

EAST MEETS WEST





Doris Duke wearing the diamond, pearl, and sapphire Indian necklace (Fig. 88). Photograph by George Hurrell.

EAST MEETS WEST:

Doris Duke's Indian/Southeast Asian Jewelry

On her first trip to India during her year-long honeymoon, Doris Duke must have been entranced by the decorative arts and architecture she saw, little of which would have been familiar to Americans of that era. There were a few Indian philosophers and artists who had traveled in America, such as Uday Shankar (the older brother of Ravi Shankar), who made a well-publicized tour with his musicians and dancers in the early 1930s, but India and its culture were still quite mysterious to most people in this country.

At that time, the princely states in pre-independence India were still supporting thousands of craftsmen as they had for hundreds of years. Work in metal and stone, textiles, and, above all, jewelry, was exquisite. Indian jewelry, like other Indian decorative arts, leaves no surface unadorned; any part of the body that can support decoration receives it. The country's long tradition of jewelry comes from a combination of factors: availability of gemstones, vast wealth accumulated from the trade in spices and textiles, and a large pool of skilled craftspeople. Until diamonds were discovered in Brazil in 1725, India had a world monopoly on diamonds, all mined in the old kingdom of Golconda. Rubies were imported from Burma (now Myanmar), sapphires from Sri Lanka (until a source of good sapphires was discovered in Kashmir in 1880, now completely mined out), and emeralds from Colombia. Pearls came from the Persian Gulf and Sri Lanka. Lesser gemstones were available in plentiful supply as well.

While in India, Doris Duke and her husband would have met upper-class British Colonial officers and their wives and the most Westernized and wealthy of the (male) Indian elite, those who fraternized with their British counterparts. Very few Indian women would have been comfortable in such company, so it is doubtful that Doris Duke gained much direct knowledge of Indian jewelry until later. She did develop a passion for Mogul architecture on that first trip, which eventually became the *raison d'être* of her house in Hawaii, Shangri La.

Because she was such a tall and striking woman, Doris Duke could wear jewelry that would have overwhelmed someone more petite. Once she did start collecting Indian jewelry, she chose spectacular pieces that she could wear with the more flamboyant clothes of the era. She also developed a taste for the somewhat more delicate and refined jewelry from Southeast Asia, primarily Thailand. The Indian and Southeast Asian ornaments in this exhibition will serve to illustrate her discerning eye for the exuberant but beautifully crafted adornments that would suit her as well as it suited their original owners.

80. Diamond pendant necklace

India

Diamonds, platinum

Doris Duke purchased a necklace (illustrated in photo below) at auction at the Parke-Bernet Galleries' sale, "Important Jewelry Collection of Madame Ganna Walska," lot no. 80, on April 1, 1971, for \$62,500. The original necklace consisted of five pendant elements, each section set with two triangular-shaped diamonds. At that sale, she also purchased lot no. 81, a diamond pendant clip, and lot no. 82, diamond pendant earrings. These two pieces were probably added to the necklace to create the chandelier-style pendant hanging from the center diamond.



East Meets West:

81. Champa-Kali ruby and diamond cluster bracelet

India

Late 17th and early 18th century

Rubies, diamonds, gold; reverse with polychrome enamel

W: 4 ½ inches

L: 9 inches

This bracelet was probably part of a set with a coordinating necklace with similar ruby-set floral units from which pendant pearl elements are suspended. Doris Duke purchased this bracelet at the Parke-Bernet Galleries' sale, "Important Jewelry Collection of Madame Ganna Walska," lot no. 104, on April 1, 1971, for \$3,250.





