

Betel holder

Southeast Asian Collection

Accession Nr.: 658 

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

Date of production: 19th century

Place of production: Thailand (Siam), Southeast Asia

Materials/Technique s: silver, hammered, engraved

Dimensions: height: 6.2 cm
diameter: 5. 8 cm

Acquisition: collection of Ferenc Hopp

A silver betel bowl in the shape of a flower, divided into six sections. The small object, decorated with embossed floral motifs on the petals, may have been part of betel set (another piece of the set is in the collection under inventory number 454). The pedestal is encircled by the Chinese equivalent of the Greek meander ('wave') motif (leiwen, 'thunder motif'), which suggests that the object was made by Peranakan (assimilated Chinese) silversmiths.

The consumption of betel was a popular custom in South Asian countries. This form of betelware was particularly widespread in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, and was an important addition to social gatherings and hospitality, especially at festivals and weddings.

