

# Basic Detail Report

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## Crown

### Date

20th Century

### Primary Maker

Miao

### Medium

Silver

## Description

This is a Miao silver crown, probably from the Guizhou Province of China. Most silver would have been reserved for festival or celebratory wear, most often by unmarried women. Traditionally, silver was worn to ward off evil, with silver's bright sheen symbolizing light. Over time as it became more culturally pervasive it came to be used as a show of wealth and health for families who could afford to wear the precious metal. Adolescent girls could wear as much as 10 kilograms of silver. When women marry the silver serves as a dowry and is eventually redistributed to their own children. Silversmithing on the other hand is exclusively performed by men and taught from father to son. This crown was specifically reserved for wear in festivals. It is decorated with many of the Miao's most common zoomorphic and floral motifs including birds, flowers, and butterflies. The central motif is a stylized lotus flower and the row of figures riding horses represents female warriors of which there are multiple examples in Miao oral histories.

## Dimensions

8 × 11 × 10 in. (20.3 × 27.9 × 25.4 cm)