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A Japanese Meiji Period Black Lacquer Hokai Lidded Box with Brass Mounts

late 19th Century

this large ribbed and cylindrical Japanese shell-game box with domed lid decorated overall with Maki-e (gold lacquered) foliate wreaths and stylized flower heads and incised brass mounts; raised on four splayed supports; good overall antique condition with even wear and rubbing to surface; some touch-ups to areas of missing lacquer; minor crack to underside of lid and inside bottom; now lacking rope. Hokai boxes became prominent in Japan during the Edo and Meiji periods to store and carry shells for the game of Kai-awase - the shell matching game - which was played by aristocrats and high ranking members of society. The shells would be painted with elaborate scenes often from the Tale of Genji. The goal was to possess as many matching pairs of shells at the end of the game to be declared the winner.

Height: 16.5"

Seat height:

Width:

Depth:

Diameter: 17"

Drop: