



**A fine and important 18th century Indian silver and parcel gilt octagonal pandan box with pierced and engraved decoration.  
£6,750.00**

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An 18th century painted version of the scene of Hanuman, Rama and Sita.

Each of the figures is richly attired. As befits their station, Hanuman, Rama and Lakshama are crowned while Sita is adorned with jewels. The scene is surrounded with lush vegetation while a river abundant with fish runs along the bottom. Rama can also be seen holding an arrow (bana) an emblem of his strength, courage, goodness, worthiness and divine origins. The nobility of all the characters is prominently emphasised as each represents the traits of divine strength and power. The craftsman has cleverly further emphasised the divine nature of Rama and Sita by incorporating a pierced halo around their heads.

The decoration continues on the boxes eight sides. The front panel depicts a lion amongst vegetation which is pierced providing a sense of depth as well as allowing air to flow and is repeated on the other side panels. The lion itself has a long history in Indian art being associated with a number of deities and symbolising power, courage, pride and confidence, all attributes manifested in Rama. The rear panel shows a large exotic bird, again against a background of pierced foliage. Its largescale suggests this is actually a representation of Garuda a Hindu demigod who helps Rama during his trials. He is also the mount of the god Vishnu, and as Rama is the seventh avatar of that deity his inclusion would be appropriate.

The remaining panels show waterfowl which in the context of the other imagery indicates they are intended to be Hamsa birds which are mentioned in the Ramayana. These birds are often identified with the Supreme Spirit and Ultimate Reality, they are the mount of the god Brahma and the goddess Saraswati.

In combining these scenes, the silversmith has demonstrated a keen awareness of form, function and meaning. The highly refined engraving and keen attention to detail, combined with the iconography of nobility and the traits that were associated with it would suggest the box was intended for an educated member of the elite.

<b>Origin</b>	Asian
<b>Period</b>	18th Century
<b>Style</b>	Artisan
<b>Condition</b>	Excellent
<b>Dimensions</b>	Length: 12.5cm Width: 9.5cm Height: 4cmLength: 12.5cm Width: 9.5cm Height: 4cm
<b>Diameter</b>	Weight: 481 grams

Antique ref: 10100