
PAGODA RED



SPITTOON DROSS BOX WITH BUDDHIST SYMBOLS

\$680

c. 1900 • China • Brass, Copper • Collection #CDKZ043B

W: 1.75" D: 1.75" H: 2.0"

By the 18th century, opium use had become as central to Chinese social life as taking tea or smoking tobacco, fostering a subculture rich with its own customs, traditions, and exquisitely crafted accoutrements.

This curious, spittoon-shaped object is a variation of the dross box, a small container used to collect spent opium ash (dross). A waste product of smoking, dross could be added to opium to prolong its use and lessen its purity. Consequently, many smokers would save their dross in containers such as this and sell it to an opium den. Continued...



1740 W. Webster Ave., Chicago, IL 60614 • 773-235-1188 • info@pagodared.com

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This early 20th century dross box is shaped of brass and copper and has an eight-sided base, a flared neck, and a square lid perforated with a geometric meander. The sides are etched with various ribbon-clad Buddhist symbols, auspicious offering fruits, and folk symbols for good fortune and longevity.

