

Islamic art pertaining to the Qur'an utilizes calligraphy as a literal and symbolic representation of its religious figures instead of visual narratives. According to the holy book, idols and idolatry are strictly forbidden.

(above)

Unidentified

Tile

Iran, 13th century

Glazed stone-paste, underglaze-painted, overglaze-painted luster

Gift of Robert P. Griffing, Jr., 1962 (3080.1)

This tile was once a part of a large inscription frieze that likely covered a wall in a tomb or mosque. The partial verse, painted in dark blue is from the Qur'an and translates as, "the people sent by God said..."

(right)

Unidentified

Gift or stand cover (*Boktcha*)

Iran, 18th-19th century

Wool, metallic thread, brocade weave,

Gift of Miss Henrietta Brewer, 1933 (3858)

Unidentified

Events in the Life of Kōbō Daishi

Japan, Kamakura period (1185-1333),
late 13th-early 14th c.

Ink and color on paper

Gift of Robert Allerton, 1952 (1689.1)

Kukai was a calligrapher, civil servant, scholar, artist and founder of The Shingon School of Buddhism. He was posthumously bestowed the honorific title Kōbō Daishi, Great Master of the Propagated Teaching by the Emperor Daigo in 919. The image to the right shows three Bodhisattvas visiting Kukai in a dream. The image is paired with the following translated text:

During the time Kōbō Daishi was five and six years old, he would often dream that he was sitting at the center of an eight-petal lotus blossom, floating in mid-air and conversing with several Buddhas. He never told anyone about this, not even his parents. His father and mother loved him dearly, and raised him with great care and reverence, as one would hold a precious gem in one's hands, always careful never to drop it or let it be damaged. His mother was always thinking of the events surrounding the birth of her son and the prophecy told to her by the saint from Tenjiku (India), who had in the dream told her that her son would one day become a follower of Buddha. Kōbō Daishi, hearing of this, became overjoyed.

Objects, symbols, and iconic motifs often accompany visual depictions of Christian saints. St. Katherine holds a book, St. Jerome aids a lion, and St. George slays a dragon. These are known as attributes and they serve as reminders of important events in the lives of saints. Displayed here are three works of art depicting saints with their attributes.

Unidentified (French)

Saint Catherine, 15th century

Sandstone with traces of polychrome

Gift of Mr. & Mrs. J. Scott Pratt, III in memory of Mrs. Theodore A. Cooke, 1970 (3717.1)

(right)

Albrecht Dürer (German, 1471-1528)

Saint Jerome in His Study, 1514

Engraving

(far right)

Unidentified

Saint George and the Dragon, 11th-12th century

Limestone

Gift of Anna Rice Cooke, 1929 (2818)

Unidentified (English)

The Harrowing of Hell, 15th century

Alabaster, traces of polychrome, gilding

Purchased from Robert Allerton Fund, Prisanlee Acquisition Fund, and the General Acquisition Fund, 1985 (5382.1)

Alabaster quarries around Nottingham and other English towns led to a brisk trade in carved altar-pieces and tomb sculpture. The subject of this alabaster relief illustrates the following passage from the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus.

And the Lord stretched forth his hand and made the sign of the cross over Adam and over all his saints, and he took the right hand of Adam and went up out of hell, and all the saints followed him. Then did holy David cry aloud and say: Sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvelous things. His right hand hath wrought salvation for him and his holy arm. The Lord hath made known his saving health, before the face of all nations hath he revealed his righteousness. And the whole multitude of the saints answered, saying: Such honour have all his saints. Amen, Alleluia.

The Adoration of the Magii and the Crucifixion represent two important moments in the narrative of Jesus Christ's life. They have been the subjects of countless works of art throughout the course of history. Shown here are two works depicting each event. Other than the media, how are the representations of each different? What could these differences be attributed to?

