

Small betel set pot

Southeast Asian Collection

Accession Nr.:	54.149.2.5 
Type:	bronze, lead, gold and silver; object for daily use; metalwork
Date of production:	19th century
Place of production:	Java, Indonesia, Southeast Asia
Materials/Techniques:	brass, engraved, chased
Dimensions:	height: 4.5 diameter: 6cm

Octagonal vessel with round base, decorated with alternating fields of swastika and floral motifs on the sides.

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 (see the object in question), 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.

