

Fine Netsuke & Sagemono

AUCTION

Friday,
8 May 2026



ZACKE

SINCE 1968





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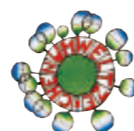
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ON DATE **8 MAY 2026**

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1
A RARE THREE-CASE RYUKYU LACQUER 'CHINESE LANDSCAPE' INRO

Unsigned
 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of wide rectangular form, bearing a rich red lacquered ground decorated in tsuikin (applied multi-colored lacquer) with Chinese landscapes embellished with trees, pagodas, and rocks. The top, bottom, and narrow sides neatly carved with a dotted hexagonal cell diaper. The interior of red lacquer and the top case divided into two compartments for storage of seals.

With a coral ojime and fine and large bamboo netsuke carved in the form of a Chinese immortal.

HEIGHT 8 cm, LENGTH 8.9 cm

Provenance: From an American private collection in Massachusetts. With an old label attached to the string, inscribed with a collection number '12', the interior of the cover also with the collection number '12'.

Condition: Good condition with expected wear and typical traces of use, light warping, minor flaking to interior and two cord holes. The netsuke with few minor old chips.

MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a related Ryukyu lacquer inro with similar landscapes and diaper, 9.1 cm high, in the Victoria & Albert Museum, accession number W.292-1921.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related Ryukyu lacquer four-case inro with similar Chinese landscapes and diaper, dated 18th century, 8.9 cm, at Bonhams, The Edward Wrangham Collection of Japanese Art part II, 10 May 2011, London, lot 184 (sold for GBP 3,840 or approx. **EUR 6,600** converted and adjusted to inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 1,500
 Starting price EUR 800



2
A VERY RARE THREE-CASE CLOISONNÉ AND LACQUER (SHIPPO-NURI) 'PRUNUS BLOSSOMS AND BUTTERFLIES' INRO

Unsigned
 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Published: Tomkinson, Michael (1898). A Japanese Collection, Vol. 1, no. 691 (unillustrated).

Of wide rectangular form and lenticular section, bearing a lustrous roiro ground finely decorated with colored enamels set within gold-lacquered wire and further embellished with kinpun and ginpun, both sides of each case depicting an array of prunus blossoms interspersed among scrolling tendrils and fluttering butterflies. The interior cases finished in matte black lacquer.

HEIGHT 6.4 cm, LENGTH 7.8 cm

Provenance: The collection of Michael Tomkinson, no. 691 (label to base), Nottingham, United Kingdom, acquired by 1898 and thence by descent, kept in the family for over 100 years.

Condition: Excellent condition with minimal wear and light traces of use.



Michael Tomkinson (1841-1921)

The exquisitely executed cloisonné enamels can be attributed to a member of the Hirata family, as no other artist active during the Edo period is known to have achieved such technical mastery. The secrets of cloisonné were closely guarded by the Hirata family at this time. Hirata Donin established the family workshop in Edo in 1616, served the shogunate, and gained renown as a maker of sword fittings. He is credited with creating the first Japanese cloisonné enamel, employing gold for the cloisons. The family continued this distinguished tradition, extending their artistry to inro, netsuke, and boxes.

MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a closely related shippo-nuri box and cover with similar decoration and motifs in the Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao, inventory number 82/1016.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related single-case black lacquer inro with silver-rimmed cloisonné enamels depicting scrolling tendrils among flowerheads, Edo period, 18th century, 9.5 cm high, at Bonhams, Fine Japanese Works of Art from the Edward Wrangham Collection, London, 18 June 2018, lot 168 (sold for GBP 2,750 or approx. **EUR 4,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



3
**A RARE EARLY FOUR-CASE
 INLAID LACQUER 'GOURDS' INRO**

Unsigned
 Japan, 17th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of rounded rectangular form, bearing a lustrous nashiji ground, decorated in gold takamaki-e and hiramaki-e, and inlaid with variously stained antler, to depict on one side an aged straw bundle with yamabuki growing behind it, while the reverse shows three harvested gourds amid autumn leaves. The interior cases finished with gold fundame, carefully painted to the risers with foliage and scrolling tendrils.

With a fine porcelain ojime, exquisitely glazed in imitation of guri lacquer, and a carved wooden netsuke in the form of an auspicious rishi fungus, inscribed Kotobuki / Ju 寿, meaning "longevity" or "happy long life."

HEIGHT 6.1 cm, LENGTH 5.7 cm

Condition: A loss to the gold lacquer on one of the leaves accompanying the gourds. Otherwise, very good condition with minor surface wear, faint traces of handling and use, and expected rubbing to lacquer along the edges.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related five-case inlaid lacquer inro depicting a gourd vine and a fruiting peach branch, also dated 17th century, 7.4 cm high, at Bonhams, The Edward Wrangham Collection of Japanese Art, London, 9 November 2010, lot 188 (sold for GBP 780 or approx. **EUR 1,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 1,500
 Starting price EUR 800



4
**KORIN: A RIMPA SCHOOL TWO-CASE LACQUERED
 AND INLAID KIRI WOOD 'POPPIES' INRO**

Style of Ogata Korin (1658-1716), inscribed Seisei Korin 青々光琳
 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved from fine-grained paulownia wood (kiri) and delicately inlaid with gold, mother-of-pearl, and pewter (mitsuda), to depict a continuous scene with a cluster of early-blooming poppies (hinageshi) amid foliage. The interior cases finished in black lacquer with gold fundame rims. The interior of the upper case bears the inscribed signature Seisei KORIN.



Poppies, School of Ogata Korin, Edo, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, object number 49.35.1

With a cloisonné enamel ojime.

HEIGHT 5.5 cm, LENGTH 6.3 cm

Condition: Very good condition with surface wear and faint traces of handling and use including minuscule losses to the inlays.

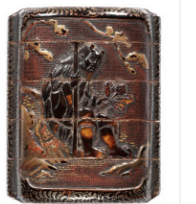
Estimate EUR 1,500
 Starting price EUR 800

HEIGHT 6.4, LENGTH 5 cm

Condition: Good condition with minor wear and traces of use including some losses to the edges of the cases and some general wear throughout consistent with age and handling.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related four-case tortoiseshell-inlaid lacquer inro depicting the inventors of botany and herbal medicine, also dated 17th century, 6.6 cm high, at Bonhams, Japanese Art Masterpieces, London, 6 November 2012, lot 6 (sold for GBP 1,875 or approx. **EUR 3,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 1,500
 Starting price EUR 800

5
**A RARE EARLY FOUR-CASE INLAID LACQUER
 'IMMORTALS AND HOUND' INRO**

Unsigned
 Japan, 17th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of upright rectangular form and oval section, bearing a finely grained wood ground and richly decorated in gold takamaki-e, enriched with kirigane flakes, and inlaid with tortoiseshell, to depict on one side an immortal seated on the ground beside a hound beneath a luxuriant pine tree, while on the reverse a hermit sits in a similarly relaxed pose beside an incense burner beneath an equally verdant pine. Both scenes framed above by drifting clouds. The cord runners decorated in nashiji, as is the top and bottom of the inro. The interior cases finished in nashiji with gold fundame rims.

With a fine silver ojime neatly incised with cherry blossoms beneath a full moon against a stippled ground, signed MASAYUKI.





6
**AN UNUSUAL FOUR-CASE GOLD LACQUER
 'MONKEY AND DOG' INRO**

Unsigned
 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of upright rectangular form and oval section, the exterior bearing a fine gold fundame ground, lacquered in black and polished away in togidashi to reveal the design beneath. One side depicts a small monkey seated beneath the shade of a gnarled peach tree, its twisting branches extending upward into drifting e-nashiji clouds. The reverse shows a spotted dog energetically running toward the monkey. The top and bottom, as well as the cord runners, are left in gold fundame. The interiors are of nashiji with gold fundame rims.

With a globular agate ojime.

HEIGHT 7 cm, LENGTH 5.6 cm

Condition: Good condition with minor surface wear and typical traces of handling and use. Occasional minuscule nibbling along the case edges and slight rubbing to lacquer, as well as small losses and cracks to the cord runners and cord holes.

Estimate EUR 1,500
 Starting price EUR 800



7
**MUNETOSHI: A FINE FOUR-CASE GOLD LACQUER
 'MONKEYS AND SWALLOWS' INRO**

By Munetoshi, signed Munetoshi 宗年
 Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of upright rectangular form and oval section, bearing a luminous kinji ground finely decorated in gold and red takamaki-e, enriched with togidashi maki-e and kirigane flakes. The decoration depicts a continuous scene of frolicking macaques beside a cascading waterfall, one monkey grasping a peach. The reverse is finely detailed with a flock of swallows darting among the leafy branches of a willow tree amid billowing clouds. The interior cases are finished in nashiji with gold fundame rims. The underside signed in gold within a rectangular silver-lacquered reserve MUNETOSHI.

HEIGHT 8.3 cm, LENGTH 5.9 cm

Provenance: Old private collection, United States. An old label to the interior reading: "#46 prob. 18th century \$47 = 50".
Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and light traces of handling and use. Occasional minuscule nibbling along the case edges and a few small dents to the top consistent with repeated contact with an ojime. Typical minor losses to the kirigane flakes and a tiny nick to the base.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related later four-case gold lacquer inro depicting monkeys, similarly lacquered, by Takano Shozan, at Bonhams, The Edward Wrangham Collection of Japanese Art, London, 15 May 2012, lot 332 (sold for GBP 2,875 or approx. **EUR 4,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



8
**A FINE THREE-CASE LACQUER
 'SUNRISE AMID TURBULENT WATERS' INRO**

Unsigned
 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of wide-bodied form and lenticular section, richly decorated in gold hiramaki-e and e-nashiji to depict a continuous scene of tempestuous waters, issuing forth dense silver-toned foam, from which emerges a striking vermilion-red sun, the iconic emblem of Japan, both finely executed in brilliant togidashi. The interior cases finished in nashiji with gold fundame rims.

HEIGHT 6.7 cm, LENGTH 7.6 cm

Provenance: Private collection of Arthur Smith (1889–1975), Nottingham, United Kingdom, assembled between the 1950s and 1960s, thence by descent.

Condition: Excellent condition with only minor surface wear and minimal traces of handling and use, including a few tiny nicks.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related gold lacquer four-case inro featuring a similar togidashi sun, by Shokasai, at Bonhams, The Harriet Szechenyi Sale of Japanese Art, 8 November 2011, London, lot 278 (sold for GBP 2,500 or approx. **EUR 4,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



9
**KAKOSAI: A FINE FOUR-CASE LACQUER
 'PLUM BLOSSOMS AND MOON' INRO**

By Kakosai Shozan, signed Kakosai 可交齋
 Japan, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of upright rectangular form and oval section, bearing a black lacquered ground, finely decorated in gold takamaki-e to depict abundant plum branches in early bloom, enlivened with delicate sprinklings of gold e-nashiji, by the light of the full moon skillfully rendered in sprinkled silver maki-e. The interior cases are finished with nashiji and gold fundame rims. The underside signed in gold KAKOSAI.

HEIGHT 8.3 cm, LENGTH 6.6 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and minimal traces of handling and use. Minuscule nibbling along the edges and light rubbing to lacquered ground, all as visible in the images provided.

In Japanese aesthetics the plum blossom (ume) is cherished as one of the earliest flowers of the year, blooming while winter still lingers and therefore symbolizing resilience, renewal, and quiet perseverance in adversity. When paired with the full moon—an enduring symbol of contemplation and enlightenment in East Asian philosophy—the motif evokes the poetic reflection on nature and the transience of life, a theme famously explored in works such as Plum Blossoms and Moon (1803) by Katsushika Hokusai.



Plum and Moon, by Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849), 1803

Kakosai Shozan was a lacquer artist active in Edo in the early nineteenth century and produced a substantial number of inro. His work shows the influence of the Kajikawa school, and he may have undergone training in the Kajikawa family workshop before establishing an independent practice. For a detailed discussion of the artist see Edward A. Wrangham and Joe Earle (eds.), *The Index of Inro Artists* (1995), p. 258.

Estimate EUR 2,500
 Starting price EUR 1,200



10
A FINE FOUR-CASE TOGIDASHI LACQUER INRO, ATTRIBUTED TO SHIOMI MASANARI

Attributed to Shiomi Masanari (1647-1722), unsigned Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of upright form and lenticular profile, the inro bearing a lightly sprinkled roiro ground decorated in splendid togidashi-e, featuring a continuous scene of a ferry-boat laden with numerous passengers, including a priest, vendors, a mother and child, and travellers, being poled along in calm water, under the full moon that emerges from misty clouds. The interior cases of nashiji with gold fundame rims.

The inro suspending a bone ojime and an ivory netsuke carved as a fukura suzume (puffed-up sparrow) with dark horn inlaid pupils, signed underneath GENKO in an oval reserve.

HEIGHT 8.5 cm, LENGTH 6.3 cm

Condition: Good condition with minor wear and traces of use. The top and bottom sections with some dents and tiny losses. The interior cases with repairs and losses. The design in very good condition with only very minor wear and typical losses to the kirigane flakes. The netsuke with few age cracks.

With a storage box, inscribed Kin makie noriaisen inro, netsuke Genko saku zoge bori fukura-suzume, ojime shiro-sango [A gold lacquer maki-e inro decorated with a passenger boat, netsuke in ivory carving in a shape of a plump sparrow made by Genko, ojime in white coral].

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related four-case inro in togidashi-e, by Shiomi Masanari, 8 cm tall, depicting a near-identical scene, at Bonhams, Fine Japanese Art, 17 May 2012, London, lot 96 (sold for GBP 5,625 or approx. **EUR 9,500** converted and adjusted to inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



11
SHIOMI MASANARI: A FINE FOUR-CASE TOGIDASHI LACQUER 'SACRED CEDAR TREE' INRO

By Shiomi Masanari (1647-1722), signed Shiomi Masanari 鹽見 政誠 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of rectangular form and oval section, bearing a rich, subtly variegated, brownish-black and dark red lacquered ground changing to nashiji at the bottom and intricately decorated in gold and silver togidashi-e and hiramaki-e to depict from either side a sacred cedar tree (sugi) with a shimenawa rope wrapped around the trunk, suspending paper streamers (shide) that move in the wind along with the lush yet delicate leafy branches of the tree. Signed beside the cord runner in red lacquer SHIOMI MASANARI.

HEIGHT 7.5 cm, LENGTH 6.1 cm

Provenance: An old label inscribed with the collector's number '1041' to the interior.

Condition: Good condition with minor expected wear and typical traces of use, a fine repaired crack to the second lowest case, some restoration to the lacquer around the rims of the underside, few tiny nibbles to the case edges, and with some rubbing as visible on the images provided.

MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a closely related inro by Shiomi Masanari with similar ground and with a bamboo groove, 7 cm tall, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, object number 81.1.312.



Shimenawa are sacred ropes traditionally placed around yorishiro, objects believed to attract or house spiritual presences. Such objects frequently include certain trees, which are thought to be inhabited by spirits known as kodama. According to belief, cutting down these trees may invite misfortune. The shimenawa, often adorned with zigzag paper streamers known as shide, serve to demarcate and visibly proclaim the sanctity of the yorishiro.



Shide on Shimenawa around a Yorishiro tree at Kawaguchi Asama Shinto Shrine, Fujikawaguchiko

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related seven-case lacquer inro by Shiomi Masanari, 9.5 cm high, at Bonhams, The Edward Wrangham Collection of Japanese Art: Part I, 9 November 2010, London, lot 292 (sold for GBP 13,200 or approx. **EUR 24,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000

12

**KAJIKAWA: A FINE FOUR-CASE
TOGIDASHI LACQUER 'NIO GUARDIAN' INRO,
AFTER KANO ISEN'IN NAGANOBU**

By a member of the Kajikawa family, signed Kajikawa 梶川 saku 作
with a red pot seal Ei 榮
Japan, 18th-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of upright rectangular form and oval section, bearing a lustrous roiro ground intricately decorated in gold, silver, and red togidashi-e, enriched with silver and aogai kirigane as well as mokume- and e-nashiji, depicting on one side an imposing red-skinned temple guardian wearing a celestial scarf and skirt decorated with clouds, standing behind a fence at a temple entrance, his fierce expression marked by a pair of bulging golden eyes, and to the other a pair of doves nesting inside a tree trunk, surrounded by bamboo stalks bound together with cords. The interior cases finished in nashiji with gold fundame rims. The underside with gold-lacquered signature KAJIKAWA saku [made by Kajikawa] and the red pot seal Ei.

The Nio side additionally inscribed in gold lacquer Isen Hogen hitsu 伊川法眼筆 accompanied by the red seal Fuji 藤, indicating the design was after the famous Kano school painter Kano Isen'in Naganobu (1775-1828).



With a globular coral ojime.

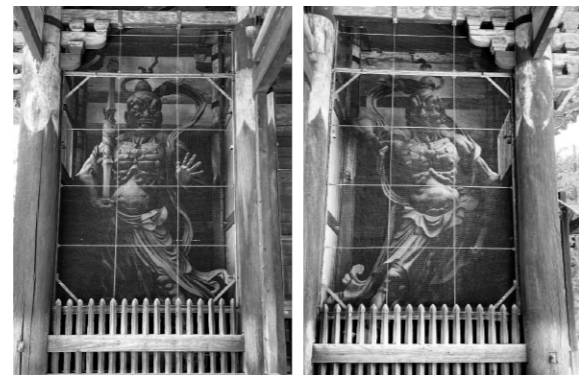
HEIGHT 8.7 cm, LENGTH 7.2 cm

Provenance: Ex-collection James Fairfax, Sydney, Australia. Sotheby's, 10 November 2003, Melbourne, lot 662. Private collection of Eva and Aubrey Sweet, Melbourne, Australia, acquired from the above. A copy of the original invoice, dated 11 November 2003, addressed to Mr. Aubrey Sweet, and stating a purchase price of AUD 8,540 or approx. **EUR 9,500** (converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing), accompanies this lot.



James Fairfax

Condition: Excellent condition with minor wear and light traces of use, little minor flaking along the case edges, few expected losses to kirigane.



**Nio Guardians at the Great South Gate (Nandai-mon)
at Todai-ji, Nara**

The signature **Isen Hogen hitsu** on this inro belongs to the important painter Kano Isen'in Naganobu (1775-1828), the son and pupil of Kano Yosen'in Korenobu (1753-1808), whom he succeeded as seventh-generation head of the Kobikicho branch of the Edo Kano school founded by Kano Naonobu (1607-50). As such he would have had privileged access to study antique Chinese and Japanese paintings in the collections of the Shogunate and feudal lords. Naganobu was granted the title 'hogen' ('Eye of the Law') in 1802 and was subsequently elevated to the highest 'hojin' (Seal of the Law) rank in 1816.

Estimate EUR 5,000
Starting price EUR 2,400



13
**OKUDA SHOJUSAI: A SUPERB AND RARE
THREE-CASE LACQUER TOGIDASHI
'CRANES AND SPARROWS' INRO**

By Okuda Shojusai, signed Shojusai 松壽齋 and kakihan
Japan, late 19th century, Meiji period (1868-1912)



Of almost square form and lenticular section, bearing a lustrous burgundy lacquer ground finely decorated on both sides employing a range of contrasting techniques. One side depicts a lively flock of sparrows rendered in silver, black, and red takamaki-e against gold hiramaki-e linear patterns, while the reverse shows cranes in graceful flight, executed in gold and silver togidashi-e against a similarly stylized ground. The interior cases are finished in gold fundame. The underside signed in gold SHOJUSAI and with the artist's kakihan.

With a globular coral ojime.

HEIGHT 7.9 cm, LENGTH 7.4 cm

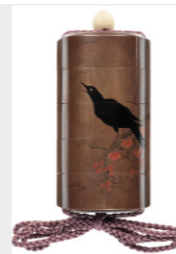
Condition: Excellent condition with only very minor typical wear.

Okuda Shojusai was active in Osaka during the late nineteenth century and is celebrated for his refined boxes and inro demonstrating consummate mastery of sophisticated lacquer techniques. He was particularly accomplished in the demanding togidashi-e technique, which allowed him to achieve subtle tonal contrasts and remarkable depth in his compositions. For further reference on the artist and examples of his kakihan identical to the present one, see Edward A. Wrangham and Joe Earle (eds.), *The Index of Inro Artists*, 1995, p. 250.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related four-case lacquer inro depicting crows in flight by the same artist, signed Shojusai and kakihan, also worked in togidashi-e, at Bonhams, The Edward Wrangham Collection of Japanese Art, London, 15 May 2012, lot 336 (sold for GBP 17,500 or approx.

EUR 29,500 converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 5,000
Starting price EUR 2,400





14
**JOKASAI: A FINE FOUR-CASE LACQUER
 'EAGLE AND PEONY' INRO**

Lineage of Yamada Jokasai, signed Jokasai 常嘉齋 and sealed Joka 常嘉
 Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of upright rectangular and oval section, bearing a lustrous roiro ground finely decorated with gold and colored takamaki-e and hiramaki-e to depict a majestic eagle with meticulously rendered plumage and head proudly raised in an alert expression, perched upon a tree trunk surrounded by leafy blossoming peonies continuing onto the reverse. The interior cases finished with nashiji and gold fundame rims. The bottom signed in gold hiramaki-e JOKASAI with a red seal Joka.

With a finely carved walnut (kurumi) ojime in the form of a quail (uzura), signed ISSAN to [carved by Issan].

HEIGHT 7.7 cm, HEIGHT 5.8 cm

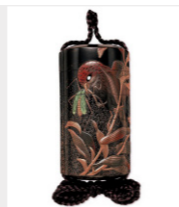
Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and light traces of use, minor flaking to interior, the cases slightly rigid.

With an associated wood storage box (tomobako).

The signature Jokasai holds a distinguished place in the study of lacquer and inro artistry, comparable in recognition to the name Kajikawa among connoisseurs and scholars. This prominence is due to the fact that the vast majority of the Yamada family of lacquer artists, active for more than two centuries, employed Jokasai alone as their signature. Those members of the family who adopted other names are documented both under Yamada and individually. The first Yamada Jokasai worked in Edo in the late seventeenth century for the shogunate and trained initially in the Kajikawa school. The school he founded continued until at least the end of the Edo period, producing a wide range of objects, including boxes, inro, netsuke, and lacquered metal sword fittings. The signature Jokasai or Joka appears in many forms, including four principal versions and a considerable number of significant variations of the character 'ka'. For further reference on the family, see Edward A. Wrangham and Joe Earle (eds.), *The Index of Inro Artists*, 1995, p. 98.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related four-case lacquer inro depicting a sparrow devouring an insect, signed Jokasai, 9.3 cm high, at Christie's, 10 November 2010, London, lot 387 (sold for GBP 22,500 or approx. **EUR 40,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



15
**A FINE FOUR-CASE LACQUER
 'TETHERED FALCON' INRO**

Unsigned
 Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of upright rectangular form and oval section, bearing a lustrous dark brown lacquer ground, finely decorated in gold, silver, and red takamaki-e and hiramaki-e, enriched with e-nashiji, mura-nashiji, and gold kirigane, to depict a lofty falcon tethered onto a perch, the head turned back in an alert expression, the wings slightly extended, and plumage delicately rendered. The reverse with a leafy blossoming peony amid further leaves, bamboo, and rockwork. The top border and the base finished in gold fundame. The interiors of nashiji with gold fundame rims.

With a globular bone ojime.

HEIGHT 6.8 cm, LENGTH 5.6 cm

Provenance: From the private collection of Alan and Simone Hartman, New York, United States.

Condition: Excellent condition with minor wear, light traces of use, and a small dent to the top from contact with the ojime.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related four-case lacquer inro depicting a falcon tethered on a long perch, by the lineage of Yamada Jokasai, 9.2 cm high, at Bonhams, Fine Japanese Art, London, 2 November 2023, lot 51 (sold for GBP 8,320 or approx. **EUR 9,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Alan & Simone Hartman



Estimate EUR 2,500
 Starting price EUR 1,200



16
**A FOUR-CASE GOLD AND BLACK LACQUER
 'SOGA EAGLE ON PINE' INRO**

Unsigned
 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of rounded rectangular form and oval section, bearing a lustrous roiro ground finely decorated in predominantly gold takamaki-e, gold hiramaki-e, and accented with gold and brown kirigane to depict a majestic eagle with exquisitely rendered plumage, the head turned backward as it perches on a gnarled pine tree with luxuriant branches continuing onto the reverse. The interiors finished with nashiji and gold fundame rims.

With a carved and partially stained fruit-nut ojime with crashing waves and mountain peaks.

HEIGHT 7.3 cm, LENGTH 5.7 cm

Provenance: From the private collection of Alan and Simone Hartman, New York, United States.

Condition: Good condition with minor wear and light traces of use, minute losses at the lower cord holes, little flaking and nibbling along the case edges. Expected occasional losses to kirigane flakes.



Alan & Simone Hartman

Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000

The present avian motif, depicting an eagle poised upon a gnarled pine tree, derives from the Soga school, established by the renowned painter Soga Chokuan, active in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Renowned for his depictions of raptors, Chokuan endowed birds of prey, often shown tethered to their perches, with a commanding dignity through meticulous brushwork and a subtle, expressive palette. Such powerful representations of falconry were especially esteemed by prominent samurai, who commissioned him to create either individual works or series of hawks for folding screens to adorn their residences. His son, Nichokuan, perpetuated this focus on avian subjects, cultivating an extensive visual vocabulary of birds that informed the idiom of Japanese arts for the subsequent centuries.



One of a pair of six-panel folding screens depicting an eagle on a rock, by Soga Nichokuan, Edo period, 17th century, 348.6 cm long, in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, accession number 11.6912



17
**KAJIKAWA: A FINE FOUR-CASE LACQUER
 'HERONS IN A WINTER STREAM' INRO**

By a member of the Kajikawa family, signed Kajikawa 梶川 saku 作 with a red pot seal Ei 榮
 Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of rectangular form and lenticular plan, bearing a finely gold-sprinkled roiro ground richly decorated in gold, silver, and aokin takamaki-e and hiramaki-e, depicting a pair of egrets standing gracefully in the calm waters of a stream amid snow-laden reeds continuing onto the reverse, the winter scene enriched with kinpun and ginpun. The interior cases finished with nashiji and gold fundame rims.

HEIGHT 7.7 cm, LENGTH 6.5 cm

Provenance: From the private collection of Alan and Simone Hartman, New York, United States.
Condition: Excellent condition with minor wear and light traces of use.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related four-case lacquer inro depicting mallards swimming among snow-covered reeds, by the Kajikawa family, signed Kajikawa with a red pot seal, 7.6 cm high, at Bonhams, The Edward Wrangham Collection of Japanese Art. Part II, London, 10 May 2011, lot 207 (sold for GBP 4,200 or approx. **EUR 7,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



18
**KAJIKAWA: A FINE THREE-CASE
 LACQUER 'CRANES' INRO**

By a member of the Kajikawa family, signed Kajikawa 梶川 saku 作 with seal Ei 榮
 Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of upright rectangular shape and oval section, bearing a lustrously polished roiro ground, lacquered in gold and red takamaki-e and hiramaki-e, accentuated with kirigane and nashiji, to depict a red-capped crane standing at shore and looking towards misty clouds, the reverse with a second crane descending. The interior of nashiji with gold fundame rims. The underside signed in gold KAJIKAWA saku [made by Kajikawa] with a red pot seal Ei.

With a finely reticulated and stained bone ojime and a copper ojime impressed with a stylized blossom and signed Harumasa.

HEIGHT 7.5 cm, LENGTH 5.2 cm

Provenance: Sotheby's, London, 12 November 1962, lot 176. Sotheby's, London, 21 June 1995, lot 408 (accompanied by a Sotheby's label inscribed "408, 21 JUN 1995"). The private collection of the Tomkinson family, United Kingdom, acquired from the above.

Condition: Good condition with minor expected wear and typical traces of use, few light scratches, few typical losses to the kirigane, some minor nibbling to edges and the top cover with few tiny dents.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related four-case gold lacquer inro with cranes and bamboo, also by a member of the Kajikawa family and signed Kajikawa saku with a pot seal, 8.3 cm tall, at Zacke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 8 November 2024, Vienna, lot 21 (sold for **EUR 3,380**).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



19
**KAJIKAWA: A FINE FIVE-CASE
 LACQUER 'FLYING EGRETS' INRO**

By a member of the Kajikawa family, signed Kajikawa 梶川 saku 作 with a red pot seal Ei 榮
 Japan, 18th-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of upright rectangular form and oval section, bearing a fine roiro ground, exquisitely decorated in gold and silver takamaki-e and gold hiramaki-e with mura-nashiji and kirigane to depict a continuous scene with egrets soaring above crashing waves amid the lush branches of an imposing willow. The interior cases finished with nashiji and gold fundame rims. The bottom signed in gold hiramaki-e KAJIKAWA with a red pot seal Ei.

With a globular stained bone ojime and a tsuishu lacquer netsuke in the form of a low table with a lobed panel enclosing a scene of scholars engaged in discussion, framed by a key-fret band, foliage, and geometric patterns.

HEIGHT 8.2 cm, LENGTH 4.8 cm

Provenance: The private collection of the Tomkinson family, United Kingdom. **Michael Tomkinson (1841-1921)** was a British businessman and noted collector from Kidderminster, Worcestershire, who began collecting Japanese art in 1878. With his wife, Annie Porrit Stonehouse, he assembled a collection of several thousand objects - including okimono, netsuke, lacquerware, inro, ceramics, woodblock prints, textiles, swords, and bronzes. His holdings were documented in the two-volume catalog "A Japanese Collection" (1898), and he was also an active council member of the Japan Society. After his death, the collection was dispersed at auction in London, with works acquired by institutions including the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Ashmolean Museum, though many pieces remained with or were repurchased by the family. The Tomkinson family continued his collecting tradition in subsequent generations, acquiring further works, particularly fine lacquer, from auction houses and dealers in the United Kingdom and France.

Condition: Excellent condition with minor wear, faint traces of use, and expected occasional losses to kirigane.

Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



20
**A VERY LARGE FOUR-CASE
 LACQUER 'WATERFOWL' INRO**

Unsigned
 Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of upright rectangular form and oval section, bearing kinji ground richly decorated in gold, silver, red, and black takamaki-e and hiramaki-e with kinpun and gold kirigane to depict a continuous scene of waterfowl including ducks and an egret at an embankment dotted with grasses, lotus, and arrowhead plants beside a maple tree and rockwork. The interior cases of nashiji with gold fundame rims.

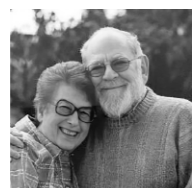
With an agate ojime.

HEIGHT 11.5 cm, LENGTH 7.5 cm

Provenance:
 Ex-collection James Fairfax, Sydney, Australia. Sotheby's, 10 November 2003, Melbourne, lot 625. The Eva & Aubrey Sweet Collection, Melbourne, Australia, acquired from the above. A



James Fairfax



Eva and Aubrey Sweet

copy of the original invoice from Sotheby's Melbourne, dated 11 November 2003, addressed to Mr. Aubrey Sweet, and stating a purchase price for the present lot of AUD 9,760 or approx. **EUR 11,000** (converted and adjusted to inflation at the time of writing), accompanies the lot.

James Oswald Fairfax (1934-2017), heir to the Australian publishing dynasty, assembled a distinguished collection defined by rarity, quality and scholarly precision. Collecting from a young age and advised by leading dealers, he acquired European and Australian paintings alongside an important body of Asian art. A formative early visit to Japan sparked a lifelong engagement with Japanese aesthetics, reflected in his notable holdings of Japanese paintings, screens and finely crafted lacquerware. Much of the collection was later dispersed through major auctions and institutional gifts. **Eva and Aubrey Sweet** devoted over six decades to the formation of a distinguished private collection of Asian art, with particular strength in Chinese jade, Japanese lacquer, and netsuke.

Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear and typical traces of use, the cover with a small flake to the upper edge and light dents from the ojime.

These exceptionally large inro are sometimes referred to in literature as 'storage inro', designed not to be worn but to store larger quantities of medicine, which would then be transferred into smaller inro for daily use.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related smaller Kajikawa family four-case lacquer inro depicting mandarin ducks, 8.9 cm high, at Bonhams, 16 September 2009, New York, lot 3010, sold for USD 12,200 or approx. **EUR 16,000** (converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 6,000
 Starting price EUR 3,000





21
**JOKASAI: A FOUR-CASE LAQUER INRO
 DEPICTING A PHEASANT AMID PLUM BLOSSOMS**

Lineage of Yamada Jokasai, signed Jokasai 常嘉齋
 Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of upright rectangular form and oval section, bearing a lustrous roiro ground with patches of mura-nashiji, richly decorated in gold, silver, and slight-colored takamaki-e enriched with subtle aogai inlay and kirigane highlights, depicting a pheasant perched on a flowering plum branch continuing onto the reverse, the blossoms that are just opening heralding the end of winter and the arrival of spring. The interior cases finished in gold fundame and red lacquer. The underside signed in gold hiramaki-e JOKASAI.

HEIGHT 8 cm, LENGTH 5.7 cm

Provenance: Bonhams, London, 6 November 2012, lot 238. A private collection in the United States, acquired from the above.
Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and subtle traces of use. Typical minute losses to kirigane flakes, minuscule nibbling along the case edges, a small nick on one of the upper edges, few light scratches.

The signature Jokasai holds a distinguished place in the study of lacquer and inro artistry, comparable in recognition to the name Kajikawa among connoisseurs and scholars. This prominence is due to the fact that the vast majority of the Yamada family of lacquer artists, active for more than two centuries, employed Jokasai alone as their signature. Those members of the family who adopted other names are documented both under Yamada and individually. The first Yamada Jokasai worked in Edo in the late seventeenth century for the shogunate and trained initially in the Kajikawa school. The school he founded continued until at least the end of the Edo period, producing a wide range of objects, including boxes, inro, netsuke, and lacquered metal sword fittings. The signature Jokasai or Joka appears in many forms, including four principal versions and a considerable number of significant variations of the character 'ka'. For further reference on the family, see Edward A. Wrangham and Joe Earle (eds.), *The Index of Inro Artists*, 1995, p. 98.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related four-case gold lacquer inro depicting a pheasants, by a member of the Kajikawa family, Edo period, 7.1 cm high, at Zucke, Fine Japanese Art, Vienna, 13 June 2025, lot 408 (sold for **EUR 4,160**).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



22
**KANSHOSAI TOYO: A FIVE-CASE GOLD LAQUER INRO
 DEPICTING PEACOCKS AND CHERRY BLOSSOMS**

Lineage of Kanshosai Toyo, signed Kanshosai 觀松齋
 Japan, late 18th to early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of upright rectangular form and oval section, bearing a luminous kinji ground, finely decorated in gold and silver takamaki-e and gold hiramaki-e, some of the leaves enriched with gold foil, to depict a pair of peacocks, one perched upon the branch of a lush cherry tree, its majestic tail fanned and meticulously inlaid with mother-of-pearl, the other standing on the ground beside the same branch on the reverse. The interior cases finished with nashiji and gold fundame. The bottom signed in gold hiramaki-e KANSHOSAI.

With a globular lacquer ojime and an antler netsuke carved in the form of a two-tiered pavilion.

HEIGHT 8.3 cm, LENGTH 4.8 cm

Condition: Good condition with expected wear and traces of use. Expected losses to gold foil and mother-of-pearl-inlays, minuscule nibbling along the case edges, few shallow surface scratches.

Kanshosai Toyo was a preeminent lacquer artist and inro decorator active in Edo during the second half of the eighteenth century. He was in the employ of Hachisuka Shigeyoshi (1738–1801), daimyo of Awa Province on Shikoku. In addition to inro and netsuke, Toyo produced lacquered trays, stands, cabinets, and combs. His oeuvre demonstrates a remarkable range of techniques, and he is particularly celebrated for sumie togidashi executed on rojin and kinji grounds. For further reference on the artist, see Edward A. Wrangham and Joe Earle (eds.), *The Index of Inro Artists*, 1995, p. 312-313.

Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



23
**YOYUSAI: A RARE AND SUPERB FOUR-CASE
 RED LACQUER 'SQUIRREL AND GRAPES' INRO**

By Hara Yoyusai, signed Yoyusai 羊遊齋
 Japan, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of upright rectangular form and oval section, bearing a striking vermilion-red lacquer ground richly decorated in gold and polychrome takamaki-e, and further embellished with inlays of mother-of-pearl and stained bone. The design depicts a lively squirrel twisting around a grapevine with large leaves and heavy clusters of fruit. The interior cases are finished in nashiji with gold fundame rims. The underside signed in gold YOYUSAI.

With a globular guri lacquer ojime and a two-part tsuishu lacquer hako (box) netsuke, finely carved with an intricate asanoha pattern.

HEIGHT 6.9 cm, LENGTH 5.2 cm
 LENGTH 3.7 cm (the netsuke)

Provenance: From an old private collection in France, with an old label inscribed in Japanese affixed to the interior of one case.

Condition: Good condition with minor surface wear and faint traces of handling and use. Few minor age cracks. Some very light nibbling to the edges of the cases. The netsuke in excellent condition with minor wear.

Hara Yoyusai (1772-1845/6) was active in Edo under the patronage of Lord Matsudaira. He oversaw an extensive workshop, from which numerous lacquer objects were produced, either bearing his full signature or his monogram. For further reference on the artist and information of his works in both contemporary and subsequent collections, see Edward A. Wrangham and Joe Earle (eds.), *The Index of Inro artists*, 1995, p. 340.

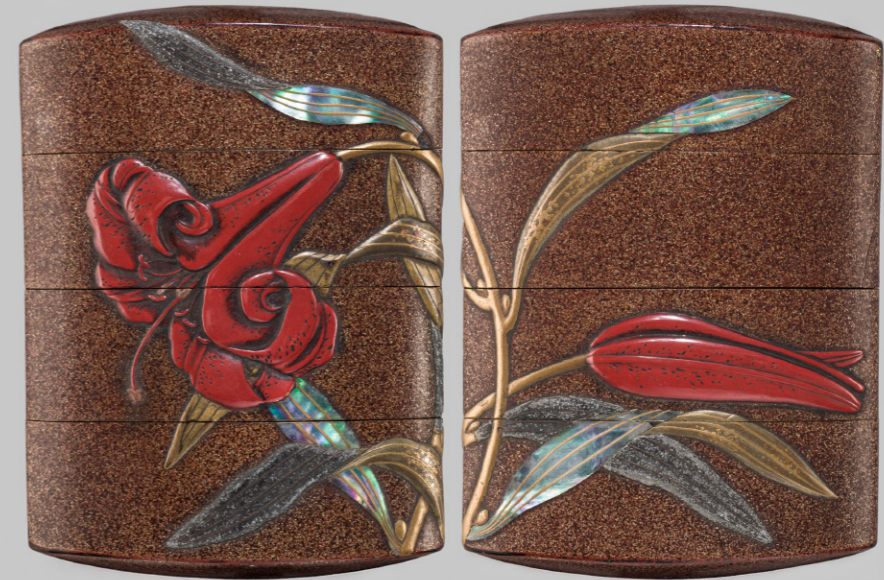
The motif of squirrels and grapes is an auspicious subject symbolizing abundance and numerous descendants. Originating in Chinese art during the Northern Song dynasty (960-1126), the theme became popular in East Asian decorative arts and was occasionally adopted by Japanese artists. Although well known in Chinese carving and painting, the subject appears comparatively rarely in Japanese netsuke and lacquer.

MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a near-identical four-case red lacquer inro depicting a squirrel perched on a grapevine, by Hara Yoyusai, 7.5 cm high, in the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon, inventory number 1364.



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



24
**A SUPERB THREE-CASE INLAID LACQUER 'LILIES' INRO,
 ATTRIBUTED TO NOMURA CHOHEI**

Attributed to Nomura Chohei(sai), unsigned
 Japan, 18th-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of upright rectangular form and lenticular section, bearing a striking nashiji ground finely decorated in gold takamaki-e and richly inlaid with gold, pewter, carved tsuishu, and mother-of-pearl to depict a pair of lilies (yuri) unfolding amid verdant leaves. The interior cases are finished in nashiji with gold fundame rims.

With a silver-inlaid coral ojime and an unusual lacquer netsuke in the form of a brazier shaped from a gourd, lacquered with a mask and foliage.

HEIGHT 7.6 cm, LENGTH 5.7 cm
 HEIGHT 3 cm (the netsuke)

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear, light traces of handling and use. Occasional minuscule losses to inlaid decoration and kirigane flakes. The netsuke in excellent condition with only minor typical wear.

Nomura Chohei(sai) was an important Japanese lacquer artist appointed as an official lacquerer to the shogunate in 1776. His works are often characterized by intricate designs and the inventive use of a variety of materials, including ceramic, lacquer, metal, and mother-of-pearl, recalling in conception the works of Ogawa Haritsu (Ritsuo, 1663-1747) and his followers.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related three-case inlaid lacquer inro depicting a similarly carved and inlaid tsuishu flower, by Nomura Chohei, at Bonhams, *Fine Japanese Works of Art*, 13 September 2011, New York, lot 2078 (sold for USD 8,750 or approx. **EUR 11,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



25

**KOMA KYUHAKU:
A MAGNIFICENT FOUR-CASE LACQUER INRO
DEPICTING IRISES IN A JARDINIÈRE**

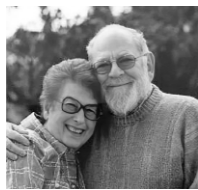
Lineage of Koma Kyuhaku, signed Koma Kyuhaku 古満 休伯 saku 作 Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of upright rectangular form and oval section, bearing a lustrous roiro ground finely decorated in gold, silver, and red takamaki-e and hiramaki-e to depict a continuous composition centered on a luxurious jardinière. The vessel, ornamented with a foliate lappet band and an encircling key-fret motif, contains magnificently blossoming irises (shobu). The smaller leaves are highlighted with gold foil, while larger fronds rise gracefully above a ground subtly sprinkled with gold powder against a delicate e-nashiji background. The interior cases are finished in nashiji with gold fundame rims.

With a globular coral ojime.

HEIGHT 7.5 cm, LENGTH 5.3 cm

Provenance: Grace Tsumugi Fine Art, London, United Kingdom, 2007. Private collection of Eva and Aubrey Sweet, Melbourne, Australia, acquired from the above. A copy of the original invoice, dated 30 January 2007, addressed to Mrs. Eva Sweet, confirming the date above, and stating a purchase price of AUD 6,800 or approx. **EUR 7,000** (converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing), accompanies this lot. **Eva and Aubrey Sweet**



Eva and Aubrey Sweet

and Aubrey Sweet devoted over six decades to the formation of a distinguished private collection of Asian art, with particular strength in Chinese jade, Japanese lacquer, and netsuke. Their collecting began in the 1950s and was refined through sustained travel, scholarship, and long associations with leading dealers, curators, and artists internationally. Aubrey, a Melbourne physician who also studied acupuncture in Beijing, and Eva developed a discerning connoisseurship that balanced intuitive appreciation



Potted irises and pinks, Ikeda Eisen, 1790-1848

with systematic study, supported by an extensive reference library and active participation in scholarly circles. They acquired works of historic importance as well as contemporary pieces by artists such as Susan Wraight and Unryuan (Kitamura Tatsuo), demonstrating a commitment both to tradition and to the continuity of craft. The collection, housed in their Melbourne residence and affectionately referred to by the family as 'the Museum', stands as a testament to their lifelong dedication to the aesthetic and cultural values of Asian art.

Condition: Excellent condition with only minor wear and minimal traces of handling and use. The gold foil appliqué are exceptionally well preserved, with only a single tiny loss.

The Koma Kyuhaku lineage extends across six generations, from the late 17th to the early 19th century. The progenitor of the family was appointed lacquerer to the shogunate in 1681 and is credited with establishing the Koma dynasty as one of the foremost families of lacquer artisans. His descendants likewise served as official lacquerers to the shogunate, maintaining the high standards of craftsmanship and aesthetic refinement that characterized the school. For further discussion of the family, see Edward A. Wrangham and Joe Earle (eds.), *The Index of Inro Artists*, 1995, pp. 157-158.

Estimate EUR 6,000
Starting price EUR 3,000



KAJIKAWA: A MASTERFUL FOUR-CASE GOLD LACQUER 'INTERIOR PERSPECTIVE SCENE (UKI-E)' INRO

By a member of the Kajikawa family, signed Kajikawa 梶川 saku 作 with a red pot seal Ei 英 Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Published: Eskenazi (1997) Japanese Netsuke, Ojime, and Inro from the Dawson Collection, London, p. 69, no. 126.

A perspective view of a house interior at New Year, with a screen of waves and the moon, and a miniature landscape with pines, a crane and a minogame, all auspicious symbols of long life. The paper screens (shoji) are pushed back to reveal a wintry garden with light snow on the roof and distant trees. The techniques of perspective painting came to Japan from the West and were popularized by woodblock artists such as Okumura Masanobu in the middle of the eighteenth century.

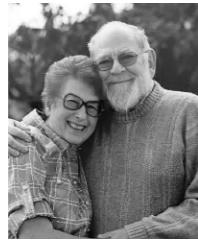
Of upright rectangular form and oval section, bearing a luminous kinji ground, exquisitely decorated in gold and silver takamaki-e, hiramaki-e, and togidashi-e, and enriched with gold foil and red lacquer accents. The interior cases finished with nashiji and gold fundame rims. The bottom signed in gold KAJIKAWA saku [made by Kajikawa] with a red pot seal Ei.

With a gold-lacquered globular ojime and a wood storage box.

HEIGHT 9.3 cm, LENGTH 4.8 cm

Provenance: Ex-Dawson Collection. Eskenazi, London, United Kingdom, by 1997. The collection of Eva and Aubrey Sweet, Melbourne, Australia, acquired from the above. A copy of the invoice from Eskenazi, dated 14 July 1997, addressed to Mr. Aubrey Sweet, and stating a purchase price for the present lot of GBP 5,000 or approx. **EUR 11,500** (converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing), accompanies this lot.

Condition: Excellent condition with minimal wear and faint traces of use.



Eva and Aubrey Sweet

The techniques of perspective painting, introduced to Japan from the West, were assimilated and developed by Japanese artists during the early modern period. By the mid-eighteenth century, they had been popularized in the realm of woodblock printmaking



Woodblock print entitled An Interior View in the Yoshiwara, by Torii Kiyotada, Edo period, c. early 1740s, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, object number JP661

by figures such as Okumura Masanobu (1686-1764), who experimented with linear perspective, depth, and spatial illusion to enhance narrative and compositional complexity. These innovations reflected both an engagement with foreign visual knowledge and a distinctly Japanese aesthetic, integrating Western spatial techniques into traditional formats such as ukiyo-e and illustrated books, thereby enriching the visual vocabulary of Edo-period art.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related four-case gold lacquer inro depicting an uki-e (perspective) scene from Chushingura, by Omura Gyokuzan, 8.2 cm high, at Bonhams, The Edward Wrangham Collection of Japanese Art: Part VI, London, 10 November 2015, lot 127 (sold for GBP 4,375 or approx.

EUR 7,000 converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 6,000
Starting price EUR 3,000





27
**A FINE FIVE-CASE GOLD LACQUER
 'HORSE AND GROOM IN THE SNOW' INRO**

Unsigned
 Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of upright rectangular and oval section, bearing a luminous kinji ground, finely decorated in gold, silver, and red takamaki-e and hiramaki-e, and enriched with gold kirigane, to depict on one side a horse with its head lowered, emerging from its stable among luxuriant bamboo stalks. The reverse shows a stableman, attired in loose-fitting robes and wearing a broad, snow-covered straw hat, carrying a bucket of water to tend the animal. The interior cases finished in nashiji with gold fundame rims.

The inro with a globular coral ojime and a two-part manju netsuke, bearing a vermilion-red lacquer ground, meticulously embellished with gold, silver, and red takamaki-e, to depict a pair of textile bundles tied at their ends with cords, their exteriors richly adorned with diapered patterns and foliate brocades.

HEIGHT 9.1 cm, LENGTH 4.9 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with minimal wear and light traces of use.

Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



28
**KAJIKAWA: A SUPERB TWO-CASE
 LACQUER 'RECUMBENT OX' INRO**

By a member of the Kajikawa family, signed Kajikawa 梶川 saku 作 with a gold pot seal
 Japan, 18th-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of horizontal rectangular form and oval section, bearing a striking vermilion-red ground delicately dusted with gold powder and thickly decorated in gold, silver, and black takamaki-e to depict a recumbent ox, shown from the front on one side and the back on the other, its legs tucked beneath its massive body, the powerful head bridled with golden cords and surmounted by upright horns, the eye finely inlaid with mother-of-pearl. The interior cases finished with nashiji and with gold fundame rims.

With a globular glass ojime.

HEIGHT 5.3 cm, LENGTH 7.8 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only minor wear.

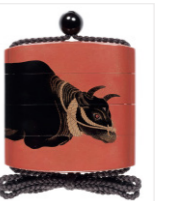
The motif of oxen is often associated with Shiomi Masanari (1647-1722), a painter of the Kano school, renowned primarily for his lacquerwork and for establishing a distinguished family of lacquerers whose techniques and name were transmitted through successive generations of pupils and descendants. Oxen appear on numerous examples of his inro, some presenting motifs almost identical to that of the present lot (see auction comparison).

A hanging scroll depicting a reclining bull by Mihata Joryu, Edo period, c. 1830, in the Minneapolis Institute of Art, accession number 2013.29.38



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related three-case lacquer inro depicting a recumbent ox by Shiomi Masanari, 19th century, 7 cm high, at Bonhams, Fine Japanese Art, London, 6 November 2012, lot 71 (sold for GBP 23,750 or approx. **EUR 40,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



29
SEKIGAWA KATSUNOBU: A FINE FOUR-CASE GOLD LACQUER INRO

By Sekigawa Katsunobu, signed Sekigawa Katsunobu 関川 勝信 作 with a red pot seal
 Japan, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of upright rectangular form and oval section, bearing a lustrous roiro ground and finely decorated in gold and silver takamaki-e, enriched with e-nashiji and kirigane. One side depicts an elderly brushwood collector carrying a large bundle across his shoulders while leaning upon his staff. The reverse shows a woman carrying water buckets suspended from a shoulder pole, pausing along her path to gesture toward a togidashi crescent moon faintly emerging through the nocturnal mist. The interior cases are finished in nashiji with gold fundame rims.

HEIGHT 7.2 cm, LENGTH 6.6 cm

Condition: Good condition with minor surface wear and minimal traces of handling and use. A small loss to the lacquer above the female figure and a small crack near one of the upper cord holes.

Sekigawa Katsunobu was a lacquerer active in Edo during the early nineteenth century. His name has led some scholars to speculate about a possible familial connection with the Seki lineage of scabbard lacquerers, while his characteristic use of red, pot-shaped seals within his signature has been interpreted as suggesting an affiliation with the Kajikawa school. However, surviving documentation provides little evidence to confirm either hypothesis. For further reference on the artist, see Edward A. Wrangham and Joe Earle (eds.), *The Index of Inro Artists*, 1995, p. 118.

The subject belongs to a long tradition in Japanese art depicting humble figures engaged in everyday rural activities. Scenes of woodcutters, brushwood gatherers, and water carriers were popular in both painting and lacquer, often conveying an idealized vision of rustic life and quiet contemplation within nature, here subtly reinforced by the appearance of the crescent moon.

AUCTION COMPARISON

For another inro by the artist depicting falconers, signed Sekigawa Katsunobu with the identical pot seal Ei, see Zackle, *Fine Netsuke & Sagemono*, Vienna, 4 November 2022, lot 186 (sold for **EUR 2,080**).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



30
YOYUSAI: A FINE FOUR-CASE LACQUER 'ASAZUMA BOAT' INRO

By Hara Yoyusai, signed Yoyusai 羊遊齋
 Japan, first half of the 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of upright rectangular form and lenticular section, bearing a lustrous roiro ground exquisitely decorated in gold takamaki-e and hiramaki-e, enriched with gold e-nashiji. One side depicts a shirabyoshi dancer seated in a wooden boat, dressed in male court attire consisting of a loose hunting robe (suikan) and a tall court cap (eboshi). She holds a small folded fan (suehiro), with a small hand drum (kotsuzumi) placed beside her, her bowed head and pensive expression conveying a quiet, contemplative mood. The boat, superbly detailed, floats amid gently undulating waters and tall reeds with distant hills beyond. The reverse shows a slender crescent moon emerging through nocturnal mist, rendered in delicate silver togidashi-e. The interior cases are finished in nashiji with gold fundame rims.

With a small black-lacquered ojime.

HEIGHT 9.2 cm, LENGTH 6 cm

Provenance: From the private collection of Alan and Simone Hartman, New York, United States.

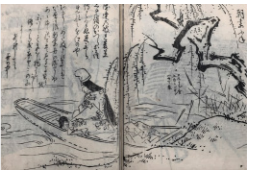
Condition: Excellent condition with only very minor surface wear.



Alan and Simone Hartman

Hara Yoyusai (1772-1845/6) was active in Edo under the patronage of Lord Matsudaira. He oversaw an extensive workshop,

The design derives from the well-known "Asazuma boat" theme, ultimately based on a celebrated painting by Hanabusa Itcho and later reproduced in an illustrated book by Suzuki Rinsho in the late eighteenth century. The composition depicts a shirabyoshi dancer seated alone in a boat near the port of Asazuma on the eastern shore of Lake Biwa. The quiet nocturnal atmosphere, emphasized by the crescent moon and misty landscape, evokes a poetic mood of solitude and anticipation often associated with classical Japanese literature and performance traditions.



Asazuma Boat, by Suzuki Rinsho

from which numerous lacquer objects were produced, either bearing his full signature or his monogram. For further reference on the artist and information of his works in both contemporary and subsequent collections, see Edward A. Wrangham and Joe Earle (eds.), *The Index of Inro Artists*, 1995, p. 340.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related three-case lacquer inro depicting Kannon emerging from a clam by the same artist, also signed Yoyusai, similarly lacquered, at Zackle, *Fine Netsuke & Sagemono*, Vienna, 8 November 2024, lot 23 (sold for **EUR 8,580**).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000

31

KOMA KORYU: A SUPERB FOUR-CASE GOLD LACQUER 'ABALONE DIVERS' INRO DEPICTING THE DESIGN AFTER KITAGAWA UTAMARO

Lineage of Koma Koryu, signed Koma Koryu 古満 巨柳 saku 作 Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of upright rectangular form and oval section, bearing a luminous kinji ground finely decorated in gold, silver, and black takamaki-e and hiramaki-e, and enriched with gold kirigane, depicting scenes of abalone divers (ama) winding down after a day of collecting. On one side, a woman wrings out her wet garments while her companion selects shells from a basket. On the reverse, a diver, partially draped in a long robe, breastfeeds a small child among craggy rocks. Both scenes are framed above by drifting clouds. The interior cases are finished in nashiji with gold fundame rims. The underside signed in gold KOMA KORYU.

With a beautifully matching gilt silver ojime in the form of a hamaguri clam, signed within a rectangular reserve Kazushige, and an en suite antler netsuke in the form of stacked shells.

HEIGHT 8.6 cm, LENGTH 4.9 cm
LENGTH 3.5 cm (the netsuke)

Condition: Excellent condition with only minor surface wear, light traces of handling and use, few minor surface scratches, and typical minute losses to kirigane flakes. The netsuke in excellent condition with minor wear.

Koma Koryu, born Kimura, assumed the family name Koma upon his adoption by his brother-in-law Koma Kyuhaku III, under whom he trained. Koryu played an important role in the later development of the Koma school, assimilating the techniques of his distinguished master and transmitting them to a subsequent generation, notably Kansai I. Other recorded pupils include Omura Gyokuzan and Nomura Kyuho. Primarily known as a specialist in inro, Koryu is also associated with a limited number of other lacquer works. He died during the Tenmei period (1781–1789) but had many followers who used his name. For further study of the artist, see Edward A. Wrangham and Joe Earle (eds.), *The Index of Inro Artists*, 1995, p. 145.

AUCTION COMPARISON

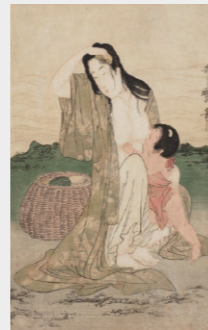
Compare a closely related four-case gold lacquer inro depicting two awabi fisher girls (ama) on an open boat, by Kajikawa Bunryusai, also after a design by Kitagawa Utamaro, at Bonhams, *Fine Japanese Art*, London, 16 May 2013, lot 204 (sold for GBP 6,250 or approx. **EUR 10,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 8,000
Starting price EUR 4,000

The design is based on the central and right-hand sheets of the woodblock-printed triptych **Awabi tori (Abalone Divers)** by **Kitagawa Utamaro**, published circa 1797–1798. Utamaro, one of the most celebrated masters of ukiyo-e, produced numerous works depicting ama divers—women who dived for shellfish and pearls, particularly haliotis abalone. In this composition he portrayed a group of nude divers resting after a day's work. In the central sheet, a woman combs her wet hair while breastfeeding a child wearing a small apron. In the right-hand sheet, another diver twists the end of her red waistcloth while holding a knife in her mouth used for opening shells, glancing over her shoulder toward a crouching companion selecting shellfish from a basket.

Woodblock print triptych entitled Awabi Tori (Abalone Divers), by Kitagawa Utamaro, c. 1797-1798



**KAJIKAWA BUNRYUSAI:
A SUPERB FOUR-CASE LACQUER
'THE HUNT FOR SHUTEN DOJI' INRO**

Lineage of Kajikawa Bunryusai, signed Kajikawa Bunryusai
梶川 文竜斎 saku 作 with kakihan
Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

The four-case inro bearing a lustrous kinji ground worked in gold, silver, and iro-e takamaki-e and hiramaki-e with gold kirigane flakes, depicting on one side Shuten Doji and attendants enjoying a banquet with supposed yamabushi monks—in reality they are Minamoto Raiko and his retainers, who have poisoned the sake in his cup—as an oni performs a dance for them, above a similarly disguised warrior carrying an oi (traveling box) and approaching the gate to Shuten Doji's lair, the scenes separated by rockwork and clouds, the reverse with further 'monks' traversing a waterfall amid lush trees. The interior cases of nashiji with gold fundame rims. Signed underneath in gold KAJIKAWA BUNRYUSAI saku [made by Kajikawa Bunryusai] with kakihan.



In the mid-Heian period, a series of disappearances in Kyoto were traced to Shuten Doji, a powerful oni living on Oeyama, who had been kidnapping and devouring people. The legendary warrior Minamoto no Raiko led a group of warriors disguised as yamabushi monks on a mission to confront the oni. Gaining Shuten Doji's trust by offering sake, the warriors lured the demon into a false sense of security. When Shuten Doji fell asleep from the poison-laced sake, Raiko and his men decapitated him. However, in a twist of supernatural defiance, the severed head came back to life and aimed for Raiko's head. Thanks to wearing two additional helmets, Raiko survived the attack. In some versions of the story, the head was triumphantly brought back to Kyoto, while others say it was buried outside the city at a mountain pass, deemed too unholy to remain close to the capital. The tale underscores the cunning of Raiko and the relentless power of evil forces, even in death.



Kuniyoshi: Shuten-doji Banquet at Oeyama, c. 1853

The inro suspending a shakudo and shibuichi ojime in the form of two adorsed masks depicting buaku and oni, and a wood netsuke carved as an oni holding the severed arm of the Rashomon demon.

HEIGHT 9.5 cm, LENGTH 6.7 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with minor expected wear and typical traces of use.

With a wood storage box.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related gold lacquer four-case inro by Kajikawa Bunryusai, 8.1 cm tall, at Bonhams, The Harriet Szechenyi Sale of Japanese Art, 8 November 2011, London, lot 360 (sold for GBP 7,500 or approx. **EUR 13,000** converted and adjusted to inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 10,000
Starting price EUR 5,000





33
KAJIKAWA AKIHIDE: A FINE FOUR-CASE GOLD LACQUER 'MOUNTED SAMURAI AND STAG' INRO

By Kajikawa Akihida, signed Kajikawa Akihida 梶川 明秀 with a red pot seal Ei 榮
 Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Published & Exhibited: Eskenazi (1984) Japanese Netsuke, Ojime, Inro, Lacquer-Ware, no. 128.

Of upright rectangular form and oval section, bearing a rich kinji ground finely decorated in gold, black, and red takamaki-e and minutely executed hiramaki-e embellished with kinpun, kirigane, and e-nashiji. The interior cases of nashiji with gold fundame rims. Signed underneath in gold KAJIKAWA AKIHIDE with a red pot seal.



With a dark horn ojime.

HEIGHT 8.6 cm, LENGTH 6 cm

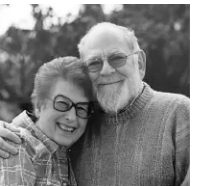
Provenance: Gretchen Kroch Kelsch collection. Eskenazi, London, by 1986. The Eva & Aubrey Sweet Collection, Melbourne, Australia, acquired from the above. A copy of the original invoice from Eskenazi, dated 26 June 1986, addressed to Aubrey Sweet, and stating a purchase price for the present lot of GBP 4,000 or approx. **EUR 14,500** (converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing), accompanies the lot.

Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear and typical traces of use, few minute flakes to interior.

A samurai in full battle dress and his black horse are startled by the appearance of a stag, shown on the reverse of the inro in front of an old pine tree. The subject may be an allusion to the foolishness of a Chinese emperor of the 2nd century AD who according to legend drafted a decree that a horse should be called a stag and a stag a horse.

Kajikawa Akihida was a member of the Kajikawa family, one of the most celebrated dynasty of Japanese lacquer artists. Traditionally founded by Hikobei in Edo in the early seventeenth century, the atelier's fame was further secured by his son and pupil Kyujiro, whom Soken Kisho described as "the finest inro maker of past or present." The Kajikawa served the shogunate for generations, their signatures often limited to the family name, occasionally accompanied by a red pot seal. For a comprehensive study of the Kajikawa lineage, see Edward A. Wrangham and Joe Earle (eds.), *The Index of Inro Artists*, 1995, pp. 107-108.

Estimate EUR 5,000
 Starting price EUR 2,400



Eva and Aubrey Sweet





34
**IKEDA TAISHIN AND OZAWA SHURAKU:
 A SUPERB TWO-CASE GOLD-INLAID LACQUER
 'JUROIIN AND MINOGAME' INRO**

The lacquerwork by Ikeda Taishin (1825-1903) and the gold inlay by Ozawa Shuraku (1820-1894), signed Taishin 泰真 and Shuraku 秀楽 with kakihan
 Japan, Tokyo, late 19th century, Meiji period (1868-1912)

The rectangular inro bearing a lustrous roiro ground, centered to one side with a round gold plate incised in fine kebori and katakiribori to depict Jurojin holding a minogame and a blossoming branch of peaches. The reverse featuring scrolling clouds centered by a gunbai fan, lacquered in gold, silver, and iro-e takamaki-e, highlighted with aogai and colored kirigane. The interior top case divided in two for the storage of seals and lacquered in nashiji with gold fundame rims. Signed underneath in black lacquer TAISHIN beside a gold reserve incised with the signature SHURAKU and kakihan.

The inro suspending two coral and one cloisonné enamel ojime, as well as a silk embroidered kinchaku pouch.

HEIGHT 4.8 cm, LENGTH 5.6 cm

Provenance: Xanadu Gallery, San Francisco, USA, by 2007. The Eva & Aubrey Sweet Collection, Melbourne, Australia, acquired from the above. A copy of the invoice from Xanadu Gallery, dated 27 January 2007, addressed to Eva Sweet, and stating a purchase price for the present lot of USD 3,750 or approx. **EUR 5,200** (converted and adjusted to inflation at the time of writing), accompanies the lot. **Condition:** Very good condition with minor expected wear and typical traces of use including a few light scratches. The interior with minor flakes and losses to the lacquer.

Ikeda Taishin (1825-1903) was the leading pupil of Shibata Zeshin who worked in the Meiji period. He was born in Edo and became Zeshin's first lacquer apprentice in 1835 at the age of eleven. He became an independent artist around 1870, approximately 35 years later. Together with Kawanobe Itcho (Genjiro; 1830-1910), Taishin was appointed an Artist to the Imperial Household (Teishitsu gigeiin) in 1896. His pupils included Umezawa Ryushin, a member of the Art committee of the Imperial Fine Arts Academy and the Imperial Household.

Ozawa Shuraku (1820-1894), a pupil of Tenmin, was an important metalworker known for his production of sword fittings, kagamibuta discs, and kanamono (pouch fittings). On occasion, he collaborated with antler carvers of the Asakusa school or with lacquer artists such as the present one.



MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a related lacquer inro with an inlaid mixed metal panel featuring Jurojin holding a minogame, by Taishin, the metal inlay by Haruaki Hogen, in the Cleveland Museum of Art, reference number 1916.884.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related inlaid gold-lacquer two-case inro, the metalwork by Ozawa Shuraku and Mitsukuni, 8 cm tall, at Bonhams, The Edward Wrangham Collection of Japanese Art, 10 November 2015, London, lot 132 (sold for GBP 3,500 or approx. **EUR 5,700** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000

35
**YAMAGUCHI SHOJOSAI:
 AN EXQUISITE SMALL TWO-CASE
 RED LACQUER 'FLOWER BASKET' INRO**

By Yamaguchi Shojosai (1893-1978), signed Shojosai 委杖齋 saku 作 Japan, Tokyo, 20th century

Of ovoid form, bearing a stunning, red-lacquered ground sprinkled with fine gold, decorated in gold, silver, and red takamaki-e to depict a woven hanging basket filled with an assortment of auspicious flowers comprising peonies, magnolias, chrysanthemums, prunus, and a vine of wisteria growing over to the reverse. The interior cases of red lacquer with gold fundame rims. Signed underneath in gold SHOJOSAI saku [made by Shojosai].

The inro suspending a stained bone ojime with a black lacquered décor and a beautifully matching hako netsuke bearing a fine kinji ground decorated in gold and silver takamaki-e with chrysanthemums (kiku) and paulownia (kiri), both Imperial symbols of Japan.

HEIGHT 6.2 cm, LENGTH 4 cm

Provenance: From an American private collection in Massachusetts. The interior of the cover with an old label inscribed with a collection number '3'.

Condition: Excellent condition with only minimal wear.

Yamaguchi Shojosai (1893-1978), born in Niigata, worked in his early years in the Tobe Studio in Tokyo before becoming independent. He lacquered a variety of objects such as inro and netsuke using many techniques. For more information on the artist see Wrangham, E. A. (1995) *The Index of Inro Artists*, pp. 249.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related rare gold-lacquer seven-case inro by Yamaguchi Shojosai, after Koami Choshin, with a very similar design, dated 19th century, 11.5 cm long, at Bonhams, The Edward Wrangham Collection of Japanese Art, 10 November 2015, London, lot 128 (sold for GBP 4,000 or approx. **EUR 6,500** converted and adjusted to inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000

SHOZAN: A RARE FOUR-CASE GREEN SEIDONURI LACQUER 'BONSAI' INRO WITH MATCHING MANJU NETSUKU

By Shozan, signed Shozan 笑山 saku 作 with kakihan Japan, Meiji period (1868-1912)

Published: Meinertzhagen, Frederick / Lazarnick, George (1986) MCI, Part B, p. 759 (not illustrated).



Given the strong similarities between the present lot and works by Shibata Zeshin (see auction comparison), it is plausible that this Shozan was a pupil or contemporary of the master lacquerer.



Bonsai lacquer painting by Shibata Zeshin, c. 1882, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, object number 36.100.102

Of oval form, bearing a beautiful seidonuri ground, imitating green-patinaed bronze, with textured areas reminiscent of aged bronze, finely decorated in gold and colored takamaki-e and hiramaki-e to depict a bonsai tree in a pot with tools for pruning including scissors, bamboo supports, and metal thread. The reverse featuring a circular reserve indicating a window that looks out onto a pine branch suspending a small stone weight. The interior cases of nashiji with gold fundame rims. The inro signed in gold hiramaki-e to the underside SHOZAN saku [made by Shozan] with red kakihan.

With a beautifully matching green lacquered manju netsuke of identical technique and design, the flowerpot detailed with a simulated crack, signed to the base with the same red kakihan as found on the inro, as well as with an agate ojime.

HEIGHT 8.5 cm, LENGTH 5.6 cm

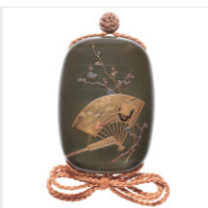
Provenance: Glendining & Co, 19 June 1939, London. An old label inscribed '203. 9.H/4/46 KI-I-' to the interior of the cover.

Condition: Good condition with minor expected wear and typical traces of use, few tiny flakes to the lacquer along the rims of the cases, and a small nick on the lowest case.

With a padded storage box.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related green seidonuri inro attributed to Shibata Zeshin, 8.5 cm tall, at Bonhams, Fine Japanese Art, 10 November 2011, London, lot 148 (sold for GBP 10,000 or approx. **EUR 17,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 3,000

Starting price EUR 1,500



KANO TESSAI: A RARE INSCRIBED THREE-CASE BLACK LACQUERED HINOKI WOOD INRO WITH HORSES AFTER SHIBATA ZESHIN, DATED 1921

By Kano Tessai (1845-1925), sealed Tessai 鉄哉 with kakihan Japan, Nara, Autumn 1921

Finely carved from light wood, one side detailed in black lacquer to depict a pair of horses beneath a willow tree, the scene continuing to the reverse where a Chinese boy holds a rod while passing a gnarled branch detailed in brown lacquer. Each side with an inscription, one dated 1921 and both signed TESSAI and kakihan.

With a dice-shaped wood ojime incised and gold-lacquered with inscriptions, and an ebony wood netsuke of a roof tile dated 1921 and signed KANO TESSAI and kakihan.

Inscriptions:

1. The 'Horses' side, 是漆筆者我友是真取作也、証之於南都最勝精舍 鎮哉 (花押), Kore shippitsu wagatomo Zeshin shosa nari, kore wo akasu, Nanto Saisho Shoja [This is painted in lacquer after the drawing by master (Shibata) Zeshin, attested at the Saisho shojo Studio, Nara], signed TESSAI with kakihan.
2. The 'Boy' side, 辛酉秋日画臺子者彫工、鎮哉 (花押), Kanoto-tori shujitsu daisu [?] o choko ga su [This is carved and painted on a day in autumn in the year of kanoto-tori (corresponding to 1921)], signed TESSAI with kakihan.
3. The netsuke, Ware sanjunen, Giyo nite, [...]an kore wo saku, toki kanoto-tori jugatsu (This is made in the 10th month of the year of Kanoto-tori (1921, Taisho 10), I am originated from Giyo (modern Gifu prefecture) and lived there over 30 years), also signed KANO TESSAI with kakihan.
4. The ojime, Namo Amidabutsu [Homage to Amitabha Buddha].

HEIGHT 8.3 cm, LENGTH 5.7 cm
LENGTH 5 cm (the netsuke)

Condition: Excellent condition with minor wear.

With an associated wood storage box.

A galloping horse from an album of six urushi-e (lacquer paintings) by Shibata Zeshin in the Honolulu Museum of Art, accession number 4666.1



Estimate EUR 2,000

Starting price EUR 1,000





38
A VERY RARE LACQUER 'YATATE' SAYA (SHEATH) INRO

Unsigned
 Japan, 18th-19th century, Edo period (1868-1912)

Of upright rectangular form and oval section, comprising a sheath (saya) with a lustrous roiro ground and a delicately ribbed body, perforated at both ends to accommodate a fitted two-part yatate (portable writing set) bearing a finely polished roiro ground, exquisitely decorated in gold togidashi maki-e enriched with mura-nashiji and e-nashiji to depict a continuous scene of lotus blossoms and various aquatic plants in a serene pond.

The interior opens in the manner of a suzuribako (writing box), revealing a complete writing set comprising an ink stone (suzuri), brush, and ink stick.

With a coral ojime and a carved wooden netsuke in the form of a reishi fungus.

HEIGHT 9.4 cm
 LENGTH (the netsuke) 4 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and traces of use, particularly to the insert resulting from frequent use and removal from the sheath.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related saya inro containing a zushi of similar two-part form as the present yatate, 10 cm high, at Zacks, 27 March 2020, Vienna, lot 253 (sold for EUR 4,298 or approx. **EUR 5,600** adjusted to inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



39
MIURA KENYA: A GLAZED CERAMIC THREE-CASE 'RAIJIN AND FUJIN' INRO WITH EN SUITE 'ONI NEMBUTSU' NETSUKU

By Miura Kenya (1825-1889), signed Kenzan 乾山
 Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of rectangular form and oval section, vibrantly glazed in shades of green, brown, yellow, blue, violet, black, and white to depict Fujin and Raijin amid dark swirling clouds. With a soapstone ojime and en suite ceramic netsuke in the form of an oni nembutsu, dressed in a black robe, the brown face with yellow horns and a green drum hanging at the chest. Signed to the underside of the inro and below the robe of the netsuke KENZAN.

HEIGHT 7.5 cm, LENGTH 5 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear and few minuscule firing flaws, the netsuke with a few tiny nicks to the back.

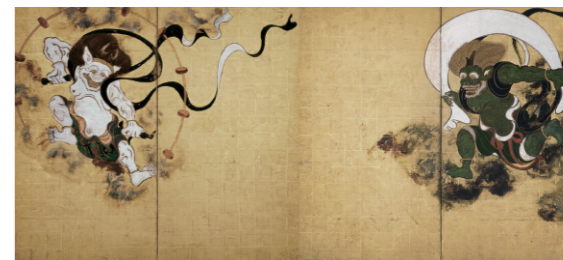
Miura Kenya (1825-1889), known as Kenya I, led a versatile life: first as a maker of clay dolls, then traveling to Nagasaki in 1854 to work on the first Japanese steamboat, in 1869 producing the first Japanese bricks, and from 1875 producing pottery at the Chomeiji in Tokyo. In an inscription on one of his inro he calls himself the last pupil of Ritsuo, and he was also strongly influenced by the style of Kenzan. See Earle, Joe [ed.] (1995) *The Index of Inro Artists*, p. 125.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related pottery three-case inro attributed to Miura Kenya, at Bonhams, *Fine Japanese Art*, 16 May 2013, London, lot 168 (sold for GBP 2,500 or approx. **EUR 4,100** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



The subject was taken from a folding screen (byobu) of Rinpa artist and national treasure Ogata Korin (1658-1716), a replica of an earlier work by Tawaraya Sotatsu (c. 1570-c. 1640), featuring Raijin, the God of Lightning, and Fujin, the God of Wind.





40
SHOJI KATSUGEN: A FINE SMALL MIXED-METAL 'SAIGYO HOSHI AND MOUNT FUJI' SAYA (SHEATH) INRO

By Shoji Katsugen (1776-1857), signed Tokairin Katsukoto 東海林 勝言 with kakihan Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of upright rectangular form and oval section, the shibuichi sheath finely engraved and neatly inlaid in gold, silver, shakudo, and suaka takazogan to depict on one side Saigyō Hoshi mounted on horseback, accompanied by his attendants of which two are shown on the reverse near an old pine tree, the poet pausing on their journey and contemplating the snow-capped summit of Mount Fuji shown majestically among swirling clouds executed in delicate openwork, revealing the three-case silver inro contained within. The lower rim of the sheath signed TOKAIRIN KATSUKOTO with a kakihan.

HEIGHT 5.6 cm, LENGTH 4.3 cm
 WEIGHT 80.5 g

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear. The silver insert with typical wear and scratches.

Saigyō Hoshi, born Sato Norikiyo (1118-1190), was a renowned Japanese poet and monk of the late Heian and early Kamakura periods. Initially a warrior in the service of Emperor Toba, he renounced his courtly obligations in 1140, embracing a monastic life that led him to travel extensively across Japan. These journeys not only reflected his spiritual quest but also provided the experiences and landscapes that inspired his waka poetry, which remains celebrated as a pinnacle of the Japanese literary tradition. The artist is listed in Robert E. Haynes, *The Index of Japanese Sword Fittings and Associated Artists*, p. 583-584 (H 02797.0).

MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a closely related mixed-metal openwork saya inro depicting foreigners on horseback looking at Mount Fuji, 5.6 cm high, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, object number 29.100.824. Compare a closely related mixed-metal openwork saya inro depicting the same subject, by Mitsuyuki Kikuoka, 7.2 cm high, in the Victoria & Albert Museum, accession number M.157:1-1928.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related three-case mixed-metal saya inro depicting a Chinese scholar seated beneath a pine tree, by Jukakusai Katsutoshi, 8.4 cm high, at Bonhams, 20 March 2025, New York, lot 651 (sold together with a gold lacquer inro for USD 15,360 or approx. **EUR 13,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



41
KAJIMA IKKOKU II: A SUPERB MINIATURE SINGLE-CASE SHIBUICHI AND SHAKUDO INRO WITH HYOTAN AND KIKU

By Kajima Ikkoku II (1846-1925), signed Mitsuyoshi 光敬 Japan, Meiji period (1868-1912)

The inro of rectangular form with rounded corners, one side worked in shibuichi and shakudo with two halves forming the body, one side featuring a hyotan before a branch of maple leaves, incised in katakiribori, and the reverse with gold hirazogan to depict kiku blossoms supported by a bamboo post, with a butterfly above. The interior of gilt metal. Incised to the lower corner with the signature KOKEI.

The inro suspending a small shibuichi and shakudo ojime and a miniature ivory kagamibuta netsuke fitted with a copper plate that is decorated with gold hirazogan bamboo leaves.

HEIGHT 3.2 cm, LENGTH 2.1 cm
 DIAMETER (netsuke) 1.7 cm
 WEIGHT (total) 10 g

Provenance: A label inscribed with a collector's number '155' accompanies the lot.
Condition: Excellent condition.

AUCTION COMPARISON

For another work by the artist, signed Ikkoku, see a silver cigarette case with a finely engraved design of sparrows, at Bonhams, *Fine Japanese Art*, 13 September 2017, New York, lot 1355 (sold for USD 4,750 or approx. **EUR 5,500** converted and adjusted to inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 1,500
 Starting price EUR 800

42
A RARE MINIATURE SINGLE-CASE SHIBUICHI INRO WITH A KURUMI SKULL NETSUKE

Unsigned
 Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

The inro of flattened ovoid form, neatly engraved in katakiribori and kebori to depict a butterfly flying above grasses to each side.

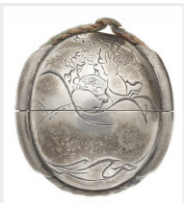
The inro suspending a small coral ojime and a superb skull netsuke carved from a kurumi nut.

LENGTH (the netsuke) 1.6 cm
 WEIGHT (total) 5.2 g

Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear and typical traces of use.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related silver miniature single-case inro incised with Hotei and a child, at Bonhams, *The Edward Wrangham Collection of Japanese Art*, 15 May 2012, London, lot 365 (sold for GBP 2,000 or approx. **EUR 3,400** converted and adjusted to inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 1,500
 Starting price EUR 800



43
**KANSHOSAI TOYO: AN INLAID THREE-CASE
 LACQUER INRO DEPICTING TWO HINA DOLLS**

Lineage of Kanshosai Toyo, signed Toyo 桃葉 and kakihan Japan, late 18th to early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of upright, rounded rectangular form, the gold-sprinkled roiro ground decorated to one side with a pair of Hina dolls, representing the Hina-matsuri festival, their round faces of stained bone, the robes inlaid in yellow and green stained antler with tsuishu lacquer, hardstone, and pewter details, the colorful inlays richly incised. The reverse intricately worked in gold, silver, and brown hiramaki-e and togidashi-e beneath gold and silver takamaki-e to depict a basket filled with shells for the kai-awase (shell matching) game, beside a blossoming sakura branch. The interior cases of nashiji with gold fundame rims. Signed to the underside in gold hiramaki-e TOYO with kakihan and inscribed Hakugyoku Hoin ga [image by Hoin Hakugyoku].

With an agate ojime.

HEIGHT 7 cm, LENGTH 4.6 cm

Condition: Very good condition with expected minor wear, the belt of the larger Hina doll repaired, and some light warping to inlays.

Iizuka (Kanshosai) Toyo was a distinguished lacquerer and inro decorator during the second half of the 18th century in Edo. He had many followers and used a wide range of techniques. For more information on the artist see Wrangham, E. A. (1995) *The Index of Inro Artists*, pp. 312-313.

The inscription **Hakugyoku hoin** (hoin/hogen being an honorific title) kaku likely refers to the Kano school painter Kano Eisen who created several designs for the Kanshosai line of lacquerers.

The Girl's Festival (Hina Matsuri), also known as Doll's Day, is celebrated on the 3rd of March. One of the five seasonal festivals, it centers on the display of male and female dolls representing an imperial Heian-period courtly couple.

Kai-awase, the shell-matching game depicted on the reverse, originated as a refined pastime of the Heian court in the 11th-12th centuries. Within the context of Hina Matsuri, the paired shells came to symbolize harmony, complementarity, and the idea of an ideal union. Miniature representations of kai-awase shells became standard elements in Hina doll displays and remain closely associated with the festival's auspicious and celebratory themes.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related lacquer four-case inro, also after a design by Kano Eisen featuring Hina dolls, at Bonhams, *The Edward Wrangham Collection of Japanese Art*, 15 May 2012, London, lot 259 (sold for GBP 6,000 or approx. **EUR 10,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



44
**OTANI MITSUTOSHI: A FINE THREE-CASE
 IVORY 'MONKEY COLLECTORS' INRO**

By Otani Mitsutoshi, signed Mitsutoshi 光利 Japan, late 19th century, Meiji period (1868-1912)

Of upright rectangular form with an oval section, exquisitely carved in varying degrees of relief and enriched with fine incision work, each side depicting a humorous assembly of monkeys acting as connoisseurs and collectors, engaged in cultured pursuits. They are shown reading unfurled scrolls, admiring porcelain vessels, and examining freshly unboxed theatre masks, while others are momentarily distracted from their scholarly activities by tempting peaches. One monkey is depicted retrieving a scroll painting beside its tomobako, inscribed Shoga (書画, "painting and calligraphy"). Each scene is contained within a shaped panel, divided by blossoming chrysanthemums and scrolling tendrils. On one side, at the lower section, signed within an oval reserve MITSUTOSHI.

HEIGHT 8.3 cm,
 LENGTH 5.8 cm

Provenance: Ex-collection Michael Tomkinson, no. 1055 (label to cover and interior), Nottingham, United Kingdom.
Condition: Excellent condition with minor expected wear.

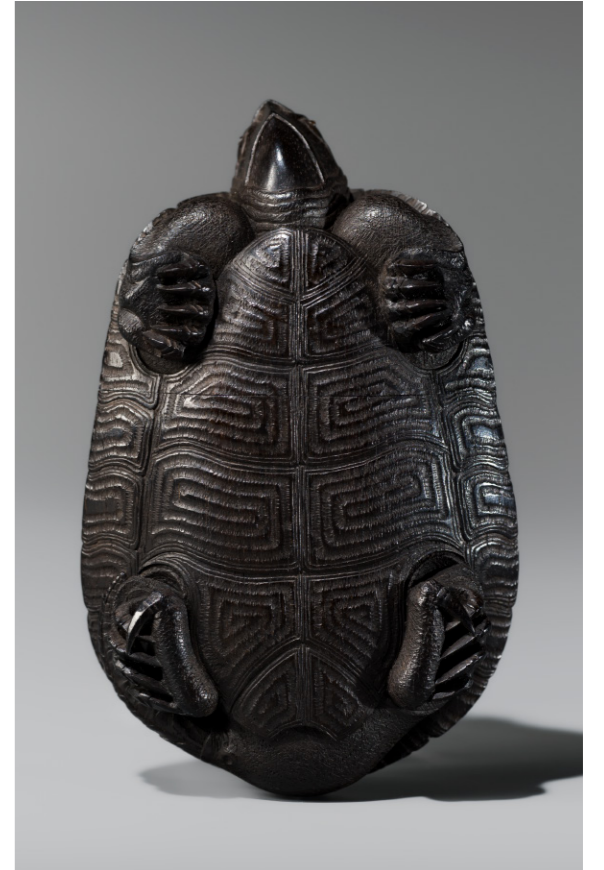


Michael Tomkinson (1841-1921)



Otani Mitsutoshi was a distinguished ivory carver of the late Meiji period, active between 1870 and 1900 in Asakusa, Tokyo. He trained under Hisamatsu Harutoshi, following a refined lineage of craftsmanship, and later instructed Ando Rokuzan (1885-1955), who became one of the most eminent ivory sculptors in Japan. Through his work and teaching, Mitsutoshi played a central role in the advancement of Meiji-period ivory carving.

Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



45
**A MASTERFUL SINGLE-CASE EBONY WOOD
 'TORTOISE' INRO, ATTRIBUTED TO HIDARI ISSAN**

Attributed to Hidari Issan, unsigned
 Japan, Iwashiro Province, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Superbly carved as a tortoise, the animal depicted with its limbs drawn inward to grasp the inro cord. The domed carapace is meticulously articulated with finely delineated scutes, while the underside (plastron) displays exceptional incision work. The head is subtly raised and turned slightly to the right, the eyes inlaid in dark horn, imbuing the creature with a vivid sense of life. The overall composition demonstrates a remarkable naturalism and technical virtuosity, characteristic of the finest works attributed to Hidari Issan.

LENGTH 9.3 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.

Hidari Issan ranks among the most accomplished netsuke carvers of the Edo period and was highly esteemed by Frederick Meinertzhagen, who placed him alongside masters such as Toyomasa, Tadatoshi, and Ikkan. His renderings of tortoises are widely regarded as unsurpassed, and the present inro stands as an exceptional example of this type.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

For a discussion of related tortoise-form inro, possibly created as 60th birthday gifts, see Kress, Heinze and Else, Tortoise-shaped Wooden Inro Carved by the Left-handed (左 = Hidari) Ichizan (Issan) 一山, Resident of Aizu (Wakamatsu), North of Fukushima, in *International Netsuke Society Journal*, Vol. 38, no. 4, Winter 2019, pp. 47-51.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related three-case wood inro by the same artist, signed Hidari Issan, 8.5 cm long, at Bonhams, *Fine Japanese Works of Art*, 16 March 2016, New York, lot 3115 (sold for USD 6,000 or approx. **EUR 7,200** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing). Compare a closely related three-case inro by the same artist, signed Hidari Issan, 8 cm long, at Zucke, *Fine Netsuke & Sagemono*, 3 May 2024, Vienna, lot 321 (sold for EUR 7,150 or approx. **EUR 7,600** adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 6,000
 Starting price EUR 3,000

46

SHOTO: A THREE-CASE CARVED BOXWOOD 'GOURD' INRO

By Shoto (Shotosai), signed Shoto 松濤
Japan, Iwashiro Province, mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved in takabori, the inro formed in the shape of a ribbed gourd issuing curling vines and delicately carved leaves, one tendril terminating in a small blossom. The naturalistic modeling cleverly follows the swelling contours of the fruit, the vines and foliage providing a lively decorative contrast to the smooth, rounded body. The interior compartments are lacquered in black. Signed to the lowest case SHOTO.

