



**Antique Indian Silver Plate, Kutch (cutch) India, C. 1840
£900.00**

This exquisite antique Kutch silver plate is a fine example of the artistic and skilful work of the Kutch silversmiths. The standard of craftsmanship is extremely high and the quality superb. This is believed to be an early example of Kutch silverware dating to around 1840. The repousse elements have been skilfully executed; they are all crisp, well defined and nicely detailed, with little signs of wear or use. The overall design and the spacing of the individual elements have been carefully considered and the plate is of very pleasing appearance.

The plate has been ornamented using repousse, chasing and pierced techniques. The background has been finely incised and provides a contrast to the bright silver surface of the repousse and chased elements. To the centre of the recessed area is a large lotus flower, reminiscent of the style of an eighteenth century Indian thali, which usually had a lotus flower at their central point. Surrounding the lotus flower are palmettes, carnations, small open daisy-like flowers and scrolling acanthus leaves. Some elements seem to derive from the Islamic Mughal tradition and others from the Hindu tradition. The contrasting plain silver to the steep side of the recess is also reminiscent of the typical construction of a thali, it leads up from the recessed area to the flat rim above and also forms a border. The rim is wide with a continuous repeating border of scrolling floral and foliate elements and a beaded border to the exterior. The plate is surrounded by a pierced and hand cut repeating acanthus leaf border to the outer edge, almost lace-like in its appearance, which produces a deckled edge.

Silver from the Kutch (Cutch) region of India probably became the most famous of all the Indian regional styles. The Maharajas of Kutch gave a lot of help to the silversmiths living there, championing the artisans' fine work and trying to encourage this ancient craft. They commissioned silver for their own use and sent it out as diplomatic gifts. They also sponsored some of the silversmiths to attend various prominent national and international exhibitions. Their efforts ensured that the region's silverware was always well represented and exhibited to great effect. This strategy helped to spread awareness of Kutch silverware and it became greatly admired and very popular. It was highly regarded for its great craftsmanship and aesthetic sensibility and appreciated for its good weight and the high grade of silver used in its manufacture. The fineness of the silver itself was usually very high and a minimum of sterling quality or 925/1000.

The "Kutch style" of silver decoration first emerged in the early 19th century and by the end of the century had developed into its distinctive and familiar form. Where the Kutch style of silver ornamentation originated is uncertain. Some writers point to the 15th century mosque of Ahmedabad as a major source of inspiration. The mosque's architecture fuses Islamic and Hindu imagery, particularly in its intricately carved stone windows, which could have inspired the scrolling decoration which became so characteristic of Kutch silver. The Dutch influence has also been noted in the appearance of the repoussé border ornamentation often found on Kutch silverware and there are also resemblances to the decoration on Portuguese pottery of the 17th century.

Origin	Asian
Period	19th Century
Style	Other
Condition	Excellent
Dimensions	15cm diameter
Diameter	Weight:218 grams

Antique ref: 10058