

Beltbuckle

Southeast Asian Collection

Accession Nr.: 7144 

Type: bronze, lead, gold and silver; jewellery; metalwork; costumes

Date of production: first half of the 20th century

Place of production: Java, Indonesia, Southeast Asia

Materials/Techniques: silver, engraved, appliqué, filigree

Dimensions: height: 7.5 cm
width: 10 cm
depth: 3.6 cm

The belt ornament (Indonesian: pending) is a popular accessory in the Malay world made by Peranakan (emigrant, assimilated) Chinese jewellers, but the clientele was not limited to this community, as it was as much a part of Javanese dress as of the people of Malayo-chinese colonies living in the Malay islands or Singapore (the former British colony, called the Straits Settlements). A beautifully crafted, ornate silver pending was also the symbol of the wearer's wealth and status.

The piece in the picture is one of the more complex pending poohwa belt ornaments: stylized fish and bird figures with symbolic meanings emerge from a lush plant background. Its rosette may originally have been decorated with a gemstone setting.