HEIGHT 7.3 cm, LENGTH 5.4 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear and some tiny nibbling to the décor. A small plugged knot to the wood near one of the bottom cord holes.

AUCTION COMPARISON

For a wood netsuke by the same artist, similarly carved, signed Shoto, see Bonhams, Fine Japanese Art, 15 May 2014, London, lot 10 (sold for GBP 2,125 or approx. **EUR 3,400** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 1,000
Starting price EUR 500



47

TOSHINAO: A FINE SMALL THREE-CASE WOOD 'BOTAN SHISHI' INRO

By Toshinao (Tounsai), signed Toun 東雲
Japan, Tokyo, late 19th century

The inro of rectangular form with rounded corners, finely carved in shishiaibori (sunken relief) to reveal a lobed cartouche enclosing a shishi jumping playfully, its eyes inlaid in dark horn within metal rims, backed by a hanabishi patterned ground. The reverse featuring peonies growing from rockwork, all framed by deeply incised scrolls to the sides and bottom. Signed underneath in sosho (running script) TOUN.

With a carved and stained antler ojime.

HEIGHT 5.3 cm, LENGTH 4.6 cm

Provenance: From an American private collection in Massachusetts. An old label inscribed with a collection number '35' to the interior of the cover and a second label '135' to the interior of the bottom case.

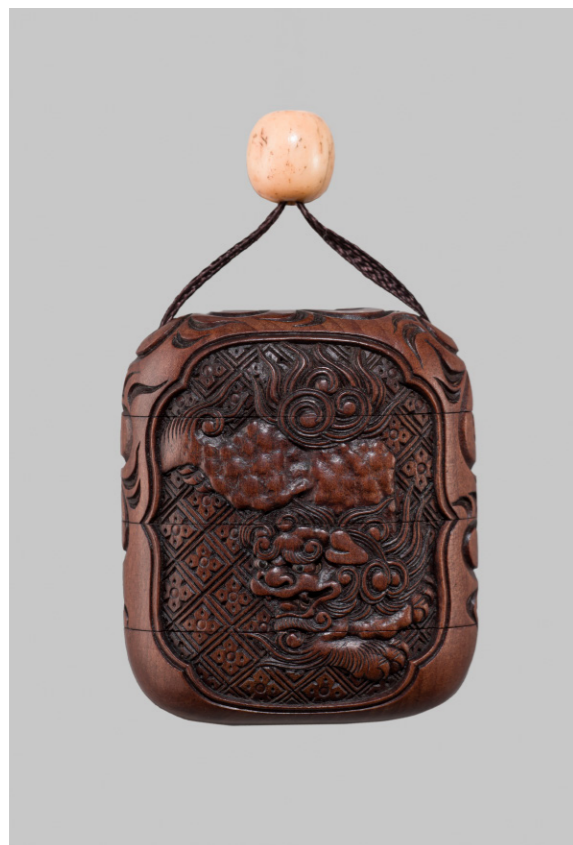
Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear and typical traces of use and a tiny loss to the edge of one eye inlay.

MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a related wood inro with similarly worked panels, dated 19th century, 7.4 cm tall, at the Victoria & Albert Museum, accession number W.464:1 to 3-1916.



Estimate EUR 1,000
Starting price EUR 500



48

A RARE SINGLE CASE INRO WITH A SHISHI

Unsigned
Japan, late 19th century

Finely carved in a circular form, this inro features a large shishi (lion) curiously peering over a gnarled rocky cliff, set against a hanabishi-diapered ground. The muscular body of the feline is detailed with a thick pelt of fur, while the face is adorned with a flowing mane, blowing in the wind. The lion appears to bite down on its lower lip as it carefully looks below, likely towards its cub, which it has cast off the cliff as part of the shishi no saka otoshi rite. The eyes are inlaid in dark horn, adding intensity to its gaze. The back is engraved with swirling cloud designs.

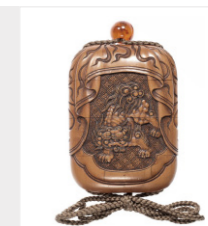
DIAMETER 5.6 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only very minor wear.

The design references the legend of Shishi no Saka Otoshi, in which the lion (shishi) tests the strength of its young by throwing them from a cliff. If the young lion survives the fall, it is believed to ensure a long life.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related boxwood three-case inro by Tounsai, dated late 19th century, 8.5 cm tall, at Bonhams, The Harriet Szechenyi Sale of Japanese Art, 8 November 2011, London, lot 269 (sold for GBP 1,750 or approx. **EUR 3,000** converted and adjusted to inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 1,500
Starting price EUR 800





49
**SUKENAGA: A SUPERB WOOD
 'TABAKO-IRE' TONKOTSU**

By Matsuda Sukenaga (1800-1871), signed Sukenaga 亮長
 Japan, Takayama, Hida Province, mid-19th century, Edo period
 (1615-1868)

Of upright rectangular form, exquisitely carved to simulate
 embossed leather (kinkarakawa), the surface decorated in high
 relief with a fierce three-clawed dragon writhing among swirling
 clouds in pursuit of the flaming pearl against a densely 'crackle-
 incised ground. The kanamono (pouch clasp) is brilliantly simulated
 as well, emulating shakudo, yet carved from dark wood in the shape
 of a dragon claw clutching a tama. The bottom signed within an oval
 reserve SUKENAGA.



HEIGHT 8.5 cm, LENGTH 5 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with minimal wear.

Matsuda Sukenaga (1800-1871), a craftsman associated with the
 Hida school of netsuke carving, ingeniously carved this tonkotsu so
 as to simulate the appearance of a leather tobacco pouch. Carvers
 and lacquer artists alike often took pride in demonstrating their
 technical virtuosity through the imitation of other materials and
 textures, a practice that allowed them to extend the expressive
 potential of their craft beyond its conventional applications.

**In the present example, particular attention may be drawn
 to the refined execution of the simulated stitching** and to the
 carefully modulated surface, which convincingly evokes the supple
 texture of worked leather.

MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood inro
 in the shape of a leather tobacco case
 with flowering plum, attributed to
 Matsuda Sukenaga, 7.7 cm high, in the
 Metropolitan Museum of Art, object
 number 91.1.717.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related wood tonkotsu
 imitating a kinkarakawa (embossed
 leather) pouch, 10.2 cm high, at
 Bonhams, Myth, Mirth, and Magic,
 Paris, 14 June 2023, lot 120 (sold for
 EUR 9,600 or **EUR 10,000** adjusted for
 inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000

50
**TANABE CHIKUUNSAI I:
 A RARE WOVEN BAMBOO TONKOTSU
 WITH EN-SUITE NETSUKE AND OJIME**

By Tanabe Chikuunsai I (1877-1937), signed
 Chikuunsai 竹雲齋 造
 Japan, early 20th century, Meiji period (1868-1912)

Rectangular in form with subtly concave section,
 exquisitely woven from split bamboo with old arrow
 shafts and rattan, variously stained and patterned,
 some of the exterior strips colored with lacquer. The
 base incised with the signature CHIKUUNSAI zo [made
 by Chikuunsai].

With a matching stained wood ojime shaped as a
 bamboo node, and a netsuke in the form of a ball of
 interlaced bamboo strips enclosing a similar smaller
 ball with a bell inside.

HEIGHT 9.8 cm, LENGTH 7.9 cm

Provenance: Collection of Dr. Richard Brown, thence
 by descent.

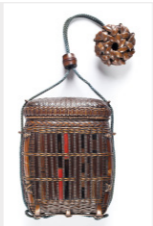
Condition: Excellent condition with minor wear.

Several weaving styles make up the body of the
 tonkotsu: mat plaiting (gozame-ami) and basic twill
 plaiting. Ornamental knots include spiral cross knots
 (juji-uzumaki-musubi) and double interlocking V
 knots, stitched insect wrapping (kakemushi-maki),
 and simple wrapping. Sections split from antique
 lacquered arrows are inserted vertically around the
 sides. The interior is double woven in a larger scale
 basic twill plaiting.

Tanabe Chikuunsai I (1877-1937) was one of the
 most influential Japanese bamboo artists of the early
 twentieth century and the founder of the renowned
 Tanabe lineage of bamboo masters. Born Tsuneo, the
 third son of Tanabe Chikatoki Yoshitsune, physician
 to the Amagasaki Domain, he apprenticed under the
 celebrated bamboo artist Wada Waichisai I at age
 twelve. In 1901, upon the death of his master, he
 inherited the art name Chikuunsai, or 'Bamboo Cloud',
 and established his own workshop in Osaka, later
 relocating to Sakai, a historic center of sencha and
 wabi-cha culture. His mastery blended Chinese-style
 precision with the spirit of Japanese literati aesthetics,
 earning him national acclaim and international
 recognition, including a Bronze Medal at the 1925
 Paris International Exhibition of Modern Decorative
 and Industrial Arts.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related
 woven bamboo tabako-ire by
 Tanabe Chikuunsai, 10 cm high,
 at Bonhams, 19 March 2013,
 New York, lot 2211 (sold for USD
 7,500 or approx. **EUR 9,100**
 converted and adjusted for
 inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 6,000
 Starting price EUR 3,000





51
KAJIKAWA: A FINE TOGIDASHI LACQUER 'DAIKON' TONKOTSU (TOBACCO CONTAINER)

By a member of the Kajikawa family, signed Kajikawa 梶川 saku 作
 Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of upright rectangular form with an oval section, bearing a lustrous roiro ground, finely decorated in gold and red takamaki-e, hiramaki-e, and togidashi maki-e, further enriched with gold powder and kirigane flakes. The design depicts a pair of daikon and turnip radishes with abundant leafy greens amid naturalistic foliage, rendered with a lively yet balanced composition. The interior is finished in roiro lacquer and distinctively lined with navy-blue silk decorated with motifs of windblown reeds.

Fitted with a glass ojime imitating agate and a large wood netsuke carved as a crouching toad, the eyes inlaid in buffalo horn.

HEIGHT 8 cm, LENGTH 7.3 cm
 LENGTH (the netsuke) 4.7 cm

Condition: The tonkotsu in excellent condition with only minor wear. The netsuke with old losses and cracks.

Daikon radishes are traditionally associated with Daikoku, one of the Seven Gods of Good Fortune, and are regarded as auspicious symbols of prosperity and abundance.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related six-case lacquer inro depicting doves perched upon a fruiting persimmon branch, by the Kajikawa family, also lacquered in togidashi-e, 8.2 cm high, at Bonhams, The Edward Wrangham Collection of Japanese Art, London, 6 November 2013, lot 163 (sold for GBP 4,375 or approx. **EUR 7,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



52
GYOKKEI: A RARE INLAID CHERRY BARK 'INSECTS' TONKOTSU (TOBACCO CONTAINER)

By Gyokkei, signed Gyokkei 玉桂
 Japan, Tokyo, second half of the 19th century

Of oval section, constructed on a wooden core with sides clad in clear-lacquered cherry bark (yamazakura), finely inlaid in gold, buffalo horn, mother-of-pearl, and pewter to depict a lively array of insects and mollusks crawling across the surface. Among them are a large rhinoceros beetle, a snail, and a pair of butterflies, each rendered with remarkable precision and naturalistic detail. The interior is finished in dark brown and red lacquer. The lower section is signed in mother-of-pearl inlay GYOKKEI, while the interior of the cover bears an incised signature Takewa (武和), likely identifying the woodworker responsible for the construction of the tonkotsu prior to its decoration.

HEIGHT 8.5 cm, LENGTH 7.1 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and manufacturing inherent irregularities. Some remnants of glue around the inlays.

Japanese mountain cherry (yamazakura) is a wild species prized for its resilient bark, which regenerates after careful harvesting. The bark is traditionally dried for several years before being cut, shaped, and polished, then applied to a wooden core using natural animal glue (nikawa). This technique allows for both the preservation of the material's natural beauty and the incorporation of intricate decorative inlays, as seen in the present work.

Gyokkei is better known as a netsuke carver, particularly for his finely inlaid depictions of snails in buffalo horn. The present tonkotsu demonstrates the same refined technique and naturalistic observation, translated into a larger and more complex format.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

For a related netsuke by the artist, featuring a similarly executed snail, see Barry Davies *Oriental Art* (1995), 100 Selected Pieces from the Netsuke Collection of Scott Meredith, no. 41.



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000





53
SHIBAYAMA: A FINE MIXED METAL INLAID KEYAKI WOOD 'BATS, CROWS AND MOON' TONKOTSU (TOBACCO CONTAINER)

By a member of the Shibayama family, signed Shibayama 芝山 Japan, Tokyo, Meiji period (1868-1912)

Rounded in form with a slightly concave section, finely carved and inlaid with shakudo, shibuichi, and suaka, as well as mother-of-pearl for the moon and gold for the eyes, to depict on one side a pair of crows in flight before a full moon, while the other shows a small bat fluttering through mist beside a waning crescent moon. The cover further embellished with a group of three small turtles. Signed within a mother-of-pearl inlaid reserve SHIBAYAMA.

HEIGHT 7.6 cm, LENGTH 8.7 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor surface wear and inherent natural imperfections. Light traces of handling and use. Occasional small dents and faint surface scratches.

The inlay technique known as Shibayama takes its name from the Shibayama region of present-day Chiba Prefecture. Characteristic works are distinguished by their meticulous application of diverse materials, including ivory, mother-of-pearl, tortoiseshell, and horn, often combined to achieve richly textured and pictorial surfaces. The technique was pioneered by Onoki Senzo, an Edo-period craftsman active in the late 18th century, who later adopted the name of his native region. Shibayama work reached its greatest refinement during the Meiji period, when such elaborately inlaid objects became highly prized both domestically and for export.

Estimate EUR 1,500
 Starting price EUR 800

54
YOYUSAI: A FINE GOLD-LACQUER PAULOWNIA WOOD 'CHRYSANTHEMUMS' TONKOTSU (TOBACCO CONTAINER)

By Hara Yoyusai (1772-1845/6), signed Yoyusai 羊遊齋 Japan, late 18th to early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved from paulownia (kiri) wood and richly decorated in thick gold takamaki-e, the surface intentionally rubbed to reveal the contrasting black ground beneath, creating a subtle and sophisticated patina. The decoration comprises an elegant array of circular chrysanthemum blossoms, a motif closely associated with the Imperial house, rendered with bold yet refined simplicity. The interior case is finished with gold fundame rims. The underside is signed in gold hiramaki-e YOYUSAI.

HEIGHT 8.3 cm, LENGTH 8.2 cm

Provenance: From an old private collection in France. A collector's label affixed to the interior of the cover, inscribed 'Yoyusai fin 18'.
Condition: Excellent condition with only very minor wear and light traces of use.

Estimate EUR 1,000
 Starting price EUR 500



55
AN INLAID PAULOWNIA WOOD 'AQUATIC LIFE' TONKOTSU (TOBACCO CONTAINER)

Unsigned Japan, 19th century, Meiji period (1868-1912)

Rustically fashioned with a flush-fitting lid, the case crafted from paulownia (kiri) wood, finely incised in kebori and inlaid with patinated copper and antler, to depict on one side a carp leaping and a sea bream swimming in pond waters over which an antler-inlaid goose flies, while the opposite side shows a large lotus leaf sheltering a small turtle. The kiri wood exhibiting an attractive grain and warm, naturally grown patina.

With a bone ojime.

HEIGHT 8.3 cm, LENGTH 7.7 cm

Condition: Good condition with minor surface wear and inherent natural imperfections. A small repair to the sea bream's tail.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related Shibayama-inlaid paulownia (kiri) wood tonkotsu depicting egrets and lotus, signed Teizan, 8.4 cm high, at Zacks, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, Vienna, 4 November 2022, lot 210 (sold for **EUR 2,340**).



Estimate EUR 1,000
 Starting price EUR 500





56
**A RARE LACQUERED CHERRY WOOD
 'SAMURAI ACCOUTREMENTS' TONKOTSU
 (TOBACCO CONTAINER)**

Unsigned
 Japan, 19th century

Of upright rectangular form with an oval section, finely crafted from cherry wood and decorated in iro-e takamaki-e and hiramaki-e, as well as sabiji-nuri (simulating iron). One side depicts a yanone (arrowhead) pierced with a stylized cherry blossom design, alongside a tsuba ornamented with a galloping horse. The reverse shows a freshly cut branch of cherry blossoms in full bloom. The upper cord apertures are inlaid with bone.

With an amber glass ojime.

HEIGHT 9.8 cm, LENGTH 8 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor surface wear and inherent natural imperfections. Light traces of handling and use. Occasional minute nicks and faint surface scratches.

Cherry blossoms (sakura) were closely associated with the samurai ethos, symbolizing the transience of life and the ideal of a brief but honorable existence. Horse imagery likewise held strong martial connotations, reflecting the importance of mounted warfare and equestrian skill among the warrior class. Both motifs appear frequently on sword fittings and related accoutrements, where they combine aesthetic refinement with references to status and martial identity.

Estimate EUR 1,500
 Starting price EUR 800



57
**A RARE CARVED BAMBOO
 'ARABABA AND THE YOKAI BOX'
 SAGEMONO CASE**

Signed with two seals Toshimitsu 利光 and Chincho 珍蝶
 Japan, late 19th century, Meiji period
 (1868-1912)

Of otoshi-zutsu type with a fitted lid, finely carved in shallow relief. One side depicts the elderly Arababa at the dramatic moment immediately after opening the treasure box, confronted by a terrifying, long-tongued, one-eyed bakemono emerging before her. The old woman is rendered in a contorted, expressive posture, her arms thrown upward and her face twisted in alarm, vividly conveying the sudden shock of the encounter.

The reverse is incised with a mortar and pestle accompanied by two sparrows hovering above, together with the inscription Mukashi banashi (昔噺, "old folktale"), and the artist's seals Toshimitsu and Chincho. The top and bottom are fitted with ebony wood mounts.

LENGTH 18.5 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with minor wear, traces of use, and natural flaws to the material such as small age cracks and imperfections.

The scene illustrates the well-known folktale Shita-kiri Suzume ("The Tongue-Cut Sparrow"), capturing the pivotal moment in which the greedy old woman (Arababa) opens the forbidden basket and unleashes a host of supernatural beings. In contrast to the kindness of her husband, her avarice leads to immediate punishment, a moral lesson emphasized through the dramatic and fantastical imagery of the emerging yokai.

**AUCTION
 COMPARISON**
 Compare a related lacquer kiseruzutsu depicting Arababa and the Yokai box, at Zacke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, Vienna, 8 November 2024, lot 45 (sold for **EUR 7,800**).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000





58
**AN UNUSUAL LACQUERED WOOD
 'KANNON BOSATSU' KISERUZUTSU
 (PIPE CASE)**

Japan, late 19th to early 20th century,
 Meiji period (1868-1912)

Of muso-zutsu type, the ground elaborately lacquered to simulate bundled bamboo strips and finely decorated in gold, silver, and red takamaki-e and hiramaki-e. The design depicts Kannon Bosatsu in the form of Bato Kannon, seated on a lotus pedestal and shown with six arms radiating around the body, each holding characteristic attributes including a lotus, bow and arrow, kongo (vajra), and gantha (bell), reflecting an esoteric (Mikkyo) interpretation of the deity. The figure is draped in flowing robes leaving the right shoulder exposed, the rounded face rendered with a serene expression and framed by a mandorla.

Below the figure is a rectangular gilt cartouche containing a lengthy inscription, while the reverse bears two rubbed and now illegible signatures. The rim and cord attachment of shakudo.

Inscription:

Musashi no kuni, Shinagawa, Hozo-ji zo,
 Masashige no hata no mon, mitsu naigu no
 hitotsu o mosu 武蔵国、品川、法蔵寺蔵〇、正
 成籐紋、三内具一ヲ模
 [Musashi Province, Shinagawa, Hozoji Temple
 collection; Masashige's banner crest; modeled
 after one of the Sannaigu crests]

LENGTH 20.2 cm

Provenance: From the private collection of
 Sharen Chappel, United States.

Condition: Good condition with minor wear. A
 few scratches and tiny losses to the lacquer as
 well as some expected rubbing.

**The inscription referencing Hozoji Temple
 in Shinagawa** suggests that the figure
 represents Bato Kannon as enshrined at the
 site, here rendered in a simplified six-armed
 form.



Hozoji Temple, Shinagawa City,
 Musashi Province

Estimate EUR 800
 Starting price EUR 400



59
**ROSETSU: AN ELABORATE INLAID
 WOVEN BAMBOO 'WARABI AND
 HAMAGURI' KISERUZUTSU
 (PIPE CASE)**

By Rosetsu, signed Rosetsu 芦雪
 Japan, late 19th to early 20th century,
 Meiji period (1868-1912)

The muso-zutsu type pipe case finely woven
 with parallel vertical spotted bamboo strips,
 inlaid in tortoiseshell, buffalo horn, and mother
 of pearl, depicting two stems of warabi (young
 fern shoots) beside three hamaguri shells. The
 rim and cord attachment are made from gold.
 The reverse with the inlaid signature tablet
 signed in seal form ROSETSU.

LENGTH 20 cm

Condition: Good condition with few minor
 repairs to the inlays.

Rosetsu was an inlay specialist of pipe cases,
 who collaborated on several occasions with
 Koshin and Zeshin school lacquerers. For more
 information on the artist see P Sydney L. Moss
 Ltd. (2010) They are all fire and every one doth
 shine. The Elly Nordskog Collection of Japanese
 Inro, Pipecases and Netsuke, London, p. 308.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related woven rattan
 kiseruzutsu by the same artist,
 signed in seal form Rosetsu,
 at Bonhams, Fine Japanese
 Works of Art from the Edward
 Wrangham Collection, 18 June
 2018, London, lot 77 (sold for
 GBP 3,500 or approx.
EUR 3,400 converted and
 adjusted to inflation at the time
 of writing).



Estimate EUR 1,200
 Starting price EUR 600



60
SHOGYOKU: A SUPERB INLAID WOVEN RATTAN 'ROARING TIGER' KISERUZUTSU (PIPE CASE)

By Shogyoku, signed Shogyoku 昭玉 and sealed To 東 Japan, late 19th century, Meiji period (1868-1912)

Of muso-zutsu form, masterfully woven in rattan, with a seam inlaid in buffalo horn, the design richly inlaid in stained boxwood to depict a snarling tiger. The beast is rendered with remarkable dynamism, its powerful body emerging from the woven ground, while the visible eye, finely inlaid in mother-of-pearl, imparts a striking sense of vitality and presence. The cord attachment is fitted with a metal rim and gilt eyelet. Signed SHOGYOKU on a mother-of-pearl inlaid plaque below a green-stained cartouche bearing the seal To 東, possibly indicating an association with the celebrated artist Suzuki Tokoku, known for similarly refined inlaid kiseruzutsu.

LENGTH 20.3 cm

Provenance: Ex-collection Edward Wrangham, collection no. 2276, acquired from Malcolm Fairley, London, 2008. Sold at Bonhams, The Edward Wrangham Collection of Japanese Art, 6 November 2013, London, lot 102.



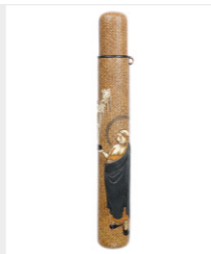
Edward 'Ted' Wrangham with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, 1980

Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear and typical traces of use, some minor repairs to the woven rattan ground.

Shogyoku, active in the late 19th century, is known for finely crafted kiseruzutsu distinguished by the sophisticated integration of weaving and inlay. The present example exemplifies this approach, combining technical precision with a bold, sculptural treatment of the subject. The presence of the seal To 東 further suggests a possible connection to the workshop or circle of Suzuki Tokoku (1846–1913), one of the leading masters of this specialized technique.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related woven rattan kiseruzutsu with similar inlays by Suzuki Tokoku, sealed Tokoku and Baiyu, at Bonhams, The Edward Wrangham Collection of Japanese Art part II, 10 May 2011, London, lot 149 (sold for GBP 15,600 or approx. **EUR 27,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



61
SHOGYOKU: A FINE INLAID WOVEN RATTAN 'CHORYO AND KOSEKIKO' KISERUZUTSU (PIPE CASE), WITH A TABAKO-IRE (TOBACCO POUCH)

By Shogyoku, signed Shogyoku 昭玉 Japan, late 19th century, Meiji period (1868-1912)

The finely woven rattan kiseruzutsu of muso-zutsu form, with a seam inlaid in dark wood, the design richly inlaid with boxwood and stained bone, depicting the well-known scene of Choryo kneeling respectfully as he presents a shoe to the aged sage Kosekiko. The composition is rendered with refined detail, the figures emerging subtly from the woven ground. The rim and cord aperture are lined in gilt metal. Signed within a square reserve inlaid in mother-of-pearl SHOGYOKU.

With a globular coral ojime and a leather tabako-ire (tobacco pouch), fitted with a gold kanamono in the form of a stylized flock of geese; the reverse of the fitting finely incised in katakiribori with reeds and a veiled moon.

LENGTH (kiseruzutsu) 21.9 cm
 LENGTH (tabako-ire) 12.2 cm

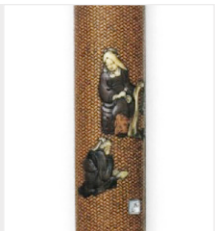
Condition: Excellent condition with only very minor wear.

The subject depicts the celebrated encounter between Choryo (Zhang Liang), the famed strategist of the early Han dynasty, and the mysterious hermit Kosekiko (Huang Shigong). According to the legend, Kosekiko repeatedly tested Choryo's humility by demanding that he retrieve and present his discarded shoe. Choryo's patience and respect ultimately earned him a secret military text, laying the foundation for his later success. This episode became a popular theme in East Asian art, symbolizing discipline, virtue, and the transmission of knowledge.

Shogyoku, active in the late 19th century, is known for finely crafted kiseruzutsu distinguished by the sophisticated integration of intricate weaving and delicate inlay.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related kiseruzutsu with similar inlays by the same artist, signed Shogyoku, illustrated in Virginia Atchley and Neil Davey, *The Virginia Atchley Collection of Japanese Miniature Arts*, p. 296, no. S32.



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000





62
**KOSHIN: A FINE LACQUERED
 AND WOVEN RATTAN
 'KINGFISHER AND LOTUS'
 KISERUZUTSU (PIPE CASE)**

By Ishikawa Koshin, signed Koshin 古真
 Japan, late 19th century, Meiji period
 (1868-1912)

Of slender hexagonal muso-zutsu form, the finely woven rattan ground incorporating a silver-mottled, black-lacquered reserve in the manner of a hanging scroll painting. This reserve is exquisitely decorated in gold and iro-e takamaki-e, hiramaki-e, and black and gold togidashi-e to depict a kingfisher perched on a lotus stem issuing a broad leaf above gently swirling waters, the composition heightened with delicate kinpun highlights. The cord attachment and eyelet are rimmed in gilt metal. Signed KOSHIN within an oval reserve.

LENGTH 20.8 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only very minor wear, the signature slightly rubbed.

Ishikawa Koshin, not to be confused with Maeyama Koshin who worked in a related style, was a skilled lacquer artist known for producing inro and kiseruzutsu distinguished by their refined pictorial decoration. For further information, see Wrangham, E. A. (1995), *The Index of Inro Artists*, pp. 149-150.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related woven rattan kiseruzutsu by the same artist, signed Koshin, illustrated in *The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Japanese Art - Treasures of Imperial Japan, Lacquer Part I*, 1995, no. 95.



Estimate EUR 1,500
 Starting price EUR 800

63
**BOKKOKU: A RARE BAMBOO
 'INK PAINTING OF A CROW'
 KISERUZUTSU (PIPE CASE)**

By Bokkoku, signed Boku 墨 kore 之 to 刀
 and sealed Koku 谷
 Japan, late 19th century, Meiji period
 (1868-1912)

Of muso-zutsu form, crafted from a broad section of bamboo and delicately engraved with a crow perched upon a rock, shown from behind as it gazes outward, with a cascading waterfall rising above. The composition is executed in bold, deliberate strokes, closely evoking the aesthetic of ink painting (sumi-e), from which the design clearly draws inspiration.

The pipe case is fitted with a gold rim. Signed below the crow BOKU kore to [carved by Boku] and sealed Koku.

LENGTH 21.7 cm

Condition: Good condition with minor wear and age cracks.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

For a discussion of the artist, see Moss, Paul (2002). *Bokko, Bokkoku, Bokuboku*, in the *International Netsuke Society Journal (INSJ)*, Vol. 22, no. 4, p. 18-44. Pl. 21 shows a related example of birds similarly engraved in the manner of an ink painting.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related bamboo kiseruzutsu decorated with a leaping carp over a breaking waves, signed Bokkoku, at Bonhams, *Fine Japanese Works of Art from the Edward Wrangham Collection*, London, 9 July 2018, lot 75 (sold for GBP 1,625 or approx. **EUR 2,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 1,200
 Starting price EUR 600





64

**HOJI: A FINE TSUISHU LACQUER
'KANSHIN' KISERUZUTSU (PIPE CASE)**

By Hoji, signed Hoji 豊次 to 刀
Japan, Tokyo, late 19th century, Meiji period
(1868-1912)

Of slender muso-zutsu type, superbly carved in tsuishu (carved red lacquer) with a continuous narrative scene depicting Kanshin crawling between the legs of a rogue, an episode rendered with striking clarity and compositional balance. The central figure is shown in a posture of deliberate humility, observed by two boys and an elderly man, all set within a finely articulated landscape of gnarled pine trees and swirling clouds. The ground is decorated with a neatly carved manji-diaper pattern. The rim and cord attachment are fitted in gold. Signed to the interior HOJI to [carved by Hoji].

LENGTH 22.4 cm

Provenance: Ex-collection of Ugo Alfons Casal.

Condition: A few repaired age cracks to the lower end as well as a fine hairline crack to the lower boy. Otherwise excellent condition with minor expected wear and presenting beautifully.



Ugo Alfons Casal

Hoji, a pupil of Matsuki Hokei, was among the foremost lacquer artists working in Tokyo during the Meiji period and was particularly noted for his mastery of tsuishu. He later served as a professor at the Tokyo Academy of Fine Arts, playing an important role in preserving and transmitting traditional lacquer techniques within the context of modern artistic education.

Estimate EUR 2,500

Starting price EUR 1,200

Kanshin (231-196 BC), a celebrated figure of early Chinese history, is remembered for an episode in which he endured public humiliation by crawling between the legs of a ruffian. Rather than reacting with violence, he chose restraint, demonstrating discipline and foresight—qualities that later contributed to his rise as a distinguished general of the Han dynasty. The subject became a popular moral exemplum in East Asian art, symbolizing patience, humility, and ultimate triumph through self-control.



Woodblock print entitled *Kanshin matakuguri no zu* (Kanshin crawling through the legs), by Utagawa Kuniyoshi, dated 1835

65

**MATSUKI HOKEI: A SUPERB TSUISHU LACQUER
'RAKAN AND SAMURAI'
KISERUZUTSU (PIPE CASE)**

By Matsuki Hokei, signed Hokei 豊慶
Japan, Tokyo, late 19th century, Meiji period (1868-1912)

Of muso-zutsu type, superbly carved in tsuishu (carved red lacquer) with a cleverly composed continuous scene. A rakan (arhat) is shown seated in meditation, hands joined at the chest and draped in flowing robes, his face rendered with an expression of deep concentration. Behind him stands a samurai with raised sword, the two figures set along the banks of a meandering stream winding through luxuriant bamboo groves. The entire composition is elevated above a finely carved wave-like pattern. The rim and cord attachment are fitted in gold. Signed to the interior HOKEI and with a second inscription Takada 高田, likely identifying the previous owner.

LENGTH 22.1 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear and a few fine hairline cracks to the sides.

Matsuki Hokei was a renowned lacquer artist active in Tokyo during the early Meiji period, distinguished for his exceptional mastery of tsuishu (carved red lacquer). He served as a professor at the Tokyo Academy of Fine Arts, where he contributed to the transmission and development of traditional lacquer techniques within the emerging framework of modern Japanese art education.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related tsuishu lacquer kiseruzutsu depicting the story of Minamoto no Yorimasa and Ino Hayata slaying the legendary nue, by the same artist, signed Hokei, illustrated in Virginia Atchley and Neil Davey, *The Virginia Atchley Collection of Japanese Miniature Arts*, p. 292, no. S26.



Estimate EUR 2,500

Starting price EUR 1,200





66
**A LARGE AND UNUSUAL METAL-INLAID WOOD
'IRISES AND WAVES' SAGEMONO CASE**

Unsigned
Japan, 19th century

Of exceptional size and presence, likely intended for a large pipe or possibly conceived as a yatate (portable writing set), of muso-zutsu type and crafted from honey-toned wood with an attractive grain. The surface is finely inlaid with silver to depict a fully blossomed iris (shobu), rendered with elegant simplicity.

The top, rim, and cord attachment are fitted with earlier sword fittings - a superb suaka fuchi and kashira - each decorated with crashing waves and scattered dew drops in finely worked silver takazogan, executed in the refined manner of the Omori school.

LENGTH 28.2 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor surface wear and inherent natural imperfections. Faint traces of handling and use. Occasional minute nicks and shallow surface scratches.

Following the Haitorei Edict of 1876, which abolished the wearing of swords in public, sword fittings such as fuchi and kashira lost their original function and were increasingly repurposed into decorative objects. Craftsmen adapted these finely worked components into new forms, as seen in the present piece, where the repurposed fittings retain their original craftsmanship while contributing to a newly conceived object.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare the treatment of waves on the present piece to those on a tsuba by Omori Teruhide, dated 1777, at Bonhams, Fine Japanese Art, 6 November 2022, London, lot 274 (sold for GBP 3,125 or approx. **EUR 4,200** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 1,500
Starting price EUR 800



67
**A GOLD-INLAID DARK WOOD
'CRABS' KISERUZUTSU (PIPE CASE)**

Unsigned
Japan, late 19th century, Meiji period (1868-1912)

Of muso-zutsu type, finely crafted from dark wood of attractive grain and delicately inlaid in gold to depict a pair of crabs skittering across a fine, naturally stippled ground suggestive of sand. The composition is elegantly understated, the small creatures rendered with lively naturalism and subtle movement against the textured surface. The rim and cord attachment loop are fitted in gilt metal.

LENGTH 20.2 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only very minor wear.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related lacquered, gold-inlaid kaki wood kiseruzutsu with a design of magnolias, illustrated in Virginia Atchley and Neil Davey, *The Virginia Atchley Collection of Japanese Miniature Arts*, p. 286, no. S16.



Estimate EUR 1,500
Starting price EUR 800





68
**HARUMITSU: A MASTERFUL INLAID BOXWOOD
 'SNAKE AND SPARROW' KISERUZUTSU (PIPE CASE)**

By Harumitsu (Shunko), signed Harumitsu 春光
 Japan, Yamada, Ise Province, second half of the 19th century

Of otoshi-zutsu form, superbly carved in high relief to depict a sinuous snake coiling tightly around the composition, its elongated body creating a dynamic vertical movement. The scales are finely and rhythmically incised, enhancing the sense of tension and vitality. The predator's head is rendered with jaws agape, exposing sharp fangs inlaid in bone, as it seizes a **small sparrow – its body partly engulfed, with wings and tail emerging below while the head protrudes above, its beak opened, crying out in distress.**

The snake's eye is inlaid in amber with a dark horn pupil, while the bird's visible eye is similarly inlaid in dark horn. The composition is both sculptural and highly animated, demonstrating exceptional technical control and sensitivity to form. Signed to the lower section on the reverse within a rectangular reserve HARUMITSU.

With a silvered iron pipe.

LENGTH (the kiseruzutsu) 22.4 cm
 LENGTH (the pipe) 20.2 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only minor wear and few tiny age cracks. The pipe with some corrosion.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of a snake preying on a frog by the same artist, signed Harumitsu, at Zacks, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 8 November 2024, Vienna, lot 121 (sold for **EUR 6,500**).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



69
**HARUMITSU: A FINE AND AMUSING
 BOXWOOD 'SAMURAI PRACTICING ARCHERY'
 KISERUZUTSU (PIPE CASE)**

By Harumitsu (Shunko), signed Harumitsu 春光
 Japan, Yamada, Ise Province, second half of the 19th century

Published: Atchley, Virginia / Davey, Neil (2006) The Virginia Atchley Collection of Japanese Miniature Arts, p. 304, no. S44.

Of otoshi-zutsu type, superbly carved in high relief (takabori) with a dynamic figural composition set within a mountainous landscape. A samurai overseer stands above two retainers engaged in archery practice. One has just loosed his arrow, missing the mark, while his companion reacts in dismay, clutching his head in anticipation of reprimand. The supervising figure above, stern and composed, reinforces the tension of the moment. Above them rises a finely carved mountainous ridge, its textured surface and layered forms adding depth and structure to the composition. The reverse with a rectangular reserve signed HARUMITSU.

LENGTH 20.3 cm

Provenance: Ex-collection Lt. Col. James Bellhouse Gaskell (1848–1925), United Kingdom. Ex-collection Virginia Atchley, California, thence by descent. Rosemary Bandini, London, 30 May 2017. The Eva & Aubrey Sweet Collection, Melbourne, Australia, acquired from the above. A copy of the original invoice from Rosemary Bandini, stating a purchase price of AUD 5,000 (approx. **EUR 4,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing), accompanies the lot. An old label inscribed "Harumitsu" affixed above the base.



Eva and Aubrey Sweet

Condition: Excellent condition with only minor wear.

Relatively little is known about Harumitsu (also called Shunko), though he is generally considered to have worked within the Masanao lineage of Yamada in Ise Province. Certain stylistic features also suggest affinities with the Tanba and Tsu schools. He is better known for his netsuke, and pipe cases by the artist are comparatively rare.

Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500





70
**A RARE AND ELABORATE KUROGAKI AND ANTLER
'BAT AND CHARCOAL' KISERUZUTSU (PIPE CASE)**

Unsigned
Japan, late 19th century, Meiji period (1868-1912)

Of senryu-zutsu type, finely carved from richly figured kurogaki (black persimmon) wood in the form of a charcoal log, the surface meticulously textured and engraved to heighten its naturalistic appearance. The upper section is ingeniously worked to accommodate, on one side, a pair of sticks for sweets, and on the other, a set of tongs for handling coals.

The interior is hollowed to receive a bamboo pipe with silver mounts, the mouthpiece finely incised with a bamboo stalk, while the chamber is decorated with a small bird. The pipe is secured by a superbly carved antler fitting in the form of a bat among reishi fungi, adding a refined and auspicious sculptural element to the ensemble.

LENGTH 19.8 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with minor wear.

Estimate EUR 2,000
Starting price EUR 1,000

71
**A LARGE AND IMPRESSIVE
WOOD 'LOTUS LEAVES' DOUBLE
KISERUZUTSU (PIPE CASE)**

Unsigned
Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of senryu-zutsu form, the large double pipe case finely carved as overlapping lotus leaves issuing from slender stems, ingeniously conceived to accommodate two pipes or a pipe with associated implements. The leaves are rendered with naturalistic curvature and subtle veining, creating a fluid and organic composition. The two stems curve around the composition, each forming a cord attachment to the back and front, while the wider compartment is reinforced with antler inlays at the junction of the leaves.

With a gold, shakudo and bamboo kiseru (pipe).

LENGTH 22.1 cm, WIDTH 4 cm

Provenance: From an American private collection in Massachusetts. An old label 'F 6' to the reverse of the shorter compartment.
Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear and natural imperfections. A few small holes to the wood and the underside hollowed.

Estimate EUR 2,000
Starting price EUR 1,000



72

**A FINE ANTLER
'FROG, LOTUS AND DRAGONFLY'
KISERUZUTSU (PIPE CASE)**

Unsigned
Japan, Tokyo, Asakusa district, second half
of the 19th century

Of senryu-zutsu type, exquisitely carved in openwork from a particularly fine and well-selected section of stag antler, depicting a blossoming lotus stalk with broad leaves, delicately incised veins, and emerging buds. A frog is perched upon the stem, its body finely textured and the head sensitively modeled, while a dragonfly flutters nearby, its wings intricately detailed with minutely carved veining. The forelegs of the frog are ingeniously carved in openwork to form a cord attachment for suspension, seamlessly integrated into the overall composition.

LENGTH 19.4 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with minor wear and only very few typical 'natural imperfections'.

The present work demonstrates a masterful understanding of material. The carver has carefully selected a section of antler of exceptional purity, its pale, ivory-like surface enhancing the clarity of the carving. The focal motif - the frog - is positioned within the most refined area of the material, while the natural grain and curvature are skillfully incorporated into the composition, resulting in a work of both technical sophistication and aesthetic balance.

Estimate EUR 2,000
Starting price EUR 1,000



73

**SEKKO: A FINE ANTLER
'FROG AND INSECTS ON A BEAN POD'
KISERUZUTSU (PIPE CASE)**

By Sekko, signed Sekko雪光 and sealed Nao 直
Japan, Tokyo, Asakusa district, second half of
the 19th century

Of otoshi-zutsu type, finely carved from a curved section of antler in the form of a bean pod issuing from leafy vines. A frog is perched near the upper end beside a fly and a wasp, its eyes inlaid in dark horn, while a small spider crawls toward the lower section. The composition makes inventive use of the material, with one of the vines forming the eyelet for the cord attachment. Signed SEKKO with the seal Nao to the narrow side.

LENGTH 20.3 cm

Provenance: Ex-collection James A. Rose. Bonhams, The James A. Rose Collection of Netsuke and Sagemono, 17 September 2013, New York, lot 2091 (part lot).

Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear and few natural imperfections to the material including a few tiny holes and age cracks.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related antler kiseruzutsu with a frog on a bean pod, signed Mune, at Lempertz, Auction 1213 - Asian Art, 9 December 2022, Cologne, lot 417 (sold for EUR 1,512 or approx. **EUR 1,700** adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 1,200
Starting price EUR 600





74
**KOSAI: A CHARMING ANTLER
 'MONKEYS' KISERUZUTSU
 (PIPE CASE)**

By Kosai, signed Kosai 孝斎 and sealed Hosai 宝斎
 Japan, Tokyo, Asakusa district, second half
 of the 19th century

Of muso-zutsu type, finely carved in high relief to depict an engaging scene of two monkeys perched within a towering peach tree rising from craggy, rock-strewn terrain. The naturally gnarled surface of the antler is ingeniously utilized to form the trunk of the tree and a rock to the reverse, demonstrating a sensitive response to the material. The animals are rendered with remarkable delicacy, their fur finely textured and their poses lively and expressive. One of the upper branches is executed in delicate openwork to form the cord attachment, seamlessly integrated into the composition. The reverse is signed KOSAI and bears the red seal of his master Hosai, possibly indicating supervision or workshop affiliation.

LENGTH 21.3 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with expected wear and few minor age cracks.

Estimate EUR 1,500
 Starting price EUR 800

75
**A FINE AND AMUSING ANTLER
 'THE REVENGE OF THE OCTOPUS'
 KISERUZUTSU (PIPE CASE)**

Unsigned
 Japan, Tokyo, Asakusa district, second half
 of the 19th century

Of muso-zutsu type, carved in varying degrees of relief with a dramatic and continuous scene of fishermen beset by a giant octopus, its long, sinuous tentacles entwining the figures in a moment of chaotic struggle. In the foreground, two fishermen are shown among lotus plants beside a straw basket filled with shells next to various tools. To the reverse, two further fishermen are depicted - one fleeing in anguish, the other falling backward in alarm. The composition unfolds beneath gnarled pine trees enveloped in drifting sea mist, the trunk of one tree ingeniously carved in openwork to form the cord attachment, seamlessly integrated into the overall design.

LENGTH 21.2 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only minor expected wear.

Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000





76
**A MASTERFUL INLAID ANTLER
'BASKETWEAVE, SNAIL AND
REISHI FUNGUS' KISERUZUTSU
(PIPE CASE)**

Unsigned
Japan, Tokyo, Asakusa district, second half
of the 19th century

Of muso-zutsu type, exquisitely carved in openwork from antler with an intricate braided pattern simulating bamboo basketwork. The lower section is further embellished with a finely inlaid dried reishi fungus, above which a minute gold-lacquered snail emerges, while selected "bamboo" segments are subtly decorated with delicate floral motifs. The rim is ingeniously formed with two additional braided strands, creating a naturalistic cord attachment that is seamlessly integrated into the overall design.

LENGTH 19.5 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and a small age crack to the rim.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related, though simpler, antler kiseruzutsu carved with a braided basketwork pattern, illustrated in Virginia Atchley and Neil Davey, *The Virginia Atchley Collection of Japanese Miniature Arts*, p. 302, no. S41.



Estimate EUR 2,000
Starting price EUR 1,000

77
**A FINE ANTLER KISERUZUTSU
'AUTUMNAL FLOWERS IN
MOONLIGHT' (PIPE CASE)**

Japan, Tokyo, Asakusa district, second half
of the 19th century

Of muso-zutsu type, superbly carved in shallow relief to depict blossoming chrysanthemums (kiku) and morning glories (asagao) among verdant grasses, evoking the arrival of autumn. The scene is enveloped in finely stippled mist, suggesting a softly illuminated, moonlit atmosphere. The rim is fitted with a small cord attachment (himotoshi) for suspension. A small signature tablet is present near the base, though now worn and illegible.

LENGTH 20.9 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with minor expected wear. A small age crack to the insert (not visible from the outside).

Although a related example is recorded by Homin (see literature comparison), the present work, in both carving quality and atmospheric refinement, more closely aligns with the oeuvre of Suzuki Tokoku (1846–1915).

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related stag antler kiseruzutsu (pipe case) decorated with chrysanthemums, plum, orchids, and bamboo amid clouds, signed Homin, illustrated in Virginia Atchley and Neil Davey, *The Virginia Atchley Collection of Japanese Miniature Arts*, p. 282, no. S11. Compare a related walrus tusk ryusa netsuke, unsigned and attributed to Tokoku, also depicting bamboo and flowers amid clouds, illustrated in Sydney L. Moss Ltd. (2016) *Kokusai the Genius: and Stag-antler Carving in Japan*, Vol. III, p. 194-195, no. 454.



Estimate EUR 1,500
Starting price EUR 800





78
KOKU: A RARE ANTLER 'REISHI FUNGUS' KANZASHI (HAIRPIN)

By Ozaki Kokusai (1835-1892), sealed Koku 谷
 Japan, Shiba, Tokyo, c. 1860s-1880s

The hairpin of elongated and slender form, finely carved from antler as a reishi fungus, the shaft gently tapering and curving toward the tip. The terminal knob is formed as the fungus cap, its layered ridges crisply articulated to evoke natural growth. The inherent speckling and darker tonal variations of the antler are skillfully incorporated into the design, enhancing its organic appearance. Toward the lower end, the hairpin is sealed within a circular reserve KOKU.

LENGTH 15.3 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only minor wear.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related antler hairpin of a reishi fungus by the same artist, signed Koku, dated to c. 1860s-1880s, 16.5 cm long, illustrated in Moss, Sydney L. (2016) Kokusai The Genius: and Stag-antler Carving in Japan, Vol. II, pp. 402-403, no. 302.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related antler kanzashi in the form a bamboo node by the same artist, sealed Koku, 17.5 cm long, at Bonhams, Fine Japanese Art including two masterpieces by Kitaoji Rosanjin, 7 November 2013, London, lot 95 (sold for GBP 1,875 or approx. **EUR 3,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 1,500
 Starting price EUR 800



79
KOKU: A FINE ANTLER OBIHASAMI NETSUKE, WITH A TABAKO-IRE (TOBACCO POUCH)

By Ozaki Kokusai (1835-1892), sealed Koku 谷
 Japan, Shiba, Tokyo, c. 1860s-1880s

The obi-hasami finely carved from a naturally curved section of antler, the material attractively polished and subtly shaded, its form gently tapering along the length to fit comfortably at the obi. The surface is minimalistically decorated with a small gourd (hyotan) in low relief at the lower end, symbolizing good fortune and protection, while the recessed channel at the top neatly accommodates the cord attachment. Sealed to the reverse KOKU, cut in sharply defined, sunken relief within a small rectangular reserve, demonstrating the confident hand and finish associated with Kokusai.

The tobacco pouch crafted from beautifully textured brown leather, finely decorated with a silver kanamono (pouch clasp) depicting a paulownia (kiri) and chrysanthemum (kiku) mon against a nanako (ring-punched ground).

With an antler ojime.

LENGTH (the netsuke) 15.2 cm
 LENGTH (the tabako-ire) 9.6 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with minor wear and natural flaws to the material.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related antler obihasami netsuke by the same artist, sealed Koku, 12 cm long, with a tabako-ire, illustrated in Sydney L. Moss Ltd. (2016) Kokusai the Genius: and Stag-antler Carving in Japan, Vol. II, pp. 212-213, no. 196.



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



80
**KOKU: A SUPERB ANTLER 'CRAB AND LOTUS'
KISERUZUTSU (PIPE CASE), WITH A TABAKO-IRE
(TOBACCO POUCH)**

By Ozaki Kokusai (1835-1892), sealed Koku 谷
Japan, Shiba, Tokyo, c. 1860s-1880s

The kiseruzutsu of muso-zutsu type, finely carved from a choice section of antler, the natural material skillfully utilized with its warm tones and subtle darker shading. One side is delicately engraved with a crab emerging beneath a half-eaten lotus leaf, the veins of the leaf and the creature's legs rendered with crisp line work and nuanced staining. The leaf's stem extends sinuously upward through the composition, undercut at the top to form the cord attachment, before trailing downward and terminating in a finely carved lotus pod.

The reverse is sealed KOKU, cut in sharply defined, sunken relief within a small rectangular reserve, in a manner entirely consistent with the artist's finest work.

The accompanying tabako-ire is fashioned from leather and brocade, decorated with various kamon, and fitted with a finely worked silver kanamono depicting chrysanthemum (kiku) and iris (shobu) blossoms.

With a marine ivory and buffalo horn ojime.

LENGTH (the kiseruzutsu) 20.2 cm

LENGTH (the tabako-ire) 13.3 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and a small chip to the mouth. The pouch with some losses, as to be expected.

Estimate EUR 4,000

Starting price EUR 2,000





81
AN IMPRESSIVE SMOKING SET (KISERUZUTSU, OJIME, ASHTRAY NETSUKE AND TABAKO-IRE) WITH GOLD FITTINGS

The kanamono by Tsuchiya Yasuchika V and Kazunori, signed Boku 墨 and Kazunori 一則 Japan, 19th century

The smoking set comprising a kiseruzutsu (pipe case), of muso-zutsu type, bearing a lustrous roiro ground, finely decorated in gold takamaki-e and hiramaki-e, and inlaid with mother-of-pearl, to depict a cluster of irises (shobu) emerging from the calm waters of a pond. The rim of the tsutsu fitted with a gilt mount in the form of berries and leaves.

With a finely carved, globular lacquer ojime, worked in takabori to depict geese among grasses in a pond; a textured wood netsuke in the form of an ashtray with coral inlay; and, a velvet pouch with a distinctive gold mae-kanagu (clasp), depicting on one side a pair of poets, signed underneath BOKU, and the uraza (reverse plate) finely incised in kebori and katakiribori with luxuriant pine trees and signed KAZUNORI.

Gold testing indicates a minimum purity of 24K for the uraza (reverse plate), 18K for the mae-kanagu (clasp) and 18K for the gold rim of the pipe case.

LENGTH (the kiseruzutsu) 20.6 cm
 LENGTH (the tabako-ire) 11.5 cm

Provenance: Eskenazi, London, 1997. Private collection of Eva and Aubrey Sweet, Melbourne, Australia, acquired from the above. A copy of the original signed invoice, dated 16 June 1997, addressed to Mr. Aubrey Sweet, confirming the date above, and stating a purchase price of GBP 3,000 or approx. **EUR 7,000** (converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing), accompanies this lot. **Condition:** Excellent condition with only minor wear.



With an associated padded silk storage box.

Bokujutei, also known as Tsuchiya Yasuchika V (1787-1852), studied under the fourth Yasuchika. He began producing metal fittings independently around the time when his teacher died, circa 1800. Therefore, his use of the Yasuchika name can be considered tenuous. This circumstance may explain his frequent use of alternative signatures, including Kunichika and Bokujutei, names under which he is often recorded. His work combines elements of the late Mito style and the late Edo kinko style.

Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



82
AN IMPRESSIVE 'DRAGON' TABAKO-IRE, WITH A FINE METAL-INLAID 'DRAGON' WALRUS TUSK RYUSA MANJU NETSUKE

The netsuke by Ko, sealed Ko 光 Japan, late 19th century

The ensemble comprising a tobacco pouch of horizontal rectangular form, finely crafted in brocade silk with stylized floral motifs in brown and bluish tones, secured with a large silver clasp in the form of a coiling three-clawed dragon clutching the sacred pearl (tama), the details picked out in gold. The tabako-ire is distinctively fitted with multiple metal chains, adjusted by a globular silver ojime decorated with a finely ring-punched ground, and is accompanied by a large walrus-tusk ryusa manju netsuke, delicately carved in openwork with an abstract pattern of reishi fungi and surmounted by a silver appliqué depicting a further dragon in pursuit of the tama. The underside of the netsuke is signed within a square reserve KO.

LENGTH (the tabako-ire) 13.2 cm
 DIAMETER (the netsuke) 4.5 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only very minor wear. The embroidery of the pouch with expected traces of use and a few loose threads.

Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500





83
**YOSHIOKA TOSEN: A RARE AND IMPRESSIVE
 DARK WOOD 'IMMORTALS AND DUTCHMAN'
 BOKUTO (DOCTOR'S WOOD)**

By Yoshioka Tosen, signed choshi 彫師 Yoshioka Tosen 吉岡 東川 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Superbly and boldly carved from dark wood, the bokuto depicts an intricate and lively composition of various immortals including Chokaro and Chinnan sennin, accompanied by a Dutchman (Oranda-jin) at the center of the composition, the foreigner's features rendered with exaggerated humor, with inlaid teeth and finely detailed, curling hair. Chinnan sennin is shown releasing a dragon from an alms bowl, the powerful mythical beast forming the hilt of the bokuto. Signed below the buffalo horn inlaid guard choshi YOSHIOKA TOSEN [carved by Yoshioka Tosen]. With a hook-form kurigata for suspension.

LENGTH 51.6 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear and light traces of use. A few filled age cracks throughout the composition.

Estimate EUR 5,000
 Starting price EUR 2,400



84
**TORYUSAI KOZAN: A RARE INLAID WOOD
 'SNAIL AND POEM' BOKUTO (DOCTOR'S SWORD)**

By Toryusai Kozan (born 1787), signed Kozan 古山 with kakihan Japan, mid 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of wakizashi type, slightly curved in form, each side inlaid with a "menuki", one fashioned as a horn-inlaid dragonfly and the other in tiger's-eye, both set against a finely worked lattice ground. The main body is further worked with two simulated mekugi pegs inlaid in bone and a kurigata for suspension, the main design beautifully inlaid with a delicately carved snail advancing toward an incised poem, the composition combining naturalistic detail with literary expression.

The poem reading:
 Fumaruru wa, hata naranedomo, katatsumuri ikuzo
 [Even when stepped upon, though it may be crushed, the snail continues onward.]

Signed to the side KOZAN and with the artist's kakihan.

LENGTH 42.1 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only minor surface wear and inherent natural imperfections.

During the Edo period, with the cessation of large-scale warfare, the wearing of arms gradually lost its practical function. The custom of carrying small, non-functional swords (bokuto) was adopted by physicians, artists, and other members of the educated classes as a symbol of status and refinement.

Toryusai Kozan, born in 1787 and active into the mid-19th century and beyond, was a distinguished woodcarver, likely based in Nagasaki - a city that fostered several prominent artists of the period. He is particularly known for finely carved kurumi (walnut) netsuke, often displaying a stylistic affinity with the work of Hidari Issan.

Estimate EUR 2,500
 Starting price EUR 1,200



85
**TATEKAWA: A SUPERB AND RARE WOOD
 'DRAGON' BOKUTO (DOCTOR'S WOOD)**

By a member of the Tatekawa family, signed Tatekawa 立川 Takumi 内匠 chokoku 彫刻 Japan, mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Gently curved in form, with one end finely carved in the shape of the dragon head, its scaly surface minutely rendered, bearing a fierce expression characterized by bulging eyes, a prominent snout with sharp fangs, and flowing whiskers. The remainder of the shaft decorated with swirling clouds neatly carved in shallow relief. Signed near the head of the shachihoko TATEKAWA Takumi chokoku [carved by Tatekawa, the master craftsman]. The wood exhibits a pronounced grain and a dark, naturally developed patina.

LENGTH 47.8 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only minor surface wear and inherent natural imperfections.

The name Tatekawa refers to a distinguished lineage of master woodcarvers associated with the Suwa Tatekawa school, renowned primarily for their elaborate architectural ornamentation rather than small-scale works. Successive generations bore the hereditary title Tatekawa Takumi, denoting their status as specialist craftsmen in temple and shrine construction from the late Edo period into the modern era.

The origins of the family can be traced to Tatekawa Washiro Tomimune, born Tsukahara Washiro, who left his native Suwa at a young age to study architecture in Edo under the celebrated master Tatekawa Kohei Tomifusa. Through exceptional diligence and skill, he earned his master's confidence and was granted the Tatekawa name, establishing a lineage that would become synonymous with refined architectural carving. His descendants continued this tradition, producing highly sophisticated decorative programs for religious buildings.

Among them, the fourth-generation master Tatekawa Takumi Tomimasa (1796-1865) stands out as the most accomplished. Active in the mid-19th century, he contributed extensively to the reconstruction and embellishment of important shrine complexes, including Kambe Shrine, Asama Shrine, and Otoshi-Mioya Shrine. Many of these carvings are today designated Important Cultural Properties of Shizuoka Prefecture, attesting to the exceptional quality and enduring significance of the Tatekawa workshop.

Although primarily celebrated for large-scale architectural work, members of the Tatekawa family also produced netsuke and related carvings, in which their mastery of composition, depth, and intricate detail is translated into miniature form. These works retain the dynamic energy and technical sophistication of their architectural counterparts, offering a rare and compelling insight into one of Japan's most accomplished carving traditions.

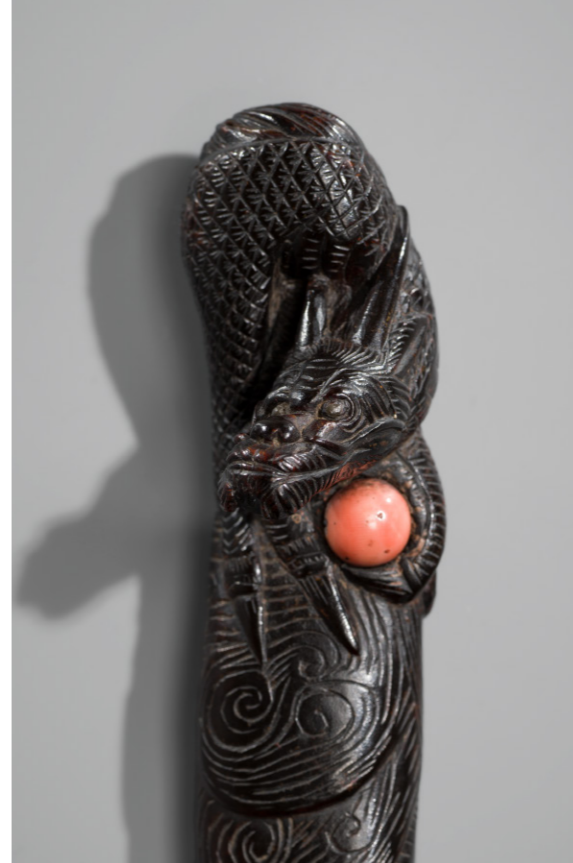
For further discussion of the Tatekawa family, see Ducros, Alain (2000), "Tatekawa Family of Wood Carvers," *International Netsuke Society Journal*, Vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 23-31.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related dragon-form bokuto, 26.3 cm long, at Zucke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 9 May 2025, Vienna, lot 79 (sold for **EUR 7,150**).



Estimate EUR 5,000
 Starting price EUR 2,400



86
**AN EXCEPTIONALLY RARE UMIMATSU 'DRAGON
 AND CORAL TAMA' BOKUTO (DOCTOR'S SWORD)**

Unsigned
 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Slightly curved in form, finely carved from a remarkably large and choice section of umimatsu (sea pine, black coral), the surface displaying striking natural marbling interspersed with deep reddish inclusions. One end is boldly sculpted with a writhing dragon grasping a coral-inlaid sacred pearl (tama) amid finely incised swirling clouds. The creature's sinuous, scaly body is meticulously rendered, while the head projects outward with dramatic presence, characterized by long horns, a pronounced muzzle, and flowing whiskers.

LENGTH 39.5 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only minor surface wear and inherent natural imperfections.

The present work is exceptional not only for its subject and carving but also for its material. Umimatsu, or black coral, is rarely encountered in such large, solid sections, making objects of this scale exceedingly uncommon. Its use for a bokuto - an already rare format - is virtually unheard of, as the material is more typically reserved for small decorative objects and jewelry. The vivid contrast between the richly marbled, organic surface of the umimatsu and the bright coral tama creates a particularly striking visual effect, further enhancing the sculptural presence of the piece.

Umimatsu, literally "sea pine," is a deep-water coral valued for its varied growth forms and distinctive coloration. In addition to its use in the decorative arts, it has historically been associated with protective and auspicious qualities.

Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000





87
**A FINE YAMADA SCHOOL WOOD
 'DRAGON' BOKUTO (DOCTOR'S SWORD)**

Unsigned
 Japan, Ise, Yamada Province, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Boldly carved, the slender, sinuous body of a dragon extends along the length of the bokuto, its scaly form coiling into a curled tail and culminating in a large, expressive head framed by a flowing mane. The fierce visage is characterized by prominent bulging eyes set beneath shaggy brows and a pronounced snout, conveying a vivid sense of movement and vitality. A circular aperture at the neck serves as a suspension point, ingeniously integrated into the composition.

LENGTH 32.7 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only minor surface wear and inherent natural imperfections.

During the Edo period, with the cessation of large-scale warfare, the wearing of arms gradually lost its practical function. The custom of carrying small, non-functional swords (bokuto) was adopted by physicians, artists, and other members of the educated classes as a symbol of status and refinement. By the 18th and 19th centuries, such objects evolved into increasingly abstract and decorative forms, as exemplified by the present piece.

Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



88
**A FINE YAMADA SCHOOL WOOD
 'DRAGON AND TAMA' BOKUTO
 (DOCTOR'S SWORD)**

Unsigned
 Japan, Ise, Yamada Province, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of wakizashi type, finely carved, the gently curved scabbard decorated in high relief with a three-clawed dragon grasping the sacred pearl (tama) amid swirling clouds. The creature's sinuous, scaly body is meticulously articulated, while the head is characterized by long, branching horns, flowing whiskers, prominent bulging eyes with inlaid pupils, and a pronounced snout, conveying a vivid sense of movement and vitality.

The hilt is adorned on both sides with tatemokko-mon "menuki", associated with the Takikawa and Hotta clans, accompanied by additional floral motifs and with simulated mekugi pegs. The lower section of the scabbard is pierced with a circular aperture for suspension. The wood exhibits an attractive grain and a warm, naturally developed patina.

LENGTH 36.6 cm

Provenance: With Robert Fleischel, Tokyo, Japan, 2007. Private collection of Eva and Aubrey Sweet, Melbourne, Australia, acquired from the above.

Condition: Excellent condition with minor surface wear and inherent natural imperfections.

**MUSEUM
 COMPARISON**
 Compare a closely related wood bokuto (doctor's sword) similarly decorated with a carved dragon, 49 cm long, in the Science Museum Group, South Kensington, London, object number A64323.



Estimate EUR 2,500
 Starting price EUR 1,200

Fine Netsuke

Lots 89-365





89
**A LARGE WOOD NETSUKE OF
 A MONKEY AND HORSE (IBA SHINEN)**

Unsigned
 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

- Published:**
1. Weber, V. F. (1923), *Koji Hoten*, vol I, p. 100, fig. 104.
 2. Davey, Neil K. (1974) *Netsuke: A Comprehensive Study Based on the M.T. Hindson Collection*, p. 377, no. 1131.
 3. Bandini, Rosemary (2001) *Expressions of Style, Netsuke as Art*, Scholten Japanese Art, New York, no. 150.

Boldly carved, this charming depiction features a horse standing on an irregular base, its head turned back as it lowers slightly to allow the monkey sprawled across its back to reach for a peach on the ground. The horse's mane is intricately incised and subtly stained, while the rest of the composition is meticulously polished, with the well-toned wood developing a rich, warm patina. The interplay between the two figures is captured with remarkable attention to detail, emphasizing the horse's graceful posture and the monkey's playful reach. Two pierced himotoshi through the base.

LENGTH 5.3 cm, HEIGHT 5.5 cm

- Provenance:**
- Ex-Collection W. Guest, no. 1332.
 - Ex-Collection F. Weber, acquired from the above.
 - Ex-Collection Ms. Isobel Sharpe, acquired from the above.
 - Ex-Collection M. T. Hindson (1883-1968), acquired from the above.
 - Sotheby's, *The M. T. Hindson Collection of Important Japanese Works of Art*, 20 October 1969, London, lot 891.
 - Ex-Collection of Marvin Glass, acquired from the above.
 - Sotheby's, *Japanese Works of Art*, 1 October 1974, New York, lot 37.
 - Ex-collection Martin S. Newstead, acquired from the above.
 - Sotheby's, *The Martin S. Newstead Collection of Netsuke*, 27 October 1894, London, lot 139.
 - A private collection in the United States, acquired from the above.



Mark T. Hindson



Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and light traces of use. A natural flaw to the wood below one himotoshi.

The subject of the 'Horse and Monkey' is known as Iba Shinen, a theme that illustrates the contrast between service and selfishness, both clearly represented in this example. In Japanese zodiac symbolism, the horse (*uma*) signifies strength, endurance, and loyalty, traditionally associated with diligent service and reliability. In contrast, the monkey (*saru*) is linked to cleverness, agility, and, at times, mischievous opportunism, embodying wit and self-interest. This interaction creates a subtle moral allegory, balancing cooperation and individual desire.

The peach further enriches the symbolism. In East Asian tradition, the peach is a potent emblem of longevity and immortality, associated with the peaches of the Queen Mother of the West, which grant eternal life. Here, the fruit deepens the allegory, suggesting that while the monkey may strive for personal gain, the peach itself - representing life and sustenance - can only be fully appreciated through cooperation.

Estimate EUR 5,000
 Starting price EUR 2,400





90
A SUPERB WOOD NETSUKE OF ROSHI SEATED ON AN OX

Unsigned
 Japan, late 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Superbly carved, this netsuke depicts Roshi seated on the back of an ox, dressed in traditional robes with flowing folds. One hand rests on his knee, while the other is placed on the ox's shoulder, holding its leash. His joyful expression is highlighted by a friendly smile, his beard is finely incised. The ox beneath him is carefully modeled, with intricately carved horns and neatly incised hair. The animal stands with its four legs closely together, its head lowered and tail resting to one side. The eyes are inlaid with dark horn. The wood is attractively polished, and the himotoshi are pierced through the back and underside.

HEIGHT 5.6 cm

Condition: A section of the right hindleg with an old restoration. Otherwise excellent condition with minor expected surface wear.

Roshi netsuke are typically carved in ivory, with only a few wood examples recorded in Fuld's Netsuke and Ojime Index. Roshi, the ancient Taoist philosopher and venerable sage, is often depicted seated on an ox as he journeys toward paradise. According to legend, Roshi's mother conceived him upon seeing a falling star and carried him for eighty-one years. He was born with distinctive features: a grey beard, a white and yellow face, large eyes, fine eyebrows, ragged teeth in a square mouth, a double ridge to his nose, ten toes and ten lines in each hand. Despite this description, artistic representations of Roshi typically depict him as an old Chinese man, often shown riding an ox to paradise, symbolizing his ascension.



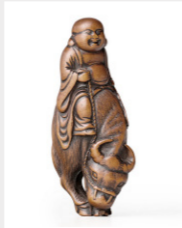
LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of a herdsboy with a similar face expression seated on an ox, by Matsuda Sukenaga, dated to the mid-19th century, 4.1 cm long, at Rosemary Bandini, Japanese Art.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of Hotei seated on an ox, dated to the 18th century, 7.9 cm, at Bonhams, Netsuke from the Collection of Joseph and Elena Kurstin, 16 December 2022, New York, lot 23 (sold for USD 24,225 or approx. **EUR 23,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 10,000
 Starting price EUR 5,000





91
A FINE AND RARE WOOD NETSUKÉ OF A HEROIC EQUESTRIAN FIGURE ABOVE CRASHING WAVES

Unsigned
 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615–1868)

Finely carved as a dynamic equestrian figure seated astride a powerful horse striding through surging waters, the hooves planted firmly amid dramatically curling waves. The animal is rendered with remarkable vitality, its head slightly turned and the eyes double-inlaid in amber and dark horn. The rider leans forward, gripping the reins with controlled tension, clad in voluminous, wind-swept robes beneath which the arm guards of his armor are revealed. He wears a distinctive Chinese-style cap, possibly suggestive of travel attire or disguise. A sword is secured across his back. The face is sensitively carved with a composed yet determined expression, the eyes inlaid. The swirling base, carved as crashing waves, is pierced with a central himotoshi.

LENGTH 5.3 cm

Condition: Old repair to the right ear of the horse; otherwise in very good condition with minimal wear.

The subject is traditionally identified as Gentoku (Liu Bei), later Emperor Zhaolie, crossing the Dankei (Tan) torrent on his famed steed Tekiro, an episode drawn from the Romance of the Three Kingdoms, the 14th-century historical novel by Luo Guanzhong recounting the struggles of rival kingdoms in the 3rd century. The scene symbolizes perseverance and escape against overwhelming odds.

However, the present depiction is notable for its unusual interpretation. Gentoku is typically represented as a mature statesman with a long flowing beard, whereas the figure here appears youthful and beardless, suggesting either an unconventional rendering of the hero or a more generalized literary or warrior subject inspired by similar narratives of heroic flight.

The carving stands out for its sculptural dynamism and finely balanced composition, the interplay between rider, horse, and waves demonstrating a sophisticated understanding of movement and form. Works of this type, combining complex figural carving with animated landscape elements, represent some of the most accomplished achievements of Edo period netsuke carving.

Estimate EUR 6,000
 Starting price EUR 3,000





92
**A RARE AND IMPRESSIVE WOOD
 INSHO (SEAL) NETSUKE OF A BAYING SHISHI,
 CIRCLE OF SANKO**

Circle of Sanko, unsigned
 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Powerfully carved as a caparisoned shishi seated atop a tall seal pedestal, the guardian beast raises its head proudly in a commanding pose. The creature is rendered with remarkable vigor: its exuberant mane and sweeping tail are carved in deeply undercut, swirling tufts, each lock crisply defined and subtly stained to heighten the sense of movement and power. The bold, expressive face is carved in a fierce roar, revealing sharp fangs beneath a broad snout, the bulging eyes set beneath furrowed brows that further intensify its imposing presence.



The shishi rises above a stepped pedestal with a tall foot, finely decorated with a foliate ground in recessed panels and a lappet band encircling the rim. The seal face beneath is crisply engraved with the characters 寿 (壽), Kotobuki / Ju, meaning "felicitous long life."

HEIGHT 7.3 cm

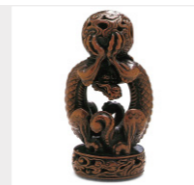
Provenance: From the collection of S. van der Velden, Delft, Netherlands, and thence by descent.

Condition: Excellent condition with minor wear. The underside with remnants of red seal paste.

Seal-type netsuke of this complexity and sculptural ambition are rare. The present example, with its powerful modeling, dynamic volutes, and monumental treatment of the shishi, recalls the distinctive manner associated with the celebrated Edo-period master Sanko and his circle.

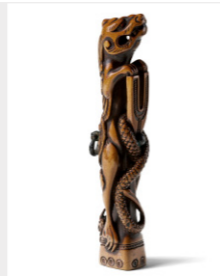
MUSEUM COMPARISON

For a related wood netsuke of a dragon seal, unsigned, dated to the 18th century, 7.5 cm high, see the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, accession number M.91.250.23.

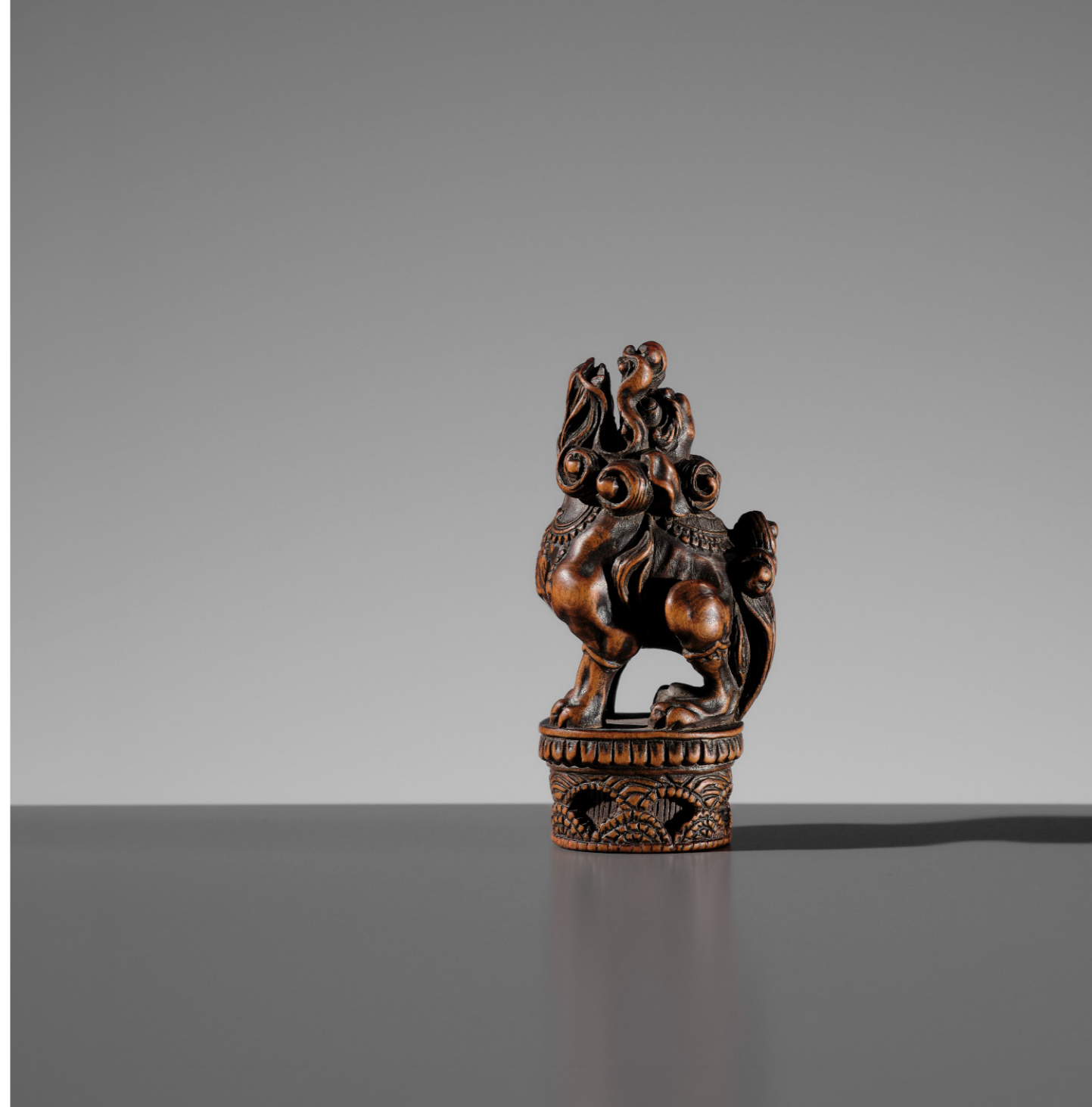


AUCTION COMPARISON

For a wood insho (seal-type) sashi-netsuke, unsigned, dated to the 18th century, 9.5 cm high, see Christie's, Japanese and Korean Art, 17 September 2014, New York, lot 151 (sold for USD 37,800 or approx. **EUR 45,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 15,000
 Starting price EUR 7,500



For a netsuke of comparable scale and sculptural ambition, widely accepted as by Sanko himself, see the rare wood netsuke of a kirin on a cloud, unsigned, dated to the 18th century, 8.6 cm high, at Bonhams, Netsuke from the Collection of Joseph and Elena Kurstin, 16 December 2022, New York, lot 31 (sold for USD 441,375 or approx. **EUR 422,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing). **Note the closely related carving of the swirling volutes to the reverse of both netsuke (fig. 1 & fig. 2).**



fig. 1



fig. 2



93
**AN EXCEPTIONAL AND RARE MARINE
 IVORY NETSUKE OF A BAKU**

Unsigned
 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Boldly carved as a baku seated four-square with its head raised proudly, the creature is rendered with a powerful, almost monumental presence. The curling mane and flowing tail are worked in deeply incised, swirling strands, each lock crisply undercut and stained for emphasis. The elongated trunk curves upward elegantly, and the eyes are inlaid with dark horn, lending the expression vitality. Large, asymmetrical himotoshi to the side and underside. The marine ivory - likely of whale origin given its remarkable bulk and thickness - is superbly polished, showing only very few inclusions. The material was almost certainly selected for its exceptional purity and impressive mass.

HEIGHT 7.3 cm

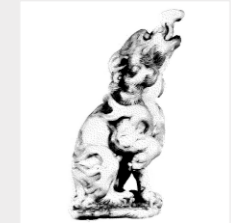
Provenance: From an old South German private collection, collected before 1990.

Condition: Excellent condition with only minor wear and typical age cracks.

Baku are Japanese supernatural beings believed to devour nightmares. According to legend, they were formed from the spare fragments remaining after the gods completed the creation of all other animals. Baku heads are traditionally placed beneath the eaves of Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines as protective talismans. While they consume evil and ward off malevolent spirits, legend cautions that if left unsatisfied after devouring nightmares, a baku may also consume one's hopes and aspirations. An open-mouthed baku drives away demons; a closed-mouthed example shelters and preserves benevolent spirits.

**LITERATURE
 COMPARISON**

Compare a related marine ivory netsuke of a standing baku, by Masatada, illustrated in Lazarnick, George (1981) *Netsuke & Inro Artists, and How to Read Their Signatures* (LNIA), Vol. 1, p. 730.



**AUCTION
 COMPARISON**

Compare a related ivory netsuke of a standing baku, dated to the 18th century, 6.9 cm high, at Bonhams, *The Harriet Szechenyi Sale of Japanese Art*, 8 November 2011, London, lot 44 (sold for GBP 20,000 or approx. **EUR 34,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing). Compare a related marine ivory netsuke of a baku head, dated to the 18th century, 7 cm long, at Zackle, *Fine Netsuke & Sagemono*, 29 October 2021, Vienna, lot 25 (sold for **EUR 10,744**).



Estimate EUR 10,000
 Starting price EUR 5,000



94
A RARE PUBLISHED WOOD NETSUKE OF A RAIN DRAGON (AMARYU), EX-COLLECTION ALBERT BROCKHAUS

Inscribed Masahide 正英
 Japan, 18th-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

- Published:**
1. Kunsthandel Klefisch GmbH, Cologne, Netsuke formerly in the A. Brockhaus Collection, 23 May 1981, no. 59.
 2. Eskenazi Ltd. (1990), Japanese netsuke from the Lazarnick collection, p. 24-25, no. 6.
 3. Eskenazi Ltd. (1998), Japanese Netsuke, Ojime, and Inro from a Private European Collection, London, p. 76-77, no. 85.
 4. Rutherford & Bandini (2011) Japanese Netsuke, Inro and Works of Art, no. 17.

The slender beast shown standing, the kirin-like head surmounted by a single horn and mouth forming a snarl, the body concave set with a long curled neck, the long bent legs creating the profile of a sashi netsuke, and the eyes inlaid in dark wood. The back finely incised with scales above the inscribed signature MASAHIDE.

HEIGHT 8.6 cm

Provenance: Ex-collection Albert Brockhaus (1855-1921). Ex-collection George Lazarnick. Ex-collection Emiel Veranneman (1924-2003), Belgium, acquired from the above.
Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and with tiny age cracks to the feet and mouth.



The design is illustrated in the Soken Kisho Vol. 7

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a rain dragon, similarly carved and stained, dated to the 18th century, 7.9 cm tall, at Christie's, Japanese and Korean Art, 17 September 2024, New York, lot 152 (sold for USD 22,680 or approx. **EUR 20,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 5,000
 Starting price EUR 2,400



95
A VERY RARE WOOD NETSUKE OF A SINIU

Unsigned
 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Boldly carved as a youthful, recumbent sinu with the comically small legs drawn in and long neck raised high. Rather unusually, this mythical animal is sporting a set of antlers rather than horns. Generously excavated, asymmetrical himotoshi to the side and underside.

HEIGHT 6 cm

Condition: Good condition with expected surface wear, small nicks, and light scratches.

The sinu (Chinese xiniu) is a goat-like creature with horns, often regarded as one of the varied types of kirin. The present netsuke appears to be a variation of this subject, recorded in the Soken Kisho.



All netsuke sinu are loosely based on the drawing in the Soken Kisho, published 1781

AUCTION COMPARISON

The present subject is very rare in wood and much more commonly seen carved from antler or ivory and invariably of seal-type. Compare a related ivory seal netsuke of a sinu, also with antlers, dated to the late 18th century, 6.8 cm high, at Christie's, Japanese Ceramics & Works of Art, 8 November 2007, London, lot 7 (sold for GBP 6,875 or approx. **EUR 13,600** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 5,000
 Starting price EUR 2,400



96

AN EXCEPTIONALLY LARGE AND VERY RARE WOOD SEAL-TYPE NETSUKE OF AN ELONGATED HORSE

Unsigned
Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Published: Resonance of Wa - The Japanese Spirit. Casal Collection, 2025, p. 280.

A strikingly unique and highly expressive netsuke, carved in the form of an elongated horse standing atop a rectangular seal base. The horse's body is compact and abstract, with a disproportionately large head, which draws attention with its finely detailed features, including sharply incised pointed ears and a dynamic, curled tail which forms the natural himotoshi. The seal face remains uncut. The carving exhibits a remarkable understanding of form, combining simplicity with an arresting presence that defies traditional proportions.

HEIGHT 18.4 cm

Provenance: Ex-Collection of Ugo Alfons Casal. Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts, bequeathed from the above and subsequently de-accessioned in 2021. **Ugo Alfons Casal**, of Swiss-German origin, was born in Florence, Italy, in 1888. He moved to Japan in 1918, working first at the Osaka branch of George H. McFadden & Brothers and later at F. S. Morse & Co. in Kobe from 1920 to 1938. Primarily involved in the cotton trade, Casal spent most of his life in Kobe, with a few years in Yokohama, until his death in 1964. Throughout his time in Japan, he remained passionate about collecting Japanese art. In the late 1930s, amidst deteriorating relations between Japan and the United States, Casal planned to move his collection to America. However, the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941 halted this plan, and the collection was instead stored in wooden crates at Kobe Port. With the help of his personal connections, Casal successfully moved the collection to the Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts, where it was kept in storage during the wartime and postwar years. After his death, the collection was bequeathed to the museum, where it remains one of the most valuable collections in Japan, with over 4,000 items.

Condition: Very good condition with old wear and a few tiny nicks to the ears.



Osaka Fine Arts Museum



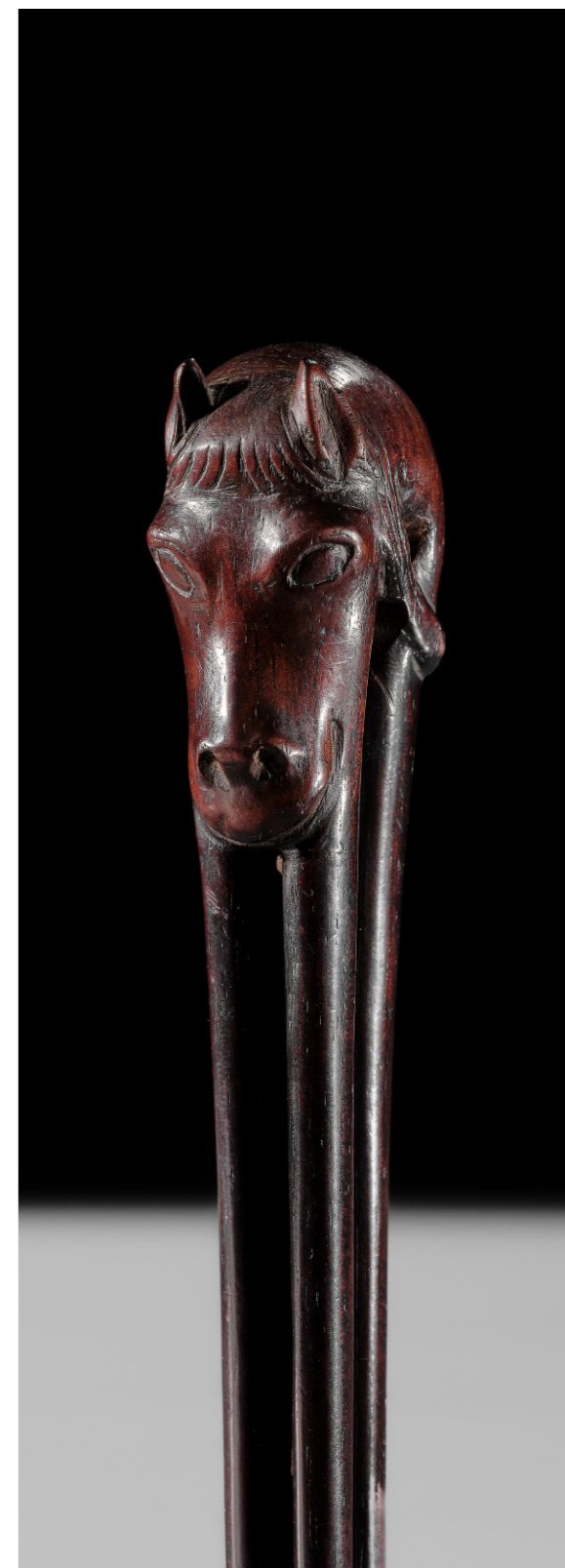
Ugo Alfons Casal

MUSEUM COMPARISON

While this netsuke may be unique in its conception and is considered extremely rare, it is related in essence to a famous wood netsuke of an elongated horse, dated to the 18th century, 10.8 cm high, formerly in the Raymond and Frances Bushell Collection and now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), accession no. AC1998.249.67.



Estimate EUR 5,000
Starting price EUR 2,400





97

A RARE AND IMPRESSIVE SASHI NETSUKE OF A MYTHICAL BIRD DRAGON (HIRYU)

Unsigned
Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

This dynamic and powerful carving depicts a hiryu (mythical bird dragon) rendered in graceful motion along the length of the wood. The creature's avian head, with sharply defined beak and alert, bulging eyes, emerges forcefully at one end, its mouth open as if uttering a cry. From the head flows a sinuous, attenuated body that curves elegantly, tapering into a finely bifurcated tail. The wings are intricately incised, set between the creature's four slender limbs, adding a sense of fluidity to the composition. Asymmetrical himotoshi underneath, the larger hole generously excavated to accommodate the knot.