(far left)

Unidentified (German or Dutch)

Adoration of the Magi, c. 1500

Ivory

Purchase, 1951 (1167.1)

(left)

Unidentified (French)

Crucifixion, late 14th century

Ivory

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Livingston Jenks, 1961 (2887.1)

(right)

Lucas van Leyden (Dutch, 1494-1533)

The Adoration of the Magi, 1513

Engraving

Purchase, 1933 (9863)

(far right)

Hendrick Goltzius (Dutch, 1558-1617)

The Crucifixion, c. 1600

Engraving

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James F. Morgan Jr., 1983 (18590)

An excerpt from *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints, The life of Saint George*

When she was there S. George passed by, and when he saw the lady he demanded the lady what she made there and she said: Go ye your way fair young man, that ye perish not also. Then said he: Tell to me what have ye and why weep ye, and doubt ye of nothing. When she saw that he would know, she said to him how she was delivered to the dragon. Then said S. George: Fair daughter, doubt ye no thing hereof for I shall help thee in the name of Jesus Christ. She said: For God's sake, good knight, go your way, and abide not with me, for ye may not deliver me. Thus as they spake together the dragon appeared and came running to them, and S. George was upon his horse, and drew out his sword and garnished him with the sign of the cross, and rode hardily against the dragon which came towards him,

and smote him with his spear and hurt him sore and threw him to the ground. And after said to the maid: Deliver to me your girdle, and bind it about the neck of the dragon and be not afeard. When she had done so the dragon followed her as it had been a meek beast and debonair. Then she led him into the city, and the people fled by mountains and valleys, and said: Alas! alas! we shall be all dead. Then S. George said to them: Ne doubt ye no thing, without more, believe ye in God, Jesu Christ, and do ye to be baptized and I shall slay the dragon. Then the king was baptized and all his people, and S. George slew the dragon and smote off his head, and commanded that he should be thrown in the fields, and they took four carts with oxen that drew him out of the city.

An excerpt from *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints, The life of Saint Jerome*

On a day towards even Jerome sat with his brethren for to hear the holy lesson, and a lion came halting suddenly in to the monastery, and when the brethren saw him, anon they fled, and Jerome came against him as he should come against his guest, and then the lion showed to him his foot being hurt. Then he called his brethren, and commanded them to wash his feet and diligently to seek and search for the wound. And that done, the plant of the foot of the lion was sore hurt and pricked with a thorn. Then this holy man put there-to diligent cure, and healed him, and he abode ever after as a tame beast with them. Then Saint Jerome saw

that God had sent him to them, not only for the health of his foot, but also for their profit, and joined to the lion an office, by the accord of his brethren, and that was that he should conduct and lead an ass to his pasture which brought home wood, and should keep him going and coming, and so he did. For he did that which he was commanded, and led the ass thus as a herdsman, and kept him wisely going and coming, and was to him a right sure keeper and defender, and always at the hour accustomed he and the ass came for to have their refectio and for to make the ass to do the work accustomed.

An excerpt from *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints, The life of Saint Katherine*

And when this holy virgin was born she was so fair of visage and so well formed Katherine in her members that all the people enjoyed in her beauty, and when she came to seven years of age, anon after she was set to school, where she profited much more than any other of her age, and was informed in the arts liberal, wherein she drank plenteously of the well of wisdom, for she was chosen to be a teacher and informer of everlasting wisdom.

Unidentified

*Amshumat Proceeds in Search of His
Uncles and Sacrificial Horse*

India, ca. 1800-1825

opaque watercolor and gold on paper

Gift of the Christensen Fund, 2001 (10696.1)

The painting portrays an episode from Book 1 (Balakanda) of Valmiki's Ramayana where a yajna (sacrifice) is performed by the king Sagara. The majority of the painting focuses on Amshumat, Sagara's grandson who is sent to find his uncles and sacrificial horse. He is shown three times in this painting; each representing a different moment in the episode. At the middle of the painting, he is proceeding forward with his grandfather's command, in the distant background at the right corner he is seen meeting the crowned and winged figure of Garuda, and in the last scene he is seen bowing before the sage Kapila who assures him that his grandson Bhagirath would cause the descent of the Ganges.

An excerpt from Book 1 of Valamiki's *Ramayana*

On observing that his sons have gone in search of ritual-horse, King Sagara spoke this to his grandson, Amshuman. You are brave and completed your education in warfare, such as, you are equal to your paternal-uncles in magnificence, thus you search the course of your paternal uncles by whom the horse is stolen. The living beings in netherworlds of earth are intrepid and extraordinary, hence take your bow along with your sword to retaliate in the event of attack. On saluting them that are worthy for salutations, and on eliminating them that are the causer of obstructions, you shall achieve your purpose of tracking the ritual-horse, and thus you come-back safely and let my Vedic-ritual be crossed over to the other shore of mortality by you...

