THE METROPOLITAN Museum of Art is the only art museum in the United States, and one of just a few in the world, with a curatorial department devoted exclusively to the study, collection and display of arms and armour, comprising approximately 14,000 objects. While sometimes overshadowed by the museum’s well-known holdings of European armour and weapons, more than 7000 items—virtually half of the department’s holdings—originate from countries and cultures other than Europe, principally Japan and the Middle East, with important concentrations from Tibet, India, Southeast Asia and China. This article will offer a glimpse of the wide variety and high quality of Asian arms and armour in The Met.

Although there was no focused plan for forming a cohesive arms collection during The Met’s first years, over 300 examples of historical arms, the majority Japanese, entered the museum’s collection in the 1880s and 1890s, primarily as gifts and bequests from private individuals, including many significant pieces. Shortly thereafter, however, the genre of historical arms and armour was prioritised by The Met as a fundamental aspect in the growth of a major art museum. By the time “Arms and Armor” was officially established as a distinct curatorial department in 1912, a purposeful programme to build a world-class collection was well underway, instituted and energetically promoted by the department’s first curator, Dr Bashford Dean (1867–1928), who began the process even before he officially joined the museum’s professional staff in 1912 (1).

A trained zoologist and professor at Columbia University, Dean’s involvement with The Met started as a volunteer in 1903, when he lent his personal collection of approximately 125 examples of Japanese arms and armour to the museum, designing and supervising the gallery installation and writing a catalogue of the material, published by The Met, which was the most detailed English-language book on the subject available at the time. Dean carefully assembled the collection from various sources, buying actively in Japan during scientific research trips, making it the most comprehensive of its kind in the United States. He sold the collection to the museum at cost in 1904, with the stated intent of using the funds to gather an even larger and stronger collection in Japan, which he lent for display and then donated to the museum in 1914. The transformative nature of Dean’s gift is embodied in one of the best-known and important pieces included in it—the iconic and exceptionally rare 14th century yoroi (cavalry armour) attributed to Ashikaga Takauji (1305–1358), founder of the Ashikaga shogunate (2).

In 1905, Dean arranged the transfer of a group of early Egyptian objects from The Met to the Imperial Museum (later the Tokyo National Museum) to facilitate an exchange for a rare group of arms and armour from the Kofun period (3rd to 7th century), which he had carefully selected in Tokyo. The exchange became official in 1906, giving The Met a collection of Kofun material unmatched in the West. Typical of Dean’s ingenious and creative methods, he personally arranged for and financed the purchase of the Egyptian pieces and then donated them to the museum solely for this purpose. Outstanding among the many significant pieces in the 1906 exchange is a 5th century ken (double-edged straight sword), excavated from the Eda
Funayama kofun (burial mound) in present-day Kumamoto Prefecture (3). This piece would be classified as a National Treasure now, had it remained in Japan. Due to these and other activities to build the collection, including his role in the acquisition of a major collection of European arms and armour in 1904, Dean was given the title of “Honorary Curator of Arms and Armor” in 1906, and then appointed Curator of the newly formed department in 1912.

In 1915, when the Department of Arms and Armor moved into a new series of purpose-built galleries, designed by New York’s premier architectural firm, McKim, Mead and White, two of the galleries were specially outfitted to feature the Japanese collection. In 1917, Dean spent about three months in Japan on his last extended trip there, visiting dozens of dealers, private collectors and old associates in Tokyo, Yokohama, Kyoto, Nagoya, Osaka and Nara. During this trip, he purchased a large number of objects for the museum, including a selection of swords, sword mountings and fittings, and armour from the distinguished private collection of Masauji Gōda (1844–1917). By the
time of Bashford Dean’s retirement in 1927, The Met had the most comprehensive collection of Japanese arms and armour outside of Japan.

The growth of the Japanese collection did not stop with Dean. Gifts from dedicated connoisseurs continued to add great depth and diversity to the collection, in particular making the selection of tsuka (sword guards) and sword fit-

1These early groups include: Bequest of Stephen Whitney Phoenix, 1881; Bequest of Edward C. Moore, 1891; Gift of Brayton Ives and W.T. Walters, 1891.
tions the largest in the country. Noteworthy among these was the 1936 gift of nearly 500 pieces from Howard Mansfield, the New York collector and scholar, followed in 1943 by more than 1300 pieces from the brothers, Herman A.E. and Paul C. Jachne, who assembled their collection personally while living in Japan between 1901 and 1918 (4). The tradition of enlightened donors strengthening the Japanese collection continues, most recently thanks to Etsuko and John Morris giving generously from their collection, which was formed by Dr Frederick Malling Pedersen (1869–1947), one of New York’s leading collectors in the early 20th century (5).

