirt,
18th century*

formed entirely of riveted rings of circular section, with a central opening at the front, wrist-length sleeves, and a mid-thigh-length skirt divided at the centre rear

Provenance:
Ginfa Monzoni, sold American Art
Associates, New York,
10th-15th October 1952
JWHA Inv. No. 1850



Red-velvet impressive traditional jama

Dates: from ca.1800-1920
From Punjab or Rajasthan





A good Afghan dagger pesh lutz, possibly from Herat, first half of the 19th century.

The T-section blade has a thickened tip, and is forged from finely patterned watered steel (*soozai*) and extensively decorated with gold *kofgari* ornament. This includes a pair of birds within flowering foliage, and a vase of flowers. The back edge and grip strap are decorated with gold *kofgari* flowers and foliage together with the maker's signature (begins with the word *amal* = work of, the rest is indistinct). The *kofgari* decoration is frequently embellished with further engraved decoration on top of the gold, a technique commonly found in Persia in the Qajar period. The pommel is fitted with a solid steel hinged finial of Persian pattern. The grips are made from elephant ivory. The sheath is covered in black ass skin and is fitted with silver mounts both chased with floral decoration against a punched ground. The hocket has a pierced fringe, and the chape is fitted with a fluted hood shaped finial. Overall length 42cms, blade length 28cms.

Notes: The significant number of features of Persian origin found on this erstwhile Indian dagger collectively point to an Afghan source. The use of ass skin is common to very many Afghan sheaths and scabbards. The blade has further been secured by a rivet placed through the bolsters possibly at a slightly later date. This feature, absent on Indian examples, is frequently observed on the hilts of Afghan swords *pishtaz*. The pairs of birds are all encircled with eyes surrounded by a plain steel background, and are identical to those on a pesh lutz in the Figel collection (Butterfield and Butterfield, lot 2094) and to another in a Danish private collection (Blanniske våben i dansk privateje No. 144). These three examples now point to a single workshop or to a single *kofgar*.





Mythical Beast (Singha)
External wall, vertical indentation
Probably Rajasthan, India, medieval period
Sandstone 76 cm.

For similar examples:
The Boudha Museum, 76.179.1
New Delhi, National Museum, M.68

A particularly fine North Indian all steel spear, Rajasthan, probably from the armoury at Bikaner, 17th century.
The head is made from finely watered steel (700/425) of dark almost black colour, with highly visible watering and retaining its original patina, the tip thickened. The shaft is well formed and very symmetrical with 2 turned hand slopes the butt is swollen, waisted and faceted. Overall length, 90cms; length of head, 25cms. Notes. The high quality finish and attention to symmetry exhibited by this spear is to be found among a large group of all steel weapons from the armoury of Bikaner, Rajasthan. A number of forging flaws along the borders of lap welds on this spear can be seen skilfully filled by the makers.



A North Indian katar with well chiselled blade. Rajasthan or Punjab, late 18th or early 19th century. The blade is made from finely watered steel (*twawat*) and has burnished edges and a burnished thickened tip. It is well chiselled in relief, on one side with a scene depicting a Sikh horseman spearing one of 2 male boars between trees in a rocky landscape. The rider's mount is rearing, and the rider wears a katar in his waist sash, while his hair is arranged in a forward facing bun situated at the very back of his turban. On the reverse is a scene showing the same horse and rider being pursued by a heavily caparisoned elephant whose mahout sits well back and controls the elephant with an ankus. The iron hilt is woven twisted and decorated with gold koftgari, the

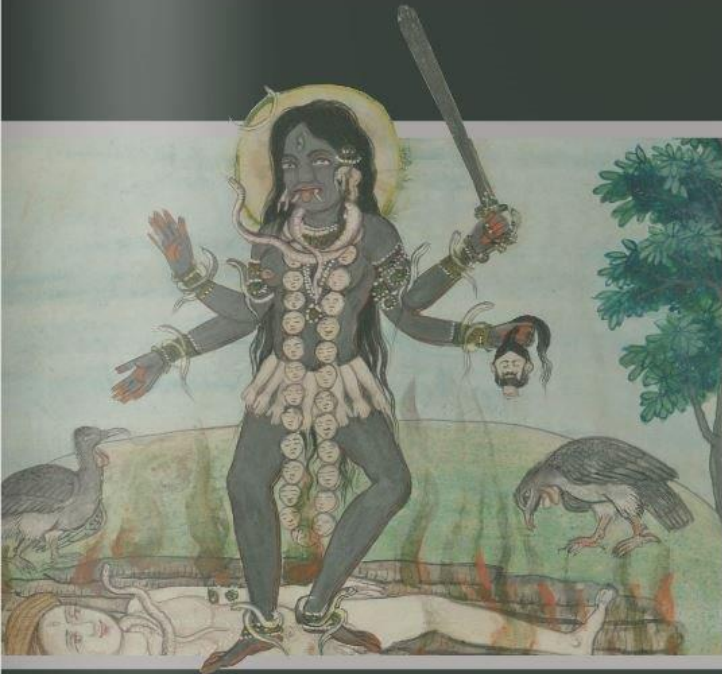
swollen handle bars are each supported by shaped capitals which are decorated with gold koftgari filigree. Overall length 41cms, blade length 20.5cms.

Notes. A large group of katars from Northern India which were clearly made in a number of different locations are to be found chiselled with similar scenes. This example can be compared with Holstein Pl. XIV No. 27, which has a hilt almost certainly from Binsli (see Nordenskiöld 2009). Close examination of this blade will reveal some expertly patched repairs to the steel blade situated beneath the fleeing horse, presumably concealing flaws in the metal which were either revealed during chiselling or during subsequent cleaning.



