

Large betel leaf container with tray as cover

Southeast Asian Collection

Accession Nr.: [54.149.1.1-2](#) 

Type: **bronze, lead, gold and silver; object for daily use; metalwork**

Date of production: 19th century

Place of production: **Java, Indonesia, Southeast Asia**

Materials/Technique
s: **brass, engraved, chased**

Dimensions: height: 24.5 cm
diameter: 21 cm

Octagonal container with removable lid, decorated with ornamental scroll, leaf, and flower motifs on the sides. The deliberate avoidance of figural representations suggests a Muslim owner. The removable lid also serves as a tray.

Its use is related to the consumption of betel (Indonesian: sirih), a favourite pastime of the inhabitants of South Asian countries. This form of betel ware is particularly widespread in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, and is an important component of social gatherings and hospitality, especially at festivals and weddings.

The set in the picture, made of more noble materials and with more exquisite workmanship, was adapted to the needs of higher circles, since a beautiful set was also a status symbol. In general, the pieces of a betel set include the spittoon (missing here), the tobacco, clove and cinnamon jars, the slaked lime and lip balm (with lid), and the gambir and areca nut holders.