All the elephants that safeguard the directions of earth have adored Amshuman and motivated him by saying, 'you will be going from here taking the horse.' Hearing that common blessing of all the directional-elephants, the nimble-footed Amshuman went to the place where his paternal-uncles were rendered as mounds of ashes. At the chance for not physically seeing his paternal-uncles, the son of Asmanja wept. Overwhelmed by agony and anguish, also beheld there the horse of Vedic-ritual that is grazing nearby.

When he that great resplendent Amshuman wanted to offer obsequial waters to the departed sons of Sagara and searched for water he has not found any fount of water. Spanning his expert glances, oh, Rama, he then saw the rapid-winged king of birds, namely Garuda, the Eagle-vehicle of Vishnu, who is the maternal uncle of his father and other paternal-uncles, and whose flight will be similar to that of the Wind-god. That great-mighty Garuda spoke this word to Amshuman, 'Best one among men, River Ganga is the elder daughter of Himavanta and dextrous one, you have to offer water-oblation to the departed paternal-uncles of yours in her waters, namely the holy waters of River Ganga. World purifier River Ganga will drift them who are rendered as mounds of ashes to heaven, and when she who is much adored by all worlds drenches this ash, that River Ganga herself will lead the sixty-thousand sons of Sagara to heaven. Oh, great fortunate one, you may proceed from here with the horse, it will be apt of you to carry out the Vedic-ritual of your grandfather. Hearing the words of that great-winged eagle, Garuda, he that highly brave and well-renowned Amshuman swiftly took the horse, and returned to the ritual place of his grandfather, King Sagara.

Unidentified

Ceremonial Hanging (*Pidan*)

Cambodia, Khmer people, c. 1900

Silk, twill weave, weft ikat (*hol*)

Gift of The Christensen Fund, 2001 (11115.1)

The Theravada Jatakas is a canon of poems and stories that chronicle the lives of Buddha. One of its stories is represented here as Prince Siddhartha, the future Buddha, leaves the family palace accompanied by the gods Indra and Brahma.

An excerpt from *Theravada Jatakas, The Great Departure*

And as he considered the coming into being and the passing away of creation, he cried his affliction, "How wretched this is." And desiring to reach perfect clearness with his mind, he stopped his friends who were following him, and proceeded himself to a solitary spot at the root of a jambu-tree, whose beautiful leaves were waving in all directions. And there he sat down on the clean ground, with grass bright like beryl; and reflecting on the origin and destruction of creating he took the path of mental stillness. And his mind at once came to a stand and at the same time he was freed from mental troubles such as desire for the objects of sense etc.

And he entered into the first trance of calmness which is accompanied by gross and subtle cogitation and which is supermundane in quality. Then he obtained possession of concentration of mind, which springs from discernment and yields extreme

ecstasy and bliss, and thereafter, rightly perceiving in his mind the course of the world, he meditated on the same matter. "A wretched thing it is indeed that man, who is himself helpless and subject to the law of old age, disease and destruction, should in his ignorance and the blindness of conceit, pay no heed to another who is the victim of old age, disease or death. For if I, who am myself such, should pay no heed to another whose nature is equally such, it would not be right or fitting in me, who have the knowledge of this, the ultimate law." As he thus gained correct insight into the evils of disease, old age and death, the mental intoxication relating to the self, which arises from belief in one's strength, youth and life, left him in the moment. He did not rejoice nor yet was he downcast; doubt came not over him, nor sloth, nor drowsiness. And he felt no longing for sensual pleasures, no hatred or contempt for others...As the day departed then, he mounted, blazing like the sun with his beauty, to his palace, even as the rising sun climbs Meru, in order to dispel the darkness with the splendour of his self.

Ben Shahn (born Lithuania, active United States, 1898-1969)

A Song of Degrees (Psalm 133), 1960

Screenprint

Purchase, 1961 (14667)

In Ben Shahn's serigraph, a pair of birds flank Psalm 133 as a golden floral motif fills the background. How does the artist's symbolic use of imagery reflect the sentiment of the accompanying text?

Psalm 133

1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in unity!