LENGTH 12.8 cm

Provenance: Ex-collection of Elizabeth Augusta Grosvenor Guest (1879-1960), and thence by descent. Woolley & Wallis, Japanese Works of Art, 27 July 2021, Salisbury, lot 449 (part lot, sold for GBP 11,000 or approx. **EUR 16,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing). A private collection in the United Kingdom, acquired from the above. **Elizabeth Augusta Grosvenor Guest (1879-1960)**, granddaughter of Richard Grosvenor, 2nd Marquess of Westminster (1795-1869), and Lady Charlotte Guest (later Schreiber, 1812-1895), was an active member of British aristocratic and cultural circles. As a keen sportswoman, dog breeder, and artist, she developed a distinguished collection of art, including a fine collection of netsuke.



Elizabeth Augusta Grosvenor Guest (1879-1960)

Condition: Excellent condition with only minor wear.



The present netsuke represents a very rare and previously unrecorded variation of the hiryu (flying dragon). While it retains the characteristic features of the mythical dragon - including three clawed limbs and a bifurcated tail - it diverges from the typical representation in that its head is that of a bird, closely resembling a karasu tengu (crow-beaked tengu), often depicted in Japanese folklore.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related wood sashi netsuke of a stylized dragon, by Gyokutei, illustrated in Bushell, Raymond (1975) *Netsuke Familiar & Unfamiliar*, p. 198, no. 585.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related wood sashi netsuke of a hiryu, dated to the 18th century, 15.3 cm long, at Bonhams, *Fine Netsuke* from a French Private Collection, 4 November 2020, London, lot 62 (sold for GBP 12,562 or approx. **EUR 18,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 6,000
Starting price EUR 3,000



98
**A POWERFUL SAISHIKI NETSUKE OF RYUJIN,
 STYLE OF YOSHIMURA SHUZAN**

Style of Yoshimura Shuzan, unsigned
 Japan, late 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

The hinoki (cypress) wood expressively carved and painted in gesso with polychrome pigments, depicting Ryujin standing and turning sharply to the left with an intense, angry expression as he holds a vase containing a branch of coral with both hands, while his loose robe slips from his shoulders. A sword in a fish-shaped scabbard is slung across his back. Himotoshi through the scabbard.

HEIGHT 7.7 cm

Condition: Repairs to the feet. Otherwise very good condition with expected wear to pigments.

Yoshimura Shuzan (d. 1776) was a Kano school painter who received the honorary title hogen. He is particularly celebrated for his painted netsuke, typically carved from hinoki wood and left unsigned. The present netsuke, carved in hinoki and conceived in a manner consistent with Shuzan's established aesthetic, reflects many of the characteristics associated with the master. Nevertheless, it is more cautiously regarded as the work of a follower or an artist working in his style in the latter half of the eighteenth century.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related saishiki netsuke of Ryujin, in the style of Yoshimura Shuzan, dated to the 18th century, 10.8 cm high, at Bonhams, Fine Japanese Art, 6 May 2013, London, lot 40 (sold for GBP 5,000 or approx. **EUR 8,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 1,500
 Starting price EUR 800



99
**A POWERFUL SAISHIKI NETSUKE OF A
 TARTAR HUNTER, STYLE OF YOSHIMURA SHUZAN**

Style of Yoshimura Shuzan, unsigned
 Japan, late 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

The hinoki (cypress) wood boldly carved and painted in gesso with polychrome pigments, the figure depicts a Tartar hunter wearing a long jacket decorated with a dragon. A dragon-form quiver is secured to his back, while his face is rendered in a dramatic, distorted grimace as he grasps a horn with both hands. Himotoshi through the quiver.

HEIGHT 9.3 cm

Condition: Minor old repairs to the feet. Otherwise very good condition with expected wear to pigments and some light flaking.

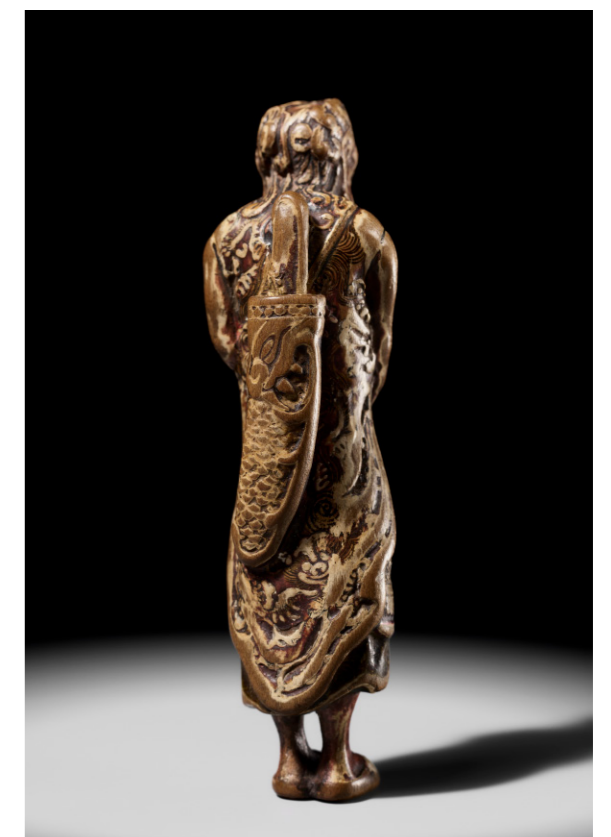
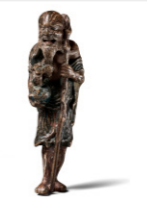
MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a closely related saishiki netsuke of Ryujin, attributed to Yoshimura Shuzan, 9 cm high, in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, formerly in the Bushell collection, accession number M.91.250.9.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related saishiki netsuke of an immortal with a similar facial expression, attributed to Yoshimura Shuzan, dated to the 18th century, 9.8 cm high, at Zacke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 8 November 2024, Vienna, lot 64 (sold for **EUR 8,450**).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



100
**A POWERFUL SAISHIKI NETSUKE OF TEKKAI SENNIN,
 STYLE OF YOSHIMURA SHUZAN**

Style of Yoshimura Shuzan, unsigned
 Japan, late 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

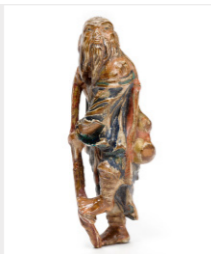
The hinoki (cypress) wood expressively carved and painted in gesso with polychrome pigments, depicting Tekkai Sennin, the eccentric Daoist immortal, rendered in a dynamic forward-striding pose. He leans upon his crutch, the folds of his robe flowing with animated movement, while a large straw hat and hyotan are secured to his back. His face is carved with gaunt features, deep-set eyes, and pursed lips. Asymmetrical himotoshi to the reverse.

HEIGHT 9.1 cm

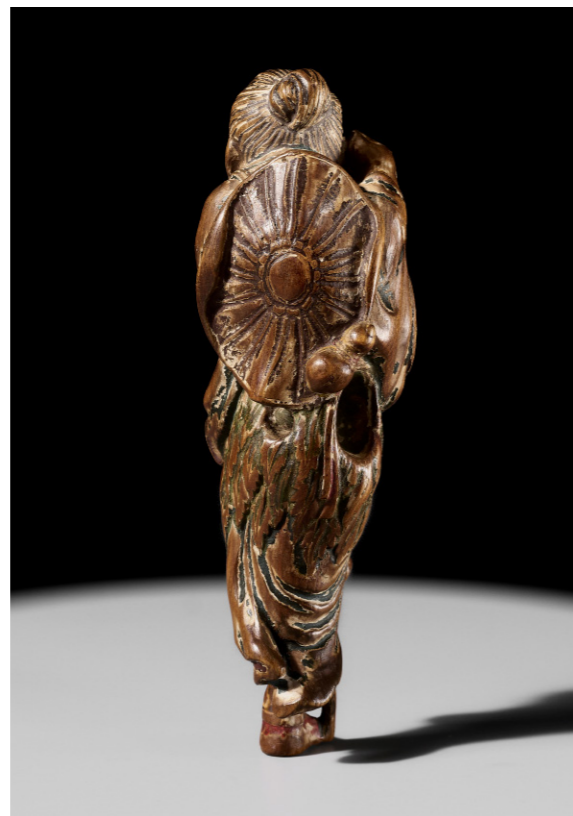
Condition: Very good condition with typical old wear and expected losses to the polychrome pigments.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related saishiki netsuke of Tekkai Sennin, in the style of Yoshimura Shuzan, 10 cm high, at Bonhams, The James A. Rose Collection of Netsuke and Sagemono, 17 September 2013, New York, lot 2079 (sold for USD 8,750 or approx. **EUR 10,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



101
**A POWERFUL AND LARGE SAISHIKI NETSUKE
 OF RYUJIN WITH A DRAGON AND TAMA,
 STYLE OF YOSHIMURA SHUZAN**

Style of Yoshimura Shuzan, unsigned
 Japan, late 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

The remarkably large and powerful hinoki (cypress) wood netsuke expressively carved and painted in gesso with polychrome pigments, the figure depicts the Dragon King of the Sea, Ryujin, standing tall and holding the sacred tama (wish-granting jewel) before him. A sinuous dragon coils dramatically around his body, its scaled form extending down the back, the dragon's head rising above Ryujin's with a ferocious expression. Ryujin's own face is rendered with equal intensity, while his robe is richly detailed with gold pigments. The large himotoshi are pierced to either side of the dragon, the cord channel running through underneath the beast's sinuous body.

HEIGHT 13.3 cm

Condition: An old repair to the edge of one foot. Otherwise very good condition with typical old wear and expected losses to the polychrome pigments.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related yet smaller saishiki netsuke of Ryujin, attributed to Yoshimura Shuzan, dated to the 18th century, 10.2 cm high, at Bonhams, Fine Japanese Art, 6 November 2012, London, lot 160 (sold for GBP 9,375 or approx. **EUR 16,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 5,000
 Starting price EUR 2,400





102
SHUZAN: A FINE TALL WOOD NETSUKE OF RYUJIN

By Shuzan, signed Shuzan 周山
 Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved as Ryujin, the Dragon King of the Sea, standing upright in a commanding pose. The deity clasps his hands before his chest holding the sacred jewel which controls the tides, his face animated with a fierce and concentrated expression, the mouth slightly open revealing teeth and the deeply carved brows intensifying his penetrating gaze, further enlivened by dark horn-inlaid pupils. He is dressed in flowing robes with finely carved hems, a scarf draped across his arms and knotted at the front.



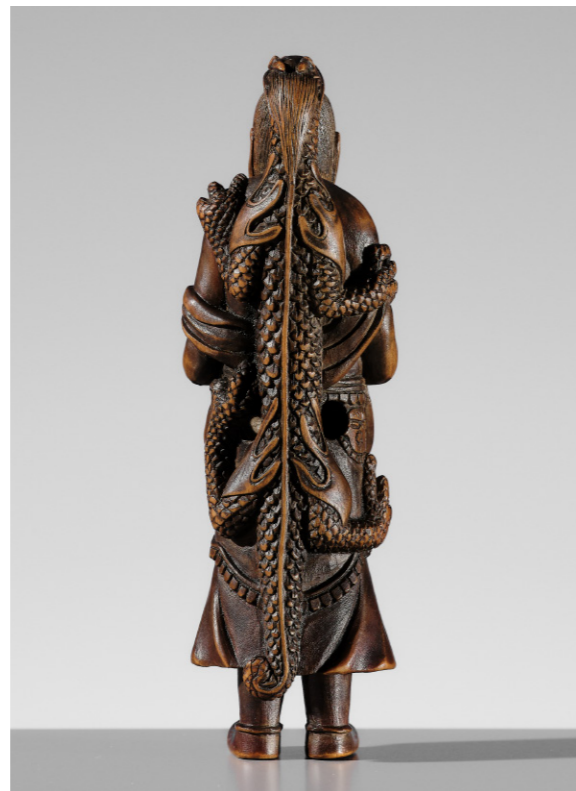
The original design for this netsuke is illustrated in the Soken Kisho of 1781, labelled as a 'dragon deity'

From the reverse emerges a magnificent dragon, sinuously winding down the length of Ryujin's body. Its scales are meticulously articulated and the powerful creature forms a dramatic vertical composition along the back, the dragon's head rising above that of the king. Himotoshi to the back and signed within an oval reserve SHUZAN.

HEIGHT 10.6 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only minor wear.

Estimate EUR 5,000
 Starting price EUR 2,400



103
AN EXCEPTIONAL AND RARE WOOD NETSUKE OF RYO TOHIN TAUNTING A DRAGON

Unsigned
 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Superbly carved, the immortal standing with one hand held behind his back, the other holding the tip of a ken sword. He is wearing long flowing robes with skillfully carved and darkly stained folds, opening in front to reveal his ribs and belly. His well-carved face with a cheerful expression as he laughs at the two-horned three-clawed dragon sinuously writhing around his body, looking up toward the sword tip. The back with asymmetrical himotoshi.

HEIGHT 8.7 cm

Provenance: Ex-collection Joe Kurstin. **Dr. M. Joseph 'Joe' Kurstin (1931-2021)** was a prominent Miami ophthalmologist who arguably built one of the greatest netsuke collections of all time. He published several books and articles on the subject and generously lent his collection for exhibitions at the Yale University Gallery, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Epcot Center at Disney World, and The Tobacco and Salt Museum, Tokyo.



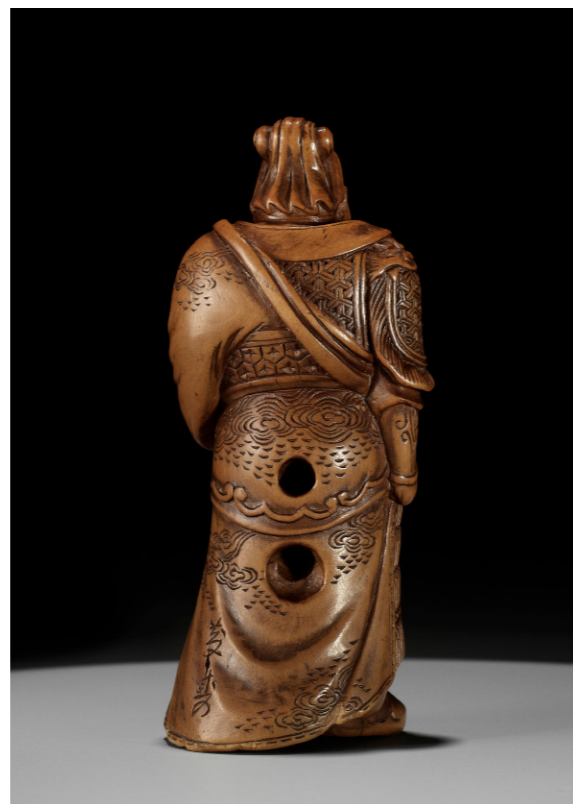
Elena and Joseph Kurstin

Condition: Very good condition, appealingly worn, one foot with old restoration to the toes.

Ryo Tohin is the Japanese name for the Daoist immortal Lü Dongbin, one of the Eight Immortals in Chinese mythology. He is often pictured riding on a cloud or a dragon as a reference to the legend that Ryo Tohin used his famous sword to subdue a dragon. He is also frequently depicted crossing water on his sword. The present netsuke depicts him holding the tip of a ken sword, which relates to depictions of male dragons with tail tips in the form of swords or spears. It thus appears that the immortal has stolen the tip of the dragon's tail and is now taunting the beast with it. It is also interesting to note that the immortal's right hand is not seen, shrouded in his robe behind his back, and perhaps he is also hiding a tama pearl from the poor dragon.

Estimate EUR 15,000
 Starting price EUR 7,500





104
**YOSHITOSHI: A SUPERB AND LARGE
 WOOD NETSUKES OF KAN'U STROKING HIS BEARD**

By Yoshitoshi, signed Yoshitoshi 慶寿
 Japan, late 18th to early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Published: Sagemonoya (2022) *A Selection of Netsuke & Sagemono* from the Collection of Georgina & Gabor Wilhelm, p. 12, no. 9.

A powerfully sculpted and large netsuke of remarkable thickness depicting the God of War Kan'u (Guan Yu) standing proudly and stroking his long and elegantly flowing beard. The legendary general wears a cloud-patterned robe below a cuirass with beast-masked shoulder plates. Note the superbly carved facial features and fingers which curl around his beard and are placed against his hip. Two large himotoshi to the back and signed towards the hem of the robe YOSHITOSHI.

HEIGHT 8.8 cm

Provenance: The Gabor Wilhelm Collection, Paris.
Condition: Good condition with minor wear and traces of use. Some light chipping with associated repairs to the edge of the robe in the back.

Guan Yu (died 220) was a Chinese military general serving under the warlord Liu Bei during the late Eastern Han dynasty of China. Guan Yu's life was lionised and his achievements glorified to such an extent after his death that he was deified during the Sui dynasty. He is reported to have had a 'peerless beard'. In the present netsuke he is depicted in a portraitist manner with particular attention devoted to the long beard, which is central to the composition, the eyes of the viewer being immediately drawn to the curved, elegant fingers caressing this legendary figure's facial hair.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Only two works are recorded by this exceptionally rare artist in Fuld's *Netsuke and Ojime Index*. One depicting Gama Sennin is illustrated in Meinertzhagen, Frederick / Lazarnick, George (1986) *MCI, Part B*, p. 992, and the other depicts a man tying his fundoshi illustrated in Barry Davies *Oriental Art, The Netsuke Collection of W.G Bosshard Part 1*, no. 92.



Estimate EUR 10,000
 Starting price EUR 5,000





105
**A VERY RARE KARAKURI (TRICK) NETSUKE
 OF A FOX PRIEST WITH A REVOLVING FACE
 (HAKUZOSU)**

Unsigned
 Japan, c. 1800, Edo period (1615-1868)

Depicting a priest standing upright and carrying a bamboo staff behind his back across his shoulders, while a fox's tail peeks from beneath his kimono. The netsuke incorporates a karakuri (trick/mechanical) device with a revolving face: one side reveals the finely carved face of an elderly priest in wood, while the reverse displays the true identity of the figure — a fox's face carved in stained bone. The smoothly rotating mask produces a sudden transformation, vividly expressing the fox's supernatural power of disguise. The robes are carefully rendered with finely incised folds and subtle surface detailing. Large himotoshi to the reverse.

HEIGHT 7 cm

Condition: Restoration to the edge of one foot and an old repair to the fox's tail. The cracks along the cowl are original and relate to the construction of the revolving face mechanism. Overall good condition with expected wear and presenting beautifully.

Only a small number of netsuke of this ingenious type are known, depicting the fox priest with a revolving face to illustrate the dramatic revelation in the Kyogen play Tsurigitsune. Numerous later copies of this subject were produced, but the present example appears to belong to the earlier group employing this revolving-face trick mechanism and may therefore represent one of the earliest and most significant interpretations of the theme.

Hakuzosu is the name of the fox spirit who disguises himself as a priest in the Kyogen play Tsurigitsune ("The Fox Trap"). In Japanese folklore kitsune possess magical powers of transformation and frequently assume human form. The revolving face ingeniously captures the theatrical moment when the priest's disguise gives way to the fox's true identity.

MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a closely related ebony wood and ivory trick netsuke of a fox priest with a revolving face, signed Masatsugu, dated late 19th century, 6 cm high, in the Los Angeles Country Museum, accession number AC1998.249.260.



Estimate EUR 6,000
 Starting price EUR 3,000





106
**A VERY LARGE IVORY NETSUKE
 OF GAMA SENNIN WITH HIS TOAD**

Unsigned
 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Boldly carved as Gama sennin standing dynamically on one foot, the other slightly raised and supported by a gnarled cane, which he grasps with his lowered right hand. He is dressed in a loosely fitted robe tied at the waist and opening at the chest, complemented by a leafy skirt and apron. His attendant toad clambers over his shoulder as Gama gazes upward with mouth agape, revealing finely incised teeth. His face is animated by a scrolling beard and hair swept back, cascading over the shoulders, the details heightened with sumi. The carving is vigorous and expressive, with a strong sense of movement and presence. Generously excavated himotoshi formed through the back and through a generously billowing sleeve.



HEIGHT 13.3 cm

Condition: Repair to the beard. Otherwise excellent condition with minor wear and expected natural age cracks.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

The present netsuke distinguishes itself not only through the quality of its carving but also by its exceptional size, being among the largest recorded examples of this type from the workshop. Compare a closely related but smaller ivory netsuke of Tekkai sennin, also unsigned but clearly from the same hand or studio, 8.7 cm high, illustrated in Joly, Henri (1908), *Legend in Japanese Art*, p. 510.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related ivory netsuke of Gama sennin, 13.1 cm high, at Zacke, *Fine Netsuke & Sagemono*, 29 October 2021, Vienna, lot 6 (sold for **EUR 22,752**).



Estimate EUR 5,000
 Starting price EUR 2,400



107
**A VERY LARGE IVORY NETSUKE
 OF A SENNIN WITH SHISHI**

Unsigned
 Japan, 17th-18th century, Edo period
 (1615-1868)

The tall ivory netsuke finely carved to depict a sennin, dressed in traditional robes with scattered holes, with a typical artemisia leaf apron and skirt, holding a mischievous shishi by its scruff, as he balances a rattan basket on his shoulders. The face carved in a tight-lipped smile, deep wrinkles, and sincere eyes inlaid in horn; the neatly incised hair pulled away from the face and secured under a headdress, all framed by the long scrolling beard. Himotoshi to the back and through the basket. The ivory is attractively worn and deeply stained to an almost caramel-brown tone, the verso revealing a honey-amber patina.

HEIGHT 14.2 cm

Condition: Small scattered losses to the robe and the feet restored. Otherwise presenting well.

**LITERATURE
 COMPARISON**

For a related ivory netsuke of a sennin with shishi, 15.8 cm high, see Joly, Henri L. (1912) *The W. L. Behrens Collection, Part 1, Netsuke*, p. 33, no 532 and illustrated on plate A.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related ivory netsuke of a sennin with shishi, 10.2 cm high, at Bonhams, *The James A. Rose Collection of Netsuke and Sagemono*, 17 September 2013, New York, lot 2075 (sold for USD 16,875 or approx.

EUR 20,500 converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 8,000
 Starting price EUR 4,000

108
A POWERFUL TALL IVORY NETSUKE OF A TARTAR ARCHER

Unsigned
 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

The Mongolian archer stands upright, wearing a curiously shaped conical hat, while a second hat - more commonly associated with this figure type - is carved at the back. His robes are finely engraved with ornate cloud and foliate designs. The face is animated, the mouth twisted into a grin as he raises his head and looks to the left, his hands toying with a spool of rope. The reverse shows a finely carved quiver stocked with arrows and decorated with elaborate latticework, above two deeply excavated himotoshi. The ivory has developed a superb honey patina.

HEIGHT 9.3 cm

Condition: The feet restored. Few natural age cracks and minor wear to sumi-stained details. Overall good condition and presenting beautifully.



The figure type corresponds closely to representations found in Nagasaki-e prints of the 18th century, where such foreigners are referred to as dattanjin (Mody 1979, pl. 107). Dattan (Chinese: Dada) was the Japanese term used for Mongolian peoples of northeast China, and figures of Tartar archers became a recognizable motif in Edo-period netsuke carving inspired by these images of exotic foreigners.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related ivory netsuke of a Mongolian archer, 9.2 cm high, at Zackle, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 28 April 2023, Vienna, lot 19 (sold for **EUR 4,940**). Compare a related ivory netsuke of a Mongolian archer, 9.9 cm high, at Zackle, Fine Netsuke, Sagemono & Okimono, 2 June 2018, Vienna, lot 40 (sold for **EUR 31,600**).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



109
A RARE TALL IVORY NETSUKE OF A BUDDHIST DISCIPLE

Unsigned
 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

The tall netsuke finely carved as a standing Buddhist disciple, the figure shown upright with ankles together and holding a hossu (Buddhist flywhisk) close to his left side, the thick bristles sweeping gently over the right shoulder. He is dressed in voluminous robes, the upper garment incised with a tiger pelt while the lower section is decorated with bundles of foliage. The robe is secured at the waist by a belt suspending a hyotan (double-gourd flask) to the back.

The face is rendered with a mirthful expression, framed by a scrolling goatee and neatly incised hair drawn back by a band and falling in thick curling tufts. The ivory has developed a pleasing, softly worn patina consistent with age and handling. Good, asymmetrical himotoshi through the back.

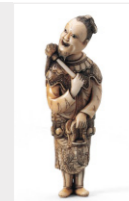
HEIGHT 9.8 cm

Provenance: From a noted private collection, the back of the right calf with an old inventory number '11853 H062'.
Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and few natural age cracks.



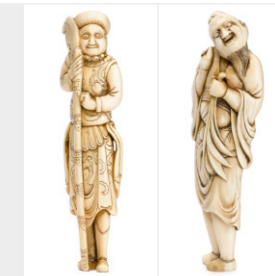
LITERATURE COMPARISON

For a related ivory netsuke of a courtier wearing an elaborate costume and holding a hossu, 9.4 cm high, see Barry Davies Oriental Art (1996), Netsuke Through Three Centuries, pp. 22-23, no. 17.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related ivory netsuke of a Chinese palace guard holding a halberd close, 12.3 cm high, at Bonhams, The James A. Rose Collection of Netsuke and Sagemono, 17 September 2013, New York, lot 2065 (sold for USD 17,500 or approx. **EUR 21,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing). Compare a related ivory netsuke of a Chinese doctor, 12.1 cm high, at Bonhams, The James A. Rose Collection of Netsuke and Sagemono, 17 September 2013, New York lot 2080 (sold for USD 11,875 or approx. **EUR 14,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 10,000
 Starting price EUR 5,000



**110
A WOOD NETSUKE OF A DUTCHMAN
WITH A CHILD**

Unsigned
Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Typically depicted with shoulder-length, curling hair and exaggerated features, the figure is clad in a coat of finely detailed texture with a pleated collar, carrying a boy on his back and holding a trumpet in his hand. The expressions of both figures are exquisitely crafted, lending this popular subject a distinct and individualized character. Asymmetrical himotoshi to the back, the larger hole generously excavated to accommodate the knot.

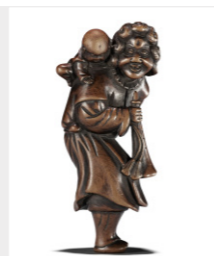
HEIGHT 7.7 cm

Condition: One foot is repaired. Otherwise excellent condition with old expected wear.

In the Edo period Dutch merchants were the only Europeans admitted to Japan, where they were confined to the island of Deshima. Netsuke representing foreigners were popular in this period. Interestingly, the lapa (trumpet) in this Dutchman's hand is also foreign, being of Chinese origin.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare to a closely related wood netsuke of a Dutchman with child, dated to the 18th century, 8.2 cm high, at Zacke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 22 April 2022, Vienna, lot 17 (sold for **EUR 3,034**).



Estimate EUR 2,000
Starting price EUR 1,000



**111
A TALL IVORY NETSUKE OF A DUTCHMAN
WITH A TRUMPET AND CHILD**

Unsigned
Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

The Dutchman is carved standing and gazing upward with a stern expression, holding a boy with a Chinese hairstyle who grasps a trumpet (lapa). He wears a long coat rendered with a stained and finely stippled surface, contrasting with the smoothly polished sleeves of his undershirt. His features are exaggerated in typical manner: protruding eyes set beneath a broad nose and a grimacing mouth, framed by flowing locks. Typical 'chimney-type' himotoshi to the reverse and underside. The ivory has developed a dark honey-gold patina.

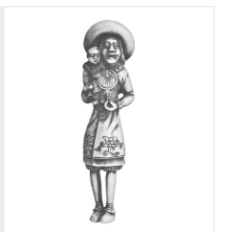
HEIGHT 8.6 cm

Condition: Good condition with minor, typical age cracks and a tiny nick to the trumpet.

During the Edo period, Dutch merchants were the only Europeans permitted to trade with Japan and were confined to the island of Dejima. Netsuke depicting foreigners were popular at the time. Interestingly, both the child and the lapa are of Chinese origin, reflecting the netsuke carvers' tendency to combine various foreign attributes within a single composition. The present example is notable for the unusually detailed carving of the child.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related ivory netsuke of a Dutchman with a similarly detailed child, illustrated in Joly, Henri L. (1912) *The W. L. Behrens Collection*, Part 1, Netsuke, pl. XLI, no 3322.



Estimate EUR 3,000
Starting price EUR 1,500



112
A SUPERB WOOD NETSUKE OF SHOKI AND ONI

Unsigned
 Japan, early 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

A remarkably rustic and boldly executed carving, depicting what appears to be the demon queller Shoki, shown here in a very unusual manner, wearing a turban-like cap, his expression one of satisfaction as he stands next to a large grimacing oni which is clutching Shoki's long sleeve, the demon queller's sword still sheathed and tied to his back. The back with two generously excavated himotoshi. A highly unusual netsuke of striking and original design, bearing a superb aji.

HEIGHT 6.6 cm

Provenance: Ex-collection Teddy Hahn, Darmstadt. Theodor "Teddy" Hahn was a well-known and respected collector of netsuke and other Asian works of art. After spending time in museums to study the early cultures of the world, finding particular interest in their sculptures, he began collecting, remarking, "I somehow knew it would have a profound influence on my life. How right I was. And how happy I have been." Teddy Hahn was a passionate collector of snail netsuke, arguably building the greatest collection of snail netsuke ever assembled.

Condition: Good condition, appealingly worn, few minor age cracks, tiny nicks here and there, one tiny chip near the himotoshi.

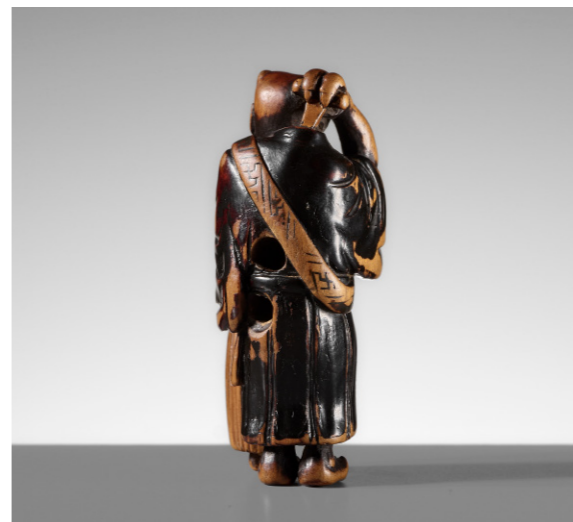
Estimate EUR 2,500
 Starting price EUR 1,200



113
A GOOD LACQUERED WOOD NETSUKE OF ONI NO NEMBUTSU

Unsigned
 Japan, late 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

This charming netsuke depicts a repentant oni standing, wearing a belted priestly robe, holding a parasol in his left hand while scratching his back with a striker. A gong and donation registry hang from his waist, and the oni's face bears an amusingly innocent expression. His gaze invites a sense of compassion, evoking the spirit of conversion. The robe is lacquered in lustrous black, with red detailing on the gong and eyes, beautifully worn with age. Asymmetrical himotoshi are pierced through the back.



Oni no nenbutsu (the invocation of Buddha by the devil) is a Japanese proverb that warns against hypocritical piety, advising that even those with the worst intentions can profess righteousness when it suits them. In folklore, the oni reciting Buddhist prayers embodies this paradox: a malevolent being adopting outward signs of devotion without true faith, highlighting the difference between external ritual and genuine spiritual sincerity. This theme became a popular subject in Edo-Meiji culture, often depicted in both oral tradition and visual arts, where it served as both a moral lesson and a comic inversion of religious imagery.



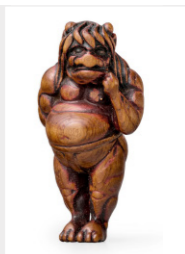
Oni no Nembutsu by Kawanabe Kyosai

HEIGHT 5.7 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear, particularly to the lacquered details.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related lacquer wood netsuke of an oni with a buddhist gong to the back, dated to the 18th century, 5.7 cm high, at Bonhams, Netsuke from the Collection of Joseph and Elena Kurstin, 16 December 2022, New York, lot 28 (sold for USD 7,012 or approx. **EUR 6,600** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000

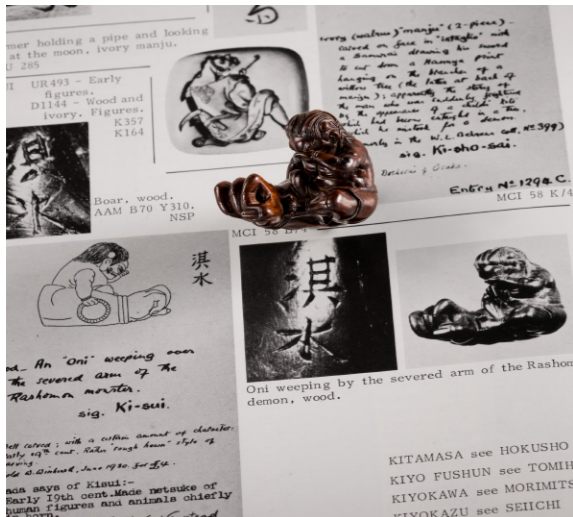


114
KISUI: A POWERFUL WOOD NETSUKE OF A LAMENTING ONI

By Kisui, signed Kisui 洪水
 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Published: Lazarnick, George (1981) Netsuke & Inro Artists, and How to Read Their Signatures (LNIA), Vol. 1, p. 624.

Boldly carved, this netsuke depicts an oni (demon) seated in a crouching pose, leaning against the severed arm of the Rashomon demon, holding a rosary in one hand and wiping tears from its eyes in a satirical manner. The figure's face is finely detailed, with hollow eyes, grinning teeth, and an expression of deep, expressive sorrow - conveying both a sense of regret and the subtle humor inherent in this legendary episode. The musculature, ribs, and limbs are carefully articulated. The wood is beautifully worn, with a rich, dark patina. Asymmetrical himotoshi are pierced through the underside, with the larger hole generously excavated to accommodate the knot. Signed KISUI - a rare artist active during the latter half of the 18th century, capable of remarkably bold and expressive carvings.



LENGTH 5 cm

Provenance: With Barry Davies Oriental Art Ltd, London, 1996. From the collection of Eva & Aubrey Sweet, Melbourne, Australia, acquired from the above. A copy of a valuation from Barry Davies Oriental Art Ltd, addressed to A. Sweet, dated 3 July 1996, stating a valuation of GBP 3,500 (or approx. **EUR 8,000** converted for inflation at the time of writing), accompanies this lot. **Eva and Aubrey Sweet** devoted over six decades to the formation of a distinguished private collection of Asian art, with particular strength in Chinese jade, Japanese lacquer, and netsuke. Their collecting began in the 1950s and was refined through sustained travel, scholarship, and long associations with leading dealers, curators, and artists internationally. Aubrey, a Melbourne physician who also studied acupuncture in Beijing, and Eva developed a discerning connoisseurship that balanced intuitive appreciation with systematic study, supported by an extensive reference library and active participation in scholarly circles. They acquired works of historic importance as well as contemporary pieces by artists such as Susan Wraight and Unryuan (Kitamura Tatsuo), demonstrating a commitment both to tradition and to the continuity of craft. The collection, housed in their Melbourne residence and affectionately referred to by the family as "the Museum," stands as a testament to their lifelong dedication to the aesthetic and cultural values of Asian art.

Condition: An old restoration to one arm. Otherwise excellent condition with minor typical wear and light traces of use as are to be expected.

The world of demons went into deep despair after Watanabe no Tsuna severed Rashomon's arm in the year 976. This event is parodied in netsuke art, as it really was only a 'drop in the ocean'.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke depicting the same subject by the same artist, signed Kisui, illustrated in Davey, Neil K. (1974) Netsuke: A Comprehensive Study Based on the M.T. Hindson Collection, p. 291, no. 888.



Estimate EUR 5,000
 Starting price EUR 2,400





**115
A RARE AND LARGE IVORY NETSUKE
OF KINTOKI WRESTLING A BEAR**

Unsigned
Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Boldly carved depicting the legendary child-hero Kintoki effortlessly overpowering a bear. The boy crouches astride the animal's back, gripping its head and shoulder with both hands while leaning forward with calm authority, clearly subduing the beast with ease. His face is animated with wide inlaid eyes and parted lips, while his robe falls loosely about the body, the sleeves flaring outward with the movement. The bear is compactly modeled with a rounded body and carefully incised fur around the face and limbs. The eyes of both figures are inlaid in reddish horn. Beautifully large and asymmetrical himotoshi are pierced through the back.

LENGTH 5 cm, HEIGHT 5.6 cm

Condition: Very good condition with attractive wear to the ivory, typical natural age cracks, and a few tiny edge nicks.



Kintoki, also known as Kintaro, is the legendary child-hero of Mount Ashigara, famed for his extraordinary strength and companionship with the animals of the mountain. Stories recount that even as a young boy he wrestled bears, uprooted trees, and defeated demons. The present netsuke captures one of the most popular episodes of the legend - Kintoki wrestling a bear - a subject frequently depicted in Edo-period art, but comparatively rare in netsuke form.



Woodblock print by Torii Kiyonaga, c. 1784-1805. Kintaro is depicted looking at an illustrated battle between two warriors atop a black bear as an oni holds an ax in his background

Estimate EUR 3,000
Starting price EUR 1,500



**116
A FINE IVORY NETSUKE
OF A DANCING FOX PRIEST (HAKUZOSU)**

Unsigned
Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Captured in a dynamic dancing pose, the figure stands enveloped in a long, incised robe, a large cowl draped over its head, the two ears visible through the cloth at the top, the face with a sly expression. One foot lifts lightly from the ground as the shapeshifting creature leans upon a slender staff, its head inclined downward in a gesture that enhances both movement and poise. The elegant asymmetry of the stance draws the eye, perfectly balancing the composition. Two large and asymmetrical himotoshi to the back.

HEIGHT 8.5 cm

Condition: Very good condition. Some very light nibbling to the ears.

Hakuzosu is the name of a popular kitsune character who shapeshifted into a priest in the Kyogen play Tsurigitsune. Kitsune are creatures imbued with magical powers and are known to have the ability to shapeshift. They are also believed to be animated by the devils.

This particular model, imbued with movement and character, is a welcome departure from the more commonly seen static fox priest which stands upright leaning against a cane.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related, almost flat ivory netsuke of the same subject, carved in a similar pose and with comparable detailing to the robe, clearly executed by the same hand or workshop which excelled in the skillful use of scrap ivory material, 7.6 cm high, sold at Zucke, Fine Japanese Art, 27 May 2022, Vienna, lot 182 (sold for **EUR 5,688**).



Estimate EUR 3,000
Starting price EUR 1,500





117
**KIYOKATSU: A GOOD KYOTO SCHOOL
 IVORY NETSUKE OF AN OCTOPUS**

By Kiyokatsu, signed Kiyokatsu 清勝
 Japan, Kyoto, late 18th-early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)



This exquisite ivory netsuke is a compact yet exceptionally crafted representation of an octopus, designed with both artistic precision and functionality in mind. The large head of the mollusk sits at the center, surrounded by its rising tentacles, each meticulously detailed with naturalistic suction pads. The octopus' comical, bewildered face features an open mouth in a distinct "O" shape, with eyes double-inlaid with dark horn pupils. The underside is equally captivating, with a radius of suckered tentacles surrounding a central inlaid beak. Natural himotoshi and signed to the back of the head KİYOKATSU.

HEIGHT 3.3 cm, LENGTH 4.2 cm

Provenance: Ex-collection Carlo Monzino, sold at Sotheby's, The Carlo Monzino Collection of Netsuke, Inro and Lacquer, 21 June 1995, London, lot 198 (sold for GBP 2,990 or approx. **EUR 7,300** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing). **Carlo Monzino (1933-1996)** was a prominent European collector renowned for his extensive collection of Japanese netsuke, inro, and other Asian art, which he meticulously amassed during his years living in Tokyo. His collection, which included rare and exceptional pieces, was celebrated for its depth and quality, particularly the Edo period netsuke crafted by master carvers. In addition to Japanese art, Monzino also developed a distinguished collection of African and Oceanic art, including the renowned Jacob Epstein collection. His legacy continues through the sale of his collections, which have become key references in both public and private art spheres.
Condition: Excellent condition with light natural age cracks.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

For a closely related ivory netsuke of an octopus by the same artist, signed Kiyokatsu, 3.5 cm high, see Barry Davies Oriental Art (1994) The Netsuke Collection of W.G Bosshard Part 1, no. 68.



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



118
**A SUPERB MARINE IVORY NETSUKE
 OF A DIVING GIRL (AMA)**

Unsigned
 Japan, late 18th to early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)



Exquisitely carved as an ama, a female pearl diver, the slender figure stands in a graceful pose with her head gently tilted upward. She adjusts her elaborate hairstyle, holding strands of hair in both hands. The hair is finely carved and sumi-stained, parted in the middle and falling forward over the shoulders. Her straw skirt is rendered in long flowing strands resembling the trailing tail of a minogame, and like the hair is subtly enhanced with sumi staining.

The diver's facial features are sensitively modeled, with full cheeks and a gentle, serene smile. The stance is natural and relaxed, both feet firmly planted, giving the figure a quiet sense of poise. The marine ivory is used to exceptional effect, its beautifully shimmering surface and soft translucency lending the figure a luminous presence, the polished areas glowing against the darker stained elements. Asymmetrical himotoshi to the reverse.

HEIGHT 6.5 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only very minor wear and few fine age cracks.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related ivory netsuke of a diving girl (ama) with a similarly elaborate sumi-stained hairstyle, 7.4 cm high, at Zacke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 25 September 2025, Vienna, lot 28 (sold for **EUR 9,480**). Compare a related ivory netsuke of a diving girl (ama), 7 cm high, at Zacke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 3 May 2024, Vienna, lot 64 (sold for **EUR 10,400**).



Estimate EUR 6,000
 Starting price EUR 3,000



119
**RAKU: A SUPERB OSAKA SCHOOL
 IVORY NETSUKE OF A GRAZING DEER**

By Raku, signed Raku 乐
 Japan, Osaka, late 18th to early 19th century, Edo period
 (1615-1868)

Superbly carved, the netsuke depicts a grazing deer with its head lowered toward the ground, the elegant curvature of the animal's back forming a compact composition. The fur is meticulously rendered through dense, stained incisions, enhanced by stippling that suggests the animal's spotted coat, while the antlers, ears, and hooves are polished for subtle contrast. Large himotoshi to the reverse, and signed RAKU within an oval reserve.

HEIGHT 5.5 cm

Condition: Very good condition with beautifully preserved inked details. Few tiny nibbles to the ears.

**AUCTION
 COMPARISON**

Compare a closely related ivory netsuke of a recumbent stag, by Garaku, dated to c. 1800, at Sotheby's, Netsuke Ojime Inro, 8 January 1981, Honolulu, lot 34 (sold for USD 2,500 or approx. **EUR 8,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing). Also compare an ivory netsuke of a puppy with similarly inked and carved features by the same artist, signed Raku, dated to the early 19th century, at Zacks, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 9 May 2025, Vienna, lot 154 (sold for **EUR 7,150**).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



120
**A CHARMING OSAKA SCHOOL
 IVORY NETSUKE OF A HARE**

Unsigned
 Japan, Osaka, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved as a hare (usagi) seated on its haunches, the long, floppy ears are laid back to form a compact and harmonious composition. The tail is short, and the eyes are large, slightly domed cabochon inlays of lustrous black horn, lending the animal a lively expression. The fur is neatly incised and darkly stained in the manner associated with the Garaku school. Two large himotoshi underneath. This anonymous study can be attributed to an Osaka workshop related to Garaku. Beautiful patina.

LENGTH 4.2 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only minor wear and expected natural age cracks.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related Osaka school hare and monkey, by Garaku, dated to the 18th century, 5.2 cm high, illustrated in Sagemonoya (2004) Ninety-Nine Netsuke & One Inro, pp. 60-61, no. 83.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related ivory netsuke of a seated hare, described as Kyoto style but likely from the same Osaka workshop related to Garaku as the present piece, dated late 18th to early 19th century, 5 cm long, at Christie's, Netsuke & Lacquer from the Japanese Department of Eskenazi, 17 November 1999, London, lot 76 (sold for GBP 6,900 or approx. **EUR 15,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000





121
**A RARE IVORY NETSUKE
 OF A DORMOUSE AND MUSHROOM**

Unsigned
 Japan, Kyoto, late 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Naturalistically carved as a dormouse nestled within the cap of an upturned mushroom, its bushy tail neatly incised and stained, the fur indicated by fine lines, the rodent's large eyes inlaid in lustrous dark horn. The upturned fungi carved with radial gills, its long stalk uncut, inclining and slightly curved. The underside of the cap is neatly incised with leaves and houses the superbly hollowed, asymmetrical himotoshi.

LENGTH (from cap to stalk) 4.5 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear, light surface scratches and expected natural age cracks.

The rodent depicted is most likely a dormouse (*Glirulus japonicus*), often misidentified as a squirrel due to its bushy tail.

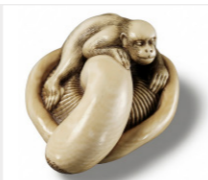
LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related ivory netsuke of a squirrel (though more likely a dormouse) on a mushroom, illustrated in Barry Davies *Oriental Art, The Netsuke Collection of W.G. Bosshard Part 1, no. 73*. Barry Davies notes on this piece: 'This is undoubtedly a Kyoto School work, and probably by Okatomo, or a close follower. The upturned mushroom is very similar to those he carved with rats and monkeys.'



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related ivory netsuke of a monkey on a mushroom, attributed to Okatomo, 4.9 cm long, at Zucke, *Asian Art Discoveries*, 22 January 2026, Vienna, lot 314 (sold for **EUR 9,824**).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



122
**SADAYOSHI: A FINE OSAKA SCHOOL
 IVORY NETSUKE OF A TOAD AND BAMBOO**

By Sadayoshi, signed Sadayoshi 定由
 Japan, Osaka, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

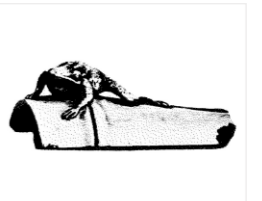
Finely carved as a lively frog (kaeru) crouching atop a section of bamboo. The amphibian is rendered with naturalistic detail, its compact body poised as if ready to leap, with splayed limbs gripping the smooth surface of the bamboo. The skin is delicately stippled to capture the texture of a frog's mottled hide, while the double-inlaid eyes are alert and slightly bulging. The bamboo is carefully shaped with softly rounded edges and shallow grooves, simulating the natural nodes of the plant, with added simulated wear for realistic effect. Himotoshi to the underside, signed in a wavy reserve SADAYOSHI.

LENGTH 5.5 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only minor wear.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related ivory netsuke of a toad atop a bamboo node by the same artist, signed Sadayoshi, illustrated in Meinertzhagen, Frederick / Lazarnick, George (1986) *MCI, Part B*, p. 689.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related Osaka school ivory netsuke of a toad atop bamboo, by Matora, 5.5 cm long, at Christie's, *The Raymond and Frances Bushell Collection of Netsuke*, 18 October 1988, London, lot 34 (sold for GBP 1,100 or approx. **EUR 3,700** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500





123
**A SUPERB KYOTO SCHOOL IVORY NETSUKE
 OF A RECUMBENT COW AND CALF**

Unsigned
 Japan, Kyoto, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

An exceptionally fine and pleasingly worn rendition of a recumbent cow and calf, with the young lying at the mother's side, raising its head to lovingly lick her cheek. The mother is rendered with remarkable attention to detail, and the thin rope halter, running from the parent's nose and trailing across her back, is beautifully carved, with extraordinarily fine detailing, even in the hard-to-reach crevices around the neck. The underside is typically formed with tucked-in feet, almost giving the impression of swaying motion. Unusually, it features two distinctly oval himotoshi, both generously hollowed out. Beautifully toned with a deep, yellowish patina that graces the entire piece.

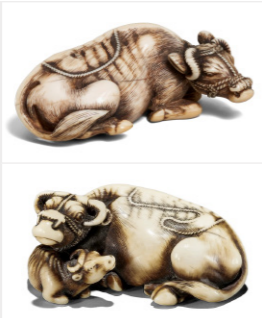
LENGTH 5.5 cm

Condition: Good condition with old wear and age cracks as well as other typical traces of use. An old restoration to the right ear.

The present piece is difficult to attribute to a specific Kyoto carver, though it bears a strong resemblance to the works of Masanao of Kyoto, especially in the manner of the face, the rope halter, and the carved folds above the eyes. However, the himotoshi, both oval in shape, differ from those typically used by Masanao or other carvers like Okatomo and Tomotada. There are certainly visual comparisons to both Tomotada and Masanao, and this netsuke would be regarded as an accomplished work by either carver.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related ivory netsuke with a similar incision work, sumi staining, pose and rope, by Masanao of Kyoto, 5.9 cm long, at Lempertz, Asiatische Kunst, 16 December 2020, Cologne, lot 867 (sold for EUR 25,000 or approx. **EUR 31,000** adjusted for inflation at the time of writing). Compare a closely related ivory netsuke of a recumbent cow and calf by Tomotada in a similar pose, 6.1 cm long, at Zacke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 25 September 2020, Vienna, lot 61 (sold for **EUR 13,904**).



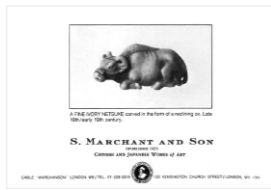
Estimate EUR 8,000
 Starting price EUR 4,000



124
**A SUPERB IVORY NETSUKE
 OF A RECUMBENT OX LICKING ITS SNOOT**

Unsigned
 Japan, Kyoto, late 18th century,
 Edo period (1615-1868)

Published: International
 Netsuke Collectors Society (INCS),
 Hobaisai 1977, Vol. 4, no. 4, p. 2
 (advertised).



An exceptionally fine rendition of a recumbent ox, its legs neatly tucked beneath the body and the bushy tail sweeping gently to one side. The animal is rendered with remarkable sensitivity and attention to detail: the tip of the tongue protrudes slightly as it reaches to lick the snout, while a thin rope halter passes through the nose and trails across the back. The fur is meticulously incised and subtly sumi-stained, and the ribs are delicately articulated. The himotoshi consist of an oval opening and a large, generously excavated circular aperture beneath the body.

LENGTH 5.4 cm

Provenance: S. Marchant and Son, London, 1977. German private collection, acquired from the above.

Condition: Very good condition with only minor wear, typical age cracks, tiny nibbling and a small chip to the tip of one horn.



The present unsigned netsuke represents a particularly refined interpretation of the oxen carved by Kyoto artists of the late 18th century. It finds its closest parallels in the work of **Okatomo**, yet distinguishes itself through especially crisp carving, the elegant sweep of the bushy tail, and the unusual treatment of the himotoshi. Most notably, the detail of the outstretched tongue - a feature more commonly encountered in oxen by Garaku - adds an intriguing stylistic nuance to the piece.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related ivory netsuke of a recumbent ox, signed Okatomo, illustrated in Ducros, Alain (1987) *Netsuke & Sagemono* 2, p. 52, no. 24.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related ivory netsuke of a recumbent ox, signed Tomotada and attributed to Okatomo, 6 cm long, at Zucke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 3 May 2024, Vienna, lot 45 (sold for **EUR 7,150**).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



125
**GARAKU: A CHARMING WOOD NETSUKE
 OF A RECUMBENT OX LICKING ITS NOSE**

By Risuke Garaku, signed Tomotada 友忠
 Japan, late 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

A charming yet boldly conceived wood netsuke carved as a recumbent ox, its tongue protruding as it stretches upward to lick the top of its snout. The rope halter passing through the animal's nose is carefully rendered and extends across the back. The eyes are inlaid in dark horn. The body is robust and confidently modeled, with strong contours and a pleasingly bulky form. The fur is finely incised and shows the characteristic wear of handling. The underside reveals neatly tucked legs and generously excavated asymmetrical himotoshi. Signed within an oval reserve TOMOTADA - a signature used by Garaku during his early period while still under the tutelage of Tomotada; however, the form of the oval reserve and the overall carving style are unmistakably characteristic of Garaku.

LENGTH 5.8 cm

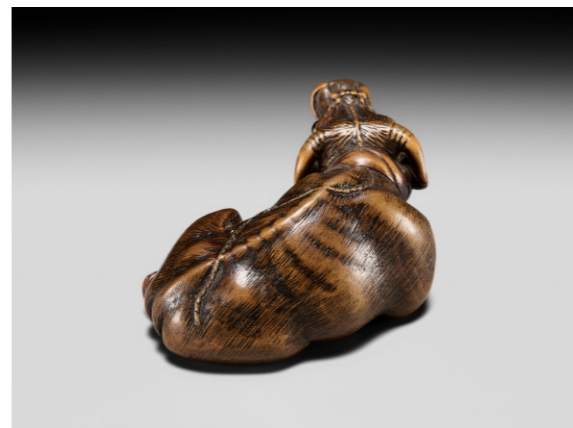
Condition: Excellent condition with only very minor wear and light expected traces of use. Beautiful patina.

MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke depicting an ox licking its snout by Garaku, signed Garaku within an oval reserve, 4.4 cm long, in the British Museum, registration number HG.486.



Estimate EUR 5,000
 Starting price EUR 2,400





126
MITSUHIDE: A GOOD WOOD NETSUKE OF A MONKEY WITH ITS YOUNG

By Mitsuhide, signed Mitsuhide 光秀
 Japan, Kyoto, late 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Boldly carved as a mother monkey restraining her young, the two animals closely entwined in an intimate and lively composition. The mother's face, expressively animated — quintessentially Mitsuhide — shows bared teeth and sharply incised features, while the smaller monkey gazes upward with mouth agape. The fur throughout is rendered with fine, deeply incised lines, and the pupils are inlaid in horn. Natural himotoshi and signed within a polished oval reserve MITSUHIDE.

LENGTH 3.6 cm, HEIGHT 4 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only minor wear and light typical traces of use.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of a monkey with two young by the same artist, signed Mitsuhide, 4 cm high, at Bonhams, The Julius and Arlette Katchen Collection of Fine Netsuke, 8 November 2016, London, lot 97 (sold GBP 3,750 or approx. **EUR 6,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing). Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a monkey with two young by the same artist, signed Mitsuhide, 4.1 cm high, at Sotheby's, Japanese Works of Art, 21 March 1997, New York, lot 340 (mid-estimated at USD 2,750 or approx. **EUR 6,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).

Estimate EUR 6,000
 Starting price EUR 3,000



127
HAKURYU: A FINE WOOD NETSUKE OF A MONKEY EATING A PEACH

By Unsho Hakuryu, signed Hakuryu 白龍
 Japan, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

The seated monkey is depicted munching on a peach held in its right hand, its left hand resting on its left foot in a relaxed pose. The fur is neatly incised, and the eyes are double inlaid in pale translucent and dark horn. Natural himotoshi are formed through the limbs, and the underside is signed HAKURYU.

Deceptively simple in composition, the carving is incredibly charming, compact and tactile in form. The ears are laid back, the fur superbly rendered, and the eyes set in an intense, almost glaring expression that lends the figure a striking immediacy and quiet tension.

HEIGHT 3.8 cm

Condition: Good condition with minor wear and light typical traces of use. The tail possibly slightly chipped and one inlaid eye is replaced.

Unsho Hakuryu was a carpenter in the service of Asano Naritaka (1817–1868), the daimyo ruler of Hiroshima. Alain Ducros suggests that Hakuryu initially trained under Mitani Goho, carving predominantly in wood. Around 1857, he is believed to have encountered Ohara Mitsuhiro (1810–1875), who had returned to his native Onomichi and was already a celebrated ivory carver. It appears that only after this meeting did Hakuryu begin working in ivory, with some of his later pieces closely resembling those of Mitsuhiro.

As the present netsuke is carved in wood, it firmly belongs to Hakuryu's earlier phase, prior to his shift toward ivory carving. Its material and comparatively restrained treatment are fully consistent with this early period of production.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare an almost identical seated monkey by the same artist, signed Hakuryu, illustrated in Lazarnick, George (1981) *Netsuke & Inro Artists, and How to Read Their Signatures* (LNIA), Vol. 1, p. 439; and also illustrated in Barry Davies *Oriental Art* (1994) *The Netsuke Collection of W. G. Bosshard Part 1*, no. 48.



Estimate EUR 6,000
 Starting price EUR 3,000





128
**A MASTERFUL WOOD NETSUKE
OF A CAT LICKING ITS PAW**

Unsigned
Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

This exquisite netsuke presents a compact yet masterfully detailed composition, depicting a reclining cat in the gentle act of licking one of its paws. The feline's relaxed posture exudes tranquility, captured with meticulous precision. The fur is skillfully incised with fine, flowing lines, accentuating the softness of its coat, while a finely crafted collar, tied into a knot at the top, introduces a subtle yet sophisticated refinement to the piece. The cat's pointed ears are expertly shaped, and its eyes and snout are delicately modeled, enhancing the lifelike expression. The tail curves elegantly to one side, and the paws are superbly crafted. Two very large himotoshi, one of which is of distinct oval shape.

LENGTH 5.2 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.

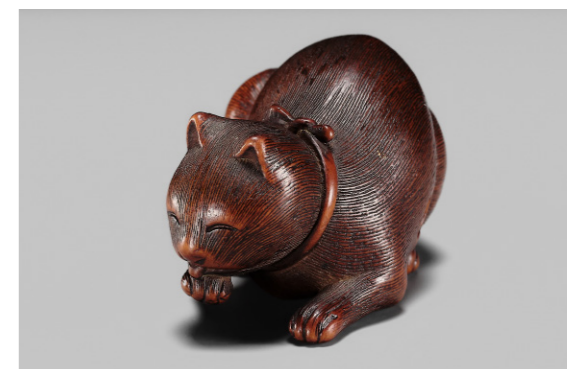
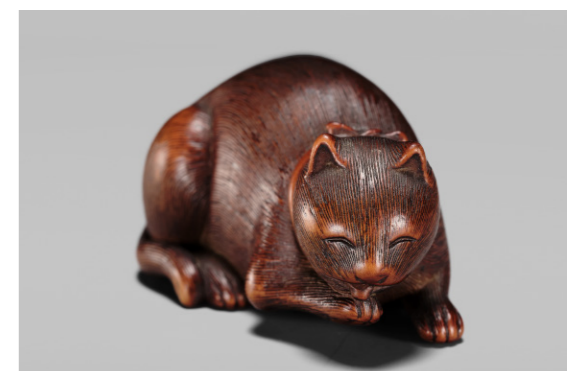
Wood carvings of cats are exceedingly rare in Japanese netsuke art, particularly those featuring a solitary cat rather than in combination with other animals or in anthropomorphized forms. This early netsuke stands as an extraordinary example of the artist's craftsmanship. The naturalistic portrayal of the cat, coupled with the fine attention to detail in the fur, is unparalleled. The large himotoshi, including the notably oval one, are of particular significance and reminiscent of the works by renowned masters such as Masanao of Kyoto, Hoshin, and Yoshinaga. This piece is undoubtedly one of the finest representations of a cat in wood netsuke, beautifully modeled and imbued with life.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke which portrays a cat cleaning its body, though less refined in its carving style, 4 cm long, at Bonhams, Samurai, Snow, Spectacle, 7 November 2024, London, lot 15 (sold for GBP 5,120 or approx. **EUR 6,200** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 10,000
Starting price EUR 5,000





129
A RARE IVORY NETSUKE OF A CAT GROOMING ITSELF, CIRCLE OF ISSAI

Circle of Ogawasara Issai, unsigned
Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

This finely carved netsuke depicts a cat (neko) reclining gracefully, with one hind leg raised and its head lowered as it delicately licks its paw. The artist has captured the cat's relaxed yet meticulous grooming posture with exquisite attention to anatomical detail, showcasing the fluidity of its natural movement. The soft curve of its tail wraps around its body, emphasizing the tranquil, introspective nature of the animal. The ivory has developed a beautiful honey patina. Large, asymmetrical himotoshi underneath.

LENGTH 4.4 cm

Provenance: Zacke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 29 October 2021, Vienna, lot 33. German private collection, acquired from the above.

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

MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a closely related ivory netsuke in The British Museum, accession no. HG.717.



Estimate EUR 2,000
Starting price EUR 1,000



130
A CHARMING KYOTO SCHOOL IVORY NETSUKE OF A CROUCHING RABBIT

Unsigned
Japan, Kyoto, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved, depicting a charming hare (usagi) seated with its back arched and head lowered, its long ears laid back, forming a tactile and compact composition. The eyes are inlaid with reddish amber and the ivory exhibits a superb honey-yellow patina. Although unsigned, this netsuke is undoubtedly from the Kyoto school and bears a style closely resembling that of Yoshinaga and his followers. Natural himotoshi.

LENGTH 3.8 cm

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

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related larger ivory netsuke of a hare, by Kiyotada, 4.6 cm long, at Lempertz, Asian Art, 18 June 2024, Cologne, lot 447 (sold for EUR 4,284).



Estimate EUR 2,500
Starting price EUR 1,200



131
A VERY RARE IVORY NETSUKE OF AN OTTER ON BAMBOO

Unsigned
Japan, probably Kyoto, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved as an otter reclining upon a section of bamboo, its elongated body draped naturally along the cylindrical form and holding a rat playfully in its mouth close to its chest. The fur is meticulously incised, and the bamboo segment is rendered with careful attention to the nodes and split leaves. A natural himotoshi is ingeniously formed by a loop created from a doubled growth segment, the carving further pierced to the underside and through the bamboo itself. The ivory has developed an attractive, warm honey patina throughout.

LENGTH 6 cm

Condition: Very good condition with only minor wear and age cracks. A small flaw to the otter's shoulder.

Otters (kawauso) are exceedingly rare in netsuke art, making the present example an especially noteworthy and unusual subject. In Japanese folklore, the otter is occasionally described as a mischievous, shape-shifting creature, though it never attained the prominence of the fox (kitsune) or raccoon dog (tanuki), and its riverine habitat further associates it with liminal and unpredictable forces of nature. Here, the otter is shown perched on bamboo and devouring a rat (nezumi), an animal commonly linked with abundance and prosperity, particularly through its association with Daikokuten, one of the Seven Gods of Good Fortune. The image of the otter consuming the rat may therefore introduce a subtle symbolic tension - perhaps suggesting the triumph of untamed nature over stored wealth - while also reflecting close observation of the natural world, as otters are opportunistic predators. Such layered resonances enhance the intellectual and artistic interest of this rare subject in netsuke carving.

MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a closely related ivory netsuke of an otter and rat on bamboo, in the Tokyo National Museum, collection reference number H-4653.



Estimate EUR 5,000
Starting price EUR 2,400



132
**RANTEI: A SUPERB WOOD NETSUKE
 OF A RECUMBENT HORSE**

By Hogen Rantei, signed Rantei 蘭亭
 Japan, Kyoto, late 18th to early 19th century, Edo period
 (1615-1868)

Superbly carved as a compact, rounded horse arching its body and twisting its head back to groom its hindquarters, the composition forms an elegant, self-contained curve. The animal's pose is both naturalistic and animated, the legs tucked neatly beneath the body while the tail sweeps forward along the flank. Particularly striking is the expressive head: the mouth is distorted to one side, revealing finely carved teeth, as if the horse is chewing at debris caught in its coat while simultaneously caught mid- neigh. The ears are laid back against the mane, and the subtle modeling of the musculature and finely worked hair along the neck lends the animal remarkable vitality and character. The eyes are brilliant double inlays of dark and pale horn. Large, asymmetrical himotoshi underneath and signed in an oval reserve RANTEI.

LENGTH 3.8 cm

Condition: Very good condition with only very minor wear and light traces of use.

Wood netsuke by Rantei, who earned the honorary Buddhist title of Hogen during his lifetime, are rare, his favored medium for netsuke being ivory. The present netsuke appears to be the only recorded netsuke of a horse carved in wood.

MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a related ivory netsuke of a recumbent horse by the same artist, signed Rantei, dated to the 19th century, 3.8 cm long, in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), accession no. M.91.250.28.

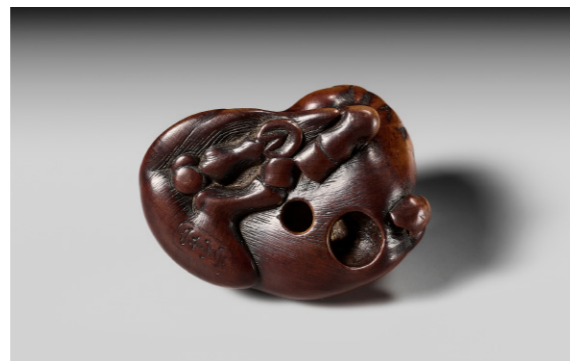


AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related ivory netsuke of a recumbent horse by the same artist, signed Rantei, dated to the 19th century, 3.8 cm long, at Bonhams, The Julius and Arlette Katchen Collection of Fine Netsuke, 8 November 2016, London, lot 81 (sold for GBP 7,500 or approx. **EUR 12,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 5,000
 Starting price EUR 2,400





133
**A SUPERB IVORY NETSUKE OF A HORSE,
ATTRIBUTED TO TOMOTADA**

Attributed to Tomotada, unsigned
Japan, Kyoto, late 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Elegantly carved as a standing horse poised in a moment of gentle movement, the animal gathers three hooves closely beneath the body while the fourth is raised and slightly curled, lending the composition a vivid sense of animation. The head turns gracefully back to the left, the horn-inlaid eyes directed downward, as if observing the ground below. The long neck twists naturally, accentuating the finely carved mane that flows in delicate strands along the crest, while the voluminous tail falls in a soft arc to the rear.

The body is wrapped in a carefully rendered cloth secured with a ribbon tied over the back, the folds subtly articulated. The carving displays a remarkable balance between compactness and vitality, the lifted hoof conveying the impression that the animal is about to shift its weight or take a step. Good, asymmetrical himotoshi to the back and underside. The ivory bears a beautiful, deep patina.

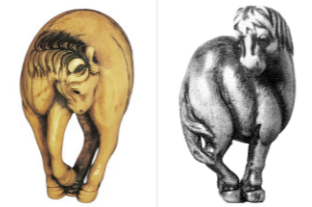
HEIGHT 5.5 cm

Condition: Very good condition, with minor wear and light traces of use. Expected age cracks.

People born in the year of the horse tend to be quite free-spirited and independent. They are flexible, quick to adapt, often charismatic, and sociable. However, they can sometimes be quick-tempered and impatient.

**LITERATURE
COMPARISON**

Tomotada appears to have carved two variants of this standing horse, one with a raised hoof and one with all four legs firmly planted on the ground. For a closely related mirrored ivory netsuke of a horse by the same artist, signed Tomotada, note the similar color and patina of the ivory, see Ducros, Alain (1987) *Netsuke & Sagemono* 2, p. 54, no. 26. For a closely related ivory horse netsuke of a horse by the same artist, with all four legs on the ground, signed Tomotada, see the *International Netsuke Collectors Society Journal* (1983) Vol. 10, no. 4, p. 23, fig. 27.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related ivory netsuke of a horse by Tomotada, Kyoto, dated to the 18th century, 5.8 cm (height), at Sotheby's, *The Katchen Collection of Netsuke - Part II*, 13 July 2006, London, lot 250 and illustrated on the **cover of the catalog** (sold for GBP 57,600 or approx. **EUR 114,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 30,000
Starting price EUR 15,000





134
**TOMOTADA: AN EXCEPTIONAL AND LARGE
 IVORY NETSUKE OF A TIGER**

By Izumiya Tomotada, signed Tomotada 友忠
 Japan, Kyoto, late 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Powerfully carved as a seated tiger (tora), the animal turns its head slightly to one side with a satisfied expression, its tail curling around its flank to create a compact composition. The pupils are inlaid in dark horn, while the thick eyebrows are a characteristic feature associated with the work of Tomotada. The netsuke was clearly cherished and handled extensively over generations, as evidenced by the heavily worn yet exceptionally attractive honey-to-amber patina that envelops the surface. Large himotoshi to the underside, and signed TOMOTADA underneath one paw.

LENGTH 5.2 cm

Provenance: Ex-collection Frank Lapisch, acquired in November 1992. **Frank Lapisch** (1934-2002) was a German entrepreneur and dedicated netsuke collector who first traveled to Japan in 1960 as a German judo champion. He later founded the Tokyo-based electronics firm Alltec in 1972 while deepening his engagement with Japanese art and craftsmanship. He showed a particular preference for early 'ur-netsuke,' prized for their expressive carving and richly developed, glossy wear patina.

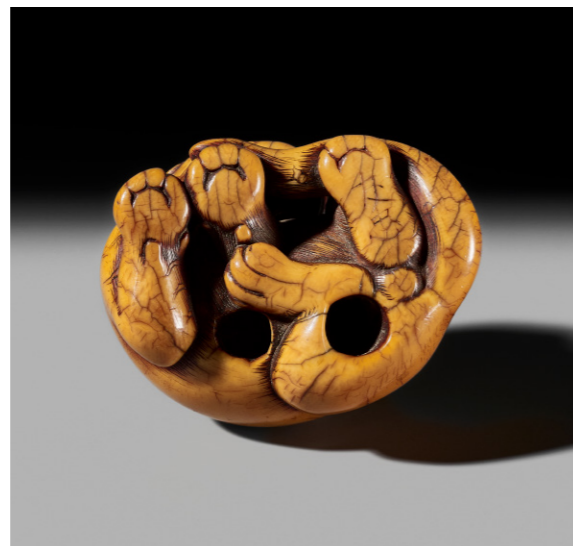
Condition: The surface and sumi details are heavily worn. Beautiful, deep patina. Several age cracks.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related netsuke of a reclining tiger in a less heavily worn condition, which provides a valuable indication of the present work's original appearance. In that example, the sumi ink details remain largely intact, though it does not yet display the deep, lustrous patina that now so beautifully characterizes the present piece. For reference, the comparative example is signed Tomotada, measures 4.7 cm in length, and is illustrated in Marie-Thérèse Coullery and Martin S. Newstead (1977), *The Baur Collection*, pp. 348-349, no. C 1091.



Estimate EUR 15,000
 Starting price EUR 7,500



135
**OKATOMO: A SUPERB IVORY NETSUKE
 OF A TIGER LICKING HIS PAW**

By Yamaguchi Okatomo, signed Okatomo 岡友
 Japan, Kyoto, late 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Seated, the tiger washes its body in a typical feline manner, one forepaw raised and the tail passing forward over the back. The stripes of the fur are finely incised, and the eyes are inlaid in dark horn. The netsuke was clearly cherished and handled extensively over generations, as evidenced by the heavily worn yet exceptionally attractive honey-to-amber patina. Himotoshi underneath and under the shoulder, signed OKATOMO.

HEIGHT 4 cm

Provenance: Collection of Frank Lapisch, acquired in November 1992. **Frank Lapisch** (1934-2002) was a German entrepreneur and dedicated netsuke collector who first traveled to Japan in 1960 as a German judo champion. He later founded the Tokyo-based electronics firm Alltec in 1972 while deepening his engagement with Japanese art and craftsmanship. He showed a particular preference for early 'ur-netsuke,' prized for their expressive carving and richly developed, glossy wear patina.

Condition: Good condition, attractively but heavily worn, several age cracks, as well as old smoothed chips to one himotoshi and paw.

**AUCTION
 COMPARISON**

Compare a closely related ivory netsuke of a seated and licking tiger



by the same artist, signed Okatomo, dated to 18th century, at Sotheby's, *Fine Netsuke & Ojime* from the H. G. Beasley Collection, 14 March 1984, London, lot 23 (mid-estimated GBP 5,000 or approx. **EUR 20,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing). Compare a related ivory netsuke of a tiger licking its paw and a cub, by Tomotada, dated to the late 18th century, at Bonhams, *The Harriet Szechenyi Sale of Japanese Art*, 8 November 2011, London, lot 126 (sold for GBP 27,500 or approx. **EUR 47,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).

Estimate EUR 10,000
 Starting price EUR 5,000





136
**A FINE OSAKA SCHOOL IVORY NETSUKE
 OF A CROUCHING TIGER**

Circle of Sadayoshi, unsigned
 Japan, Osaka, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Boldly carved and deeply stained, the tiger is rendered with particular attention to its fur, achieved through alternating stripes set against finely incised and inked hairwork, now attractively worn to a fine patina. The bulky creature makes a valiant attempt to appear fierce, its head turned back, the eyes inlaid in horn and lending it an amusing expression. The thick tail curls over its back, while the massive, rounded paws press firmly against the ground. Small himotoshi underneath.

LENGTH 3.8 cm

Condition: The left forepaw is restored, as is commonly encountered with this model; otherwise in excellent condition with typical natural age cracks.

**AUCTION
 COMPARISON**

Compare a closely related Osaka school ivory netsuke of a tiger with a similarly amusing expression, 4 cm long, at Zackle, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 22 April 2022, Vienna, lot 69 (sold for **EUR 9,840**). Compare a closely related Osaka school ivory netsuke of a tiger with finely rendered fur, 3.8 cm long, at Zackle, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 9 May 2025, Vienna, lot 151 (sold for **EUR 3,120**).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



137
**A SUPERB IVORY NETSUKE OF A RECUMBENT GOAT,
 ATTRIBUTED TO MITSU HARU**

Attributed Mitsu haru, unsigned
 Japan, Kyoto, late 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved as a recumbent goat, its legs tucked beneath its body and its head turned slightly to one side. The shaggy fur is distinctively in the manner of Mitsu haru, meticulously incised to capture the soft texture of the goat's coat with remarkable detail. The face is rendered with gentle, endearing features and an alert expression. The pupils of the eyes are inlaid with dark horn, and the ivory displays a beautifully warm patina. Asymmetrical himotoshi underneath.

LENGTH 5 cm

Condition: Good condition with minor expected wear and light traces of use. A tiny nick to one ear and minor repairs to the edges of the horns.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related ivory netsuke of a standing goat, also unsigned and attributed to Mitsu haru, 5.4 cm high, at Bonhams, The James A. Rosen Collection of Netsuke and Sagemono, 17 September 2013, New York, lot 2014 (sold for USD 17,500 or approx. **EUR 20,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000





138
A CHARMING OSAKA SCHOOL IVORY NETSUKE OF A KARAKO WITH A HORSE PUPPET

Unsigned
 Japan, Osaka, late 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

- Published:**
1. Cohen, George (1974), In Search of Netsuke & Inro, p. 31, no. 18, illustrated on pl II.
 2. Eskenazi Ltd. (1998), Japanese Netsuke, Ojime, and Inro from a Private European Collection, London, no. 75.

Superbly carved as a karako (Chinese boy), laughing merrily as he holds up a horse-head puppet over his shoulder. He wears a finely incised and sumi-stained Chinese-style robe with fur-edged detailing over fur leggings, and his robes swing back as he presents his puppet with lively vigor. His face is cheerful, revealing teeth, and the ivory bears an attractively warm, yellow patina. Good, large himotoshi to the back.

HEIGHT 6.2 cm



Provenance: Ex-Collection of N. S. Bamji. Sotheby's, Fine Netsuke, Okimono and Inro, 7 March 1979, London, lot 2. Ex-Collection of Mr. and Mrs. G. A. Cohen, acquired from the above. Sotheby's, Japanese Works of Art, 17 May 1987, London, lot 144 (sold for GBP 3,250 or approx. **EUR 11,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing). European private collection, acquired from the above. With Eskenazi Ltd, London, 1998. A noted private collection, acquired from the above.

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear, few natural age cracks and typical light traces of use.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

This type of karako with distinct facial features can be attributed to the early Osaka school, particularly to the circle of Garaku, though it is much more commonly seen carrying a goat. For an unsigned variant carved from marine ivory, depicting a karako holding a goat, see Zacke, Japanische Netsuke - Ausstellung 1990, no. 60. For a wood netsuke of a boy with similar features, signed Raku, see Zacke, Netsuke und Inro - Ausstellung 1984, no. 143.



Estimate EUR 6,000
 Starting price EUR 3,000



139
AN IVORY NETSUKE OF A TARTAR ARCHER, ATTRIBUTED TO MITSU HARU

Attributed to Mitsuharu, unsigned
 Japan, Kyoto, late 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

The standing archer is depicted wearing a broad, characteristically shaped hat surmounted by an inlaid horn finial, and dressed in a robe elaborately decorated with scrolling cloud motifs. A finely carved dragon-headed quiver is slung across his back, its details crisply defined and harmoniously integrated into the composition. In one hand he grasps a pair of arrows, while the other holds a bow partially concealed within the folds of his sleeve behind him. Asymmetrical himotoshi to the reverse, the larger generously excavated to accommodate the knot. Although unsigned, the carving displays many of the distinctive stylistic features associated with Mitsuharu and as such can be confidently attributed to the master. The ivory has developed an attractively warm honey patina.

HEIGHT 9.2 cm

Condition: Repairs to the right foot, hand and arrows. Expected natural age cracks. Presenting beautifully with a deep, unctuous patina.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

For a discussion of the carver and his Mongolian archers see International Netsuke Society Journal (INSJ), 2019, Vol. 39, no. 1, pp. 11-23, figs. 27 & 28.

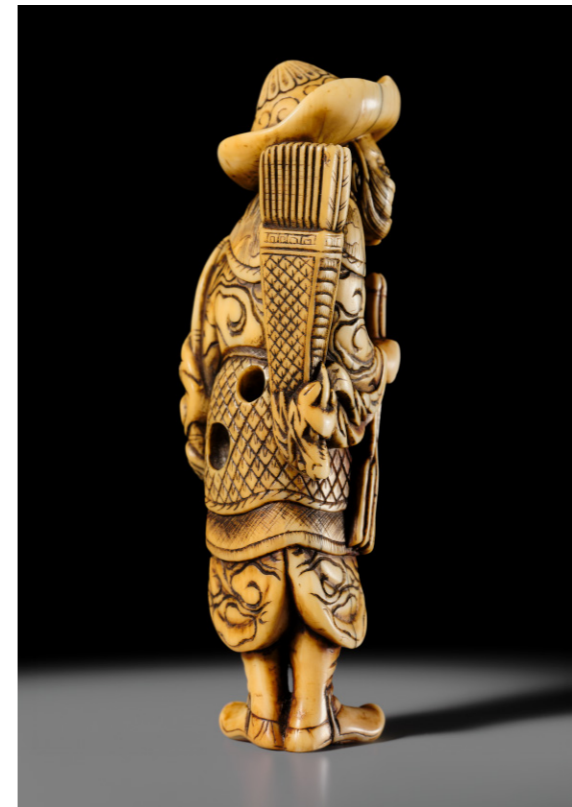


AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related ivory netsuke of a Tartar archer by the same artist, signed Mitsuharu, 7.9 cm high, at Bonhams, Fine Japanese Art, 9 November 2017, London, lot 20 (sold for GBP 4,750 or approx. **EUR 7,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 6,000
 Starting price EUR 3,000





140
A RARE IVORY NETSUKE OF A CHINESE LADY AND DOG, CIRCLE OF GECHU

Circle of Gechu, unsigned
 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved, this netsuke depicts a Chinese lady kneeling and engaged in a gentle interaction with a small dog. One arm is raised behind her head, while the other supports the animal, which gazes up at her. The lady's almond-shaped eyes, slender nose, and composed expression reflect the distinctively Chinese physiognomy associated with Gechu's works. The robe is decorated with finely incised scrolling foliage and a wave pattern, while the garment panels and hems are articulated with patterned borders. A basket is slung over his shoulder, likely filled with peaches, granting immortality, further adding to the symbolism of the scene. The puppy is rendered with smooth, polished modeling. Himotoshi to the back, the larger hole generously excavated to accommodate the knot.

HEIGHT 7 cm

Provenance: Bonhams, Fine Japanese Art, 15 May 2014, London, lot 22 (sold for GBP 5,250 or approx. **EUR 8,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing). A private collection, acquired from the above.

Condition: Excellent condition with minor wear and expected light traces of use.

Gechu is a somewhat enigmatic carver of netsuke, in that little is known of him, including his residence. For many years he has been thought to have lived in Osaka, mainly based upon the similarity of his work to that of Risuke Garaku of that city. More recently, Alain Ducros has proposed that Gechu may instead have been active in Kagoshima in Satsuma Province on the island of Kyushu, where ivory carvings were produced and discreetly transported to Kyoto for sale (see Alain Ducros, *Satsuma Ivory Netsuke*, INSJ, Vol. 36, no. 2, 2016, pp. 20–29). Ducros further suggests that Gechu may have been of Chinese origin, a hypothesis that helps to explain the distinctly Chinese physiognomy and costume in his carvings.

The present lot shows notable affinities with the small group of carvings attributed to Gechu. In particular, the face and pose of the small dog resemble an example in the collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (object number AC1998.249.94); however, Gechu's documented dog carvings typically display a more shaggy treatment of the fur. Furthermore, the incisive detailing of the garments and the sensitively carved facial features of the young Chinese figure correspond to characteristics observed in known works (see Lazarnick, George (1981), *Netsuke & Inro Artists, and How to Read Their Signatures* (LNIA), Vol. 1, p. 399).

In his study, Ducros attributes several netsuke to Gechu. Of particular importance is his illustrated fig. 13, where a monkey, carved without detailed fur articulation, appears on the back of the figure, accompanied by two closely related baskets slung over the shoulder (**fig. 1**), both elements providing a compelling parallel to the present lot. A further comparison may be drawn with a female figure, which Ducros attributes to Gechu (fig. 19 in his article) and which was sold at Bonhams, New York, 17 September 2013, lot 2066 (see Auction comparison), whose graceful bearing and distinctly Chinese facial features parallel those of the present lot. Taken together, these stylistic correspondences strongly support an attribution of the present netsuke to Gechu, reinforcing its significance within this rare corpus.



fig. 1

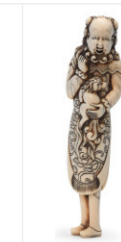
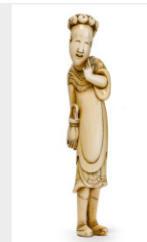
LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related tall ivory netsuke of a Chinese lady with a dog, clearly carved by the same studio or hand, formerly in the Behrens collection, illustrated in Davey, Neil K. (1982) *Netsuke: A comprehensive study based on the M.T. Hindson Collection*, no. 1037.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related tall ivory netsuke of a Chinese court noble, which Alain Ducros also attributes to Gechu, 13.7 cm high, at Bonhams, The James A. Rose Collection of Netsuke and Sagemono, 17 September 2013, New York, lot 2066 (sold for USD 86,500 or approx. **EUR 101,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing). Compare a related tall ivory netsuke of a foreigner with a dog, likely by the same artist, 15.5 cm high, at Bonhams, Fine Japanese Art, 11 May 2017, London, lot 42 (sold for GBP 47,500 or approx. **EUR 74,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 10,000
 Starting price EUR 5,000





141
**A REMARKABLE TALL WOOD NETSUKE
 OF CHINNAN SENNIN WITH DRAGON,
 ATTRIBUTED TO SOSHIN**

Attributed to Soshin, unsigned
 Japan, Osaka or Kii, c. 1800, Edo period (1615-1868)

Published:
 Hurtig, Bernard (1973) Masterpieces of Netsuke Art: One Thousand
 Favorites of Leading Collectors, p. 201, no. 841.
 Sydney L. Moss Ltd. (2006) More Things in Heaven and Earth, pp.
 40-41, no. 11.

A remarkable wood figure of the immortal Chinnan stroking a loose
 strand of hair and holding an alms bowl from which a minutely
 carved dragon emerges, the creature looking up at its conjuror
 and gently placing one claw against Chinnan's chest. This small
 yet striking detail is executed with peculiar sensitivity, almost
 surprising the viewer, giving a rare glimpse into the bond shared

by the dragon and sennin. Chinnan's glaring eyes, inlaid in pale
 and dark horn, and opened mouth confirm this heightened sense
 of pleasure induced by the dragon's touch. The immortal wears
 a neatly incised leaf cloak and has a curious horn-like protrusion
 emerging from his head, which is usually an attribute of rishi such
 as the immortal Ikkaku. The back with large, asymmetrical, and
 generously excavated himotoshi placed at an angle. The wood
 bearing a fine, dark patina.

HEIGHT 9.3 cm

Provenance: Ex-collection Georges Weil. **Georges Weil (b. 1938)**
 was a jewelry designer and sculptor of precious metals who formed
 an important collection of netsuke in the 1960s and also started
 carving netsuke in the 1970s. His works have been featured in
 many important exhibitions throughout the world, and are in the
 collections of many noted museums, such as the British Museum.
 With Sydney Moss Ltd., London, 1993. An American private
 collection, acquired from the above. Christie's, 21 December 2009,
 Paris, lot 46. Ex-collection Guy de Lasteyrie, acquired from the
 above. De Lasteyrie is a member of the Lasteyrie du Saillant family
 and is considered among the leading French collectors of netsuke.
Condition: The feet have been replaced a long time ago (already
 visible in the 1973 publication quoted above) and are convincing
 and respectful repairs. They have been probably lost due to fire
 damage as indicated by some light singeing to the left sleeve. Few
 natural age cracks and typical wear. Appealingly dark patina.



LITERATURE COMPARISON
 Compare a related figure of Tekkai
 sennin, by Soshin, note the similar
 crispness of the carving and the
 expression with peculiarly inlaid eyes,
 illustrated in Sydney L. Moss Ltd.
 (2006) More Things in Heaven and
 Earth, no. 37.



Estimate EUR 6,000
 Starting price EUR 3,000



142

TSUJI: A SUPERB WOOD NETSUKE OF TEKKAI SENNIN BREATHING OUT HIS SPIRIT

By Tsuji, unsigned
Japan, Osaka, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved depicting Tekkai sennin standing upright, clad in a leafy robe and leggings, holding his staff in his right hand while raising his left palm to support the tiny figure of his spirit as it is exhaled heavenwards. The slender vapor trail of the departing spirit is explicitly rendered by the carver. The diminutive spirit figure, also wearing leggings, crouches upon the immortal's hand as if poised for flight. Asymmetrical himotoshi to the reverse, the larger deeply and generously excavated to accommodate the knot, a characteristic feature of Tsuji's work.

HEIGHT 6.5 cm

Condition: Old repairs to the foot, the arm, and the spirit; nevertheless all original elements are preserved, which is rare for this subject, as the delicate spirit figure is frequently lost. Overall in good condition and presenting well.

Although unsigned, the hand of Tsuji is unmistakable in numerous details. The treatment of the leafy robe with its characteristic folds, the form of the leggings, and the distinctive hairstyle correspond closely to other documented works by the artist. Tsuji produced several versions of this popular subject. In many examples, however, the exhaled breath is only implied, leading to the suggestion that it may originally have been present but later lost or damaged. The most highly regarded examples retain the breath and spirit figure intact, making the present netsuke a particularly desirable and rare example.

