

Rain drum

Southeast Asian Collection

Accession Nr.: 2015.85.1 

Type: bronze, lead, gold and silver; religious or cult object; metalwork

Date of production: 17 – 18th (?) century

Place of production: Laos, Southeast Asia

Materials/Technique
s: bronze

Dimensions: height: 42 cm
diameter: 56 cm

Karen bronze rain drum. The top is decorated with four pairs of frogs standing on each other's back, with a sun symbol in the centre, surrounded by concentrical, indented geometric patterns. The sides reveal small elephant and snail shapes.

Bronze drums like this were used as early as 3000 years ago in the Dong Son culture to gain the support of spirits and to attract monsoon rains. The fertility symbols on the drum also refer to this.

These rain drums are among the most powerful magical-ritual aids of the Karen people of Myanmar (Burma) and northern Thailand.

