



Fine Japanese Art (JAP0621)

Fri, 4th Jun 2021

Viewing:

You may view objects in this auction in our gallery from 25 May to 4 June, 2021. 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 preview will be open from 10 AM to 1 PM. FFP2 masks are required.

Lot 52

Starting price: €12500

Estimate: €25000

AN IMPORTANT KO-BOSHI KABUTO (HELMET WITH STANDING RIVETS) WITH IMPRESSIVE KEN MAEDATE (FRONT CREST)

Attributed to Norikuni (active 1532-1554)

Japan, Kozuke (Joshu), 1532-1554, Muromachi period (1336-1573)

Of unusual form with a somewhat flat crown surmounted by the tehen no kanamono, constructed of 62 plates riveted together with the small rivets (30 vertical rivets per suji, on average 4 mm long and 2.4 mm wide) left raised in relief and lacquered black, with a five-lame iron-red lacquered iron hineno-jikoro terminating in ear-shaped fukigaeshi gold-lacquered with the character Ai 愛, the mabizashi with dark brown lacquer, the front of the hachi fitted with a superb gilt-brass ken (sword) maedate crafted from gold and from the same period. With a brown and red lacquered iron saru hanpo (monkey cheek half-mask) and four-piece iron nodowa (throat protection) from the same period, as well as an associated wood stand.

HEIGHT 14 cm (the hachi), LENGTH 33.5 cm (the maedate)

WEIGHT 2,846 g (total incl. wood stand)

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear, some flaking and other wear to lacquer, little wear to gilt.

Provenance: Austrian private collection.

This historically significant kabuto of exceptional quality was likely made by Norikuni, a student of Narichika who used the art name Hachiro and was active in Kozuke (Joshu) Province during 1532 and 1554. It was certainly worn by a Hatamoto (general) from the Sengoku Jidai ('Warring States period', 1467-1615), a turbulent time in Japanese history marked by near-constant civil war, social upheaval, and political intrigue. The peculiar style of this helmet was called daikon oroshi ('turnip grater') due to the spiked form of the boshi, meant to absorb the shock of a matchlock bullet. The hachi is of goshozan shape, slightly higher at the back. The hineno-jikoro was named after an invention of the warlord Hineno Oribe no Kami Takayoshi, retainer of Oda Nobunaga and later Toyotomi Hideyoshi. The imposing appearance and superb quality of the helmet and fittings, all from the same period, suggest the original wearer was of high status.

Auction comparison:

Compare a related ko-boshi kabuto, applied with a paper

inscribed Norikuni sho saku (Made by Norikuni) and dated to the 16th-17th century, at Bonhams, Fine Japanese and Korean Art, 11 September 2019, New York, lot 984 (**sold for 31,325 USD**). A related kawari kabuto with a very similar maedate was offered at Bonhams, Fine Japanese and Korean Art including Property from the Collections of Drs Edmund and Julie Lewis, 22 July 2020, New York, lot 1108 (**bought in at 100,000 USD**).