

The Imperial Japanese Silver Coin-50 Sen



Order Code: JAPAN50SENBOX

Struck in Japan from 1922-1938 under the Emperor Yoshihito and his son Hirohito, these gorgeous silver coins are rich in symbolic imagery. The cherry blossoms, eight-lobed mirror, Paulownia flowers, chrysanthemum, and phoenix all inform the coin with a wealth of meaning, as does the precious metal itself.

Silver represents security, reliability, intelligence, modesty, and maturity. The chrysanthemum—*kiku* in Japanese—is the Imperial coat of arms. Indeed, the Imperial office itself is known as the Chrysanthemum Throne, and is the oldest monarchy in the world. It is said that the Empire of Japan was founded in 660 BCE by the Emperor Jimmu Tenno, and that his descendants continue to reign to this day; the current Emperor Akhito (Heisei Tenno) is the direct 125th descendant of Jimmu.

The blossoms of the *sakura*, or cherry tree, are held in the highest esteem in Japan; their annual spring bloom is widely celebrated. Cherry blossoms symbolize innocence, simplicity, and rebirth.

The Paulownia (or “princess”) tree is called *kiri* in Japan, and is the emblem of the Prime Minister. The stems attached form a *karakusa*—a winding-stem pattern that is often expressed in various Japanese traditional artistry.

According to legend, the phoenix, or *Hō-ō*, appears very rarely, and only to mark the beginning of a new era—the birth of a virtuous ruler, for example. In other traditions, a *Hō-ō* sighting indicates a period of peace and prosperity. This mythical bird represents fire, the sun, justice, obedience, fidelity, and the southern star constellations.

Finally, the sacred mirror, an ancient bronze artifact with eight lobes, is part of the Japanese Imperial regalia. Kept from public view by priests housed in Ise Shrine in Mie prefecture, the *Yata no Kagami*, as it is called in Japan, is considered an essential possession for a new emperor to claim the Chrysanthemum Throne.

Data:

KMy46/ 50; Weight: 4.95g; Diameter: 23.5mm; % of silver: .720; Actual silver weight: 0.1146 oz
Obverse: sunburst in center, between two cherry blossoms. Authority symbol on top (round object-sign for yen), the date (year of current emperor’s reign) and emperor’s symbol are on the bottom, all within a sacred mirror. Reverse: vertical value and denomination flanked by a phoenix. Paulownia crest (deciduous tree) below and a chrysanthemum on top.

Box measures: 3.87” x 3.87” x 1.25”

*All coins in each set are protected in an archival capsule and beautifully displayed in a mahogany-like box.
The box set is accompanied with a story card, certificate of authenticity, and a black gift box.*