

Basic Detail Report



Pipe

Date

1644-1912

Medium

Bamboo and brass

Description

This is a pipe dating from 19th Century China. Pipes such as this would have been used to smoke tobacco, opium or an incredibly powerful combination thereof called madak. All three substances have long, unhappy histories in China. First imported to the country around 1611, smoking tobacco was a common practice throughout much of China as early 1636 when the first Ming edicts were made to ban smoking in public. Smoking only gained ground in China, however, and in addition to being consumed by itself it was occasionally mixed with opium, mostly in the southern coastal provinces. By the 19th Century, an increased supply and lower costs on opium imported by the British Empire without the permission of the Qing emperor led two up to 10% of the population smoking a now pure form of opium. The profound cultural damage this caused resulted in two opium wars. Given the prevalence of bamboo in China and that it is already hollow it was a common medium for pipes. The natural qualities of bamboo helped longer pipes mellow the flavor of tobacco. Brass pipes and pipe heads were introduced in the 19th century and used for smoking both tobacco and less frequently opium.

Dimensions

a: 3/4 x 23 1/4 in. (1.9 x 59.1 cm) b: 5 1/8 x 1 3/4 x 1 1/8 in. (13 x 4.4 x 2.9 cm)