A fine North Indian powder flask Baranoda

Indian matchlock gun torador
India' late 18th or early 19th century



PRAY

Meditation Hymn of Adya Kali

*She is dark as a black rick, wearing a jeweled crown.
The sign of a third eye is on her forehead,
She, the Goddess with three eyes,
Like lotus petals, Her eyes are large,
They shine like two bright jewels.
Her glance showers compassion.
Three locks of matted hair adorn her,
Her face radiates contentment and,
She is graced with much splendor.
Her raised left hand holds a sword,
a human head in the lower one.*

*Her right hand grant sanctuary and boons to all,
Her tongue shows between her lips,
the garland of skulls hanging to her feet
Bejeweled, of heavenly form, there is no skirt of human arms.
She stands on a lotus base,
Her right foot on the chest of Shiva sprawled at Her feet.
Her other foot is on his right thigh.
She grants freedom from fear.*

*She the Goddess, is the expression of the ultimate Brahman. Meditate
on Adya, the infinite,
She who embodies the extreme beauty in form.*



*An indian khanda with wood, ornately chiselled blade
first half 19th century*

With single-edged blade double-edged towards the swelled point, chiselled in low relief with foliage and flower-heads. Characteristic basinet hilt's square and spike surmounting the pommel with a dense lattice of foliate patterns, the larger and intricate guard ornate with flowers.
31 cm (60cm) blade

Retained in an original wooden scabbard
now recovered with false.





*Head of Bhairava,
Medieval period, India, 12th Century
Sandstone, 21cm*



Nayar sword from the Malabar coast of South India

The extensive brass mounts typical of southern Indian swords are beautifully shaped, layered and pierced in the form of the flame shakri shakri, the guard is four lobed with a central 'eye' to each quarter, the pommel featuring layers of brass and alternate steel rings with applied diamond shaped brass jingles. Along the back of the blade have been added a row of iron wrights or jingles. Definitely for temple use. 18th century.



A fine Rajput sword Khanda

The blade is straight, double edged, and swells gently towards the tip. It is made from *wostz* (Indian crucible steel) presenting a finely watered pattern. The blade is reinforced with strips of polished iron for approximately 2/3 of the back edge, and 1/4 of the front edge. These reinforcing strips have pierced and shaped borders, and enclose 2 small windows towards the hilt, which reveal the blade proper. The hilt is of conventional 'basler' form, and fitted with a tall pommel spike which gives the user an opportunity to wield the sword with both hands simultaneously. The hilt is sumptuously ornamented overall with a generous amount of gold *lofigari* (false damascene) decoration in form of repeated foliage, geometric and comma-shaped motifs. The hilt further retains its original velvet covered cotton stuffed fabric liner.

Probably Rajasthan, late 18th or early 19th century; the blade may possibly be earlier.

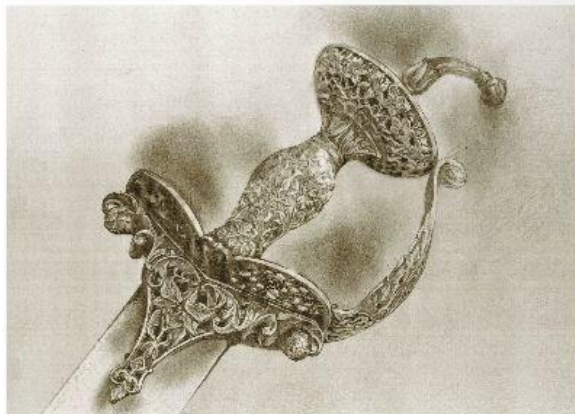
Notes. Khanda hilted swords of this form seems to have been used by Sikhs, Marhattas and Rajputs alike.

*A very fine Rajput or Marhattan sword Khanda,
Punjab or Rajasthan, 18th century*

The slightly curved blade with *velman* (swollen double edged tip) is made from fine dark watered steel (*wostz*), cut with multiple fullers and inlaid with a series of brass discs. The back edge has been decorated with a full length inscription in gold *lofigari* of which clear traces remain. The hilt of conventional form is made from finely watered steel (*wostz*) and has reinforced edges. It has gold *lofigari* decoration overall incorporating fine bundles of leaves and geometric borders. The pommel is fitted with a tall fluted spike terminating in a lotus bud finial. The broad kerchie-like base has a raised medial rib, and has pierced palmettes at each end. The hand guard incorporates a pair of leopards secured by brackets from which issue a pair of lotus flowers each with pierced stem and leaves; the flower heads each have a frosted glass centre. The hand guard has been fitted with an elegant device in the form of a pair of split palmettes which have been riveted across a small flange. Overall length 96cms; blade length 75cms.

Notes. For a sword with a precisely similar hilt see the Wallace Collection, London, No. OA.1794 (Laking p.185-86); and also another in the Tarslov-Selo Collection (Lobzovskiy p. 56-57 No. 10). A drawing of Sikh Chieftains by Prince A. Saltykov (reproduced in Strong 1999, p.221) made in 1842 in Lahore also shows a sword of very similar form. Saltykov was a collector of Indian weapons as well as an accomplished artist, and might be relied upon to record details accurately.



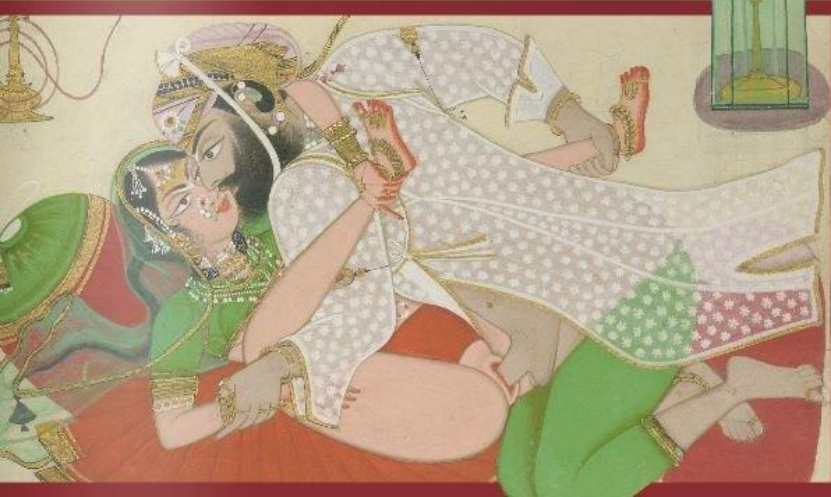


17th century Mughal sword with finely pierced iron hilt

The blade is a variation of the Saem Parah (= lily leaf shape associated with Central India and with the Rajputs. The blade is quite broad, single edged, and has a distinct and swollen end which projects at a slight angle towards the tip. The iron hilt is finely chiselled overall with typical Mughal decoration of lotus flowers, buds and foliage. The grip is chiselled in low relief, and other parts of the hilt are finely pierced overall. The entire hilt has been covered

