



PROANTIC  
LE PLUS BEAU CATALOGUE D'ANTIQUITES

## Kozuka In Shibuichi Inlaid With Precious Metals By Unno Bisei. Meiji Japan Circa 1900



7 500 EUR

Signature : Unno Bisei

Period : 19th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Gold

Length : 95mm

Width : 15mm

Height : 4mm

### Description

Kozuka of exceptional quality; on a hammered Shibuichi background with a light, discreet amati, the artist has chiseled a scene representing a Chinese child feeding a crane, the details are inlaid with precious metals, gold, silver, shakudo and sentoku in light relief. On the reverse are incised 6 Chinese characters. The first 3 characters Ki Ryu Ken could be translated as "Pavilion of the awakened dragon" which would be the name of a place or a poetic name for the work as the artists of this period liked to do. The other three characters are the signature of the famous master goldsmith Unno Bisei (1868-1919). This kozuka is in the style of the Mito School, subtle mixture of metals, extreme technical precision, joyful subjects. Descended from a prestigious line of artists of the Mito

### Dealer

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school, Unno Bisei was one of the best goldsmiths of his time and was named in 1892 "Teishitsu Gigei In" goldsmith of the Imperial court. He was also the master goldsmith at the school of traditional arts of Edo. These works representing Japanese art caused a sensation at the Universal Exhibition of Paris in 1900. Most of the objects bearing his signature are creations of follower artists or students, rare are the works of the artist. All these copies, even the most successful, always present a flaw, a hesitant chiseling, a strike too marked or too weak, a clumsy drawing. We can affirm that this Kozuka is a work of Unno himself because everything is perfect. The choice of subject and its layout is of a fascinating aesthetic. The mastery of the tool is flawless, the balanced choice of metals is perfect, it was certainly created in full artistic maturity of Unno at the end of the 19th century. It is recalled that this is not a kozuka which would have been part of a saber mount, indeed during the Meiji period the goldsmiths made certain elements of mounts separately. It is a small object but a great masterpiece worthy of the most important collections. We can, here too, remind Kozuka collectors of the famous proverb "If a good collector has a thousand objects, A great collector has only one left." Dimensions of a Kozuka.

Perfect state of preservation.