Inro

Place of origin: Japan (made)
Date: ca. 1870 (made)
Artist/Maker: Masakazu (maker)
Materials and Techniques: Lacquered, carved and inlaid wood, with mother-of-pearl, coral, shell and metal
Museum number: W.165:1 to 3-1922
Gallery location: In Storage

Public access description

This inro (a personal medicine or seal case) is composed of four sections. The main gold-lacquered body is decorated with mother-of-pearl, shell and coral (in what is known as Shibayama style) and illustrates the Shishi-mai (Lion Dance) as performed in eastern Japan. There, a single dancer cavorts through the village in autumn, operating the mask while draped in a long cloth. The dancer is accompanied by a drummer who also carries a gong. The netsuke (a kind of toggle) is in the form of a tengu (a mythical creature) hatching from an egg. This netsuke is extremely similar to another in the V&A's collection (A.909-1910). The metal bead is in the form of a pomegranate.

Descriptive line

Metal bead in the form of a pomegranate, Japanese, 19th century; Woo, Japan, dress accessories, lacquer

Lacquer inro decorated with mother-of-pearl and coral with a design of a lion dancer and drummer, Japanese, 19th century; Woo, Japan, dress accessories, lacquer

Figure of tengu (mythical creature) hatching from an egg, carved wood, Japanese, 19th century; Woo, Japan, dress accessories, lacquer

Physical description

This Inro (personal medicine or seal case) is composed of three parts: the main lacquered body is decorated with mother of pearl and coral (in what is known as Shibayama style) and illustrates the shishi-mai (Lion Dance) as performed in Eastern Japan, with a single dancer cavorting through a village in autumn, operating the mask whilst draped in a long cloth. He is accompanied by a drummer who also carries a gong. The netsuke is in the form of a tengu (a mythical creature ) hatching from an egg. This netsuke is extremely similar to A.909-1910. The ojime (metal bead) is in the form of a pomegranate.

Dimensions
Height: 10.2 cm

Museum number
W.165:1 to 3-1922

URL
http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O74869/inro-masakazu/