with fine gold foil by *lofugari* (false damascene) of which much remains intact. The 'basket' hilt is of conventional form with the addition of a pair of in-turned lotus buds positioned beneath the extremities of the guard proper. The design of this hilt is entirely homogenous and satisfying, and the decoration covers the irregular-shaped surfaces with seemingly effortless conviction. Mughal India, 17th century.





LOVE

Love the intoxicating substance pervading all

"It is the time you have wasted for your rose that makes your rose so important."

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*

An old Chinese proverb tells us that when we have only two pennies left in the world, we need buy a loaf of bread with one, and a flower with the other.

The bread is for surviving, the flower is so we have a good enough reason to survive, a motivation that is over and beyond the needs of the body. This proverb may very well be the very foundation of all aesthetics, for without beauty and the love it engenders, without the motive power of the experience of beyond, why survive?

It is this very beyondness, beyond the spaces and the times, beyond the moments, whether of joy or of suffering, whether celebrating birth or ritualizing death, that the grand vision of Hindu cosmology depicts.

Bringing forth a unique blend of universal consciousness, pervading all, towered by gods and demigods, divinities and demons, desires impossible and passions unquenchable, the particularities of the Indian cosmological project is nothing less than stunning.

It is not a perfect universe, but it is a cosmos that is vibrant, full of life and intent; a cosmos full of meaning and importance, managed by values and consequences.

Between the dream of Brahma, the sustenance of Vishnu and the all-destroying powers of Shiva a grand narrative explodes into being, paving the way for an experience of becoming unlike any other.

Abundantly providing the human mind with a plethora of divinities and symbols, representations and manifestations, naturally ascending and transcending the banal and temporal into concepts of a-temporality and immortality, the Indian reality discernible in art and poetry, music and rituals is over and above all a mythology of love and beauty, being and becoming.

Vishnu, for instance, the supreme blue being holding a lotus (padma) in one hand, a mace (kaumodaki gada) in the second, the conch (panchajanya shankha) in the third and the final weapon of choice the chakra (Sudarshana Chakra) in his fourth hand, presents us with a grand vision from which all avatars will be born. So grand is the trimurti that all stand in awe and need surrender their egos before their transformative power.

None more so than Vishnu, whose very name translates into:

"all pervading, present everywhere". (Adi Shankara in his commentary on the Sahasranama states derivation from vi, with a meaning 'presence everywhere'. «As he pervades everything, veesti, he is called Vishnu»). Adi Shankara states (regarding Vishnu Purana, 3.1.45): «The Power of the Supreme Being has entered within the universe. The root vi means 'enter into').

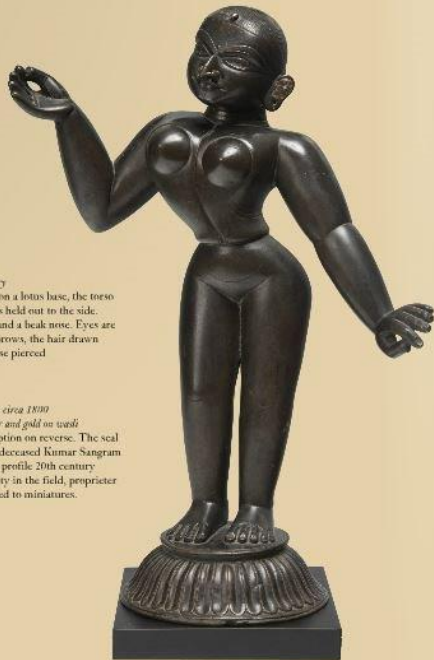
But what is it that enters the world via the agency of Vishnu?

What is it that pervades all and everything?

A great secret indeed.

In Hindu cosmology, the universe, the spaces, the times, are all cyclical, endless, repeating, bending and turning upon themselves.

This aspect of Hindu cosmology might probably be the closest to the way we currently understand the state of affairs of the universe, via our modern astronomy, physics and mathematics. But the sages of the Rig Veda knew something even deeper, they knew all



A bronze figure of Radha

India, Orissa, 18th/19th century

Standing with straight legs on a lotus base, the torso turned to her right and arms held out to the side.

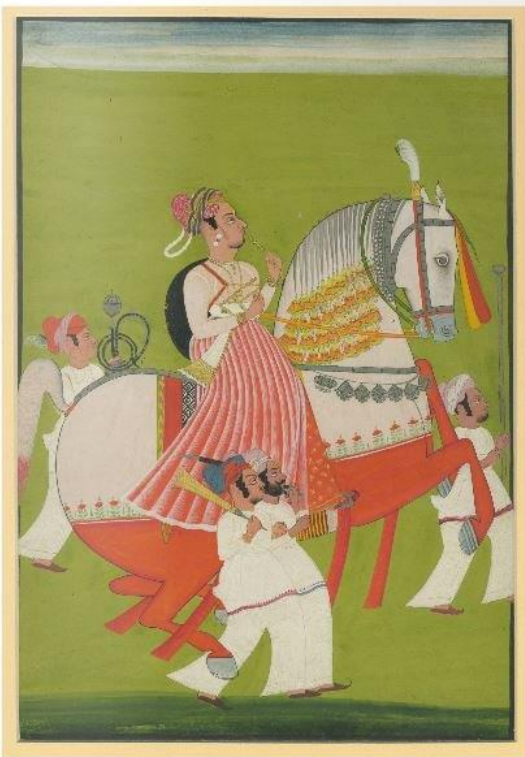
The face with gentle smile and a beak nose. Eyes are wide open beneath arched brows, the hair drawn smoothly back. Ears and nose pierced
50 cm. high

