



**Antique Chinese Silver Circular Lidded Box, China – Late 17th Century
POA**

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This rare seventeenth century Chinese silver box has a pull-off cover and the surface of the cover and the lower part of the side of the box have been finely ornamented using repousse and chased techniques. The beautifully balanced scene to the cover is in the Chinese tradition; a gentleman scholar is returning home with his servant and the season is spring. This scene was a favourite and recurring theme of Chinese court and professional painters during the Ming dynasty. It is understood to represent a scholar returning home following a spring outing after he had enjoying a pleasant day filled with wine and poetry.

The scene shows a scholar sitting astride his horse. Horse and rider are approaching a small bridge under which is a fishing platform. The water underneath the bridge is fast flowing and turbulent, indicating that the river is swollen with melted snow. A servant walks behind his master carrying a bundle. It is springtime and the cherry trees near the bridge are in full blossom with birds flying around them and perching amongst their branches. A small boat with sail can be seen to the lower right. A weeping willow, or tree of similar pendulous habit, occupies the central foreground with occasional rocks, plants and bushes scattered over the ground.

The upper part of the side of the box is formed from the side of the cover. This, approximately top third of the side, is concave in section, to facilitate grip. It has not been ornamented save for a thin incised linear border to top and bottom. The lower part of the side of the box is formed from the side of the container. This has been ornamented in similar style to the top of the lid using repousse and chased techniques. It features a pagoda, birds and blossoms amongst other motifs.

The background to the repousse and chased scene on the cover has been finely punched and shows evidence of having been worked in tight concentric circles, emanating from the central point. The background to the side is very similar but has been worked differently, this time in straight lines which circumnavigate the box. Similar small boxes in gilded copper are known and feature in various museum collections including those of the Asian Civilisations Museum, Singapore, and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Within the collection of the Met Museum is a Chinese carved medallion featuring a similar scene and dating to the late 16th or early 17th century.

Origin	Chinese
Period	17th Century
Style	Other
Condition	Excellent
Dimensions	Weight: 56grams
Diameter	Height: 1.8cms Width: 4.8cms