2 It is like the precious oil upon the head,
Running down on the beard,
The beard of Aaron,
Running down on the edge of his garments.

3 It is like the dew of Hermon,
Descending upon the mountains of Zion;
For there the Lord commanded the blessing—
Life forevermore.

Unidentified

Parvati

India, Cholla period, 13th century

Bronze

Purchase, 1975 (4313.1)

Parvati is the Hindu goddess of power. She is the giver of Shakti (life force or energy) to all living things. Without Shakti, living things enter stasis. Below is a traditional celebratory poem that heralds Parvati's achievements and power.

Salutations to You, Goddess, The bestower of boons, The destroyer of sins, The bestower of various fruits (of deeds), and The one adorned with skull of demons Shumbh and Nishumbh. I bow to You, Goddess, Who absolves the pain of humans.

Salutations to You, Goddess, adorned with eyes like sun and moon, having a face glorified like fire, lost in the entity Bhairav (Shiv), and The oppressor of Andhaka (a demon).

Salutations to You, the destroyer of Mahisha (a demon), Who holds a [tri]dent in her hand, Who finishes the sins and evils of this world [during dooms day], and Who is revered by Brahma, Vishnu, Sun, and Indra.

Salutations to You, Who is revered by Kartikeya (six-headed) and Shankar, Who races towards ocean in the form of the river Ganga, Who is revered by Shambhu, Who destroys sorrow and poverty, and Who increments the bliss of son and wife.

Salutations to You, Goddess, Who is omnipresent in polymorphic forms, Who shows [us] the heaven, Who absolves all the grief, Who destroys all the obstacles, Who bestows Moksha, Who grants [us] all the wishes, and Who is the best among deft and skilful.

Unidentified

Fragments of the Illustrated Origin of Kumano Shrine (*Kumano Honchi Emaki*)

Japan, 16th-17th c.

Handscroll; ink and color on paper

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Philip E. Spalding, 1955
(2048.1) (2049.1)

These two framed fragments from an illustrated handscroll are representative of the style of narrative painting done in the ancient Japanese capital of Nara during the Muromachi period. The paintings appear to show a woman (formerly a nun) being escorted by a small military contingent. Although traditionally titled "Punishment of a Nun", the paintings have not yet been identified with a specific story.

The Gospel according to Luke, The Crucifixion

Luke 23.26 And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus. 23.27 And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. 23.28 But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. 23.29 For, behold, the days

are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. 23.30 Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. 23.31 For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry? 23.32 And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death. 23.33 And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. 23.34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

The Gospel according to Matthew, The Adoration of the Magii

2.1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, 2.2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. 2.3 When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 2.4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. 2.5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, 2.6 And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. 2.7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time

the star appeared. 2.8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. 2.9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. 2.10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. 2.11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. 2.12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

Utagawa Kunimasa IV (1848-1920)

Chushingura

Japan, Meiji period (1868-1912), c. 1892

Woodblock print; ink and color on paper

Gift of Dr. Leslie Wilbur, 1994 (25667)

The 47 Ronin, Also known as *Kanahedon Chushingura* (The Treasury of Loyal Retainers) tells the story of how a group of samurai are left without a master when their lord, Enya Hangan is forced to commit seppuku for drawing his sword upon an unscrupulous senior lord named Ko no Moronao. Witnessing the unjust act, the masterless samurai (ronin) set forth to avenge Hangan's honor by executing a two year plan to kill Moronao.

This print summarizes the story in eleven acts as it is told in Kabuki Theatre. A number of the scenes are shown in greater detail in the seven prints to the right. Pay particular attention to how the artists depict each character. What visual clues (facial expression, posture, wardrobe, placement in composition etc.) aid in discerning one character from another?

1 The scene takes place at a ceremony to enshrine a fallen enemy's helmet and portrays the arrogant and obnoxious lord Moronao making advances toward Kaoyo, the wife of lord Hangan, which she rejects. Wakasanosuke, Lord Hangan's friend witnesses the act and instructs Kaoyo to go home. Moronao fires off insults at Wakasanosuke for the interruption.