Equestrian portrait:

Thakur Indrasingh Ji, Jodhpur, circa 1800

Opaque watercolour with silver and gold on wasti

Portrait identified by inscription on reverse. The seal on the reverse is that of the deceased Kumar Sangram Singh of Nawalgarh, a high profile 20th century Indian collector and authority in the field, proprietor of his own museum dedicated to miniatures.
33.2 x 23.2cm



these cycles and repetitions in time and in space are all part and parcel of the great life of the cosmos to which we, humans, are only a small and insignificant part. And yet within the great sleeping cycles of Brahma, along the quasi infinite Manu, where life is born again and again, there, lays an even deeper profundity.

That profundity, as stated in the Natya Shastra, belongs to Vishnu, source of all avatars, especially because Vishnu is the final and ultimate presiding deity of the S'ngara rasa, the rasa of erotic love, romantic love, or passionate attraction but more importantly and above all the rasa of beauty.

Vishnu, beauty, love, rasa, attraction, being , becoming, a continuous and unbreakable chain, all pervading, intoxicating, invigorating, stimulating.

"Where there is love there is life."
Mahatma Gandhi

When Gandhi spoke those famous words, he meant something very different from what we understand, he desired to whisper frontally and in public, a secret and very ancient wisdom.

He spoke in the English language but behind the words lay a mysterious and most magnificent landscape of meanings and insinuations, a geography of wisdom and understandings, a continuum of immanencies, universes within universes, all patiently waiting to be unveiled and tasted, unfolded and experienced, but which so very often remains hidden in the deep recesses of the human mind veiled by its immediate needs.

Gandhi spoke of a secret. And what a secret it is!

There exists a secret that only very few initiates ever have been able to touch, to experience and to be immersed in.

This secret that was whispered amongst the deserts and plains of Asia for millennia, we in the western hemisphere commonly call - love. A term we both overuse and underestimate, very much unlike the Indian (or eastern) tradition.

Love, the very embodiment in one word of a dynamic motion. One word, Love, that has as many constituents and attributes, features and qualities as the number of minds that will use the term.

Nowhere has the term been researched and amplified, recognized and elevated as in the Indian subcontinent.

There a colorful and deep mythology brought to life in the forms of stories and images, representations and rituals, evolved over the course of millennia to bring into manifestation the love of being and the passion of becoming.

Led by powerful minds, that in some mysterious fashion were able to transcend the banality of everyday life into an ephemeral yet extremely powerful sense of being and communion with forces and energies, far from the modern and farther yet from the common.

Indian culture in this sense provides us with an array of options of becoming that is nothing less than astonishing.

What is maybe the most surprising aspect of this culture in this respect is the paradoxical, and in some westerners, alien, concept of emotions.

There is no term that describes emotions in Sanskrit, which is itself a paradox since the culture is steeped in highly emotional energies.

Though there is no emotion (at least not in the common Greco-Latin influenced western translation) there are many 'emotions' and more importantly 'feelings', critical aspects of the interaction of the human with the world in which he or she finds himself or herself respectively.

The perspective we suggest is that the secret of Love as manifested in the Indian philosophy is best represented in Indian art, in its manner of being conceptualized and in its deep connectivity to the flow of all life.

Therefore to enter the realm of love we will need explore Indian art, itself an enigma, for its aesthetics understanding is very deep and in a sense all encompassing.

To penetrate into the challenge or secret of Indian art and its manifestations we need first consider the subject matter of Rasa, the very essential ingredient in the aesthetic perception of life.

Rasa is a difficult concept to understand for us westernized minds, but maybe the way to go about it is by accepting that rasa is a generalized emotion, a very special kind of consciousness or cognition from which the individual needs and necessities have been expunged.

Art in the sense of Rasa then is a special kind of mimesis, an imitation, but a very special and highly extraordinary form of imitation, for it imitates not a form but an essence, a universality or a potentiality.

That may probably be the most important issue at play here, for 'essence mimesis' is fundamentally different than 'form mimesis'.

Consequently, the difference between Indian art in its deepest sense and western art conceptualization is in 'that which is being imitated'.

Rasa, in this respect can be said then to be the emergence of the sense of being and becoming associated with a direct interaction with a form (the art in itself) that carries an essence and in many cases 'is' the essence in manifest.

In this sense when we look upon a form of art, contrary to the commonly objectified manner we usually look at objects and believe to perceive them, in the case of Rasa, the observer, the work of art and their interaction need be understood as one coherent whole.

Art accordingly is not an object but an event that gives us not only the intelligence hidden in the thing in itself (for according to rasa it is impossible to grasp the thing in itself outside the interaction or merging of man and object- concluding in an event of possibilities opening up) but the very essence that is hidden and points the way to self transformation.

To the westernized mind, aesthetics objectifies a reality, discriminates its qualities and features and arrives to find an experience. Rasa, on the other hand, whether understood as taste, juice or essence, is a completely different theory of aesthetics. In fact it is illuminating to comprehend that for Rasa to be, to exist, the observer must, in a fashion, lose herself within the experience of art, manifesting as an emergent situation of sensation and emotion, that is a-priori transcendent.

The sense of Rasa should in fact be understood as a deeper reality manifested in the event of experience, in which the triplicate of the art work, the observer and the essence are merged at the point of time and space of the event of Rasa.





Since there is no duality as it exists for us, due to our heritage of western thought, dividing our bodies and minds, the experience of Rasa is a full spectrum wholeness, a process and a continuous progression. A rasa for the soul or a vision to the senses, the experience of Rasa is transformative and totally immersive, it is a manifestation of the higher faculties of the mind translated into an immediate experience of absorption.