By the late 1920s, The Met had achieved a steadily improving international status in the fields of European and Japanese arms and armour. Beyond these regions, however, the collections had important, but limited and uneven representation, including several exceptional 15th and 16th century Iranian and Ottoman helmets and a group of sumptuously bejewelled 19th century Ottoman edged weapons. This changed dramatically in 1935 with the bequest of nearly 3500 objects from George Cameron Stone (1859–1935), enabling the museum to display, sometimes in great depth and often with examples of the finest quality, arms and armour from the Middle East, India, Tibet, China, Korea and much of Southeast Asia (6). Stone coupled an extremely successful career of nearly fifty years as a metallurgist and mining engineer with a lifelong passion that led him to assemble the world’s most comprehensive private collection of armour and weapons from nearly all cultures outside of Europe. In a lasting achievement, and a feat seldom accomplished by any collector, Stone distilled the encyclopedic character of his collection, and the correspondingly expansive knowledge he derived from it, into a monumental book titled A Glossary of the Construction, Decoration and Use of Arms and Armor in all Countries and in all Times. Although he was primarily interested in understanding categories of weapons by accumulating types and studying representative examples, Stone’s collection is punctuated by a number of unquestionable masterpieces, such as a superb sabre possibly made for the Ottoman Sultan, Suleyman I the Magnificent (reigned 1520–1566) (7).

The Stone bequest and other foundational collections ensure a meaningful context as the department’s collection continues to develop through gifts, bequests and purchases.
Building on these strengths, highlights in the area of Islamic arms and armour include: a Mughal Indian dagger fitted with gold mounts set with jewels, probably from the time of Emperor Jahangir (reigned 1605–1627); a crucible steel and gold encrusted Ottoman yatagan made in Istanbul in the workshops of Süleyman I the Magnificent; a shirt of mail reinforced with gilt steel plates, embellished with Qur'anic inscriptions and possibly once owned by the Mughal emperor, Shah Jahan (reigned 1627–1658); and a shirt of mail and plate belonging to the Mamluk Sultan of Egypt, Al-Ashraf ad-Din Qaitbay (1416/1418–1496), one of only four Mamluk armours of this type known to survive (8).[10]

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5 See Stephen V. Grancsay, “The Howard Mansfield Collection: Japanese Sword Furniture”, Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin, Vol. 32, October 1937, pp. 228–233. The Mansfield gift was accessioned as 36.120.1 to 36.120.498. In 1938, the museum purchased eighty sets of gold mounts from the Jæhne brothers, accessioned as 38.55.1 to 38.55.80. The donation of the remainder of their collection of Japanese sword furniture followed in 1943, accessioned as 43.120.1 to 43.120.1353. There seems to be no published account of the Jæhne brothers as collectors, but some details can be gleaned from their correspondence with

Stephen V. Grancsay, Curator of Arms and Armor, on file in the departmental archives. Images and basic information regarding individual pieces from the Mansfield and Jæhne gifts can be accessed via the museum website at www.metmuseum.org/art/collection.


7 For a detailed discussion of the growth of the non-European, specifically Islamic, section of the collection at this time, see Stuart W. Pylrr’s comprehensive essay, “American Collectors and the Formation of the Metropolitan Museum’s Collection of Islamic Arms and Armor”, David Alexander, with Stuart W. Pylrr and Will Kwaitkowksi, Islamic Arms and Armor in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2015, pp. 3–17.

8 Stone’s Glossary was originally published in 1934. For more details of Stone’s life and career, see my introduction to the 1999 reprint published by Dover, pp. v–vi.

9 For a full discussion of this sabre, see Alexander, 2015, no. 58, pp. 153–157.

Dagger (katar), Indian, Thanjavur (blade European), 17th century, steel, length 55.2 cm. Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935 (36.25.1009)


There are several other important but relatively unknown aspects of the Stone bequest. One of these comprises a small group of highly distinctive southern Indian weapons that were salvaged from the remains of the royal armoury in Thanjavur (formerly known as Tanjore) in the mid-19th century. The majority of these sculptural and ornate weapons are now divided between the Madras Government Museum and The Met. Many of them prominently feature Hindu deities and religious symbols. The boldly sculptural peacock hilt of this unique katar (dagger) refers to Subrahmanya, a god of war and son of Shiva, by depicting his divine vahana (literally, “vehicle”), the peacock Paravani (9). Probably also from this group is a more recently acquired dagger (10). Intricately crafted, it is among the best examples of ornamental steel chiselling from southeastern India. As with other weapons from the Thanjavur armoury, this dagger is particularly noteworthy for the fineness of its workmanship, including complete figures in the round, and for retaining areas of original gilding, a feature entirely absent on most surviving pieces of this type.

