



# WORLD JOURNAL FOR SAND THERAPY PRACTICE

PROMOTING THE ETHICAL PRACTICE OF SAND THERAPY

## Focus on Miniatures: Treasure Chests

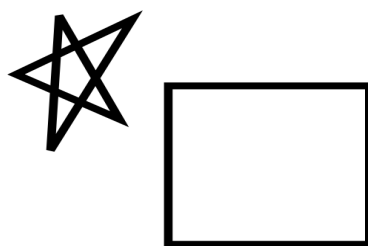
Theresa Fraser, Associate Editor  
Canada

The Tomb of Tutankhamun (1332–1323 BC) contained a variety of chests, including some that were intricately decorated and served the purpose of storing precious items. The wooden "Tutankhamun's Painted Chest" is one such example. The painted scenes on the sides of the chest depicted the hunting activities and battles of the king. The concept of a chest designed to hold valuables existed even earlier in Mesopotamian and other ancient cultures.

Pirates are also often depicted with treasure chests to consolidate their loot or protect it. Treasure chests were not often buried, even though literature and movies depict this.



In his book *Understanding Treasure, Signs, and Symbols*, Garratt (2009, p. 45) shares that chests can be found below when the following drawing is found in nature.



**BOX OR CHEST,  
BURIED HERE,  
OR SQUARE FOOT**

Digging for a pirate's chest brings the promise of found treasure, including precious stones, golden coins, etc. However, in truth, a treasure chest can hold anything deemed valuable, including items we don't want to share with or protect from others. This could include memories, stories, mementos, or things we want to keep and protect in their natural state.

In Spanish, the treasure chest is known as a *Cofre del tesoro*; in France, it is a *Coffre au trésor*; in German, it is a Schatztruhe; in Japanese, a *Takarabako*; and Arabic, a *Sunduq al-kanz*. The idea of a chest full of valuables has universal appeal, symbolizing hidden wealth, adventure, and mystery. While the exact word or connotation might vary, the concept of a container filled with treasures transcends languages and has been incorporated into global folklore, literature, and entertainment media.

A therapist in Thailand (who works only with adults) shared that in her healing space, the treasure chest is often metaphorically protecting unspoken or forgotten trauma memories, hidden negative feelings, or emotions that one would like to forget or avoid. She further stated that she felt this symbol communicated perhaps a long-lost childhood or even anger (person communication, Saksiamkyul, 2024).

Whatever the client believes about what the treasure chest is holding or protecting is important for the sand therapist to be curious about. As witnesses, we sometimes hold a mirror up to our clients. We show them what is there or what they want to be there and sometimes what they don't want. However, no matter if the treasure holds gems or money, a heart, or your future, we want to ensure that our healing spaces present at least one treasure chest.

Thank you to Expressive Arts Therapist Kevalin Saksiamkul for their contribution.

## References

Garratt, C. (2009). Understanding treasure signs and symbols. Ram Publishing Company.  
Retrieved from: [https://garrett.com/sites/default/files/pdf/2020-02/garrett\\_signs\\_symbols\\_book.pdf](https://garrett.com/sites/default/files/pdf/2020-02/garrett_signs_symbols_book.pdf)

Original content from this work may be used under the terms of the <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/> Any further distributions of this work (noncommercial only) must maintain attribution to the author(s), the title of the work, journal citation, and DOI.