This fashion of understanding the world, the mind and the full spectrum of human experience is radically different than our common understanding, based as it is on our Greco-Roman philosophy:

In the old Greek tradition the division between *techné* and *epistémé* was to be the fundamental influence on all matters. The original (Greek) division is between that which can be 'made' or *techné* and that which can only be theorized as knowledge or '*epistémé*'. *Techné* in fact is more akin to craft or art (though eventually we have translated that into technology) and *epistémé* might better be understood as the equivalent to that which we today might call 'theory'.

We are as a matter of fact highly influenced by the Aristotelian view of opposition between 'knowledge' as *epistémé* and 'crafting' as in *techné* but also this contrast is new (relatively speaking). For writers of Greek philosophy before Aristotle such a division was anything but a misconception. According to Xenophon and his mentor Socrates not only is there no such distinction that makes sense, but: "Socrates explicitly identifies as *technai* such activities as playing the harp, generalship, piloting a ship, cooking, medicine, managing an estate, smithing, and carpentry; by association with these *technai*, we can include housebuilding, mathematics, astronomy, making money, flute playing, and painting. Without marking any difference, he also calls many of these activities *epistémata*." (1)

In other words, the division is an illusion, and nowhere more so than in the Indian tradition of Rasa, for Rasa (though translated as the equivalent of our aesthetic experience) sees no division between the knowledge and the making. This is an important facet of the Indian craftsmanship and art especially in the making of divinities, for in the making (*techné*) lays dormant the trigger to a different kind of knowledge '*epistémé*'. Indian art in this sense brings forth an emergence of an engulfing sensation, that contains both the 'intelligence' or 'knowledge' of a particular state of mind and the sensation of being part of this same knowledge via the 'making' or *techné* of practice, that may be translated also as a form of prayer as acquiring a communion with a higher knowledge, 'intelligence' and 'essence'. We suggest that in Indian art we find a 'rising above' the distinction of art and technology, a floating beyond the distinction of *techné* and *epistémé*, a merging of theory and practice into one seamless whole. This merging results in the Indian form of making divinities that are not a representation of a force but a manifestation of a knowledge that through practice and sensing brings forth a process of becoming or the 'essence' or 'drinking the juice', the Rasa.

Rasa in the sense I understand it is a term that represents a communion with an intelligence, a self-transforming engagement, a process of becoming that aims to beautify the mind and the world, to connect to the natural wonder of life in a fashion that is over and above the mundane.

Which brings us to the ultimate realization of the rasa conceptualization - that of the great secret of Love.

Love then

In Indian philosophy, culture and mythology love is a multiplicity of states, all related to feelings of beauty and transformation of perception.

Whether we use terms of longing such as Kama, seen as desire or longing (but often also as wish or passion) or Sringara, one of the nine Rasas, usually translated as erotic love, romantic love, or as attraction or beauty, the motion of self transformation is crystalline.

Alternatively we could use Bhakti a form of love, most often associated with religious devotion. Bhakti, literally meaning 'portion or share', from the root bhaj -to partake in, to receive one's share', is a fascinating concept especially if we understand the devotion not in the act of worship itself (though so it is usually conceived) but as partaking in the essence and emerging from the experience as 'part of' the divinity itself. The form of love called Bhakti leads one to Iya-devatā, literally 'cherished divinity' (from iya -desired, liked, cherished) and devatā 'godhead'), technically meaning the worshipper's favorite deity, or the divinity which inspires him or her the most.

In this sense the concept of Iya-devatā tells us that one can choose which divinity to worship and in what fashion. Put differently, we could say that the love that permeates the universe of Indian mythology is immense enough to accommodate the specific characteristics of the worshipper's personal love and it is up to each and every one to find her love in the divinity, unstrained by the particular deity one is affiliated with.

I find this particular aspect of Indian traditional philosophical perspective particularly enlightening, for even in the Vaishnavism tradition the concept of choosing one's deity is prevalent. A particular form of Vishnu can be chosen, manifested as one of his avatars whether Krishna or Rama.

The fact that one can choose a deity that fits his being is paramount and critical to understanding Indian art, how much more so when the subject matter are the divinities manifesting love.

The world of Indian art manifestations of the intelligence and essence as divinities is an enormous ocean of sensations waiting to be experienced. It is silent on first approach, hiding its multilayered, many faceted existences from casual beholding. But an observant lover, as any art appreciation personification should be, according to Rasa, can meditate or worship, approaching openly the manifestation, then the whispers of distant pasts will reveal themselves to his inner ear, engendering an experience unlike any other.

This experience, that carries a transformative value as well as an integrity leading to a higher comprehension of ethics, translates into becoming. The reason this is possible in Indian art is due to the Vedas' conception of time and its manipulation, allowing the image in Indian art to be not a representation but a manifestation of the divine.

And the divine permeates all, as Love, the intoxicating substance that pervades all and everything.

Tyger AC - On behalf of Ethnoart Gallery Milano

Tyger AC is a writer, a rogue philosopher and a great lover of Indian Art, Indian Culture and Indian philosophy (his preferred deity is Vishnu).







A fine Indian tulwar with gold inlaid hilt
The hilt Northern India, probably Rajasthan 17th century;
the blade Persian early 19th century



A fine Mughal sword tulwar, the iron hilt is decorated overall with gold koftgari, in this instance the koftgari istarnishan or true inlay. The design is of symmetrically arranged flowers contained within simple linear borders, the area surrounding the opening for the blade is inlaid with a series of small rings. The blade is forged from wootz (Indian crucible steel) and the pattern presents in sharp contrast exactly like mechanically watered steel. The blade has been etched in positive relief with an inscription referring to Fath-Ali Shah [Qajar], the second Persian Shah in the Qajar dynasty (reigned 1798-1834). Such inscriptions were not intended to convey historical ownership, but rather to enhance the commercial value of the blade. The inscription has been highlighted with gold koftgari (false damascene) and is a method of blade decoration used during the 19th century, especially in Syria. The blade is also cut with a single narrow fuller, and this too is redolent of 19th century blade production. The sword retains its wooden scabbard covered in red velvet, fitted with a chape, and with a brocaded belt with metal buckle.