Tekkai sennin is the Japanese interpretation of Li Tieguai, one of the Eight Chinese Immortals (Baxian). He was believed to possess the ability to leave his body and travel in spirit form. According to legend, he once instructed a disciple to guard his body and burn it if his spirit failed to return within seven days. When the disciple's mother died on the sixth day, he prematurely cremated the body and returned home. Upon returning on the seventh day, Tekkai's spirit found its body gone and was forced to inhabit the corpse of a recently deceased beggar, leaving him with the emaciated appearance with which he is typically depicted.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of Tekkai sennin, also with the exhaled spirit and unsigned, 6.8 cm high, illustrated in Sydney L. Moss Ltd. (1996) Meetings with Remarkable Netsuke, London, no. 33.

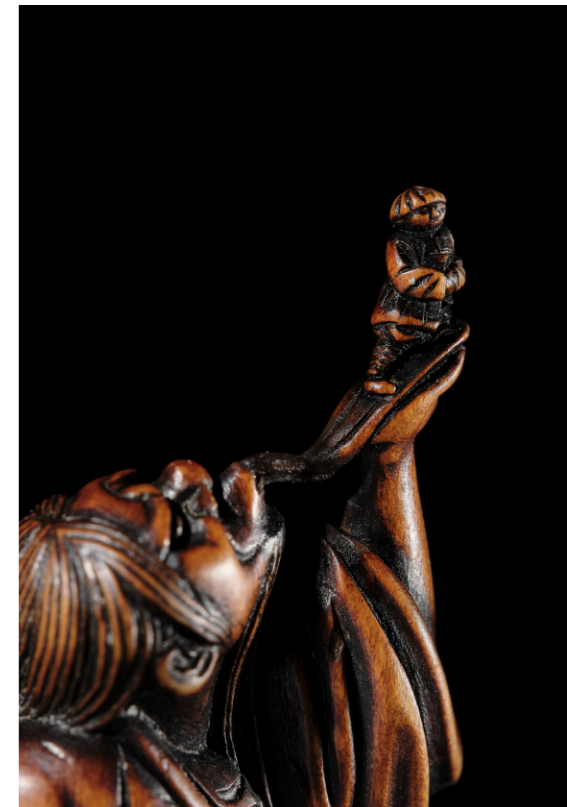


AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of Tekkai Sennin, also a rare example retaining the exhaled spirit, signed Tsuji, 7 cm high, at Bonhams, Netsuke from the Collection of Joseph and Elena Kurstin, New York, 16 December 2022, lot 20 (sold for USD 28,050 or approx. **EUR 26,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 15,000
Starting price EUR 7,500





143
**A SUPERB IVORY NETSUKU OF A SEATED TARTAR,
ATTRIBUTED TO OTOMAN**

Attributed to Matsushita Otoman (d. 1862), unsigned
Japan, Hakata, first half of the 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved, this netsuke depicts a squatting Tartar, adjusting his characteristic headgear with one hand while holding a bag with the other, resting it against his side. The figure's face is skillfully rendered with a slight smile and broad cheeks, capturing the joyful, humorous expression that is a hallmark of Otoman's work. His attire is elegantly depicted, with fine incisions of flowers and detailing in the folds of his clothing. The ivory bears an attractively warm patina. Large, asymmetrical himotoshi are pierced through the back.

LENGTH 3.6 cm

Condition: Good condition with old wear and light traces of use including a small abrasion to the cap.

Matsushita Otoman (d. 1862) was born and lived in Kakemachi in Hakata. Widely regarded as one of the greatest netsuke carvers of the 19th century, Otoman studied his craft in Edo, Kyoto, and Osaka. He became famous during his lifetime and received numerous commissions from both Edo and Kyoto, particularly known for his expertise in ivory dyeing. Otoman is one of the most recognizable carvers, known for his distinct facial expressions and dynamic figures, which are almost always immediately identifiable and unmistakable.

The charm of Otoman's netsuke often lies in the expressions of his figures. The Tartar's face is a prime example of Otoman's ability to carve faces full of life, capturing the nuances of joy and humor. These facial details, often marked by broad smiles, exaggerated cheeks, and lively eyes, are the defining characteristic of Otoman's style. The playful, expressive quality of his figures, even in scenes of calm or repose, underscores Otoman's unique ability to combine emotive realism with the humor that often permeates his work.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

For an excellent analysis of the carver, see Val Dryagin (2025), *Otoman and other Hakata Netsuke Carvers*, where several comparable pieces are listed, both unsigned and signed. A particularly comparable example in the publication is an ivory netsuke of Yojo stabbing the King's mantle, a carving of similar size and expression, also unsigned and attributed to Otoman, 3.4 cm long, illustrated on p. 36, no. 27.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related ivory netsuke of Asahina Saburo and Soga no Goro, with similar expressions, also unsigned attributed to Matsuhita Otoman, 4.5 cm wide, at Bonhams, *Fine Japanese Art*, 16 May 2013, London, lot 10 (sold for GBP 16,250 or approx. **EUR 26,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 10,000
Starting price EUR 5,000



144
A SUPERB MARINE IVORY NETSUKE OF THE DEMON IBARAKI IN MID-TRANSFORMATION

Unsigned
 Japan, late 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

This brilliant netsuke refers to the legend of Watanabe no Tsuna and the demon Ibaraki-doji, capturing the figure in a striking moment of transformation. The carving presents a duality of form: the left side reveals the demon, with one leg raised, the arm still sleeved, the corner of the mouth showing bared fangs, a small dimple indicating the emerging horn, and long straggly hair flowing down the back. The right side retains the disguise of the old woman, with softly curled hair and an emaciated arm clutching the severed limb of the demon. The robes fall in fluid folds and are finely incised with delicate scrolling tendrils. The marine ivory bears a beautiful, deep and lustrous patina. Large, asymmetrical himotoshi underneath.



The present netsuke captures the dramatic moment of revelation in the Rashomon legend, when the demon Ibaraki, disguised as an elderly woman, retrieves her severed arm from Watanabe no Tsuna. In ukiyo-e prints, such as those by Tsukioka Yoshitoshi, the demon often appears still in disguise, revealing only subtle hints of its true nature. The present carving condenses this moment into a single figure, showing both the demonic and human aspects simultaneously.



The disguised demon Ibaraki viewing the severed arm as Watanabe no Tsuna looks on, Tsukioka Yoshitoshi

HEIGHT 3.5 cm

Provenance: Collection of Frank Lapisch, acquired in November 1992.
Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear and typical 'natural flaws' to the material.

Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



145
RAKU: A FINE MARINE IVORY NETSUKE OF HOTEI HOLDING AN OKAME MASK

By Raku, signed Raku 乐
 Japan, Osaka, late 18th to early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Hotei is depicted in a seated pose with both legs tucked beneath him, raising his hand covered by the sleeve in a womanish manner holding an Okame mask in front of him. The facial expression is joyful and serene, with a broad, content, red-pigmented smile. His robes are finely carved with a hexagonal pattern and intricate folds, delicately incised and stained. The left hand rests on his treasure bag incised with a shippo pattern. Asymmetrical himotoshi to the back, the larger hole generously excavated to accommodate the knot and signed RAKU within a wavy reserve underneath.

HEIGHT 3.8 cm

Provenance: Lempertz, Asiatische Kunst II, 5 December 2015, Cologne, lot 615. A noted private collection, acquired from the above.
Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear and typical 'natural flaws' to the material including age cracks and nerve channels.

The name Raku is associated with artists trained by, or associated with, Risuke Garaku of Osaka, working around 1800 and later.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related ivory netsuke of Jurojin by the same artist, also signed Raku in a wavy reserve, 5.9 cm high, at Zucke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 16 April 2021, Vienna, lot 69 (sold for **EUR 4,880**).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



146
ANRAKU: A GOOD WOOD NETSUKE OF A MAN APPLYING MOXA

By Shukosai Anraku(sai), signed Anraku 安楽
 Japan, Osaka, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Depicting a seated man grasping his leg with both hands, a small pellet inlaid in coral on the bent left knee indicating the application of moxa. His aggravated facial expression vividly conveys the discomfort associated with the treatment. The figure is dressed in loosely draped robes, the sleeves carved with characteristic angular folds. Generously excavated, asymmetrical himotoshi through the back and underside. Signed ANRAKU.

HEIGHT 4.3 cm

Provenance: Mossgreen Auctions, The Ray Mitchell and Julian Sterling Collections, 26 February 2007, lot 326. The collection of Eva & Aubrey Sweet, Melbourne, Australia, acquired from the above. A copy of an invoice from Mossgreen Auctions accompanies this lot. Eva and Aubrey Sweet devoted over six decades to the formation of a distinguished private collection of Asian art, with particular strength in Chinese jade, Japanese lacquer, and netsuke.

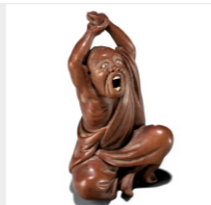
Condition: Repairs to the edges of the feet. Otherwise excellent condition with minor typical wear.

The subject appears to be unrecorded for the Anraku and the Osaka school and is more commonly associated with Edo-school carvers, such as Miwa.

Moxibustion is a traditional Chinese medicine therapy used to heat particular points of the body by using burning dried mugwort.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of a stretching Daruma by Anraku, bearing a similarly humorous expression and with similar inlays, 4.9 cm high, at Zacke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 3 November 2023, Vienna, lot 167 (sold for **EUR 5,850**).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



147
ANRAKU: A FINE IVORY NETSUKE OF A COMBAT SCENE FROM SUIKODEN

By Shukosai Anraku(sai), signed Anraku 安楽
 Japan, Osaka, mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved depicting a dramatic moment of combat from the Chinese epic Suikoden (The Water Margin). A warrior kneels astride a fallen adversary, pressing him down while raising his sword to deliver the decisive blow. The victor's face is animated with fierce concentration, his long hair neatly incised and stained. His robe is carefully engraved with delicate foliage designs, while the defeated opponent lies supine beneath him, his features contorted in resignation as he anticipates the fatal strike. The composition is compact yet dynamic, the interlocking bodies forming a powerful triangular arrangement. Himotoshi underneath and signed ANRAKU.



The scene derives from Suikoden (The Water Margin), the celebrated Chinese novel recounting the exploits of the 108 outlaw heroes of Liangshan Marsh. The present composition likely represents one of the many episodes of single combat in which a Liangshan warrior subdues an opponent. Such dramatic moments of martial triumph were popular subjects for netsuke carvers of the Osaka school, who favored compact compositions emphasizing physical struggle and expressive characterization.



A similar scene from the Suikoden, by Utagawa Kuniyoshi, c. 1830

LENGTH 4.5 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear. Beautiful patina.

Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



148
**MASAKAZU: AN AMUSING
 WOOD NETSUKE OF FUKUROKUJU**

By Masakazu, signed Masakazu 正一
 Japan, Osaka, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Amusingly carved as Fukurokuju, the god of longevity and wisdom, seated with his extraordinary elongated forehead sweeping dramatically backward. The deity's exaggerated cranium arches behind him in a great rounded mass, so large that it appears almost to pull the little figure downward, framing his face like a hood. His expression is delightfully animated, the mouth open in laughter and the eyes narrowed to cheerful slits beneath finely incised brows. The long beard flows across the chest and merges into the softly carved folds of the robe. The wood has developed a beautifully worn patina from generations of handling. Asymmetrical himotoshi are neatly incorporated underneath and the underside is signed within a sunken reserve MASAKAZU.

HEIGHT 3.8 cm, LENGTH 3.8 cm

Condition: Good, slightly worn condition. Old, smoothed chips to the edge of the robe and minor natural age cracks.

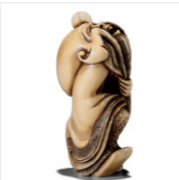
LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related ivory netsuke of Fukurokuju by the same artist, signed Masakazu, dated to the early 19th century, 6 cm high, at Sotheby's, The Carlo Monzino Collection of Netsuke, Inro and Lacquer, 21 June 1995, London, lot 286.

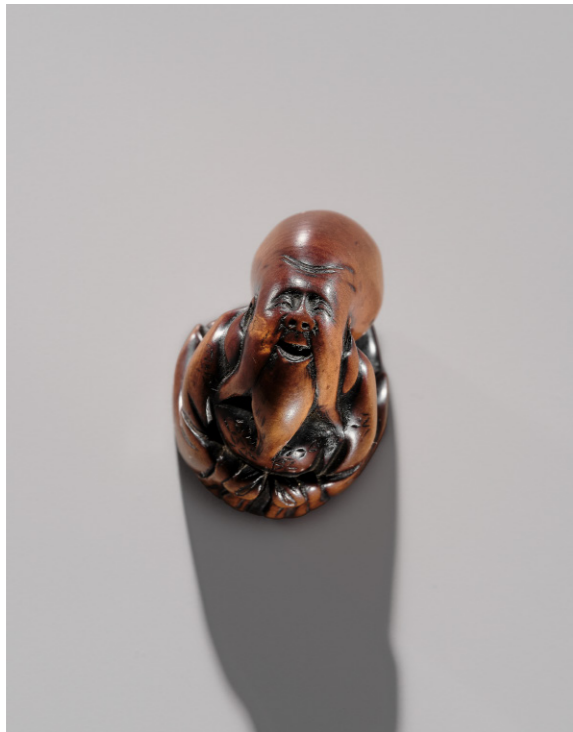


AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related ivory netsuke of Fukurokuju playing kemari, by Hidemasa, 4.3 cm high, note the similar expression and posture, at Zacks, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 25 September 2020, Vienna, lot 38 (sold for **EUR 6,952**).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



149
**A FINE OSAKA SCHOOL WOOD NETSUKE OF
 HOTEI AND A KARAKO, ATTRIBUTED TO MASAKAZU**

Attributed to Masakazu, unsigned
 Japan, Osaka, first half of the 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved depicting Hotei standing with a broad, benevolent smile, a large treasure sack slung around his neck containing a small Chinese boy (karako). The god's voluminous robe is lightly engraved with karakusa vines and falls in elegantly cascading, deeply cut folds. The young boy clutches a pair of cymbals in his hands, suggesting the imminent mischief for which karako companions are so often depicted, and which Hotei appears to endure with patient good humor. Asymmetrical himotoshi to the back, the larger hole generously excavated to accommodate the cord.



HEIGHT 4.3 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with minor wear.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of Hotei and a karako, by Masakazu, 5.5 cm high, at Christie's, Japanese Art and Design, 12 May 2010, London, lot 91 (sold for GBP 1,375 or approx. **EUR 2,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000

150
**HIDEMASA: AN IVORY NETSUKE
 OF FUKUROKUJU**

By Hidemasa, signed Hidemasa 秀正 with kakihan
 Japan, Osaka, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of compact shape, seated with his left hand grasping his right arm in front, his bearded chin flanked by elongated earlobes resting on the arms, the elongated head of typical phallic shape, the long flowing robe finely incised and inked with characteristic scrolling designs, the underside with two asymmetrical himotoshi and the signature – HIDEMASA with a kakihan.

LENGTH 3.6 cm, HEIGHT 1.9 cm

Provenance: Ex-collection Jury Kolodotschko, purchased at Lempertz, 7 December 2007, Cologne, lot 343.
Condition: Very good condition, natural age cracks, fine honey-gold patina, smoothly worn.

Estimate EUR 1,500
 Starting price EUR 800



151

MASAKAZU: A RARE OSAKA SCHOOL MARINE IVORY NETSUKE OF SENNIN KOKO

By Masakazu, signed Masakazu 正—
Japan, Osaka, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)



The rather rarely depicted Koko Sennin is shown, as customary, seated within an alms bowl and grasping its rim, leaning forward as if propelling himself in his makeshift vehicle. His facial features are expressively carved with large, bulging eyes and a contented smile, conveying a lively sense of character typical of the artist. The netsuke was evidently cherished and extensively handled over generations, as reflected in the deeply worn yet particularly attractive deep honey patina. Large himotoshi through the back and underside. Signed underneath MASAKAZU, a pupil of Hidemasa of Osaka.

HEIGHT 4.3 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear, traces of use and typical age cracks. Beautiful, deep patina.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related ivory netsuke of Koko sennin by the same artist, signed Masakazu, illustrated in Meinertzhagen, Frederick / Lazarnick, George (1986) MCI, Part A, p. 422.



Estimate EUR 2,000
Starting price EUR 1,000

152

AN AMUSING OSAKA SCHOOL MARINE IVORY NETSUKE OF DARUMA EMERGING FROM A SCROLL

Unsigned
Japan, Osaka, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved from the outer curved section of marine tusk as a hanging scroll from which the figure of Daruma emerges in relief. The Zen patriarch is depicted frontally, his powerful face framed by a simple hood, with large bulging eyes with horn-inlaid pupils, heavy brows, and a stern contemplative expression. His robe falls in softly modeled folds across the chest, while one hand grasps a hossu (Buddhist fly whisk), its sweeping fibers resting across his shoulder.

The rectangular scroll format is carefully rendered with neatly incised borders and patterned bands suggesting the mounting of a traditional hanging painting. The composition cleverly incorporates the lower rollers of the scroll, also inlaid in dark horn. Himotoshi to the reverse.

HEIGHT 5.5 cm

Condition: Good condition with old wear, natural age cracks and some plugged nerve channels.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of Daruma emerging from a hanging scroll, by Masakazu, illustrated in Lazarnick, George (1981) Netsuke & Inro Artists, and How to Read Their Signatures (LNIA), Vol. 1, p. 710.



Estimate EUR 1,500
Starting price EUR 800



153

HIDEMASA: AN AMUSING IVORY NETSUKE OF AN ONI CLEANING SHOKI'S SHOE

By Hidemasa, signed Hidemasa 秀正
Japan, Osaka, first half of the 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved depicting an oni crouching submissively as it diligently polishes the shoe of its arch-enemy Shoki, the Demon Queller. The scene presents a humorous inversion of the usual legend: instead of being chased or beaten, the demon has become a servile boot-cleaner. The oni kneels low with its muscular limbs splayed, clutching the shoe while carefully rubbing it with a small brush, its expression one of anxious concentration.

The mischievous devil's features are vividly rendered with bulging horn-inlaid eyes, sharply incised brows, and protruding fangs, while the body is textured with finely engraved hairwork. The tiger-skin trousers are neatly stippled and stained. Asymmetrical himotoshi are formed through the trousers, and the piece is signed within a polished oval reserve HIDEMASA.

LENGTH 3.9 cm

Condition: Good condition with minor expected wear. Old repairs to one horn and to a tiny section of the left arm. One claw to the foot with a chip.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related ivory netsuke of Shoki and oni with a similar carving manner, unsigned and attributed to Hidemasa, 4.7 cm long, at Zackle, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 3 November 2023, Vienna, lot 165 (sold for **EUR 3,380**).



Estimate EUR 3,000
Starting price EUR 1,500



154
A FINE OSAKA SCHOOL IVORY NETSUKE OF A TORTOISE

Circle of Mitsuhiro, unsigned
 Japan, Osaka, mid to late 19th century

Naturalistically carved, the reptile is almost completely retracted within its carapace, its head emerging while the legs are drawn in, forming a compact composition. The segments of the carapace are rendered with great realism, decorated with neatly arranged hexagonal patterns, encircled by fine incised lines and delicate ishime stippling. Himotoshi underneath.



LENGTH 4.4 cm

Condition: Good condition with minor wear and few tiny chips to the edges of the carapace.

This unsigned work, of distinct Osaka style can be attributed to the circle of Ohara Mitsuhiro (1810-1875), which includes his chief pupil Ohara Mitsusada.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related ivory netsuke tortoise and young, by Ohara Mitsusada, illustrated in Hurtig, Bernard (1973) Masterpieces of Netsuke Art: One Thousand Favorites of Leading Collectors, pp. 194-195, no. 811.



Estimate EUR 2,500
 Starting price EUR 1,200



155
MITSUHIRO: A FINE IVORY NETSUKE OF TWO BIWA (LOQUATS)

By Ohara Mitsuhiro (1810-1875), signed Mitsuhiro 光廣
 Japan, Osaka, mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Naturalistically carved and beautifully stained to depict two loquats borne on a gnarled branch finished in ishime and with a half-eaten leaf, the edge of the netsuke carved to imitate a freshly cut branch. Signed MITSUHIRO within a polished oval reserve. Natural himotoshi.

LENGTH 4.2 cm

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

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related ivory netsuke of a biwa by the same artist, signed Mitsuhiro and kakihan, at Christie's, The I.A. and Cecile Mann Victor Collection of Netsuke, 20 April 1989, New York, lot 75 (sold for USD 1,400 or approx. **EUR 3,100** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



156
MITSUHIRO: A FINE IVORY NETSUKE OF A MANCHURIAN CRANE

School of Ohara Mitsuhiro (1810-1875), signed Mitsuhiro 光廣
 Japan, Osaka, mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved and stained, the crane is depicted seated with its head turned back and one leg resting upon a large egg at its side. The wings, plumage, and feet are neatly incised with careful attention to naturalistic details, while the eyes are double inlaid with translucent horn and black pupils. Himotoshi underneath and signed in an oval reserve MITSUHIRO.

LENGTH 4.1 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear. One inlaid pupil is replaced.

There are several netsuke of cranes signed Mitsuhiro that are not from the hand of the famous Osaka master Ohara Mitsuhiro, but rather attributed to his pupils, such as Ueda Kohosai or Mitsutama (see literature comparison).

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related ivory netsuke of a Manchurian crane, signed Mitsuhiro, illustrated in



Davey, Neil K. (1974) Netsuke: A Comprehensive Study Based on the M.T. Hindson Collection, p. 44, no. 92. Compare a closely related ivory netsuke of a crane, by Mitsutama, illustrated in Hurtig, Bernard (1973) Masterpieces of Netsuke Art: One Thousand Favorites of Leading Collectors, p. 191, no. 794.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related ivory netsuke of a Manchurian crane, signed Mitsuhiro and described as being 'after Mitsuhiro', dated to the late 19th century, 4.2 cm long, at Bonhams, The Julius and Arlette Katchen Collection of Fine Netsuke, 10 May 2017, London, lot 154 (sold for GBP 3,125 or approx. **EUR 5,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 5,000
 Starting price EUR 2,400





157
DORAKU: A FINE IVORY NETSUKE OF A CHICKEN EMERGING FROM AN EGG

By Doraku, signed Doraku 道乐
 Japan, Osaka, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

The young chick is depicted clambering from a halved eggshell, one foot braced against the upper rim while the other trails behind. The wings are finely incised and subtly stained, and the eyes are inlaid in dark horn. Asymmetrical himotoshi underneath and signed underneath within a wavy reserve DORAKU – a particularly fine example of this motif which was treated by several Osaka artists including the famous Ohara Mitsuhiro (1810-1875).

HEIGHT 3.8 cm

Condition: Very good condition with only minor wear, natural age cracks, and a tiny nick inside the larger himotoshi.

MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a closely related ivory netsuke of a chicken emerging from an egg by the same artist, signed Doraku, 3.7 cm high, in the British Museum, registration number F.791.



Estimate EUR 2,500
 Starting price EUR 1,200



158
MITSUHIRO: A LARGE WALRUS TUSK MANJU NETSUKE DEPICTING A SPARROW AMONGST BAMBOO

By Ohara Mitsuhiro (1810-1875), signed Mitsuhiro 光廣 with kakihan
 Japan, Osaka, mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of circular form, the thick manju netsuke finely inked and carved in kebori and katakiribori with tall bamboo stalks and a sparrow ascending in flight. The verso left uncarved to reveal the exquisite natural milky inclusions of the tusk. The cord attachment through the pierced eyelet peg with a metal loop housed inside the central himotoshi. Signed to the obverse MITSUHIRO with the artist's typical kakihan.

DIAMETER 5.2 cm, THICKNESS 1.6 cm

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

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related walrus tusk netsuke by the same artist, also signed Mitsuhiro with kakihan, 4.6 cm in diameter, at Zackle, Fine Japanese Art, 14 June 2024, Vienna, lot 444 (sold for EUR 5,200).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



159
MITSUHIRO: A FINE OSAKA SCHOOL IVORY NETSUKE OF A PUPPY

By Ohara Mitsuhiro (1810-1875), signed Mitsuhiro 光廣 with kakihan
 Japan, Osaka, mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved as a charming, chubby puppy seated with one paw slightly raised, two of them pushed firmly on the ground and another emerging from the underside. The puppy has its head curiously raised and the outline of the eyes are inked, the pupils minutely inlaid in black lustrous horn. The ivory is lightly stained, particularly visible in the back and on the underside. Small himotoshi through the back and the signed underneath with neatly incised and inked characters MITSUHIRO and kakihan.

HEIGHT 3.2 cm

Provenance: British private collection. Zackle, 27 March 2020, Vienna, lot 66 (sold for EUR 4,550). European private collection, acquired from the above.

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and natural age cracks. Two plugged nerve channels to the puppy's back.

MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a closely related ivory netsuke of a puppy by the same artist, signed Mitsuhiro, in the Walters Art Museum, accession number 71.911.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related ivory netsuke depicting a puppy with dragonfly by the same artist, signed Mitsuhiro saku, 3.5 cm high, at Zackle, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 7 November 2025, Vienna, lot 145 (sold for EUR 10,400).



Estimate EUR 5,000
 Starting price EUR 2,400



160

**A FINE IVORY NETSUKE OF A SNAKE AND MONKEY,
ATTRIBUTED TO KAIGYOKUSAI MASATSUGU**

Attributed to the workshop of Kaigyokusai Masatsugu (1813-1892),
unsigned
Japan, Osaka, c. 1850-1870



Exquisitely carved from stained ivory depicting a large, densely coiled hebi (snake), its body powerfully wrapped around a hapless saru (monkey). The scales are rendered with exceptional precision and naturalism, each meticulously defined to enhance the lifelike quality of the creature. The snake's expression is strikingly dramatic - almost terrifying - with its mouth agape, sharp teeth exposed, and tongue flickering, heightening the tension of the scene as the monkey is crushed within its coils. The eyes are inlaid in dark horn and there are plenty of possibilities for natural himotoshi through the openworked body.

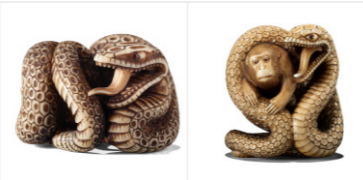
LENGTH 4 cm

Condition: Good condition with minor expected wear. A few minuscule age cracks and tiny repairs to a few scales.

Kaigyokusai is one of the most celebrated netsuke carvers, whose artistry transformed small carvings into remarkably lifelike creations. Kaigyokusai and his school produced numerous netsuke depicting zodiac animals, reflecting their enduring popularity during his lifetime.

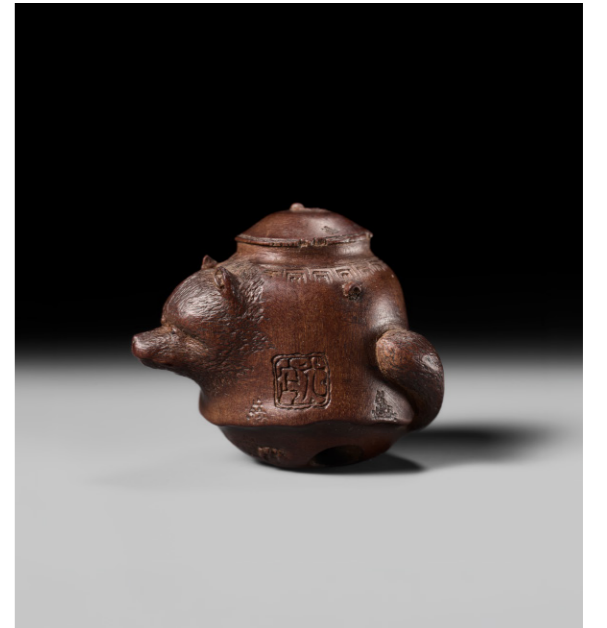
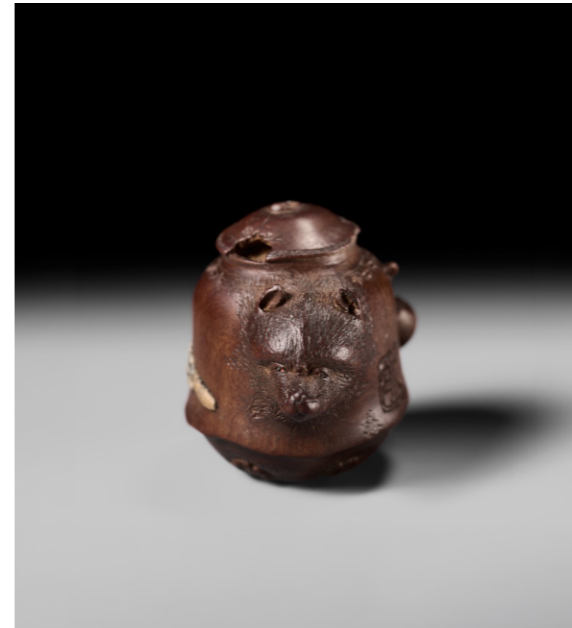
**AUCTION
COMPARISON**

Compare a closely related netsuke of a snake and toad by the same artist, signed Masatsugu, at Zucke, Fine Netsuke, Sagemono & Okimono, 24 November 2018, Vienna, lot 16 (sold for **EUR 13,904**). Compare a closely related ivory netsuke of a snake preying on a monkey, by Kosai (likely a pupil of Kaigyokusai), at Zucke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, Vienna, lot 85 (sold for **EUR 6,952**).



Estimate EUR 6,000
Starting price EUR 3,000





161
**RYUGYOKU SANSUI & OHARA MITSUSADA:
 A SUPERB INLAID WOOD NETSUKE OF THE
 BUNBUKU CHAGAMA (BADGER TEA KETTLE)**

By Ryugyoku Sansui and Ohara Mitsusada, signed Ryugyoku 龍玉 with kakihan and sealed Mitsusada 光定 Japan, Osaka, second half of the 19th century

Published: Meinertzhagen, Frederick / Lazarnick, George (1986) MCI, Part B, p. 701 (not illustrated, the seal erroneously transcribed as Mitsumasa).

Finely carved as a tanuki tea kettle from the famous tale Bunbuku Chagama, the badger is rendered emerging from a kettle with a cleverly simulated cracked lid at the top. The polished surface is adorned with various kanji characters, an antler-inlaid feather, and a key-fret band encircling the shoulder. The face is executed with particularly fine detailing, featuring dense hairwork and alert, pointed ears, while a bushy tail curls playfully around the side. Two himotoshi underneath, signed RYUGYOKU with kakihan and sealed to the side MITSUSADA - suggesting a collaboration, with the carving likely by Ohara Mitsusada and the inlays executed by Ryugyoku Sansui.

LENGTH 3.5 cm

Condition: Restoration to the feather and possible losses to the handles and nibbles to the ears. Generally in very good condition and presenting beautifully.

The popular folktale **Bunbuku-Chagama** tells of a tanuki being mistreated as a teakettle at a temple, before being sold off and bringing great wealth to its new owner using its shapeshifting powers.

MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a related inlaid wood bunbuku chagama by Ohara Mitsuhiro, the master of Mitsusada, 3 cm high, formerly in the Raymond and Frances Bushell Collection, now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, object number M.91.250.236a-b.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related ivory bunbuku chagama by Ohara Mitsuhiro, the master of Mitsusada, 4.2 cm long, at Bonhams, The Harriet Szechenyi Sale of Japanese Art, 8 November 2011, London, lot 208 (sold for GBP 13,750 or approx. **EUR 23,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 5,000
 Starting price EUR 2,400



162
MASANAQ: A WOOD NETSUKE OF THE BUNBUKU CHAGAMA (BADGER TEA KETTLE)

By a member of the Masanao family, signed Masanao 正直
 Japan, Yamada, Ise province, 19th century, Edo period
 (1615-1868)

Finely carved, depicting a tanuki tea kettle from the famous tale Bunbuku Chagama. The badger is rendered with large handles and a removable lid, while a bushy tail curls playfully around the side. Its whimsical face with a curiously downturned snout. Himotoshi underneath, the cord attachment in the form of an eyelet under the removable lid. Signed within a polished reserve MASANAQ.

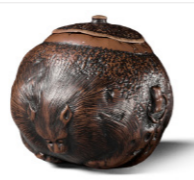
LENGTH 3.9 cm

Condition: Good condition with minor expected wear and traces of use. An old fill to the rim and some very light nibbling to the ears.

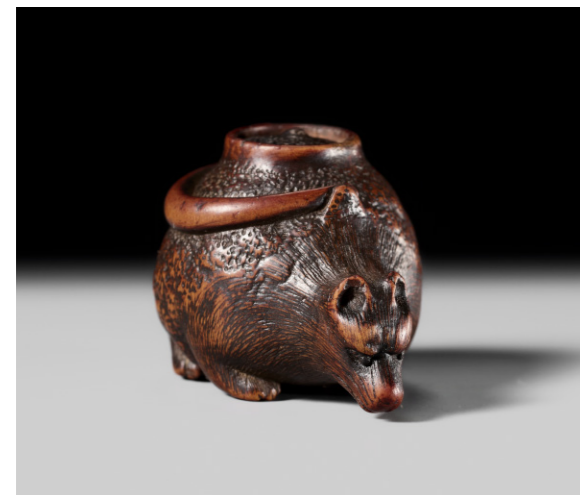
The popular folktale Bunbuku-Chagama tells of a tanuki being mistreated as a teakettle at a temple, before being sold off and bringing great wealth to its new owner using its shapeshifting powers.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of the bunbuku chagama carved from walnut, by Masatada of Ise, 3.7 cm long, at Zacke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 9 May 2025, Vienna, lot 338 (sold for **EUR 4,160**).



Estimate EUR 2,500
 Starting price EUR 1,200



163
RANTEI: A FINE IVORY NETSUKE OF THE BUNBUKU CHAGAMA (BADGER TEA KETTLE)

By Hogen Rantei, signed Rantei 蘭亭
 Japan, Kyoto, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Published:

- Hurtig, Bernard (1973) Masterpieces of Netsuke Art: One Thousand Favorites of Leading Collectors, pp. 192-193, no. 804.
- Eskenazi (1998) Japanese Netsuke, Ojime and Inro from a Private European Collection, pp. 120-121, no. 141.

Finely carved, depicting a tanuki tea kettle from the famous tale Bunbuku Chagama. The badger is rendered with two ring handles and a fixed lid at the top, its bushy tail curling playfully around the side. The ivory is finely stained and the badger's whimsical face is stained black and detailed with a curiously downturned snout and double-inlaid eyes. The rounded body is finely stippled. Small himotoshi underneath and signature within an oval reserve RANTEI.



LENGTH 3.6 cm

Provenance: Ex-collection Emile Veranneman. With Eskenazi Ltd., London, 1998.

Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear. A natural age crack to the lid and a nerve channel crack to body.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related ivory netsuke of a tanuki by the same artist, signed Rantei, dated to the 19th century, 4 cm high, at Sotheby's, The Carlo Monzino Collection of Netsuke, Inro and Lacquer, 21 June 1995, London, lot 335 (sold for GBP 3,220 or approx. **EUR 8,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500





164
A FINE IVORY NETSUKE OF A TANUKI WRAPPED IN A LOTUS LEAVES

Unsigned
 Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved as a tanuki standing with one foot placed before the other, its body wrapped in a large lotus leaf with another resting atop his head. The leaves are intricately rendered, their veins finely incised and sumi-stained, while the fur of the face is delicately worked with similar attention to detail. The eyes are inlaid with dark horn. Large, asymmetrical himotoshi are hollowed to the reverse, with the lotus stem positioned neatly between them. The ivory bearing a fine patina.

HEIGHT 6.1 cm

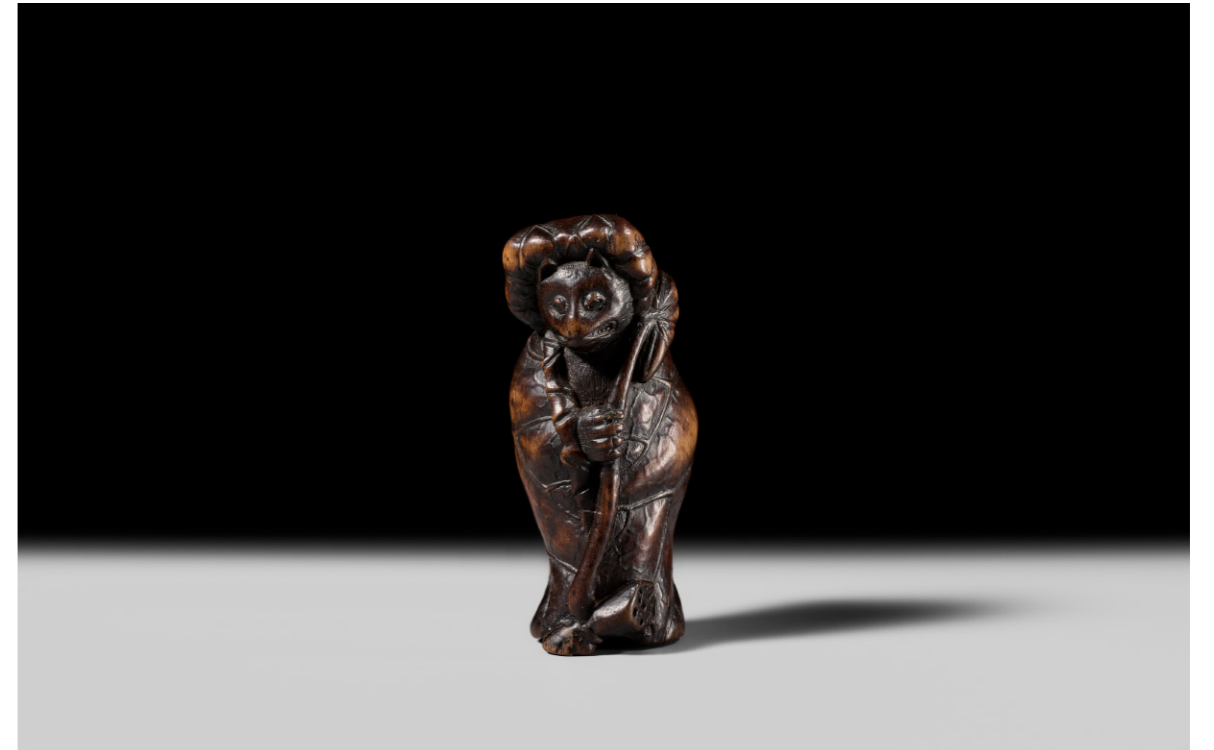
Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear and few tiny natural age cracks.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related ivory netsuke of a tanuki wrapped in lotus leaves, signed Nanboku, offered by Oriental Art Gallery in Tokyo, illustrated in International Netsuke Collectors Society (INCS), 1977, Vol. 4, no. 4, p. 2.



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



165
SHORAKU: A FINE WOOD NETSUKE OF A TANUKI WRAPPED IN A LOTUS LEAVES

By Shoraku, signed Shoraku 正乐
 Japan, Edo (Tokyo), early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved as a disguised tanuki, enveloped in a large lotus leaf forming its robe, with another leaf drawn over its head like a cowl. The figure stands upright, clasping a long lotus stem before it as if it were a staff. The tanuki's face peers out from beneath the hood with a characteristically mischievous expression. The broad lotus leaves are beautifully rendered, their veins carved in ukibori relief and subtly enhanced by staining. Well-formed, asymmetrical himotoshi are arranged around the lotus stem at the back, where the piece is signed SHORAKU.

HEIGHT 5.2 cm

Condition: Overall good, worn condition. Few age cracks. Old repairs to the lotus staff near the bottom and to the exposed fingers.

The tanuki (raccoon dog) is a well-known figure in Japanese folklore, celebrated for its magical powers and ability to change shape, often disguising itself as a Buddhist priest or monk. Such transformations allowed the mischievous creature to deceive travelers and play tricks on humans, making the image of a tanuki in priestly guise a humorous and popular subject in Edo-period art.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a tanuki in a lotus leaf by the same artist, signed Shoraku, 4.8 cm high, at Sotheby's, The Betty Jahss Collection of Netsuke Part II, 14 November 1991, London, lot 114 (mid-estimated at GBP 3,350 or approx. **EUR 9,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



166
A LARGE AND IMPRESSIVE KUROGAKI (BLACK PERSIMMON) WOOD NETSUKE OF A RECUMBENT OX

Unsigned
 Japan, probably Iwami Province, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)



Charmingly carved from richly figured kurogaki (black persimmon) wood as a recumbent ox lying on its side, the head raised and turned slightly upward, the neck articulated with gentle folds, conveying a relaxed and natural posture. The body is smoothly polished, the striking grain of the wood evocatively suggesting the animal's fur. A rope halter is carved attached to the muzzle and drapes naturally across the side. Very large himotoshi underneath.

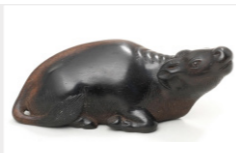
LENGTH 7.2 cm

Provenance: From the Collection of Dr. Reinhard Lohrberg (1943-2024), Hanover.
Condition: A few old repairs. Overall good condition and presenting beautifully.

The present netsuke displays characteristic features of the Iwami school, including the use of richly grained kurogaki wood, the smooth, highly polished surfaces, and the gently modeled anatomy. The calm, naturalistic expression and compact composition further reflect the refined sensibility of Iwami animal carvings, where the inherent beauty of the material is skillfully integrated into the overall design.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related large kurogaki netsuke of a recumbent ox, also unsigned, attributed to Kanman, 8.2 cm long, at Bonhams, The Robert S. Huthart Collection of Iwami Netsuke, 15 May 2019, London, lot 118 (sold for GBP 2,295 or approx. **EUR 3,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



167
A LARGE AND BEGUILING WOOD NETSUKE OF AN OX

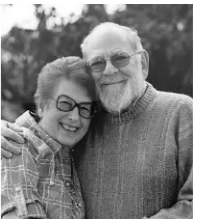
Unsigned
 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Powerfully carved as a recumbent ox with its head lowered and tail swept to one side, a rope halter draped across its back. The ribs and spine are subtly articulated, while the fur is rendered with a naturalistic, slightly roughened texture. The animal is finely detailed with elegantly curved horns, funnel-shaped ears, and large eyes inlaid dark, lending a gentle and contemplative expression.

The underside is carved with notably large and asymmetrical himotoshi, the larger opening of distinct oval form.

LENGTH 7.9 cm

Provenance: With Rosemary Bandini. The collection of Eva & Aubrey Sweet, Melbourne, Australia, acquired from the above in 2008. A copy of an invoice from Rosemary Bandini, dated 8 April 2008, addressed to Eva Sweet, and stating a purchase price of GBP 5,800 or approx. **EUR 11,000** (converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing), accompanies this lot.
Condition: Excellent condition with old wear.



Eva and Aubrey Sweet



The present carving is difficult to attribute to a specific school. Stylistically, it shows affinities with the Nagoya tradition, particularly in the treatment of the textured fur recalling the manner of Tametaka. At the same time, the unusually large, oval himotoshi is more characteristic of early Kyoto workmanship, suggesting an intriguing intersection of regional influences.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related smaller wood netsuke of an ox and calf, attributed to Tametaka, 5.1 cm long, at Zucke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 28 April 2023, Vienna, lot 69 (sold for **EUR 4,666**).



Estimate EUR 5,000
 Starting price EUR 2,400





168
**A RARE IWAMI SCHOOL UMOREGI (BOGWOOD)
 NETSUKE OF A RAT ON A CHESTNUT**

Unsigned
 Japan, Iwami Province, late 18th to early 19th century, Edo period
 (1615-1868)

Finely carved as a rat (nezumi) resting possessively atop a chestnut, the animal claspng the nut with its delicate forepaws while its tail curls around the compact body. The fur is rendered with minute incisions, the cupped ears laid back, and the eyes gently bulging beneath subtly arched brows. The mouth is twisted into a disgruntled expression, the creature appearing alert and watchful for any potential threat. The underside with asymmetrical himotoshi.

LENGTH 5.3 cm

Provenance: From a private collection in West Germany, acquired from a Japanese estate.

Condition: A small repair to the tail. Otherwise very good condition with minor wear.

Umoregi (bogwood) is carbonized wood, typically pine, yew, or cypress, preserved through long burial in sediment layers over millions of years. Representing an early stage of fossilization, the material has been valued in Japan since the Edo period for its distinctive dark color and lustrous surface. Significant deposits occur in the Aobayama area of Miyagi Prefecture.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related Iwami school umoregi (bogwood) netsuke of a dragon in a chestnut by Tsuramitsu (Kanman), 4.7 cm wide, at Bonhams, The Robert S. Huthart Collection of Iwami Netsuke Online-only, 1-14 September 2020, London, lot 25 (sold for GBP 2,295 or approx. **EUR 3,400** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



169
**RYUSUI: A RARE IWAMI SCHOOL
 EBONY WOOD NETSUKE OF A RECUMBENT OX**

By Ryusui, signed Ryusui 龍水
 Japan, Iwami Province, late 18th to early 19th century, Edo period
 (1615-1868)

LENGTH 4.9 cm

Condition: Old restoration to the edge of one hoof and a tiny nick to the neck. Otherwise excellent condition with only very minor expected wear and typical traces of use.

Ryusui is among the rarer carvers of Iwami Province, and his work is closely related to that of Seiyodo Tomiharu (1733-1810), the founder of the Iwami school of netsuke carving. Comparable subjects within this tradition include recumbent oxen, boar tusk carvings, and crabs on driftwood.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

For a closely related ebony wood netsuke of an ox by the same artist, signed Ryusui, 3.8 cm wide, see the Sato Art Museum of Toyama, Netsuke exhibition (Netsuke chōkoku Edo no oshare), 1998, p. 45, no. 169.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related kurogaki wood netsuke of a recumbent ox, similarly carved, by Seiyodo Tomiharu, 5.8 cm long, at Bonhams, The Robert S. Huthart Collection of Iwami Netsuke Part II, 6 November 2019, London, lot 26 (sold for GBP 5,687 or approx. **EUR 8,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 2,500
 Starting price EUR 1,200



**KANMAN: A MASTERFUL UMIMATSU (SEA PINE)
NETSUKE OF A CICADA ON A BRANCH**

By Tsuramitsu (Kanman, 1793-1859), signed Iwami-no-kuni Kanman
石見国 貫満 and kakihan
Japan, Iwami Province, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Published:

1. Earle, Joe (2000) The Robert S. Huthart Collection of Iwami Netsuke, Vol. II, pp. 252-253, no. 220.
2. Burditt, David, The Iwami Carvers: Kanman (Spring 2000) International Netsuke Society Journal, Vol. 20, no. 1, p. 51, fig. 11.

Naturalistically carved as a cicada perched upon a gnarled, angled branch, the insect shown in exquisite detail, the veined wings executed with delicate precision, and its legs and head realistically worked. The branch itself is boldly undercut and textured, with leaves and fissured bark. The variegated coloring of the material is cleverly used, with darker core tones accentuating the cicada's body, while lighter areas highlight the wings and foliage. Two himotoshi underneath and signed Iwami-no-kuni KANMAN [Kanman of Iwami Province] with the artist's kakihan.

LENGTH 6.2 cm



Provenance: Ex-collection Anne Hull Grundy. The Robert S. Huthart Collection, acquired from the above. Bonhams, The Robert S. Huthart Collection of Iwami Netsuke, 6 November 2019, London, lot 98. European private collection, acquired from the above. **Anne Hull Grundy** (1926-1984), later Anne Hull Grundy Boucheron, was a British art collector and philanthropist renowned for her discerning eye and scholarly dedication. Though best known for her collection of European decorative arts and jewelry, she also assembled an important group of Japanese works of art, including netsuke. Much of her collection was generously donated to public institutions, most notably the British Museum, ensuring its accessibility to scholars and the public. **Robert S. Huthart** (1928-2023) was a British businessman and one of the most important modern collectors of Japanese netsuke. He developed a particular passion for Iwami netsuke, His discerning eye and dedication over several decades elevated the appreciation of Iwami carvers such as Seiyodo Tomiharu and his followers. Portions of his collection are now housed and published by the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. **Condition:** Very good condition with minor wear and a natural age crack to the angle of the branch.



**Anne Hull Grundy
(1926-1984)**

Kanman (1793-1859) was a Japanese netsuke carver of the Iwami school, which was founded by Seiyodo Tomiharu. Most of his work was designed in the first three decades of the 19th century. According to Anne Hull Grundy, "His netsuke [...] are extremely rare." David Burditt has described him as one of the greatest of the Iwami carvers and Robert Huthart dubbed him as the "King of Cicadas". A hallmark of Kanman's work is his understanding of the materials he uses. His carvings demonstrate wonderful undercutting, deep incisions, copious ukibori, and detailed overall carving.

Umimatsu (lit. 'sea pine'), commonly known as black coral, is a soft deep-water coral. Many patterns of growth are unique to black coral, growing in whips, trees, fans, or coils. While it is commonly used in various forms of jewelry in Japanese art, it is also believed to have apotropaic power and is for this reason used in numerous medical treatments as well.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related umimatsu netsuke of a cicada on a log by the same artist, signed Iwami-no-kuni Kanman to, dated to the first half of the 19th century, 6.6 cm long, illustrated in Earle, Joe (2000) The Robert S. Huthart Collection of Iwami Netsuke, pp. 252-253, no. 221.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related umimatsu (sea-pine) netsuke of a cicada on a log by the same artist, also signed Iwami-no-kuni Kanman to with kakihan, dated to the early 19th century, 7.6 cm long, at Bonhams, The Robert S. Huthart Collection of Iwami Netsuke, 15 May 2019, London, lot 92 (sold for GBP 31,312 or approx. **EUR 47,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 8,000
Starting price EUR 4,000





171
SEIKAN: AN ANTLER AND EBONY WOOD NETSUKE OF A CRAB ON AN AWABI SHELL

By Fujima Seikan, signed Hachijussai kore o saku 八十歳作之 Fujima Seikan 藤間 樓閑 and kakihan Japan, Iwami Province, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

- Published:**
1. Rokusho (1996), Vol. 20, p. 74, no. 109.
 2. Earle, Joe (2000) The Robert S. Huthart Collection of Iwami Netsuke, Vol. II, pp. 372-372, no. 346.
 3. Sagemonoya (2024), A Fine Selection of Iwami Carvings, no. 32.

The removable crab, finely carved from antler, is positioned atop a naturalistically rendered abalone shell set in ebony wood, the underside beautifully lined in aogai. Central himotoshi underneath, the cord attachment through the eyelet under the crab. Signed Hachijussai kore o saku FUJIMA SEIKAN [made by Fujima Seikan at the age of eighty].

LENGTH 4.9 cm



Provenance: Ex-Collection of Robert S. Huthart. Bonhams, The Robert S. Huthart Collection of Iwami Netsuke Part I, 15 May 2019, London, lot 159. A private collection, acquired from the above.
Robert S. Huthart (1928–2023) was a British businessman and one of the most important modern collectors of Japanese netsuke. He developed a particular passion for Iwami netsuke, his discerning eye and dedication over several decades elevated the appreciation of Iwami carvers such as Seiyodo Tomiharu and his followers. Portions of his collection are now housed and published by the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.
Condition: A tiny loss to one crab's leg. Otherwise excellent condition with minor wear and typical light traces of use.

Literature comparison: For the only other netsuke recorded by the artist, signed Seikan with seal, depicting a mokugyo, see Meinertzhagen, Frederick / Lazarnick, George (1986) MCI, Part B, p. 708.

Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



172
A SUBLIME BOAR TUSK NETSUKE OF A MINOGAME

By Seiyodo Bunshojo (1764-1838), signed Iwami-shu Enokawa 石見州可愛河 Seiyodo Bunsho 青陽堂 文章 horu 彫 Japan, Iwami Province, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Published: Earle, Joe (2000) The Robert S. Huthart Collection of Iwami Netsuke, Vol. I. p.114, no. 94.

Carved from a choice piece of shimmering boar tusk with pronounced curvature, the lower section finely incised and inked with ferns, a charming minogame carved towards the tapering end, its long flowing tail rendered in high relief. Signed near the minogame Iwami-shu, Enokawa SEIYODO BUNSHO(jo) horu [carved by the Eno River in Iwami Province by Seiyodo Bunsho].

LENGTH 7.7 cm

Provenance: Ex-Collection of Robert S. Huthart. Bonhams, The Robert S. Huthart Collection of Iwami Netsuke Part II, 6 November 2019, London, lot 34. A private collection, acquired from the above.
Condition: Very good condition with only minor wear and typical traces of use.

Seiyodo Bunshojo (1764–1838) was the daughter of Seiyodo Tomiharu, a renowned carver and founder of the Iwami school of netsuke carving. Bunshojo, one of the few recorded female netsuke carvers, is particularly praised for her delicate and finely detailed works, often depicting nature with remarkable precision.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related boar tusk netsuke with a minogame by the same artist, dated 1826, 10 cm long, at Bonhams, The Robert S. Huthart Collection of Iwami Netsuke Part I, 15 May 2019, London, lot 49 (sold for GBP 9,437 or approx.

EUR 14,000 converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



173
HAKURYU: A LARGE IWAMI SCHOOL WOOD NETSUKE OF A FROG ON A TARO LEAF

By Unko Hakuryu, signed Hakuryu 白龍 saku 作
 Japan, Iwami province, late 18th to early 19th century,
 Edo period (1615-1868)

Superbly carved, the frog is depicted squatting on a large, folded taro leaf, its limbs closely tucked against its compact body. The textures of its warty skin are finely stippled in ukibori, the eyes are inlaid in dark horn and the taro leaf beneath the frog is gently curved, its veins intricately incised and rendered in further brilliant ukibori. Asymmetrical himotoshi are pierced through the underside, the larger hole generously excavated to accommodate the knot. Signed in ukibori characters HAKURYU saku [made by HAKURYU].

LENGTH 8 cm

Provenance: Ex-Collection of George Lazarnick. With Eskenazi Ltd., London, 1991. From the collection of Eva & Aubrey Sweet, Melbourne, Australia, acquired from the above. A copy of a valuation, addressed to A. Sweet, dated 1 November 1991, and confirming the provenance above, accompanies this lot. **Eva and Aubrey Sweet** devoted over six decades to the formation of a distinguished private collection of Asian art, with particular strength in Chinese jade, Japanese lacquer, and netsuke. **Condition:** Very good condition with minor wear and light traces of use as well as some very minuscule nibbling to the edges of the leaf.



A valuation from Eskenazi Ltd., addressed to A. Sweet, dated 1 November 1991

The artist, Unko Hakuryu, should not be confused with the more famous Unsho Hakuryu. This carver is an Iwami artist of whom little is known. His output appears to be limited to the subject of frogs on lotus leaves, with only two comparable works recorded.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related boxwood netsuke of a frog on a folded leaf by the same artist, signed Hakuryu saku, dated to the early 19th century, 6.3 cm long, at Bonhams, The Robert S. Huthart Collection Part II, 6 November 2019, London, lot 132 (sold for GBP 3,187 or approx. **EUR 4,800** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing). Compare a related boxwood netsuke of a frog on a taro leaf, by Seiyodo Tomiharu, 6.4 cm long, at Bonhams, The Robert S. Huthart Collection, 15 May 2019, London, lot 19 (sold for GBP 31,312 or approx. **EUR 46,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 6,000
 Starting price EUR 3,000



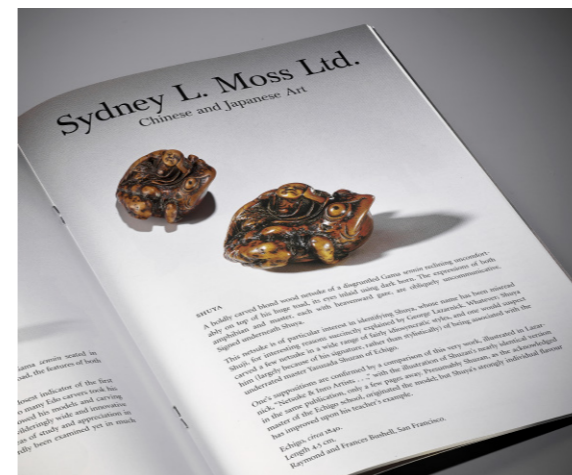
174
SHUYA: A WOOD NETSUKE OF GAMA SENNIN ON A TOAD

By Shuya, signed Shuya 秋冶
 Japan, Echigo province, first half of 19th century,
 Edo period (1615-1868)

Published:
 International Netsuke Society Journal (INSJ), 2001, Vol. 21, no. 3, p. 29. (illustrated in a full-page advert by Sydney L. Moss Ltd.)

Depicting Gama Sennin sleeping blissfully on the back of a massive toad, looking upwards, dressed in the typical mugwort cape and girdle. The toad with its head raised in an expression of irritated dismay, its body amusingly flattened, the eyes inlaid and ringed in metal, its masterfully carved warty skin contrasting with the smooth underside, the feet tucked neatly under its body. Himotoshi underneath, signed in boldly carved characters SHUYA - a pupil of the great Yasusada Shuzan. It is likely that Yasusada Shuzan originated this model, but Shuya's strongly individual flavor has improved upon his teacher's example.

LENGTH 4.1 cm



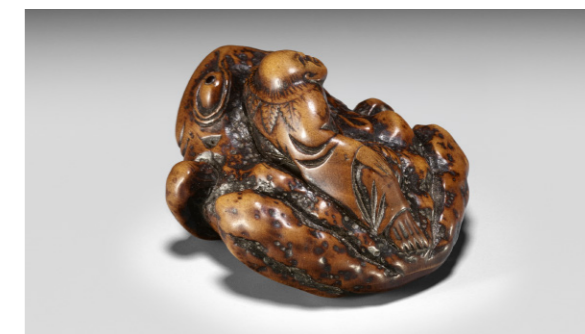
Provenance: Ex-collection Raymond and Frances Bushell. A French private collection. Purchased at Rosemary Bandini, 2012. Ex-collection Teddy Hahn, Darmstadt. **Theodor "Teddy" Hahn (1933-2012)** was a well-known and respected collector of netsuke and other Asian works of art. After spending time in museums to study the early cultures of the world, finding particular interest in their sculptures, he began collecting, remarking, "I somehow knew it would have a profound influence on my life. How right I was. And how happy I have been." **Condition:** Very good condition, minor wear. Fine, smooth patina. Possibly some old, worn-down chips to the edges of the webbed feet.

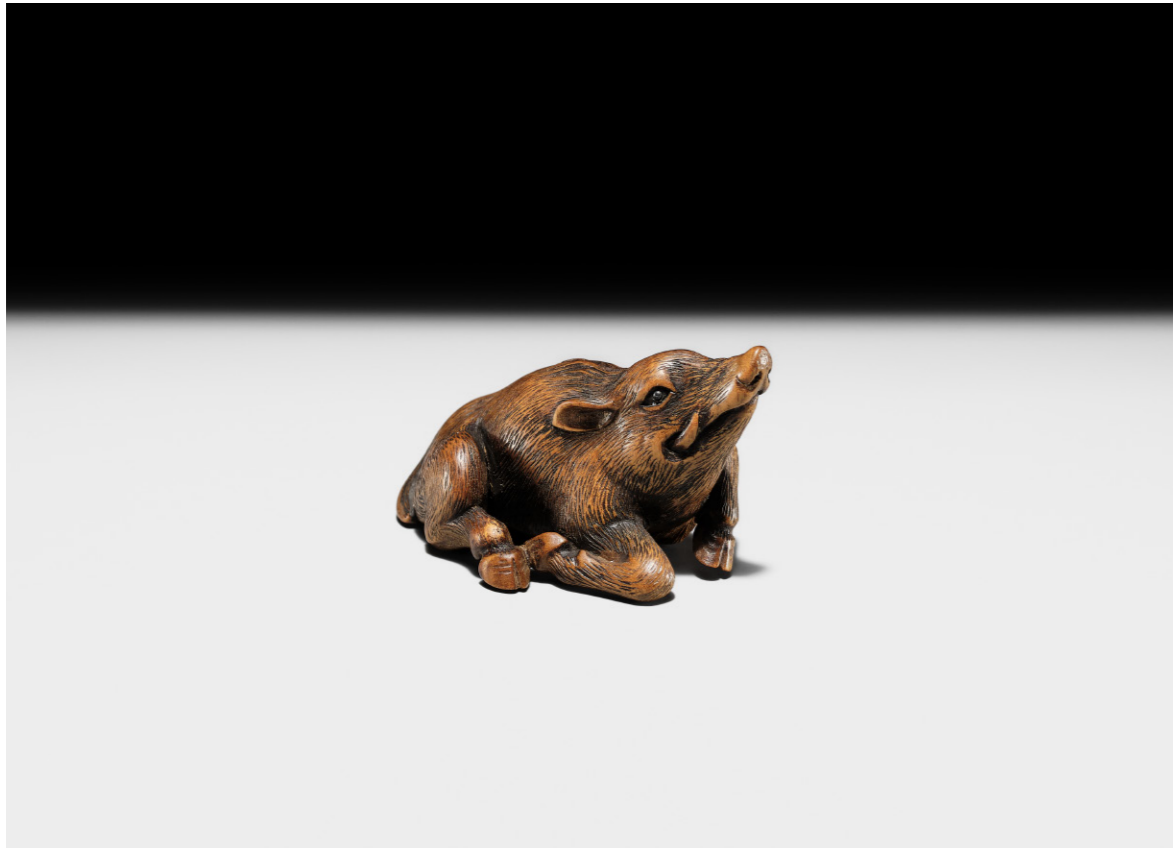
LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of Gama sennin on a toad by Yasusada Shuzan, circa 1820, illustrated in Rutherford and Bandini, The Sheila M. Baker collection of Japanese netsuke and inro, 2011, no. 5. Another closely related wood netsuke by Shuya, the face similarly carved, is illustrated in Lazarnick, George (1981) Netsuke & Inro Artists, and How to Read Their Signatures, Vol. 2, p. 1013.



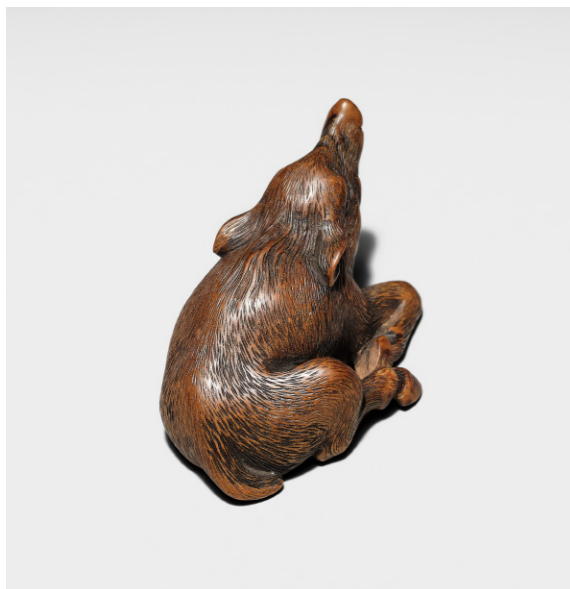
Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500





175
**SUKETADA: A FINE AND RARE
 WOOD NETSUKE OF A RECLINING BOAR**

By Eguro Suketada (1852-1915), signed Suketada 亮忠
 Japan, Takayama, Hida Province, Meiji period (1868-1912)



Superbly carved as a recumbent boar (inoshishi) raising its head alertly. The eyes are inlaid dark, the small tusks visible at the corners of the mouth, and the coat is rendered with finely incised and subtly stained hairwork. The powerful animal is modeled with a pleasing sense of movement: one hoof is dynamically poised while the others are tucked beneath the body, suggesting the moment before the boar rises to its feet. Natural himotoshi and signed to the underside within a polished reserve SUKETADA.

LENGTH 5 cm

Condition: Very good condition with only very minor wear and traces of use including a tiny nick to the underside.

The subject of a boar appears to be very rare among the carvers of the Hida school. No examples by Suketada appear to be recorded, and only a small number are known by Matsuda Sukenaga, where the animal is almost invariably shown in combination with a snake. One such example by Sukenaga is preserved in the British Museum (see Museum comparison).

MUSEUM COMPARISON

For a closely related wood netsuke of a boar and snake by Sukenaga, 3.75 cm long, see the British Museum, registration no. F.676.

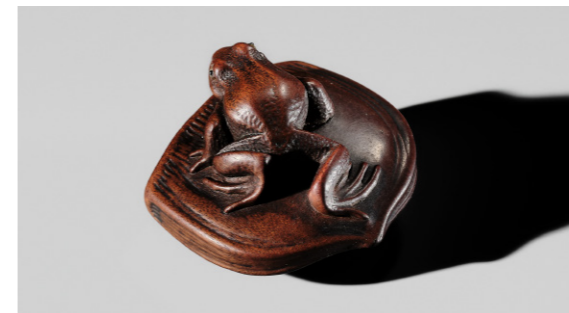


Estimate EUR 6,000
 Starting price EUR 3,000



176
**A FINE WOOD NETSUKE OF A FROG
 ATOP A CHESTNUT, ATTRIBUTED TO SUKENAGA**

Attributed to Matsuda Sukenaga, signed Hida 比夕 togi 刀戯
 Japan, Takayama, Hida Province, first half of the 19th century,
 Edo period (1615-1868)



Naturalistically carved in an attractively compact composition, depicting a small frog climbing atop a chestnut. The frog's body is rendered with fine stippling and subtle staining, emphasizing the smooth curvature of its back and the delicate texture of its limbs. Its face is animated with an alert expression, the eyes double-inlaid in pale translucent horn with dark pupils. The chestnut beneath is intricately incised with fine lines to suggest the natural ridges of the shell and further articulated in ukibori along the long edge. Asymmetrical himotoshi underneath and signed Hida togi ["carved in amusement in Hida Province"].

LENGTH 3.6 cm

Condition: Old repairs to the inlaid eyes. Otherwise excellent condition with only very minor wear.

The subject of a frog perched upon a chestnut appears to be characteristic of the Hida master Matsuda Sukenaga, the founder of the Hida school. As this motif seems to have been carved exclusively by Sukenaga, and given the superb quality of the present example, it is most plausible that the netsuke is indeed his work. The inscription "Hida togi", rather than a personal signature, suggests that the piece may have been carved for the artist's own amusement rather than as a formal commission.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a toad atop a chestnut, by Sukenaga, 3.5 cm long, at Sotheby's, Netsuke from the Collection of Raymond and Frances Bushell, 18 November 1999, London, lot 266.



Estimate EUR 5,000
 Starting price EUR 2,400



177
SUKEYUKI: A FINE ITTOBORI WOOD NETSUKE OF DARUMA DOLL

By Izumi Sukeyuki, signed Sukeyuki 亮之
 Japan, Takayama, Hida province, second half of 19th century

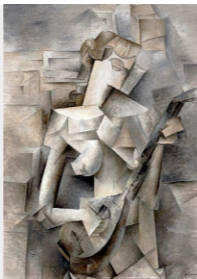
Exquisitely carved from ichii (Japanese yew wood), this netsuke depicts a Daruma doll, executed in itto-ori (single cut technique) with the body fully enveloped in a cloak, leaving only the expressive face exposed. The face is animated with an exaggerated yawn, its open mouth and hollow eye sockets beneath bushy brows, complemented by a wide nose. The reverse features two himotoshi, and the signature SUKEYUKI is inscribed.

HEIGHT 4.7 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and typical light traces of use.

Izumi Sukeyuki (1838–1920) was born in Bamba, Omi Province (present-day Shiga Prefecture). A master carver of Buddhist altars, Sukeyuki became inspired by the works of sculptor Matsuda Sukenaga (1800–1871), famous for his depictions of reptiles and amphibians. Upon visiting Hida-Takayama, Sukeyuki was captivated by Sukenaga's netsuke and okimono and transitioned to sculpture in homage to his master. He adopted the name Sukeyuki, reflecting the first syllable of Sukenaga's name. Renowned for his carvings of toads, snakes, and skulls, Sukeyuki's creations, particularly those depicting snakes slithering through skulls, became a signature motif. Although often associated with macabre subjects, his versatility is evidenced by works like the present Daruma, which reflects his ability to convey whimsy and humor.

The composition is reminiscent of the early 20th century cubism art movement pioneered by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, who were heavily influenced by Japanese art



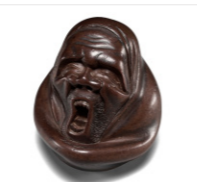
LITERATURE COMPARISON

For a near identical itto-ori wood netsuke of Daruma by the same artist, signed Sukeyuki, see Joly, Henri L. (1912) *The W. L. Behrens Collection*, Part 1, Netsuke, no. 4284, illustrated on Plate LV.

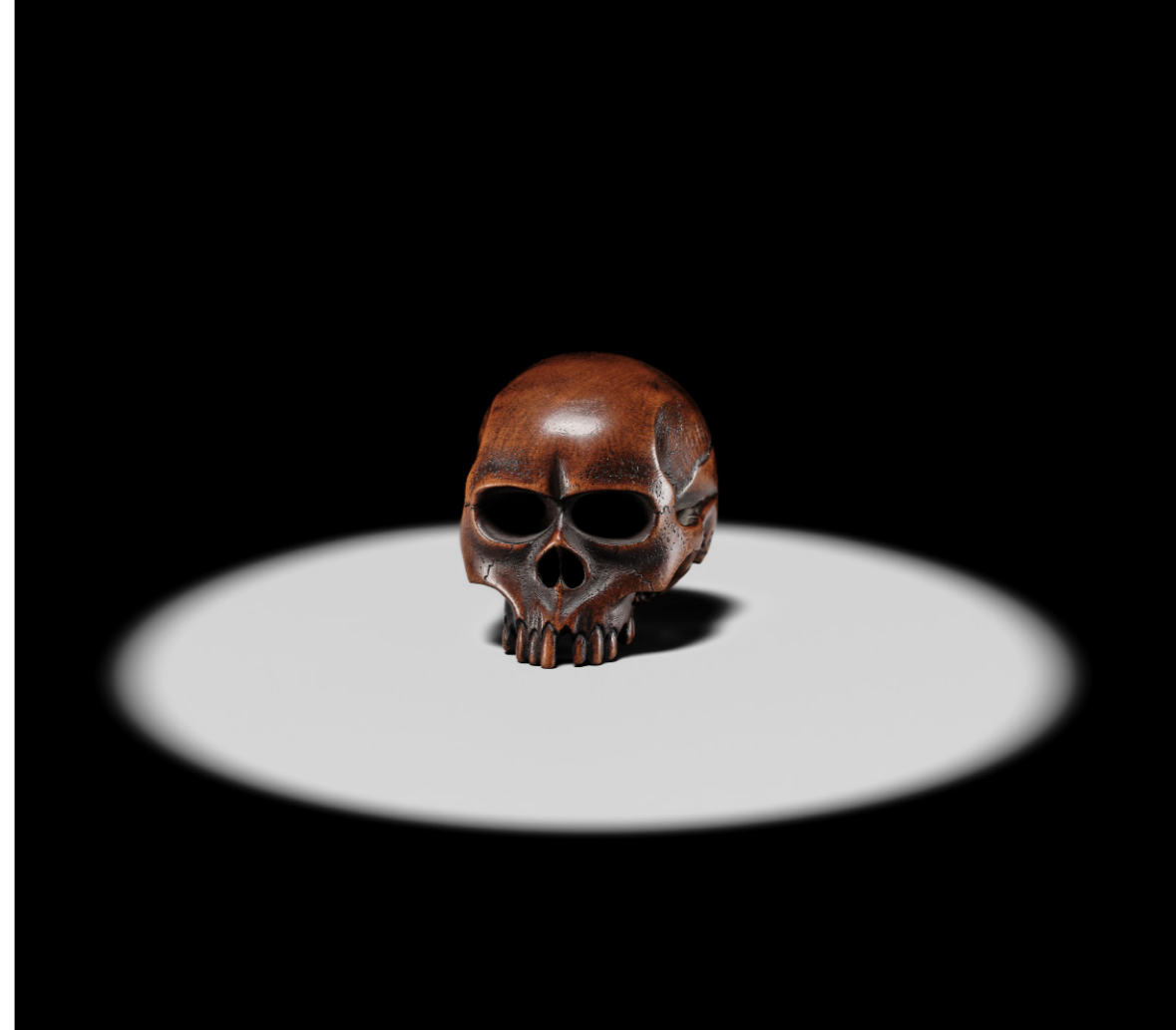


AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of a Daruma doll, by Sukenaga, dated to the first half of the 19th century, 3.3 cm high, at Zacke, *Fine Netsuke & Sagemono*, 9 May 2025, Vienna, lot 206 (sold for **EUR 5,200**).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



178
A SUPERB WOOD NETSUKE OF A SKULL

Unsigned
 Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Expertly carved, this netsuke depicts a skull with deep, cavernous eye sockets, a narrow nasal bone, and well-defined cheekbones. The surface is intricately incised with parietal lines and skillfully polished and stippled to replicate the natural, varied texture of the cranium. The bottom of the skull is adorned with ten finely carved teeth and curved spikes, suggesting the connection to the spine. Natural himotoshi.

LENGTH 4 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear.

The theme of memento mori (Latin for 'remember that you will die') serves as an artistic and symbolic reminder of the inevitability of death. A concept that has resonated across cultures and centuries, memento mori is both sobering and, in some ways, comforting—a universal epitaph transcending both commoners and kings alike. In Japan, as in other cultures, such motifs were often associated with festivals commemorating the deceased, honoring the fleeting nature of life.

MUSEUM COMPARISON

For a closely related wood netsuke of a skull, unsigned, see the British Museum, registration number F.1201.



Estimate EUR 5,000
 Starting price EUR 2,400





179
A SUPERB HIDA SCHOOL WOOD NETSUKE OF A SNAKE AND SKULL

Unsigned
 Japan, Takayama, Hida Province, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

A striking and morbidly fascinating netsuke of a large snake, its body finely carved with naturalistic scales and varying in thickness as it coils around an anatomically precise skull. The skull shows signs of age, with a few missing teeth and the back of the cranium hollowed out. The snake slithers through this opening, penetrating the eye socket, and rests its head atop the skull. Its eyes are inlaid in horn, and the tongue is extended. The surface of the skull is masterfully stippled, mimicking the heterogeneous texture of the cranium. Natural himotoshi. The carving appears slightly earlier than the next lot (no. 180) and may very well be by Matsuda Sukenaga (1800-1871), renowned for his masterful snake depictions.

HEIGHT 3.5 cm

Provenance: Sotheby's, 6 December 1972, London, lot 101. An important European private collection, acquired from the above. Christie's, Japanese and Korean Art, 17 September 2024, New York, lot 172 (sold for USD 7,560 or approx. **EUR 6,800** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).

Condition: Excellent condition with minor expected wear.

Weathered skulls symbolize the evanescence of life, embodying the concept of memento mori, which fascinated an artist steeped in Zen Buddhist culture. The subject, often referred to as nozarashi, was especially favored by the samurai class, who were taught to be prepared for death at any time.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare the style of the snake to a wood netsuke by Matsuda Sukenaga, 4.2 cm wide, sold at Bonhams, London, 9 November 2017, lot 5 (sold for GBP 13,750, approx. **EUR 21,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 8,000
 Starting price EUR 4,000



180
SUKEYUKI: A SUPERB WOOD NETSUKE OF A SNAKE AND SKULL

By Izumi Sukeyuki (1838-1920), signed Sukeyuki 亮之
 Japan, Takayama, Hida Province, second half of 19th century

A strikingly macabre netsuke depicting a snake with intricately carved scales and a body of varying thickness, coiling around a stylized, stippled skull. The skull appears weathered, with a few missing teeth and the back of the cranium hollowed out. The snake penetrates the skull through the hole, entering the eye socket, and rests its head atop the skull, its eyes double-inlaid and its tongue extended. Natural himotoshi. Signed on the underside within a polished rectangular reserve SUKEYUKI.

HEIGHT 3.7 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with minor expected wear.

It is said that Sukeyuki had gone to find his models of skulls in old burial mounds and had taken anatomy courses from a physician friend to gain a better understanding of muscle tendon insertions. Izumi Sukeyuki (1838-1920) lived in the town of Bamba in Omi Province, present-day Shiga Prefecture. He initially specialized in carving family Buddhist altars, but upon visiting Hida-Takayama, he became captivated by the work of sculptor Matsuda Sukenaga (1800-1871), renowned for his netsuke and okimono of reptiles and amphibians. Inspired by Sukenaga's style, Sukeyuki adopted his master's name and turned to sculpture, focusing particularly on snakes, toads, and skulls. His sculptures of snakes slithering through skulls became a signature motif, reflecting his interest in the Zen Buddhist concept of memento mori, symbolizing the impermanence of life. Such motifs, favored by the samurai, were reminders of the inevitability of death and the importance of living prepared for it.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

For a closely related wood netsuke of a skull and snake by Sukenaga, formerly in the Hayashi collection, with a similarly stylized skull carving, see Meinertzhagen, Frederick / Lazarnick, George (1986) MCI, Part B, p. 823.

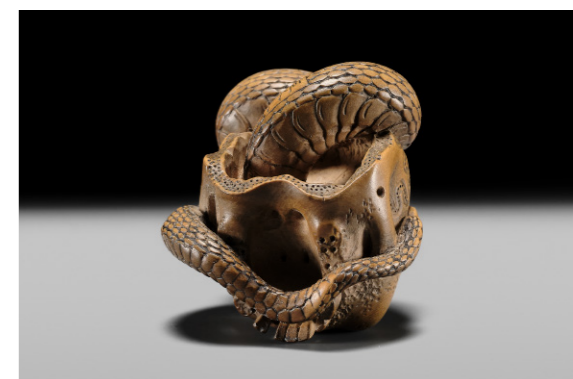
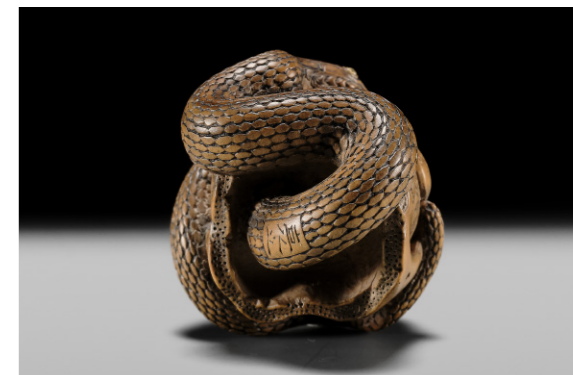


AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a snake and skull by the same artist, signed Sukeyuki, 4.5 cm long, at Zackle, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 16 April 2021, Vienna, lot 151 (sold for **EUR 17,080**).



Estimate EUR 10,000
 Starting price EUR 5,000



**Slowly, Yet Irresistibly:
Teddy Hahn's Netsuke of Snails and Okame
(Lots 181-192)**

Teddy Hahn, born in 1933 in Breslau, was profoundly shaped by the early experience of displacement from Silesia. He spent much of his life in Darmstadt, where he passed away in 2012. A self-taught collector of remarkable intuition, Hahn initially focused on pre-Columbian art before turning his attention to Japanese netsuke. His discerning eye and deep appreciation for unusual, erotic, and humorous subjects—combined with an emotional attachment to the objects he acquired—made his collection truly exceptional. Hahn documented his pieces with meticulous care, often adding handwritten notes in which some works were praised as masterpieces while others were bluntly labelled 'unsaleable'. These annotations reveal a collector who did far more than assemble objects; he lived with them. As he once reflected: 'I somehow knew it would have a profound influence on my life. How right I was. And how happy I have been.'



Gisela and Teddy Hahn



Among the many themes Hahn explored, snails and Okame appear with striking frequency. At first glance these subjects seem playful or whimsical, yet both carry long-standing associations with sensuality and erotic humour in Japanese visual culture. Their gentle suggestiveness—never explicit but unmistakable—perfectly reflects Hahn's fascination with netsuke that balance wit, tactility, and subtle erotic undertones. The present sale brings together some of the most remarkable examples from his collection, works distinguished by their character, quiet sensuality, and layered histories.

**The Snail:
Katatsumuri, Between Tsuyu and Tactility**

In Japan, the snail (katatsumuri) is more than a humble creature; it is closely associated with the rainy season (tsuyu), which extends from late May to mid-July. In haiku and seasonal almanacs (saijiki), the snail functions as a seasonal symbol, its unhurried movement and retreat into the earth evoking the languid atmosphere of the humid months. Yet the motif also carries playful connotations in Edo-period culture: the soft body emerging from its spiral shell offered artists a discreet visual metaphor that could easily lend itself to erotic interpretation.

For netsuke artists, the snail proved an ideal motif. Its compact spiral shell and supple body offered abundant

opportunities for creative interpretation, combining stillness with the suggestion of slow movement. The examples presented here demonstrate a harmonious balance between naturalistic observation, gentle suggestiveness, and refined craftsmanship. Surface treatments of the body—ranging from delicate cross-hatching that evokes glistening moisture to intentionally rustic carving that captures the creature's earthy quality—enhance the tactile appeal and quiet sensuality of these slow-moving forms.

Okame: The Playful Spirit

Okame, also known as Otafuku, is a familiar figure in Japanese folklore, associated with joy, laughter, and good fortune. In netsuke, however, she often assumes a more intimate and mischievous character. Her rounded cheeks, relaxed features, and cheerful expression made her an ideal figure for humorous or subtly erotic scenes, particularly in the playful visual language of Edo-period carving. Hahn's collection contains an exceptional group of Okame netsuke distinguished by rustic material treatment and unconventional poses. Rare works by carvers such as Hobaisai and Tsugen demonstrate both a sophisticated understanding of the figure's symbolic resonance and Hahn's remarkable eye for netsuke of striking aesthetic appeal and individuality.



181
AN UNUSUAL WOOD AND NEGORO LACQUER
NETSUKE OF OKAME TAKING A BATH

Unsigned
 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Okame is depicted joyfully taking a bath, leaning over a traditional wooden bathtub. Her left hand is immersed in the water while her right hand playfully cleanses her upper body. Her face is animated with delight, smiling broadly and revealing her teeth. The hair is finely incised and gathered into a loose ponytail. Okame's loincloth is lacquered in the negoro style, providing an attractive contrast to the wood surface. Good himotoshi underneath.

LENGTH 4.1 cm



Provenance: From the collection of Teddy Hahn, Darmstadt.
Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear, particularly to the lacquered details.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood and negoro lacquer netsuke of Hotei taking a bath, likely carved by the same hand or workshop, 3.7 cm high, at Zacke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 4 November 2022, Vienna, lot 54 (sold for **EUR 2,080**).



Estimate EUR 2,500
 Starting price EUR 1,200



182
A SUPERB WOOD NETSUKE
OF A DANCING OKAME

Unsigned
 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Published: Bandini, Rosemary (2014) Japanese Netsuke of the Collection of Teddy Hahn, no. 7.

The Shinto goddess of mirth dressed in the attire of a Heian court lady, performing a dance while holding a bell rattle and fan, her windswept hair neatly falling down her back, the loose sleeves swinging with movement. She is laughing with an opened smile and puffed wide cheeks. The wood bearing a stunning natural hand patina. Large himotoshi through the back.

HEIGHT 6.1 cm

Provenance: Ex David collection, sold at Christie's, 14 October 1986, London, lot 102. Purchased by Nelly Davies from the above. Purchased by Teddy Hahn, Darmstadt, from the above.

Condition: Very good condition with associated surface wear and a fine patina.

Okame was able to tempt the sun goddess Amaterasu from her cave when she retired there in displeasure of her brothers' antics. Okame performed a dance, getting so caught up in her enthusiasm that all her clothes fell off. The ensuing laughter finally caused so much curiosity that the secluded goddess came out to learn the source of such merriment, thus restoring daylight to the world.

Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500





183
TSUGEN: A FINE BOXWOOD SHUNGA NETSUKE OF OKAME CLIMBING A MUSHROOM

By Tsugen, signed Tsugen kun isaku, mago Hironobu chinzo
 通玄君遺作、孫廣信珍藏
 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Powerfully carved as Okame climbing a large mushroom in a humorous and playful pose. Her legs wrap around the stem while her hands grasp near the cap as she ascends. Her rounded body, clad only in a skirt with softly carved folds, is rendered with remarkable vitality. Clearly cherished and handled over generations, the netsuke has developed a beautifully worn patina. Himotoshi pass through the stem and Okame's body.

A lengthy inscription, inked in red along the stem, further enhances the charm and importance of this remarkable piece. It reads: TSUGEN kun isaku, mago Hironobu chinzo [The last work of Master Tsugen, preserved and treasured by his grandson Hironobu].

HEIGHT 6.3 cm

Provenance: Sotheby's, The Carlo Monzino Collection of Netsuke, Inro and Lacquer, 21 June 1995, lot 258 (sold for GBP 3,450 or approx. **EUR 8,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing). From the collection of Teddy Hahn, Darmstadt, acquired from the above. A copy of collection notes from Teddy Hahn, which notes the present piece is "unverkäuflich (unsaleable)" accompanies this lot. Carlo Monzino (1933–1996) was a prominent European collector renowned for his extensive collection of Japanese netsuke, inro, and other Asian art, which he meticulously amassed during his years living in Tokyo. His collection, which included rare and exceptional pieces, was celebrated for its depth and quality, particularly the Edo period netsuke crafted by master carvers. In addition to Japanese art, Monzino also developed a distinguished collection of African and Oceanic art, including the renowned Jacob Epstein collection. His legacy continues through the sale of his collections, which have become key references in both public and private art spheres.

Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear and few nicks here and there.

Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



184
A CHARMING OLD WOOD NETSUKE OF OKAME BINDING HER HAIR

Unsigned
 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

HEIGHT 3.7 cm

Provenance: From the collection of Teddy Hahn, Darmstadt.
Condition: Good condition with minor wear, chips to one foot and the ponytail as well as encrustations to the hair.

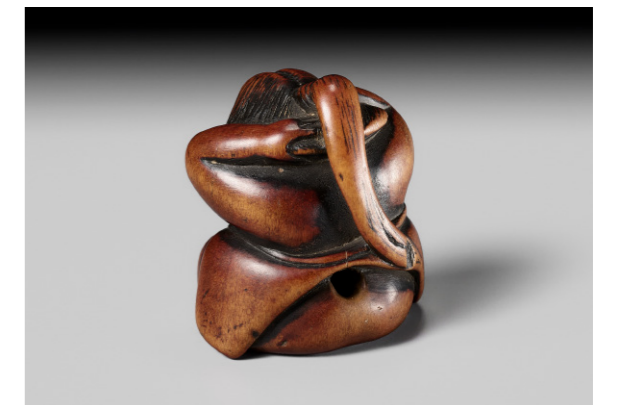
Boldly carved, the seated Okame is shown calmly binding her hair, her posture relaxed and unhurried. The rustic carving and refined staining emphasize the soft curve of her body and bent arm as she gathers a long strand of hair to tie into a ponytail. She is simply dressed, wearing only a skirt which folds naturally beneath her, while her bare upper body and rounded belly are revealed. Her face, characteristically round and benevolent, radiates a serene and content expression. Clearly cherished and handled over generations, the netsuke has developed an exceptionally attractive, deep patina. Large himotoshi to the back and underside.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related early wood netsuke of Okame clipping her toenails, also from the collection of Teddy Hahn, 4.2 cm high, at Zacke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 29 October 2021, Vienna, lot 147 (sold for **EUR 4,803**).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



185
HOBASAI: A UNIQUE KUROGAKI WOOD NETSUKE OF A 'MOON-VIEWING' OKAME

Signed Hobaisai 芳梅齋 saku 作 and kakihan
 Japan, late 18th-early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

- Published:**
1. Sydney L. Moss, Ltd. (2000) Myth, Reality and Magical Transformation, no. 13.
 2. Wilhelm, Gabor (2000) On the Continent, INSJ 20/4, p. 30, no. 13.