82. Pair of diamond, ruby, and enamel rigid gold bangles

Jaipur

c. 1900

Rubies and diamonds in *kundan* settings, enamel, gold; inside with polychrome enamel



83. Pair of ruby, diamond, and enamel rigid gold bangles

Jaipur

Early 20th century

Rubies and diamonds in *kundan* settings, enamel, gold; inside with polychrome enamel

84. Pair of ruby, diamond, seed pearl, and enamel rigid gold bangles

Jaipur

Late 18th or early 19th century

Rubies and diamonds in *kundan* settings, seed pearls, enamel, gold; inside with polychrome enamel

This type of rigid, enameled bangle, with or without gemstones, continues to be an extremely popular style in India and one that is most easily worn by Westerners as well. The practice of enameling the unseen reverse side of Jaipur-style jewelry is partly to preserve the original gold content of the bangle as well as to increase the rigidity of the bangle.



East Meets West:

85. Pair of diamond and enamel armlets

Jaipur

19th century

Diamonds, gold, silk and metal-thread cord; reverse with polychrome enamel

L: 7 inches

Variations of flexible armlets, called *bazuband*, appear in Indian folk jewelry and have been extensively copied by Western jewelry designers. A diamond and gold version was made by René Boivin in 1950.





86. Enameled and inset gold necklace

Jaipur

Early 20th century

Seed pearls, rubies, diamonds, red glass beads, silk and metal-thread cord; reverse with polychrome enamel

87. Ruby, diamond, and gold necklace

India

Late 19th or early 20th century

Cabochon rubies, diamonds, gold, silk cord; reverse with polychrome enamel



East Meets West:

**88. Diamond, pearl, and sapphire
gold necklace**

Jaipur
19th century

Diamonds, sapphire beads, pearls, seed pearls, blue
glass beads, enamel, gold, silk cord; reverse with
polychrome enamel



89. Diamond, gem-set, and pearl gold *arya* necklace

Bikaner

19th century

Diamonds in *kundan* settings, sapphires, emeralds, rubies, seed pearls, gold, silk cord; reverse with polychrome enamel

Arya necklaces, extremely complex examples of the goldsmith's art, are often worn attached to the neck by multiple strings of glass seed beads and silk tassels. Doris Duke purchased this necklace at the Parke-Bernet Galleries' sale "The Important Jewelry Collection of Madame Ganna Walska," lot no. 102 on April 1, 1971, for \$2,600.



90. Carved emerald and diamond gold pendant

India

18th century, setting early 19th century

W: 2 3/4 inches

Carved emerald in hexagonal (*shashpahlū*) form, emerald beads, diamonds in *kundan* setting, pearls, gold; reverse with polychrome enamel

The hexagonal form became a standard shape for Mogul emeralds because the actual crystal is shaped in that way. Beginning in the sixteenth century, lapidaries became skilled at engraving floral designs in low relief on these special stones.



91. Pair of seed pearl and glass bead gold ear ornaments

India

19th or 20th century

Seed pearls, glass beads, diamonds, enamel, gold, cord

H: 6 ¾ inches

These long ear ornaments are still an indispensable element in Indian bridal finery and are also used in dance costumes. They are worn firmly fastened to the hair or to other jewelry for security as well as to reduce the weight on the ear.

92. White sapphire, ruby, seed pearl, and gold bale *jhabbedar* ear ornaments

Delhi

19th century

White sapphires, rubies, seed pearls, emerald beads, enamel, gold, cord

H: 9 ½ inches

An ornamental chain with a hook for attachment to the hair supports the bale *jhabbedar* earrings. This design dates to the Mogul period.



East Meets West:

93. Gem-set and enamel gold armlet

Jaipur

20th century

Colored gemstones and rubies in *kundan* settings, gold; reverse with polychrome enamel

L: 7 inches

The stones on this armlet are set in the classical Hindu *navaratna* (nine gemstones) arrangement, a powerful amulet symbolizing the power of the sun and all the planets in relation to the universe. It was believed that such an armlet would allow the wearer to “manipulate celestial forces for personal benefit.”

94. Diamond, gem-set, and enamel gold flexible bracelet

Jaipur

Late 19th century

Diamonds, foil-backed corundums, gold; reverse with polychrome enamel

L: 7 inches



95. Pair of gem-set gold hand ornaments (*hathphul*) with finger rings (*panchangala*)

Jaipur

19th century

Emeralds, diamonds, rubies, gold, silver, cord

L: 5 ¼ inches

The hand ornament or *hathphul* is a traditional wedding jewel based on a lotus flower. It is worn on the back of the hand, secured by a bracelet and four finger rings and is hinged at many points for flexibility.