Note.

The mouth of the hilt is far larger than the size of the current blade, and was made to receive a much wider blade. Indian tulwar hilts are hollow, and blades are fitted by filling the hilt with molten resin which holds the tang of the blade securely once cooled. Thus hilts and blades are easily exchanged with changes in fashion or fortune.

The dating of Indian arms and armour decorated with tarnishan (true inlay) is currently a matter of debate, however the relatively small size of the disc pommel argues for a probable 17th century date.



A fine Mughal sword tularwar with silver inlaid hilt Northern India, probably Rajasthan 17th century

A fine Mughal sword tularwar, the iron hilt is decorated overall with silver kofgari, in this instance the kofgari is tarnishan or true inlay. The decorative scheme is symmetrical arrangements of flowering poppy plants contained within chequered type borders. The poppies are depicted in quite a naturalistic manner perhaps reflecting the prevailing Mughal taste. The small dome-shaped pommel emerges from a flange of 4 poppy petals, and the button supports a small hinged bracket intended to take a short strap or lanyard. The firanghi (imported) blade is broad, slightly curved, and single edged with exception of the double edge tip or yelman. In its green velvet covered wooden scabbard with silver chape pierced with a lotus flower.

Notes

Good quality tarnishan was produced continuously in India during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, and discerning the actual date of manufacture is currently a matter of on-going debate. However the form of this hilt, especially the knuckle bow with its particular Makara finial, and the shallow pommel section, all suggest a date during the 17th century.

A hilt of comparable form is found on a tularwar in the Royal Armouries, Leeds, Inv. No. XXVIS.25 illustrated in Richardson, 2007, p.12.

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'An introduction to Indian Arms and Armour'
ed. T. Richardson, Royal Armouries, Leeds, 2007.





A good all steel recurve bow, Kaman from the Kishangarh armoury, Rajasthan; probably 18th century.

Fitted with 2-piece hardwood grips riveted to the bow. The grips are covered with red kincob (Kinkhab) which is decorated with bullion thread. The nocks (terminals to which the string is attached) are forged integrally and at right angles to the limbs

of the bow. The bow retains its original sinew "string". Overall length, 102.5cms

Notes. This bow is from a group of approximately 40 which came from the Kishangarh Armoury. A late 19th century unpublished photograph, from the Robin Wigington collection, shows a small part of the group which are identical to ours. The use of steel bows is particularly associated with the Sikhs. For another bow which retains its kincob grip covering see Egerton No.366.

Kincob (also Kinkhab) refers to Indian tarocades woven from silk and bullion (gold and/or silver) wire. For an extensive discussion of kincob see Watt p.p. 319-336. A similar steel bow made for Bahadur-Shah I (1707-1712) said to have been made in Gwalior is in the Tsarskoi-Stein Collection (Lebedynsky p.p 56-57 No.2)

Historical portrait Rao Ridmal Ji

(1427 - 1438) ruler of Marwar before the founding of Jodhpur in 1459
Marwar circa 1820

Opaque watercolour with gold on wash
35 x 25cm.

The artist has given Rao Ridmal costume in the style of Mughals in the 17th century. This is because they had no earlier portraits than 17th century, so did not know what costume was worn in the 15th century.





An Indian Kard dagger containing two others inside it. The largest dagger has a hollow watered steel sword blade, gold-inlaid with the maker's name along the back edge, and also gold-inlaid around the root of the blade. It has ivory grips, a hinged ivory pommel, and a silver backstrap and clasp. The second dagger is of similar construction and fitted with a hollow blade and hinged steel pommel lid. The last and smallest dagger is made with a solid watered steel blade and has ivory grips. India, circa 1800

A great deal of skill was involved in producing these daggers, and although of no practical purpose, they appealed to the Indian taste for novelty.

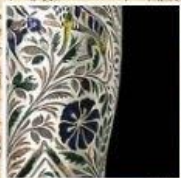


Do not go to the garden of flowers
O friend I go not there;
In your body is the garden of flowers.
Take your seat on the thousand petals of the lotus,
and there gaze on the Infinite Beauty.

From: *Songs Of Kabir*



An elegant punjabi dagger
The fine high carbon watered steel (broads)
blade is chiseled at the forte and the spine
with flowers and foliage.
18th century



KEELBYNY
Pepesahan
dar Britishe Peris
sanc. Sontes.

p. 2 A finely carved Indian ivory sword hilt

The pommel is carved in the form of a Makara's head with an up-turned nose, and lips with vertical ribs. The Makara has a long pair of pointed horns which in back open to a wide-defined snout. This particular form of Makara is strongly associated with Indian Hinduism. The pommel ornaments are carved and each is carved with a single flower head. The hilt is also carved with a pair of identical flower heads, and each head is situated at the base of the grip. Probably Rajasthan or Central India, 19th century.

The hilt firmly belongs to a small group of very similar hilts with either a Makara's or an elephant's head pommel which have all been dated to the 18th and 19th centuries. Examples exist in the Royal Collection of HM The Queen, illustrated in Marlborough House, Case N 275, D97326, and in The Metropolitan Museum, New York (1931, 51, 129). Most are made from silver or gold, although several others are also known which are made from ivory. Ivory is quite a fragile material, and it is likely that this present hilt was intended for dress or processional use rather than for the field. No firm evidence is currently available to identify their precise place or date of manufacture.