Charmingly carved from kurogaki (black persimmon wood), depicting Okame standing with her feet closely together and her head tilted back as she gazes upward, seemingly absorbed in moon-viewing. Her hair falls freely down her back and the robe is drawn aside, revealing her bare torso while she modestly covers her intimate parts with clasped hands. The figure is conceived with striking simplicity: broad, rounded forms contrast with the almost graphic treatment of the face, whose full "moon-like" cheeks and ingenuous expression lend the carving a poetic quality. As noted by Sydney L. Moss, the great round face seems to embody both naïve innocence and mischievous humor at once.

Two lines of inscription appear along the left side of the skirt, formed as a haiku-like poem engraved in a mixture of flowing kanji and abbreviated kana syllabary, referring to mountains and the moon and reinforcing the contemplative upward gaze. Asymmetrical himotoshi to the reverse and signed Hobaisai saku [made by Hobaisai] and kakihan.

HEIGHT 7.4 cm



Provenance: Ex-collection Raymond and Frances Bushell. Sotheby's, Netsuke from the Collection of Raymond and Frances Bushell, 21 March 2000, New York, lot 200. With Sydney L. Moss Ltd., London, 2000. From the collection of Teddy Hahn, Darmstadt, acquired from the above. A copy of the invoice from Sydney L. Moss Ltd, dated to 9 June 2000, stating a purchase price of GBP 10,000 (or approx. **EUR 22,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing), and confirming the artist and provenance above, accompanies this lot. A copy of collection notes from Teddy Hahn, with a note "masterpiece" accompanies this lot.

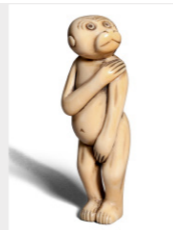


Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and fill to one tiny chip on the right back of the shoulder.

Okame (also known as Otafuku) ultimately derives from the Shinto goddess Ame-no-Uzume, whose famously provocative dance before the cave of the sun goddess Amaterasu caused the assembled gods to burst into laughter and thereby coax Amaterasu from hiding, restoring light to the world. In later folk tradition Uzume evolved into the jovial figure of Okame, associated with uninhibited joy, humor, and good fortune. The upward gaze of the figure toward the moon playfully echoes this mythic episode: just as Uzume's performance brought the hidden sun back into the sky, here the great round "moon-face" of Okame looks upward in quiet wonder — a poetic visual pun in which the moon above is mirrored by the moon-like face below.

AUCTION COMPARISON

The pose and deceitful simplicity recalls a famous ivory netsuke of a bashful monkey, 7.6 cm high, at Bonhams, The Bluetie Kirchhoff Collection of Fine Netsuke and Sagemono, 16 September 2009, New York, lot 2013 (sold for USD 36,600 or approx. **EUR 48,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000





186
**HIDARI ISSAN: A WOOD NETSUKE
 OF A SNAIL EMERGING FROM ITS SHELL**

By Hidari Issan, signed Hidari Issan 左一山
 Japan, Iwashiro Province, early 19th century, Edo period
 (1615-1868)

Boldly carved in a compact and deceptively simple composition, the snail (katatsumuri) is shown crawling from its shell, the body winding forward with its antennae extended. At first glance the carving appears rustic and understated, yet the design reveals a remarkable efficiency and sculptural strength. The shell is rendered with light dashed incisions that subtly articulate the spiral structure, while the body is carved with a deliberately rough surface that convincingly evokes the wrinkled texture of the creature's skin. The overall effect is one of striking vitality achieved through minimal means - a hallmark of Issan's powerful carving style. Large himotoshi to the reverse. Signed HIDARI ISSAN.

LENGTH 3.9 cm

Provenance: Barry Davies Oriental Art, London, 1990s. From the collection of Teddy Hahn, Darmstadt, acquired from the above for GBP 5,000.

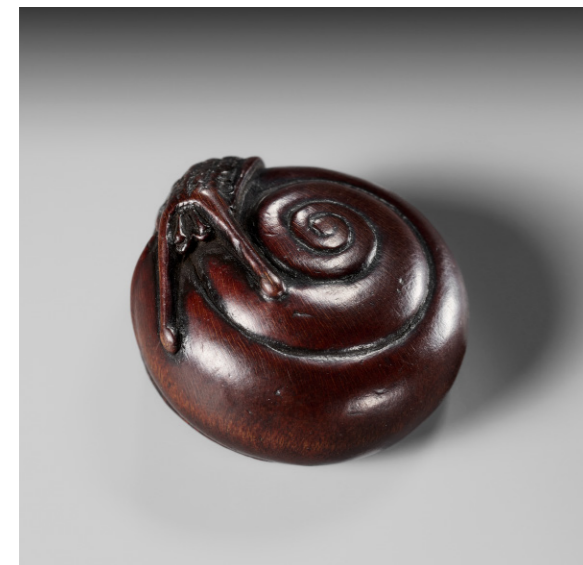
Condition: Good condition with minor wear, few tiny nicks here and there, light surface scratches and a small crack through the himotoshi.

MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a snail by the same artist, signed Hidari Issan, 3.6 cm long, in the British Museum, registration number 1953,1217.16.



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



187
**TSUNEMASA: A VERY FINE WOOD NETSUKE
 OF A SNAIL EMERGING FROM ITS SHELL**

By Tsunemasa, signed Tsunemasa 庸正
 Japan, Nagoya, first half of the 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

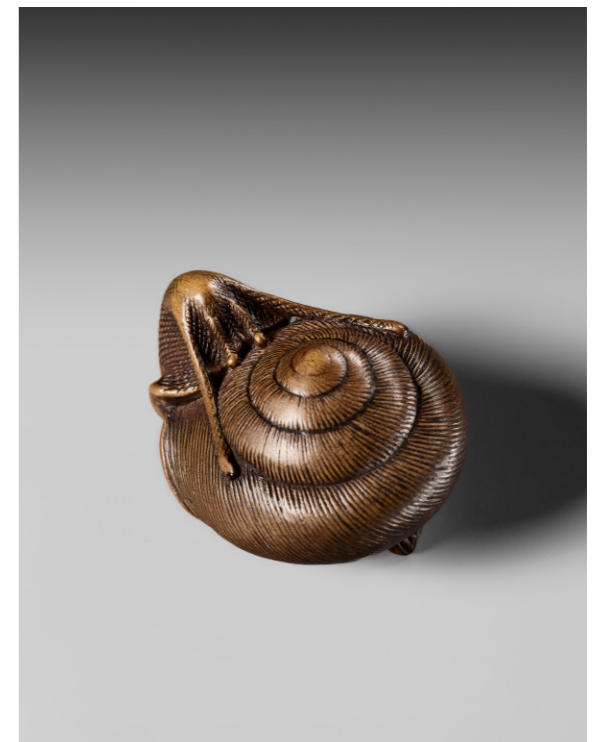
Superbly carved in an attractively compact composition, the snail (katatsumuri) is depicted in the act of emerging from its shell, the body almost fully extended and winding outward. The checkered texture of the body is rendered with remarkable precision through fine cross-hatched carving, contrasting beautifully with the spiraling ridges of the shell, which are intricately incised and subtly modeled in delicate ukibori. The shell tapers to a pointed apex, while the feelers extend gracefully forward, capturing the quiet movement of the creature as it slowly advances. A small opening along the edge of the shell — the snail's breathing pore — adds a charming naturalistic detail. Natural himotoshi underneath and signed TSUNEMASA. Considering the superb staining and carving style, the artist was likely related to the famous Shigemasa.

LENGTH 4 cm

Provenance: Glendining & co, London, 12 April 1952. Kunsthandel Klefisch, 3 April 1993, Cologne, lot 694. From the collection of Teddy Hahn, Darmstadt, acquired from the above.

Condition: Good condition with minor wear and light traces of use. A small crack to the shell underneath.

Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000





188
**YOSHIHARU: A FINE WOOD NETSUKE
 OF A SNAIL EMERGING FROM ITS SHELL**

By Yoshiharu, signed Sashu no ju 石州住 Yoshiharu 義治
 Japan, Sado Province, first half of the 19th century, Edo period
 (1615-1868)

Superbly carved, the snail (katatsumuri) is depicted in the act of emerging from its shell, the body almost fully extended and gently winding forward. The checkered texture of the body is rendered with fine cross-etched strokes, contrasting with the delicate ridges of the spiraling shell. The antennae extend gracefully, their tips inlaid, capturing the slow, deliberate movement of the creature. The foot is visible on the underside, forming a curled mass through which the natural himotoshi pass. Signed on the shell Sashu no ju YOSHIHARU [Yoshiharu, resident of Sashu (Sado Province)].

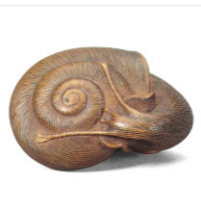
LENGTH 4 cm

Provenance: From the collection of Teddy Hahn, Darmstadt.
Condition: Tiny repair near the signature, otherwise very good condition with minor wear and minuscule nicks.

Yoshiharu, listed as number 3270 (399) by Neil Davey, was a skilled wood netsuke artist active during the 19th century. He is noted to have resided in Nagato Province (Choshu), located on the western tip of Honshu near Iwami, though the signature on some of his netsuke carvings suggest he may have moved and lived in different provinces throughout his life.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a snail by the same artist, signed Odawara no ju Yoshiharu, 4.1 cm long, illustrated in Davies, Barry (1998) The Robert S. Huthart Collection of Non-Iwami Netsuke, pp. 210-211, no. 159.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a snail and young by the same artist, signed Sashu no ju Yoshiharu, 3.5 cm long, at Bonhams, The Robert S. Huthart Collection of Iwami Netsuke, 15 May 2019, London, lot 153 (sold for GBP 3,812 or approx. **EUR 5,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



189
**SANYU: A VERY RARE WOOD NETSUKE
 OF A SNAIL EMERGING FROM ITS SHELL**

By Sanyu, signed Sanyu 三友
 Japan, first half of the 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved in an ideally compact form, this netsuke depicts a snail emerging from its shell. The ridged spiral shell is rendered with remarkable precision, while the rough texture of the body is achieved through a dense network of cross-hatched lines. The antennae extend naturally across the body, their tips delicately inlaid. Natural himotoshi run ingeniously beneath the curled foot, and the piece is signed within the polished interior of the shell SANYU.

LENGTH 4 cm

Provenance: H.L., Munich, 1985. From the collection of Teddy Hahn, Darmstadt, acquired from the above. A copy of a collector's note from Teddy Hahn, with the note "masterpiece" accompanies this lot.

Condition: Very good condition with only minor wear, light rubbing and traces of use.

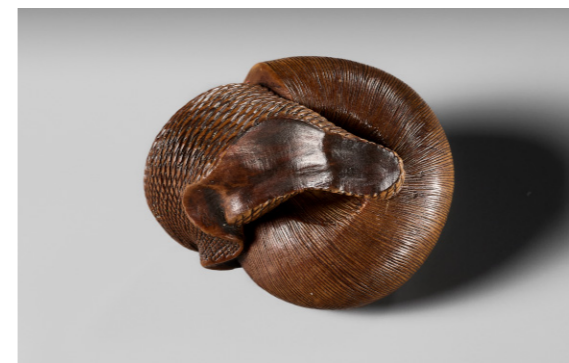
Sanyu appears to be a very rare netsuke artist, recorded only once in Fuld's Netsuke and Ojime Index, where an unillustrated wood carving of a toad on a rock is listed under this name. Stylistically, the present work shows affinities with carvings by Sari of Iwashiro, while the smooth, carefully controlled carving and perfectly parallel incisions also recall works from the Nagoya school. The small inlays at the tips of the antennae further evoke the work of Yoshiharu of Sado Province, whose snail carvings display similar treatment.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of a snail emerging from its shell, by Sari, 4.5 cm long, from the same Collection of Teddy Hahn, at Zucke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 29 October 2021, Vienna, lot 123 (sold for **EUR 7,584**).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500





190
**TOMOKAZU: A SUPERB WOOD NETSUKE
OF A SNAIL EMERGING FROM ITS SHELL**

By Kano Tomokazu (c. 1765-1840), signed Tomokazu 友一
Japan, Gifu/Nagoya, first half of the 19th century, Edo period
(1615-1868)

Naturalistically carved as a decidedly plump snail (katatsumuri) emerging from its shell, the feelers and labial tentacles folded back and resting against the shell to maintain a compact composition. The ridged spiral shell is rendered with remarkable precision, finely incised to emulate its natural structure, while the rough texture of the body is conveyed through a dense network of cross-etched strokes. The foot is visible on the underside, forming a curling mass through which the natural himotoshi are formed. Signed within the typical raised oval reserve TOMOKAZU.

LENGTH 4 cm

Provenance: From the collection of Teddy Hahn, Darmstadt.
Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear. A small crack to one antennae.

Kano Tomokazu (c. 1765-1840) was one of the earliest and most respected netsuke carvers from Gifu, renowned for his meticulous craftsmanship in wood, particularly tsuge wood, which he skillfully treated with various stains to enhance its natural grain. Starting at the age of 17, Tomokazu began working for the Shibata family, where he initially faced his master's disapproval but secretly practiced at night, eventually honing his skill to a level of remarkable proficiency. After gaining recognition in Kyoto for his intricate netsuke carvings, he returned to Gifu, where he lived a life of seclusion near Kinkazan Mountain, dedicating himself fully to his craft.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a snail by the same artist, signed Tomokazu, 3.8 cm wide, at Bonhams, Netsuke from a European Private Collection, 8 May 2016, London, lot 62 (sold for GBP 6,875 or approx.

EUR 11,000 converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 6,000
Starting price EUR 3,000





191
TADARIKI: A FINE NAGOYA SCHOOL WOOD NETSUKE OF A SNAIL EMERGING FROM ITS SHELL

By Tadariki, signed Tadariki 忠力
 Japan, Nagoya, first half of the 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved as a snail (katatsumuri) emerging from its spiral housing, the antennae extended widely and resting upon the curved surface. The deliberate placement of the antennae against the shell forms a compact, protected composition, a device frequently encountered in Nagoya-school snail carvings. The coiling form is intricately rendered with remarkable precision, delicately incised to emulate the natural structure and attractively stained. The body is detailed with fine cross-hatched lines suggesting the creature's soft texture. The foot is visible on the underside, with the himotoshi passing beneath it. Signed within a rectangular reserve in ukibori characters TADARIKI.

LENGTH 4.3 cm



Provenance: Sotheby's, Japanese Prints, Paintings and Works of Art, 13-14 November 1996, London, lot 463. From the collection of Teddy Hahn, Darmstadt, acquired from the above.
Condition: Excellent condition with only minor wear.

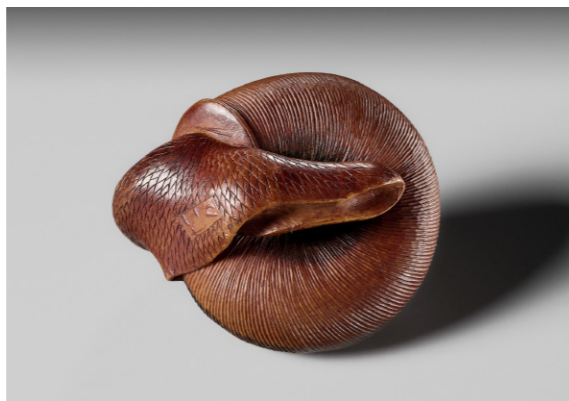
Tadariki is a very rare Nagoya artist of whom only a small number of works are recorded. His carvings, particularly his snails, are closely related in style to those of Tadatoshi, suggesting that he may have been a pupil or close follower.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke by Tadatoshi, with very similar staining and overall carving, 3.8 cm long, also from the collection of Teddy Hahn, at Lempertz, Auktion 1203, 11 June 2020, Cologne, lot 414 (sold for **EUR 16,380**).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



192
TADAYUKI: A FINE NAGOYA SCHOOL WOOD NETSUKE OF A SNAIL EMERGING FROM ITS SHELL

By Tadayuki, signed Tadayuki 忠行
 Japan, Nagoya, c. 1820-1840, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved in a compact form, the netsuke depicts a snail (katatsumuri) emerging from the opening of its shell, the feelers widely extended and resting gently upon the curved surface. The spiraling shell is rendered with remarkable precision, finely incised to suggest the natural structure and attractively stained. The body is articulated with delicate cross-etched lines to convey the soft texture of the creature. The foot is visible on the underside, with the himotoshi passing beneath it. Signed within a rectangular reserve in sublime ukibori characters TADAYUKI.

LENGTH 4 cm

Provenance: From the collection of Teddy Hahn, Darmstadt.
Condition: Excellent condition with only minor wear and light traces of use.

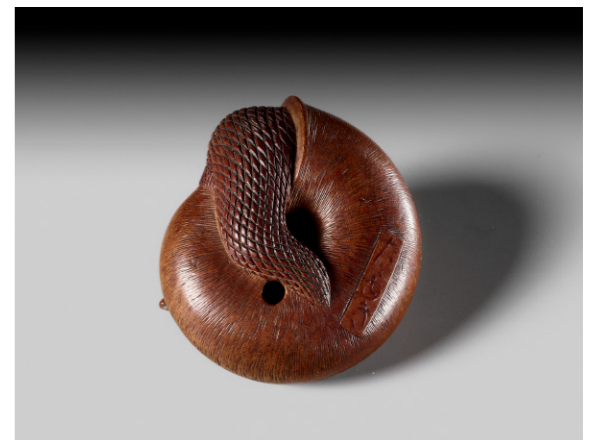
Neil Davey writes on this artist, "Little can be said of this artist, save for the fact that he worked very much in the tradition of Tadatoshi, producing similar models, lightly stained of compact form."

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a snail retreating into its shell, by Tadayuki, 4 cm long, at Zucke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 22 April 2022, Vienna, lot 94 (sold for **EUR 4,803**).



Estimate EUR 5,000
 Starting price EUR 2,400





193

**SHIGEMASA: A SUPERB NAGOYA SCHOOL
WOOD NETSUKE OF A SNAIL ON REISHI FUNGUS**

By Shigemasa, signed Shigemasa 重正 and kakihan
Japan, Nagoya, mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved as a snail (katatsumuri) crawling upon a reishi fungus, its body fully extended from the shell while the antennae explore the smooth, rounded surface of the mushroom. The wood is skillfully manipulated and variously stained, with ridges, stippling, and grooves used to remarkable effect to distinguish the textures of shell, body, and fungus. The attractively curling stem underneath forms a natural opening for the himotoshi. Signed to the underside SHIGEMASA with kakihan.

LENGTH 4.2 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only very minor typical wear.

Shigemasa excelled in the carving of snails and was particularly renowned for the subtle staining of his works, often creating the impression that they are carved from several different types of wood. His netsuke depicting a snail on a bucket - conceived in a similar manner to the present example - are considerably more common than this variant showing a snail on reishi fungus.

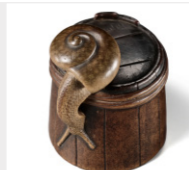
LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a snail on reishi fungus by the same artist, signed Shigemasa and kakihan, 3.8 cm wide, at Christie's, The Raymond and Frances Bushell Collection of Netsuke Part III, 28 January 1989, Los Angeles, lot 33.

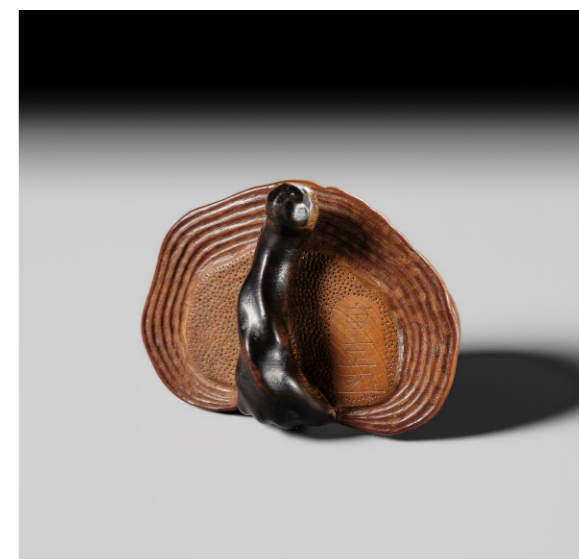
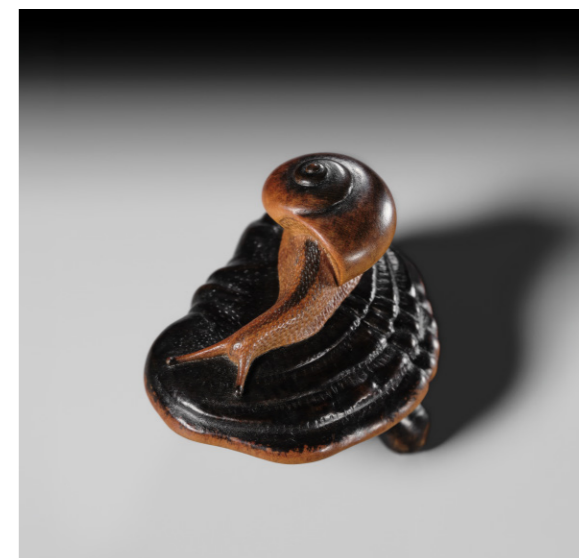


AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a snail on a bucket by the same artist, signed Shigemasa, 5 cm high, at Zackle, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 7 November 2025, Vienna, lot 220 (sold for **EUR 9,295**).



Estimate EUR 10,000
Starting price EUR 5,000





194
**A SUPERB WOOD NETSUKE OF CHILDREN
 PLAYING AROUND A TSUITATE,
 ATTRIBUTED TO TAMETAKA**

Attributed to Tametaka, unsigned
 Japan, Nagoya, late 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved to depict three lively karako engaged in playful mischief around a table screen (tsuitate). One child peers out mischievously while wearing a demon mask, its eyes inlaid in dark horn. Another covers his eyes in mock terror, and the third hides behind the screen. The tsuitate itself is meticulously carved, its sides adorned with finely incised foliage, while the central panels feature a relief dragon on one side and a half-concealed tiger on the other. A crisply carved key-fret border runs along the base. Large, functional himotoshi pierced through the underside and back of the screen.

LENGTH 4.3 cm

Condition: Very good condition with only minor wear and a tiny nick to the edge of the screen base.

Tametaka, the earliest recorded netsuke artist from Nagoya, is listed in the Soken Kisho of 1781. His works are known for their delicate balance between refinement and functionality, retaining an idiosyncratic, rustic style that is characteristic of his circle. The present netsuke is an exemplary work, demonstrating this balance while showcasing the intricate detail and naturalistic expressions that define his oeuvre.



At first glance, the carving may appear too refined for Tametaka's typical style, but closer inspection reveals the artist's hallmark features: the detailing of the robes, the deep, lustrous patina developed over time, and, notably, the gesture of the child who buries his face in his lap. This piece is either one of the finest known examples by Tametaka or the work of a highly talented follower active during the same period.

The tiger and dragon motifs have significant symbolism in Buddhist and Taoist philosophy, representing the balance of yin and yang, the earth and sky, or the male and female. Together, they also symbolize strength, resilience, and courage.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related netsuke of children around a tsuitate, by Tametaka, illustrated in Lazarnick, George (1981) *Netsuke & Inro Artists, and How to Read Their Signatures* (LNIA), Vol. 2, p. 1077.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related netsuke of children around a tsuitate, by Tametaka, dated to the 18th century, at Bonhams, *Fine Japanese Art*, 15 May 2014, London, lot 50 (sold for GBP 12,500 or approx. **EUR 20,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 8,000
 Starting price EUR 4,000



195

HOKYUDO ITSUMIN: A SUPERB WOOD NETSUKE OF GAMA SENNIN WITH TWO TOADS

By Hokyudo Itsumin, signed Hokyudo Itsumin 逢丘堂 逸民 刀 Japan, Nagoya, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved depicting Gama sennin wearing a thick mugwort-leaf skirt spreading about him as he straddles a gigantic toad. The amphibian is rendered with a forcefully dyspeptic and disagreeable expression, its bloated body and warty skin meticulously articulated with fine stippling. Gama, by contrast, appears cheerful and amused by the playful reversal of roles - he, the sage, now humorously perched upon the toad's shoulders - while a second, smaller toad scurries up his back. Turning his head to the left, the immortal looks toward the smaller creature with a startled expression, seemingly caught off balance by its sudden weight. All eyes are inlaid. Generously excavated asymmetrical himotoshi to the underside and signed HOKYUDO ITSUMIN to [carved by Hokyudo Itsumin].

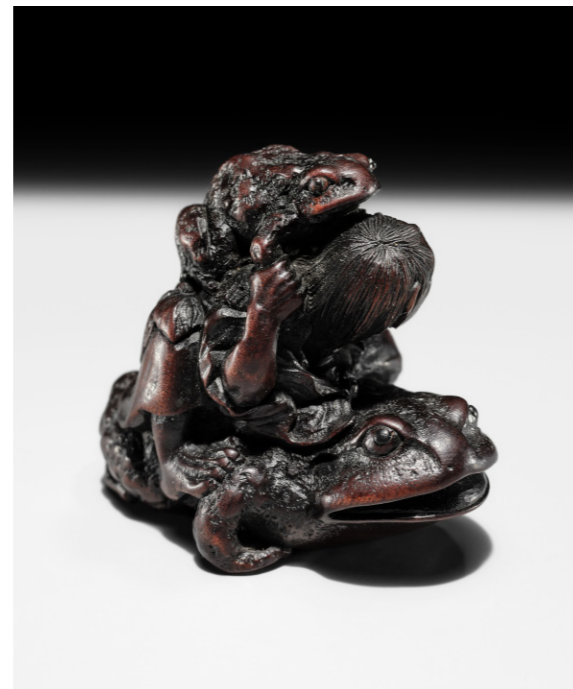
HEIGHT 3.8 cm, LENGTH 4.4 cm

Provenance: Christie's, Arts Asiatiques, 19 November 2003, Paris, lot 110 (sold for EUR 3,290 or approx. **EUR 4,700** adjusted for inflation at the time of writing). An important private collection in France, acquired from the above. Bonhams, Fine Netsuke from a French Private Collection, 4 November 2020, London, lot 27 (sold for GBP 3,563 or approx. **EUR 5,300** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing). A British private collection, acquired from the above.

Condition: Very good condition, with minor wear. One inlaid eye pupil is replaced.

This may be the netsuke described in Joly, Henri L. (1912) *The W. L. Behrens Collection*, Part 1, Netsuke, no. 685 (unillustrated).

Hokyudo Itsumin was a highly accomplished carver of netsuke and okimono who likely began his career in Nagoya, possibly as a pupil of Ittan, before later moving to Edo (Tokyo). The present example belongs to his earlier work, retaining the characteristics of the Nagoya style.



MUSEUM COMPARISON

For a closely related wood netsuke of Gama sennin with two toads by the same artist, signed Hokyudo Itsumin, 5.4 cm high, see *The Victoria & Albert Museum*, London, accession no. A.50-1952.



Estimate EUR 4,000
Starting price EUR 2,000





196
A RARE NAGOYA SCHOOL WOOD KARAKURI (TRICK) NETSUKE OF RAIJIN IN HIS THUNDER DRUM DEVOURING BELLY BUTTONS

Unsigned
 Japan, Nagoya, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved, this netsuke depicts Raijin, the Thunder God, in a dynamic pose as he is revealed inside a hinged drum. In a playful yet sinister moment, Raijin is shown eating belly buttons from a cloud-shaped dish, which he has gathered over time. This scene is drawn from Japanese folklore, where Raijin, a mischievous figure, was said to steal the navels of children during thunderstorms - an act that both terrified and fascinated those who heard the tale. The deity's face and openworked cloud structure are remarkably finely carved, typical of the Nagoya school. The top and bottom of the drum are decorated with a tomo-e motif, and the barrel is incised with mokume grain designs. The sides are encircled with metal bosses. Himotoshi through the drum hinge.

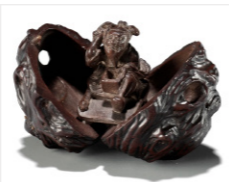
LENGTH 3.4 cm (closed), 6 cm (opened)

Condition: Excellent condition with minimal wear. Only one inlaid stud to the drum is lost.

In Japanese folklore, Raijin is famously feared for eating the navels (belly buttons) or abdomens of children during thunderstorms. Parents traditionally tell children to cover their belly buttons to prevent this.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related Nagoya school wood trick netsuke of Shoki and oni, by Masakazu, at Zacke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 3 November 2023, Vienna, lot 219 (sold for EUR 5,200).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



197
TADAYOSHI: A FINE WOOD NETSUKE OF A COWERING ONI DURING SETSUBUN

By Hogen Tadayoshi, signed Owari no kuni ju 尾張国住 Tadayoshi 忠義
 Japan, Nagoya, mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

A compact and superbly carved netsuke depicting an oni covering inside a rattan basket beneath a kasa (straw hat), attempting to shield himself from a barrage of roasted beans thrown during the oni-yarai ceremony on Setsubun. Several beans are carved atop the hat, which features a small opening through which another oni peers out. The worn kasa is rendered with intricate textural detail, while the crouching demon beneath displays finely carved musculature and a fiercely expressive face. Two himotoshi underneath and signed within two reserves in fine ukibori Owari no kuni ju, TADAYOSHI [Tadayoshi living in the Owari Province (modern Nagoya)].

LENGTH 4 cm

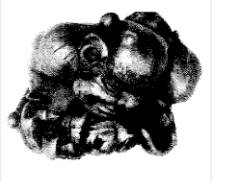
Condition: Repairs to the edge of the hat. Otherwise excellent condition with minor expected wear.

Tadayoshi (c.1820-1870, also Tadashige) was a pupil of Tadatashi of Nagoya. He earned the title of Hogen during his lifetime and is regarded by Neil Davey as the most celebrated of the Nagoya carvers, his work becoming infinitely more subtle and sophisticated than that of Tadatashi.

The Setsubun festival, celebrated annually on the day before the beginning of spring, marks a ritual symbolic renewal, during which roasted beans are scattered in the oni-yarai or mamemaki rite to drive out demons and disease-bringing spirits and welcome good fortune.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of an oni during Setsubun by the same artist, signed Hogen Tadayoshi, illustrated in Davey, Neil K. (1982) Netsuke: A comprehensive study based on the M.T. Hindson Collection, no. 583.



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



198
MASATOSHI: A FINE NAGOYA SCHOOL SEAL-TYPE WOOD NETSUKE OF A KIRIN

By Sawaki Masatoshi (1835-1884), signed Shukei 種兄 Masatoshi 正利 to 刀
 Japan, Nagoya, c. 1870

Finely carved, the kirin stands tall atop a circular pedestal, its body gently curved and covered with a thick, dense coat, the tufts of hair neatly incised. The head is turned and raised high, its mouth open in a bray, with whiskers framing its snarling face and a curved horn carved between the two ears. The tail curls upward toward the body, sweeping in an elegant arc. The seal face remains uncut. Natural himotoshi and signed along the curvature of the base Shukei, MASATOSHI [carved by Masatoshi, respected elder brother].

HEIGHT 5 cm

Provenance: Ex-collection Raymond and Frances Bushell. Sotheby's, Netsuke from the Collection of Raymond and Frances Bushell, 21 March 2000, New York, lot 133 (illustrated, part-lot). An American private collection, acquired from the above.

Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear. An old age crack, now invisible, has been filled on the face.

The inscription 種兄 (respected elder brother) may be interpreted as a nod to the carver's younger brother Masakazu of Nagoya, who also carved similar netsuke depicting kirin.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

For a closely related wood netsuke of a reclining kirin by the same artist, signed Masatoshi, see Sydney L. Moss Ltd. (1993) *Zodiac Beasts and Distant Cousins*, no. 56.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related Nagoya school wood netsuke of a kirin, by Masayuki, 4.5 cm wide, at Bonhams, *Fine Japanese Art*, 12 November 2008, London, lot 375 (sold for GBP 2,880 or approx. **EUR 5,400** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



199
KARAKU: A RARE AND POWERFUL WOOD SEAL-TYPE NETSUKE OF A KIRIN

By Karaku, signed Tensai 天祭 Karaku 可乐 sei 製
 Japan, late 18th to early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Boldly carved, standing foursquare atop a tall rectangular pedestal with rounded corners. The body is intricately detailed, featuring an articulated spine that terminates in a scrolling tail with curled locks. The lowered head is adorned with a similarly rendered, lush mane and trailing whiskers, as well as two horns. Natural himotoshi are present, and two additional cord holes are pierced through the uncut seal face, which is inscribed on the sides Tensai, KARAKU sei [worshipping heaven, made by Karaku].

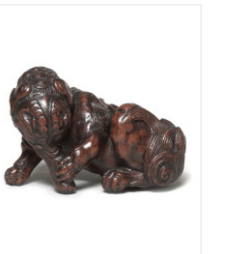
HEIGHT 4.6 cm

Provenance: Sotheby's, Good Netsuke Inro and Lacquer & Japanese Ceramics, 27 February 1980, London, lot 106 (described as a baku). A private collection, acquired from the above.

Condition: Excellent condition with minor wear.

AUCTION COMPARISON

The carving of the head is reminiscent of a famous wood netsuke of a baku, 6.5 cm wide, at Bonhams, *The Julius & Arlette Katchen Collection of Fine Netsuke Part I*, 8 November 2016, London, lot 187 (sold for GBP 15,000 or approx. **EUR 24,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 5,000
 Starting price EUR 2,400



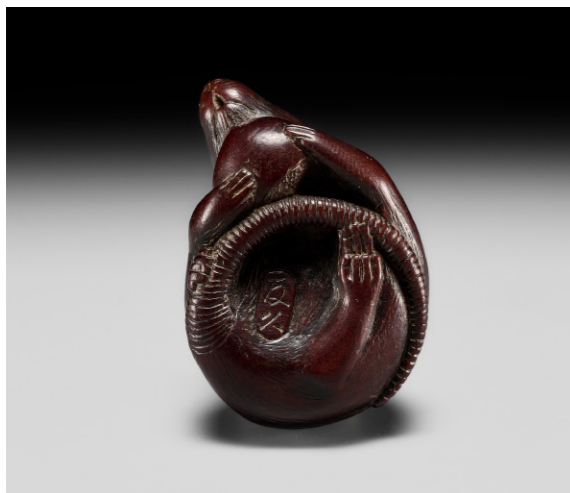


200
TOMOHISA: A FINE NAGOYA SCHOOL WOOD NETSUKE OF A RAT EATING A CHESTNUT

By Tomohisa, signed Tomohisa 友久
 Japan, Gifu/Nagoya, mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved and beautifully stained to depict a pudgy rat cradling a small chestnut in its front paws. Naturalistically rendered, the back paw is holding the base of its tail which curls beneath the relaxed creature. Its cupped ears are laid back, its eyes inlaid in dark horn. Natural himotoshi through the tail and signed within an oval reserve TOMOHISA.

LENGTH 4.2 cm



Provenance: Ex-collection Frank Lapisch, acquired in November 1992. **Frank Lapisch** (1934-2002) was a German entrepreneur and dedicated netsuke collector who first traveled to Japan in 1960 as a German judo champion. He later founded the Tokyo-based electronics firm Alltec in 1972 while deepening his engagement with Japanese art and craftsmanship. From the late 1970s onward, he pursued the study and acquisition of netsuke with increasing discernment, carefully documenting purchases made at auction houses such as Lempertz and Klefisch. He showed a particular preference for early 'ur-netsuke,' prized for their expressive carving and richly developed, glossy wear patina.

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and few tiny nicks here and there.

Tomohisa of Gifu/Nagoya, active in the early to mid-19th century, was a rarely encountered pupil within the circle of Kano Tomokazu and belongs to the important Gifu school. Tomohisa adopted Tomokazu's refined naturalism and compact compositional balance, producing netsuke of closely comparable quality. His oeuvre includes finely carved representations of rats, oxen, and other zodiac animals. Though far less frequently encountered than Tomokazu himself, Tomohisa's works demonstrate a high level of technical accomplishment and artistic fidelity to Kano Tomokazu, marking him as a significant yet elusive figure within this regional lineage.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of a rat with a chestnut, by Tomokazu, dated to the early 19th century, 4.4 cm long, at Zacke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 3 May 2024, Vienna, lot 112 (sold for **EUR 4,420**).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



201
KANO TOMOKAZU: A FINE WOOD NETSUKE OF A TORTOISE WITH TWO YOUNG

By Kano Tomokazu (circa 1765-1840), signed Tomokazu 友一
 Japan, Gifu/Nagoya, first half of the 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

This superbly carved netsuke depicts an adult tortoise with two young clambering on top of her shell and each other. The carapaces are intricately grooved, with a remarkable level of detail that captures the natural texture of the shell, finely incised and polished to enhance the movement of light across the surface. The limbs are meticulously stippled and textured, subtly reflecting the movement of the animals, as they interact with one another. The adult turtle has almost entirely retreated into her shell, while her young strive to climb over each other, vying for the prime spot at the top where the sun is strongest. Large, asymmetrical himotoshi are pierced through the underside. Signed within the typical oval reserve TOMOKAZU.

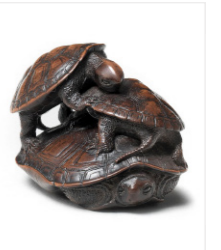
LENGTH 3.7 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only minor wear.

Kano Tomokazu (c. 1765-1840) was one of the earliest and most respected netsuke carvers from Gifu, renowned for his meticulous craftsmanship in wood, particularly tsuge wood, which he skillfully treated with various stains to enhance its natural grain. Starting at the age of 17, Tomokazu began working for the Shibata family, where he initially faced his master's disapproval but secretly practiced at night, eventually honing his skill to a level of remarkable proficiency. After gaining recognition in Kyoto for his intricate netsuke carvings, he returned to Gifu, where he lived a life of seclusion near Kinkazan Mountain, dedicating himself fully to his craft.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a turtle with two young by the same artist, signed Tomokazu, 3.4 cm long, at Bonhams, Fine Netsuke from a French Private Collection, 4 November 2020, London, lot 121 (sold for GBP 5,312 or approx. **EUR 7,700** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000





202
**TADAYUKI: A FINE WOOD NETSUKE
 OF A COCKEREL AND HEN**

By Tadayuki, signed Tadayuki 忠之 nanajuni 七十二
 Japan, Nagoya, first half of the 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved as a reclining rooster and hen, the two birds nestled closely together as if warming one another. The cockerel is rendered with remarkable detail, its plumage finely incised and the comb delicately stippled, with gracefully curving, majestic tail feathers. The hen, slightly smaller, rests beside it with her head turned toward the cock, the two birds forming a tight circular arrangement with their heads directed toward one another, suggestive of an intimate moment of courtship or repose. On the underside the feet are carefully rendered, the rooster's claws enclosing one of the two small himotoshi. Signed TADAYUKI nanajuni [Tadayuki at the age of seventy-two].

LENGTH 3.6 cm

Provenance: From an old French private collection, old inventory number '159' lacquered underneath.

Condition: Good condition with minor wear, a small crack to the underside extending from one of the himotoshi.

MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of a cockerel by Tadatoshi, 4.5 cm long, in the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, accession number 47.509.



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



203
**A FINE WOOD NETSUKE OF A COCKEREL
 ON A WAR DRUM, ATTRIBUTED TO MASATAMI**

Attributed to Masatami, unsigned
 Japan, Nagoya, mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved as a rooster seated upon a war drum, its wings, plumage, and tail carefully incised, with the comb and wattle delicately stippled. The drum is detailed with rows of studs along the sides and finely incised on the underside with a dragon amid scrolling clouds. Two asymmetrical himotoshi pass through the base.

LENGTH 3.8 cm

Condition: Good condition with minor wear and light traces of use. An old, smoothed chip to the wing.

The motif of a rooster perched on a taiko drum symbolizes peace under a benevolent ruler. The design derives from an ancient Chinese tradition in which drums were placed at city gates to warn of approaching enemies. During periods of peace they remained unused, moss-covered and silent, allowing birds to roost undisturbed upon them.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related netsuke by Masatami depicting a cockerel and hen on a war drum, also with studs to the sides and a dragon design to the underside, at Bonhams, The Julius and Arlette Katchen Collection of Fine Netsuke Part I, 8 November 2016, London, lot 107 (sold for GBP 3,500 or approx. **EUR 5,600** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



204
**TOMOKAZU: A SUPERB WOOD NETSUKE
 OF A COCKEREL ON A DRUM**

By Kano Tomokazu (c. 1765-1840), signed Tomokazu 友一
 Japan, Gifu/Nagoya, first half of the 19th century, Edo period
 (1615-1868)

The rooster is finely carved from pale wood, with carefully incised wings, plumage, and tail, and a stippled comb and wattle. It is seated upon a war drum, tucking its beak into its wing in repose. The eyes are double inlaid in pale and dark horn. The drum is masterfully rendered, with small studs along the sides and a finely carved mokume band in low relief, enhanced by stippling. Asymmetrical himotoshi are pierced through the underside, with the signature TOMOKAZU in an oval reserve.



HEIGHT 3.4 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.

Kano Tomokazu (c. 1765-1840) was one of the earliest and most respected netsuke carvers from Gifu, renowned for his meticulous craftsmanship in wood, particularly tsuge wood, which he skillfully treated with various stains to enhance its natural grain. Starting at the age of 17, Tomokazu began working for the Shibata family, where he initially faced his master's disapproval but secretly practiced at night, eventually honing his skill to a level of remarkable proficiency. After gaining recognition in Kyoto for his intricate netsuke carvings, he returned to Gifu, where he lived a life of seclusion near Kinkazan Mountain, dedicating himself fully to his craft.

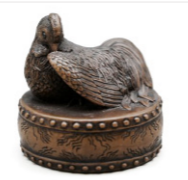
LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a cock on a drum by the same artist, signed Tomokazu, illustrated in Hurtig, Bernard (1973) *Masterpieces of Netsuke Art: One Thousand Favorites of Leading Collectors*, p. 30, no. 46.



MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a cock on a drum by the same artist, signed Tomokazu, in the British Museum, registration number HG.571.



Estimate EUR 8,000
 Starting price EUR 4,000





205
**KANO TOMOKAZU: A SUPERB
WOOD NETSUKU OF A RECUMBENT GOAT**

By Kano Tomokazu, signed Tomokazu 友一
Japan, Gifu/Nagoya, first half of the 19th century, Edo period
(1615-1868)

Naturalistically carved and finely stained, the netsuke depicts a recumbent goat with its head turned back, the legs tucked closely beneath the body for compactness. The eyes are delicately double inlaid in pale translucent horn with dark pupils, giving a lifelike expression, and the fur and beard are meticulously incised. Natural himotoshi and signed to the underside within an oval reserve TOMOKAZU.

LENGTH 4.3 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear. One inlaid pupil is replaced.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a recumbent goat by the same artist, signed Tomokazu, illustrated in Hurtig, Bernard (1973) Masterpieces of Netsuke Art: One Thousand Favorites of Leading Collectors, p. 108, no. 412.

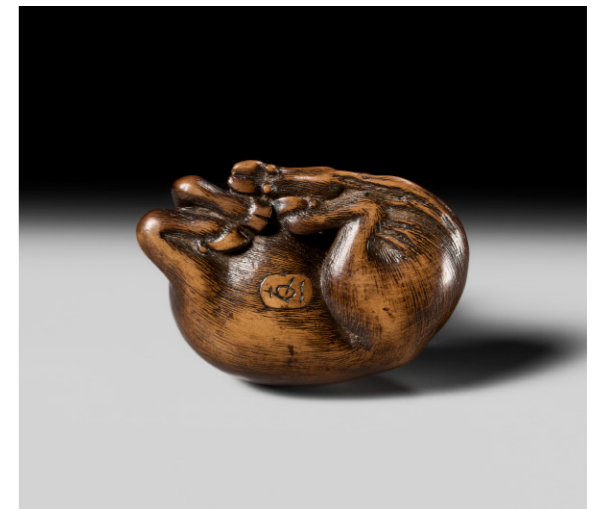


AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a recumbent goat by the same artist, signed Tomokazu, at Christie's, Selected Netsuke, Ojime and Inro, 25 October 1984, London, lot 59 (sold for GBP 2,916 or approx. **EUR 11,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 6,000
Starting price EUR 3,000





206

TOMOKAZU: A MASTERFUL WOOD NETSUKE OF A TIGER LICKING ITS PAW

By Kano Tomokazu (c. 1765-1840), signed Tomokazu 友一 Japan, Gifu/Nagoya, first half of the 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

This exquisite and masterfully carved netsuke depicts a seated tiger, hunched over with its head turned to the left, delicately extending its tongue to lick its raised forepaw. The fur is meticulously incised with fine lines, and the tiger's distinctive stripes are expertly sumi-stained, creating a vivid contrast against the smoothness of its body. The eyes are double-inlaid with pale, translucent horn and dark pupils, giving the figure an intense and lifelike expression. The protruding fangs are crafted from stained bone and the tiger's tail is elegantly curled beneath its body, forming the natural himotoshi. Signed TOMOKAZU within the typical oval reserve on one paw.

HEIGHT 3 cm, LENGTH 4 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only minimal wear. One inlaid eye is of a slightly different tone and is possibly replaced.

Kano Tomokazu (c. 1765-1840) was one of the earliest and most respected netsuke carvers from Gifu, renowned for his meticulous craftsmanship in wood, particularly tsuge wood, which he skillfully treated with various stains to enhance its natural grain. Starting at the age of 17, Tomokazu began working for the Shibata family, where he initially faced his master's disapproval but secretly practiced at night, eventually honing his skill to a level of remarkable proficiency. After gaining recognition in Kyoto for his intricate netsuke carvings, he returned to Gifu, where he lived a life of seclusion near Kinkazan Mountain, dedicating himself fully to his craft.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a tiger by the same artist, signed Tomokazu, dated to the mid-19th century, illustrated in Lazarnick, George (1981) *Netsuke & Inro Artists, and How to Read Their Signatures* (LNIA), Vol. 2, p. 1155.

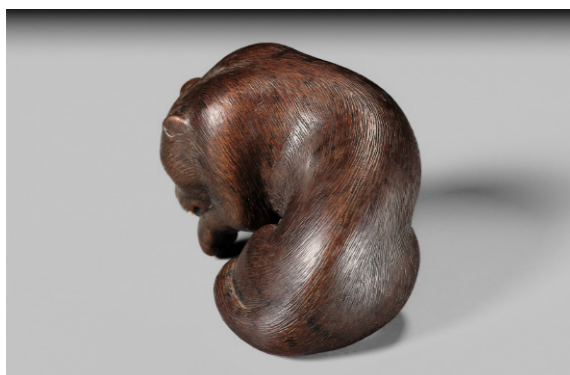


AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a tiger by the same artist, signed Tomokazu, 4.2 cm high, at Bonhams, *Myth, Mirth and Magic*, 14 June 2023, lot 68 (sold for **EUR 63,900**).



Estimate EUR 30,000
Starting price EUR 15,000



207

TOMOKAZU: A SUPERB WOOD NETSUKE OF A MONKEY AND YOUNG

By Kano Tomokazu (c. 1765-1840), signed Tomokazu 友一 Japan, Gifu/Nagoya, first half of the 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

This finely carved netsuke depicts a monkey and its young in a lively and assertive interaction, with the adult monkey sitting and eating from a branch of loquats, while the young one eagerly reaches across to grab a fruit. The young monkey's arm is slung around the parent's body, emphasizing its desire to share the meal. The adult's expressive face, with its slightly arched brows, conveys a focused intent as it enjoys the fruit, while the young monkey's eager face adds a sense of urgency. The wood is beautifully polished, with the eyes double inlaid in pale and dark horn, further enhancing their liveliness. Natural himotoshi are pierced through the legs, and the piece is signed TOMOKAZU underneath.

HEIGHT 3.2 cm, LENGTH 3.3 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only minor wear.

Kano Tomokazu (c. 1765-1840) was one of the earliest and most respected netsuke carvers from Gifu, renowned for his meticulous craftsmanship in wood, particularly tsuge wood, which he skillfully treated with various stains to enhance its natural grain. Starting at the age of 17, Tomokazu began working for the Shibata family, where he initially faced his master's disapproval but secretly practiced at night, eventually honing his skill to a level of remarkable proficiency. After gaining recognition in Kyoto for his intricate netsuke carvings, he returned to Gifu, where he lived a life of seclusion near Kinkazan Mountain, dedicating himself fully to his craft.

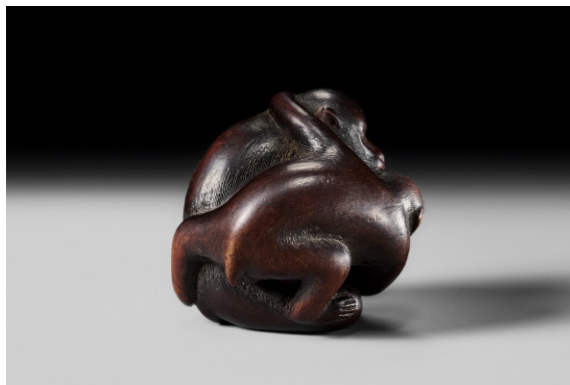


AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a monkey and child eating fruit by the same artist, signed Tomokazu, dated to the early 19th century, 3.5 cm long, at Bonhams, Fine Netsuke from the Adrienne Barbanson Collection, 13 May 2013, London, lot 16 (sold for GBP 11,250 or approx. **EUR 18,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 10,000
Starting price EUR 5,000





208
TOMOKAZU: A FINE WOOD NETSUKE OF A MONKEY EATING LOQUATS

By Kano Tomokazu (c. 1765-1840), signed Tomokazu 友一 Japan, Gifu/Nagoya, first half of the 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)



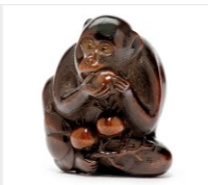
Finely and naturalistically carved, this netsuke depicts a monkey (saru) holding a leafy branch of ripe loquats, taking a bite from one with an expression of enjoyment. Its upper lip and brows are slightly arched, showcasing the artist's precise attention to detail. The wood is beautifully polished, enhancing the warm tones of the material, while the eyes, inlaid with dark horn, add further life to its expression. Natural himotoshi are present, and the piece is signed within the typical oval reserve TOMOKAZU.

HEIGHT 3.3 cm, LENGTH 3.4 cm

Condition: Very good condition with only minor typical wear.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related, yet less worn wood netsuke of a monkey eating fruit by the same artist, signed Tomokazu, dated to the 19th century, 3.8 cm high, at Bonhams, The James A. Rose Collection of Netsuke and Sagemono, 17 September 2013, New York, lot 2019 (sold for USD 13,750 or approx. **EUR 16,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 6,000
 Starting price EUR 3,000



209
A FINE WOOD NETSUKE OF A MONKEY AND FISH HEAD, ATTRIBUTED TO KANO TOMOKAZU

Attributed to Kano Tomokazu (c. 1765-1840), unsigned Japan, Gifu/Nagoya, first half of the 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved as a mischievous monkey perched atop a large fish head, the monkey's face animated with excitement as it lifts a finger to prod the lifeless fish's skin, while its other hand opens the fish's jaw. The expressive features of the monkey are captured in fine detail, with eyes double-inlaid in pale translucent horn and dark pupils. The fish's gaping mouth reveals sharp teeth, and its eyes are inlaid with lustrous dark horn. The well-toned wood retains a beautiful patina. Himotoshi are pierced through the 'natural' opening of the fish and beneath.

LENGTH 3.5 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and tiny nicks here and there.

Kano Tomokazu (c. 1765-1840) was one of the earliest and most respected netsuke carvers from Gifu, renowned for his meticulous craftsmanship in wood, particularly tsuge wood, which he skillfully treated with various stains to enhance its natural grain. Starting at the age of 17, Tomokazu began working for the Shibata family, where he initially faced his master's disapproval but secretly practiced at night, eventually honing his skill to a level of remarkable proficiency. After gaining recognition in Kyoto for his intricate netsuke carvings, he returned to Gifu, where he lived a life of seclusion near Kinkazan Mountain, dedicating himself fully to his craft.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a monkey teasing a tortoise, by Kano Tomokazu, 3.7 cm high, at Zacks, Asian Art Discoveries, 22 January 2026, Vienna, lot 379 (sold for **EUR 23,400**).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



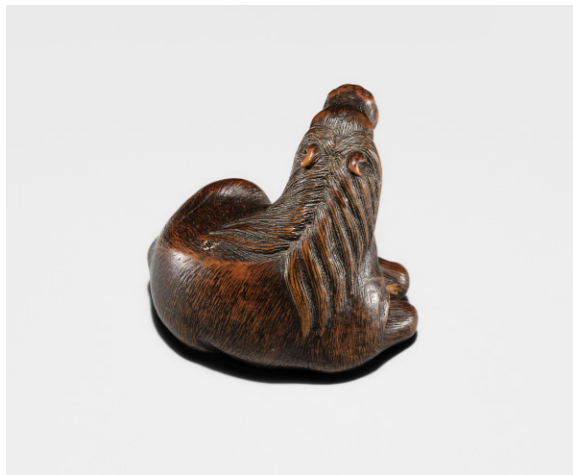
210
**MASAMICHI: A FINE YAMADA SCHOOL
 WOOD NETSUKE OF A RECLINING HORSE**

By Masamichi, signed Masamichi 正路
 Japan, Ise, Yamada Province, mid-19th century, Edo period
 (1615-1868)

Finely carved as a recumbent horse lying with its head raised and turned to the left, the legs neatly drawn beneath the body and the tail curling gracefully around the flank. The animal is rendered with a charming expression, the snout smoothly polished and the eyes carefully defined. The coat, mane, and tail are all delicately incised. Himotoshi underneath and signed within a polished oval reserve MASAMICHI, a rarely encountered pupil of the Masanao lineage.

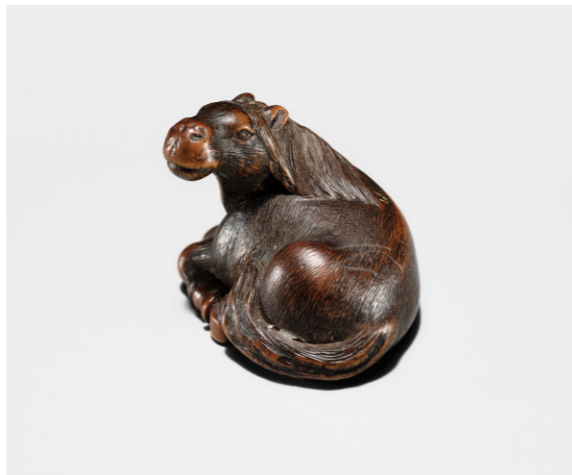
LENGTH 3.4 cm

Condition: A few light surface scratches and a crack to the body extending to the underside; otherwise good condition with minor typical wear.



AUCTION COMPARISON
 Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a reclining horse by the same artist, signed Masamichi, 3.2 cm long, at Sotheby's, 18 November 1999, London, lot 237 (mid-estimated at GBP 2,150 or approx. **EUR 5,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing). Also compare a closely related wood netsuke of a horse, by a member of the Masanao family, signed Masanao, 3.5 cm wide, at Christie's, Art of Japan, 5 December 2019, London, lot 17 (sold for GBP 2,375 or approx. **EUR 3,800** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).

Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



211
**MASATAMI: AN EXQUISITE NAGOYA SCHOOL
 WOOD NETSUKE OF A HARE**

By Masatami, signed Masatami 正民
 Japan, Nagoya, mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Delicately carved, the charming animal raises its head slightly and turns to the left, the ears folded back and the legs neatly drawn beneath the body. The fur is beautifully and precisely incised with fine, flowing lines that convey the softness of the coat. The eyes are inlaid in dark amber, lending the figure a vivid and lifelike expression. One hind leg forms the himotoshi. Signed underneath within a polished reserve MASATAMI.

LENGTH 3 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.

AUCTION COMPARISON
 Compare a closely related Nagoya school wood netsuke of a hare with amber eyes, by Masanobu, at Zacke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 8 November 2024, Vienna, lot 146 (sold for **EUR 4,680**).

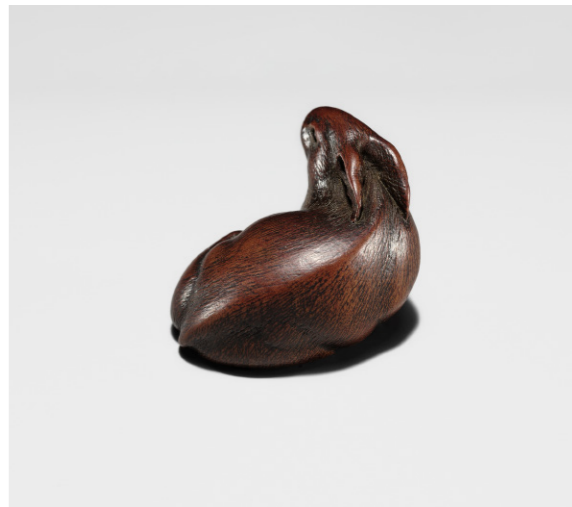
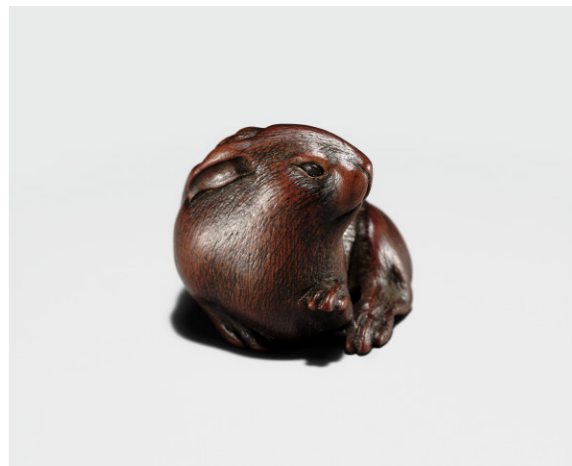


This elegant Nagoya model of a hare with amber eyes achieved international recognition through Edmund de Waal's celebrated book *The Hare with Amber Eyes*.

The famous hare with amber eyes, by Masatoshi



Estimate EUR 5,000
 Starting price EUR 2,400





**212
TADASHIGE: A FINE WOOD NETSUKE
OF A HIFUKI DARUMA**

By Hogen Tadashige, signed Hogen Tadashige 忠茂
Japan, Nagoya, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Carved in the form of a hifuki daruma, this netsuke features the figure of Daruma with large, staring eyes, a rounded nose, and softly swelling cheeks that emerge from the smooth surface of the wood. Subtle carved folds beneath the face suggest the drapery of Daruma's robe, with the surface beautifully polished. The reverse displays two asymmetrical himotoshi and a signature reserve signed in worn ukibori characters, TADASHIGE.

HEIGHT 4.8 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and light traces of use.

Tadashige (sometimes erroneously transcribed as Tadayoshi) was a pupil of Tadatoshi of Nagoya. He earned the title of Hogen during his lifetime and is regarded by Neil Davey as the most celebrated of the Nagoya carvers, his work becoming infinitely more subtle and sophisticated than that of Tadatoshi.

Traditionally, netsuke like this one were thought to represent tin click toys, a theory supported by the scalloped edge visible around the side. However, recent research has clarified that these are more likely hifuki daruma, a device used in traditional sunken hearth braziers to conserve wood and charcoal. Measuring about 5–8 cm in length, these devices were often shaped like Daruma. A small hole (in this case, the mouth) expelled air when placed near the fire. After being removed and plunged into cold water, the water intake would cool the device, and when placed back by the fire, thin steam would be released through the hole, damping the burning fuel and prolonging its life.



Hifuki daruma, a fascinating tool for the hibachi

LITERATURE COMPARISON
Compare a closely related wood netsuke depicting a hifuki daruma by the same artist, signed Tadashige, illustrated in International Netsuke Collectors Society (INCS), Vol. 10, no. 4, p. 26, fig. 6.



Estimate EUR 1,500
Starting price EUR 800



**213
A FINE NAGOYA SCHOOL
WOOD NETSUKE OF A TATEBINA DOLL
FOR HINAMATSURI (GIRLS' DOLL FESTIVAL)**

Unsigned
Japan, Nagoya, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved in a typical flattened form, the figure is entirely enveloped in a robe, with the hems carved in ukibori featuring wave and maple leaf motifs. The robe is secured at the waist with a plain belt. The short oval head is detailed with gold-lacquered eyes, a nose, and a red-lacquered mouth, framed by three thick strands of hair falling gracefully over the shoulders and back. Excellent himotoshi to the back and underside.

HEIGHT 6 cm

Condition: Good condition with old wear. One small nick to the hair and minor expected wear to the lacquered details.

Hinamatsuri, or Girls' Doll Festival, is celebrated annually on March 3rd in Japan to pray for the health, happiness, and prosperity of young girls. Families display traditional hina-ningyo dolls representing the Heian court, and partake in festive foods such as chirashizushi, hishimochi, and hinaarare, while enjoying the display of peach blossoms.

Tatebina (standing dolls) are the oldest form of Hinamatsuri dolls, predating the modern seated styles of the Edo period. Made from paper, wood, or ceramic, these simple yet elegant dolls represent the Emperor and Empress and were historically used for hina-nagashi - a ritual where paper dolls were floated down rivers to wash away misfortune and ensure a child's healthy growth.

LITERATURE COMPARISON
For a closely related wood netsuke of two tatebina dolls, also with ukibori detailing, unsigned, see Davey, Neil K. (1974) Netsuke: A Comprehensive Study Based on the M.T. Hindson Collection, p. 417, no. 1237.



Estimate EUR 1,500
Starting price EUR 800





214
**A FINE NAGOYA SCHOOL
 WOOD NETSUKE OF A BAMBOO SHOOT**

Unsigned
 Japan, Nagoya, first half of the 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Carved with remarkable precision, depicting a large bamboo shoot, with the body intricately detailed in fine ukibori work, and overlapping sheaths (leaf bases) visible at the top. The lower section of the shoot is sculpted with finely incised, raised nodes typical of bamboo. Generously hollowed himotoshi to the side.

LENGTH 7.7 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor surface wear and light typical traces of use.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related Nagoya school wood netsuke of a bamboo node, signed Tadakuni, also worked in fine ukibori, at Christie's, Fine Netsuke and Inro, 7 October 1977, Kansas City, lot 43.



Estimate EUR 1,200
 Starting price EUR 600



215
**A FINE NAGOYA SCHOOL
 WOOD NETSUKE OF SHIMEJI MUSHROOMS**

Unsigned
 Japan, Nagoya, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

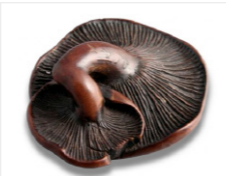
Naturalistically carved as a cluster of shimeji (beech mushrooms), the stems of the two largest forming the himotoshi, the radial gills of the caps and roots of the stems superbly incised and applied with dark stain, the cap of the largest finely rendered to appear partly worm-eaten.

LENGTH 4.5 cm

Provenance: Kunsthandel Klefisch, 9 April 2011, lot 312. Collection Prof. Dr. Henk C. Hoogsteden, Rotterdam, acquired from the above.
Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and light typical traces of use.

MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare also a related wood netsuke of two mushrooms by Tadatoshi, also with the stems forming the himotoshi, in the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, object number 2006.002.044.



Estimate EUR 1,200
 Starting price EUR 600



216
**JIKAN GANBUN: A BOXWOOD NETSUKE
 OF A MUSHROOM CLUSTER WITH INLAID ANTS**

By Jikan Ganbun, signed Jikan Ganbun 自侃 眼文
 Japan, Kyoto and Tokyo, 19th century

A pleasingly tactile wood netsuke depicting five fungi of varying sizes clustered together, their joined stalks forming a compact composition in well-toned boxwood. The surface is animated by three ants fashioned from different metals and lacquer, shown crawling across the top and sides. Natural himotoshi and signed on an inlaid wood tablet JIKAN GANBUN.

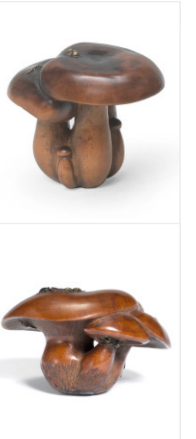
HEIGHT 3.2 cm

Condition: Good condition with minor wear, traces of use and few natural age cracks.

Jikan Ganbun (active 19th century) was an accomplished netsuke artist and metalworker active in the late Edo period, long recorded as working in Kyoto and Edo, though at one time also believed to have been active in Iwami Province. He was particularly celebrated for his extraordinarily meticulous and lifelike miniature ants, which he inlaid into his own carved netsuke and occasionally added to wood carvings by other artists.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a mushroom cluster with inlaid ants by the same artist, signed Jikan Ganbun, 3.4 cm high, at Bonhams, Samurai, Beauties, and Townsmen, 18 May 2023, London, lot 66 (sold for GBP 5,865 or approx. **EUR 7,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing). Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a mushroom cluster with inlaid ants by the same artist, signed Jikan Ganbun, 4.8 cm high, at Bonhams, The Edward Wrangham Collection of Japanese Art, 9 November 2010, London, lot 126 (sold for GBP 5,760 or approx. **EUR 10,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



217
SHIGEKAZU: A FINE WOOD NETSUKE OF A TIGER

By Shigekazu, signed Shigekazu 重一
 Japan, Tanba Province, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved as a seated male tiger (tora) with a beautifully worked fur coat, the tiger stripes rendered with polished areas against the neatly incised hairwork, the docile feline turning to its left, rather amusingly trying to appear like a powerful creature, its mouth closed with fangs visible at the corner, and the enigmatic, somber eyes inlaid with lustrously polished, brown horn. The underside shows the well-carved paws and the signature within an oval reserve SHIGEKAZU – a rarely encountered pupil of Shugasai Toyokazu who is widely regarded as the most accomplished pupil of Naito Toyomasa (1773-1856), founder of the Tanba school of carvers.

LENGTH 4.2 cm

Provenance: From an old private collection in Geneva, Switzerland.
Condition: Overall good condition with minor expected wear. Tiny repair to the edge of one ear and a section of the tail restored.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of a tiger by Toyokazu at Bonhams Cornette de Saint Cyr, Myth, Mirth and Magic – Important Netsuke and Sagemono from the Guy de Lasteyrie Collection, 14 June 2023, Paris, lot 67 (sold for **EUR 15,360**).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



218
TADATOSHI: A FINE NAGOYA SCHOOL WOOD NETSUKE OF A COILED DRAGON

By Tadatoshi, signed Tadatoshi 忠利
 Japan, Nagoya, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

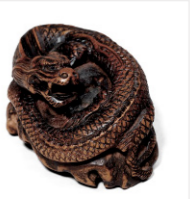
The dragon is elegantly coiled in tight loops, forming a compact and dynamic composition. It grips its tail with sharp claws, and the body is meticulously carved with finely incised scales. The eyes are inlaid and the mouth is open in a roar, with the tongue extended. Natural himotoshi through the winding body and signed TADATOSHI in fine ukibori characters within an oblong reserve.

LENGTH 3.8 cm

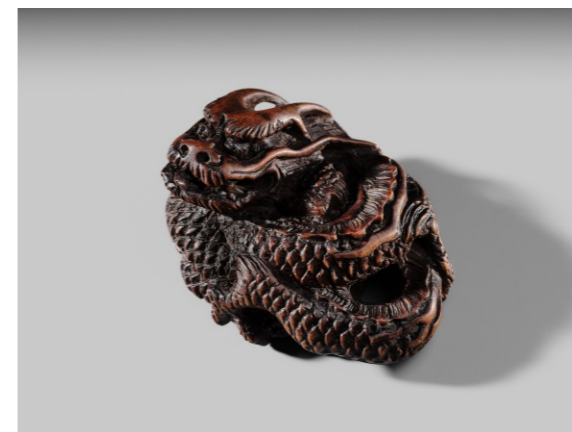
Condition: Good condition with minor wear. A small loss to a section of the right whisker.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely wood netsuke of a dragon on a rock by the same artist, signed Tadatoshi, 4.8 cm wide, at Lempertz, Asiatische Kunst, 25 June 2021, Cologne, lot 843 (sold for EUR 2,500 or approx. **EUR 3,000** adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500





219
**A FINE NAGOYA SCHOOL WOOD RYUSA MANJU
 NETSUKE OF A TIGER AND DRAGON**

Unsigned
 Japan, Nagoya, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Of circular form and finely carved in openwork, this netsuke depicts a powerful tiger prowling among dense bamboo leaves, its muscular body bent low as it advances, with the fur rendered in finely incised strokes. The tiger's face is intensely expressive, with furrowed brows and bared fangs, while its tail curves dynamically above its back. The reverse features a coiled dragon emerging from swirling clouds, its sinuous body winding through the openwork composition. The scales are carefully defined, and the whiskered head is animated. Natural himotoshi.

DIAMETER 3.7 cm

Provenance: Joshua McClelland Print Room, Melbourne, Australia, 2004. From the collection of Eva & Aubrey Sweet, Melbourne, Australia, acquired from the above. A copy of an invoice from Joshua McClelland Print Room, addressed to A. Sweet, dated 7 August 2004, accompanies this lot. **Aubrey Sweet** devoted over six decades to the formation of a distinguished private collection of Asian art, with particular strength in Chinese jade, Japanese lacquer, and netsuke. Their collecting began in the 1950s and was refined through sustained travel, scholarship, and long associations with leading dealers, curators, and artists internationally.

Condition: Excellent condition with only very minor wear.

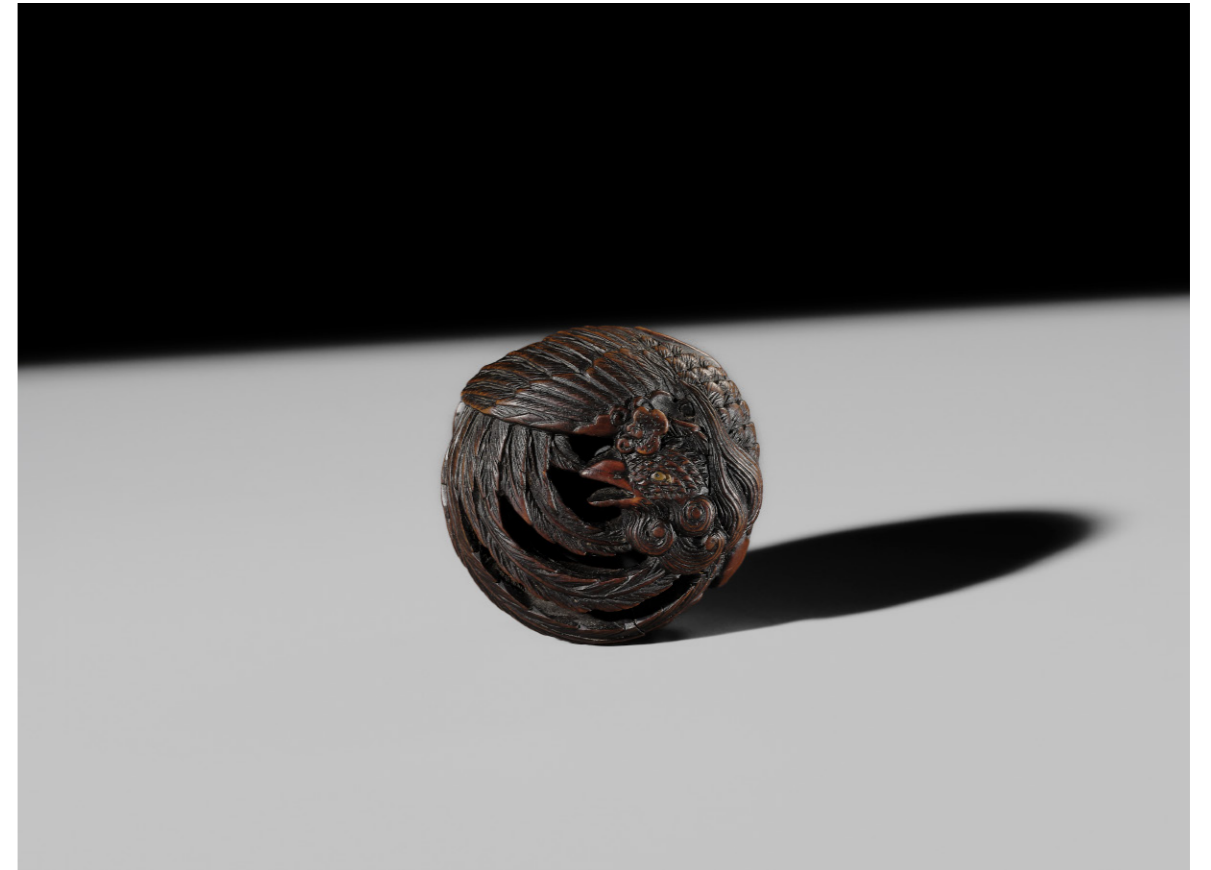
Tiger and dragon are Chinese cosmological symbols of the balancing forces in the world, yin (the feminine aspect) and yang (the masculine aspect). The tiger's roar is also said to generate wind, and the dragon clouds.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related earlier wood manju netsuke of a dragon and whirlwind, by Tametaka, dated to the 18th century, 3.5 cm in diameter, at Christie's, The Raymond and Frances Bushell Collection of Netsuke, 27 October 1987, London, lot 307 (sold for GBP 1,760 or approx. **EUR 6,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



220
**TOYOKAZU: A VERY FINE WOOD RYUSA MANJU
 NETSUKE DEPICTING KIRI NO HO-O**

By Shugasai Toyokazu, signed Toyokazu 豊一
 Japan, Sasayama, Tanba province, mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Exquisitely carved in the round, this ryusa manju netsuke depicts a ho-o bird, its beak open and tail feathers extended in a dramatic, openwork display, engulfed by a large paulownia (kiri) leaf at the back. The details of the plumage are meticulously engraved and the majestic bird's eye is inlaid in pale, translucent horn. Central himotoshi to the back and signed in an oval reserve TOYOKAZU.

DIAMETER 3.6 cm

Condition: A small feather section is re-attached with an associated crack. Otherwise excellent condition with minor expected wear.

Shugasai Toyokazu is widely regarded as the most accomplished pupil of Naito Toyomasa (1773-1856).

Both the ho-o bird and the paulownia (kiri) tree are imperial symbols of Japan. According to legend, the ho-o, a bird similar to the phoenix that represents the eternal rebirth of the soul, only settles on the kiri tree. In the hope of attracting this auspicious bird that blesses people with wisdom, health and happiness, the trees are planted in courtyards and gardens.

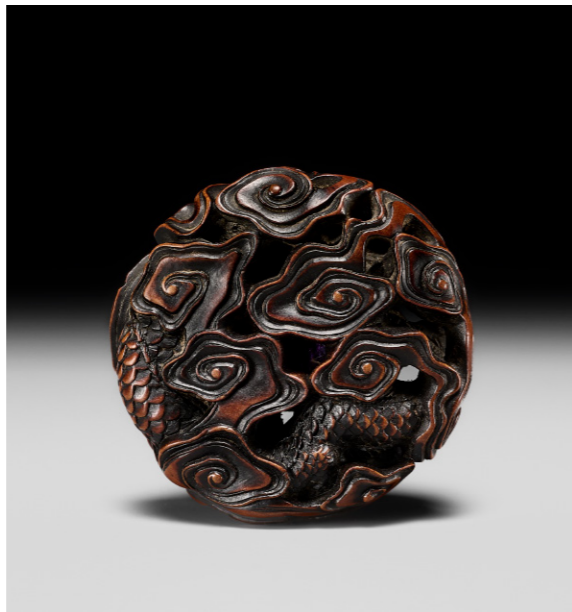
AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke by the same artist, signed Toyokazu, 4.5 cm in diameter, at Bonhams, The Julius & Arlette Katchen Collection of Fine Netsuke Part I, 8 November 2016, London, lot 192 (sold for GBP 3,500 or approx. **EUR 5,600** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000





221
TOYOMASA: A SUPERB WOOD RYUSA MANJU NETSUKE OF A DRAGON AMONG SWIRLING CLOUDS

By Naito Toyomasa (1773-1857), signed Toyomasa 豊昌
Japan, Sasayama, Tanba Province, first half of the 19th century,
Edo period (1615-1868)

Exquisitely carved as a tightly wound dragon among swirling clouds, it's sinuous body with crisply carved scales, flaming whiskers and a bifurcated horn, all forming a dramatic, dynamic, and compact composition. The visible eye is inlaid in pale, translucent horn. Natural himotoshi and signed near the bottom to the inside TOYOMASA.

LENGTH 4.1 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and light traces of use and a tiny chip to the edge of the dragon's horn.

MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood ryusa manju netsuke of a dragon, by Naito Toyomasa, dated to the first half of the 19th century, 4.4 cm wide, in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, object number M.87.263.102.



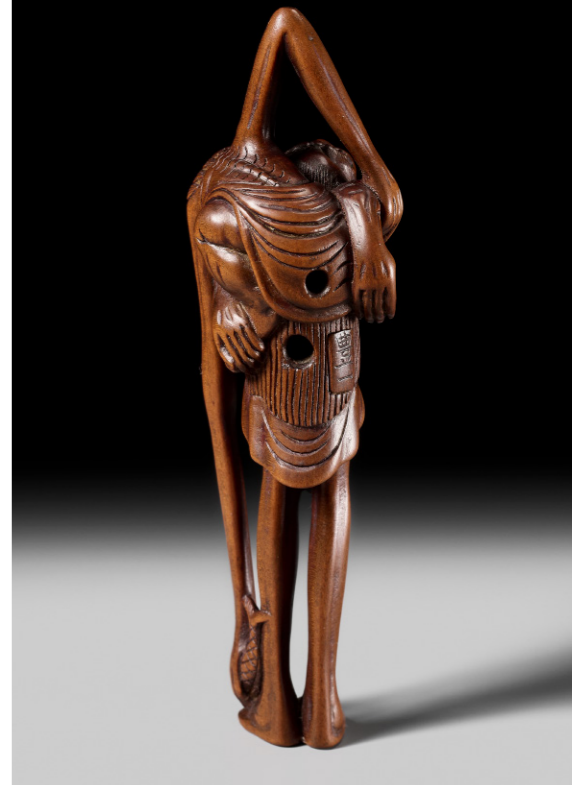
AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood manju netsuke of a dragon by the same artist, signed Toyomasa nanaju-sai, 4.1 cm wide, at Bonhams, Myth, Mirth and Magic, 14 June 2023, Paris, lot 53 (sold for **EUR 25,600**). Compare another closely related netsuke of a dragon by the same artist, signed Toyomasa, 4.1 cm wide, at Zacke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 9 May 2025, Vienna, lot 213 (sold for **EUR 20,800**).



Estimate EUR 8,000
Starting price EUR 4,000





222
**TOYOKAZU: A LARGE AND SUPERB
 WOOD NETSUKE OF ASHINAGA AND TENAGA**

By Shugasai Toyokazu, signed Toyokazu 豊一
 Japan, Sasayama, Tanba province, mid-19th century, Edo period
 (1615-1868)

Humorously carved as the legendary symbiotic fishermen Ashinaga and Tenaga working in tandem to catch a fish, the composition captures the dynamic imbalance between the two figures. The long-legged Ashinaga strains to support Tenaga on his back with his short arms, while Tenaga extends his elongated limbs toward the elusive catch. Their animated expressions - wide-mouthed, exuberant, and faintly strained - heighten the comic tension of the scene. The pupils are inlaid in reddish horn. Pleasingly large himotoshi are pierced through the straw skirt at the reverse beside the boldly incised signature within a rectangular reserve TOYOKAZU.

HEIGHT 11.5 cm

Provenance: Sotheby's, 29 October 1995, Melbourne, lot 597B (sold for AUD 3,450 or approx. **EUR 4,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing). From the collection of Eva & Aubrey Sweet, Melbourne, Australia, acquired from the above. A copy of an invoice, addressed to A. Sweet, dated 31 October 1995, and confirming the artist and dating above, accompanies this lot. **Eva and Aubrey Sweet** devoted over six decades to the formation of a distinguished private collection of Asian art, with particular strength in Chinese jade, Japanese lacquer, and netsuke. Their collecting began in the 1950s and was refined through sustained travel, scholarship, and long associations with leading dealers, curators, and artists internationally. Aubrey, a Melbourne physician who also studied acupuncture in Beijing, and Eva developed a discerning connoisseurship that balanced intuitive appreciation with systematic study, supported by an extensive reference library and active participation in scholarly circles. They acquired works of historic importance as well as contemporary pieces by artists such

as Susan Wraight and Unryuan (Kitamura Tatsuo), demonstrating a commitment both to tradition and to the continuity of craft. The collection, housed in their Melbourne residence and affectionately referred to by the family as "the Museum," stands as a testament to their lifelong dedication to the aesthetic and cultural values of Asian art.

Condition: Excellent condition with only very minor wear.

Shugasai Toyokazu is widely regarded as the most accomplished pupil of Naito Toyomasa (1773-1856), inheriting both his technical refinement and lively narrative sensibility. Toyokazu is best known for his depictions of monkeys, often shown in combination with peaches or chestnuts. The present subjects represents an exceptionally rare subject within his oeuvre and appears to be unrecorded for Toyokazu, though Fuld's Netsuke and Ojime Index records one carved by Toyomasa I and another carved by Toyomasa II.

**AUCTION
 COMPARISON**

Compare a related wood netsuke of Gama sennin by Toyokazu, noting the closely comparable facial type - particularly the agape mouth revealing teeth and the distinctive treatment of the nose at



Zacke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 16 April 2021, Vienna, lot 119 (sold for **EUR 20,750**). Compare a related wood netsuke of Ashinaga and Tenaga, dated to the early 19th century, 10.5 cm high, at Bonhams, The Harriet Szechenyi Sale of Japanese Art, 8 November 2011, London, lot 91 (sold for GBP 8,750 or approx. **EUR 15,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).

Estimate EUR 6,000
 Starting price EUR 3,000



223
MASAKATA: A FINE AND RARE WOOD NETSUKE OF HADESU SLAYING THE TIGER

By Masakata, signed Masakata 正方
 Japan, Nagoya, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Clad in full armor and half kneeling, Hadesu slips a knife into the tiger's neck, his face with a grim expression, the tiger snarling with clenched teeth and biting into the warrior's armor. The details are finely carved, the tiger's fur coat is precisely rendered, and the eyes of the fierce feline are inlaid in dark horn. The underside shows the superbly carved paws and the signature within a rectangular reserve MASAKATA between the two himotoshi.

LENGTH 4.1 cm

Provenance: Hauswedell, Hamburg, 4 June 1962, lot 681. Then old Viennese private collection.

Condition: Very good condition, minor surface wear consistent with age and handling.

The artist was a pupil of Sato Masayoshi, active in Nagoya. Masataka's work is relatively scarce with only few examples recorded in literature. Furthermore, while Sato Masayoshi and his followers carved many tigers, this is the only recorded example of Hadesu slaying a tiger from this school.

Hadesu (Hasuhi) was a Japanese envoy in Korea in 545 AD. According to legend, he avenged his child's death by seizing the tiger's tongue with his left hand and stabbing the tiger with his right hand.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of a tiger family, signed Masayoshi and dated to the 19th century, at Bonhams, The Julius and Arlette Katchen Collection of Fine Netsuke Part III, 6 November 2018, London, lot 52 (sold for GBP 2,750 or approx **EUR 4,200** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



224
MINKO: A WOOD NETSUKE OF INO HAYATA SLAYING THE NUE

By Tanaka Juntoku Minko (1735-1816), signed Minko 岷江
 Japan, Tsu, late 18th-early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved in a compact and dynamic composition, this netsuke captures the legendary hero Ino Hayata as he sits astride the struggling nue, with his knife poised to strike the fatal blow. The figure's face is intensely focused, his brow furrowed with determination. In a pose full of motion, his muscular arms grip the creature tightly as it writhes beneath him. The mythical creature's curved snake tail is visible on his back, and his robe is intricately carved with delicate details. Himotoshi underneath and signed MINKO.

HEIGHT 3.9 cm

Condition: Repair to the sword, otherwise very good condition with only minor wear.

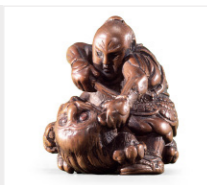
The scene depicted draws inspiration from the Tale of the Heike (Heike monogatari), specifically from book 4, section 15, titled "The Nightbird." The narrative recounts the legendary battle between Ino Hayata and the nue. The nue had been terrorizing Emperor Konoe, filling his nights with nightmarish visions. When Minamoto Yorimasa, assisted by Hayata, heard strange noises, he shot an arrow into the mysterious black cloud hovering above the Emperor's palace, striking the nue. Hayata then followed up by slaying the creature, bringing an end to the Emperor's torment.



Tanaka Juntoku Minko (1735-1816) was one of the few names mentioned in the Soken Kisho of 1781, the first publication mentioning netsuke. He was famous during his lifetime and is widely regarded as one of the greatest netsuke carvers. At first, he was a carver of Buddhist shrines, and only carved netsuke later, setting up a prolific school in Tsu.

MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of Ino Hayata slaying the nue by the same artist, signed Minko, 4 cm high, in the Los Angeles Country Museum of Art, object number M.59.35.8.



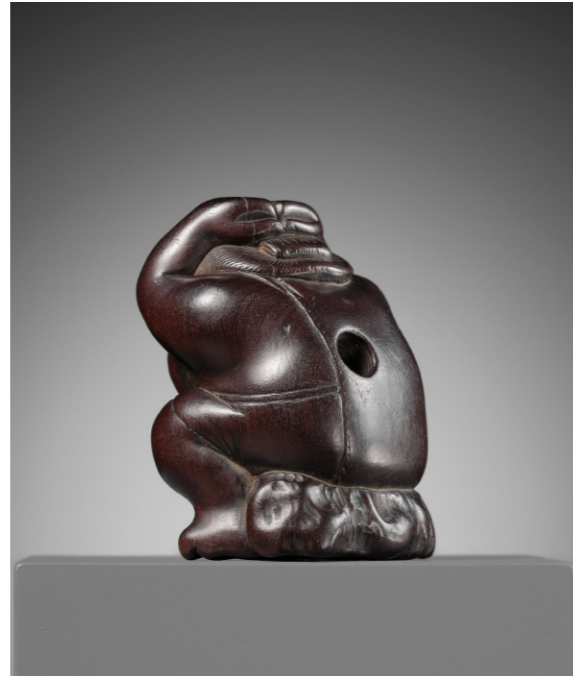
AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of Ino Hayata slaying the nue by the same artist, signed Minko, 3.8 cm high, at Bonhams, Fine Japanese Art, 10 November 2016, London, lot 260 (sold for GBP 1,750 or approx. **EUR 2,800** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500





225
**MINKO: A SUPERB AND LARGE
 WOOD NETSUKE OF OKAME FIXING HER HAIR**

By Tanaka Juntoku Minko (1735-1816), signed Minko 珉江 Japan, Tsu, late 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Boldly carved in dark-reddish wood, the half-naked Shinto goddess of mirth carved squatting on a rock, the deity with her hands raised above her head as she fixes her comb. Okame is depicted in a rather unusual manner, almost ogre-like, yet still retaining her sensitive features, portrayed with typically large, puffed cheeks, a pronounced forehead, and neatly tied hair. Generously excavated himotoshi from the back through the base and signed underneath the rock MINKO. The wood bearing a fine dark patina. A deceptively simple carving, possessing remarkable power and imbued with irresistible character and charm.

