

# Betel leaf container, part of a betel set

Southeast Asian Collection

Accession Nr.: **54.149.2.1** 

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: 7.5 cm  
diameter: 7. 5 cm**

Hexagonal vessel with broad top, decorated with alternating fields of swastika and floral motifs on the sides. It is used for storing betel leaves in which the ingredients of the betel are wrapped.

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 a spittoon (missing here), a tobacco, clove and cinnamon storing container, a slaked lime and lip balm pot (with lid), and a gambir and areca nut holder. The central element is the container with removable lid which also serves as a tray.

