

Finch & C^o



AN INDIAN SILVER COSMETIC BOX

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CONTAINING A PALE-GREEN JADE PALETTE FOR USE IN THE APPLICATION OF THE RED HINDU CASTE MARK OR 'URNA'

LATE 18TH – EARLY 19TH CENTURY

SIZE : 3 CM HIGH, 8 CM WIDE, 3.5 CM DEEP – 1¼ INS HIGH, 3¼ INS WIDE, 1½ INS DEEP

LITERATURE

THERE ARE FOUR BASIC CLASSES OR VARNAS IN HINDU SOCIETY: BRAHMAN OR PRIEST, KSHATRIYA OR WARRIOR, VAISYA, MERCHANT OR FARMER, AND SUNDRA OR LABOURER. EACH OF THESE CASTES IS HEREDITARY AND IS DISTINGUISHED BY RELATIVE DEGREES OF RITUAL PURITY OR POLLUTION, AND OF SOCIAL STATUS. HINDU WOMEN OF HIGH CASTE WEAR A SCARLET MARK IN THE MIDDLE OF THEIR FOREHEAD TO DENOTE THEIR CLASS.