



Antique Indian Silver Box 19th century
£650.00

A fine early 19th century Indian silver box. Of square shape with each side applied with an intricate lotus motif. The lid has a reeded border with foliate decoration to each corner, the centre of the lid rises from a complex lotus motif to a domed stupa like finial.

Although of small scale, this exquisite box displays great quality in both technical and aesthetic aspects.

The lotus flower has an ancient history in the art and religions of the Indian sub-continent. Within Hinduism the flower is associated with a number of divinities, most notably Vishnu and Lakshmi. The symbolism of the lotus is extensive within the Hindu canon, it symbolises the divine and immortal aspects in humanity as well as divine protection and the realization of inner potential. It is frequently referenced in Puranic and Vedic literature and appears frequently in depictions of the deity's often as a throne. In Tantric and Yogic traditions, it symbolizes the potential of an individual to harness the flow of energy moving through the chakras (often depicted as wheel-like lotuses) flowering as the thousand-petaled lotus of enlightenment at the top of the skull.

Many of these aspects were adopted into Buddhism, and indeed the Buddha is quoted as comparing himself to the lotus saying that the lotus flower rises from the muddy water unstained, as he rises from this world, free from the defilements taught in the specific sutta. This symbolism is expanded so the lotus represents the purity of the body, speech and mind floating above the murky waters of material attachment and desire.

The religious importance of the lotus naturally meant it was a frequent motif in the art of the sub-continent as the great temples were decorated with sculpture and reliefs and religious texts were often illuminated.

As the lotus is closely associated with the Buddha the flower is often incorporated into the architecture of the stupa's that were built as shrines often containing relics associated with the Buddha. The top of this box bears a design reminiscent of a stupa with a dome rising up from an open lotus motif.

The emphasis on the lotus could suggest a specifically Buddhist use for the box although the general importance of the flower in all the major religions of the sub-continent make a specific attribution difficult. It was obviously intended for something precious and is a fine example of the quality of silver artisans working in the early years of the 19th century.

Length: 5.2 cm

Width: 5.2 cm

Height: 7 cm

Total Weight: 155 grams

Material and Technique	Silver
Origin	Other
Period	Early 1900s
Condition	Excellent
Dimensions	Width: 5.2 cm Height: 7 cm

Antique ref: JC-07217