



Fine Netsuke & Sagemono (NE1021)

Fri, 29th Oct 2021

Lot 73

Starting price: €7500

Estimate: €15000

‡ A SUPERB OSAKA SCHOOL IVORY NETSUKE OF ONO NO TOFU ON A GIANT FROG, ATTRIBUTED TO ANRAKU

Attributed to Shukosai Anraku(sai), unsigned
Japan, Osaka, mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Published: Katchen, Arlette (2010) Netsuke 7, Vol. 2, pp. 340-341, no. K939.

Superbly and humorously carved as the calligrapher Ono no Tofu, wearing an eboshi and holding a parasol, mounting a gigantic frog balancing on two geta. The eyes of the frog are large inlays of dark buffalo horn. Note the superb staining, masterful stippling on the frog, and minutely inked details. Himotoshi through the back and underneath. Unsigned, however attributed to Shukosai Anraku.

HEIGHT 5.1 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and expected natural age cracks.

Provenance: Ex-collection Julius & Arlette Katchen. Carré collection, acquired from the above.

In despair after trying seven times to rise to a higher position at the imperial court the calligrapher Ono no Tofu (Ono no Michikaze, 894-964) takes a walk alongside a river. There he spots a frog trying to reach the sloping branch of a willow. Despite seven unsuccessful attempts the frog perseveres and succeeds on the eighth leap. Just as Ono no Tofu who regains courage and applies once again to the emperor finally being appointed minister.

Literature comparison:

The present netsuke bears some sort of iconographic relationship to a netsuke signed Oto and attributed to Otoman, illustrated in Lazarnick, George (1981) Netsuke & Inro Artists, and How to Read Their Signatures, vol. 2, p. 857.

Auction comparison:

Compare to a similar ivory netsuke of Ono no Tofu, signed Anrakusai, sold at Lempertz, Netsuke from the Albert Brockhaus Collection, 27 June 2020, Cologne, lot 476 (**sold for 10,000 EUR**).