

Basic Detail Report



Opium-Pipe

Date

1800-1950

Medium

Metal

Description

Chinese opium pipe formed of two brass cylinders covered with shagreen and brown lacquered paper at the top and bottom. Between the two cylinders are two smaller cylinders which contain a brass tube fitted with a sliding implement with an openwork flower-shaped head. One of

the large cylinders has a hinged lid under which are engraved Chinese characters. From the other large cylinder is a long curved brass stem and mouthpiece which is shaped to resemble bamboo. The tube implements fit into the open tube which extends from the large cylinder with the stem. A loop of leather is fixed to the centre, probably for suspension. Opium was a drug commonly smoked in China before being brought to the west. In China the tradition permeated all levels of society with the richest having a special room in their house for smoking, and the poorest visiting opium dens. The pipes used to smoke the drug were designed to vaporise rather than burn it. The smoking of opium was eventually banned and much of the paraphernalia associated with it destroyed.

Dimensions

Object/Work: 325 mm