

Japanese Faux-Tortoiseshell Lacquer Games Box, 19th Century

£475



REF: 6591

Height: 7 cm (2.8")

Width: 24 cm (9.4")

Depth: 19 cm (7.5")

Description

A rare and highly decorative 19th-century Japanese lacquer games box, finished in an attractive faux-tortoiseshell lacquer and retaining an exceptionally complete original-style contents. Dating from circa 1840-1890, the box opens to reveal four smaller lacquered card boxes, each containing a complete deck of playing cards, together with two counters.

The warm, mottled lacquer finish cleverly imitates the rich tones and translucent character of tortoiseshell, giving the box an immediately luxurious appearance. The fitted interior is ingeniously arranged, with the four individual lacquer boxes creating a pleasing sense of order and ceremony when opened. Such pieces were made both as practical entertainment accessories and as decorative objects, reflecting the 19th-century European fascination with Japanese lacquerwork and the refined craftsmanship associated with it.

The card decks include examples by Wells & Co., London, and Goodall, London-two respected English makers-adding an engaging Anglo-Japanese dimension to the set. Their survival alongside the original box and accessory counters makes this a particularly appealing and unusual ensemble.

A charming object for a games table, library, or cabinet display, this complete set offers decorative appeal, social history, and the enduring pleasure of a beautifully designed domestic object. It would make a distinctive addition to a collection of Japanese lacquer, antique playing cards, games-related antiques, or 19th-century decorative arts.