



## Fine Japanese Art (JAP0522)

Fri, 27th May 2022

### Lot 156

**Starting price:** €1500

**Estimate:** €3000

#### **MINKO: A RARE TONKOTSU SET DEPICTING BELLY-DRUMMING TANUKI**

The tonkotsu and netsuke signed Minko with kakihan Japan, Tsu, 19<sup>th</sup> century, Edo period (1615-1868)

The paulownia wood tonkotsu inlaid with a wood tanuki drumming on his belly (tanuki hara tsuzumi), further embellished with antler and mother-of-pearl, the cover inlaid with the rising moon. The stag antler ojime in the shape of a tanuki with enlarged belly. The matching wood netsuke as well in the shape of a tanuki about to drum on its huge belly, the eyes inlaid in brass with dark pupils. The tonkotsu and netsuke both signed MINKO and with kakihan.

SIZE (tonkotsu) 8.2 x 6.5 cm, HEIGHT (ojime) 1.6 cm, HEIGHT (netsuke) 3.7 cm

Condition: Good condition with minor associated wear. The netsuke with an old chip to the tanuki's tail.

Provenance: German private collection.

**The tanuki** possesses magical powers and can change forms, sometimes into Buddhist monks; they are jovial, but also dangerous, as they have been known to suffocate hunters with their enormous scrotums. The act of drumming on the belly, according to legend, was used by tanuki to beguile travelers and hunters to lead them astray. However, it has also been said that tanuki would get together just for fun, drumming on their bellies under the moonlight, perhaps even with some sake involved.

#### **Auction comparison:**

A related tonkotsu by Minko was sold at Bonhams, Japanese Works of Art, 19 September 2008, New York, lot 5041 (**sold for 4,800 USD**).