Scheldate der Armes Orientaler, H. Rehnert, 1984.
Indian Art in Marlborough House, C. Peckler Clarke, 1998.
Treasury galleries of Central America and America's V. V. Grainger, in The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin, May 1988.

p. 7 A Indian carved ivory sword hilt

India, first half of 19th century

The silver hilt is in the form of a crane's head, decorated with various animal and vegetal motifs, filled with polychrome enamel.

p. 10 A gilt-copper elephant-ear (bhaj)

India, South, 19th century

The broad single-edged blade with silver underplates, fixed to the shaft through a typical elephant-head piece, the hilt is carved with four underplates.

p. 14-15 Repoussé illustration: Net Rajas

Devas, Hyderabad, circa 1790.
Copper underplate with gold in a gilt-powdered silver leaf, the right identified in the Devas inscription written in Sanskrit, the reverse with two panels of Devas (gods) written in elegant Nasta'liq script with wide orange, silver, and enameled inner borders, the left panel possibly earlier than the painting.
29.1 x 16cm.

p. 17 A very fine Indian shield (dhal)

From Patanjali, probably the first half of the 18th century. Diameter: 56 cm (22 in).
Made from wood. Indian artistic style: the border is decorated in low relief with a band of stylized flowers containing written characters and circles between an outer band of split palm-trees, and an inner band of split palm-trees. Between the lotus band and a second identical band there are 8 cartouches each containing a flower head within a cartouche surrounded by split palm-trees. All the decoration is chiselled in relief to form a raised gold leaf-gilt decoration. Four central iron bosses, each surrounded by a silver washer, have tiny bezels containing talismanic printed panels.

The chiselled ornament of this shield is clearly Mughal in character but derives from Indian prototypes. The spray and period borders of the bosses are also Indian in character. The decorative arrangement of the shield is determined by purely practical considerations. The available cubes of wood and brass are large enough to provide a single piece of metal to make this shield. As a result several pieces of metal were fused together, and the border of each joint has been concealed by chiselled and gilt-decoration. This device conceals but is especially noticeable in the example owned by the Royal Armories, which is dated 1847.

A number of closely similar shields exist in various collections, including 2 belonging to HM Queen Elizabeth 2nd at Sandringham, Nos. 166 and 178 (see Dutton Clarke 1938). Another in the Royal Armories, London, Inv. No. XXXI A 79 (see Strong 1969, 18, 71). Another in the British Collection (see Liggett 1986, No. 14, D.101). Another related shield formerly in the collection of the Maharaja of Dabhoi (see Grewne-Grewne of India 1887-1896) and taken as a trophy at the end of the Sikh war in 1849 (see Sathley's, 2, 185, 190 for 35).

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p. 16 Mahabharata scene: Durga kills the Buffalo Demon

Jalpaiguri area at Bhawan, circa late 18th century. Copper-plate miniature with silver leaf and gold on wood.
15.1 x 26.2 cm.

The scene is in heroic form – i.e. as if a heroic hero (Shak and may well have been used in a Hindu shrine for worship). The style is a blend of traditional Bhawan style Bhawal influence and the Rajasthani style of Jalpaiguri. The Jalpaiguri painting style came to strongly influence Bhawan miniature painting in the 18th century, before the Jaipur style became dominant there. This was due to changing alliances between the Rajasthani kingdom which were notorious for making friends then enemies of each other.





▲ 29 *Maharaja Ari Singh riding the three Feroz Nauls to hunt deer*

Udajpur, circa 1700-90.
Opaqa, wax, red wax with gold and silver on shell.
37.2 x 47.9 cm

Ari Singh is seen twice, using the elements of contemporary variation. The inscription identifies the maharaja and his horse. The same horse, known as Sirvan Bay, Indian and British Works of Art, 16.12.2010. The *three Nauls* (Pauz riddan) by a group.



▶ 30-31 *A pair North Indian powder flasks Bardoloi*

Made from iron, a metal sword and with gold leaf and silver decoration, 18th or early 19th century, Rajasthan or Punjab.

The large, bowl-shaped powder flask is made from finely worked steel (sawant) and the body is ornamented with gold leaf and silver inlay incorporating flowers with 3 petals, and the top with a petal-like decoration surrounding a central flower decorated by split palmettes. The barrel-shaped sword is decorated with a series of split palmettes which has a beaded floral period with split palmettes all with further gold leaf and silver decoration. One side of the body is fitted with 2 shaped rings which were intended to support the flask when being worn on a belt. Overall length 37.5 cm.

Indian sword flasks powder

The original sword-shaped barrel is finely worked iron. This is typically produced by hammering iron rods of different carbon contents around a mandrel, the resulting polishing and finally coating with wax and to reveal the decorative parts. The barrel has also been decorated with thick gold leaf and silver (also, diamonds) work in floral and foliate designs at the hilt and mouth. The barrel has also been engraved with an Indian inscription and the words in Sanskrit: 1) number 1201 in Sanskrit. The sword's full mode is fitted with iron mounts, incorporating pommel and ring-pommel handles, together with a decorative plate near the hilt inscribing a typical period call which also defines the shape of the trigger.

Indian iron, 18th or early 19th century

Notes

The type of blade flasks barrel was highly valued, especially in Sindh, where, smaller barrels were used on individual and on campaign.

In Punjab very similar but slightly more slender sword shapes were much favoured, as was the use of steel flasks to the stock with very small decorations too (for example, B. 2000, fig. 7). Similar barrels with plain shaped mounts are also much favoured in Punjab.

Another pair of similar design is illustrated in Ferguson, No. 421, and described to Japan.

A closely related gun in the 'Tiring Range' collection is illustrated in Elgood, 1995, No. 100.

At the moment it is simply not possible to identify the place of manufacture with any confidence.

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Jan B. van der Grinten, 'A systematic classification of Indian matchlock guns' in Royal Asiatic Society Yearbook, London, Volume 7, 2002.

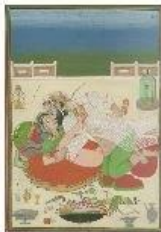
Lord Ferguson of 'Tiring', 'Indian and Oriental Arms', London, 1898.
Robert Elgood, 'The Arms of the Islamic World', London, 1995.



