



Fine Netsuke & Sagemono (NE0422)

Fri, 22nd Apr 2022

Viewing:

You may view objects in this auction in our gallery from 19 April to 22 April 2022. We are open Monday to Friday from 10 AM to 6 PM CET, as well as by appointment. On the day of the sale, the viewing will be open until 1 PM CET.

Lot 149

Starting price: €2000

Estimate: €4000

𠄎 MINKO: A FINE INLAID WOOD NETSUKE OF KIYOHIME WITH THE TEMPLE BELL OF DOJO-JI

By Minko II, signed Nidai Minko □ □ □ □ and kakihan Japan, mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

The vengeful, serpentine monster Kiyohime wrapped around the temple bell of Dojo-ji, her extraordinarily well carved face and claws are inlaid in ivory. The hair and scaly body are finely carved and expressive. The slightly curved horns are inlaid in horn. The handle of the bell can be turned to alternate between the two expressions of Anchin, one showing a pale, frightened expression and the other burnt-red from fire. Two himotoshi underneath, one ringed in ivory, next to the red-inked signature Nidai MINKO and kakihan.

HEIGHT 4.5 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.

Provenance: French private collection.

This model belongs to one of the true classics of netsuke. It was treated by all members of the Tsu school founded by Tanaka Juntoku Minko (1735-1816). The present netsuke bears the signature Minko but also the additional characters Nidai, meaning second generation. There is no information on Minko II, however it is known that Tomin, a pupil of Minko, signed Minko in the earlier stages of his career.

Auction comparison:

A closely related netsuke by Minko was sold at Zacke, Fine Netsuke, Sagemono & Okimono, 24 November 2018, Vienna, lot 70 (sold for 8,670 EUR).

The tale of Anchin and Kiyohime forms the basis of a collection of plays termed Dojoji mono (Dojo-ji Temple plays), depicting an event some years after the temple bell was destroyed. These plays include the Noh play Dojoji and the Kabuki dance drama Musume Dojoji. The legend, connected with the founding of the Dojo-ji temple in Kii Province (modern-day Wakayama Prefecture), relates how a priest named Anchin from Shirakawa in Oshu province made a pilgrimage to the Kumano Shrine lodged at the home of a shoji (steward of a shoen manor) of Manago/Masago, where the manor official's daughter Kiyohime fell in love with the young monk. In order to avoid her, he deceived her with a false promise to return and continued his journey. Kiyohime became furious by his rejection and pursued him in rage. At the edge of the Hidaka River, Anchin asked a ferryman to help him to cross the river, but told him not to let her cross with his boat. When Kiyohime saw that Anchin was escaping her, she jumped into the river and started to swim after him. While swimming in the torrent of the Hidaka river, she

transformed into a serpent or dragon because of her rage. When Anchin saw her coming after him in her monstrous new form, he ran into the temple called Dojo-ji. He asked the priests for help and they hid him under the bonsho bell of the temple. However, the serpent smelled him hiding inside the bell and started to coil around it. She banged the bell loudly several times with her tail, then gave a great belch of fire so powerful that it melted the bell and killed Anchin.

Trade Certificate: The trade certificate for the sale of this lot within the EU has been granted (permit number AT 22-B-0191).