It is often not realised that the arms of virtually every Asian country or culture show distinct, frequently unique, forms, styles, motifs and materials. In essence, they present a precis of the artistic influences and traditions of their respective societies. An early 18th century small sword (11) is European in form, but was made in Sri Lanka and is suffused with motifs found throughout Sinhalese art that
would be expected on the piha katta daggers and kastane short swords typical of that island kingdom. The dha (or dha hmyaung), a dagger characteristic of Burma (Myanmar), is immediately recognisable by its ivory hilt, which is often carved in the round with locally significant animals and demon figures (12). The kris, legendary sword of Indonesia, varies subtly in both its hilt and blade forms from Sumatra to Java, Bali and other parts of Indonesia, with variations continuing into the Philippines (13). These are just some of the many other equally evocative examples that could be cited from throughout the region.

Our selection of Chinese arms and armour is comparatively small, with only a handful of important examples. Recently, however, it has been greatly strengthened by a selection of imperial-quality pieces dating from the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), currently on long-term loan from a private collection. In China, beginning as early as the Shang dynasty (circa 1600 BC–circa 1046 BC), the systematisation of skilfully made and finely decorated arms and armour developed over a period of nearly 3000 years. This policy and tradition reached its final and most refined stage at the height of the Qing dynasty, which was established by the Manchus, an ethnic group from north-east China. From its inception and through the peak of its territorial expansion in the 18th century, the dynasty thrived due to its superior military organisation. Traditional Chinese art, including painting, lacquerware, ceramics and calligraphy, also flourished under the Qing. Although it is not well known today, alongside these art forms, elaborately decorated armour, military and hunting weapons, and equestrian equipment were also accorded great importance in Qing society. Often incorporating precious materials, such as lacquer, jade, gold, silver and mother-of-pearl, these martial masterpieces were appreciated for more than their utility, being highly valued as luxurious demonstrations of rank and status, and as expressions of the Manchus’ military heritage. The Qing emperors of the 17th and 18th centuries purposefully acted as exemplars for their courtiers by avidly practising horsemanship, archery, and the use of other weapons, to hone the skills needed for hunting and warfare. The following few pieces give an idea of the exceptional arms and accoutrements that were created for their personal use.

The excellent quality and elaborate ornamentation of the helmet illustrated (14) indicate that it was made for a nobleman, possibly of imperial status, or a very high-ranking military official. It is decorated with applied ornaments of gilt copper including the Buddhist mantra, Om mani padme hum, in Lantsa characters. The Lantsa alphabet was often

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12. Dagger (dha or dha hmyaung), Burmese, probably 18th century, ivory and steel, length 36.8 cm. Bequest of George C. Stone, 1935 (36.25.998).

13. Kris with sheath, the hilt representing Batara Bayu, Balinese, 19th century, steel, wood, gold and semi-precious stones, length with sheath 66.4 cm. Fletcher Fund, 1928 (28.23.2a, b).

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used for sacred inscriptions in Tibet, China and other Buddhist countries. The helmet is very similar to one worn by Emperor Qianlong (reigned 1735–1796) in a famous equestrian portrait painted by Giuseppe Castiglione (1688–1766), the Jesuit artist, and another helmet that was donated by the emperor to a Tibetan monastery in 1757.\(^2\)

Carved lacquer is an uniquely Chinese art form.\(^3\) In addition to the great artistic skill required to carve designs in relief, preparing the lacquer surface was time consuming and expensive because multiple layers had to be applied before it was thick enough for carving. In the earliest examples, dating from the 8th or the 9th century, simple patterns were created by exposing underlying layers of red and black lacquer (15). Complex figurative lacquer carving flourished during the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368) and the craft was revitalised and revived during the Qing dynasty, particularly under Emperor Qianlong. The visible areas of a beautifully intricate saddle, illustrated in (16), are covered entirely with carved red lacquer. This expensive and time-consuming technique was normally restricted to objects such as dishes and small boxes, which were luxury items made to be appreciated for their beauty and delicacy. Its use on a saddle, even one intended only for ceremonial purposes, is unprecedented and conveys the great wealth, taste and refinement of its original owner. It is possible that this saddle was made in the Imperial Palace Workshops (zaoban chao), one of which was devoted solely to the production of saddles for the emperor. Skillful horsemanship played a vital role in the military successes of the Manchus and was a key factor in the establishment of the Qing dynasty. Riding and the use of weapons on horseback for warfare or hunting, thus, became important aspects of Qing cultural identity. Elaborate decorated saddles were one highly visible way that Qing emperors and the military elite celebrated their equestrian heritage.