HEIGHT 4.8 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear, including some light surface scratches.

Tanaka Juntoku Minko (1735-1816) was one of the few names mentioned in the Soken Kisho of 1781, the first publication mentioning netsuke. He was famous during his lifetime and is widely regarded as one of the greatest netsuke carvers.

Literature comparison: Minko rarely depicted Okame on her own, for the only other variant, see a closely related wood netsuke of Okame stretching, by Minko, 18th-19th century, 4.4 cm, see Harris, Victor (1987) *The Hull Grundy Collection in the British Museum*, p. 24, no. 11.

MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of Fukurokuju and Okame, by Minko, 19th century, 12 cm, in the Linden Museum, inventory number OA 18739.



Estimate EUR 6,000
 Starting price EUR 3,000





226
KOKEI: A SUPERB WOOD NETSUKE OF A CROUCHING TOAD

By Kokei, signed Kokei 虎溪 with a distinctively Minko-style kagikan Japan, Tsu, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Boldly carved and finely stained, depicting a crouching toad rendered with remarkable vitality. The textured skin is masterfully achieved through large, raised warts set against a minutely stippled ground, while the chest is further articulated with brilliantly carved ukibori pimples. The eyes are double-inlaid in pale and dark horn, creating an intense, glaring expression. The underside reveals finely carved webbed feet and the signature KOKEI accompanied by a kagikan executed in the style of Minko. The cord channel runs neatly between the right limbs.

HEIGHT 4.5 cm

Condition: Very good condition with light nibbling to edges and minor expected wear throughout.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

For two closely related wood netsuke of toads by Minko and Kokei, see Ducros, Alain (1987) *Netsuke & Sagemono* 2, pp. 86-87, nos. 155 & 156.



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000

The present netsuke is particularly close to the work of Minko, to the extent that one might almost expect a Minko signature rather than Kokei's. Moreover, Kokei rarely employed a kagikan, and the monogram found on the present piece (fig. 1) is strikingly similar to Minko's characteristic kagikan (fig. 2). This strongly suggests that the netsuke was carved during a period when Kokei was still working under the direct stylistic influence of Minko, likely early in his independent career, when he appears to have produced some of his finest work.



227
KOKEI: A FINE WOOD NETSUKE OF FIVE TOADS ON A ROCK

By Kokei, signed Kokei 虎溪 Japan, Kuwana, Ise province, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved from boxwood, this netsuke depicts five toads, four positioned in various poses atop a craggy rock, with the fifth nestled at the side, forming a dynamic and compact composition. Each toad is rendered with meticulous attention to its warty skin, while the rock base is deeply textured. The himotoshi are cleverly incorporated into the design and the signature is found within a polished area KOKEI.

LENGTH 3.8 cm, HEIGHT 2.8 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with minimal expected wear.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of seven toads on a rock by the same artist, signed Kokei, illustrated in Meinertzhagen, Frederick / Lazarnick, George (1986) *MCI, Part A*, p. 365.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of four frogs on a rock, signed Kokei, dated to the early 19th century, 2.8 cm high, at Christie's, The Raymond and Frances Bushell Collection of Netsuke, 23 April 1991, New York, lot 66 (sold for USD 3,300 or approx. **EUR 6,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



228
**MINSAI: A RARE WOOD NETSUKE
 OF A TOAD INSIDE A BUCKET**

By Minsai, signed Minsai 珉齋
 Japan, Tsu, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Expertly carved as a toad concealed within a wooden bucket, the amphibian crouches deep inside the hollow interior, with its rounded, warty body barely visible in the shadowed cavity. The bucket is skillfully rendered, with tapering sides and a bold wood-grain pattern, further embellished with small peg-like bosses suggesting iron rivets. A central bar inside forms the himotoshi, cleverly integrated within the hollow structure. The toad's skin is delicately textured with stippling. The netsuke is signed within a polished oval reserve MINSAI.

HEIGHT 2.8 cm

Provenance: From the collection of Teddy Hahn, Darmstadt. A copy of a collector's note from Teddy Hahn accompanies this lot. **Theodor "Teddy" Hahn** (1933-2012) was a well-known and respected collector of netsuke and other Asian works of art. After spending time in museums to study the early cultures of the world, finding particular interest in their sculptures, he began collecting. He remarked once, "I somehow knew it would have a profound influence on my life. How right I was. And how happy I have been."



**Gisela and
 Teddy Hahn**

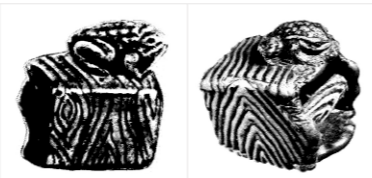
Condition: Excellent condition with only minor expected wear.

Minsai was a pupil of Tanaka Juntoko Minko (1735-1816), one of the few carvers mentioned in the Soken Kisho of 1781, the first publication to mention netsuke. Minko, a highly regarded figure during his lifetime, was known as one of the greatest netsuke carvers. Initially a carver of Buddhist shrines, Minko later turned to netsuke carving, setting up a prolific school in Tsu. Netsuke depicting a toad atop a bucket are known from both Minko and his pupil Minsai; however, **this inventive composition, where the toad is concealed inside the bucket, appears to be unrecorded, marking this piece as a unique variation on a well-established motif.**



**LITERATURE
 COMPARISON**

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a toad atop a bucket by the same artist, signed Minsai, illustrated in Lazarnick, George (1981) *Netsuke & Inro Artists, and How to Read Their Signatures* (LNIA), Vol. 1, p. 770. Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a toad atop a bucket by the artist's master, signed Minko, illustrated in Lazarnick, George (1981) *Netsuke & Inro Artists, and How to Read Their Signatures* (LNIA), Vol. 1, p. 758.



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



229
**MASANA0: A FINE WOOD NETSUKE
 OF A SNAKE PREYING ON A FROG, SANSUKUMI**

By a member of the Masanao family, signed Masanao 正直
 Japan, Yamada, Ise province, first half of the 19th century,
 Edo period (1615-1868)

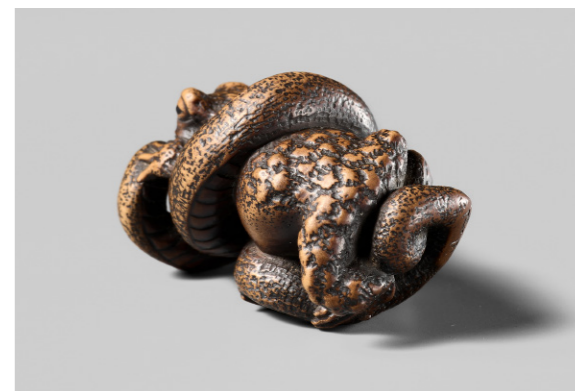
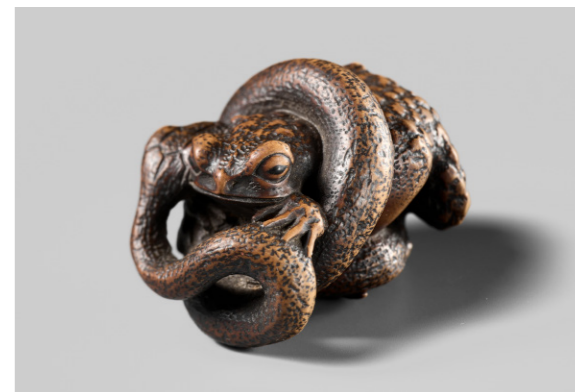
Finely carved as a snake and toad locked in mortal combat. Unfortunately for the toad, the snake seems to have the upper hand in the struggle. The slithering body encircles the amphibian's thorax, as the latter struggles to brace its feet against the tightening coils. The textures of the two animals' skins are achieved with a heightened sense of realism. The eyes inlaid in polished dark wood. The depiction is an allusion to the sansukumi motif, meaning 'mutual control'. The snake will consume the frog, however there is a catch - the frog has already eaten a poisonous snail, so too the snake must perish. Natural himotoshi and signed within a polished reserve MASANA0.

LENGTH 4.9 cm

Provenance: Alan Hartman, Hartman Trading Corp., 1951 (260H51A1), New York, USA. Ex-collection Cornelius V.S. Roosevelt (1915-1991), acquired from the above. Sotheby's, The Cornelius V.S. Roosevelt Collection of Netsuke, 2 June 1992, New York, lot 6. German private collection, purchased from Rosemary Bandini, London. Zacke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 8 November 2024, Vienna, lot 120 (sold for **EUR 3,640**). A private collection, acquired from the above.

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear.

Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000





230
HARUMITSU: A SUPERB WOOD NETSUKE OF A RECUMBENT OX

By Harumitsu (Shunko), signed Harumitsu 春光
 Japan, second half of the 19th century

A fine wood netsuke of a recumbent ox (ushi) with its limbs folded closely beneath the body for compactness. The hairwork is very finely incised and smoothly polished. The eyes are beautifully double-inlaid in pale and dark horn. The rope halter, attached to the ox's muzzle, is particularly well carved and extends beneath its gracefully curved horns. Asymmetrical himotoshi to the underside and signed within a polished oval reserve HARUMITSU.

LENGTH 5.1 cm

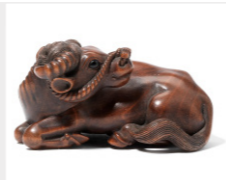
Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear. One inlaid eye is replaced.



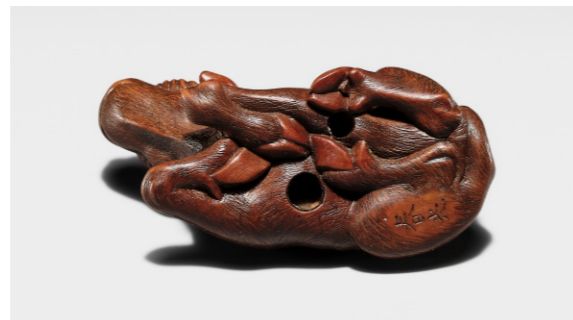
Relatively little is known about the artist Harumitsu (Shunko), though he is suspected to have been a pupil of the Masanao lineage of Yamada. At the same time, certain aspects of his carvings share characteristics with the Tanba and Tsu schools.

AUCTION COMPARISON

This superbly crafted ox shows more similarities to Tanba-school oxen than to those from the Masanao lineage, strengthening the hypothesis that Harumitsu may at some point have been influenced by the Tanba masters such as Toyomasa and Toyoyo. For a closely related model by Toyoyo, note the very similar treatment of the underside and the manner of the rope halter, see Bonhams, Fine Japanese Art, 6 November 2012, London, lot 146 (sold for GBP 21,250 or approx. **EUR 36,000** adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 6,000
 Starting price EUR 3,000



231
MASANAO: A FINE AND EARLY WOOD NETSUKE OF A RECUMBENT OX

By Masanao I, signed Masanao 正直
 Japan, Yamada, Ise Province, late 18th-early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Powerfully carved as a recumbent ox with its head lowered and tail swept to one side. The ribs and spine are subtly articulated, while the fur is rendered with finely executed, naturalistic incision work. The animal is carefully detailed with curved horns, funnel-shaped ears, and large eyes inlaid to corners. The underside is neatly carved with asymmetrical himotoshi and signed within a polished reserve MASANAO.

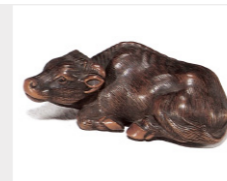
LENGTH 4.7 cm

Condition: Very good condition with typical minor wear.

This remarkably bold and powerful carving, showing wear in all the right places, is clearly an early work from the industrious Masanao lineage, most plausibly attributable to Masanao I.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of an ox by the same artist, signed Masanao, 5.6 cm wide, at Sotheby's, Fine Netsuke Inro and Lacquer from the Estate of Madelyn Hickmott, 8 February 1989, New York, lot 227 (sold for USD 3,575 or approx. **EUR 8,200** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 6,000
 Starting price EUR 3,000





232
MINKO: AN AMUSING WOOD NETSUKE OF A TANUKI DISGUISED AS A SAKE VENDOR

By Tanaka Juntoku Minko (1735-1816), signed Minko 岷江 Japan, Tsu, late 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

The mythical raccoon dog (tanuki) depicted with its scrotum enlarged to form a hat, the head turned to the left with eyes double-inlaid in bone and dark wood, creating a highly comical expression. One hand grasps a sake bottle while the other is raised to the ear in a beckoning gesture, as if enticing the viewer to approach. The hairwork is finely incised in sharp contrast to the superbly polished, grooved surfaces of the tanuki's unusual "headgear." Two himotoshi pierce the back, above the boldly incised signature MINKO.

HEIGHT 5.2 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and expected age cracks. Fine, naturally grown patina.

This netsuke depicts a tanuki, or Japanese badger, with its exaggerated scrotum. It is known for being a trickster but generally harmless and beloved. The size of the scrotum of the tanuki is described in Japanese 'as large as eight tatami mattresses' and the Japanese used this as a tremendous opportunity for amusement. See a related woodblock print depicting tanuki in daily pursuits with their enlarged scrotums, by Kawanabe Kyosai, 1864.

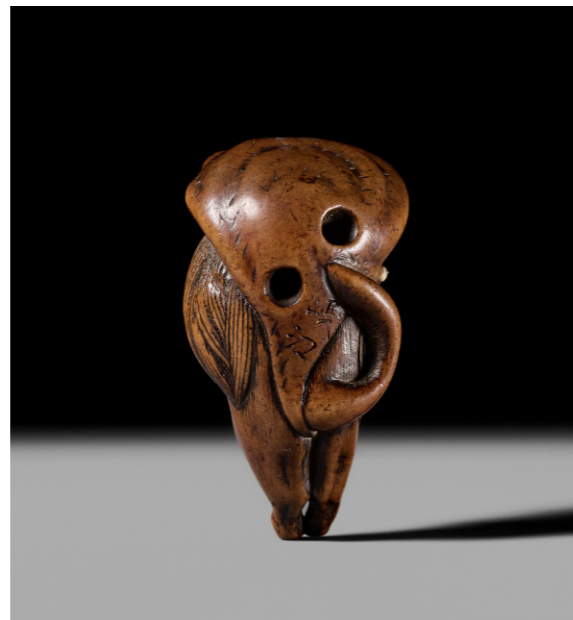


LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a tanuki in a similar pose, signed Gyokuseki, illustrated by Meinertzhagen, Frederick / Lazarnick, George (1986) MCI, Part A, p. 103.



Estimate EUR 6,000
 Starting price EUR 3,000



233
KOKEI: AN EBONY WOOD NETSUKE OF A RECUMBENT OX

By Kokei, signed Kokei 虎溪 Japan, Kuwana, Ise province, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

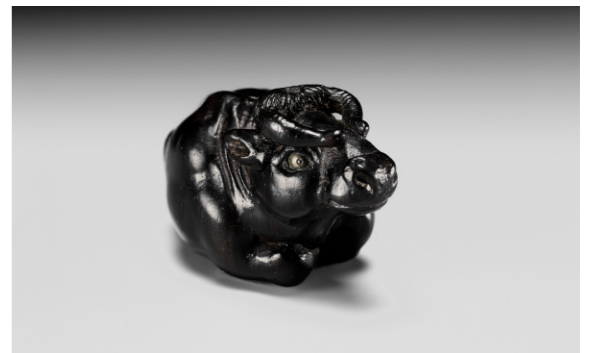
A compact and powerful study of a recumbent ox with a bulky body, its legs neatly tucked underneath and the tail drawn closely alongside. The eyes are inlaid in gilt brass with dark pupils, typical of Kokei's earlier works, where they closely resembled those of his master Tanaka Juntoku Minko. Natural himotoshi are formed through the legs. Signed underneath KOKEI.

LENGTH 4.5 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only minor wear.

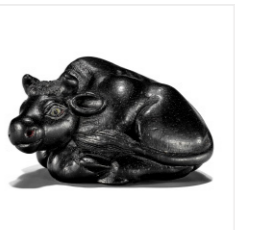
LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a recumbent ox by the same artist, signed Kokei, dated to the late 18th-early 19th century, length 4.75 cm, illustrated in Barry Davies Oriental Art (1994) The Netsuke Collection of W.G Bosshard Part 1, no. 43.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related ebony wood netsuke of a recumbent ox, by Tanaka Juntoku Minko, dated late 18th to early 19th century, length 3.6 cm, at Zackle, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 28 April 2023, Vienna, lot 138 (sold for EUR 4,290).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



234
HARUMITSU: A FINE WOOD NETSUKE OF A BOAR

By Harumitsu (Shunko), signed Harumitsu 春光
 Japan, Yamada, Ise Province, second half of the 19th century

Finely carved as a boar raising its head alertly. The eyes are double-inlaid in amber with dark pupils, the small tusks visible at the corners of the mouth, and the coat is rendered with finely incised and subtly stained hairwork. The robust animal is modeled with a lively sense of movement, the forehooves poised dynamically while the hind legs remain grounded, suggesting the moment before the boar rises to its feet. Natural himotoshi through the right hind leg. Signed within a polished reserve HARUMITSU.

LENGTH 4.5 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only very minor wear.

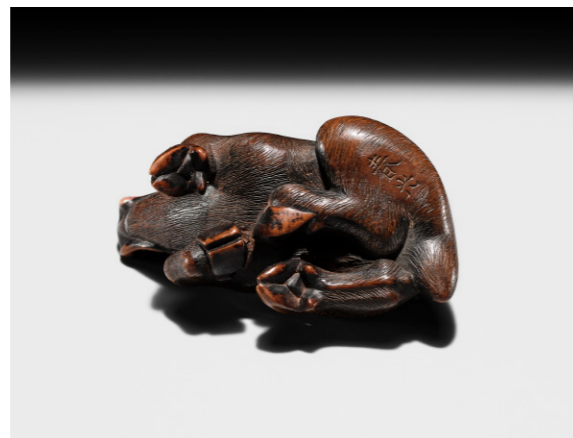
Relatively little is known about the artist Harumitsu (also called Shunko), though he is generally believed to have been a pupil within the Masanao lineage of Yamada in Ise Province. At the same time, certain features of his carving show affinities with the Tanba and Tsu schools.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a boar by the same artist, signed Harumitsu, 5.5 cm wide, at Christie's, Japanese and Korean Art, 21 September 2006, New York, lot 349 (sold for USD 4,200 or approx. **EUR 5,800** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



235
SHUZAN: A FINE AND RARE WOOD NETSUKE OF A RUNNING BOAR

By Shuzan, signed Shuzan 舟山
 Japan, Edo (Tokyo), mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved as a boar captured in full gallop, the animal charges forward with powerful momentum, its head raised and snout lifted dramatically. The mouth is open, revealing sharply carved tusks and a lively expression conveying ferocity. The body is compact yet muscular, the legs extended beneath it in mid-stride. The coat is meticulously rendered with countless finely incised strokes following the contours of the body, while the pupils are inlaid in dark horn. Himotoshi underneath and signed within a polished reserve SHUZAN.

LENGTH 5.1 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear and a tiny nick to the left ear.

The running boar relates to the famous episode of Nitta no Shiro, the legendary warrior who pursued and captured a ferocious wild boar in a dramatic hunt. While netsuke often depict the hero riding the animal, the present carving may represent one of the many boars scattering in flight during the chase.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

For a related wood netsuke of Nitta no Shiro on a running boar, by Shuraku, 4.8 cm long, see Zacke, *Kunst aus Südostasien, China, Japan, Indien & Tibet - Ausstellung 2008*, no.177.



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



236
**KYOKUSEN: A LARGE EDO SCHOOL
 WOOD NETSUKE OF A MAN IN ANGUISH**

By Kyokusen, signed Kyokusen 旭扇
 Japan, Edo (Tokyo), late 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)



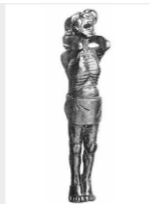
This striking netsuke depicts a man standing on his toes in a dynamic, anguished pose, with his arms raised dramatically to his head, as if shouting in distress. He is clad only in a fundoshi (loincloth), with the finely incised details of his lean body, including his chest and ribs, accentuating the tension of his expression. His face conveys intense emotion, with one wide-open eye and a gaping mouth, exposing his teeth and tongue in a loud, silent scream. Large himotoshi to the back and signed KYOKUSEN.

HEIGHT 9.5 cm

Condition: Very good condition with old wear. Beautiful patina.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke, similarly carved, by Yukoku, illustrated in Joly, Henri L. (1912) *The W. L. Behrens Collection*, Part 1, Netsuke, no 3778 and illustrated on pl. LIII.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of a man tying his loincloth, by Awataguchi, 9.8 cm high, at Bonhams, *Netsuke from the Collection of Joseph and Elena Kurstin*, 16 December 2022, New York, lot 3 (sold for USD 12,750 or approx. **EUR 12,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



237
**AN EARLY EDO SCHOOL WOOD
 NETSUKE OF A DRUMMING ISLANDER**

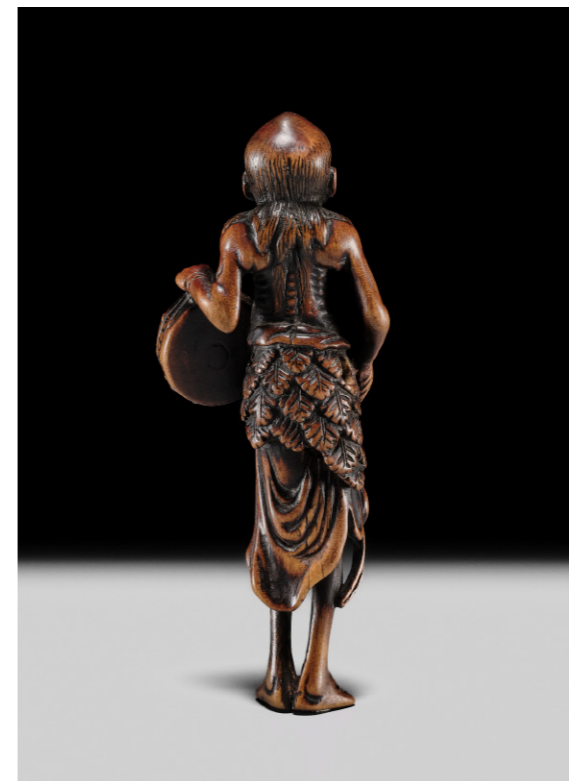
Unsigned
 Japan, Edo (Tokyo), late 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

The whimsical islander stands on long legs, evoking the iconic Ashinaga, his face expressing a comical charm as he readies a drumstick and drum. His mouth is slightly ajar, with wrinkles framing his expressive eyes, further enhancing his humorous character. The figure is dressed in a leafy skirt, a motif traditionally associated with sennin, adding to the figure's mystic allure. His long, flowing hair and beard cascade downward, while his upper body is intricately carved, revealing his ribs. Excellent himotoshi through the side and under the skirt.

HEIGHT 7.8 cm

Condition: Repairs to the right hand, drumstick, right leg and to the back of the loincloth. Otherwise excellent condition with old wear.

This expressive, powerfully carved netsuke can be attributed to a carver from the Edo school, most likely Shugetsu (see auction comparison).



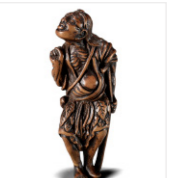
MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a related islander with a drum and similar expression, by Gessho, 7.3 cm high, in *The Los Angeles County Museum*, accession number AC1998.249.25.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of Tekkai sennin by Shugetsu I, note the similar carving to the mugwort leaves and rib cage, 7.3 cm high, at Zacke, *Fine Netsuke & Sagemono*, 28 April 2023, Vienna, lot 168 (sold for **EUR 5,200**).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



239
AN AMUSING WOOD NETSUKE OF A MAN CARRYING A LARGE TOKKURI SAKE BOTTLE

Unsigned
 Japan, late 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Boldly carved as a man wearing only a loincloth and headband, balancing a large tokkuri bottle against his shoulder, standing precariously on one leg and crouching slightly under its weight. He steadies the vessel with both hands, the pose conveying a lively sense of movement and strain. The face is rendered with a comical, exaggerated expression, the eyes inlaid in bone. Large himotoshi to the reverse.

HEIGHT 6 cm

Condition: Good condition with typical wear and traces of use. Old losses and repairs to the toes, one eye is replaced.

MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of a seated man with a large sake flask, by Doraku, 3.4 cm high, in the Los Angeles Museum of Art, accession number M.91.250.302.



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500

238
A RARE AND UNUSUAL WOOD NETSUKE OF A KUMOSUKE WEARING A BUCKET

Unsigned
 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Boldly and humorously carved as a kumosuke, clad only in a fundoshi and wearing a large wooden water bucket over his head, the vessel serving as a comical improvised hat. He balances precariously on one leg, the other raised as if caught mid-step, both hands gripping the sides of the bucket, heightening the sense of movement and theatricality. The bucket is carefully carved with an intricate woven pattern and enhanced with subtle staining.

The porter's face is expressively rendered with exaggerated features and a broad, toothy grin, conveying a lively and humorous character. His muscular physique is powerfully modeled, with smoothly polished limbs. The wood bears a rich, attractive patina and pleasing wear from handling over time. Large himotoshi channel between the right arm and body.

HEIGHT 7.4 cm

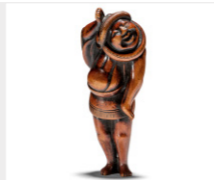
Condition: The right foot repaired, otherwise very good condition with minor wear and typical traces of use.

Kumosuke were porters of humble background who carried palanquins along the Tokaido, the great highway linking Edo and Kyoto during the Tokugawa period. They were celebrated in popular culture as vigorous, colorful figures, associated not only with physical strength but also with lively entertainment. The present netsuke captures this spirited world in an unusual and playful manner, presenting the porter in a comic performance.

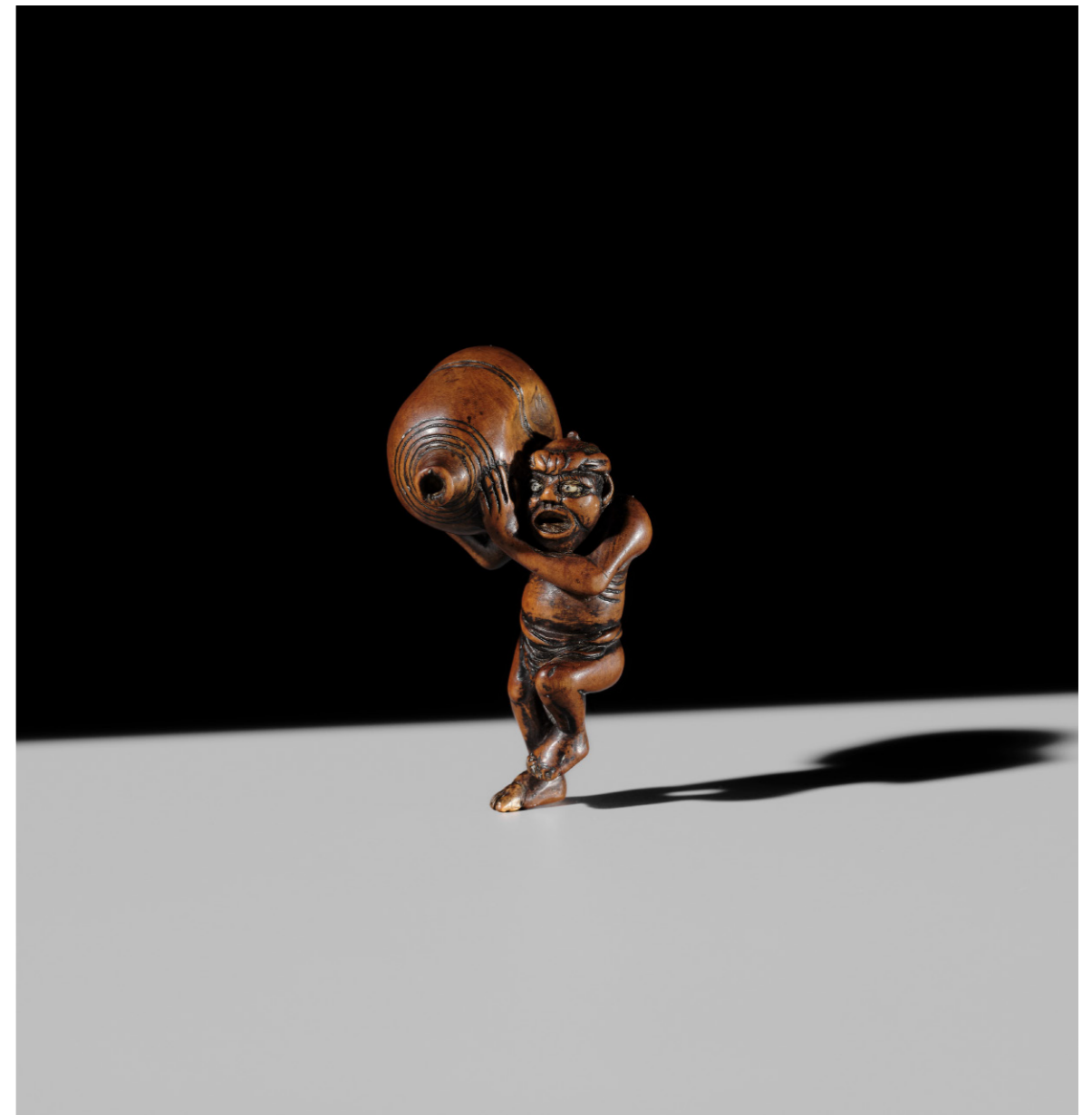


AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a porter, likely by the same studio or hand, 10.3 cm high, at Bonhams, Myth, Mirth and Magic, 14 June 2023, Paris, lot 25 (sold for **EUR 14,080**).



Estimate EUR 6,000
 Starting price EUR 3,000





240
SHUGETSU: A FINE WOOD NETSUKE OF A LAMENTING OLD MAN

By Hara / Higuchi Shugetsu, signed Shugetsu 舟月
 Japan, Edo (Tokyo), late 18th century, Edo period (1615–1868)

A spirited and finely carved depiction of an old man standing upright, his face dramatically contorted as he looks upward, crying out in lament, the mouth wide open and teeth visible. Deeply carved furrows frame the eyes and cheeks, conveying an intense emotional expression. He grips a long wooden staff before him with one hand, the other hand clenched into a fist in the back. His long kimono falls in softly modeled folds and is secured with a belt. Beautiful, asymmetrical himotoshi to the reverse. Signed SHUGETSU.

HEIGHT 5.6 cm

Provenance: From an old French private collection. With an old label 'A 212' pasted underneath.
Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and typical light traces of use. Superb patina.

MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a man standing with a drum, displaying a similar facial expression, by the same artist, signed Shugetsu, late 18th century, 10.7 cm high, in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, accession number 47.594.



Estimate EUR 2,500
 Starting price EUR 1,200



241
TOMAN: A GOOD WOOD NETSUKE OF A FARMER CARRYING A HUGE GOURD

By Fujiwara Toman, signed Toman 東満
 Japan, Edo (Tokyo), late 18th to early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Published:

1. Meinertzhagen, Frederick / Lazarnick, George (1986) MCI, Part B, p. 877.
2. Eskenazi Ltd. (1998), Japanese Netsuke, Ojime, and Inro from a Private European Collection, London, no. 80.

HEIGHT 5.1 cm

Provenance: Glending and Co, 'Oriental Sales', 4-6 December 1922, London, lot 12. Ex-Dawson Collection, acquired from the above. Sotheby's, An Important Collection of Netsuke, 23 October 1972, London, lot 117. Eskenazi Ltd, Japanese Netsuke, Ojime, and Inro from a Private European Collection, 16 June-4 July 1998, London, no. 80. French private collection, acquired from the above.
Condition: Excellent condition with minor wear and light traces of use. Beautiful, deep patina.

Finely carved as a diminutive farmer carrying an enormous gourd on his back, thick ropes tied around the giant vegetable and slung over the man's shoulders. The small figure leans forward under the weight of his burden, the pose cleverly arranged so that the entire composition balances naturally and stands securely. Signed TOMAN beneath the gourd beside the himotoshi, the cord attachment ingeniously formed as a small eyelet beneath the removable stem.

Fujiwara Toman was active in Edo (Tokyo) during the late 18th to early 19th century and is associated with artists such as Gessho, Shugetsu, and Jobun. Notably, the present model appears to be unique to Toman.

Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500





242
SHUNSAI: AN INLAID WOOD SHUNGA NETSUKE OF OKAME WASHING CLOTHES

By Shunsai, signed Shunsai 春齋
 Japan, Edo (Tokyo), first half of the 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

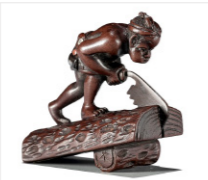
- Published:**
1. Joly, Henri (1975) Catalogue of the H. Seymour Trower Collection of Japanese Art, no. 292 (unillustrated).
 2. Meinertzhagen, Frederick / Lazarnick, George (1986) MCI, Part B, p. 783.

Boldly carved, depicting Okame crouching behind a wooden washing tub as she scrubs clothes, her body bent forward in concentration. Her cheerful face is rendered with the characteristic full cheeks and playful smile associated with the figure of Okame. The hair is neatly arranged and secured with a tortoiseshell-inlaid comb accompanied by coral and bone hairpins. The shunga element is revealed beneath the tub: while Okame appears occupied with her washing above, her intimate parts are visible below, an explicit contrast typical of shunga imagery. Two ringed himotoshi pass through the tub next to the signature SHUNSAI.

LENGTH 4 cm, HEIGHT 4.2 cm

Provenance: Ex-collection H. Seymour Trower, no. 292.
Condition: The comb with an old repair. Otherwise excellent condition with minor wear and light traces of use.

AUCTION COMPARISON
 Compare a related inlaid wood netsuke of a carpenter by the same artist, signed Shunsai, with similar inlays, at Zacks, Fine Japanese Art, 3 December 2021, Vienna, lot 250 (sold for **EUR 2,781**).



Estimate EUR 2,500
 Starting price EUR 1,200



243
GENRAKU: A RARE AND UNUSUAL WOOD NETSUKE OF A LADY AND BLIND MASSEUR

By Genraku, signed Genraku 減楽
 Japan, late 18th–early 19th century, Edo period (1615–1868)

This unusual and evocative netsuke depicts a reclining lady, her head gently supported on a hakomakura (box pillow used to protect elaborate hairstyles), while a blind masseur crouches over her body, his hands pressing into her lower abdomen. The lady's voluminous robe, incised with finely detailed floral motifs and subtle stippling, spreads broadly beneath her, creating a stable base that anchors the composition. The blind attendant is also finely rendered, with his crouched posture, rounded shoulders, and focused hands conveying a deep tactile engagement with his task. Asymmetrical himotoshi are pierced through the underside, the larger hole generously hollowed to accommodate the knot. Signed GENRAKU.



A blind man massaging a lady

LENGTH 4.2 cm

Condition: Good condition with minor expected wear. A small repair to the masseur's left hand.

A second interpretation of this netsuke could be kanashibari (sleep paralysis), a condition often represented in Edo-period visual culture by small, crouching figures pressing upon the prone body. These figures were sometimes depicted as attendants or yokai, blending the literal and supernatural in visual storytelling. There may be a hidden meaning here, with the image of a blind masseur massaging a lady subtly echoing the folklore of a yokai creature inducing sleep paralysis.



A woodblock print of a sleeping beauty during kanashibari, by Kajita Hanko

Estimate EUR 2,500
 Starting price EUR 1,200





244
AN OLD WOOD NETSUKE OF THE SOGA BROTHERS

Unsigned
 Japan, late 18th-early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

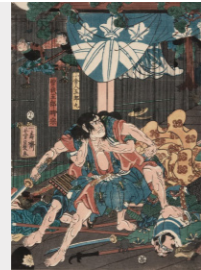
This boldly carved, beautifully worn netsuke depicts the pivotal moment from the legendary Night Attack of the Soga Brothers. The elder brother, Soga Tokimune, is powerfully crouched, restraining his younger sibling, Soga Sukenari, in an intense struggle. The elder grips the younger around the waist to prevent him from rushing forward with his sword to slay their enemy, Kudo Suketsune. The expressive face of the elder brother captures the urgency of the moment, while the younger brother, his posture tense, desperately attempts to break free. The younger's eye is inlaid, adding to the realism and emotion of the scene. Natural himotoshi.

LENGTH 4 cm

Condition: Good condition with old wear and traces of use, few age cracks.

Estimate EUR 1,500
 Starting price EUR 800

The Soga brothers, Soga Tokimune and Soga Sukenari, sought vengeance for their father's death, a vendetta that became one of the most iconic tales in Japanese history and literature. In 1193, they avenged the death of their father



A detail of a wood block print depicting The Night Attack of the Soga Brothers, by Utagawa Yoshikazu, dated to 1858

by killing Kudo Suketsune at a hunting event arranged by the shogun Minamoto no Yoritomo. This event, known as the Night Attack, has been immortalized in many works of art, including this netsuke, which references Yoshikazu's famous woodblock print. The moment depicted here occurs when the brothers, having located their sworn enemy, find him asleep. The younger brother, poised to strike, is restrained by the elder, preventing him from completing the act of vengeance.

245
AN IVORY NETSUKE OF CHORYO DEFEATING THE WATER DRAGON

Unsigned
 Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Published: Zacke (1989) Netsuke von Meistern, no. 100.

Finely carved as the Chinese sage Choryo, the figure is shown standing triumphantly above a writhing dragon, holding a shoe in one hand. His face is powerfully rendered with furrowed brows, narrowed eyes, and a flowing moustache and beard, conveying a determined and commanding expression. His hair is drawn up into a topknot, and his robe falls in richly carved folds, the garment intricately decorated with geometric and brocade-like patterns. Beneath him the defeated dragon coils energetically around the base of the composition, its scales crisply incised and its jaws opened in a dramatic snarl. Two himotoshi pierced to the back.

HEIGHT 4.9 cm

Provenance: Galerie Zacke, Vienna, 1989. A German private collection, acquired from the above.

Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear.

Estimate EUR 1,500
 Starting price EUR 800



246
A FINE AND RARE EBONY WOOD NETSUKE OF CHOUN AND ATO

Unsigned
 Japan, Edo (Tokyo), first half of the 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved as the heroic general Choun (Zhao Yun) galloping forward on horseback while protecting the infant Ato, whom he holds securely against his chest. The horse is rendered in a dynamic stride, its legs extended and head thrust forward, the mane and harness neatly incised, while the rider sits firmly in the saddle with flowing armor and garments carved in crisp detail. Choun's determined expression and forward-leaning posture convey urgency and courage. The underside features a green-stained ringed himotoshi, the cord attachment in the form of an eyelet beneath a removable finial to the saddle.

LENGTH 5.1 cm

Condition: One leg is repaired. Otherwise excellent condition with minor wear.

Choun (Zhao Yun), who lived from approximately 168 to 229, was one of the most celebrated generals serving the warlord Liu Bei during the tumultuous era of the Three Kingdoms in China. Renowned for his exceptional loyalty, martial prowess, and courage, he achieved legendary status through historical accounts and the famous Chinese novel Romance of the Three Kingdoms. Among his most iconic feats was the rescue of Liu Bei's infant son Ato (A-Dou) during the Battle of Changban. Amid the chaos of battle, Zhao Yun charged into enemy lines, fighting through overwhelming forces to safely carry the child back to Liu Bei. This heroic act became an enduring symbol of loyalty, courage, and selflessness, deeply ingrained in East Asian cultural traditions. This scene is only very rarely depicted in netsuke art.

Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000





247
AN UNUSUAL AND RARE WOOD NETSUKE OF TWO EJI (TEMPLE SERVANTS)

Unsigned
 Japan, Edo (Tokyo), late 18th-early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

This rare and unusual netsuke depicts two eji (temple servants) seated, both showing signs of exhaustion from their laborious duties. One servant is seen cleaning the sweat from the forehead of the other, capturing a poignant moment of camaraderie in their shared toil. The finely carved garments, delicate folds, and expressive faces - tired yet determined - capture the servants' humble roles, all while infusing the scene with a playful touch of humor. Natural himotoshi.

LENGTH 6.7 cm

Condition: Very good condition with only minor typical wear.



Eji (temple servants) were common subjects in Edo-period netsuke, often portrayed as hardworking, low-ranking figures engaged in laborious tasks like cleaning, sweeping, or bell polishing. While typically depicted individually, this rare example shows two eji, a noteworthy detail as only a few netsuke of multiple eji exist. One famous example by Minko humorously portrays three eji as drunken figures.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of three eji drinking sake, by Minko, illustrated in Joly, Henri L. (1912) *The W. L. Behrens Collection, Part 1, Netsuke*, pl. LXVI, no 4955.



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



248
GYOKUSENSAI: A RARE WOOD NETSUKE OF SOSHI ARAI NO KOMACHI

By Gyokusen Tomochika, signed Gyokusensai 玉泉齋
 Japan, late 18th century to early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Published: Lazarnick, George (1981) *Netsuke & Inro Artists, and How to Read Their Signatures* (LNIA), Vol. 2, p. 1151.

This finely carved netsuke depicts one of the Seven Principal Episodes in the life of the celebrated poet Ono no Komachi, specifically the dramatic Soshi Arai no Komachi (Komachi Washing the Manuscript). The scene captures the moment when Komachi's jealous male rival alters her poem during a poetry contest in an attempt to discredit her. Komachi proves the deception by washing the manuscript in water, causing the tampered ink to dissolve and revealing the original text.

In this carving, the rival poet is seated with his back turned, embodying his embarrassment as he watches the manuscript being washed. Komachi kneels beside the basin, her focused expression portraying the moment of truth. The flowing robes of both figures are intricately incised with hexagonal and foliate patterns, and their hair is finely sumi-stained, adding texture to the detailed carving. Natural himotoshi underneath, signed GYOKUSENSAI.

LENGTH 5 cm

Provenance: Christie's, Fine Netsuke and Inro, 28 May 1980, London, lot 56. French private collection, acquired from the above.
Condition: Old repair to the rival poet's headdress. Otherwise in good condition with minor typical wear and a few tiny nicks.

Gyokusen Tomochika was a pupil of Tomotada, but moved later from Kyoto to Edo (unlike Chikuyosai Tomochika who moved from Edo to Kyoto). Meinertzhagen notes (MCI, p. 893): "Gyokusen Tomochika was an artist of exceptional ability whose work has not received the attention from collectors it deserves."

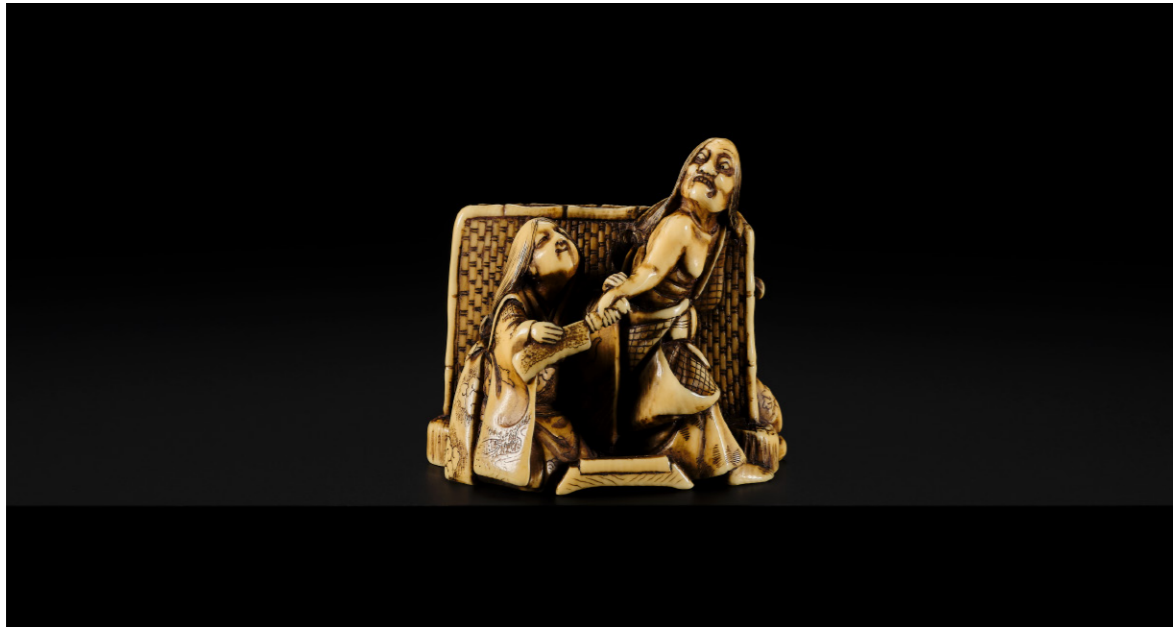
Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500

The Soshi Arai no Komachi episode, part of the Seven Principal Episodes in Komachi's life, depicts her rival - a jealous male poet - altering her poem during a contest. Komachi proves the deception by washing the manuscript, revealing the original text beneath. This moment became a popular subject in Edo-period art, appearing in works such as Iwasa Matabei's painting of Soshi Arai Komachi (Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian), where Komachi kneels beside a basin while her rival, the male poet, watches. The present netsuke masterfully captures this moment, showcasing Komachi's dignity and the quiet revelation of truth.



Detail of a screen depicting Soshi arai (Ono no Komachi washing a manuscript), Iwasa Matabei (1578-1650)





249
GYOKUICHI: A VERY RARE IVORY NETSUKE OF THE WITCH OF ADACHIGAHARA

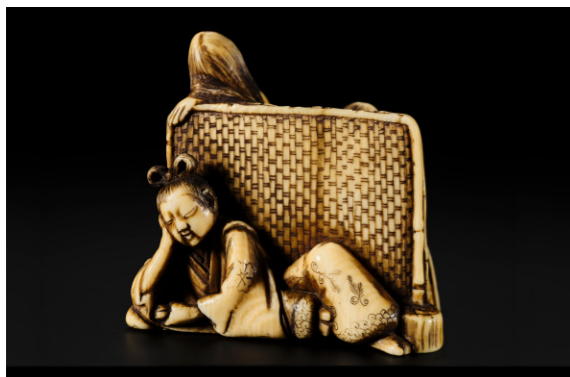
By Gyokuichi (Tamakazu), signed Gyokuichi 玉一
 Japan, Edo (Tokyo), mid-19th century, Edo period (1615–1868)

On one side, the witch of Adachigahara, disguised as an elderly woman, is shown at the moment she is caught in the act. She holds a cleaver, while a kneeling woman behind her restrains her by grasping both the blade and her wrist. The figures are sharply carved, their expressions animated, the robes finely detailed with incised cloud designs.

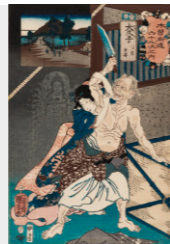
A carefully rendered rattan table screen (tsutate) separates this scene from the reverse, which depicts a sleeping lady, unaware of the danger. Her garment is neatly incised with floral motifs, and her hair is tied in a double knot. The screen serves as both a compositional and narrative divider. Signed within an oval reserve GYOKUICHI.

HEIGHT 4.1 cm, LENGTH 4.4 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with minor wear.



The legend of the witch of Adachigahara is connected to the moor of Adachi. According to the story, she was attached to the court of a prince suffering from an unknown illness. The only cure required the blood of children or young girls born during a certain month. She obtained it by killing them with a knife. When she was eventually discovered and confessed, she was nevertheless pardoned, as the cure had proven successful.



The witch of Adachigahara at Okute Station, by Utagawa Kuniyoshi, dated July 1852, in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, accession number EA1971.93

The present netsuke distinguishes itself through its dramatic interpretation of the legend and the unusual inclusion of a sleeping lady separated by a tsutate, a motif not commonly encountered in netsuke treatments of this subject.

Gyokuichi (Tamakazu) was an Edo (Tokyo) netsuke carver active in the mid-19th century and is recorded in Fuld's Netsuke and Ojime Index, where only a small number of ivory netsuke are listed. Stylistically, he appears connected to the Edo lineage of carvers such as Tomochika and Tomomasa, who also produced netsuke of the Adachigahara subject, though the present composition with the tsutate appears to be a distinctive model.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related ivory netsuke of Adachigahara, by Tomomasa, illustrated in Meinertzhagen, Frederick / Lazarnick, George (1986) MCI, Part B, p. 905.



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



250
AN AMUSING IVORY NETSUKE OF RAIJIN AND FUJIN

Unsigned
 Japan, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Humorously carved as the Thunder God Raijin and the Wind God Fujin seated side by side, as if conspiratorially planning their next thunderstorm. Raijin sits beside his drum, leaning forward with one hand resting upon it while holding a drumstick, while Fujin crouches closely next to him with his windbag slung over his shoulder. Their postures suggest an animated discussion, the two deities huddled together like mischievous companions plotting the coming tempest. Both figures are rendered with exaggerated and highly expressive faces, their mouths curling into sly, knowing grins, giving the impression that they delight in the chaos they are about to unleash upon the world. The eyes are inlaid with dark horn. The ivory bears a fine patina. Two large, asymmetrical himotoshi underneath.

LENGTH 3.9 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only very minor wear and light traces of use.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related ivory netsuke of Raijin and Fujin, by Toun, illustrated in Davey, Neil K. (1982) Netsuke: A comprehensive study based on the M.T. Hindson Collection, no. 389.



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



251
SHUNKOSAI CHOGETSU: A LARGE AND SUPERB MARINE IVORY NETSUKE OF SHOKI AS A RAT CATCHER

By Shunkosai Chogetsu, signed Shunko 春光
 Japan, Edo (Tokyo), c. 1850, Edo period (1615-1868)

Humorously carved, this netsuke depicts the demon-queller Shoki crouching forward as he leans over a small open box trap, attempting to capture a mischievous oni. With one hand he steadies the trap while the other grips his sword, his powerful body bent low in intense concentration. Behind him, however, a tiny oni has climbed onto his back, pulling a mocking grimace and taunting the great demon hunter.

Shoki's face is rendered with remarkable vigor, furrowed brows, bulging eyes, and an open mouth revealing teeth and tongue, conveying irritation and determination in equal measure. Turning his head sharply over his shoulder, he seems on the verge of discovering the imp perched behind him, creating palpable tension and comic suspense within the composition. His long beard is finely incised, and the warrior's robe is decorated with neatly carved swirling patterns. Natural himotoshi and signed underneath within a wavy reserve SHUNKO.

HEIGHT 4.3 cm, LENGTH 4.6 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear, typical age cracks, small chips to the ribbon of the head dress and edge of the box, tiny nibbling.

Shunkosai Chogetsu appears to have worked exclusively in marine ivory, a material he handled with particular mastery. His netsuke are notable for their bold carving, animated expressions, and especially their inventive and humorous subject matter, often presenting playful reversals of familiar themes. Scenes of Shoki and oni were a favorite motif, allowing the artist to explore comic tension between the formidable demon-queller and the impish creatures he pursues. Works by Shunkosai are relatively rare and are distinguished by their confident modeling, lively characterizations, and highly individual compositions.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related marine ivory netsuke of Shoki and oni by the same artist, signed Shunkosai, illustrated in Christie's, *Fine Netsuke from an Important American East Coast Museum*, 16 November 1976, London, lot 60.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related walrus tusk netsuke by the same artist, signed Chogetsu, 6.3 cm long, at Zacke, *Fine Netsuke & Sagemono*, 29 October 2021, Vienna, lot 100 (sold for **EUR 10,112**).



Estimate EUR 10,000
 Starting price EUR 5,000



252
**GYOKUSHU: AN IVORY NETSUKE
OF SESSHU BEING FREED BY RATS**

By Gyokushu, signed Gyokushu 玉秀
Japan, Tokyo, Meiji period (1868-1912)

Finely carved, the figure of young monk Sesshu is shown tied to a pine trunk, with a thick, gnarled branch curving above his head and pine needles offering shelter from the elements. Sesshu leans forward in an attempt to break free, while a group of rats - his unlikely accomplices - work to release him. One rodent perches atop his head, while two others gnaw at the rope binding him, their eyes inlaid. The trunk is intricately carved with a hexagonal diaper ground, with two apertures on the back, the handiwork of the mischievous rats. The irregular base is signed GYOKUSHU within a paintbrush resting on a shallow bowl. Asymmetrical himotoshi through the tree trunk.

HEIGHT 4.2 cm

Provenance: From a German private collection. Zacke, Asian Art and Netsuke Art Auction, 1 April 2017, Vienna, lot 253 (sold for **EUR 2,022**). A private collection in Recklinghausen, Germany, acquired from the above.

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear.

Estimate EUR 2,000
Starting price EUR 1,000



253
**GYOKUZAN: AN IVORY NETSUKE
OF KIKUJIDO (THE CHRYSANTHEMUM BOY)**

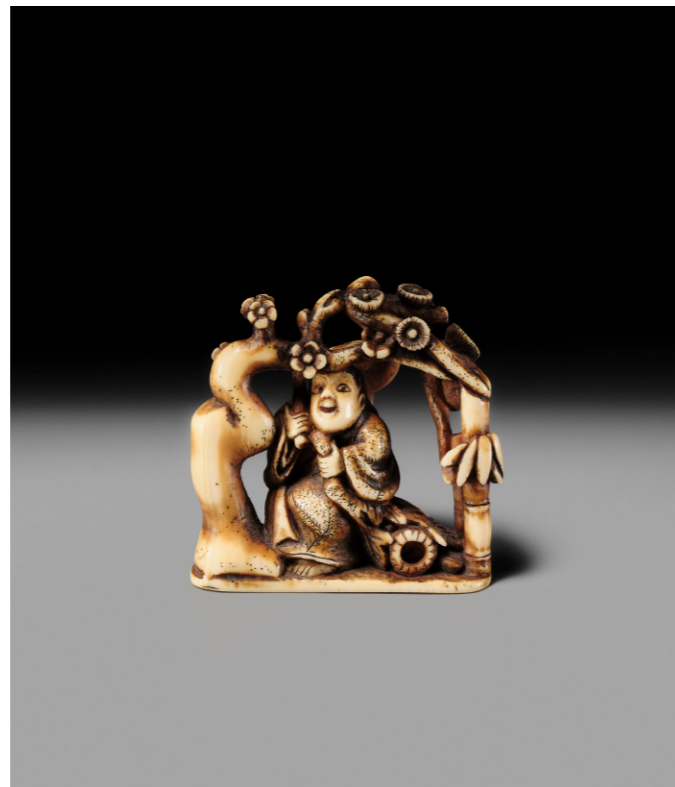
By Gyokuzan, signed Gyokuzan 玉山
Japan, mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved in openwork as Kikujido, the Chrysanthemum Boy, seated beneath an elegant natural framework formed by the Three Friends of Winter - pine, bamboo, and prunus. The youthful figure sits beside a rock while grasping the stem of a large chrysanthemum that arches above his head, the blossoms and branches forming a delicate openwork canopy. His face is rendered with a charming expression, the eyes gently lowered and the lips forming a subtle smile. The hair falls neatly around the head and shoulders, finely incised, while the robes cascade in softly carved folds enriched with delicate engraved patterns. A central himotoshi is pierced through the base.

HEIGHT 3.6 cm

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

Estimate EUR 1,500
Starting price EUR 800



254
**MINKOKU: A FINE IVORY HAKO (BOX) NETSUKE
OF A BUTTERFLY DANCER (KOCHO NO MAI)**

By Shuyusai Minkoku (Minkoku III), signed Minkoku 民谷
Japan, Edo (Tokyo), mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)



This two-part hako netsuke, of rectangular shape with rounded edges, is finely carved in shishiaibori (sunken relief) and accented with sumi-e (ink) to depict a butterfly dancer in mid-motion. The dancer is shown with arms spread wide and knees bent, her flowing robes rendered with delicate incised details. Her calm expression and the soft fluidity of her movement are emphasized by finely carved facial features. She holds two sticks, with a drum strung to the front of her body. The reverse depicts a flute and sho (mouth organ), both associated with Bugaku, and the neatly incised signature MINKOKU. Central himotoshi to the back, the looped cord attachment within.

LENGTH 3.6 cm

Provenance: Ex-collection Raymond Bushell. Sotheby's, Netsuke from the Collection of Raymond and Frances Bushell, 21 March 2000, New York, lot 243 (illustrated, part-lot). French private collection, acquired from the above.

Condition: Excellent condition with only very minor wear.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related ivory manju netsuke of a butterfly dancer by the same artist, signed Minkoku, 3.8 cm in diameter, illustrated in Coullery, Marie-Therese / Newstead, Martin S. (1977) The Baur Collection, pp. 244-245, no. C 697.



Estimate EUR 1,500
Starting price EUR 800

255
**A FINE WALRUS TUSK RYUSA MANJU NETSUKE
OF A STRETCHING DARUMA**

Unsigned
Japan, Edo (Tokyo), mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Carved in circular form, partly in openwork, this netsuke humorously depicts Daruma yawning and stretching in front of iron bars, a playful allusion to a brothel window. His face is finely detailed with incised facial hair, hooped earrings, and sumi-stained chest hair. The reverse with a single ringed himotoshi.

The reverse inscribed: Momo kuri sannen kaki hachinen, Daruma wa kyunen narikaneru 桃栗三年柿八歳、面壁九年ぞ成兼る [Planted peach and chestnut trees take three years to bear fruit, persimmons take eight, and it took Daruma nine years to achieve enlightenment.]

This satirical representation of Daruma parodies the enlightenment he famously achieved.

DIAMETER 4.2 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only very minor wear and light traces of use.

Estimate EUR 2,000
Starting price EUR 1,000





256
MASAMITSU: A CHARMING IVORY NETSUKE OF AN AWABI SHELL OVERRUN BY A SWARM OF RATS

By Hagiwara Masamitsu, signed Masamitsu 正光
 Japan, Tokyo, late 19th century, Meiji period (1868-1912)



Hagiwara Masamitsu is renowned for his compact and lively studies of animal groups, particularly his inventive depictions of rats. The present netsuke portrays approximately twenty-five rodents with inlaid eyes, each rendered with remarkable individuality in pose and expression. The animals swarm energetically over the surface of a large awabi (abalone) shell, crowding together as they explore its contours. The former inhabitant has already been devoured, leaving the shell stripped clean.

The awabi is carved with notable naturalism, its characteristic perforations and radiating striations finely incised. Subtle details such as simulated chips and tears evoke the effects of the rodents' destructive feast. The composition is compact yet dynamic, the densely interwoven bodies of the rats creating a sense of animated movement across the shell's surface. The underside features a natural himotoshi and is signed within an oval reserve MASAMITSU.

LENGTH 4.7 cm

Provenance: From an Austrian private collection. Zacke, Asian Art and Netsuke Art Auction, 1 April 2017, Vienna, lot 253 (sold for **EUR 3,034**). A private collection in Recklinghausen, Germany, acquired from the above.

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and fine age cracks. The tips of the rodents' ears with microscopic nibbling.

MUSEUM COMPARISON

For a closely related ivory netsuke of a cluster of rats atop an awabi by the same artist, signed Masamitsu, 4.1 cm wide, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Object Number 1985.399.16.



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



257
MASATOMO: AN AMUSING IVORY NETSUKE OF A DISTRACTED MONKEY COLLECTOR

By Masatomo, signed Masatomo 正友
 Japan, Tokyo, late 19th century, Meiji period (1868-1912)

Finely carved and stained, the netsuke depicts a monkey with neatly incised fur and horn-inlaid eyes, dressed in a haori jacket with a shippo pattern to the collar. In his right hand he holds a magnifying glass, apparently intending to examine a small monkey netsuke from the sagemono set he clutches in his left hand - a humorous reflection of the habits of human collectors themselves. In typical monkey fashion, however, his scholarly concentration is quickly interrupted: an insect crawling up his arm captures his full attention, and the magnifying glass is instead turned toward the tiny intruder. Meanwhile, the hind legs conceal a tempting persimmon beneath him, suggesting that the collector's priorities may soon shift yet again. Natural himotoshi and signed to the underside MASATOMO. The artist was a pupil of the famous monkey carver Masatami (see auction comparison).

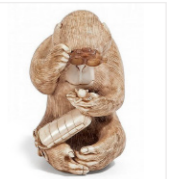
HEIGHT 3.3 cm



Condition: Very good condition, with expected light surface wear and very fine natural age cracks. One inlaid eye pupil is replaced. The magnifying glass, as is the case with almost all netsuke of this type, is replaced.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related ivory netsuke of a monkey examining an inro by Masatami, 3.5 cm high, at Van Ham, Asiatische Kunst, 6 June 2015, Cologne, lot 308 (sold for EUR 4,515 or approx. **EUR 5,900** adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 2,500
 Starting price EUR 1,200





258
TOU: A RARE EBONY WOOD NETSUKE OF A BADGER HOLDING HIS HUGE SCROTUM

Attributed to Tsuchiya Yasuchika (1670-1744), signed Tou 東雨 gito 戯刀
 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

- Published:**
1. Lazarnick, George (1981) Netsuke & Inro Artists, and How to Read Their Signatures (LNIA), Vol. 2, p. 1220.
 2. Netsuke Kenkyukai (1987), Vol. 7, no. 3, p. 15, fig. 23.
 3. International Netsuke Society Journal (INSJ) (1997), Vol. 17, no. 1, p. 22, fig. 15.

Amusingly carved, the seated tanuki (badger) grasping and stretching his exaggerated scrotum before him. The animal sits with its legs bent beneath its compact body, leaning forward as both hands clutch the swollen form, which curves outward to form a large rounded mass in front of the figure. The tanuki's face is rendered with lively character, the eyes are painted gold. Natural himotoshi and signed underneath TOU gito [carved in amusement, Tou].



The tanuki (raccoon dog) is a famous trickster figure in Japanese folklore, celebrated for its magical powers of transformation. In popular imagery the creature is often shown with comically exaggerated scrotums, which folklore attributes with various magical and sometimes mischievous uses.



A woodblock print by Utagawa Kuniyoshi depicting various imaginative uses of the tanuki's enlarged scrotum

LENGTH 4 cm

Condition: Very good condition with only minor wear and surface scratches.

The name Tou is recorded only in connection with the celebrated Nara sword-fitting master Tsuchiya Yasuchika (1670-1744), who is known to have produced a small number of netsuke in addition to his metalwork.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related ebony wood netsuke of a reclining puppy by the same artist, signed Tou saku, 4.8 cm long, at Sotheby's, Japanese Works of Art, Painting and Screens, 18-19 June 1996, London, lot 190 (sold for GBP 11,000 or approx. **EUR 26,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



259
YOSHIIHISA: A NAGOYA SCHOOL WOOD NETSUKE OF A TANUKI CRUSHING A HUNTER

By Yoshihisa, signed Yoshihisa 義久
 Japan, Nagoya, mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved depicting the magical shapeshifting tanuki (raccoon dog) suffocating a hunter beneath its enormous, veiny scrotum. The unfortunate hunter peers out from the front with an agonized expression, his eyes inlaid in mother-of-pearl, as are those of the tanuki, whose crescent-shaped eyes lend the creature an eerie appearance. The underside reveals the hunter's amusingly flattened body together with his tanegashima teppo rifle, the mounts neatly inlaid in metal. The himotoshi are cleverly incorporated into the composition beneath and the signature YOSHIIHISA appears to the side.

LENGTH 3.5 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only very minor wear.



LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of a tanuki crushing a hunter by Hokyudo Itsumin, illustrated in Meinertzhagen, Frederick / Lazarnick, George (1986) MCI, Part A, p. 245.

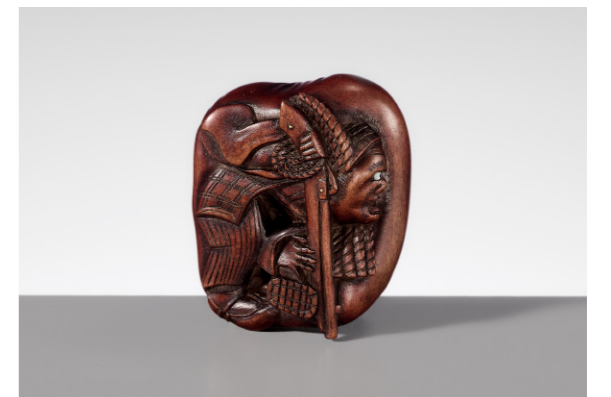


AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a tanuki crushing a hunter by the same artist, signed Yoshihisa, 4 cm high, at Sotheby's, Fine Netsuke, Ojime and Inro, 28 January 1985, Honolulu, lot 117 (sold for USD 1,100 or approx. **EUR 3,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000





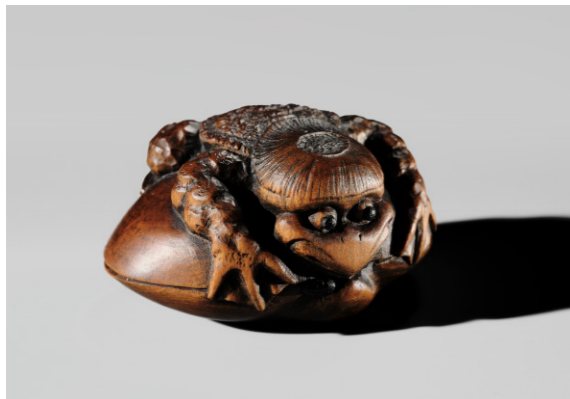
260
**AN AMUSING WOOD NETSUKE
 OF A KAPPA ON HAMAGURI CLAM**

Unsigned
 Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved as a kappa slouching over a hamaguri clam, one foot caught within the shell's jaws, the creature's expression amusingly capturing the moment it realizes its predicament. The kappa's warty skin is delicately rendered, as is its shell, while the head is detailed with minutely incised hairs encircling the characteristic fluid-filled cavity. The eyes are inlaid in polished dark wood, echoed by a small inlaid section at the clam's posterior. The shell itself is finely carved and highly polished, its surface attractively stained. Good, asymmetrical himotoshi to the underside.

LENGTH 4.5 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear and a tiny age crack near the shell inlay.



The subject humorously alludes to a playful parody of **seduction**, the clam serving as a suggestive symbol of feminine allure while the kappa finds itself literally caught by its own lustful curiosity.

AUCTION COMPARISON

This model of a kappa on a clam is more commonly encountered in carvings in the manner of the Hida school, where the kappa lifts itself from the shell rather than lying flat across it. For a kappa in the same pose as the present netsuke, by Rensai, see Bonhams, Fine Netsuke from the Adrienne Barbanson collection, 13 May 2013, London, lot 45 (sold for GBP 18,750 or approx. **EUR 30,700** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



261
**ITTO: A FINE WOOD NETSUKE
 OF A RECUMBENT SHISHI**

By Itto, signed Itto一刀 戯
 Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

The shishi is shown curling tightly around its limbs, forming a compact composition, its face bearing a characterful expression. The muscular body is finely detailed, with a gently raised spine and ribs, and is covered overall in radiating whorls carved against the naturally striated grain of the wood, effectively simulating fur. The mane and beard are deftly rendered as thick tufts of curling hair. The eyes are inlaid in dark horn. Natural himotoshi and signed underneath the left foot ITTO gi [made by Itto, in amusement].

LENGTH 3.8 cm

Provenance: Christie's, Arts of Asia Online, 27 March 2025, New York, lot 96 (sold for USD 3,528 or approx. **EUR 3,100** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing). A private collection, acquired from the above.
Condition: Excellent condition.

Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



262

TOEI: A RARE WOOD NETSUKE OF TAMAMO NO MAE WITH THE NINE-TAILED FOX

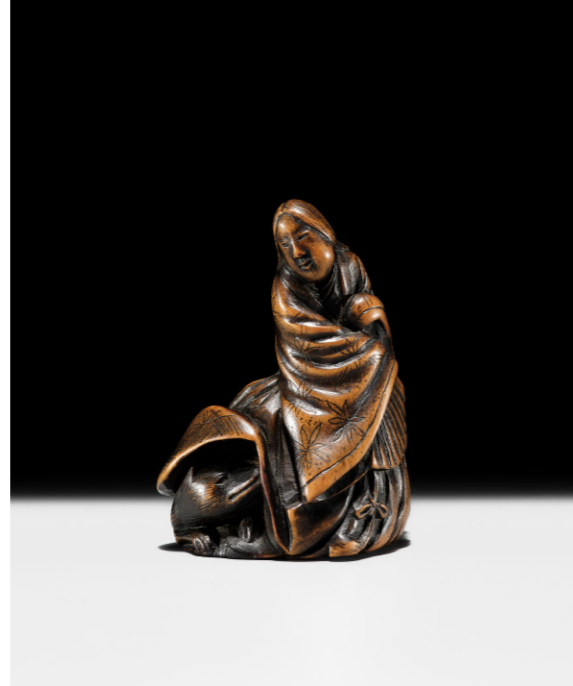
By Toei, signed Toei 東英
Japan, Edo (Tokyo), 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved as the legendary beauty Tamamo no Mae, shown standing with her body gently turned, her elegant figure enveloped in flowing robes as she glances subtly to the side. Her expression is serene yet enigmatic, the delicately carved features conveying an air of concealed mystery befitting the famed fox-spirit of Japanese legend. Her long hair falls gracefully down her back in finely incised strands. The robe cascades in softly swelling folds and is intricately engraved with floral motifs.

Tamamo no Mae is among the most celebrated fox spirits in Japanese legend. According to the tale, she appeared at the imperial court as an exceptionally cultivated and graceful lady, only later revealed to be a nine-tailed fox (kyubi no kitsune) whose presence brought calamity to the emperor. Upon her exposure, she fled and was eventually slain, her spirit said to reside in the infamous Sesshoseki ("Killing Stone") at Nasu. In artistic representations, Tamamo no Mae is frequently shown in subtle association with the fox that betrays her true identity, as expressed in the present composition.



A woodblock print of Tamamo no Mae by Utagawa Toyokuni III



Beneath the drapery emerges the nine-tailed fox, crouching low and partially concealed under the hem, its head peering outward - an ingenious compositional device alluding to her true nature. Himotoshi to the back and signed underneath TOEI.

HEIGHT 4.5 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and light typical traces of use.

Estimate EUR 1,500
Starting price EUR 800

263

MINKOKU: A FINE WOOD NETSUKE OF A SAMBASO DANCER

By Minkoku, signed Minkoku 民谷
Japan, Edo (Tokyo), 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved as a Sambaso dancer captured in a lively and dynamic pose, one leg raised and the body slightly twisted, with elbows bent and arms lifted, the hands concealed within the long, flowing sleeves of his robe. The voluminous garment is delicately incised with kadomatsu motifs, alluding to the New Year, while the characteristic tall, pointed eboshi hat is rendered with fine incision work. The carving conveys a strong sense of rhythmic movement and ceremonial energy, characteristic of this auspicious dance. Small himotoshi to the back and signed MINKOKU.

HEIGHT 4.8 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with minimal wear.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a Sanbasu dancer by the same artist, signed Minkoku, 5.5 cm high, at Christie's, Japanese and Korean Art, 23 March 1999, New York, lot 33.



Estimate EUR 1,500
Starting price EUR 800



264

CHIKUSAI: A FINE WOOD NETSUKE OF SOTOBA KOMACHI

By Chikusai, signed Chikusai 竹齋
Japan, Tokyo, Meiji period (1868-1912)

Finely carved as Ono no Komachi, one of the celebrated Rokkasen (Six Immortal Poets) of the 9th century, here portrayed in her later years. Once famed for her exceptional beauty and poetic brilliance, she is depicted as an aged woman seated upon a grave marker (sotoba), her former elegance now diminished. Clad in worn and tattered robes, she leans upon a staff, a basket beside her containing meagre provisions gathered along the roadside.

The carving is executed with remarkable sensitivity and attention to detail. Her face is particularly expressive, with deeply incised wrinkles, a sharply defined chin, squinting eyes, and inlaid teeth, conveying both dignity and pathos. The artist has devoted equal care to the rendering of her garments, as well as to the large, weathered hat, pierced with several holes. Subtle details - such as the gentle positioning of her feet, placed one atop the other - enhance the quiet introspection of the figure. The grain of the sotoba is finely articulated. Himotoshi through the back and underside, the latter bearing the signature within a rounded oval reserve CHIKUSAI.

LENGTH 4.1 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of Ono no Komachi by the same artist, signed Chikusai, 4.6 cm long, illustrated in Coullery, Marie-Therese / Newstead, Martin S. (1977) The Baur Collection, p. 170-171, no. C 412.



Estimate EUR 2,000
Starting price EUR 1,000





265
TOSHIMASA: A FINE WOOD NETSUKE OF A SKELETON WITH A FAN

By Toshimasa (Jusho), signed Toshimasa 壽正
 Japan, Edo (Tokyo), mid to late 19th century

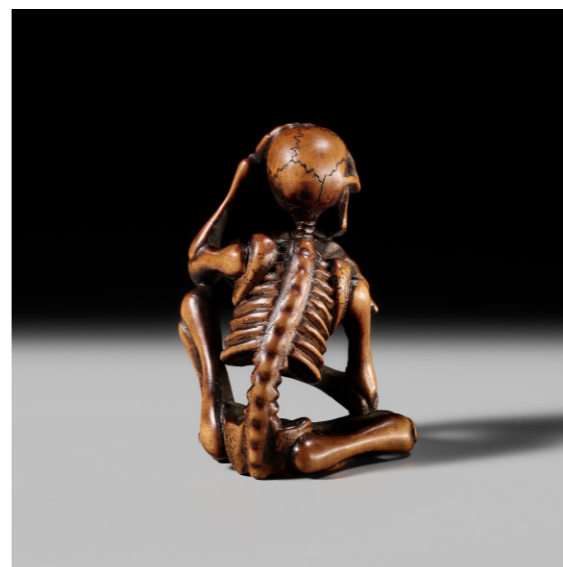
This finely carved and rather unusual netsuke depicts a seated skeleton, crouching with one knee raised and the other leg folded beneath, its bony frame rendered with striking anatomical precision. In one hand, it holds an open folding fan, delicately incised with radiating ribs, while the other hand rests thoughtfully against its skull. The skull is masterfully carved, with hollow eye sockets, grinning teeth, and finely incised fissures, suggesting age and wear. The ribs, vertebrae, and elongated limbs are carefully articulated. Natural himotoshi and signed within an oval reserve bridge TOSHIMASA.

HEIGHT 4.4 cm

Provenance: Christie's, Asian Art, 23 February 2006, London, lot 2589. A French private collection, acquired from the above.

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear, surface scratches and tiny nibbling.

The artist should not be confused with the Nagoya artist who signed 利正. This carver, likely related to Jugyoku (sharing the same first kanji 壽), appears to have specialized in depicting skeletons and skulls, as evidenced by his body of work.



The present netsuke likely draws inspiration from the works of Kawanabe Kyosai (1831-1889),

a renowned artist known for his playful and sometimes macabre depictions of skeletons. Kyosai famously created hanging scrolls of skeletons engaged in various activities such as dancing, playing music, or wielding swords, as seen in the example at the British Museum (registration number 1946,0209,0.48).



A hanging scroll of skeletons, some dancing, others seated and playing music, by Kawanabe Kyosai, in the British Museum, registration number 1946,0209,0.48

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of a skull by the same artist, signed Toshimasa, 4 cm high, at Christie's, Japanese Art & Design, 13 May 2009, London, lot 103 (sold for GBP 2,375 or approx. **EUR 4,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing)



Estimate EUR 8,000
 Starting price EUR 4,000



266
A SUPERB TALL WOOD NETSUKE OF A PERFORMER

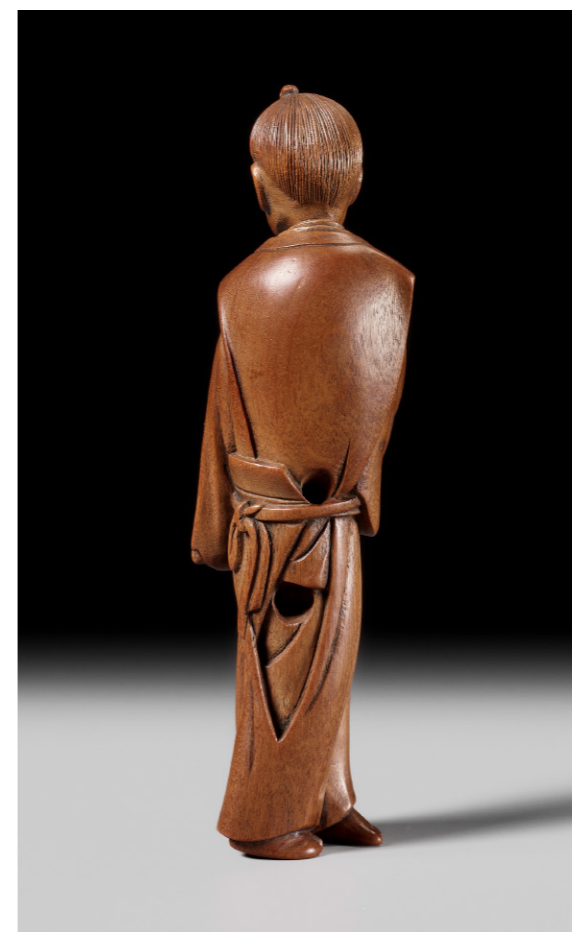
Unsigned
 Japan, 19th century

A remarkably tall netsuke depicting a performer standing in a dynamic pose, his upper body turned away from the audience as he flourishes a folding fan partly concealed within the voluminous folds of his robe. The garment falls in heavy pleats to the ankles, lending the figure a striking vertical presence. The slender hands with delicately modeled fingers animate the gesture, while the face displays a vivid and humorous expression: the mouth open to reveal crooked teeth, the broad nose with flaring nostrils, and drooping eyes set beneath a bulbous forehead. The finely incised hair is combed upward and tied in a small knot, the topknot falling gently to one side. Large, asymmetrical himotoshi are carved through the back.

HEIGHT 10.8 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.

This superbly carved figure, executed in deeply polished and attractively grained, pale wood, is difficult to assign to a specific school, as it shares characteristics with several accomplished carvers. The exaggerated and humorous facial expression recalls works by Kokeisai Sansho (1871–1926); however, a good comparison is also provided by the monkey-mask performer by Meikeisai Hojitsu (1835–1910) in the present sale (lot number 267). Another intriguing parallel is a netsuke of the same subject signed Toyomasa. Regardless of attribution, this anonymous carving stands comfortably alongside the finest works of these masters.



LITERATURE COMPARISON

For a related wood netsuke of a dancing courtier by Kokeisai Sansho, 7.4 cm high, see Zacke, *Kunst der Netsuke und Inro Japans – Ausstellung*

1991, Vienna, no. 58. Compare also a related wood netsuke of the same subject and similar size, signed Toyomasa, illustrated on the cover of Inagaki Kiichi (2019) *Netsuke Sanka (Love Song to Netsuke)*.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of a dancing Okame with a similar expression, by Kokeisai Sansho, 8.3 cm high, at Sotheby's, *The Katchen Collection Of Netsuke*, Part II, 13 July 2006, London, lot 26 (sold for GBP 9,360 or approx. **EUR 18,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 15,000
 Starting price EUR 7,500

267
**HOJITSU: A RARE AND SUPERB
 TALL WOOD NETSUKE OF A KYOGEN
 SARUMUKO PERFORMER**

By Meikeisai Hojitsu, signed Hojitsu 法實
 Japan, Edo (Tokyo), mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Superbly carved, the actor stands upright in a theatrical pose, the right hand raised and clasping a temari ball while the lowered left hand holds a folding fan. He is dressed in voluminous robes neatly incised with scrolling designs and secured by a brocade belt from which hangs a fish, an auspicious symbol of prosperity and abundance. His face is concealed behind a saru mask, the hair beneath a tall eboshi cap.

The finely carved monkey mask is rendered with a startled expression, the mouth agape to reveal teeth and large circular eyes set within recessed sockets. The garments fall in flowing folds that enhance the sense of movement appropriate to a stage performer. Good himotoshi to the back and signed HOJITSU.

HEIGHT 9.7 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with minor expected wear and very light traces of use.

The present figure is notable for its unusually large size (9.7 cm) within the oeuvre of Hojitsu, whose works are typically smaller and frequently incorporate inlays. Nevertheless, the carving retains the confident modeling and expressive theatrical character seen in his finest pieces, particularly in the animated simian mask and the dynamic treatment of the robes.



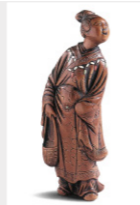
LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of an actor wearing a tengu mask, by the same artist, signed Hojitsu, dated to the mid-19th century, 6 cm high, at Sotheby's, Japanese Works of Art including the Collection of the Late Charles A. Greenfield, Part III, 24 March 1999, New York, lot 62. Compare a related wood netsuke of a monkey dressed as a sambaso dancer, by Sansho, illustrated in Meinertzhagen, Frederick / Lazarnick, George (1986) MCI, Part B, p. 697.



MUSEUM COMPARISON

For a related wood netsuke of Seiobo, by the same artist, signed Hojitsu, see the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, accession number M.91.250.118.



Estimate EUR 10,000
 Starting price EUR 5,000

Sarumuko is a comic play from the Kyogen repertoire, traditionally performed as an interlude between more serious Noh dramas. The story centers on a monkey who marries into a human family and travels to visit his bride's parents for the first time. During the journey he encounters various mishaps and is teased for his awkward manners and animal nature. The play's energetic dancing and expressive gestures have also made it a source of inspiration for netsuke carvers, who occasionally depict actors wearing monkey masks and holding theatrical props associated with comic dance performances.



**Tsukioka Kogyo, Sarumuko, from the series
 Fifty Kyogen Plays (Kyogen gojuban)**





268
**MASAYOSHI: AN AMUSING WOOD NETSUKE
 OF A PARASOL-MAKER WITH A MOVABLE HEAD**

By Masayoshi, signed Masayoshi 正義
 Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

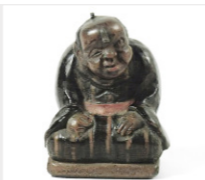
The seated parasol-maker bent over a block of wood, hard at work, one foot resting over an incomplete parasol, the other against the block of wood, his hands sharpening his tools. Dressed in a robe incised with foliate motifs, his obi suspends a tabako-ire, and strewn to his back is a thatched bag. His movable head with a cheerful countenance surmounted by an incised conical hat. Himotoshi to the back.

HEIGHT 5 cm

Condition: Minor repairs and a small crack to the underside. Generally good condition and presenting well.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of a figure with a moving head, by Masayoshi, illustrated in Arakawa, Hirokazu (1983) *The Go Collection of Netsuke*, Tokyo National Museum, p. 119, no. 232-33.



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



269
**A FINE LACQUERED WOOD NETSUKE
 OF A MANZAI DRUMMER**

Unsigned
 Japan, Meiji period (1868-1912)

The Manzai performer depicted with his back hunched, kneeling on one foot, enthusiastically playing the tsuzumi (hand drum), his lacquered robes adorned with kiri (paulownia) crests and foliate vines in gold hiramaki-e, the expressive face turned forward and surmounted by a small traditional cap. Two himotoshi to the underside.

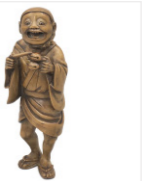
LENGTH 3.7 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear to lacquer.

Manzai is a traditional style of comedy in Japanese culture involving two performers, one being a 'straight' man (tsukkomi) and a 'funny' man (boke). Originally performed as part of New Year festivities, references to manzai performers appear as early as the Heian period, and the lively performances remained a familiar element of popular entertainment for centuries.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

The humorous expression and pale wood used calls to mind the work of Kokeisai Sansho (1871-1926), for a related example by Sansho, note the similar expression, see Weber, V. -F. (1965), *Koji Hoten*, pl. XXXVIII, no. 2.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related lacquered wood netsuke of a Manzai dancer, by Meikeisai Hojitsu, dated to the mid-19th century, 5.1 cm high, at Zackle, *Fine Netsuke & Sagemono*, 9 May 2025, Vienna, lot 370 (sold for **EUR 5,200**).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



270
RYUKEI: A RARE WOOD NETSUKE OF A MAN SEATED ON THE HAND OF BUDDHA

By Ryukei, signed Ryukei 龍珪 with kakihan
 Japan, Edo (Tokyo), first half of the 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved depicting a seated man resting within the palm of a large hand, holding a mirror, with a small box placed before him. The mirror retains a thin inlay of shell forming the reflective surface. The figure is rendered with a calm, contemplative expression, the robes falling in softly carved folds over the compact body. Asymmetrical himotoshi underneath, the larger hole generously excavated to accommodate the cord. Signed RYUKEI with kakihan.

LENGTH 3.7 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear. The thin shell inlay slightly worn.

The unusual motif of a figure seated upon a large hand may allude to Buddhist imagery of divine protection or revelation, in which a devotee is symbolically supported by the hand of the Buddha. The mirror held by the figure may represent a magic mirror (makyo), objects associated in Buddhist tradition with the revelation of sacred imagery.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of a seated man laughing and reading a book by the same artist, similarly formed and inlaid, signed Ryukei, illustrated in Joly, Henri (1975) Catalogue of the H. Seymour Trower Collection of Japanese Art, no. 245, plate IX.

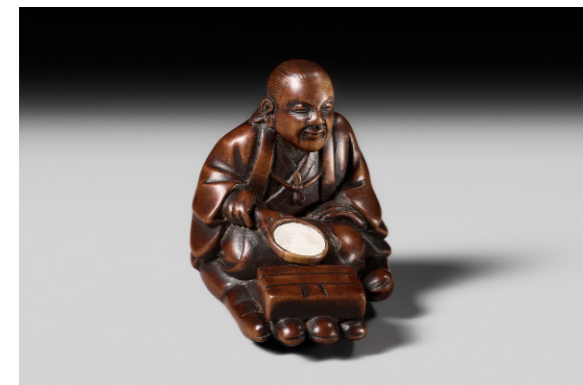


AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of the same subject by the same artist, signed Ryukei with kakihan, 4.1 cm long, the figure holding a closed fan instead of a mirror, at Christie's, Arts of Asia Online, 18 March - 2 April 2026, New York, lot 232.