▶ 33 *Golden Kati standing on Shiva as a preserver, Pahari, circa 1820*



▶ 34 *Kati, Miniature, circa 1750 provenance: Maggie, London 1972, lot # 154*



▶ 39 *Lovers to create a new or a paleo form*

Udajpur, circa 1830. Opaqa, wax, red wax with gold and silver on wax, 34.4 x 25.3 cm. The painting has elements of Bhagat, shikhar of Bhagat and son of Ch. Mah, master painter of the Daryapur (Meerut) House, but the style, though having the appearance of Ratan Lalit Ban of Daryapur is more likely the work of a younger court, Bhagat's family, still at work at Udajpur when the wax likely painted.

▶ 42 *17th century Mughal sword with gilded period iron hilt*

Notes

2 months with cloudy natural hilt each incorporating a pair of similar iron hilt include the following:-

1. An example, with Parvati's Collection (no. 62 in 'The arms of the Muslim knights') with an inked inscription on the hilt, Mid-17th century.
2. Another in the Dawson Collection (Bowers, London, 10th April, 2008, lot 219) was misidentified as 18th century in the catalogue entry. In fact the decoration is closely related to a sword shown in Zahrawi, pl. 504a, p. 91, all of which is essentially 17th century and from North India. Indeed the hilt's decoration in all the pieces of natural wax, shown on page 91 of Zahrawi, are very close indeed to the decoration on our iron hilt. Of particular significance, in this hilt is the pair of lions heads under the guard. They were to have gained popularity as a decorative element in the Mughal court during the 17th century. I have shown a random sample of 5 Mughal sword hilt hilt heads dating from the 17th century. These are arranged in each having a pair of projecting lion heads which act as handles. It seems likely that this is the source of the foliate which is worked on our hilt. Although the lion heads are not a structural element of the hilt, they do seem to have been a quite deliberate Mughal construct which replace the formal pairs of hermetic animal forms found in the same site on similar Hindu hilt. The general and showy iron hilt is of sufficiently high quality of manufacture, and so well designed as to suggest it may have originated in a Mughal court workshop. However, they remain the first possibility that the hilt could be the product of a Dutch East India Company or Portuguese factory involved in the manufacture of iron munition works, primarily (though for example, for the far eastern market). When made, the hilt would have looked at though it was made from solid gold, and even the concept of iron, hilt, not described as poorer to others in such an honour.

Acknowledgement: I found it difficult to deal with the hilt properly, and would like to acknowledge the insights and constructive assistance provided by my colleague, Brian Bate in providing both attention and context.

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'The Arms of the Muslim Knight', concept and direction Rana Muhammad, Miles, 2007.
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p. 44 A good quality flintlock Muzabbar pistol (pansoti).

North India, mid-19th century.

The barrel is made from best quality Damascus steel and flares significantly towards the muzzle. It is flange shouldered with sharp chamfers containing fluting rings. The swollen hind neck has a sharply down-curved butt which characterises this group of pistols. The flintlock lock is heavily based upon English prototypes, it is fitted with a roller bearing friction spring to speed ignition, and the lockplate is engraved with foliage and with scrolls. The steel furniture includes a trigger guard with a protective shaped front, a butt cap with a dimple, swollen hind, which lock and an ornate horn all engraved in steel with floral ornament. The stock has been repaired, and the ramrod and ramrod pipes retained. Overall length 45 cm, barrel length 33 cm.

Note: These pistols with dimple-tooled shaped stocks have been attributed to Kashmir, Sindh, the Punjab and even D. B. I. For a very similar pistol which was given presented by H. H. the Maharaja Gulab Singh, Figure No 761 and for 2 pistols of similar form in the Muser collection see: Balguy and Kley p.p. 101-106.



p. 44 An Indian Khayir dagger.

The dark green jada hilt is carved with flowers and foliage. It is fitted with a natural steel blade having a small central rib and a swollen point. Circa 1800.



p. 44 Painted dhal kila shield.

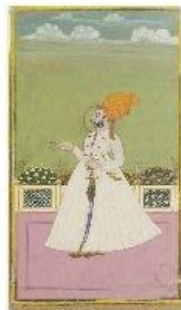
India, Rajasthan, Udaipur (cavalry)
19th century.

A circular, convex shield made from prepared hide, and painted with finely detailed foliage and flowers in gilt polychrome, laid up in parts with glass in four raised, the inner face, painted with blue, orange, green and red floral ornament, the outer, composed of a man with a falcon on his back, to the sides surrounded by four metal bosses, on the base of recumbent elephants.

Diameter 36.5 cm, size

p. 44 Portrait of Rao Singh, Maharaja of Jodhpur.

By Bhanu Ram (courtier artist) Hasan, circa 1770. With an inscription on the reverse, translated into English including "Portrait of Maharaja Dattaj Maharaja Sri Rao Singh p. by painter Hasan" Opaque watercolor with gold on wash, 29.7 x 13 cm.



A fine Indian colonial-style gasser sarbani.

Made from layers of cotton, sometimes with a thin leather liner, the outside is covered with red soil which is embossed with hollow with repeated geometrical designs, enclosed within shaped cartouches, and around the border within a band of foliage. It contains its original matching suspension straps, belt and ornamental tassels, and contains a group of Indian metal pieces for each with an iron tip.

Northwest India, late 18th or early 19th century.

Note:

A number of similar turbans have survived. They were, originally made, with a matching kamandul (brae case).

For a closely similar example from Gwalior (Rajasthan) in the Royal Armouries, Leeds, see "An Introduction to Indian Arms and Armour" p. 8.

Another matching turban and kamandul are in the Royal Collection at Sandringham, No. 661 in Purdon Clarke, 1910, then, described as "50th, early 19th century. From Lahore, Punjab," and another turban in the same collection No. 590 then described as "50th, ca. 1800. From Lahore, Punjab."

Others include sets from Lahore, in the Victoria and Albert Museum (No. 8773 - 1851, 8588 - 1853), another turban from Udaipur in the V&A Museum from the Egerton Collection (No. 367), and another set in Waddesdon Manor No. 94 in Blair, 1974, made for James Balfour's Elphinstone, (see Blair, 1981).

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