

AMIR MOHTASHEMI



Jambya Dagger

Malaysia, 19th century

Silver, steel and wood

31cm long

Stock no.: A5316

This unique dagger has a waisted hilt of silver, which is attached to a J-shaped double-edged blade in steel with a central ridge. The pommel is of heart shape decorated with two symmetrical scrolling fern patterns and flowers in relief, it connects to the grip that has embossed foliage patterns which are divided by a lozenge shape on each side. The guard has three flowers in relief on a background of embossed foliage patterns, which is chased by a row of triangular pattern. The scabbard is of wood covered in embossed silver at the locket and the chape. The patterns on the silver are similar to the foliage patterns on the hilt. The “open lotus” pattern that forms part of the overall foliage pattern, as seen from this dagger, is typical of Malay silverware (Roth: 1910, p.6). The distinctive triangular pattern at the guard and locket is also a feature found in Malay silverware (Roth: 1910, p.18, fig.1). The fine execution of the silverwork suggests the dagger was produced with high quality craftsmanship.

The shape of the dagger, with its H-shaped hilt and elegantly curved blade, is commonly found in India, Iran and the Ottoman Empire. Yet the silverwork reveals the dagger’s origin from the Malay world. Thus, this object reflects a distinctively unique hybridisation of form and decorative scheme from different geographical locations.

Reference:

Roth, H. Ling. *Oriental Silverwork, Malay and Chinese*. London: White Lotus Press, 1910.