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



271
A RARE WOOD NETSUKE OF THE RAKAN AJITA (ASITA)

Unsigned
 Japan, Edo (Tokyo), mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Amusingly carved as the seated rakan Ajita tying his famously elongated eyebrows above his head, while holding a mirror in his lap to admire the result. He sits cross-legged, one arm raised overhead, his expressive face rendered with furrowed brows, pursed lips, and finely incised features. The drapery falls in fluid, naturalistic folds.

Two ringed himotoshi of stained bone underneath.

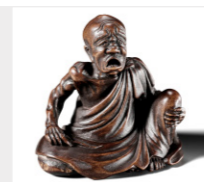
HEIGHT 3.5 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.

The carving suggests a pupil of Hoshunsai Masayuki, active in mid-19th-century Edo (Tokyo), particularly in the treatment of the facial features and the crisp, rhythmic folds of the garment.

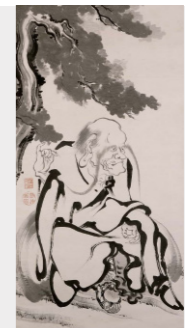
AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of a rakan applying moxa, by Hoshunsai Masayuki, dated to the mid-19th century, 4 cm high, at Zacks, Asian Art Discoveries, 22 January 2026, Vienna, lot 461 (sold for **EUR 3,640**).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500

Ajita (Asita) is one of the Sixteen Rakan (arhats), the enlightened disciples of the Buddha, frequently depicted in Japanese art. His extraordinarily long eyebrows are his defining attribute and are humorously emphasized in the present composition.



A hanging scroll depicting the Rakan Ajita with long eyebrows, by Ito Jakuchu, dated to the second half of the 18th century, in the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, accession number 11.6923





272
**YASUAKI: A FINE INLAID TOKYO SCHOOL
 IVORY NETSUKE OF A MAN WITH A GO BOARD**

By Yasuaki (Homei), sealed Yasuaki 保明
 Japan, Tokyo, Meiji period (1868-1912)

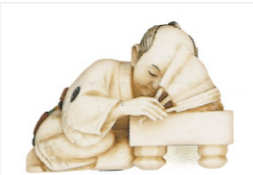
Superbly carved, the figure is depicted seated and asleep, leaning against a go board while partially concealing his face with an open fan. His hair and robes are finely incised and subtly stained, lending depth and softness to the composition. The netsuke is exquisitely inlaid with various precious materials including tortoiseshell, buffalo horn, coral, and mother-of-pearl to the intro set, obi, and roundels of the robe. Horn-ringed himotoshi underneath and sealed within a green-stained plaque to the goban YASUAKI.

LENGTH 4.4 cm

Condition: The fan is restored. Otherwise excellent condition with minor expected wear and few fine age cracks.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare an almost identical inlaid ivory netsuke by the same artist, signed Yasuaki with seal Kodama, dated to the late 19th century, 4.2 cm long, at Sotheby's, Japanese Works of Art, 17 May 1987, London, lot 94 (sold for GBP 1,700 or approx. **EUR 6,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



273
**YASUAKI: AN UNUSUAL INLAID TOKYO SCHOOL
 IVORY NETSUKE OF DARUMA**

By Yasuaki (Homei), signed Yasuaki 保明 with seal Kodama 見玉
 Japan, Tokyo, Meiji period (1868-1912)

Daruma is carved in a strikingly angular manner, the robe executed in the style of ittobori with crisp ridges and sharp edges that emphasize the compact, tumbling-doll form of the body - a marked departure from Yasuaki's more rounded and realistic carvings. His face is inlaid with mother-of-pearl eyes, creating a penetrating gaze, while the beard and moustache are finely stained for contrast. The handle of his hossu is inlaid in dark horn, and the ivory is beautifully stained with hues of red pigments. Ringed himotoshi to the back. Signed underneath YASUAKI above a silver plaque bearing the seal Kodama.

HEIGHT 3.5 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only minor wear.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related stained ivory netsuke of Daruma in a bowl by the same artist, signed Yasuaki, at Sotheby's, 22 January 1977, Honolulu, lot 118 (sold for USD 1,300 or approx. **EUR 6,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500





274
**KOKEI: A FINE TOKYO SCHOOL INLAID
 IVORY NETSUKE OF OKAME**

By Kokei, signed Kokei 光慶
 Japan, Tokyo, late 19th-early 20th century, Meiji period (1868-1912)

Finely carved as Okame, seated in a compact, relaxed pose, the jovial figure rests her arms gently folded before her, leaning slightly forward. The full face is beautifully modeled, with the hair skillfully rendered in flowing strands, delicately enhanced with sumi staining. The hair frames her face and cascades over her shoulders. The robe enveloping her body is carved with soft, undulating folds, and its surface is subtly polished to highlight the smoothness of the ivory, with small decorative details inlaid in green-stained horn. The underside features two small himotoshi and the signature KOKEI within an inlaid red lacquer reserve.

HEIGHT 3.5 cm, LENGTH 3.6 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.



The style and signature, sharing the character Ko 光, suggest that this unrecorded carver was very likely a pupil of the renowned Ishikawa Komei (1835-1910), who was appointed an Imperial Household Artist in 1890.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related ivory Okame with inlaid decorations to her robe, by Meiuin (also a pupil of Ishikawa Komei), illustrated in Lazarnick, George (1981) *Netsuke & Inro Artists, and How to Read Their Signatures* (LNIA), Vol. 1, p. 753.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related Tokyo school inlaid ivory netsuke of a chubby boy, by Yasuaki, 3.5 cm long, at Zacke, *Fine Netsuke & Sagemono*, 16 April 2021, Vienna, lot 242 (sold for **EUR 6,710**).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



275
**A FINE TOKYO SCHOOL INLAID
 WOOD NETSUKE OF SHOKI TRAPPING AN ONI**

Unsigned
 Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved, the demon queller Shoki crouches low as he traps a struggling oni beneath a large woven straw hat. Shoki is depicted with a long beard and a scholar's cap, one hand pressing firmly upon the hat while the oni writhes beneath it, its fierce face vividly carved in bold relief on the underside. The carving is enhanced with inlays of variously stained bone and horn. Natural himotoshi.

LENGTH 3.5 cm

Condition: One of the inlays on the hat has been restored. Otherwise, excellent condition with minor expected wear.

Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000





276
**NAOYUKI: A VERY FINE INLAID WOOD
 NETSUKE OF TWO EGG TESTERS**

By Naoyuki, signed Naoyuki 直雪
 Japan, Edo (Tokyo), mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Exquisitely carved, the larger figure stands upright examining a large egg held up to his eye, his expression conveying concentrated scrutiny. Beside him a smaller figure crouches while inspecting another basket of eggs, his face animated with a mischievous smile. Both figures wear simple garments, the standing figure's buttons neatly inlaid in bone, as are the many eggs. Asymmetrical himotoshi to the reverse next to the neatly incised signature NAOYUKI.

HEIGHT 3.8 cm, WIDTH 2.3 cm

Condition: Very good condition with only minor wear and light typical traces of use.

**LITERATURE
 COMPARISON**

Compare a closely related wood and ivory netsuke of two Dutchmen testing eggs by the same artist, signed Naoyuki, illustrated in Lazarnick, George (1981) *Netsuke & Inro Artists, and How to Read Their Signatures (LNIA)*, Vol. 2, p. 824. Compare a closely related wood and ivory netsuke of three Dutchmen testing eggs by the same artist, signed Naoyuki, illustrated in Coullery, Marie-Therese / Newstead, Martin S. (1977) *The Baur Collection*, pp. 186-187, no C 454.



Estimate EUR 6,000
 Starting price EUR 3,000



277
**MIWA: A FINE EBONY AND CORAL
 NETSUKE OF AN ISLANDER**

By Miwa, signed Miwa 三輪
 Japan, Edo (Tokyo), early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Superbly carved as a coral diver straining to lift a gigantic coral branch. The figure's body is rendered in ebony, while his trousers, carved from stained bone, are finely decorated with chrysanthemum motifs and scrolling patterns. A dagger is thrust into the waistband, its bone hilt intricately carved. The coral branch itself is formed from natural coral, its organic texture ingeniously incorporated into the composition. Natural himotoshi and signed MIWA to the leg.

LENGTH 4.8 cm

Provenance: A private collection in the United States. Bonhams, *Fine Japanese Works of Art*, 25 March 2010, New York, lot 2080 (sold for USD 5,185 or approx. EUR 6,500 converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing). The Saoud bin Mohammed Ali Al-Thani Foundation, acquired from the above. **Saoud bin Mohammed Ali Al-Thani (1966-2014)** was a Qatari prince who served as minister of Culture, Arts and Heritage. By the turn of the 21st century, Sheikh Saoud had established an international reputation as an avid art collector, both for his own collection as well as those of several state-owned museums he oversaw in Qatar.



Saoud bin Mohammed Ali Al-Thani (1966-2014)

Condition: Sections of the feet and arms have been glued to support the coral, but this is original to manufacture. The coral with some typical natural flaws including cracks and fissures. Overall excellent condition with minor typical wear.



LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related ebony and coral netsuke of an islander, by Genryosai Minkoku, illustrated in Christie's, *Fine Japanese Works of Art*, 22 July 1975, London, lot 171.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related ebony wood and coral netsuke of two islanders, by Minkoku, 4 cm high, at Zucke, 25 September 2020, Vienna, lot 156 (sold for EUR 5,688).



Estimate EUR 5,000
 Starting price EUR 2,400



278
A RARE TOKYO SCHOOL INLAID WOOD NETSUKE OF A HORAGAI CONCH AND DRUM

Unsigned
 Japan, Tokyo, second half of the 19th century

Finely carved as a horagai (conch-shell trumpet) fitted with a kaji-o, the ritual bead cord associated with Shugendo practitioners, the beads inlaid in ivory, lacquered wood, and mother-of-pearl. The mouthpiece is of ivory. The shell rests upon a tsuzumi hand drum, which is inlaid on both sides with ivory and carved with the mitsudomoe crest within a star-shaped reserve. Two himotoshi to the underside.

LENGTH 4 cm

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

The horagai is closely associated with the yamabushi, the mountain ascetics of the Shugendo tradition. Fitted with its characteristic bead cord (kaji-o), the conch-shell trumpet served both as a signaling instrument used to communicate across mountainous terrain and as a ritual implement accompanying chants and esoteric practices. Together with drums and prayer beads it forms part of the distinctive ritual equipment of Shugendo practitioners and appears frequently in Japanese art, sometimes also evoking legendary warrior-monks such as Benkei, who is often depicted with yamabushi attributes.

Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



279
TOSHICHIKA: AN INLAID WOOD NETSUKE OF HANDAKA SONJA

By Toshichika, signed Toshichika 俊親
 Japan, Tokyo, late 19th century, Meiji period (1868-1912)

Finely carved, the rakan is seated in monastic robes and holding his alms bowl aloft from which his dragon companion emerges. The dragon slithers out of the vessel, appearing as a sinuous line of smoke, its head resting in the hands of its master who strokes its beard gently; the mighty dragon with minutely incised scales. The deity's face is carved with a stern expression, wide eyes under furrowed brows, and a grim smile, flanked by ears suspending metal hoop earrings, further adorned with an aogai amulet suspended on a metal chain. Asymmetrical himotoshi to the underside and signed on an inlaid lacquer reserve TOSHICHIKA.

HEIGHT 3 cm

Provenance: From the private collection of Maybelle Dore. Zackle, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 9 May 2025, Vienna, lot 286 (sold for **EUR 3,120**). A French private collection, acquired from the above.
Condition: Very good condition with minor wear. A small gold-leaf fill to the chest.

AUCTION COMPARISON

For another work by the artist, depicting kannon inside a lotus leaf signed Toshichika, see Zackle, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 8 November 2024, Vienna, lot 275 (sold for **EUR 4,680**).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500





280
**CHIKUSAI: A RARE GILT METAL AND BAMBOO
 NETSUKE OF A WASP ON GRAPES**

By Chikusai, signed Chikusai 竹齋
 Japan, Tokyo, second half of the 19th century

Superbly carved as a compact cluster of ripened grapes, the body skillfully fashioned from bamboo, with the natural nodes and grain of the material cleverly used to evoke the rounded forms of the fruit and twisting vine. A striking gilt-copper wasp is delicately applied to the surface, with finely detailed wings, legs, and segmented body. The combination of materials showcases remarkable ingenuity, with the metal insect appearing to alight naturally upon the fruit. Natural himotoshi and signed within an inlaid circular wood reserve CHIKUSAI.

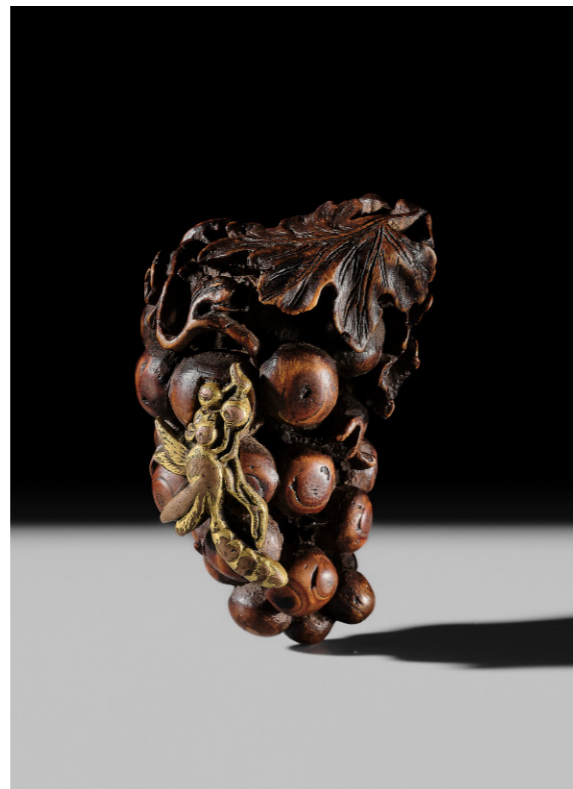
HEIGHT 5.8 cm

Provenance: Dorotheum, Vienna, 1992. German private collection, acquired from the above. With a collection label '44'. A copy of a receipt from Dorotheum, dated 5 May 1992, and a description of the present piece, accompanies this lot.

Condition: Excellent condition, minor rubbing to gilt and few typical 'natural flaws' to the bamboo.

Chikusai, a talented artist from Edo (Tokyo), was renowned for his ability to combine various materials to create dynamic and harmonious compositions. His inventive use of materials, as demonstrated in the present netsuke, is a hallmark of his work.

Estimate EUR 2,500
 Starting price EUR 1,200



281
**TOMOCHIKA: A RARE WOOD AND IVORY
 RYUSA NETSUKE OF A RAKAN (ARHAT)**

By a member of the Tomochika school, signed Tomochika 友親
 Japan, Edo (Tokyo), mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

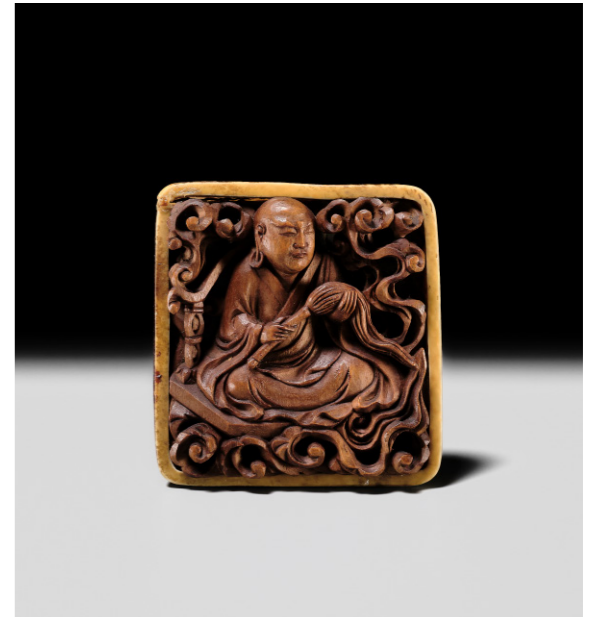
Finely carved in openwork from attractively grained wood, depicting a rakan (arhat) in contemplative repose, surrounded by swirling clouds. The enlightened disciple is shown seated cross-legged, gently holding a hossu (fly whisk) in his hand, his serene face conveying a peaceful and introspective expression. The openwork panel is set within a square ivory bowl. Two large connected himotoshi and signature TOMOCHIKA to the back.

LENGTH 3.7 cm

Provenance: Dorotheum, Vienna, 1992. A German private collection, acquired from the above. A copy of a receipt from Dorotheum, dated 30 April 1992, and a description of the present piece, accompanies this lot.

Condition: Good condition with minor repairs to the fingers and a few of the clouds. A crack to the ivory bowl near the top.

Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



282
**FUETSU: A RARE INLAID WOOD
 SHUNGA HAKO (BOX) NETSUKE**

By Fuetsu, signed Fuetsu 負越
 Japan, Tokyo, second half of the 19th century

Published: Eskenazi Ltd. (1998), Japanese Netsuke, Ojime, and Inro from a Private European Collection, London, pp. 148-149, no. 179.

Finely carved in square form, this hako netsuke features a dark-stained wood base that contrasts with the lighter lid, which is richly decorated with coral, green-stained bone, and silver inlays. The lid depicts a box laden with clams, a bean pod, and droplets of water clinging to the shells, along with a price tag reading "thirty-two momme." Upon opening the box, the interior reveals a close-up erotic scene. The box is further adorned with pegs inlaid in dark wood and is finished in gilt. A central green-stained, ringed himotoshi is pierced into the underside, and signed in a tsumishu reserve FUETSU.



LENGTH 2.5 cm

Provenance: Ex-collection Emile Veranneman. With Eskenazi Ltd., London, 1998. A private collection, acquired from the above.
Condition: Very good condition with minor wear, the inlaid himotoshi slightly chipped.

Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



283
**GYOKUSHI: A FINE WOOD NETSUKE
 OF A DISCARDED CICADA HUSK**

By Gyokushi, signed Gyokushi 玉芝
 Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Exquisitely carved as the empty shell of a cicada (semi no nukegara), its delicate form rendered with remarkable naturalism. The head is powerfully modeled, with large, rounded eyes and sharply defined mouthparts and pincers, while the segmented thorax and abdomen are carved in rhythmic ridges that taper toward the tail. The slender legs are tightly folded beneath the body, with angular joints carefully articulated to evoke the fragile husk left behind after the cicada's emergence, symbolizing renewal. A single himotoshi is pierced underneath and signed on a mother-of-pearl inlaid reserve GYOKUSHI.

LENGTH 4 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only very minor wear.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a discarded cicada by the same artist, signed Gyokushi, illustrated in Lazarnick, George (1981) Netsuke & Inro Artists, and How to Read Their Signatures (LNIA), Vol. 1, p. 429.



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000

Published: Stern, H. P. (1972) The Magnificent Three: Lacquer, Netsuke, and Tsuba, Japan House Gallery, New York, cat. no. 103 (not illustrated).

Exhibited: Japan House Gallery, New York, The Magnificent Three: Lacquer, Netsuke, and Tsuba, 1972.

Finely carved as a group of three overlapping mushrooms, two growing adjacent to one another, and the third nestled beneath the large cap of the central fungus. The umimatsu is beautifully chosen for its exceptional marbling and skillfully manipulated to highlight the contrasting textures, which emulate the natural differences between the smoothly polished caps and the finely incised radial gills. Natural himotoshi and signed within an inlaid red lacquer reserve BAIKO.

LENGTH 4.3 cm

Provenance: Ex-collection Charles A. Greenfield. Sotheby's, Japanese Works of Art including the Collection of the late Charles A. Greenfield, Part III, 24 March 1999, New York, lot 51 (mid-estimate USD 3,000 or approx. EUR 5,200 converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing). A private collection in Belgium, acquired from the above.

Condition: Two small nicks to the outer edge of the caps, otherwise presenting very well with only minor wear.

Very few netsuke are recorded by Baiko, who appears to have worked exclusively in umimatsu, a material prized for its intricate, marbled texture.

Estimate EUR 2,500
 Starting price EUR 1,200

284
**BAIKO: A RARE UMIMATSU NETSUKE
 OF A GROUP OF MUSHROOMS**

By Baiko, signed Baiko 梅湖
 Japan, second half of the 19th century



285
**JUGYOKU: A RARE TSUSHU (CARVED RED LACQUER)
 NETSUKE OF A BOY PLAYING WITH A PUPPY**

By Ryukosai Jugyoku II (1815-1877), signed Jugyoku 壽玉
 Japan, Edo (Tokyo), mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Published: Meinertzhagen, Frederick / Lazarnick, George (1986) MCI, Part A, p. 273.

The tsuishu (carved red lacquer) netsuke is finely modeled, depicting a charming boy seated playfully holding a puppy that wriggles in delight. The boy's robe is intricately incised with a diaper pattern, and his hair is delicately carved with fine lines. The puppy's eyes, double-inlaid in pale translucent and dark horn, give it a wonderfully expressive look. The reverse features two asymmetrical himotoshi, the smaller hole ringed in tortoiseshell, and signed underneath in a tortoiseshell plaque JUGYOKU.

HEIGHT 4.3 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with minor wear and light rubbing to lacquer.

Ryukosai Jugyoku II (1815-1877) was renowned for his ability to combine various materials in his work, with tsuishu carving being a particular specialty. While tsuishu was occasionally used for decorative accents, netsuke carved entirely from this medium are exceedingly rare, making this example particularly remarkable.



LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related netsuke of a shoji dancer with tsuishu details by the same artist, signed Jugyoku, illustrated in Jahss, Melvin H. and Betty Jahss (1971) Inro and Other Miniature Forms of Japanese Lacquer Art, p. 259, no. 162.



Estimate EUR 5,000
 Starting price EUR 2,400



286
**JUGYOKU: A FINE WOOD NETSUKE
 OF A MASK CARVER**

By Ryukosai Jugyoku II (1815-1877), signed Jugyoku 寿玉
 Japan, Edo (Tokyo), mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Superbly carved as a seated mask carver absorbed in his craft, the figure is shown working with hammer and chisel upon a mask of Okame. His face is rendered with gentle concentration, the softly modeled cheeks and subtly pursed lips conveying calm focus. The finely incised hair is neatly combed back and gathered into a small topknot. Asymmetrical himotoshi underneath, the smaller one ringed with green stained horn and signed JUGYOKU.

LENGTH 3.5 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only very minor wear.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a mask carver, signed Jugyoku, illustrated in Davey, Neil K. (1974) Netsuke: A Comprehensive Study Based on the M.T. Hindson Collection, p. 119, no. 344.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a mask carver, signed Jugyoku, dated to the mid-late 19th century, 3.3 cm long, at Sotheby's, Fine Netsuke Inro and Lacquer from the Estate of Madelyn Hickmott, 8 February 1989, New York, lot 170 (sold for USD 1,045 or approx. **EUR 2,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



287
**JUGYOKU: A HUMOROUS WOOD NETSUKE
 OF ONI PULLING SHOKI IN A JINRIKISHA**

By Ryukosai Jugyoku II (1815-1877), signed Jugyoku 寿玉
 with kakihan
 Japan, Edo (Tokyo), second half of the 19th century

Humorously carved to depict Shoki, the Demon Queller, riding in a jinrikisha pulled by a captive oni, the muscular demon strains forward in exaggerated effort, his tense expression and crouched posture contrasting with Shoki's composed, authoritative bearing as he sits upright, grasping his sword. Shoki's flowing beard and robes are finely carved, with crisp detailing. The eyes of both are inlaid with dark horn. A single central himotoshi through the base and signed JUGYOKU with kakihan.

LENGTH 4 cm

Condition: Very good condition with only very minor wear and light traces of use. A few light scratches to the base.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of Shoki and oni by the same artist, signed Jugyoku, 5 cm long, at Sotheby's, The Carlo Monzino Collection of Netsuke, Inro and Lacquer, 21 June 1995, London, lot 159 (sold for GBP 1,380 or approx. **EUR 3,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000

288
**RYUKEI: A FINE WOOD NETSUKE
 OF A SHOJO IN A SAKE SAUCER**

By Ryukei II, signed Ryukei 龍珪 with kakihan
 Japan, Edo (Tokyo), mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved, the shojo is depicted seated in a large sakazuki (sake saucer) borne upon waves (or sake), holding a ladle in both hands, the end inlaid in stained bone. Her face displays a cheerful, animated expression, with the characteristic long hair neatly incised and the robe falling in fluid, naturalistic folds. Two himotoshi through a wave underneath and signed to the rim RYUKEI with the artist's characteristic kakihan.

LENGTH 3.7 cm

Condition: The ladle and rim with an old repair. Otherwise excellent condition.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a shojo by the same artist, signed Ryukei, 4 cm, at Lempertz, Asiatische Kunst, 5 December 2015, Cologne, lot 775 (sold for EUR 2,108 or approx. **EUR 2,700** adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



289

**SUZUKI TOKOKU: A SUPERB INLAID
WOOD NETSUKE OF A BOY AND PUPPY**

By Suzuki Tokoku (1846-1913), signed Tokoku 東谷
with seal Bairyu 樺立
Japan, Tokyo, late 19th century, Meiji period (1868-1912)



A boy, masterfully carved from warm-toned boxwood, sits upon a woven straw mat with one leg drawn up, intent on fastening a leash around his small puppy, which lies obediently before him, rendered in dark wood. The child's robe is delicately incised with an intricate diaper pattern and secured at the back with a ribbon, exemplifying the artist's celebrated precision and virtuosity on an intimate scale. Two asymmetrical himotoshi ringed in bone underneath, the smaller cord hole stained green. The artist's full signature, usually reserved for his best works, is found underneath in seal form within two plaques, one in tsuishu lacquer and one in gold, reading TOKOKU and BAIRYU respectively.

HEIGHT 3.5 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.

Suzuki Tokoku (1846-1913) is regarded as one of the finest netsuke carvers, renowned for his masterful use of inlay.

His restrained application of color achieves an elegant balance - never overwhelming the viewer, but always precisely judged. Tokoku's early works, often manju or ryusa types, are executed in the Asakusa style and frequently incorporate fine metal inlays. It is plausible that his art name, Tokoku 東谷, derives from that of Kokusai 谷齋. Although apparently self-taught, Tokoku must at some point have worked in association with Kokusai.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related ivory netsuke of a boy and dog by the same artist, sealed Bairyu, at Christie's, 20 April 1989, New York, lot 141 (sold for USD 10,000 or approx. **EUR 22,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



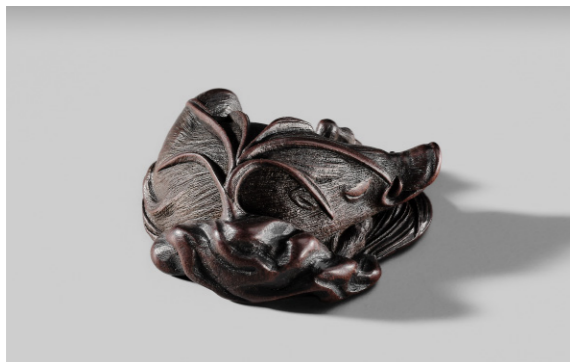
Estimate EUR 15,000
Starting price EUR 7,500





290
JUGYOKU: A FINE WOOD NETSUKE OF A BOAR SLEEPING AMONG AUTUMN GRASSES

By Ryukosai Jugyoku II (1815-1877), signed Jugyoku 壽玉 Japan, Edo (Tokyo), mid-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)



The theme of autumn leaves and a boar, portrayed in a similar pose, is reflected in the painterly theme of 'Akikusa ni fusuru inoshishi' (A Wild Boar Lying Amidst Autumn Plants), first published in 1720 in an instructional picture book by Tachibana Morikuni.



Finely carved as a boar sleeping next to a craggy rock, a stalk of pampas grass draped over its back as it rests upon a bed of autumn grasses, ginkgo, and maple leaves. The boar's bulky form is rendered with remarkable sensitivity, with the fur neatly incised to capture its texture. Two green-stained ringed himotoshi are located underneath, and the netsuke is signed within a polished area JUGYOKU with kakihan.

LENGTH 3.4 cm

Condition: Repair to the rock, otherwise excellent condition with minor wear.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a sleeping boar by the same artist, signed Jugyoku with kakihan, 5.1 cm long, at Sotheby's, Netsuke, Inro, Ojime and Kiseruzutsu, 20 February 1986, London, lot 30 (sold for GBP 1,650 or approx. **EUR 6,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 4,000
Starting price EUR 2,000



291
KYOKUSAI: A FINE SO SCHOOL NETSUKE OF A HARE AND TANUKI, KACHI-KACHI YAMA

By Tsukamoto Kyokusai, signed Kyokusai 旭齋 Japan, Tokyo, c. 1930

Exquisitely carved with remarkable attention to detail, the two characters from the famous fable Kachi-Kachi Yama are vividly depicted. The hare is shown energetically launching the clay boat, pushing against its edge. Its face expresses determination and mischief, with long ears tucked back. The tanuki sits inside the boat, its fur finely incised, and the boat itself is realistically rendered with a stippled texture that mimics the appearance of wood. On the underside, the waves of the water are cleverly carved, through which the himotoshi passes. Signed underneath KYOKUSAI.

LENGTH 4.5 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.

Tsukamoto Kyokusai was a contemporary of Gyokuso and Morita Sōkō. Born and raised in Kyoto, he moved to Tokyo in 1923. In his younger years, he signed Hoshu as his chōmei, later changing it to Kyokusai and occasionally to Kyokudo. Wood was the primary material used in Kyokusai's netsuke, although he occasionally worked with ivory.



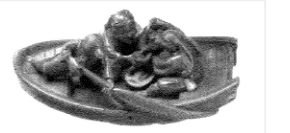
This netsuke references a scene from the Kachi-Kachi Yama folktale, where a tanuki challenges a hare to a life-and-death contest to prove who is the better creature. They are tasked with building boats and racing across a lake. The hare carves a boat from a fallen tree trunk, while the tanuki foolishly builds a boat from mud. Though they start evenly matched, the tanuki's boat begins to dissolve in the water. Instead of rescuing the tanuki, the hare strikes him with an oar and declares his friendship with the innocent couple whom the wicked tanuki had wronged, revealing his revenge.



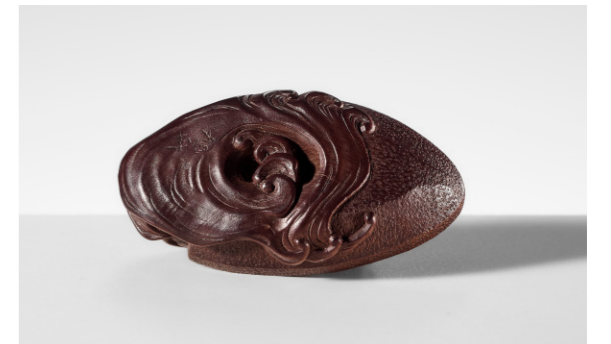
Yamamoto Shoun (1870-1965), Kachi-kachi Yama (The Kachi-Kachi Mountain)

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related So school wood netsuke of a hare and tanuki in a boat (kachi-kachi yama), by Gyokuso, illustrated in Davey, Neil K. (1974) Netsuke: A Comprehensive Study Based on the M.T. Hindson Collection, p. 157, no. 469.



Estimate EUR 5,000
Starting price EUR 2,400





292
GYOKUSO: A SUPERB MINIATURE SO SCHOOL WOOD NETSUKE OF DOVES ON A WARAJI

By Ouchi Gyokuso (1879-1944), signed Gyokuso 玉藻
 Japan, Tokyo, first half of the 20th century

Exquisitely carved as a pair of doves perched atop a disintegrating waraji (straw sandal), with the weaving of the sandal intricately emulated. One bird is depicted preening itself, while the other pecks at loose grains, inlaid in bone. The birds are finely detailed with neatly incised feathers and minutely carved feet. The underside features himotoshi pierced beneath a pale wood kongo (vajra), and the signature GYOKUSO is inscribed on an inlaid, red-lacquered plate.

LENGTH 2.8 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.

Ouchi Gyokuso (1879-1944) was the father of Ouchi Sosui (1911-1966) and together with Morita Soko (1879-1942), the most important pupil of Miyazaki Joso (1835-1910), the founder of the important So school in Tokyo.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of a rat on a straw rice bale, of similar size and similarly carved, by Morita Soko, 3 cm long, at Zacks, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 28 April 2023, Vienna, lot 219 (sold for **EUR 10,400**).



Estimate EUR 6,000
 Starting price EUR 3,000



293
SOKEI: A FINE SO SCHOOL WOOD NETSUKE OF FUJIN

By Sokei, signed Sokei 藻溪
 Japan, Tokyo, early 20th century

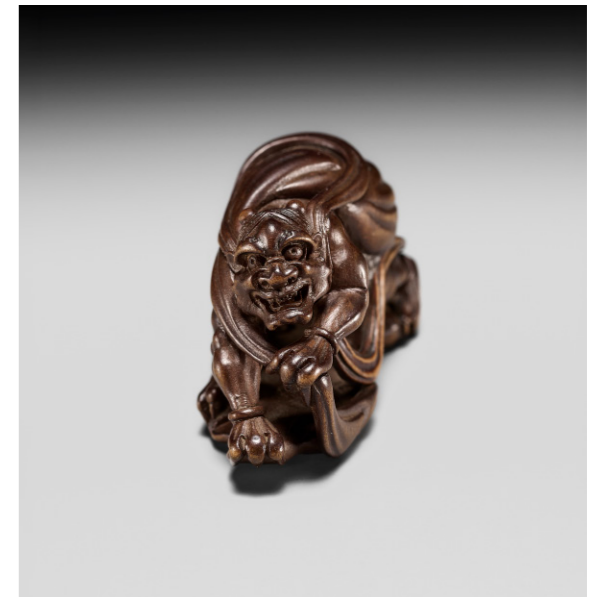
The Wind God Fujin is depicted crouching in a dynamic pose atop a scrolling cloud, clutching his great wind bag as he leans forward, his muscular limbs tense with energy. His expressive face is rendered with bulging eyes, furrowed brows, and an open mouth revealing sharp teeth. The wind bag is draped across his back, its surface carved in flowing folds. A single himotoshi underneath through the beautifully carved cloud base and signed within an oval reserve SOKEI.

LENGTH 4.2 cm

Condition: A small restoration to a section of the billowing scarf. Otherwise excellent condition.

The artist is a rarely encountered member of the So school, founded by Miyazaki Joso (1835-1910).

Estimate EUR 6,000
 Starting price EUR 3,000





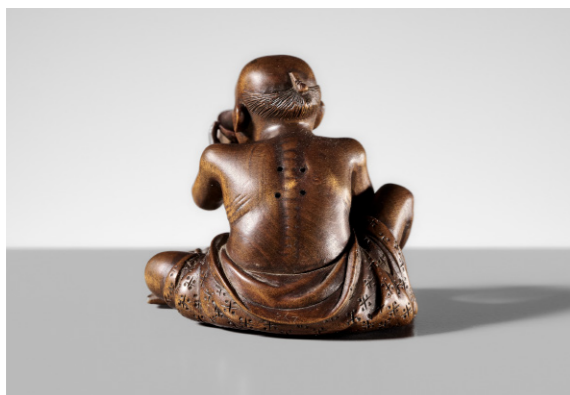
294
GYOKUSO: A SUPERB SO SCHOOL INLAID WOOD NETSUKE OF A SAKE DRINKER

By Ouchi Gyokuso (Ouchi Jiemon, 1879-1944), signed Gyokuso 玉藻 and sealed Ji 治 Japan, Tokyo, first half of the 20th century

Superbly carved, the seated man is shown in mid-merrymaking, raising a sake saucer (sakazuki) while holding a glazed (!) ceramic jug in his other hand. His loosely worn kimono falls open to expose his bony rib cage, and four inlaid horn pellets along his spine indicate moxa treatment — suggesting he is indulging in both medicinal therapy and hearty drink. He sits upon a large kitchen fan (shibu uchiwa, or sensen), beside which lies a bag containing a delicacy — an octopus tentacle inlaid in stained bone — a customary accompaniment to robust sake. Two ringed himotoshi underneath. Signed on an inlaid wood tablet GYOKUSO and sealed Ji (for Jiemon, the artist's given name) on a carved red lacquer (tsuishu) tablet.

LENGTH 3.9 cm

Condition: One hand with a repair and minor traces of glue residue; this may be original and related to the construction, possibly to secure the separately carved and glazed sake jug within the composition. Otherwise in excellent condition with only minimal wear.



Ouchi Gyokuso (1879–1944) was the father of Ouchi Sosui (1911–1966) and, together with Morita Soko (1879–1942), among the most important pupils of Miyazaki Joso (1835–1910), founder of the influential So school in Tokyo. “Jiemon” is recorded as Gyokuso's given name in *The Netsuke Handbook* by Ueda Reikichi (p. 225), translated by Raymond Bushell.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a sake drinker by the same artist, signed Gyokuso, dated c. 1900, illustrated in *Sotheby's, Netsuke, Inro and Lacquer*, 8 December 1981, New York, lot 67.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related inlaid wood netsuke of a seated Daruma by the same artist, signed Gyokuso to, dated to the first half of the 20th century, 4 cm high, at *Zacke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono*, 7 November 2025, Vienna, lot 281, lot 281 (sold for **EUR 14,300**).



Estimate EUR 8,000
 Starting price EUR 4,000



295
SOKOKU: A FINE INLAID WOOD NETSUKE OF A MUSICIAN

By Egawa Sokoku (b. 1920), signed Sokoku 藻谷 Japan, Tokyo, mid-20th century

Masterfully carved as a standing itinerant musician playing a lute, the instrument exquisitely worked, with finely inlaid bone elements accentuating the tuning pegs and plectrum. His robe is carved with exceptional precision, the surface neatly incised with delicate floral decoration. Suspended at his side is a small box with a functional opening drawer. A ring-inlaid himotoshi to the back, the cord channel running through in chimney-style under the man's garment and underside and signed within a green-stained tablet under the box SOKOKU.

HEIGHT 5.5 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.

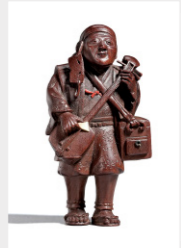
Egawa Sokoku (b. 1920) was a distinguished carver of the So school, renowned for his versatility and masterful use of a wide range of materials. He trained under Morita Soko (1879–1942), the foremost pupil of Miyazaki Joso (1835–1910), the founder of the influential So school in Tokyo. Through this direct lineage, Sokoku inherited a tradition characterized by technical refinement.

The shamisen (lit. 'three strings'), known as samisen in Kyoto and Osaka, is a three-stringed traditional Japanese musical instrument derived from the Chinese instrument sanxian. It is played with a plectrum called a bachi. The construction of the shamisen varies in shape, depending on the genre in which it is used. The instrument used to accompany kabuki has a thin neck, facilitating the agile and virtuosic requirements of that genre. The one used to accompany puppet plays and folk songs has a longer and thicker neck instead, to match the more robust music of those genres.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke depicting the same subject, however differing in that the musician wears a mask, by Soya, 5.7 cm high, at *Bonhams, The Bluette H. Kirchhoff Collection of Netsuke and Sagemono*, 16 September 2009, New York, lot 2086 (sold for USD 2,745 or approx. **EUR 3,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 6,000
 Starting price EUR 3,000



296
SOYA: A FINE SO SCHOOL INLAID WOOD NETSUKE OF HOTEI

By Nakano Soya, signed Soya 藻也
 Japan, Tokyo, late 19th to early 20th century, Meiji period (1868-1912)

Superbly carved as Hotei seated in a relaxed and cheerful pose, his ample body leaning slightly forward as he clasps a fan before him. The fan is finely inlaid with green-stained bone, mother-of-pearl, and tsuishu (carved red lacquer). His robe falls in soft, flowing folds, while a beautifully inlaid nyoï sceptre is tucked into his obi at the back. Hotei's face is warmly expressive, with plump cheeks, half-closed smiling eyes, and a broad, contented grin conveying benevolence. Himotoshi underneath and signed SOYA.

LENGTH 3.6 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.

Nakano Soya is recorded as entry 1115 in The Netsuke Handbook of Ueda Reikichi. His real name was Nakano Genshiro, and he lived and worked in Kawasaki City. Soya was a pupil of Miyazaki Joso (1835-1910), the founder of the important So school in Tokyo, and was active during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related inlaid wood netsuke of Hotei, by Suzuki Tokoku, carved from the same type of wood and with similar inlays, 3.2 cm long, at Zackle, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 7 November 2025, Vienna, lot 278 (sold for **EUR 14,300**).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



297
SO: A SUPERB SO SCHOOL 'SHITAKIRI SUZUME' KARAKURI (TRICK) IVORY NETSUKE

By a member of the So school, signed So 宗
 Japan, Tokyo, early 20th century

The two-part trick netsuke is superbly carved in the form of an unassuming rattan box, with naturalistic latticework and a flat loop to the top. A large simulated tear to one side reveals the interior scene: the moment when the old man Nasakeji, the benevolent hero of the tale, is granted an audience at the home of the Tongue-Cut Sparrow (Shitakiri Suzume). The supernatural bird, dressed in a voluminous robe, offers sake to the humble visitor in gratitude for his earlier kindness. Nasakeji sits respectfully before him, holding a shallow cup, while a dish with a large fish is presented as part of the generous feast prepared in his honor. The underside pierced with a central himotoshi, which divides into two cord runners leading into the lid, and is signed SO within a red-lacquered reserve.

HEIGHT 3 cm, LENGTH 3.5 cm

Provenance: Sotheby's, Chinese and Japanese Works of Art, 6 May 1999, London, lot 342. French private collection, acquired from the above.

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

The netsuke depicts a scene from the well-known Japanese folktale Shitakiri Suzume

("The Tongue-Cut Sparrow"). The kind old man, Nasakeji, rescues and cares for an injured sparrow, and later visits the bird's magical home, where he is rewarded for his compassion. The present scene shows the audience and feast offered in his honor, expressing the tale's moral theme of kindness rewarded and greed punished.



The Tongue-Cut Sparrow, Illustration by Shozan Obata

AUCTION COMPARISON

For a variant of this story by Morita Soko, also a member of the So school, depicting Nasakeji opening the treasure box, 3.2 cm high, see Zackle, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 15 April 2021, Vienna, lot 243 (sold for **EUR 9,150**).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



298
**SOSUI: A MASTERFUL SO SCHOOL
WOOD NETSUKE OF URASHIMA TARO**

By Ouchi Sosui (1911-1966), signed Sosui 藻水
Japan, Tokyo, c. 1932-1938

Superbly carved depicting Urashima Taro seated astride a magnificent dragon-headed turtle emerging from surging waves. The hero sits relaxed upon the creature's back, laughing as he unfurls a scroll. Beneath him the turtle is rendered with extraordinary vitality, its domed shell and deeply incised scales articulated with remarkable precision, the dragon-like head turning upward while the powerful body propels itself through vigorously carved waves. The entire composition is masterfully conceived, balancing dramatic movement with the compact harmony essential to netsuke design. The asymmetrical himotoshi are formed by the natural openings of the waves and signed in boldly incised characters SOSUI.

LENGTH 4.6 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with minor wear.

Ouchi Sosui (1911-1966), the eldest son of the master carver Ouchi Gyokuso (1879-1944), was born in Tokyo's Asakusa district and trained under Morita Soko, founder of the influential So school of netsuke carvers. Sosui proved to be an exceptionally meticulous artist, carefully sketching and refining his designs from multiple viewpoints before committing them to wood. When working under ideal circumstances he produced works of extraordinary originality and refinement.

The present netsuke belongs to Sosui's earliest independent period, shortly after the completion of his apprenticeship in 1932. Works of this early phase are particularly prized, as they represent the moment when Sosui's creative imagination was able to flourish before the disruptions of the Second World War. According to Miriam Kinsey, Sosui's finest carvings reveal a rare combination of technical mastery, bold design, and dynamic narrative expression.

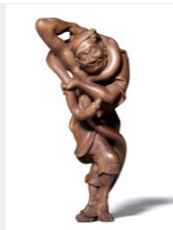
The present carving captures the moment of Urashima's triumphant journey across the sea upon the dragon-turtle that bore him to the Dragon King's palace. The exuberant energy of the waves and the majestic hybrid creature evoke the supernatural voyage central to the legend.



Remarkably, no direct parallels are recorded among the works of other So school carvers, whose subjects typically follow more conventional narrative or figural themes. The originality of this composition therefore suggests that Sosui conceived the design independently. Its confident modeling, lively narrative, and sculptural power place it among the most accomplished and imaginative netsuke known by the artist, and arguably among the finest creations of the So school itself.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related boxwood netsuke of a man struggling with a giant eel, signed Sosui to, 6.4 cm high, at Bonhams, The Bluetie H. Kirchhoff Collection of Netsuke and Sagemono, 16 September 2009, New York, lot 2080 (sold for USD 31,720 or approx. **EUR 41,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 15,000
Starting price EUR 7,500





299
A LARGE ANTLER NETSUKE OF FUKUROKUJU

Unsigned
 Japan, 17th to early 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Published: Eskenazi (1998) Japanese Netsuke, Ojime and Inro from a Private European Collection, pp. 40-41, no. 34.

Finely carved from the tapering tip of a stag-antler tine, depicting a kneeling sennin with his hands resting upon his knees, one slightly raised while the other is tucked beneath him. The ascetic's expression is comically blissful, yet the engraved details around the deeply set, dark-stained eyes lend the figure a faintly unsettling aspect. His elongated, dramatically tapering skull, cleverly utilizing the natural form of the antler, is complemented by exaggerated earlobes and a narrow chin, producing a strikingly caricatural physiognomy typical of early netsuke humor.

The figure's compact pose contrasts with the pronounced verticality of the head, creating a lively silhouette that fully exploits the material. The generous, well-worn himotoshi passes through the naturally hollow underside of the antler and emerges discreetly at the middle of the figure's back.

HEIGHT 13.6 cm

Provenance: Ex-Delplace Collection. Ex-collection Emile Veranneman, acquired from the above. With Eskenazi Ltd., London, 1998. A British private collection, acquired from the above.

Condition: Excellent condition with minor typical wear and 'natural flaws' to the material.

In the Eskenazi publication it was tentatively suggested that such forms might have served a secondary function as a harikata, though the present example is more convincingly understood as an inventive early netsuke that cleverly exploits the natural form of the antler.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related antler netsuke, 11.6 cm high, illustrated in Sydney L. Moss Ltd. (2016) *Kokusai The Genius: and Stag-antler Carving in Japan*, Vol. II, pp. 138-139, no. 21. Compare another closely related antler netsuke of Fukurokuju, 10 cm high, illustrated in Eskenazi (1998) *Japanese Netsuke, Ojime and Inro from a Private European Collection*, pp. 40-41, no. 32.



Estimate EUR 2,500
 Starting price EUR 1,200



300
TSUNEMASA: A RARE ANTLER NETSUKE OF A MONKEY WITH PEACH

By Tsunemasa, signed Tsunemasa 常政
 Japan, Kyoto, early to mid-18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Boldly carved from a branch section of antler, depicting a seated monkey clutching a large peach tightly to its chest. The simian's expressive face is finely detailed with deeply carved brows, a prominent muzzle, and alert eyes, conveying a spirited and slightly mischievous character. The feet are bent to one side, creating an attractively compact composition, while the fur of the face and body is effectively suggested by the natural grain of the antler.

The peach itself is smoothly polished, as is the robe-like cloak draped across the monkey's back in softly carved folds, both contrasting pleasingly with the textured treatment of the fur. The warm, honey-toned antler has developed an attractive yellow patina with age. Himotoshi to the underside and back, signed TSUNEMASA within an oval reserve.

LENGTH 4.7 cm, HEIGHT 4.1 cm

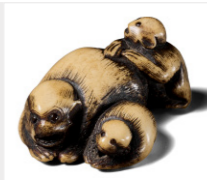
Condition: Very good condition with minor wear, natural imperfection, typical age cracks and tiny nibbling.

Fuld's Netsuke and Ojime Index records only a few netsuke by Tsunemasa; however, the artist appears to have only rarely signed his work. For a discussion of Tsunemasa, see *The International Netsuke Society Journal* (2015), Vol. 35, no. 2, *The Enigmatic Tsunemasa*, pp. 22-29.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related antler netsuke of a monkey with two young by the same artist, signed Tsunemasa, 4.5 cm long, at Zucke, *Fine Netsuke & Sagemono*, 8 November 2024, Vienna, lot 308 (sold for EUR 3,120).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



301
**A LARGE AND RARE BONE NETSUKE
 OF A CHUBBY HARE**

Unsigned
 Japan, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved from a solid and substantial section of bone, the hare is depicted seated in a crouching pose with its head slightly raised. The eyes are delicately inlaid with amber, lending the animal a lively expression. The carver has cleverly exploited the natural marbling and tonal variation of the antler, using the smooth curvature of the body and the mottled surface of the material to suggest the texture and pattern of the fur. Himotoshi underneath.

HEIGHT 3.6 cm, LENGTH 4.2 cm

Provenance: Collection of Frank Lapisch, acquired in November 1992. **Frank Lapisch (1934-2002)** was a German entrepreneur and dedicated netsuke collector who first traveled to Japan in 1960 as a German judo champion. From the late 1970s onward, he pursued the study and acquisition of netsuke with increasing discernment, carefully documenting purchases. He showed a particular preference for early 'ur-netsuke,' prized for their expressive carving and richly developed, glossy wear patina. **Condition:** Excellent condition with minor wear and typical natural flaws to the material including few natural age cracks.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related smaller antler netsuke of a hare, 3.2 cm long, at Zucke, Fine Japanese Art, 16 June 2023, Vienna, lot 392 (sold for **EUR 2,600**).



Estimate EUR 2,500
 Starting price EUR 1,200

302
**MASAKATSU: A FINE AND RARE
 ANTLER NETSUKE OF A PIEBALD HARE**

By Masakatsu, signed Masakatsu 正克
 Japan, Kyoto, late 18th to early 19th century, Edo period
 (1615-1868)



Finely carved from a hollow cross-section of antler, plugged through the center. The hare is depicted with its head lowered and ears laid back along the body in a compact, alert pose. The fur is rendered with fine incised lines and delicate staining. The eyes are inlaid in lustrous dark horn, lending the animal a lively expression. Himotoshi underneath and signed within a wavy reserve MASAKATSU.

LENGTH 3.6 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear, natural age cracks and tiny nibbling.

The artist should not be confused with the better-known carver from Ise; the present netsuke appears to be the work of an otherwise unrecorded carver working in the Kyoto style.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related ivory netsuke of a hare, Kyoto school, by Tadatoshi, 4.8 cm wide, at Bonhams, The Julius and Arlette Katchen Collection of Fine Netsuke Part II, 10 May 2017, London, lot 66 (sold for GBP 6,000 or approx. **EUR 9,400** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 1,000
 Starting price EUR 500

303
**A FINE AND RARE BONE SEAL NETSUKE
 OF A RAT, SCHOOL OF RANTEI**

School of Hogen Rantei, unsigned
 Japan, Kyoto, early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved as a rat standing alert upon an elongated gourd-shaped seal base. The animal's body arches slightly, the fur lightly incised, while the eyes are inlaid in dark horn and the snout is delicately defined, features characteristic of Hogen Rantei and his school. A single himotoshi is pierced through the pedestal, the cord channel running beneath the rat. The seal face is engraved Kotobuki / Ju 寿, meaning "longevity" or "happy long life."

HEIGHT 3.5 cm

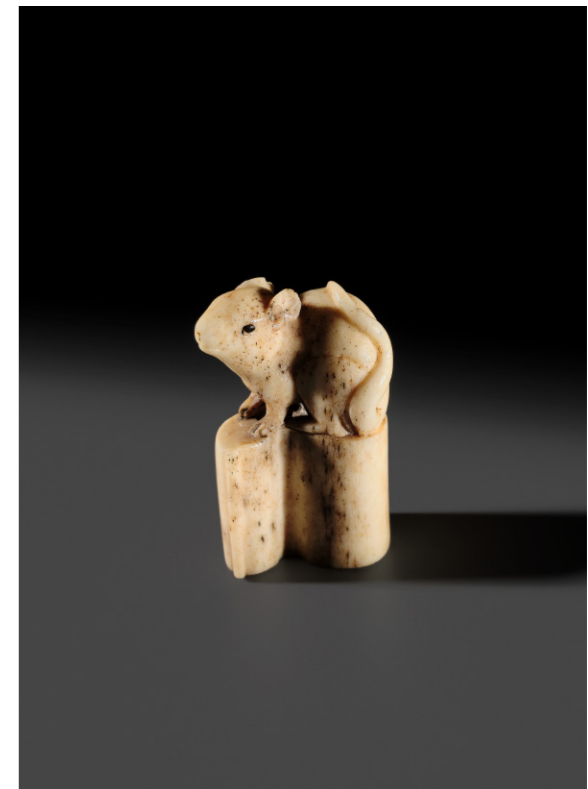
Condition: Good condition with minor wear and typical natural flaws to the material. Tiny chips to the ears.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related ivory netsuke of a rat and nut, by Rantei, at Sotheby's, A Collection of Netsuke, Inro and Lacquer Wares, 14 March 1984, London, lot 218 (sold for GBP 880 or approx. **EUR 3,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 1,000
 Starting price EUR 500





304
A RARE ANTLER 'SILK SEAL' TYPE NETSUKE OF A FOREIGNER

Unsigned
 Japan, late 17th to early 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved from the hollow tine of a branch section of antler, this netsuke depicts a foreigner with a boldly rendered head. The figure wears an elaborate collar with intricately incised ruff-like detailing, while the robe below is decorated with neatly carved half-circle patterns. The face is strikingly expressive, featuring deeply cut eyes and a grotesque grimace that imparts a lively, somewhat caricatured appearance. The top of the head is fitted with a small hat plug. Natural himotoshi.

HEIGHT 4 cm, LENGTH 4.3 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with expected wear and 'natural flaws' to the material.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related silk seal type antler netsuke, 4 cm high, at Zacks, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 9 May 2025, Vienna, lot 311 (sold for **EUR 4,862**).



Estimate EUR 1,000
 Starting price EUR 500



305
A LARGE ANTLER NETSUKE OF SHISHI NO SAKA OTOSHI

Unsigned
 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Carved from the hollow tine of a large section of antler, this finely executed openwork netsuke depicts a cub that has survived a fall from a cliff and is climbing toward its mother. The antler is polished to a warm, yellow-toned patina, enhancing the natural grain of the material. A small koban (coin) is fitted inside the netsuke, secured with a peg attached to the underside. Natural himotoshi.

HEIGHT 7.4 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with minor expected wear.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related antler netsuke of two shishi, by Tomohisa, dated to the mid-18th century, 7.6 cm high, illustrated in Sydney L. Moss Ltd. (2016) *Kokusai The Genius: and Stag-antler Carving in Japan*, Vol. 1, pp. 198-199, no. 54.



Estimate EUR 1,500
 Starting price EUR 800



306
AN EARLY ANTLER NETSUKE OF A NIO GUARDIAN

Unsigned
 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Boldly carved from a tubular section of antler, the temple guardian stands upright with suitably fierce features and clenched fists, the intended ferocity somewhat softened by the spread of his potbelly hanging over the belt of his loosely draped robe. Large himotoshi to the back. The antler displays a stunning caramel-brown coloration. The top of the head is fitted with an antler plug, while the underside reveals the beautifully porous core of the material.

HEIGHT 7.6 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and natural flaws to the material including few age cracks.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare to a closely related antler netsuke of a Nio Guardian, 8.4 cm high, illustrated in Sydney Moss Ltd. (2016) *Kokusai The Genius: and Stag-antler Carving in Japan*, Vol. 1, pp. 146-147, no. 25.



Estimate EUR 1,500
 Starting price EUR 800



307
A LARGE ANTLER NETSUKE OF IKKAKU SENNIN CARRYING THE LADY OF BENARES

Unsigned
 Japan, 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Carved from a large branch section of antler, Ikkaku Sennin is shown carrying the Lady of Benares over his shoulder. The underside and Ikkaku's head are plugged, forming his horn. The ascetic's stern expression is complemented by furrowed brows and a pointed beard. His robe falls in simple folds, while the female figure, with a serene expression and delicately flowing robe, rests over his shoulder. The figures rise vertically, making use of the natural shape of the antler. Good himotoshi to the back.

HEIGHT 10 cm

Provenance: Ex-Collection of Jay Hopkins, Lynchburg, Virginia, United States.

Condition: Excellent condition with minor expected wear and typical traces of use.

Estimate EUR 1,200
 Starting price EUR 600



308
**A LARGE WOOD CANE WITH A
SUPERB ANTLER HANDLE OF A KAPPA
HOLDING A SAKE FLASK**

Unsigned
Japan, Tokyo, Asakusa district, mid to late 19th
century

Masterfully carved, the handle of this large cane depicts a kappa, a mischievous, mythical Japanese water creature. The kappa is holding a sake bottle attached to a rope in its right hand while supporting its face with the left, its expression amusing, crafted with eyes inlaid with dark horn. The fur of the coronet is cleverly used to represent the kappa's hair, and its robe is adorned with large, finely incised leaves. The handle is well balanced, with a warm, natural patina that enhances the organic curves and texture of the antler. The cane tapers smoothly to a slender wooden shaft.

HEIGHT 87.8 cm (total), 14.9 cm (the handle)

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and typical 'natural flaws' to the material.

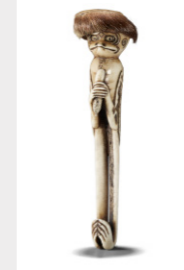
**LITERATURE
COMPARISON**

Compare a related antler obi hasami of a Kappa with a similar face, by Kokusai, 12.9 cm high, illustrated in Sydney L. Moss Ltd. (2016) Kokusai The Genius: and Stag-antler Carving in Japan, Vol. II, p. 286, no. 232. Compare a related antler cane handle of a karasu tengu, also unsigned, 14.45 cm high, illustrated in Sydney L. Moss Ltd. (2016) Kokusai The Genius: and Stag-antler Carving in Japan, Vol. III, pp. 432-433, no. 597.



**AUCTION
COMPARISON**

Compare a related antler obi hasami netsuke of a Kappa, attributed to Ozaki Kokusai, 12.1 cm high, at Zackle, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 4 November 2022, Vienna, lot 120 (sold for **EUR 7,800**).



Estimate EUR 4,000
Starting price EUR 2,000





309
KOKU: A SUPERB AND RARE ANTLER NETSUKE OF A HATCHING TENGU (TENGU NO TAMAGO)

By Ozaki Kokusai (1835-1892) or a close follower, sealed Koku 谷 Japan, Shiba, Tokyo, c. 1860s-1880s

- Published:**
1. Sydney L. Moss Ltd. (2016) Kokusai the Genius: and Stag-antler Carving in Japan, Vol. II, pp. 72-73, no. 103.
 2. Kurstin, Joe (1999) Masterworks of Netsuke and other Japanese Miniature Art from American Collections, no. 52.

Superbly carved from a choice section of stag antler, the netsuke depicts a karasu tengu emerging from its broken egg, wings dramatically outstretched. The natural curvature, density, and irregular surface of the antler are masterfully exploited to suggest the fractured shell, the material itself reinforcing the theme of birth and rupture. The mythical being is finely detailed, its expression amusing, appearing almost dumbfounded - as if in a gesture of "how did I get here?" Perhaps even a subtle nod by Kokusai, acknowledging this as a departure from his usual subject matter. The wings and plumage are neatly incised, featuring arrowhead featherwork issuing into webbed wings, a trait it shares with the karyobinga in the literature comparison.

The symmetrical himotoshi are deeply hollowed beneath and connected by an ingot-shaped bridge - a characteristic Koku feature employed in varied works. The seal KOKU is carved just below in sunken relief within a square reserve. The ambitious scale, powerful modeling, and confident incision are entirely consistent with works from his mature period, and the distinguished provenance reinforces this assessment. Any hesitation in firmly assigning it to Kokusai stems not from weakness of execution, but rather from its singularity - no directly comparable example appears to be recorded, apart from the unsigned karyobinga cited in the literature comparison, which is very likely by the same hand. If securely attributable to Kokusai, it would represent a work of exceptional rarity within his oeuvre.

LENGTH 5 cm

Provenance: Ex- Collection of Joseph and Elena Kurstin. With Sydney L. Moss Ltd, London.
Condition: Very good condition with natural imperfections to the material as well as few natural age cracks.



Elena and Joseph Kurstin

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related antler netsuke of karyobinaga in flight with



similarly detailed wings, attributed to Kokusai, 8.2 cm long, illustrated in Sydney L. Moss Ltd. (2016) Kokusai the Genius: and Stag-antler Carving in Japan, Vol. II, pp. 70-71, no 102. Compare a related antler netsuke of a water dragon, by Kokusai, note the similar himotoshi and color of the antler, 4.4 cm long, illustrated in Sydney L. Moss Ltd. (2016) Kokusai the Genius: and Stag-antler Carving in Japan, Vol. II, pp. 100-101, no 119.

Estimate EUR 15,000
 Starting price EUR 7,500





310
**KOKUSAI: A FINE MIXED METAL INLAID
 ANTLER MANJU NETSUKE OF A DOG AND LANTERN**

Ozaki Kokusai (1835-1892), sealed Kokusai 谷齋
 Japan, Shiba, Tokyo, mid to late 19th century

Of circular form, finely carved in openwork to depict a dog resting beside a traditional Japanese lantern with a square windowed housing and broad, overhanging cap, carefully carved in low relief. To one side stands a tall, narrow post rendered in fine mixed metal inlay, embellished with delicate floral details. The reverse with two irregular apertures and a central himotoshi as well as the full signature KOKUSAI in a sunken reserve.

DIAMETER 4.1 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor manufacturing-inherent nibbling to edges.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related antler manju netsuke with lanterns, unsigned and attributed to Kokusai, illustrated in Davey, Neil K. (1974) *Netsuke: A Comprehensive Study Based on the M.T. Hindson Collection*, p. 176, no. 523.



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



311
**A RARE GILT-IRON AND ANTLER RYUSA MANJU
 NETSUKE OF A MOKUGYO, ATTRIBUTED TO TOKOKU**

Attributed to Suzuki Tokoku (1846-1913), unsigned
 Japan, Tokyo, Asakusa district, second half of 19th century

This exquisite ryusa manju netsuke consists of two separate elements, elegantly combining the contrasting textures of gilt-iron and antler. The front features a finely detailed double dragon-headed mokugyo cast in iron and enriched with gold nunomezogan. The openworked reverse is finely carved with a hossu (Buddhist flywhisk), a large koro (censer), and scrolling clouds, all centered by a beautifully carved floral himotoshi.



HEIGHT 3.9 cm, LENGTH 4 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and natural imperfections to the material, typical age cracks, tiny nicks and losses to the gilt.

This work can be attributed to Suzuki Tokoku (1846-1913), regarded as one of the finest netsuke carvers associated with the Asakusa school and distinguished by his masterful use of metal inlays. His earlier works frequently take the form of manju or ryusa netsuke, often incorporating finely executed metal elements. It has been suggested that his art name Tokoku 東谷 may derive from Kokusai 谷齋. Although Tokoku is often described as self-taught, the stylistic relationship suggests that he may at some point have worked in proximity to, or under the influence of Kokusai.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related antler netsuke with a similar backside of scrolling clouds and a flower himotoshi, by Tokoku, 3.9 cm in diameter, illustrated in Sydney L. Moss Ltd. (2016) *Kokusai the Genius: and Stag-antler Carving in Japan*, Vol. III, pp. 184-185, no. 447.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related antler netsuke of a mokugyo, also unsigned and attributed to Tokoku, 3.8 cm long, at Zacks, 22 April 2022, Vienna, lot 263 (sold for **EUR 4,550**).



Estimate EUR 5,000
 Starting price EUR 2,400



312
**GENMIN: A SUPERB SILVER INLAID WALRUS TUSK
RYUSA MANJU NETSUKE WITH A KIRIN**

By Genmin, signed Genmin 玄民
Japan, Tokyo, Asakusa district, mid to late 19th century

Published: Meinertzhagen, Frederick / Lazarnick, George (1986)
MCI, Part A, p. 77. (unillustrated)

Delicately carved in openwork, the ryusa manju depicts a kirin galloping amidst blooming lotus and reishi fungi twisting around the composition. The mythical beast is finely inlaid in silver, partially gilt, and rendered with a flowing mane, lending the creature a striking presence within the airy openwork design. The reverse continues the composition with finely carved swirling foliage encircling a central himotoshi. Signed within a rectangular reserve GENMIN.

DIAMETER 4.2 cm

Condition: Very good condition with some very light nibbling to edges.

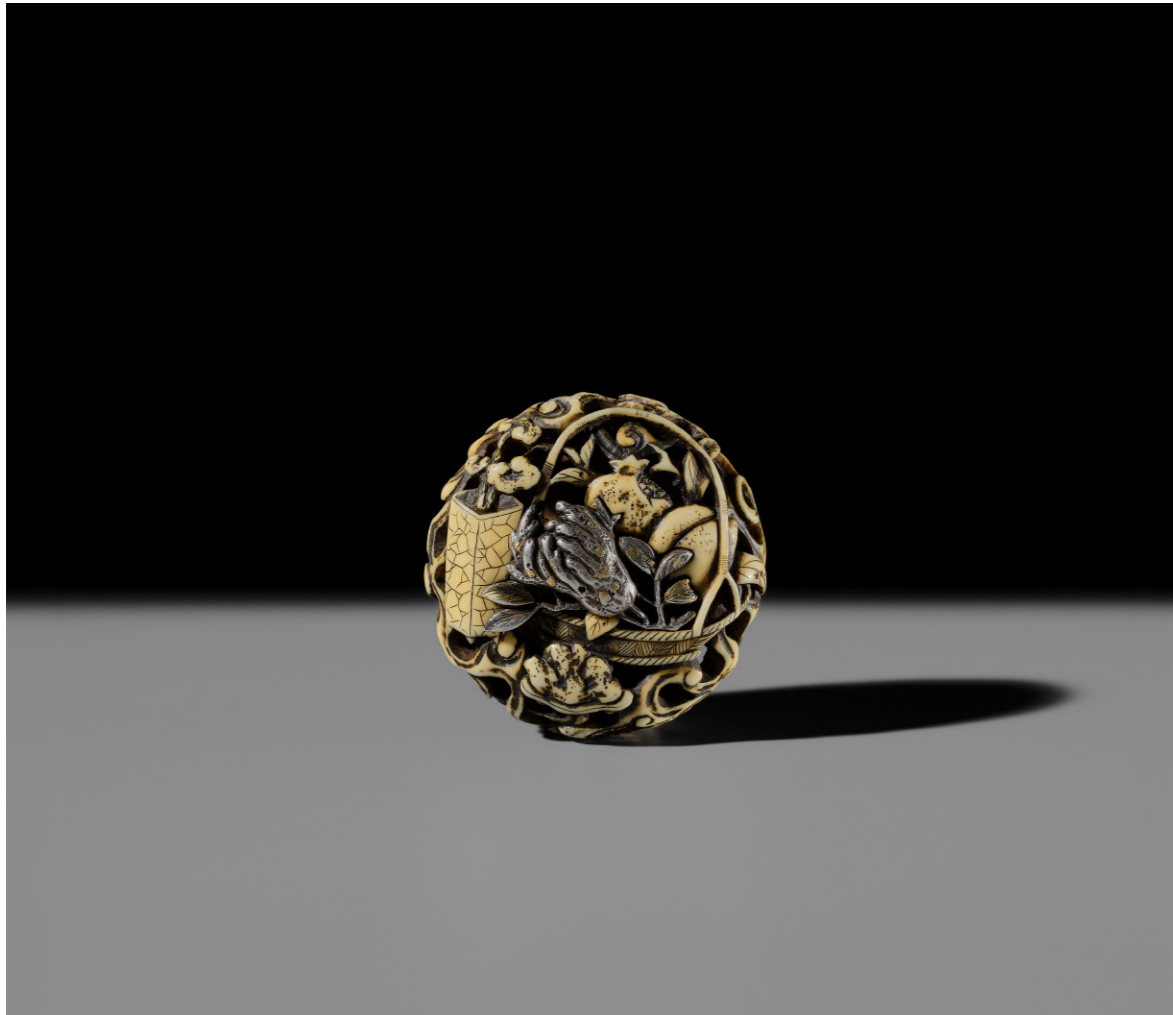
LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related mixed metal inlaid walrus tusk ryusa manju netsuke by the same artist, signed Genmin, 4.6 cm in diameter, illustrated in Sydney L. Moss Ltd. (2016) *Kokusai the Genius: and Stag-antler Carving in Japan*, Vol. III, pp. 252-253, no. 486.



Estimate EUR 6,000
Starting price EUR 3,000





313
**KO: A FINE SILVER INLAID WALRUS TUSK
 RYUSA MANJU NETSUKE WITH AUSPICIOUS FRUITS**

By Ko, sealed Ko 光
 Japan, Tokyo, Asakusa district, mid to late 19th century



Of circular form, intricately carved in openwork to depict an auspicious basket filled with peaches and a pomegranate beside a vase containing reishi fungus. A silver inlay to the center, partly gilt, forms a finger citron (Buddha's hand fruit). The reverse continues the design with finely carved lotus blossoms and leaves elegantly intertwined with swirling clouds, all encircling a central himotoshi. Signed within a raised square reserve with a single seal character KO.

DIAMETER 4.3 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related inlaid ivory ryusa manju netsuke by the same artist, similarly carved with pines and bamboo, signed Ko, illustrated in Lazarnick, George (1981) *Netsuke & Inro Artists, and How to Read Their Signatures*, Vol. 1, p. 627.



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



314
**AN ANTLER AND SHIBUICHI KAGAMIBUTA NETSUKE
 OF AN ONI WITH A TEMPLE BELL**

Unsigned
 Japan, Tokyo, Asakusa district, mid to late 19th century

Of circular form, finely carved from antler as a bowl fitted with a shibuichi metal plate. The plate is delicately worked in relief with gold takazogan and hirazogan, depicting an oni beside a large temple bell (bonsho). The surrounding antler bowl is intricately carved in openwork with scrolling foliage of pine and cherry blossoms, the porous texture of the material cleverly incorporated into the design. Central himotoshi to the reverse, the cord attachment to the back of the plate.

DIAMETER 4.1 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and natural flaws to the material including few age cracks.

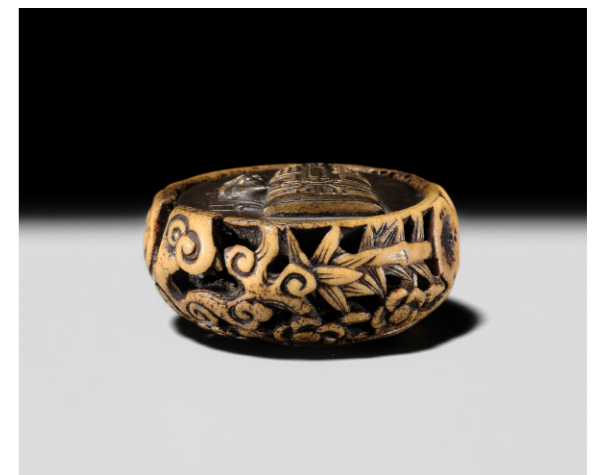
The motif of an oni with a temple bell draws on a well-known theme in Japanese folklore and visual culture, often associated with mischief, punishment, and spiritual awakening. Temple bells (bonsho) are sacred Buddhist instruments whose resonant sound is believed to dispel evil and ignorance; when paired with an oni, the imagery often carries a humorous or moralizing undertone, showing the demon interacting irreverently with an object intended to banish such creatures.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related antler kagamibuta netsuke with a similarly carved antler bowl, 3.9 cm diameter, illustrated in Moss, Sydney L. (2016) *Kokusai The Genius: and Stag-antler Carving in Japan*, Vol. III, pp. 256-257, no 490.



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000





315
A SUPERB GOLD INLAID WALRUS TUSK RYUSA MANJU NETSUKE OF A RICE BALE AND TWO RATS

Unsigned
 Japan, Tokyo, Asakusa district, mid to late 19th century



Superbly carved in the form of a tightly bound rice bale, its sides meticulously secured by a rope. The central inlay, framed by finely carved swirling clouds, is executed as an exceptional mixed-metal plaque of gold, silver, and shakudo, depicting a pair of clothed rats diligently carrying a large treasure bag (takarabukuro) suspended from a pole shared between them. The bag, neatly incised with katakiribori, reveals Daikoku's wish-granting mallet (uchide no kozuchi) together with an invisibility cloak (kakuremino), both rendered with remarkable detail. A central himotoshi is pierced to the reverse.

With a silk cord suspending a coral ojime.

LENGTH 4.3 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.

The motifs of rats, the treasure bag, the wish-granting mallet, and the rice bale are all attributes of Daikokuten (Daikoku). Together they symbolize wealth, prosperity, abundance, and fertility, making them particularly auspicious subjects in netsuke carving.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related gold-inlaid walrus tusk ryusa manju netsuke of a daikon and two rats, by Sokoku, 3,9 cm long, at Zackle, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 7 November 2025, Vienna, lot 325 (sold for **EUR 10,010**).



Estimate EUR 5,000
 Starting price EUR 2,400



316
A FINE SILVER INLAID ANTLER RYUSA MANJU NETSUKE OF A BAT, ATTRIBUTED TO SUZUKI TOKOKU

Attributed to Suzuki Tokoku (1846-1913), unsigned
 Japan, Tokyo, Asakusa district, c. 1860-1880



The two-part netsuke of circular form, superbly carved in openwork to depict a silver-inlaid bat in flight, gliding beneath a full moon emerging through dense swirling clouds and revealing a wild copse of straggling willow trees below. The reverse is applied with a larger silver-inlaid kanji character reading 寿 (壽), kotobuki or ju, meaning "felicitous long life," above a shippo-tama and three reishi fungus heads on slender stems. A ringed central himotoshi is pierced to the back.

DIAMETER 4 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.

Suzuki Tokoku (1846-1913) is regarded as one of the finest netsuke carvers, distinguished by the masterful use of inlay. His earlier works are in the Asakusa style of manju or ryusa type and often use fine metal inlays. It seems plausible his art name Tokoku 東谷 is derived from Kokusai 谷齋, and although Tokoku was apparently self-taught, he must have worked with Kokusai at some point in his life.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related inlaid antler ryusa manju netsuke depicting the same subjects, also unsigned and attributed to Tokoku, illustrated in Sydney L. Moss Ltd. (2016) *Kokusai The Genius: and Stag-antler Carving in Japan*, Vol. III, pp. 198-199, no. 457.



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000

317

A SUPERB ANTLER RYUSA MANJU NETSUKE OF BATS AMONG REISHI

Unsigned
Japan, Tokyo, Asakusa District, mid to late 19th century

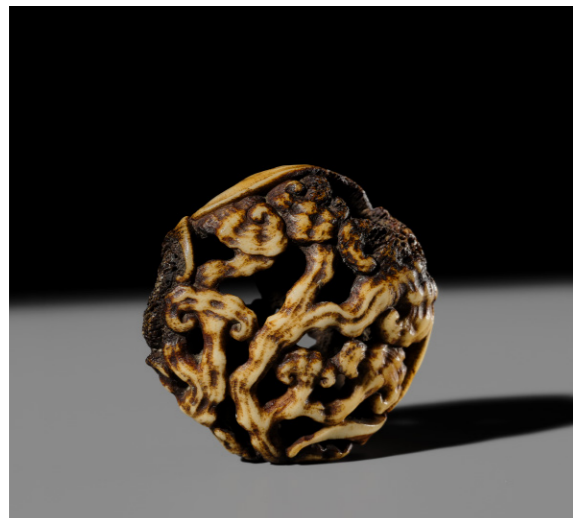
Of circular form, finely carved in openwork to depict two bats with wings spread, facing one another as they fly among reishi mushrooms. This ryusa manju netsuke demonstrates the carver's skillful use of porous antler, the natural black shading of the material cleverly employed to accentuate the contours of the fungi. Natural himotoshi.

LENGTH 3.8 cm

Condition: Very good condition with only minor wear and typical natural imperfections to the material.

A small group of antler ryusa manju netsuke depicting bats among reishi mushrooms is known from the late 19th century and associated with the Asakusa district of Tokyo, most notably by carvers such as Masayuki and Rensai. While the present example shares stylistic affinities with both artists, it can be firmly attributed to neither and stands as an accomplished work in its own right.

The combination of bats and reishi fungus carries auspicious meaning. In Chinese symbolism, the bat (fu) is associated with good fortune and happiness, while the reishi mushroom (lingzhi) represents longevity and immortality. Together they convey the wish for long life and prosperity.



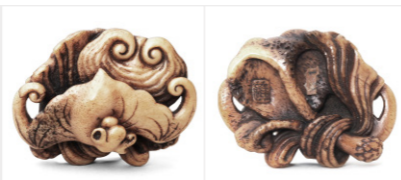
LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related antler ryusa manju netsuke of a bat among reishi, attributed to Masayuki, 4.3 cm wide, note the similar rendering of the reishi and the use of heavily porous antler, illustrated in Sydney L. Moss Ltd. (2016) Kokusai the Genius: and Stag-antler Carving in Japan, Vol. III, no. 377.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related antler ryusa manju netsuke of a bat among reishi, by Rensai, 4.5 cm long, at Bonhams, The Julius and Arlette Katchen Collection of Fine Netsuke Part III, 6 November 2018, London, lot 119 (sold for GBP 6,875 or approx. **EUR 10,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 10,000
Starting price EUR 5,000





318
A FINE ANTLER NETSUKE OF A SHISHI ON A CUSHION,
ATTRIBUTED TO RENSAI

Attributed to Ishikawa Rensai, unsigned
 Japan, Tokyo, Asakusa district, second half of the 19th century

Finely carved from a heavily porous section of antler, the netsuke depicts a lively shishi crouching alertly upon a circular cushion base. The mythical beast is rendered with an animated expression, its bulging eyes with horn-inlaid pupils, curling brows, and wide mouth conveying a playful yet fierce demeanor. The mane is carved in spiraling tufts and flowing locks, while the compact, muscular body rests firmly on the textured surface of the stand. The base itself is carefully ornamented with geometric patterns set against a stippled ground. On the underside the composition continues with a finely carved hossu (Buddhist priest's whisk), ingeniously incorporated as the himotoshi.

HEIGHT 2.3 cm, DIAMETER 3.2 cm

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and typical 'natural imperfections'.



LITERATURE COMPARISON
 Compare a closely related ivory seal netsuke with a shishi, similarly carved, also unsigned and attributed to Rensai, 3.4 cm long, illustrated in Sydney L. Moss Ltd. (2016) *Kokusai the Genius: and Stag-antler Carving in Japan*, Vol. III, no. 331.



MUSEUM COMPARISON
 Compare a closely related antler netsuke of a shishi on a base, by Rensai, 4.2 diameter, in the Los Angeles Country Museum, accession number M.87.263.17.



Estimate EUR 8,000
 Starting price EUR 4,000



319
A RARE ANTLER NETSUKE OF A SLENDER DRAGON

Unsigned
 Japan, Tokyo, Asakusa district, mid to late 19th century

Carved from a thin, tubular, and naturally hollow section of antler, resembling a small pipe, the netsuke depicts a stylized dragon extending along the tapering length of the material. The dragon's head forms one end of the piece, its mouth opened wide in a dramatic expression, with bulging eyes, curling whiskers, and sharply defined brows giving the creature a lively and animated character. The mane flows backward along the neck, neatly incised and subtly stained. The sinuous body continues elegantly along the shaft, the scales carefully engraved in orderly rows that follow the curvature of the material. Himotoshi underneath.

LENGTH 6.3 cm

Condition: Excellent condition

Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000





320
**MASA: A FINE WALRUS TUSK NETSUKE
 OF AN OCTOPUS IN A BASKET**

Signed with a single character Masa (Sho) 正
 Japan, Tokyo, Asakusa district, second half of the 19th century

Superbly carved, the eight-limbed cephalopod is concealed within a tattered rattan basket, its limbs pushing against the simulated tears. The octopus's large head, detailed with a long puckered mouth, peers out through a large crack in the front, while one curled tentacle touches its head in a gesture of amazement at its own feat. The surface of its skin is stippled, and the limbs are intricately detailed with suction cups on the underside. The detailed underside features a slender rain dragon alongside various conches and shells, with the asymmetrical himotoshi integrated into the design. Each himotoshi is ringed, with the larger one in an irregular oblong shape. Signed underneath in relief with a single character MASA.

LENGTH 3.5 cm

Condition: Good condition with minor expected wear and an old chip to the rim of the basket.

The distinct Asakusa style and cursively written signature, somewhat reminiscent of Masayuki's typical kakihan, may indicate a work by the famous Asakusa carver Hoshunsai Masayuki.

Estimate EUR 2,500
 Starting price EUR 1,200



321
**SANGETSU: A FINE WALRUS TUSK
 RYUSA MANJU NETSUKE OF A TANUKI PRIEST**

By Sangetsu(sai), signed Sangetsu 山月
 Japan, Tokyo, Asakusa district, mid to late 19th century

Of circular form, this finely carved walrus tusk ryusa manju netsuke depicts a tanuki priest seated among leafy foliage, rocks, reishi clouds, and a window. The mischievous tanuki, dressed in monk's robes, holds a beater in one hand, about to beat the mokugyo before him. The robes and surrounding motifs are delicately incised and stained, while the porous texture of the walrus tusk is skillfully integrated into the design. The reverse is equally finely executed, featuring a floral himotoshi in the form of a stylized blossom at the center, surrounded by lotus leaves and single lotus blossom. Signed on the mokugyo beater SANGETSU.

DIAMETER 4 cm

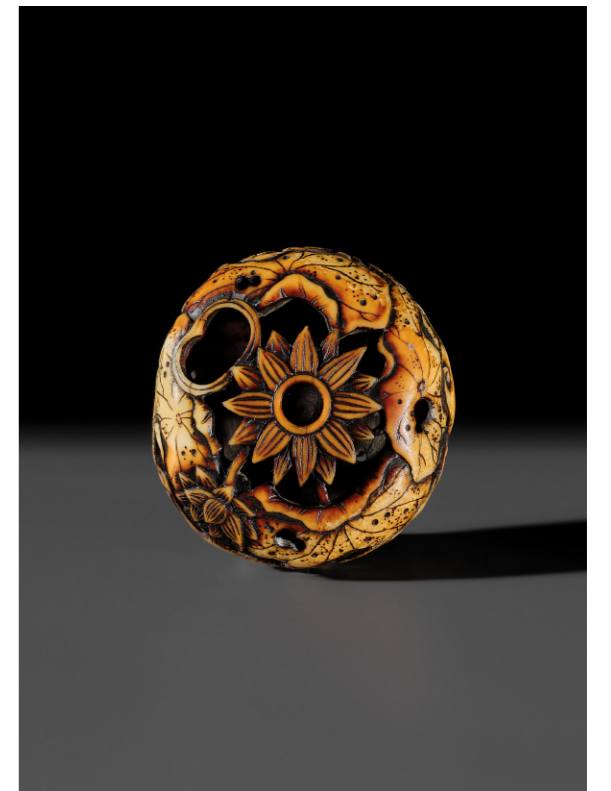
Condition: Excellent condition with only minor wear.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

For another work by this rare artist, signed Sangetsusai Baiyoku, see Meinertzhagen, Frederick / Lazarnick, George (1986) MCI, Part A, p. 11.



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



322
**KOKUSUI: A RARE KURUMI (WALNUT)
 NETSUKE DEPICTING A RAT AND DAIKON**

By Kokusui, signed Kokusui 谷水
 Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

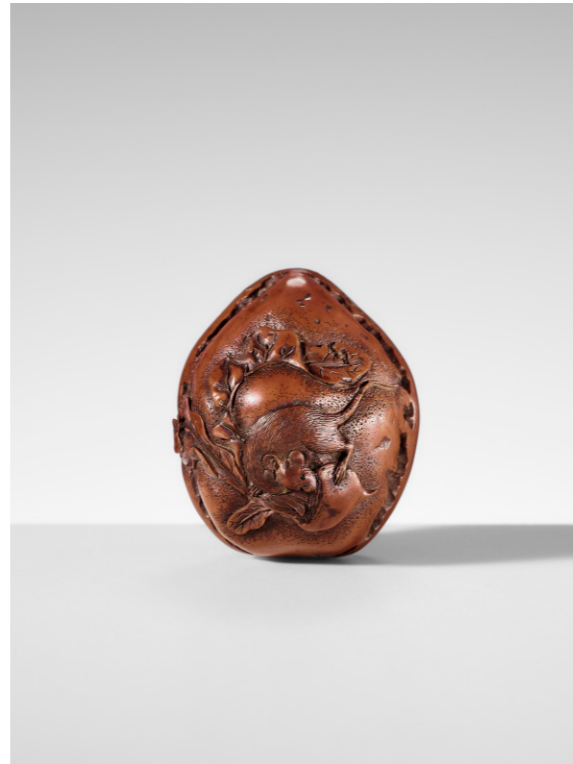
Finely decorated to the front in relief depicting a rat (nezumi) on a leafy daikon (radish), both associated with the Lucky God of Wealth Daikoku, the rodent's eyes inlaid in dark horn and detailed with a neatly incised fur coat. Two himotoshi to the reverse, one ringed in stained bone. The surface is otherwise largely left natural, allowing full appreciation of the material. Signed underneath KOKUSUI.

HEIGHT 3.8 cm

Condition: The walnut with typical flaws such as small holes, tiny losses, nibbling, some with associated fills. A tiny crack to the bone-inlaid ring of the himotoshi. Overall good condition and presenting very well.

AUCTION COMPARISON

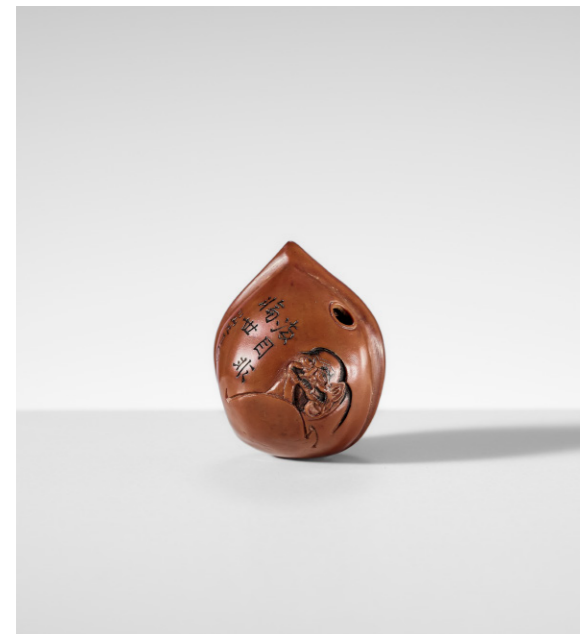
Compare a closely related netsuke of rats and daikon by the same artist, signed Kokusui, dated to the 19th century, 4 cm long, at Zucke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 3 November 2023, Vienna, lot 321 (sold for **EUR 3,380**).



