



**Antique Japanese Silver & Gold Vase, Signed, Mitsukoshi Japan – Meiji  
C.1910  
£3,200.00**

This magnificent antique Japanese silver vase is of good height and weight using a good gauge of high-quality silver, Japanese silver is normally a higher grade than sterling silver. It has been inlaid with gold in places and was made during the Meiji or early Taisho periods. The vase is of simple baluster shape and has been ornamented with great artistry and a lightness of touch which shows great deftness and mastery of the medium. The curvaceous simplicity of the shape means that the onlooker is not distracted by the vase itself but focuses entirely on the figural scene. As with all great Japanese art, the scene has a profound sense of space which has only been achieved through great planning, care and forethought.

The figural scene shows seven men and a child within a bamboo grove. The figures are possibly participating in a ritual; one unrolls a scroll, whilst the other men and the child watch. A couple of the men have unusual head coverings, probably religious and many carry distinctive rootwood sticks. In Japan, sacred bamboo groves around Shinto shrines held a clear function of warding off evil which is similar to the Chinese beliefs that bamboo drives off evil spirits. Similar beliefs are common across Asia. The most famous bamboo grove in Japan is the Chikurin no Michi “????” near Kyoto. Every December during the Hanatoro Festival illuminated lanterns are placed there. The object carried by the boy in the figural scene might well be a lantern.

In places, details have been inlaid with gold, the edge of kimono sleeves and hems, head coverings and details of the basket or lantern carried by the child, creating contrast and interest through this embellishment. The faces of the figures are characterful and individual, the scene has been superbly rendered with a light and sure hand as if sketched.

The maker's signature has not been identified but his name can be found inscribed to the body of the vase. To the underside of the base, there is the four character 'jungin' mark, meaning pure silver, which was only used during the Meiji period (1868-1912) and shortly thereafter as well as the retailer's mark, Mitsukoshi, showing that the vase was sold by one of their high-end department stores. The famous Mitsukoshi department stores were modelled on American department stores and started in 1905. They were the first department stores in Japan and provided a new shopping experience for the Japanese consumer. They were very popular and the chain of stores expanded quickly. They sold a wide range of goods including jewellery and silverware. Around the underside of the base is an inscription which refers to the Nagano Prefecture, a mountainous region which is in the centre of Japan.

An absolutely stunning antique Japanese silver vase, ornamented by a master and in outstanding original condition! Despite its age, this vase would look fabulous in a contemporary or minimalist interior as well as those with a more traditional aesthetic.

<b>Origin</b>	Japanese
<b>Period</b>	19th Century
<b>Style</b>	Other
<b>Condition</b>	Excellent
<b>Dimensions</b>	Weight – 694 grammes
<b>Diameter</b>	Height 24cms; Width 13cms

Antique ref: 10035