



Pair of Japanese lacquer tokkuri sake flasks and covers, 19th century POA

Pair of Japanese lacquer tokkuri sake flasks and covers, 19th century, of wood covered in black polished lacquer (roiro), of pear-shaped form with bulbous bodies and slender waisted necks with flat-topped stoppers, each decorated in gold hiramaki-e with 'mon' roundels containing a triple hollyhock leaf design, against a widening interlocking trellis ground.

Condition: Flakes to both lids and one lid with crack

Notes: The mon (clan symbol) depicted on these flasks is associated with the Tokugawa, a powerful daimyo family that rose to prominence after the Battle of Sekigahara in the early 17th century, and which played a crucial role in the 'unification' of the states of Japan. The most famous figure from this family was Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543-1616), who established the Tokugawa shogunate, a feudal military government that ruled Japan for over 250 years. The Tokugawa clan symbol is known in English as a 'triple hollyhock', though the Japanese plant 'aoi' actually belongs to the birthwort family. The symbol served as an icon of authority and legitimacy for the Tokugawa dynasty, and was displayed on flags, banners and official documents throughout this period, reinforcing the Tokugawa shogunate's unifying control. After tumultuous centuries of civil war, the Edo era was a largely peaceful period of Japanese history, during which arts and culture flourished under the 'pax Tokugawa'. The shogunate itself was a great patron of the arts, encouraging a newly enriched culture of art and innovation in Japan. The Tokugawa mon thus became an integral part of the visual culture of the Edo period, appearing on various artistic and cultural artefacts and contributing to the creation of a distinctive visual identity associated with this era.

Material and Technique	Lacquered wood with gold design
Origin	Japanese
Period	19th Century
Dimensions	Height: 20.3cm. (8in.)