

**ORIENTAL SILVERWORK, MALAY AND
CHINESE, WITH OVER 250 ORIGINAL
ILLUSTRATIONS; A HANDBOOK FOR
CONNOISSEURS, COLLECTORS,
STUDENTS AND SILVERSMITHS**

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Oriental Silverwork, Malay and Chinese, with over 250 Original Illustrations; A Handbook for Connoisseurs, Collectors, Students and Silversmiths by H. Ling Roth

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ORIENTAL SILVERWORK

MALAY AND CHINESE



MALAY CIRCULAR DISH

FROM PERAK

Univ. of
CALIFORNIA

ORIENTAL SILVERWORK

MALAY AND CHINESE

With over 250 Original Illustrations

A Handbook for Connoisseurs, Collectors, Students and Silversmiths

BY

H. LING ROTH

Hon. Curator, Bankfield Museum, Halifax

Author of "The Natives of Sarawak and British North Borneo," &c., &c.



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1910

TO VARIOUS
MEMBERS

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RG

ERRATUM

For MR. W. H. LUNING read throughout Mr. W. A. LUNING.
Carpenter

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INTRODUCTION



MALAY SILVERWORK! Few people in England have ever heard of it! South Kensington is poor in half-a-dozen pieces. One or two collectors are rich in a few specimens. Two connoisseurs are opulent in the possession of over one hundred and fifty pieces, and will part with none. Can we blame them? Such treasures are as rare as fairy visits, and a collection takes a lifetime to gather. Chance pieces may be bought; deliberate search is useless. We may systematically hunt all the pawnshops of the Peninsula, and they will yield nothing. On the other hand, a casual visit may result in the acquisition of a gem at the price of a dollar; or a friendly action, long since forgotten by all but the beneficiary, suddenly brings forth fruit in the shape of a cup or dish, and another treasure is added to the collection.

It is some years since I stumbled on a large collection, and I shall never forget how my fingers trembled with delight as I opened packet after packet of this beautiful work when the owner kindly let me find a temporary home for it at Bankfield Museum. It was a sad day when I had to return it, and now, in the happy assurance that, if I know little about Malay Silverwork, few know more, I proceed to reveal some of its beauties to the public.

As we pass from dish to cup, from vase to saucer, from belt buckle to casket, every one with its appropriate design, we are bewildered with the varying devices and novel combinations laid before us. Masterliness of execution here goes hand in hand with exquisite delicacy and refinement. We see at once that artists have been at work. The reduplication, which characterises the production of the modern European silversmith, is hardly to be found. It is present only in the pillow plates, where, for some unexplained reason, the designs always run in pairs. The craftsman's genius, unhampered by the tendency to repetition, is free to indulge itself