East Meets West:



96. Pair of diamond and enamel gold “lotus” bracelets

Probably Hyderabad

Late 18th century

Diamonds, gold, cord; reverse with polychrome enamel

Length of one: 6 ¼ inches

97. Pair of beryl, enamel, and gold “guard” bangles

Rajasthan

Late 19th century

Enamel, beryl, gold

In northwestern India (Rajasthan and Gujerat), these large bangles are worn in pairs on each arm, above and below a set of smaller bangles or bracelets.



98. Pair of seed pearl bracelets

India

Late 19th century

Seed pearls, diamonds, enamel, metal-thread cord

L: 6 inches

The effect of *gajre*, granulated silver or gold balls, is emulated here with seed pearls. The oval or half-spherical form covered with real or imitation granulation is often used in Indian jewelry.



99. White sapphire and enamel gold belt

Jaipur

Late 19th century

White sapphires, seed pearls, gold; reverse with polychrome enamel



100. Ruby pendant necklace

Madras, Tamil Nadu

Late 19th or early 20th century

Rubies, diamonds, emeralds, gold, cord

Two stylized peacocks facing a center rosette form the upper part of two pendants. The rubies come from Myanmar (Burma), which has been known as a source of rubies to Europeans since the late-fifteenth century.



101. Diamond hair ornament (part of a jadanagam, braid ornament)

Tamil Nadu

Late 19th century

Diamonds, emeralds, rubies

W: 2 1/2 inches

L: 3 inches

This is the main part of a hair ornament traditionally worn by south Indian Hindu brides or by *Bharata-natyam* dancers. The missing upper part, fastened to the back of the head, would represent the sun, the new moon, and a fragrant flower (*thazambhu*). This section represents the *nagaraja* (literally, snake-king) and would be fastened at the nape of the neck. Attached to the bottom of this ornament would be a long, jeweled piece which would entirely cover a hair braid and end in three large silk tassels.



102. Diamond necklace

Delhi

Late 19th century

Diamonds, pearl, ruby glass beads, gold; reverse with enamel



103. Pair of diamond pendants

India

Late 18th or early 19th century

Diamonds, gold, enamel



East Meets West:

104. Pair of diamond gold chain-link anklets (*jarao ka paizeb*)

Northern India

Late 18th century

Diamonds in *kundan* settings, enamel, gold; reverse in polychrome enamel

Feet are as visible as hands in Indian traditional dress, and jewelry in the form of anklets and toe-rings is always worn. The foot is given additional decoration with *mehndi* (henna) designs.

105. Diamond gold buckle

Southeast Asia

Diamonds, gold

W: 3 inches

H: 2 ¼ inches

106. Diamond gold buckle

Southeast Asia

Diamonds, gold

W: 4 inches

H: 3 ¼ inches

This buckle with its refined, delicate goldwork and small diamonds is very different in character to the kind of work in such pieces as the gold belt from Jaipur in Figure 99.



107. Enameled and gold cigarette holder

Jaipur

20th century

Enamel, gold

L: 2 ¾ inches

This cigarette holder is a charming novelty item, one that was probably made for the Western market.



108. Silver gilt and synthetic ruby armlet

Thai

Synthetic rubies, silver gilt

L: 10 ½ inches





109. Silver gilt and synthetic ruby fringe necklace

Southeast Asia
20th century
Synthetic rubies, silver gilt

110. Bib necklace

India
White zircons, enameled miniatures, base metal, silk cord; reverse with polychrome enamel
This necklace of small, enameled religious paintings is decorative but also has apotropaic qualities to protect the wearer. It is a more elaborate version of the amulet necklace commonly worn by Hindus to show devotion to a particular god or goddess.