2 This image portrays the explosive moment when Lord Moronao, still upset over Kaoyo's rebuff, goads Lord Hangan into drawing his sword. Though Hangan does not actually attack Moronao, he is ordered to commit seppuku as punishment for his insubordination. The remainder of the drama describes how Hangan's 47 followers attempt to avenge Hangan's unjust treatment by Moronao

3 A brooding Yuranosuke, Hangan's chief retainer and leader of the now 47 masterless samurai, leaves the palace after witnessing his lord's death.

4 This scene is peripheral to the story but it emphasizes the hardship the retainers and their families endure as they attempt to raise money for a vendetta. Returning home after selling his daughter to a brothel, Yoichibei is attacked and murdered by Sadakurō, the wicked son of an untrustworthy retainer, Kodayu.

5 This image centers on the merchant Gihei (standing on a crate) who has been entrusted with secretly purchasing and transporting weapons that will be used in the vendetta. To test Gihei's trustworthiness, the retainers disguise themselves as law officers and pretend to conduct an inspection of Gihei's chests. He adamantly refuses to open the chests and admirably demonstrates his commitment to the mission.

6 The silent moments before the 47 ronin storm Moronao's castle on a dark winter night.

7 The 47 ronin capture Lord Moronao. Moments after this image, the ronin kill and behead Moronao and take his head to the grave of their lord Hangan, where they all commit seppuku.

Kabuki theatre is known for its demonstrative emotion. In print, actors were portrayed with the same high level of melodrama. Kabuki actor portraits began to change in the early 20th century as artists began to infuse western sensibilities into their work. Natori Shunsen, was one such artist whose realistic approach was a dramatic shift from previous traditional depictions of kabuki actors. Shunsen mixed western style realism with traditional Japanese aesthetics, which resulted in portraits that were introspective and hinted subtly at the emotive theatrics of kabuki.

With expressive language seldom used in contemporary modes of communication, Queen Lili'uokalani conveys her passion and deep concern for the future of Hawaii, sometimes articulating her aloneness and mistrust of her supposed friends.

When did you last hand-write a letter? How does it compare to other, modern forms of communication such as email or text messaging? How do they vary in tone, appearance, and content?

Take a moment to write a letter to the Queen. What is your reaction to her words and her plight? Inform her of your personal experience here in Hawai'i, how things have changed, and Hawaii's current state of affairs.

Leave your letter in the mailbox for review and possible display.

No'u Revilla

Alter-ing Papers, June 2012

Vinyl

Courtesy of the artist

“Alter-ing Papers reflects an ongoing exploration of the language and process of documentation, particularly letter writing. Contextualized by the Overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893 and Queen Lili'uokalani's subsequent letters to her attorney, J.O. Carter, *Alter-ing Papers* juxtaposes ordinary acts of letter writing with strong, intimate performances of resistance. Words such as “forward,” “envelope,” and “privilege” are presented in fragments, distilled units of mana'o meant to be read slowly, patiently. The process of waiting (as a deposed queen, a disenfranchised people, a reader, a viewer) is thus experienced not as a general state of inactivity but rather a literary and political condition. *Alter-ing Papers* asks: how are documents like letters conceptualized as objects of memory-making? What meaningful play is possible and relevant here?”

-No'u Revilla

A proverb is a short saying of advice or a statement about a general truth. Proverbs are often metaphorical and the images they conjure are sometimes quite absurd despite referring to common sense or practicality. Here a few examples of often-used proverbs:

*“You can lead a horse to water,
but you can’t make him drink”*

*“Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day.
Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.”*

“A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.”

“Don’t poke the bear.”

Francisco de Goya was known to have a preoccupation with life’s irrationalities and ridiculousness. With its wild, nonsensical imagery, could any of Goya’s prints illustrate a popular proverb, adage, maxim, or aphorism? Or perhaps an image has inspired a new one in you...

Using the pencils and pads on the tables write a proverb that relates to the attached image. Feel free to use an established proverb, a variation of a popular proverb, or a proverb of your own creation.

Submit your proverb into the drop box to have it reviewed and displayed.

Letters from Queen Lili’uokalani

Hawai’i, 1897-1907

From the Collection Of The Family Of Allison Holt Gendreau

The letters displayed are dated between 1897 and 1907. Some of them were written during Liliuokalani’s stay in Washington DC where she attempted to gain support for the restoration of Hawai’i’s monarchy and in protest of annexation to the United States.