Although otherwise typical in its form, the illustrated matchlock gun is extraordinary, possibly unique, for its painstaking, delicate and expensive decoration (17). Deeply carved red lacquer covers the entire gunstock and features designs of undulating dragons among billowing clouds, demonstrating that it was made to be appreciated as a work of art, aside from its function as a hunting weapon. Additional ornament is visible on the gun barrel, which is finely
engraved along its length with images of dragons and leafy vines.

China pioneered the use of gunpowder for fireworks and artillery in the 13th and 14th centuries. Sophisticated firearms technology, however, developed more rapidly in Europe during the 15th and 16th centuries, and was then introduced into China by merchants, diplomats and missionaries during the 17th century. Improved designs for cannons and practical types of hand-held guns were eagerly promoted and officially adopted as regulation military equipment under the Qing emperors, Kangxi (reigned 1662–1722) and Qianlong. In addition to mastering the use of bow and arrow and other weapons, both Kangxi and Qianlong owned and used guns, particularly for hunting. This was in keeping with their overall belief in the importance of martial training, which they encouraged by personal example.\(^{18}\)

Elegant knives were worn as personal accessories by members of the imperial court, and not solely as weapons

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\(^{18}\) The Castiglione portrait, variously dated to 1739 or 1738, is in the collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing (inv. no. Gu8761), and is discussed in Evelyn S. Rawski and Jessica Rawson, eds, *China: The Three Emperors, 1662–1795*, London, 2006, cat. no. 65, pp. 166 and 405.

\(^{19}\) Lacquer is a natural resin made by purifying the sap of a type of sumac tree found in southern China and other parts of Asia. It has been used in East Asia for thousands of years, sometimes simply for practical purposes, for instance as a water-resistant coating or protective layer, but it is better known and appreciated as a method of creating beautiful decoration. While lacquer is often black, a bright red colour can be achieved by mixing lacquer with cinnabar, a mineral derived from mercury. See James Watt and Barbara Brennan Ford, *East Asian Lacquer: The Florence and Herbert Irving Collection*, New York, 1991.

\(^{14}\) On this last topic, see Joanna Waley-Cohen, *The Culture of War in China: Empire and the Military under the Qing Dynasty*, New York, 2014.
The gilding of their blades is a distinctive and a highly unusual feature: the steel beneath the gold is purposely roughened to create a mottled, naturalistic surface to contrast with the refined precision of the accompanying hilt and sheath. At the base of the spine of the blade on some, if not all, the Qianlong mark is inlaid in gold letters: Qianlong nian zhi (Made in the Qianlong reign). The grips are made of varying materials and the sheaths of each have various forms of ornament. The sheath of The Met’s example, for instance, emulates European gold and enamel work.

China and Tibet maintained close cultural, political and religious ties over many centuries. Nevertheless, armour and weapons from Tibet are distinct from those of China, constituting a separate, multifaceted and fascinating subject, which includes many unusual, often unprecedented, types found only on the Tibetan plateau. Thanks again largely to the generosity of donors, the department’s collection of Tibetan arms and armour is now the most important in the world outside of Tibet, and is particularly notable for examples of the highest quality and rarity. The seeds of the collection, as with so many other parts of our Asian holdings, are rooted in the Stone Bequest of 1935; in this instance about fifty Tibetan items. These blossomed into about 200 pieces due mainly to the generosity of Arthur Ochs Sulzberger (1926–2012), who provided the funds that enabled a series of new acquisitions, mostly between about 1995 and 2006. Much of this material was exhibited together for the first time in 2006 as part of the special exhibition, “Warriors of the Himalayas: Rediscovering the Arms and Armor of Tibet.”

