


Mother-of-pearl inlaid box

Southeast Asian Collection

Accession Nr.:	80.29.1-3 
Type:	object for daily use; lacquers
Date of production:	19th century- first half of the 20th century
Place of production:	Vietnam, Southeast Asia
Materials/Techniques:	wood, lacquer, mother of pearl inlay, tin
Dimensions:	height: 24cm diameter: 10 cm

Round wooden box with five compartments. The rich mother-of-pearl decoration on both sides and the lid depicts a dragon (symbol of good fortune and emperorship), a Chinese or Vietnamese unicorn (called "qi lin"), a phoenix (virtue, noble qualities), and a turtle (spiritual power, extraterrestrial wisdom) among floral motifs, in a European tin mounting. In Vietnamese culture, these four 'sacred' animals together symbolise the power of the universe and often appear in the representation of cemeteries, pagodas, and shrines.

