



**Fine Japanese tobacco pouch (tabako-ire), circa 1880**  
**POA**

Fine Japanese tobacco pouch (tabako-ire), circa 1880, with an overall design of flowers against a background of meandering rivers, decorated to the front with a silver metal ornamental clasp (mae-kanagu) with a design of flowering iris, the pouch attached by a multi-strand metal chain to a silver and ivory kagamibuta netsuke, the inner metal roundel with a design of flowering chrysanthemum and foliage.

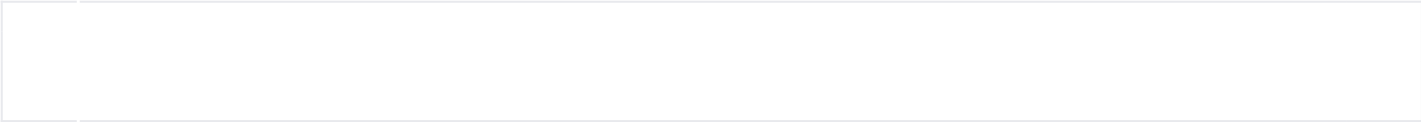
Dimensions:

Diameter of pouch: 13.3cm. (5 1/4in.)

Notes:

'Tabako-ire' pouches, used to hold loose tobacco, were a type of 'sagemono' (literally 'suspended thing') to be worn hanging from the belt of a kimono, which traditionally had no pockets. They were typically made from fabric or leather, while wood and lacquer were popular material choices for sturdier 'tonkotsu' tobacco boxes. Another example of sagemono is 'inro', a box for storing medicine or small items. Edo period decorative arts flourished alongside the rising prosperity of the merchant classes, with master craftsmen producing novel and lavish new variations of what were once merely utilitarian items including sagemono, which were now worn to indicate the status and taste of the wearer. They were typically worn with highly decorative accessories including 'netsuke' or 'ojime' which would be strung onto the cord used to suspend the item from the obi (kimono belt). Tobacco smoking was widely practiced by men and women of all levels of society, though upper class smokers developed strict rituals akin to those of the tea ceremony. Tobacco was first introduced by Europeans during the period of 'nanban trade' in the late 16th century and started to be grown domestically shortly after, gaining such popularity that in 1624 the Tokugawa government abandoned an earlier attempt to ban its production and use. Finely-shredded loose tobacco, of the kind which would have been stored in this tobacco ire, was smoked in long-stemmed 'kiseru' pipes which would also be worn suspended from the obi. Pipe smoking and the associated paraphernalia remained popular even after cigarette smoking became widespread during the Meiji period (1868-1912).

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| <b>Material and Technique</b> | Tobacco pouch with silver metal and ivory fittings |
| <b>Origin</b>                 | Japanese   |
| <b>Period</b>                 | 19th Century                                       |
| <b>Diameter</b>               | 13.3cm. (5 1/4in.)                                 |



Antique ref: R422