The Tibetan collection is particularly rich in equestrian equipment, including saddles, bridles and other elements...
of tack, stirrups and horse armour. The saddles found in Tibet are a mixture of Mongol, Chinese and Tibetan styles. The best of these are notable for their exuberantly decorated metal plates that cover the outside of the pommel, cantle and end-boards of the underlying wooden saddletree (19). Although these plates reinforce the saddletree, they function chiefly as a very visible and often very elaborate form of ornament, and as clear indicators of the rank, status and importance of the rider. They can be made of copper alloy or silver, but the finest are done in pierced and chiselled iron, usually damascened in gold and silver, and constitute some of the best examples of Tibetan and Sino-Tibetan ironwork of any kind. The same is true for bridle bits (20), the best of which can have very delicately pierced and chiselled fittings that rival the workmanship of the finest saddles.

The most immediately recognisable feature of the stirrups found in Tibet, China and Mongolia is the nearly ubiquitous pair of dragonheads at the top of the arch, flanking the slot for the stirrup leathers (21). The stirrups are usually made of iron and can be chiselled in high or low relief, often including pierced work, and may be extensively damascened in gold and silver. A few examples incorporate wood or horn. Others are made of cast and gilt bronze, and a very few examples are cast in solid silver. They are basically made up of two posts that form an arch over the foot and a tread on which the foot rests. Beyond these similarities, however, there is amazing variety in the form, decoration and quality of stirrups from these regions.

The specific form of horse armour found in Tibet remains a type unto itself, one that exists nowhere other than Tibet, and is known only due to the actual examples coming from Tibet, which are very rare. Few complete Tibetan shaffrons (protective armour for a horse’s head) survive, the majority of known examples having been acquired by museums in the early 20th century. The illustrated shaffron (22) is by far the most elaborately decorated of any recorded to date. The quality and execution of its lavish gold and silver damascened rank among the best examples of Tibetan decorated ironwork of this kind, suggesting that it would have been owned by a very high-ranking general, if not a king. A carbon-14 test of one of its leather laces

15 In addition to 60.107a, b, there are two knives in the Department of Asian Art, accession numbers 02.18.735a, b and 02.18.736a, b. On the latter, Jason Sun observed the Qianlong reign mark on the blade and a poem by Qianlong engraved on the reverse of the hilt. I am very grateful to my colleagues, Jason Sun and Pengliang Lu, for examining these knives and other Chinese pieces in the collection and for generously offering advice and providing translations of various Chinese inscriptions, including the one quoted here. Three more examples appeared at Sotheby’s Hong Kong (October 8th, 2009, Lot 1817; April 8th, 2010, Lot 1810; and October 8th, 2013, Lot 3155). I am grateful to Peter Dekker for the Sotheby’s references. Another was sold in New York by Heritage Auctions (Asian Art Signature Auction, September 12th, 2017, Lot 78158).


17 For an example with wood see Metropolitan Museum of Art, accession number 2004.400a, b; and with horn see 2014.72a, b.

18 A solid silver pair of Tibetan stirrups, accession number 2003.427.2a, b; and pair of Mongolian stirrups, probably a silver alloy, 2017.315a, b.
resulted in a date range of 1450–1650, which coincides almost exactly with the period of the last two secular Tibetan monarchies: the Rinpung (1435–1565) and the Kings of Tsang (1566–1641).

Swords were the primary hand-held weapons in Tibet from at least the 7th century to the early 20th century. A few distinct styles of swords are found in Tibet, which can be distinguished by several basic features, including the type of blade, the form of hilt and scabbard, and how the sword was designed to be worn. The sword also has rich symbolic significance within Tibetan Buddhism, particularly the Sword of Wisdom (shes rab ral gri), which represents the ability to cut through spiritual ignorance, and is an important attribute of many deities, such as Manjushri. This symbolic value is often conveyed to some extent in the form and decoration of actual swords, an exemplar of which is a 14th to 15th century sword guard (23). A masterpiece that entered the collection as a generous gift of Steven Kossak, the noted art collector and former Met curator, it is exceptional for the precision and crispness of its chiselling, punched work and damascening. Its figural relief is higher and more skilfully executed than virtually anything else encountered on Tibetan or Chinese decorated ironwork of any kind. The guard represents the mask of a fierce guardian deity, and is all that remains of what must have been one of the most sumptuous swords of its type ever made.

Much more typical of Tibetan swords in its form, but truly exceptional for the quality of its blade and the metal fittings of its scabbard and belt, is an example that is said to have been captured in China in 1860, during the Second Opium War (24). Traditional Tibetan blades are made of pattern-welded steel and usually show what is called a hairpin pattern of nested, slightly wavy V-shaped lines. Very few Tibetan swords depart from the hairpin style. This extraordinary blade is remarkable for its unique, sinuous pattern-welding design, which resembles reflections on water, moving clouds, or lively wood grain. It is possibly the most beautiful Tibetan blade in existence.

