



**Antique Sri Lankan Silver Multi-Sided Box, Sri Lanka, Ceylon - Circa 1900
£6,000.00**

This very unusual antique Sri Lankan silver box is of complex form with a myriad of angles and sides. It seems to have been inspired by, or derive from, the platonic solids of sacred geometry. The box consists of seventeen angled panels with narrow plain silver borders between them. The hinged cover and sides of the box have been ornamented using repousse and chasing whilst the underside of the base, which has fine ornamentation, also has engraving. The design has been planned with great care and the craftsmanship is of very high quality and skilfully executed. The box is believed to have been made around 1900.

The surface of the box has been divided into a series of square and triangular panels. The panels around the side have all been framed by a repeating lotus flower border with a narrow rope border to top and bottom. Some of the square panels have been bisected to produce two triangular panels where one of the triangles is to the side and one to the cover.

The four, square principal panels feature the same image, a holy man, believed to be the Buddha meditating under the Bodhi tree, which is where he received enlightenment. The Sri Maha Bhodi tree at Anaradhapura, Sri Lanka, was propagated from a branch of the original Bhodi tree under which Buddha meditated. It is documented that it was planted in 288 BC which means that today it is over 2,300 years old and if not the oldest, it is one of the world's oldest trees.

Only the top part of Buddha's body has been depicted, framed within an archway of branches. His two hands are grasping the branches to either side. He is surrounded by scrolling branches or vines with occasional flowers. The panels are framed by repeating lotus flower borders within narrow rope borders.

The triangular panels to the side depict a double headed bird, known as a gandaberunda, surrounded by scrolling vines. This image can often be found within the ornamentation to Sri Lankan silverware where it was a favourite motif. The gandaberunda features in ancient stone carvings in the important Buddhist temple of Kelaniya (Kelaniya Raja Maha Vihara), seven miles from Colombo. To the top, the panels are surrounded by a narrow rope border only, whilst the other two sides are framed by the repeating lotus flower border contained within narrow rope borders.

The cover comprises four triangular panels rising to a central peak like a tented roof. This shape is half of an octahedron. A decorative finial has been placed at the apex which has been made in the form of an offering bowl containing a fig, the fruit of the Bhodi tree. The triangular panels to the cover have each been divided into three areas of ornament. Working upwards from the perimeter of the cover, these are: a scrolling floral and foliate border surrounded by narrow rope borders, next is a narrow repeating flame border topped by a narrow rope border and finally an elaborate foliate scroll surrounding a central flower.

The surface to the flat underside of the box has been ornamented with the utmost care and shows great artistry. To the centre, a square panel has been chased and engraved. This contains a depiction of a fully open lotus flower with a small floral scroll at each corner. The ground surrounding the central flower has been textured with ring punching. Surrounding the lotus panel is an elegant and deeply cut repeating flame border which is, in turn, surrounded on each side by a chased and engraved floral scroll on a textured ring punched ground. These provide a pleasing contrast with each other and with the relief work to the sides and the cover. The box stands on four neat spherical plain silver feet which have been placed to the corners of the box at the points where the outer borders intersect.

Origin	Asian
Period	Early 1900s
Style	Other
Condition	Excellent
Dimensions	Weight: 680 grammes
Diameter	Height 15 cms; Width 16 cms