

# AMIR MOHTASHEMI



## **Silver Teapot (kar nam ton) or Water-Pot (kanam)**

Thailand, 19th century

16cm high (20.5cm with handle), 14cm diameter

600 grams

Stock no.: A4604

The silver teapot (kar nam ton) or water-pot (kanam), with a rounded, globular shape and elongated 'S' shaped spout, is decorated in relief with an ornate pattern featuring blossoming flowers, leaves and, amongst the foliage, four fox-like creatures which have nine incisions made on their tails. This suggests they may be related to the huli jing, a mythical nine-tailed fox of Chinese origin. The lid of the pot is particularly distinctive; it features cascading, circular flat domes, reminiscent of Thai architecture such as pagodas with multiple tiers. The pot has a long, swinging handlebar that forms a rectangular shape with indented or pinched corners. The dense flora and fauna on this pot may indicate it is work of a Chinese artist. In particular, its relatively small, compressed globular shape, along with the ornate decorative motifs invoke the diminutive teapots made by Chinese artists in the Straits during the 19th century (present day Malaysia and Singapore) (Meng, p. 149, fig. 120). Thus, it seems possible that a Chinese artist may have made this pot for a Thai patron.

The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, has a similar 18th century pot from Thailand (Accession Number 476-1894). Although the objects differ in their material and decoration – the Victoria and Albert Museum example is made with both silver and gold – they appear related both in their form and style. In particular, the two pots share the swinging rectangular handlebar together with the tiered lids and small vase-shaped finials. Our example is small in comparison to the Victoria and Albert Museum pot, which is 24cm high, and further conveys Chinese tastes in the Straits: pots made in this region by Chinese artists, or for the Straits-born Chinese, were surprisingly small and jewel-like (Meng, p. 150).

Literature:

Meng, H. W. Straits Chinese Silver: A Collector's Guide, Times Editions, 1984.