Lamellar armour (25) has been recognised as the characteristic form of body armour from Tibet since it was documented or acquired there, from the late 19th century onward, by Western ethnographers, explorers, diplomats and soldiers, most notably during the Younghusband Expedition in 1903–1904. The term lamellar refers to the horizontal rows of small overlapping plates (lamellae) joined by leather lacing. The basic features that distinguish lamellar armour from scale armour are that the lamellae are supported by being laced only to one another, rather than to a lining or support material of any kind, and that the rows of lamellae always overlap upward (as opposed to scales, which overlap downward). The body armour was accompanied by an equally characteristic helmet, made of eight
or more, rarely sixteen, overlapping plates, fitted with a lamellar neck defence.

More recent research has revealed that, in addition to the canonical lamellar types, a surprising variety of armour existed in Tibet. This is particularly true of helmets, several little known or previously unrecognised forms of which have come to light over the past twenty-five years. One of the most richly decorated, rare, and beautiful examples is a Mongolian helmet decorated in gold with the image of the deity Yamantaka, sky goddesses or dakinis, mantras, seed syllables and other sacred symbols, which would have enveloped the wearer in a potent panoply of spiritual defence (26). There are a few other helmets of this type, but none is nearly as extensive or complex in its decoration and iconography.20

More viscerally evocative is a unique Tibetan mask, made of iron, skillfully and subtly forged to represent a human or divine visage and boldly damascened in gold with flame-like tendrils for eyebrows, around the mouth and framing the face (27).21 This transformative work recently entered the collection as another extremely generous gift of Steven Kossak. Its function has at times been in question, with suggestions that it was intended as a dance mask or for ritual use; but when seen in the broader context of Asian armour, it becomes apparent that it can only be a war mask. One other example, very plain but otherwise closely related in form, material and design, is known from Tibet.22 Both of these masks are part of a long continuum of war masks, made of iron or copper alloys, used in various cultures and found as far west as Roman Britain in the 1st century AD and as far east as Japan until the end of the Edo period (1615–1868). Extant examples of war masks worn in Persia (Iran) and by various branches of the Mongols in West Asia and Central Asia are well known. As a form of armour, war masks were probably introduced into Tibet by the Mongols in the 14th or the 15th century, but based on their extreme rarity in a Tibetan context, only saw limited use over a brief period of time.23

In many ways, the story of this mask is the story of Asian arms and armour at The Met. It represents the rarity, excellence and beauty of the works that constitute our collection; like other masterpieces, it epitomises features unique to one great culture, while offering valuable insights into interactions with others; and it shows how the collections grow and thrive as the core of the museum’s mission to share the greatest art of the world, thanks in large part to the generosity of dedicated friends and enlightened donors. As a result, the delight and edification of curators, collectors, visitors to the galleries and anyone using the collection database via the website, there is always something new to see, experience, or learn, precisely because the collections continue to develop, change, and improve; no part is ever considered finished or static, making The Met an endlessly fascinating work in progress.

21 For reference to comparable examples and a discussion of the helmet’s decoration, see La Rocca, 2006, pp. 80–81.
23 Metropolitan Museum of Art accession number 3007.10, illustrated and discussed in La Rocca, 2006, fig. 1 and p. 20.
24 For a concise overview and references to various examples and sources, see La Rocca, 2008, especially notes 6 to 10. War masks are referred to in at least one Tibetan text, in a discussion of the efficacy of various types of arrowheads, as follows: Against facemasks and iron helmets/ to destroy iron facemasks the solid bodkin type [of arrowhead] is best (ghang lea’s rig/ dong dang lea’s mrog la zhe/ qhang thu dang med khang). The Tibetan text is quoted from Tashi Tsering, ed., BRTAG THABS PADMA DEAR POT’ CHUN PO: A reproduction of an incomplete manuscript of a verse work on the appraisal and appreciation of armors, precious objects, weapons, and other possessions by Snags-chul Rgya-ka-nga-dar-ma, Delhi, 1979, fol. 66. The translation is my own. For the different editions of this text used for comparison of slightly alternate spellings of the original Tibetan, see Donald J. La Rocca, “An Early Tibetan Text on the Connoisseurship of Swords”, in The Armourer’s Art: Essays in Honor of Stuart Pihler, Woonsocket, Rhode Island, 2014, p. 90, n. 7.