



Fine Netsuke & Sagemono (NE0421)

Fri, 16th Apr 2021

Lot 153

Starting price: €7500

Estimate: €15000

OTOMAN: A MASTERFUL WOOD NETSUKE OF HOTEI WITH TWO CHILDREN

By Matsushita Otomitsu (Otoman), signed Otomitsu 音満
Japan, Hakata, mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Published: Joly, H. L. (1913) Catalogue of the H. Seymour Trower Collection of Japanese Art, no. 165B.
Davey, Neil K. (1974) Netsuke: A comprehensive study based on the M.T. Hindson Collection, p. 264, no. 818.
Barry Davies Oriental Art (1995) 100 Selected Pieces from the Netsuke Collection of Scott Meredith, no. 66.

A compact, well-carved and above all spirited carving of the lucky god Hotei pulling at his treasure bag with his teeth and revealing two young boys inside, one lying on his back and both smiling. The individual expressions are full of character and charm, one cannot help but smile when picking up the netsuke. The face of Hotei is very typical for Otoman, who is regarded as one of the greatest netsuke-shi of all time, with the eyes set wide apart and a broad nose.

Otoman's netsuke are immediately recognizable as they possess a certain 'je ne sais quoi' – as is the case with this piece. One does not need to see the signature, nevertheless it is boldly incised in the typical manner on the underside with two characters – OTOMITSU. Large, asymmetrical himotoshi through the underside. The wood bearing a good color and patina.

HEIGHT 3.1 cm, LENGTH 3.5 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor associated surface wear.

Provenance: Ex-collections H. Seymour Trower, M. T. Hindson, G. Alessi and Scott Meredith

Auction comparison:

Wood netsuke by this most celebrated Hakata carver are extraordinarily rare. For a very similar, yet larger, and in our opinion much less spirited carving by Otoman see Sotheby's, The Cornelius V. S Roosevelt Collection of Netsuke, 2 June 1992, New York, lot 170.