



Japanese tobacco pouch mount (mae-kanagu)

POA

Japanese tobacco pouch mount (mae-kanagu), the metal decorated with a 'nanako uchi' ground, inlaid with a design rendered in 'iroe takazogan' of a man holding a basket working in a garden.

Condition: Good

Notes:

A common technique in the decoration of Japanese metalwork is 'nanako-uchi' (????, literally 'fish-roe engraving'), in which a round chisel is used to produce a fine background pattern of small rings. The technique was transmitted to Japan through Chinese metalwork during the Nara period and features in both metalwork and lacquer design. Here it is used to decorate a metal 'mae-kanagu', the clasp of a 'tobacco ire', a pouch used to hold loose tobacco. These pouches were a type of 'sagemono' (literally 'suspended thing') to be worn hanging from the belt of a kimono, which traditionally had no pockets. Another example of sagemono is 'inro', a box for storing medicine or small items. Edo period decorative arts flourished alongside the rising prosperity of the merchant classes, with master craftsmen producing novel and lavish new variations of what were once merely utilitarian items including sagemono, which were now worn to indicate the status and taste of the wearer. They were typically worn with highly decorative accessories including 'netsuke' or 'ojime' which would be strung onto the cord used to suspend the item from the obi (kimono belt). Tobacco smoking was widely practiced by men and women of all levels of society, though upper class smokers developed strict rituals akin to those of the tea ceremony. Tobacco was first introduced by Europeans during the period of 'nanban trade' in the late 16th century and started to be grown domestically shortly after, gaining such popularity that in 1624 the Tokugawa government abandoned an earlier attempt to ban its production and use. Finely-shredded loose tobacco, of the kind which would have been stored in a tobacco ire, was smoked in long-stemmed 'kiseru' pipes which would also be worn suspended from the obi. Pipe smoking and the associated paraphernalia remained popular even after cigarette smoking became widespread during the Meiji period (1868-1912).

Material and Technique	Metal with engraved and iroe takazogan design
Origin	Japanese
Dimensions	Length: 5.5cm. (2 1/8in.)