Estimate EUR 1,500
 Starting price EUR 800

323
**KOSEN: AN EXQUISITE SMALL KURUMI (WALNUT)
 NETSUKE OF DARUMA**

By Kosen, signed Kosen toto 小仙 吐刀
 Japan, mid to late 19th century



One half of the shell is smoothly polished and delicately carved in shishiaibori (sunken relief) with a portrait of Daruma detailed with expressive features, arched brows, prominent nose, and heavy-lobed ears. The reverse retains the textured, organic surface of the nut, surrounding a polished circle. Two ringed himotoshi to either side and signed KOSEN toto [carved by Kosen] next to an inscription: Manmoku rinse ni arazu, 満目非輪世, [all that meets the eye is beyond the wheel of delusion/ samsara] as well as a seal mark in the form of a variation of the enso, the perfect circle, symbolizing nothingness or enlightenment in Zen teachings.

HEIGHT 2.8 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only very few natural flaws to the material.

Kosen was very likely a pupil of the famous Toryusai Kozan who excelled in the carving of kurumi (walnut) netsuke.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related fruit nut netsuke of two puppies by the same artist, signed Kosen, dated to the late 19th century, 4 cm long, at Christie's, Japanese and Korean Art, 16 September 2003, New York, lot 263 (USD 1,912 or approx. **EUR 2,800** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 1,000
 Starting price EUR 500



324
**A FINE KURUMI (WALNUT) SHUNGA
 NETSUKE OF AN AMA (FISHER GIRL) AND OCTOPUS,
 ATTRIBUTED TO SEIMIN**

Attributed to Seimin, unsigned
 Japan, Iwashiro, c. 1850, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved, the natural form of the walnut is ingeniously employed to create a compact openwork composition of an ama clam diver entwined with an octopus. The diver is shown partially draped, one breast exposed, with a woven basket carved to her side. She turns her body away from the advancing creature in feigned resistance, while her gaze wanders back toward it with unmistakable curiosity. The octopus raises its central puckered mouth toward her as its sinuous tentacles curl around her body and across the surface of the nut. The mantle is textured and the suckers carefully articulated, the eyes inlaid in mother-of-pearl. Himotoshi to the reverse.

HEIGHT 3.8 cm

Provenance: Ex-collection R. Tamanini (by repute).

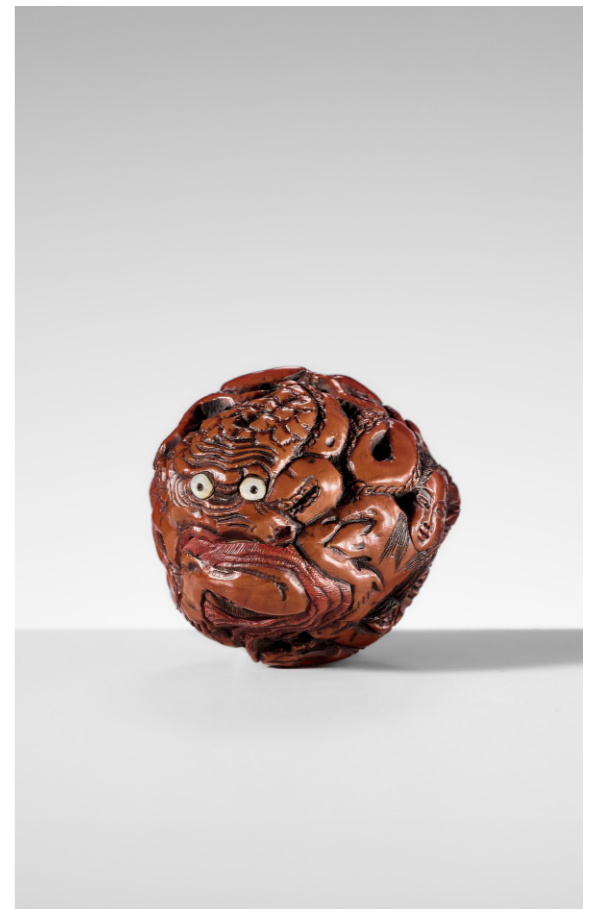
Condition: Good condition with typical natural flaws to the material including fine age cracks and a few tiny nicks here and there.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related kurumi netsuke of Fujin breastfed by his mother-in-law, also unsigned and attributed to Seimin, 3.8 cm high, at Zucke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 29 October 2021, Vienna, lot 285 (sold for **EUR 1,896**).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000





325
A SUPERB BAMBOO ROOT CARVING OF A PUMPKIN

Unsigned
 China, 18th century, Qing dynasty (1644-1912)

A superb carving of a pumpkin, ingeniously fashioned from the rhizome of bamboo. The natural rings and growth patterns of the material are skillfully utilized to evoke the ribbed surface and texture of a kabocha pumpkin. The manipulation of the bamboo root is masterful: the surface is subtly worked to suggest the skin of the fruit, while a small insect perches upon it and another opening reveals a worm within. From the stem emerge finely carved blossoms, curling leaves, and a smaller pumpkin. Natural himotoshi pass through the stem. Beautiful, deep patina.

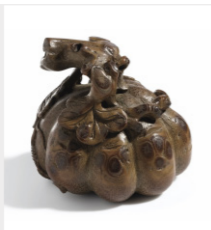
LENGTH 4.5 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only very minor wear.

Although now used as a netsuke, the carving was most likely produced in China, where bamboo-root carving was a well-established artistic tradition during the Qing dynasty. In Japan, bamboo was rarely employed for netsuke — materials such as boxwood, ivory, or ebony being far more common. It is therefore likely that this object was imported into Japan in the late Edo period and subsequently adapted for use as a netsuke, its natural perforations conveniently serving as himotoshi.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related bamboo root carving of a pumpkin, dated to the 18th century, Sotheby's, Important Chinese Works of Art, 7 April 2015, Hong Kong, lot 3691 (sold for HKD 87,500 or approx. **EUR 12,000** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



326
RYURYUSAI: A VERY RARE WOVEN WISTERIA VINE NETSUKE OF A FLOWER BASKET (HANAKAGO)

By Ryuryusai, signed Ryuryusai 琉々斎 zo 造
 Japan, Meiji period (1868-1912)

Published: Bushell, Raymond (1961) *The Netsuke Handbook* by Ueda Reikichi, p. 38, no. 28.

Superbly carved as a miniature flower basket (hanakago), this netsuke is rendered with exceptional naturalism. The bulbous basket, featuring three carrying handles, rises from a short circular foot. Its body is intricately woven with wisteria vines, each strand carefully twisted and plaited, subtly smoked to mimic the texture and appearance of larger examples. Signed to the side RYURYUSAI zo (made by Ryuryusai), suggesting the artist's background as a bamboo artist.

HEIGHT 3.8 cm

Provenance: Ex-collection Raymond and Frances Bushell. Sotheby's, *Netsuke from the Collection of Raymond and Frances Bushell*, 21 March 2000, New York, lot 148. Ex-collection of Alan and Simone Hartman, New York, acquired from the above. Alan Hartman (1930-2023) was an influential American art dealer, who took over his parents' antique business in Manhattan and established the legendary Rare Art Gallery on Madison Avenue, with further locations in Dallas and Palm Beach. His wife Simone (née Horowitz) already served as assistant manager of the New York gallery before the couple were married in 1975, and together they built a renowned collection for over half a century and became noted art patrons.



Alan & Simone Hartman

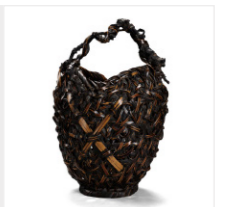
Condition: Excellent condition.



Hanakago (flower baskets) were integral to ikebana (flower arranging), and netsuke like this, crafted by bamboo artists rather than traditional netsuke carvers, are exceedingly rare.

MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a related full-size flower basket (hanakago), with similar variegated coloration of smoked bamboo and a rustic appearance, dated to the Meiji period (1868–1912), in the collection of Cornell University, object number 2012.015.002.



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



327
**A VERY RARE TORTOISESHELL NETSUKE
 OF A DRAGON AGAINST CRASHING WAVES**

Unsigned
 Japan, 19th century

Superbly carved from tortoiseshell, this netsuke utilizes the natural contours of the material to depict a tightly coiled dragon amidst crashing waves. The dragon's meticulously articulated scales are finely detailed, while its face is expressive, with large eyes beneath furrowed brows, scrolling whiskers, and facial hair. The reverse features a raised fragment resembling a mountain ridge, intricately incised with swirling clouds, and houses the central himotoshi.

LENGTH 7.2 cm

Condition: Very good condition with old wear, few tiny nicks and light surface scratches.

Netsuke carved entirely from tortoiseshell are to be considered exceedingly rare.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

For a related tortoiseshell netsuke of a recumbent ox, unsigned, see Bushell, Raymond (1975) *Netsuke Familiar & Unfamiliar*, Tokyo, p. 151, no. 348.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related tortoiseshell netsuke of a spider crab, by Juko, 5.7 cm long, at Bonhams, The Harriet Szechenyi Sale of Japanese Art, 8 November 2011, London, lot 241 (sold for GBP 2,250 or approx. **EUR 3,900** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



328
**SOMIN: A VERY RARE AND IMPRESSIVE
 SENTOKU NETSUKE OF A MINOGAME**

Lineage of Yokoya Somin, signed Somin 宗民 with kakihan Japan, second half of the 19th century

Superbly cast as a minogame, portrayed in a flattened form as it crawls, its limbs extended from its gently domed carapace. The shell is intricately detailed with finely plated scoots, while the lower plastron is neatly rendered. The face of the turtle bears a fierce expression, with a mouth shaped into an enigmatic smile, and bulging eyes under delicately incised brows. The fine details of the netsuke are accentuated with katakiribori engravings, adding texture and depth to the design. Two large himotoshi are situated on the underside, and the piece is signed SOMIN and kakihan.

LENGTH 6.7 cm
 WEIGHT 64 g

Provenance: From the private collection of Alan and Simone Hartman, New York.

Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear and light traces of use.

The **Yokoya Somin family** is renowned for its expertise in katakiri (fine engraving) work. Robert E. Haynes lists at least three generations of Somin in *The Index of Japanese Sword Fittings and Associated Artists*, pp. 1773-1774. Yokoya Somin I is credited with developing the katakiri carving style, which became a defining characteristic of the Yokoya school and was later adopted by its students and successors. The artist of the present netsuke is likely Yokoya Somin III (H 08919.0), born in 1795. While netsuke from this lineage are extremely rare, they are primarily known for their kagamibuta plate engravings. Examples in katabori, like the present piece, are particularly scarce.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related gold ojime with two oni, signed Somin with the kakihan identical to the present piece, 1.5 cm high, at Christie's, Japanese Art and Design, 13 July 2005, London, lot 179 (sold for GBP 5,040 or approx. **EUR 10,300** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



329
**HAMANO MASAYUKI: A VERY RARE
 SILVER 'YATATE' NETSUKE OF AN ELEPHANT**

By Hamano Shozui (1696-1769) or his lineage, signed Masayuki (Shozui) 政随
 Japan, Edo (Tokyo), 18th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

This ingenious silver netsuke opens to reveal the deep well of an inkpot, secured by a hinged lid with a foliate clasp, trimmed with a scalloped edge in gilt. The patinated silver is skillfully carved to simulate the gray skin of the elephant, incised with grooved wrinkles. The elephant's large face is detailed with crinkled gilt eyes beneath raised brows, large ears, and a mouth flanked by curling gilt tusks, extending to a curled trunk. The cord attachment is formed as a himotoshi loop to the top. The underside is signed in boldly incised characters MASAYUKI.

LENGTH 7.6 cm
 WEIGHT 57.7 g

Provenance: From the collection of Eva & Aubrey Sweet, Melbourne, Australia, acquired from Malcolm Fairley, London, in 1997. **Eva and Aubrey Sweet** devoted over six decades to the formation of a distinguished private collection of Asian art, with particular strength in Chinese jade, Japanese lacquer, and netsuke. Their collecting began in the 1950s and was refined through sustained travel, scholarship, and long associations with leading dealers, curators, and artists internationally. Aubrey, a Melbourne physician who also studied acupuncture in Beijing, and Eva developed a discerning connoisseurship that balanced intuitive appreciation with systematic study, supported by an extensive reference library and active participation in scholarly circles. They acquired works of historic importance as well as contemporary pieces by artists such as Susan Wraight and Unryuan (Kitamura Tatsuo), demonstrating a commitment both to tradition and to the continuity of craft. The collection, housed in their Melbourne residence and affectionately referred to by the family as "the Museum," stands as a testament to their lifelong dedication to the aesthetic and cultural values of Asian art.



Eva and Aubrey Sweet

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear and little tarnishing. One gilt inlay to the eye lost.



Hamano Shozui (1696-1769) was a prominent metalworker in Edo, known for being the founder of the Hamano School of sword fitting makers. A pupil of Nara Toshinaga, Shozui was succeeded by several metalworkers in his lineage, making it challenging to definitively attribute works to him or his followers.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related silver mask netsuke by the same maker, signed Shozui and dated 1753, 5.1 cm high, formerly in the Seymour Trower collection, at Bonhams, The Edward Wrangham Collection of Japanese Art: Part IV, 6 November 2013, London, lot 12 (sold together with a fuchi-gashira for GBP 10,625 or approx. **EUR 17,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 5,000
 Starting price EUR 2,400



330
**A RARE MIXED METAL NETSUKE OF A
 MINIATURE TANEGASHIMA TEPPU (RIFLE),
 ATTRIBUTED TO BAITETSU**

Attributed to Baitetsu, unsigned
 Japan, late 19th century, Meiji period (1868-1912)

The miniature replica with working mechanism, finely crafted from silver, soft metals, and sentoku bronze as a matchlock pistol (known as tanegashima, a firearm introduced to Japan through the Portuguese Empire in 1543 and used by the samurai class). The teppo chiseled with karakusa designs and silver-mounted floral kiku mon. The underside with a looped floral himotoshi.

LENGTH 5.2 cm
 WEIGHT 29.6 g

Provenance: From the private collection of Alan and Simone Hartman, New York.

Condition: Very good condition with minor expected wear.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related mixed-metal netsuke of a miniature tanegashima, unsigned and attributed to Baitetsu, 5.1 cm long, at Zacke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 3 November 2023, Vienna, lot 359 (sold for EUR 5,148 or approx. **EUR 5,600** adjusted for inflation at the time of writing).



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000

331
**RYUMIN: AN AMUSING IVORY AND
 SHIBUICHI KAGAMIBUTA NETSUKE OF
 A TOAD WITH A FROG ON A LEASH**

By Serizawa Ryumin, signed Ryumin 立民 and kakihan
 Japan, Tokyo, late 19th century

The shibuichi plate set into an ivory bowl, the front finely decorated in takazogan and delicate katakiribori with an amusing scene of a toad holding a long rod and leading a frog on a leash beside a gently flowing stream, with aquatic plants in the background. Central himotoshi to the reverse and signed to the plate RYUMIN with kakihan.

DIAMETER 4.6 cm

Condition: Excellent condition with only minor wear. The ivory bowl with a short age crack to the back.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related ivory manju netsuke with mixed metal inlays of a toad holding an umbrella, by the same artist, signed Ryumin with kakihan, 4.1 cm in diameter, at Sotheby's, The Cornelius V.S. Roosevelt Collection of Netsuke, 2 June 1992, New York, lot 285.



Estimate EUR 1,500
 Starting price EUR 800



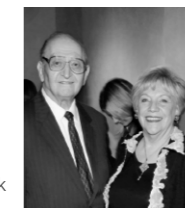
332
**A FINE MIXED METAL KAGAMIBUTA NETSUKE
 OF KAJIWARA KAGESUE**

Unsigned
 Japan, 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

The circular shakudo plate set into a shibuichi bowl, the plate worked in a fine nanako (ring-punched) ground and superbly decorated in shakudo and gold takazogan to depict the samurai Kajiwara Kagesue in full armor, holding a long riding crop as he urges his horse through the turbulent waters of the Uji River. His face is rendered with a fierce and determined expression, conveying the intensity of the moment. Central himotoshi to the reverse, with a looped cord attachment to the back of the plate.

DIAMETER 4.3 cm
 WEIGHT 43.8 g

Provenance: From the private collection of Alan and Simone Hartman, New York. **Alan Hartman** (1930-2023) was an influential American art dealer, who took over his parents' antique business in Manhattan and established the legendary Rare Art Gallery. His wife Simone (née Horowitz) already served as assistant manager of the New York gallery before the couple were married in 1975, and together they built a renowned collection for over half a century and became noted art patrons, enriching the collections of important museums.



Alan & Simone Hartman

Condition: Excellent condition with only minor wear.

Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



The scene is drawn from the Heike monogatari, the great 14th-century war chronicle recounting the struggle between the Taira and Minamoto clans during the Genpei War (1180-1185). In one of its most celebrated episodes, Kajiwara Genta Kagesue and Sasaki Shiro Takatsuna race across the Uji River to be the first to engage the enemy, each striving for honor and distinction in battle. Kagesue is traditionally associated with a dark horse, allowing him to be identified here as he charges through the torrent, embodying the valor, rivalry, and dramatic intensity of this iconic moment.



Kajiwara Kagesue, by Shuntei (1770-1824)

333

GYOKUZAN: A SUPERB IVORY MASK NETSUKE OF HANNYA

By Asahi Gyokuzan (1843-1923), signed Gyokuzan 玉山 Japan, Tokyo, Meiji period (1868-1912)

Boldly carved as a Hannya mask, the face set in a fierce and menacing expression, the mouth opened in deep undercutting to reveal large, sharply defined fangs. The eyes are powerfully rendered, bulging beneath deeply furrowed brows, while two curved horns emerge from finely incised hair, stained with sumi. The reverse is equally well considered, the straggling hair carved with great precision and ingenuity, even serving to conceal a natural age crack in the material. Two foliate cord-holes are arranged to the sides, echoing the placement of cord attachments on actual theatre masks. The back with a central himotoshi bar and is signed within an oval reserve GYOKUZAN.

HEIGHT 3.9 cm

Provenance: Zacke, Antike Asiatische Kunst, June 2004, Vienna, lot 274. An Austrian private collection, acquired from the above.
Condition: Excellent condition.

The present netsuke displays a remarkable level of technical refinement and artistic sensitivity. The finely carved and functionally integrated details – most notably the treatment of the hair at the reverse, ingeniously worked to mask a natural flaw – demonstrate a masterful handling of the material.



Born in Asakusa, Asahi Gyokuzan was among the most celebrated sculptors of his time and was appointed Teishitsu gigeiin (Imperial Court Artist). He quickly gained renown for his technically brilliant and often strikingly realistic works, particularly his depictions of skulls and skeletal subjects.

Estimate EUR 2,000
Starting price EUR 1,000

334

A FINE WOOD NETSUKE OF A SMILING MASK ON DRIFTWOOD

Unsigned
Japan, Edo (Tokyo), first half of the 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)



Finely carved as a smiling youthful Noh mask resting atop a fragment of driftwood (nagaregi). The mask projects prominently against the irregular surface, its rounded cheeks, narrow eyes, and gently curved mouth rendered with soft, sensitive modeling that conveys a warm and good-natured expression. The driftwood is finely rendered with a rugged surface to the top, smoothly polished below, and with asymmetrical himotoshi underneath.

LENGTH 4.2 cm

Provenance: Collection of Emil Zuckerkandl, Vienna, Austria, thence by descent to his wife Berta Zuckerkandl-Szepts, and thence by further descent in the family.
Condition: Excellent condition.



Berta Zuckerkandl-Szepts, 1886, portrait by Vilma Elisabeth von Parlaghy Brochfeld

The juxtaposition of the smiling mask and the driftwood (nagaregi) creates a subtle dialog between crafted image and natural form. This pairing recalls the aesthetic principles underlying Noh theatre, where the mask, though inanimate, acquires presence through context and perception.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of an Okame mask on driftwood, by Sankoken, illustrated in Lazarnick, George (1981) *Netsuke & Inro Artists, and How to Read Their Signatures* (LNIA), Vol. 2, p. 912.



Estimate EUR 1,500
Starting price EUR 800



335

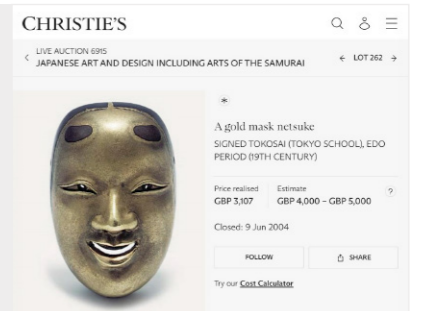
TOKO: A RARE MIXED METAL MASK NETSUKE OF KO-OMOTE

By Toko, signed Toko 冬湖 koku 刻 Japan, 19th century

Finely cast, the sentoku face engraved to depict the face of a young woman with almond-shaped eyes and slender lips forming a wide smile, revealing the blackened teeth within, the eyes, mouth, and nostrils pierced, and the hair and forehead with black-lacquered details. The reverse, beautiful gilt, with a central himotoshi bar signed TOKO koku [engraved by Toko].



The present lot at Christie's, Japanese Art and Design including Arts of the Samurai, 8-9 June 2004, London, lot 262 (sold for GBP 3,107 or approx. **EUR 6,500**)



HEIGHT 4.2 cm
WEIGHT 45 g

Provenance: Christie's, Japanese Art and Design including Arts of the Samurai, 8-9 June 2004, London, lot 262 (sold for GBP 3,107 or approx. **EUR 6,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing). The private collection of Alan and Simone Hartman, New York.
Condition: Very good condition with expected wear and a minuscule ding to the chin.

Ko-omote (literally "small face") Noh masks are used for main or secondary roles, of either a young girl or a supernatural being. Inspired by Heian-period (794-1185) aristocratic style, the face is painted white, with shaved and painted eyebrows, neatly combed hair, and black-dyed teeth.

Estimate EUR 2,000
Starting price EUR 1,000



336
SHIBAYAMA: A FINE INLAID GOLD LACQUER MANJU NETSUKE OF A DEER AMONG AUTUMN GRASSES

By a member of the Shibayama family, signed Shibayama 芝山 Japan, Tokyo, late 19th century, Meiji period (1868-1912)

The two-part manju netsuke is decorated with iro-e takamaki-e on a lustrous kinji ground, depicting a deer resting among autumn grasses and bush clover. The scene is further enhanced with a mother-of-pearl inlay, including the tiny spots on the sika deer. The reverse is finished with a mother-of-pearl inlaid, florally rimmed central himotoshi, and is signed on an inlaid mother-of-pearl plaque SHIBAYAMA. The interior is finished in gold nashiji and houses the cord attachment.

DIAMETER 4.2 cm

Provenance: From the private collection of Alan and Simone Hartman, New York. **Alan Hartman** (1930-2023) was an influential American art dealer, who took over his parents' antique business in Manhattan and established the legendary Rare Art Gallery on Madison Avenue, with further locations in Dallas and Palm Beach. His wife Simone (née Horowitz) already served as assistant manager of the New York gallery before the couple were married in 1975, and together they built a renowned collection for over half a century and became noted art patrons, enriching the collections of important museums. **Condition:** Very good condition with minor wear, a few tiny nicks to the rim and a short crack to the deer.

Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



Alan & Simone Hartman



337
NORIKAZU: AN EXQUISITE 18K GOLD AND LACQUER KAGAMIBUTA NETSUKE

By Norikazu, signed Norikazu 則一 Japan, second half of the 19th century

This exquisite kagamibuta netsuke features a circular 18K gold plate set within a beautifully lacquered bowl. The gold disc is finely worked in takazogan and katakiribori to depict an egret fishing in a lotus pond. The lacquer bowl is decorated in gold and silver takamaki-e and hiramaki-e on a lustrous roiro ground, with two cranes in flight above reeds. A central himotoshi is located on the back, and the looped cord attachment is positioned at the back of the plate. The plate is signed NORIKAZU.

DIAMETER 3 cm
 WEIGHT of the 18K gold disc 1.7 g

Provenance: From the private collection of Alan and Simone Hartman, New York. **Alan Hartman** (1930-2023) was an influential American art dealer, who took over his parents' antique business in Manhattan and established the legendary Rare Art Gallery on Madison Avenue, with further locations in Dallas and Palm Beach. His wife Simone (née Horowitz) already served as assistant manager of the New York gallery before the couple were married in 1975, and together they built a renowned collection for over half a century and became noted art patrons, enriching the collections of important museums including the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (which opened the Alan and Simone Hartman Galleries in 2013) as well as the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Brooklyn Museum in New York. Notably, they assembled an impressive collection of Japanese art, focusing on fine netsuke, inro, and lacquer. **Condition:** Very good condition with minor wear, tiny nicks to the interior of the bowl.

Norikazu (active late 19th century) was a talented maker of kagamibuta plates and mixed metal ojime.

Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000





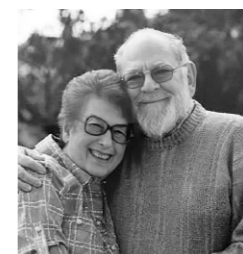
338
**AN EXTREMELY RARE AND LARGE LACQUER
 NETSUKE DEPICTING THE DREAM OF ROSEI**

Unsigned
 Japan, c. 1800, Edo period (1615-1868)

Finely carved, Rosei reclining serenely, with his head resting upon his left hand, and dressed in voluminous robes, exquisitely decorated in gold hiramaki-e with scrolling tendrils and foliage, cinched at the waist with a silver-inlaid belt neatly incised with karakusa motifs. The chest of the figure conceived as a detachable element, allowing storage within the hollow body. The rounded head bearing a placid expression, lost in a daydream, with a gentle smile and his hair neatly arranged in two symmetrical buns. The underside with a silver-ringed himotoshi, the cord attachment to the back of the removable robe element to the front.

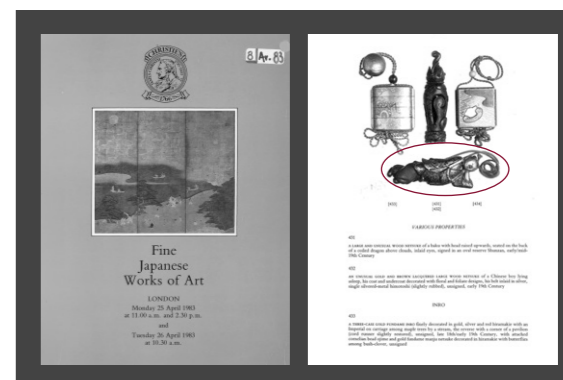
LENGTH 13.8 cm

Provenance: Christie's, London, 26 April 1983, lot 432. Charlotte Horstmann & Gerald Godfrey, Hong Kong, acquired from the above. The collection of Eva and Aubrey Sweet, Melbourne, Australia, acquired from the above. Copies of the invoice from Charlotte Horstmann & Gerald Godfrey, dated 22 October 1983, addressed to Mr. Aubrey Sweet, and stating a purchase price of HKD 19,500 or approx. **EUR 9,900** (converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing) and a certificate of antiquity dated 24 October 1983 and confirming the dating above accompany this lot. **Eva and Aubrey Sweet** devoted over six decades to the formation of a distinguished private collection of Asian art, with particular strength in Chinese jade, Japanese lacquer, and netsuke. Their collecting began in the 1950s and was refined through sustained travel, scholarship, and long associations with leading dealers, curators, and artists internationally. Aubrey, a Melbourne physician who also studied acupuncture in Beijing, and Eva developed a discerning connoisseurship that balanced intuitive appreciation with systematic study, supported by an extensive reference library and active participation in scholarly circles. They acquired works of historic importance as well as contemporary pieces by artists such as Susan Wraight and Unryuan (Kitamura Tatsuo), demonstrating a commitment both to tradition and to the continuity of craft. The collection, housed in their Melbourne residence and affectionately referred to by the family as 'the Museum', stands as a testament to their lifelong dedication to the aesthetic and cultural values of Asian art.



Eva and Aubrey Sweet

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear, traces of use, expected rubbing to lacquer.



Christie's, London, 26 April 1983, lot 432

In the original eighth-century Chinese tale, Rosei (Lu Sheng) departs his village in pursuit of a distinguished career in the civil service. This narrative later inspired the fifteenth-century Japanese Noh play Kantan, which was adapted to reflect the Buddhist sensibilities for the elite warrior audience of Noh theatre. In the drama, Rosei falls asleep at an inn while awaiting his meal and dreams of a grand procession that invites him to assume the role of emperor. Upon being awakened by the innkeeper, he recognizes that his fifty-year reign was but a fleeting illusion. This moment of awakening evokes a spiritual enlightenment, acknowledging both the impermanence of human life and the futility of worldly ambition. Abandoning his pursuit of personal advancement, Rosei returns to his village, transformed by this revelation.

Estimate EUR 5,000
 Starting price EUR 2,400



339
**A FINE EBONY SEAL NETSUKE
 OF A SHISHI ON A PEDESTAL**

Unsigned
 Japan, 18th-19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

The Buddhist lion is seated upright atop a rectangular, finely polished plinth, rising above the seal face below. The body is crisply carved with well-defined musculature and a flowing mane, while the bushy tail curls delicately to one side. The floppy-eared shishi is rendered with a charming expression, the mouth open in a snarl, the eyes encircled by metal rings and set beneath deeply furrowed brows. Natural himotoshi.

The underside is engraved with the auspicious inscription 寿比南山、福如東海 (Ju kore Nanzan, fuku Tokai no gotoshi), meaning "May your life be as long as the South Mountain, and your happiness and good fortune as boundless as the Eastern Sea."

HEIGHT 5.6 cm



Condition: Excellent condition with minor wear.

The inscription derives from a well-known verse in the *Shijing (Classic of Poetry)*, the earliest extant collection of Chinese poetry, compiled between the 11th and 7th centuries BC. As one of the Five Classics traditionally associated with Confucius, it has long been revered throughout East Asia, and such phrases were widely employed as auspicious wishes for longevity and prosperity.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

For a related ebony seal netsuke of a shishi, inscribed Tenko, 5.7 cm wide, see Katchen, Arlette (2010) *Netsuke* 7, Vol. 2, p. 235, no. K443.



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



340
**MASAKIYO: A LARGE AND UNUSUAL
 EBONY WOOD NETSUKE OF A SHISHI**

By Masakiyo, signed Masakiyo 正清
 Japan, late 18th to early 19th century, Edo period (1615-1868)

Powerfully carved as a large and highly unusual recumbent shishi (Buddhist lion), the mythical beast shown crouching alertly with its forelegs extended and its head facing forward, the jaws opened in a fierce snarl. The expressive face is boldly modeled with bulging eyes, curling brows, and sharply defined teeth. The luxuriant mane and tail are rendered in deeply carved, swirling locks cascading across the shoulders and haunches, providing a dynamic contrast to the smoothly polished, muscular body. The composition is notably elongated and low-slung, imparting a strong sense of latent energy and tension. Himotoshi to one side and signed within a large square reserve in seal form MASAKIYO.

LENGTH 7.8 cm

Condition: Good condition with minor wear and a few minor nicks to the edges, notably to the tail and one ear.

The present netsuke is remarkable for its distinctive interpretation of the shishi. While such subjects are common in Japanese netsuke - typically rendered as compact and playful creatures - this example departs from convention through its elongated proportions and grounded, tension-filled stance.



In this respect, it recalls early and more archaic forms of Japanese guardian lions (komainu), particularly those found at provincial shrines, where the animals are conceived with extended bodies and a low, crouching posture, emphasizing vigilance and latent force rather than decorative exuberance.

Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000



342
**GYOKKIN: A BAMBOO SASHI NETSUKE
 OF A SHISHI ON A PEDESTAL**

By Gyokkin (1816-1880), signed Gyokkin 玉琴 with seal
 Japan, Nara, second half of the 19th century

Published:

1. Reikichi, Ueda (1934) Shumi no Netsuke [Netsuke for Taste], Netsuke Kenkyukai, Osaka.
2. Meinertzhagen, Frederick / Lazarnick, George (1986) MCI, Part A, p. 86.
3. Hawley, John D (2005) Gyokkin, International Netsuke Society Journal (INSJ), Vol. 25, no. 2, p. 19, fig. 17.

Of flattened form, finely carved from a section of bamboo (metake) as a Buddhist Lion raised on a waisted double-lotus pedestal, the recessed section neatly incised with foliate scrolls, the guardian seated on its haunches in a distinctly powerful posture. The design is inspired from the stone shishi on pedestal that guards the Great South Gate at Todaiji. The natural surface of the material is heightened with clever polishing and staining to replicate more than 1,200 years of exposure to earthquakes and the elements. The neatly polished reverse with two himotoshi and the inscription Todaiji komon ishi shishi den un Kudara Toman GYOKKIN tori tsukuru [Made by Gyokkin, Toman, a sculptor, of Kudara in Korea carved the stone shishi lion that guards the old Great South Gate of the Todaiji Temple in Nara].

HEIGHT 14.5 cm

Provenance: From an old private collection in Switzerland, and thence by descent.

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear. Two small, smoothed losses to the back, one to the himotoshi and the other to the inscription; as well as one small nick.

With an inscribed wood tomobako (storage box): Todaiji komon mae Korai-koma, soko Gyokkin o saku, Kyusai kansu, 東大寺古門前高麗狗、祖工玉琴翁作、汲哉鑑 with the seal 汲哉 [This is made by the old master Gyokkin, modeled on the Korean shishi dog sitting at the front of the old gate of the Todaiji Temple (Nara), authenticated by (Tetsugendo Hirai) Kyusai].



341
**A RARE PAINTED HINOKI WOOD
 SEAL NETSUKE OF THE INARI FOX**

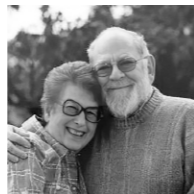
Unsigned
 Japan, probably Nara, second half of the 19th century

Carved from hinoki (cypress) wood and painted to represent a temple statue of the Inari fox, the pedestal detailed with hoju (wish-granting jewel) and evergreen pine motifs. The figure with an upright tail, its posture dignified, recalling small shrine guardians placed at the entrances of Inari sanctuaries. A single himotoshi through the tail. The seal face inscribed Ippo 一方.

HEIGHT 6.9 cm

Provenance: Ex-collection Mary Louise O'Brien. With Barry Davies Oriental Art, London, 1987. From the collection of Eva & Aubrey Sweet, Melbourne, Australia, acquired from the above. A copy of an invoice, from Barry Davies - Oriental Art, addressed to A. Sweet, dated 11 February 1987, accompanies this lot.

Condition: Very good condition with minor wear, typical losses to pigments and light flaking.



Eva and Aubrey Sweet

Among foxes (kitsune), it is the white fox – messenger of Dakiniten, later identified with Inari, the deity of cereals and harvest – that holds particular importance. Countless shrines dedicated to Inari were erected across Japan, often flanked by pairs of fox statues.

MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a related ivory model of fox sculpture, by Kyokuso, 5.6 cm high, formerly in the Raymond and Frances Bushell collection, in the Los Angeles Museum of Art, accession number M.91.250.274.



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000

The design of the present netsuke is inspired by the stone shishi on pedestal that guards the Great South Gate at Todaiji



LITERATURE COMPARISON

For a closely related bamboo netsuke of a shishi on a pedestal, by the same artist and signed by inscriptions, see Bushell, Raymond (1975) Netsuke Familiar & Unfamiliar, p. 195, no. 573.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related bamboo sashi netsuke of a guardian lion, by Morikawa Toen, 10.4 cm high, at Zackle, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 4 November 2022, Vienna, lot 125 (sold for EUR 4,160).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



343
HIDEYUKI: CHOKARO SENNIN CARRYING HIS HORSE

By Hideo Sakurai (Kosei Hideyuki, born 1941), signed Hideyuki 秀之 Japan, Tokyo, c. 1980

This highly amusing and cleverly interpreted netsuke depicts Chokaro Sennin, the legendary Taoist immortal, carrying his large, heavy horse on his back - a creature he has just freed from its gourd, now clearly regretting his decision. The exaggerated expression on Chokaro's face captures the humorous moment of realization, as he supports the weight of the animal with both hands, a look of mild distress on his face. Chokaro's neatly incised beard and finely modeled nose, coupled with the wrinkles on his forehead, give him a wise yet comically frazzled appearance. The horse, perched awkwardly on Chokaro's back, looks equally bemused, its body perfectly rendered in a dynamic pose, further emphasizing the humor of the moment. Natural himotoshi and signed within an 18K gold plaque HIDEYUKI.

HEIGHT 6.1 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.

The horse is the familiar of Chokaro Sennin, who is able to conjure the animal out of a gourd at will. The Japanese expression *hyotan kara koma* (lit. 'a horse in the gourd'), referring to a completely unexpected event that actually comes to pass, akin to the flight of pigs in the English-speaking world.

Sakurai Hideo (born Sakurai Hideo, 1941) learned carving from his father, Sakurai Hirokichi, who worked under the art name Kosei. Miriam Kinsey (1977), a leading authority on contemporary netsuke of the 20th century, notes: "His netsuke are executed with his own original ideas and with delicate, detailed, and meticulous workmanship."



Sakurai Hideo (Hideyuki)



LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of Chokaro Sennin by the same artist, signed Kosei with seal Hideyuki, illustrated in *International Netsuke Collectors Society* (1980), Vol. 7, no.4, p. 48, no. 12.



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



344
HIDEYUKI: THE WATER MARGIN

By Hideo Sakurai (Kosei Hideyuki, born 1941), signed Kosei Hideyuki 廣晴 秀之 Japan, Tokyo, c. 1980

Superbly carved, this netsuke depicts a hero from **The Water Margin**, shown standing with one leg slightly bent, holding a long sword over his shoulder, drawn from the sheath slung across his back. His layered attire is finely carved, with the robe and apron incised with geometric and wave-like patterns, enhanced by dark horn inlays. The face is powerfully modeled, featuring double-inlaid eyes, a full beard, and a weathered expression that conveys strength. Natural himotoshi and incised with the signature KOSEI and further signed HIDEYUKI within an inlaid 18K gold plaque.

HEIGHT 6.7 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.

With a wood tomobako (storage box) inscribed to the cover of the tomobako inscribed Suikoden, Kosei Hideyuki saku. 水滸伝、廣晴英之作, [The Water Margin, made by Kosei Hideyuki].

The Water Margin, one of the Four Great Classical Novels of Chinese literature, is traditionally attributed to Shi Nai'an and dates from the 14th century. Set during the Northern Song dynasty, it follows 108 outlaws and heroes who unite at Mount Liang (Liangshan Marsh) to oppose corruption, injustice, and oppressive officials, ultimately becoming a band of righteous rebels. The characters represent a range of virtues — bravery, loyalty, cunning, and martial prowess — weaving together a narrative of camaraderie and conflict. The novel's enduring popularity has had a profound influence on art across East Asia for centuries.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of an oni triumphing over Shoki by the same artist, signed Hideyuki, 6.7 cm high, at Zucke, Asian Art Discoveries, 22 January 2026, Vienna, lot 756 (sold for **EUR 3,432**).



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500





345
BISHU: SOUTHERN BARBARIAN (NANBANJIN)

By Katsutoshi Saito (Bishu, born 1943), signed Bishu 美洲
 Japan, Tokyo, dated 1980

Superbly carved as a drunken Southern Barbarian (Nanbanjin), the foreigner is depicted reclining, holding a flask in one hand while the other supports his heavy head. He is dressed in elaborately detailed foreign attire, the robe intricately incised with decorative patterns including waves. Two buttons are inlaid in dark horn, and between them the robe has burst open over the distended stomach, the buttons seemingly on the verge of flying apart. His facial features - high-bridged nose, prominent brow, and slightly parted lips - are finely rendered, capturing both character and humor. Himotoshi to the reverse and signed to the bottle BISHU.

LENGTH 6.8 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.

With a wood tomobako (storage box) inscribed to the cover: Nanbanjin, Showa gojugo-nen, Bishu, 南蛮人、昭和五十五年、美洲, [Southern barbarian, Showa 55 (1980), Bishu, with the artist's seal Bishu].

Bishu (real name Katsutoshi Saito, born 1943 in Tokyo) studied sculpture at the Taiheiyō Art Academy and learned carving from his father Shosai Saito. In the contemporary netsuke movement that emerged in the 1970s - aimed at developing new artistic expressions within the traditional format - Bishu became one of the central artists producing innovative modern netsuke. In 1981 one of his works was acquired by the British Museum, and his carvings are now represented in numerous important institutional and private collections, including the Takamado royal collection.



Katsutoshi Saito (Bishu), born 1943



LITERATURE COMPARISON

Bishu only very rarely carved people, his output being mostly limited to animals, both real and mythical. For a related ivory netsuke of a Portuguese man see the Netsuke Kenkyukai Study Journal, 1985, Vol. 5, no. 4, p. 41 (illustrated in an advert by Ehrenkantz & Epstein Inc.).



Estimate EUR 2,500
 Starting price EUR 1,200



346
TANETOSHI: MINAMOTO NO YOSHITSUNE

By Hiraga Tanetoshi (born 1947), signed Tanetoshi 胤寿
 with seal Mei 明
 Japan, Tokyo, second half of 20th century

Superbly carved, this fine wood netsuke depicts the legendary Minamoto no Yoshitsune kneeling while fastening the cords of his hat with both hands. His samurai armor is intricately detailed: the yoroi (body armor) is carefully articulated, while the domed jingasa (war hat), sode (shoulder guards), and kote (armored sleeves) are meticulously carved and enriched with metal inlays to the upper sections. Yoshitsune's face is modeled with a serene yet concentrated expression, evoking the calm determination associated with the famed warrior. Himotoshi to the back and underside, one hole ringed in horn. Signed TANETOSHI within an inlaid oval reserve and sealed Mei to the knee.

HEIGHT 5.1 cm

Condition: Excellent condition. Only one tiny metal inlay is lost.

Hiraga Tanetoshi, born in 1947 in Kyoto, Japan, is an acclaimed ivory carver and haiku poet, renowned for his exquisite netsuke sculptures. As a fourth-generation ivory carver, he inherited a rich legacy of craftsmanship. Tanetoshi's creations often depict intricate scenes and figures, including animals, people, and skulls.



The beginnings of the netsuke carver Tanetoshi, his father and fellow contemporary artist Meigyokusai in the back

Minamoto no Yoshitsune (1159–1189) was one of Japan's most celebrated warriors, famed for his brilliant victories during the Genpei War that led to the fall of the Taira clan and the rise of the Minamoto. Despite his military genius, his life ended tragically after a falling-out with his brother Minamoto no Yoritomo, a fate that helped secure his enduring reputation as one of Japan's most romanticized heroic figures.

Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000





347
BISHU: PRAYING MANTIS

By Katsutoshi Saito (Bishu, born 1943), signed Uma hashiru 午走 Bishu 美洲 with seal Bishu 美洲 Japan, Tokyo, c. 1990s

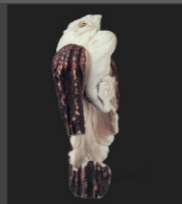
Superbly carved from antler, this elongated sashi netsuke takes the form of a praying mantis. The natural curvature and taper of the material are ingeniously utilized to emphasize the insect's slender posture, the long abdomen rendered with finely striated surfaces suggesting the segmented body. The raptorial forelegs are raised in a characteristic stance, while the eyes are inlaid in dark horn. Natural himotoshi and signed Uma hashiru, BISHU [the running horse, Bishu] and with seal Bishu.

HEIGHT 15.2 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Bishu only rarely used antler, a material he adopted later in his career. Compare a related antler netsuke of a phoenix by Bishu, illustrated in Michael Spindel Ltd. (1993), *Contemporary Netsuke: Selected Ojime & Related Arts*, New York, p. IV, no. 2.



AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related bone netsuke of a whale with young by the same artist, signed Garyu Bishu with seal, dated to c. 1993, 10 cm long, at Zacke, *Fine Netsuke & Sagemono*, 4 November 2022, Vienna, lot 161 (sold for **EUR 4,940**).



Estimate EUR 4,000
Starting price EUR 2,000



348
BISHU: TWO FOXES PLAYING

By Katsutoshi Saito (Bishu, born 1943), sealed Bishu 美洲 Japan, Tokyo, c. 1980s-1990s

Finely carved as two foxes playfully intertwined in a compact composition. One fox stands atop the other, grasping its back, while the lower fox turns its head upward in response. The bodies are delicately incised with fine striations suggesting fur, and the alert eyes are inlaid in dark horn. Their snouts are rendered with gentle, almost smiling expressions, lending the group a charming sense of animation and harmony. Natural himotoshi and sealed to one tail BISHU.

HEIGHT 4.1 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.

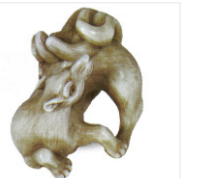
Bishu (real name Katsutoshi Saito, born 1943 in Tokyo) studied sculpture at the Taiheiyō Art Academy and learned carving from his father Shosai Saito. In the contemporary netsuke movement that emerged in the 1970s - aimed at developing new artistic expressions within the traditional format - Bishu became one of the central artists producing innovative modern netsuke.



Katsutoshi Saito (Bishu), born 1943

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related ivory netsuke of a nine-tailed fox by the same artist, signed Bishu, illustrated in the *International Netsuke Collectors Society Journal* (1974) Vol. 2, no. 2, p. 31, no. 4.



Estimate EUR 3,000
Starting price EUR 1,500



349

KANGYOKU: NEIGHING HORSE

By Noriyoshi Tachihara (Kangyoku), signed Risshisai Kangyoku
立志齋 寛玉
Japan, Tokyo, 1979

Published:

- 1. Kinsey, Robert (1997) Bowers Museum of Cultural Art, Contemporary Netsuke: Miniature Sculpture from Japan and Beyond, no. 8.
- 2. Kinsey, Miram (2001), Contemporary Netsuke: The Kinsey Collection Accompanied By H. I. H. Takamado Collection, no. 78.
- 3. Kinsey, Robert (2003) The Poetry of Netsuke, no. 98.

Superbly carved, the horse is depicted in a dynamic and almost theatrical pose, its body twisting as it lifts its head high in a spirited whinny. One foreleg bends inward while the hind legs brace firmly beneath the muscular body. The face is vividly expressive, the mouth open wide as if mid- neigh, the nostrils flared and ears alert, the eyes inlaid in amber. The powerful neck arches gracefully, leading into a flowing tail that curls around the hindquarters. Natural himotoshi and signed RISSHISAI KANGYOKU to one leg.

HEIGHT 5.5 cm

Provenance: Ex-collection Miriam Kinsey, one of the leading authorities on contemporary netsuke of the twentieth century. **Miriam Kinsey** was an influential scholar and collector whose research and publications helped shape the study of contemporary netsuke. Through her scholarship and collecting activities she was also influential in the formation of the Takamado royal netsuke collection, one of the most important modern collections of netsuke.

Condition: Excellent condition.

With a wood tomobako (storage box) Inscribed to the cover: Inanaki, Risshisai Kangyoku koku, Showa gojuyon-nen haru, with the seal Kangyoku, いなゝき、立志齋寛玉刻、昭和五拾四年春、寛玉, [Neighing horse, carved by Risshisai Kangyoku, Spring of Showa 54 (1979), with the red seal Kangyoku].



Noriyoshi Tachihara (art name Kangyoku) was born in Tokyo in 1944. He learned carving from his father Fasukichi Tachihara, who had been associated with the school of the renowned netsuke master Meikeisai Hojitsu. Kangyoku is particularly celebrated for his dynamic animal subjects and mythological creatures. While he frequently worked in mammoth ivory, he also produced highly successful carvings in wood.



Noriyoshi Tachihara (Kangyoku)

Miriam Kinsey devoted the opening twelve pages of her influential study Living Masters of Netsuke to Kangyoku, writing: "Today some of the young carvers, while still respecting the old masters, are producing netsuke with a refreshing freedom of spirit and self-expression. Kangyoku Risshisai is such a carver."

LITERATURE COMPARISON

A closely related netsuke by the same artist, carved from ivory and also dated 1979, signed Risshisai Kangyoku, 5.7 cm high, is in the Museum Kunstpalast Düsseldorf, illustrated in Jirka-Schmitz, Patrizia, The World of Netsuke - The Werdelmann Collection at the Museum Kunstpalast Düsseldorf, no. 548.



Estimate EUR 6,000
Starting price EUR 3,000





350
SEIHO: SHISHI WITH BALL

By Katsuo Azuma (Seiho, 1936-2003), signed Seiho 声方 Japan, Ibaraki prefecture, c. 1990s

Finely carved from boxwood, the composition depicts a playful shishi reclining while grasping an openwork ball adorned with dark horn and amber inlays, containing a movable sphere within. The muscular body is powerfully modeled, while the voluminous mane and curling tail are rendered in flowing, neatly incised strands. Its expression is fierce yet animated, the tongue extended in lively fashion, and the bulging eyes inlaid in dark horn lend a striking intensity to the gaze. Natural himotoshi and signed underneath SEIHO.

LENGTH 4 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.

Seiho, born as Katsuo Azuma in 1936 in Ibaraki prefecture, studied carving under the famous Hose Maguro until he turned 22. Seiho is well known for his legendary and mythological figures, animals, and religious subjects. He was a member of the International Netsuke Carvers Association and has received several awards from the Ueno Royal Museum and the Japan Art Association.



Katsuo Azuma (Seiho, 1936-2003)

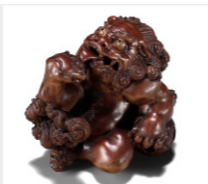
LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a shishi with ball by the same artist, signed Seiho, illustrated in Kinsey, Miram (2001), Contemporary Netsuke: The Kinsey Collection, no. 331.

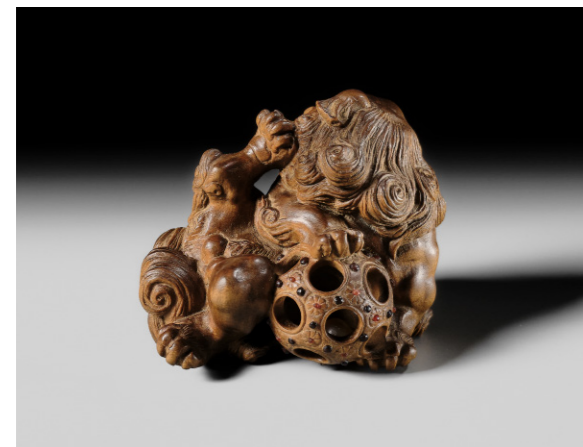


AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a shishi by the same artist, signed Seiho, dated to c. 1996, 5.5 cm high, at Zacke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 3 May 2024, Vienna, lot 221 (sold for **EUR 4,420**).



Estimate EUR 4,000
Starting price EUR 2,000



351
KOZAN: HIPPO AND YOUNG

By Fukuyama Kozan (born 1946), signed Kozan 恒山 Japan, late 20th century

Superbly carved, the netsuke depicts a hippopotamus mother reclining in repose while her calf nestles closely against her side, gently pressing to rouse her from sleep. The massive bodies are rendered with smooth, finely polished surfaces, contrasted by the subtly stippled and carefully carved folds of wrinkled skin, particularly around the neck and head. The eyes of both animals are beautifully double-inlaid, one of the mother's eyes delicately closed in rest while the other remains slightly open, acknowledging the touch of her offspring. The mother's teeth are inlaid in bone. Natural himotoshi pass through the body. Signed underneath KOZAN.

LENGTH 5.3 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.

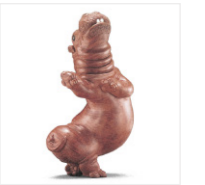
Fukuyama Kozan (born 1946) is a distinguished Japanese netsuke artist, whose works are held in prestigious collections, including the Kyoto Seishu Netsuke Art Museum, the Prince Takamado Collection, and the Tokyo National Museum (TNM). In 2011, the Kyoto Seishu Netsuke Art Museum published a catalog titled Netsuke Sakka Kozan no Sekai [The World of Netsuke Artist Kozan], a 64-page publication showcasing his remarkable talent.



Fukuyama Kozan (born 1946)

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a dancing hippo by the same artist, signed Kozan, 6.4 cm high, illustrated in Kinsey, Miram (2001), Contemporary Netsuke: The Kinsey Collection, no. 298.



MUSEUM COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a hippo by the same artist, signed Kozan, dated to 1994, 5.1 cm high, in the Museum of Tokyo University of Fine Art.



Estimate EUR 5,000
Starting price EUR 2,400





352
FUJI ANGO: TANUKI AS A SAKE VENDOR

By Fuji Ango (born 1960), signed Ango 安剛
Japan, late 20th to early 21st century

Masterfully carved and stained, this netsuke depicts a humorous scene of a tanuki sake vendor seated in a playful pose. One paw clutches a sake cup decorated with an Omodaka Tsurumaki mon, while the other holds a fish. A broad straw hat rests across his back, its concentric plaiting intricately carved and stained to contrast with the tanuki's darker body. The hat is further embellished with delicate leafy vines. The tanuki's expression is animated and mischievous, his tongue provocatively protruding. The fur is finely incised and subtly stained, adding to the lively detail. Beautifully hollowed and asymmetrical himotoshi to the side and signed to the base of the cup ANGO.

HEIGHT 4 cm

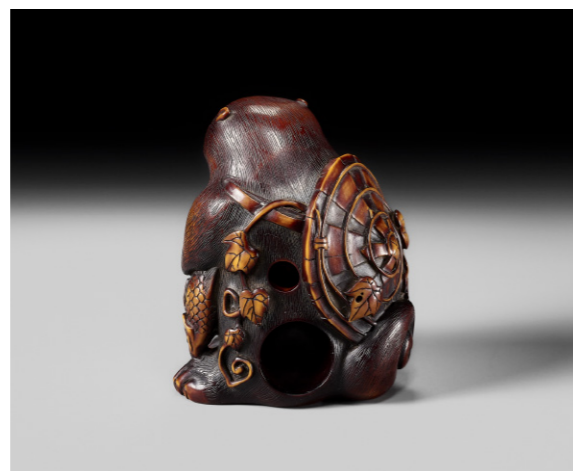
Condition: Excellent condition.



Fuji Ango, born in 1960 in Ehime Prefecture, studied netsuke carving under Ryushi Komada and Akira Kuroiwa at the Asahi Culture's Contemporary Netsuke Course. Ango is known for blending contemporary elements with traditional netsuke techniques, carefully balancing classical form, color, and style while adding a modern touch to his work. Like his mentor Ryushi Komada, Ango is a master of staining techniques, bringing a dynamic depth to his carvings.

The tanuki (raccoon dog) is a symbol of prosperity and good fortune in Japanese folklore. Commonly seen in front of shops, tanuki figurines like the one in this netsuke are believed to bring business success. The playful depiction of the tanuki as a sake vendor reflects this tradition, with its joyful expression symbolizing abundance. The homophone for tanuki means "to excel others," further associating the figure with success, much like the lucky tanuki figurines (Tanu-Kichi) found at store entrances to attract good fortune.

Estimate EUR 5,000
Starting price EUR 2,400



353
ROKUSHO-DO: NAMAHAGE DEMONS IN SNOW

By Shikamasa Rokusho (b. 1968), signed Rokusho 鹿正
Japan, c. 2021

Carved from antler and buffalo horn, these striking Namahage demons are crowned with dramatically flowing, finely incised hair that sweeps outward in wind-blown strands, creating dynamic silhouettes. The surfaces are richly stained in contrasting tones, with one figure rendered in vivid red and the other in deep indigo-blue. Textured encrustations on the hair evoke the appearance of freshly fallen snow. The faces are powerfully expressive, with furrowed brows, flared nostrils, and gaping mouths baring sharp, antler-carved fangs. The eyes are inlaid in horn. Ringed himotoshi to the reverse, each signed within an oval reserve ROKUSHO.

LENGTH 6.2 cm and 6.1 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.

Shikamasa Rokusho (born 1968) is a contemporary Japanese netsuke and deer-antler carver, working under the name Rokusho-do in Yamanashi Prefecture.

354
MATT KOWOLLIK: HAZEL DORMOUSE ON A FIRETHORN

By Matt Kowolik, signed with the artist's signature
United States, c. 2000



Namahage are folkloric demon figures originating from the Oga Peninsula in Akita Prefecture, northern Japan. Traditionally appearing during winter and New Year rituals, the Namahage are performed by villagers wearing masks and straw garments, visiting households to admonish laziness and encourage good behavior, particularly in children. Though their appearance is fearsome, Namahage are not malevolent but instead serve a corrective and protective social function. Their association with snow and winter is central to their identity, and they are often depicted in red and blue pairs, representing complementary temperaments rather than moral opposition.



Namahage demons in the snow

Estimate EUR 2,000
Starting price EUR 1,000

Finely carved from dense, heavy wood, this naturalistic depiction shows a hazel dormouse perched atop a firethorn branch. The charming rodent is delicately rendered with lifelike details, including rounded ears, neatly incised fur texture, and expressive dark inlaid eyes. It holds a small cluster of red berries from the firethorn plant in its paws, which are separately carved from semi-translucent horn, some of the fruits showing evidence of nibbling. Ringed himotoshi to the back, in-between is the signature of the artist within a polished, rounded reserve.



Hazel dormouse on a Mediterranean firethorn

HEIGHT 7.5 cm

Condition: Good condition with minor wear and tiny chips to the feet.

The work of Matt Kowolik, born in 1946, is distinguished by an imaginative use of materials to portray small creatures and plants that often go unnoticed, capturing the essence of nature in each piece. For Kowolik, netsuke carving is both an art form and a personal expression of his appreciation for the natural world.

Estimate EUR 1,500
Starting price EUR 800



355
MICHAEL WEBB: RECUMBENT MOLE

By Michael Webb (1934-2009), signed 'MJW'
England, Yorkshire, 1980

A finely carved, naturalistic model of a plump mole, its body gently curved to the left as if caught mid-dig. The graphically enlarged, clawed forepaws and snout are stained brown, contrasting with the black-stained body, which is meticulously worked with minutely carved fur. The tiny inlaid eyes lend the animal a remarkably vivid and engaging expression. Signed 'MJW' and dated 1980, with the suffix 'AS 46', within a polished reserve on the underside, and with natural himotoshi through the left hind and front legs. Moles are an exceptionally rare subject in netsuke art.

LENGTH 5.3 cm

Provenance: With Rosemary Bandini, London, 2011. From the collection of Eva & Aubrey Sweet, Melbourne, Australia, acquired from the above.

Condition: Excellent condition.

Michael Webb (1932-2009), formerly a director and auctioneer at Sotheby's, carved netsuke as a hobby until 1976. Thereafter, he moved to Yorkshire and began to master the art under the guidance of Luigi Bandini of Eskenazi Ltd. The present netsuke is a rare and early work by the artist, likely inspired by a mole in his own garden, as suggested by the exceptionally naturalistic treatment, particularly evident in the finely rendered hairwork and the convincing bodily proportions of the animal.



Michael Webb (1932-2009)

Literature comparison: For a closely related model of a recumbent mole see Eskenazi Ltd., Japanese Netsuke from Private Collections and Michael Webb Netsuke, London, 1980, p.28, no.67.

Estimate EUR 3,000
Starting price EUR 1,500



356
LEIGH SLOGGETT: HORNBILL

By Leigh Sloggett (b. 1960), signed 'LS'
Australia, 1999

Carved from holly, this netsuke depicts a great hornbill (*Buceros bicornis*) preening its tail feathers, rendered with a convincing sense of naturalism while retaining the distinctive character and charm typical of netsuke carving. The plumage is finely detailed, with neatly articulated feathers enhanced by bold, deliberate staining to evoke the bird's natural coloration, while the imposing crest and gracefully curved beak lend the figure a sense of presence and authority. The underside reveals the feet drawn up and clawed for compactness, stained a lighter grey, the asymmetrical himotoshi and the signature 'LS' carved within an oval reserve.

LENGTH 6.2 cm



The Great Hornbill preening its tail feathers

Provenance: From the collection of Eva & Aubrey Sweet, Melbourne, Australia, acquired directly from the artist in 1999 for AUD 3,600 (or approximately **EUR 4,500** converted and adjusted for inflation at the time of writing). A copy of the invoice confirming the above is included with the lot.
Condition: Excellent condition.

With the original wood box, titled 'Hornbill', signed and sealed by the artist.

Leigh Sloggett (b.1960) is an Australian contemporary netsuke carver who combines the traditional and functional attributes of the netsuke with innovative ideas, forms and concepts which come from his personal experiences. Mr. Sloggett studied fine arts, majoring in painting and sculpture. In a moving interview, written by Jeffrey Klotz and Phyllis Lieberman in the INS Journal Volume 23, Leigh states: "I see it (netsuke) as the ultimate sculptural art form because it is carved in the round". His works have been exhibited and are in the collections of the British Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, the Los Angeles County Museum and the Tokyo National Museum.



Leigh Sloggett with one of his creations, c. 2019

Estimate EUR 2,000
Starting price EUR 1,000





357
**LEIGH SLOGGETT: SENTIMENTAL ONI
 (A SONG SO SWEET EVEN DEVILS CRY)**

By Leigh Sloggett (b. 1960), signed 'LS'
 Australia, c. 1990s

The oni is rendered in distinctly Western attire, seated cross-legged while playing the violin with deep emotional intensity. Its head tilts upward, eyes closed, as tears stream down its cheeks, suggesting a state of Romantic rapture more readily associated with European concert halls than with the demonic realms. The violin and bow are held with carefully articulated hands, the instrument convincingly detailed, while the jacket is carved with a richly textured surface suggestive of heavy wool. Two himotoshi underneath and signed 'LS' within a tiny circular reserve.

HEIGHT 4.5 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.

Leigh Sloggett (b.1960) is an Australian contemporary netsuke carver who combines the traditional and functional attributes of the netsuke with innovative ideas, forms and concepts which come from his personal experiences. Mr. Sloggett studied fine arts, majoring in painting and sculpture. In a moving interview, written by Jeffrey Klotz and Phyllis Lieberman in the INS Journal Volume 23, Leigh states: "I see it (netsuke) as the ultimate sculptural art form because it is carved in the round". His works have been exhibited and are in the collections of the British Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, the Los Angeles County Museum and the Tokyo National Museum.



Leigh Sloggett with one of his creations, c. 2019



LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of an oni and hare by the same artist, illustrated the International Netsuke Society Journal (INSJ), 2003, vol 23, no. 1, p. 45.



Estimate EUR 3,000
 Starting price EUR 1,500



358
**DAVID CARLIN:
 'COMEDY AND TRAGEDY' CHIMERA**

By David Carlin (b. 1944), signed with the artist's seal
 Hawaii, c. 1990s

Exquisitely carved from boxwood and painted with polychrome pigments, this dynamic netsuke is conceived as a fantastical theatrical chimera uniting the opposing archetypes of comedy and tragedy. A smiling comedy mask, its expression animated and benevolent, rises at the apex of the composition, while below emerges a deeply furrowed tragedy mask bearing a somber, anguished expression.

The two faces are integrated within a spiraling, baroque volute that suggests both movement and transformation. Elements of a jester's bell-tipped cap (coxcomb) extend downward and resolve into scrolling, bifurcated terminals, blurring the distinction between costume and anatomy. A finely carved Elizabethan ruff frames the lower mask, its delicately stippled texture contrasting with the smooth planes of the faces. The body of the composition is richly ornamented with carved roses, their layered petals forming a dense, ornamental mass that unifies the theatrical imagery into a single sculptural entity.

Carlin's surfaces are rendered with exceptional precision, incorporating minute stippling, subtle pigment modulation, and bone inlays. The work is signed underneath with the artist's bone-inlaid seal. Natural himotoshi.

HEIGHT 7.1 cm

Provenance: The Edward and Marilyn Flower Collection of Contemporary Netsuke. **Edward and Marilyn Flower** assembled a significant private collection devoted to contemporary netsuke carving. Their collection focused on leading late-20th-century and early-21st-century artists.

Condition: Excellent condition.

David Carlin (b. 1944) is widely regarded as one of the foremost contemporary masters of netsuke carving. His netsuke are held in major museum collections, including the Tokyo National Museum, the Honolulu Museum of Art, and the Kyoto Seishu Netsuke Art Museum, and have been purchased by renowned international collectors such as Robin Williams and members of the Japanese Imperial family.



David Carlin

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related group of netsuke by David Carlin, illustrated at the inside cover of the International Netsuke Society Journal (INSJ) (1996), Vol. 16, no. 3.



Estimate EUR 2,000
 Starting price EUR 1,000





359
MICHAEL BIRCH: THE PORTUGUESE DANDY

By Michael Henry Birch (1926-2008), signed with artist's initials MHB
 England, 1996

Published: Birch, JKL (2013) *The Art & Life of Michael Birch*, p. 80.
Exhibited: *The Carvings of Michael Henry Birch*, I.N.S.C., Honolulu, 1997.

Charmingly carved from a fine piece of highlands stag antler, The Portuguese Dandy stands in a theatrical pose, his weight shifting onto one leg as if caught mid-gesture. His long coat falls in graceful, curling folds that flare near the hem, the natural texture and material of the antler cleverly used to suggest fabric. The dandy's head tilts slightly with a self-assured yet faintly amused expression; his eyes are inlaid with drawn crystal rods. Signed with the artist's initials within an inlaid gold plaque MHB.



HEIGHT 10.2 cm

Provenance: The Edward and Marilyn Flower Collection of Contemporary Netsuke.
Condition: Excellent condition.

Michael Henry Birch (1926-2008) was a potter, painter, writer and contemporary netsuke carver, holding his first one-man show at the Eskenazi Gallery in London in 1976. He was designated a master carver by Japan's artists' guild, the first such honor for a non-Japanese artist. He was versatile in many materials and his work showed undeniable vitality and character.

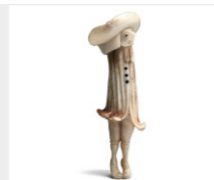


Self portrait of Micheal Birch, unsigned, c. 1972

Dandies and Dutchmen are certainly one of Michael Birch's most popular subjects and he was acknowledged for his ability to create character in a face that is rarely any more, and often much less than one centimeter in height. Some collectors consider many of the faces to be self-portraits, a notion which the artist strongly denied.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related antler netsuke of a Dutchman by the same artist, signed MHB, dated c. 1996, 10 cm high, at Zackle, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 25 September 2020, Vienna, lot 203 (sold for **EUR 3,539**).



Estimate EUR 4,000
 Starting price EUR 2,000



360
GUY SHAW: POPPY MAIDEN

By Guy Shaw (1951-2003), signed with the artist's initial 'GS'
 England, c. 1996

Naturalistically carved from a beautifully curved section of antler, the artist transforms the material's inherent sweep into a lyrical botanical composition. Shaw described horn as "a fascinating material with its two very different qualities — a hard exterior and beautiful inner structures," a duality he masterfully exploits here. The elongated form rises in a gentle arc, culminating in a ripened poppy pod cradled by a serrated, unfurling leaf. The pod is slightly parted, revealing a glimpse of its interior and lending the composition a subtle sense of organic vitality.

The entire surface is stained in rich, nuanced greens with delicate tonal variations that follow the natural structure of the antler, enhancing its organic taper and internal gradation. The smooth pod contrasts with the deeply undercut and finely incised leaf, whose textured edges and hollowed interior create depth and shadow within the slender vertical form.

The work embodies the artist's credo that "everything I carve must reflect a part of me." Through the slow and painstaking process of carving, the artist engages in a form of quiet self-examination, allowing the composition to become an act of introspection — a sculpted reflection on ego, growth, and impermanence.

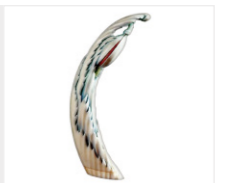
Signed underneath with the artist's initials GS in abstract 'seal' form.

HEIGHT 9.7 cm

Provenance: The Edward and Marilyn Flower Collection of Contemporary Netsuke.
Condition: Excellent condition.

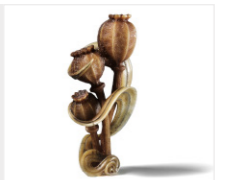
LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a closely related boar tusk netsuke also titled 'Poppy Maiden' by the same artist, signed GS gaijin, dated to 1996, 10.9 cm high, illustrated in *International Netsuke Society Journal (INSJ)*, 2004, Vol. 24, no. 3, p. 52, fig. 7.

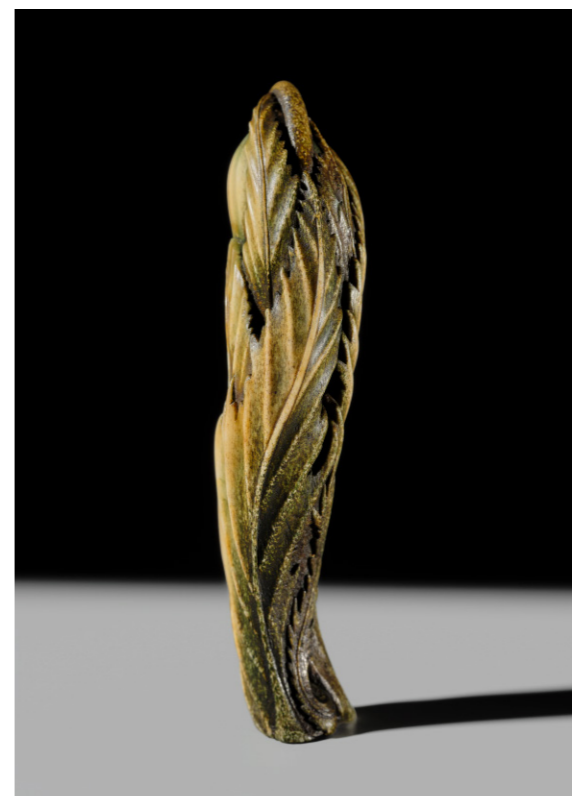


AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related antler netsuke of poppies by the same artist, signed GS, dated to 1997, 7.2 cm high, at Zackle, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 3 May 2024, Vienna, lot 224 (sold for **EUR 7,800**).



Estimate EUR 5,000
 Starting price EUR 2,400





361
GUY SHAW:
ANT-RIDDLED LOG AND MUSHROOMS

By Guy Shaw (1951–2003), signed 'GS'
 England, 2000

A masterful tour-de-force netsuke by Guy Shaw, carved late in the artist's life and conceived in the aftermath of his celebrated *Busy Life* (see literature comparison). Executed from a single piece of horn, the work demonstrates Shaw's extraordinary understanding of material, both in its external form and its internal structure, which he exploits with exceptional sensitivity and control.

The exterior of the horn is transformed into a cluster of fleshy, moisture-laden bracket fungi of the type that grow directly from trees, their swollen forms rendered with striking naturalism, their caps polished and gills incised. In contrast, the interior of the horn becomes a porous, decaying core animated by a concealed world of ants. These are embedded within fissures, channels, and natural cavities of the horn itself. Some appear fleetingly near the surface, while others are almost entirely burrowed from view, their presence revealed only through partial glimpses within the material.

Crucially, the interior section is carved as a separate, precisely fitted element that slides seamlessly from the outer form. Only when it is fully withdrawn does the full extent of this hidden activity become apparent, transforming the act of viewing into one of discovery and gradual revelation. The brilliance of the work lies in this duality: an outwardly contained, almost reticent object that conceals an intensely animated interior world.

With natural himotoshi, and signed within a gold plaque 'GS'. With the original box carved as a natural dried fungus box, fitted with silver hinges, the interior painted in gold with further mushroom motifs and signed and dated by the artist.

LENGTH (the netsuke) 6.5 cm
 LENGTH (the box) 10.1 cm

Provenance: Ex-collection Gill Shaw, acquired directly from the artist in 2000. The lot is accompanied by a copy of a signed note from the artist, headed "Secrets," stating that the box is made from beefsteak fungus and snakewood with silver hinges; that the netsuke is carved from horn, probably African, acquired from the Natural History Museum in Oxford during a clearance sale approximately 25 years earlier; and that the interior element represents the actual bone of the horn. The note is signed and dated Guy Shaw, 21.2.00.

Condition: Excellent condition.

Guy Shaw (1951-2003) was one of Britain's finest netsuke carvers. Shaw attended the Bournemouth College of Art and sometime after graduation was introduced to netsuke via the collection of his landlord, Francis Dinley. Netsuke carving seeks a visual replication of nature, place, and time, and it was in this field that Shaw, with his lifelong love of the wild, found his vocation.



Guy Shaw
 (1951-2003)

Shaw famously likened his own working life to that of the ants—"Like the ants I work almost every single moment, often over 18 hours a day"—a sentiment that finds particularly eloquent expression here.

LITERATURE
COMPARISON

For two related works carved by Guy Shaw in 1998, one depicting a leaf riddled with ants (the busy life) and the second depicting group of oyster mushrooms, see Zacke, *Netsuke von Meistern*, 1989, Vienna, nos. 90 & 92.



Estimate EUR 10,000
 Starting price EUR 5,000



362

ADAM BLAND: A WONDERFUL FATHER FOX

By Adam Bland, signed with the artist's initials
United Kingdom, 2024



Finely carved as a fox priest (kitsune) dressed in priestly attire, shown striding gently forward while leaning upon a large, superbly carved gnarled staff. Prayer beads are draped around the creature's wrist and entwined about the staff, enhancing the spiritual character of the figure. The layered robes fall in soft, naturalistic folds and are secured at the waist with a carefully carved sash. The face is superbly modelled with a subtly sly expression, the mouth slightly open in a gentle smile, the head surmounted by a finely carved eboshi. Signed to the underside with the artist's initials 'AB'.

The fox's tail is suggested by an elegantly crafted silk himo, made by the talented artist Dayle Farrell.

HEIGHT 7.7 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.

With a wood tomobako (storage box) inscribed to the cover:
Subarashiki tosan kitsune, すばらしき父さん狐, [A wonderful father fox].

Adam Bland is a contemporary netsuke artist from the north of England who has studied the craft for several years. Trained in Fine Art and Design, he discovered netsuke following a career in architectural model making. Drawn to their unique combination of design and sculpture, he creates intricate works rich in narrative and character. Bland exhibited at the International Netsuke Society Convention in Amsterdam in 2022 and is regarded as one of the most promising emerging contemporary carvers.

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of a tiger by the same artist, signed with the artist's initials and dated 2023, 3.7 cm long, at Zucke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 28 April 2023, Vienna, lot 319 (sold for **EUR 7,150**).



Estimate EUR 8,000
Starting price EUR 4,000





363
CLIVE HALLAM: LEAF

By Clive Hallam (born 1965), signed 'CH'
United Kingdom, 1993



A deceptively simple yet highly technical netsuke, demonstrating a masterful and highly intelligent use of material. Carved from a naturally curved, hollowed section of sika deer antler, it is formed as a curled leaf attached to a robust, gently arcing stem. The inherent qualities of the antler are exploited with great sophistication: the more porous areas are deliberately reserved for the interior of the leaf, while the denser, purer material is employed for the exterior surfaces and the finely carved cicada, rendered in crisp relief and subtly stained. The reverse reveals two butterflies, also carved in relief, their wings inlaid with shimmering mother-of-pearl. Signed at the terminus of the stalk 'CH' and pierced with a single himotoshi to one side.

LENGTH 6 cm

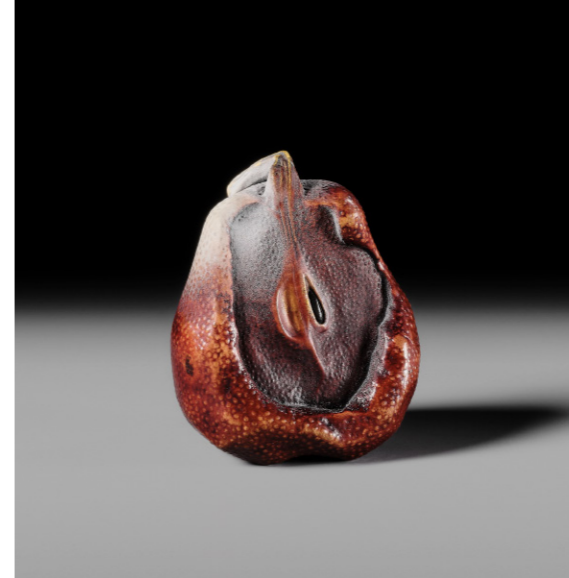
Provenance: The Jacobsen collection of Important Asian Art, purchased directly from the artist in 1993.
Condition: Excellent condition.

Clive Hallam, born in 1965, has been a professional netsuke artist and restorer for over three decades. His creative journey began in the veld of Southern Africa, where, as a boy, he crafted toys for himself and his friends from discarded cola cans and scraps of old wire. Today, his intricately carved pieces are held in esteemed collections such as the Toledo Museum of Art and have been featured in publications like the International Netsuke Society Journal (INSJ), recently on the front page of INSJ, Vol. 42, No. 1.



Clive Hallam
(born 1965)

Estimate EUR 3,000
Starting price EUR 1,500



364
NIKITA STRUKOV: WASP AND ROTTEN PEAR

By Nikita Strukov, signed with the artist's mark 古丁 北卯
2025

Exceptionally well carved as half of a rotting pear, the fruit rendered with remarkable attention to naturalistic detail. The outer skin is worked in refined ukibori, producing a tactile surface that convincingly evokes the textured grain of a ripening pear. The interior is carefully modeled, with one seed inlaid in dark horn, while the area near the stem is treated in lighter tones with subtle gilt highlights to suggest creeping mold and decay.

On the reverse the artist's mark appears beside the two himotoshi, the larger hole cleverly housing an inlaid wasp that has burrowed into the fruit, its body only partially visible from the outside.

365
VADYM PYVOVAR: BAKU

By Vadym Pyovov, signed with the artist's initials
Ukraine, 2025

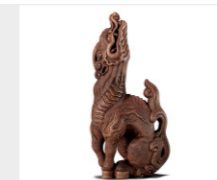
Finely carved, the baku stands upright with one forepaw resting on an openwork stool and the other raised. Its powerful body is elegantly elongated as it lifts its trunk-like snout upward, the mouth agape in a snarl revealing sharp teeth. The creature is superbly rendered, the mane carved in richly swirling curls that are deeply undercut and crisply defined, while the fur along the flanks is articulated with fine, subtle striations. Natural himotoshi pass through the legs and stool. Signed underneath with the artist's initials.

HEIGHT 8.5 cm

Condition: Excellent condition

AUCTION COMPARISON

Compare a closely related wood netsuke of a kirin, after Sanko, by Vadym Pyovov, 2023, 7.8 cm high, at Zacke, Fine Netsuke & Sagemono, 28 April 2023, Vienna, lot 316 (sold for **EUR 3,640**).



Estimate EUR 1,500
Starting price EUR 800



HEIGHT 4.1 cm

Condition: Excellent condition.

With a wood tomobako (storage box) inscribed and sealed by the artist.

Nikita Strukov is a contemporary carver working in the tradition of netsuke and miniature sculpture.

LITERATURE COMPARISON

Compare a related wood netsuke of a rotten pear, by Bazan, likely serving as an inspiration for the present netsuke, illustrated in Davey, Neil K. (1974) *Netsuke: A Comprehensive Study Based on the M.T. Hindson Collection*, p. 306, no. 628.



Estimate EUR 1,500
Starting price EUR 800



ARTIST SIGNATURES



4
Korin
光琳



7
Munetoshi
宗年



9
Kakosai
可交齋



11
Shiomasa
鹽見 政誠



12
Kajikawa
梶川



39
Kenzan
乾山



40
Tokairin Katsukoto
東海林 勝言



41
Mitsuyoshi
光敬



43
Toyo
桃葉



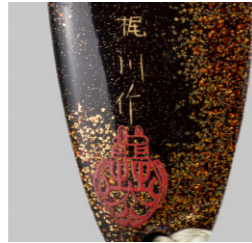
44
Mitsutoshi
光利



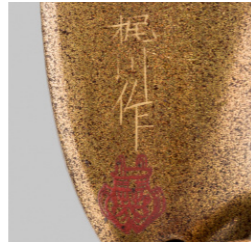
13
Shojusai
松壽齋



14
Jokasai
常嘉齋



17
Kajikawa
梶川



18
Kajikawa
梶川



19
Kajikawa
梶川



46
Shoto
松濤



47
Toun
東雲



49
Suenaga
亮長



50
Chikuunsai
竹雲齋



51
Kajikawa
梶川



21
Jokasai
常嘉齋



22
Kanshosai
觀松齋



23
Yoyusai
羊遊齋



25
Koma Kyuhaku
古満 休伯



26
Kajikawa
梶川



52
Gyokkei
玉桂



53
Shibayama
芝山



54
Yoyusai
羊遊齋



57
Tshimitsu 利光
& Chincho 珍蝶



59
Rosetsu
芦雪



28
Kajikawa
梶川



29
Sekigawa Katsunobu
関川 勝信



30
Yoyusai
羊遊齋



31
Koma Koryu
古満 巨柳



32
Kajikawa Bunryusai
梶川 文龍齋



60
To 東
& Shogyoku 昭玉



61
Shogyoku
昭玉



62
Koshin
古真



63
Boku
墨



64
Hoji
豊次



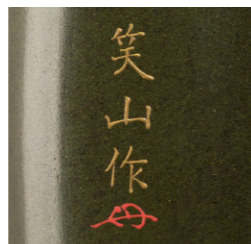
33
Kajikawa Akihide
梶川 明秀



34
Taishin 泰真
& Shuraku 秀楽



35
Shojosai
恣杖齋



36
Shozan
笑山



37
Tessai
鉄哉



65
Hokei
豊慶



68
Harumitsu
春光



69
Harumitsu
春光



73
Sekko
雪光



74
Kosai
孝齋

ARTIST SIGNATURES



78
Koku
谷



79
Koku
谷



80
Koku
谷



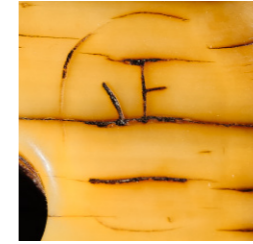
81
Boku 墨
& Kazunori 一則



82
Ko
光



150
Hidemasa
秀正



151
Masakazu
正一



153
Hidemasa
秀正



155
Mitsuhiro
光廣



156
Mitsuhiro
光廣



83
Yoshioka Tosen
吉岡 東川



84
Kozan
古山



85
Tatekawa
立川



94
Masahide
正英



102
Shuzan
周山



157
Doraku
道乐



158
Mitsuhiro
光廣



159
Mitsuhiro
光廣



161
Ryugyoku 龍玉
& Mitsusada 光定



162
Masanao
正直



104
Yoshitoshi
慶寿



114
Kisui
淇水



117
Kiyokatsu
清勝



119
Raku
乐



122
Sadayoshi
定由



163
Rantei
蘭亭



165
Shoraku
正乐



169
Ryusui
龍水



170
Kanman
貫滿



171
Fujima Seikan
藤間 樓閑



125
Tomotada
友忠



126
Mitsuhide
光秀



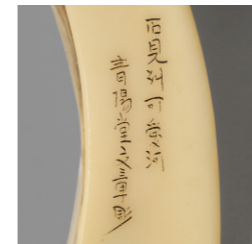
127
Hakuryu
白龍



132
Rantei
蘭亭



134
Tomotada
友忠



172
Seiyodo Bunsho
青陽堂 文章



173
Hakuryu
白龍



174
Shuya
秋冶



175
Suketada
亮忠



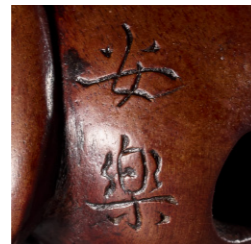
176
Hida
ヒタ



135
Okatomo
岡友



145
Raku
乐



146
Anraku
安樂



147
Anraku
安樂



148
Masakazu
正一



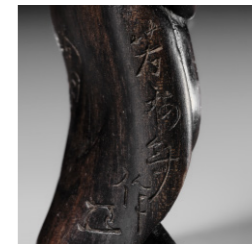
177
Sukeyuki
亮之



180
Sukeyuki
亮之



183
Tsugen
通玄



185
Hobaisai
芳梅齋



186
Hidari Issan
左一山

ARTIST SIGNATURES



187
Tsunemasa
庸正



188
Yoshiharu
義治



189
Sanyu
三友



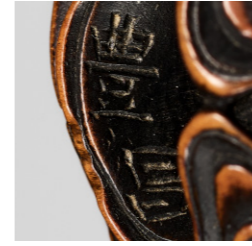
190
Tomokazu
友一



191
Tadariki
忠力



220
Toyokazu
豊一



221
Toyomasa
豊昌



222
Toyokazu
豊一



223
Masakata
正方



224
Minko
岷江



192
Tadayuki
忠行



193
Shigemasa
重正



195
Hokyudo Itsumin
逢丘堂 逸民



197
Tadayoshi
忠義



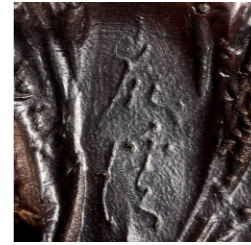
198
Masatoshi
正利



225
Minko
珉江



226
Kokei
虎溪



227
Kokei
虎溪



228
Minsai
珉齋



229
Masanao
正直



199
Karaku
可樂



200
Tomohisa
友久



201
Tomokazu
友一



202
Tadayuki
忠之



204
Tomokazu
友一



230
Harumitsu
春光



231
Masanao
正直



232
Minko
岷江



233
Kokei
虎溪



234
Harumitsu
春光



205
Tomokazu
友一



206
Tomokazu
友一



207
Tomokazu
友一



208
Tomokazu
友一



210
Masamichi
正路



235
Shuzan
舟山



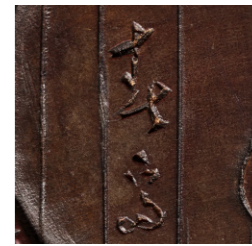
236
Kyokusen
旭扇



240
Shugetsu
舟月



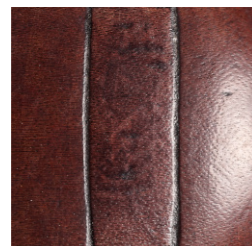
241
Toman
東滿



242
Shunsai
春齋



211
Masatami
正民



212
Tadashige
忠茂



216
Jikan Ganbun
自侃 眼文



217
Shigekazu
重一



218
Tadatoshi
忠利



243
Genraku
減案



248
Gyokusensai
玉泉齋



249
Gyokuichi
玉一



251
Shunko
春光



252
Gyokushu
玉秀

ARTIST SIGNATURES



253
Gyokuzan
玉山



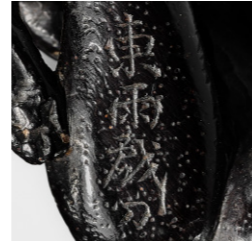
254
Minkoku
民谷



256
Masamitsu
正光



257
Masatomo
正友



258
Tou
東雨



285
Jugyoku
壽玉



286
Jugyoku
壽玉



287
Jugyoku
壽玉



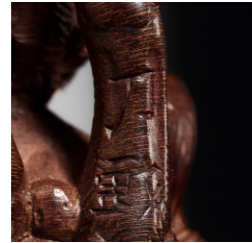
288
Ryukei
龍珪



289
Bairyu Tokoku
棟立 東谷



259
Yoshihisa
義久



261
Itto
一刀



262
Toei
東英



263
Minkoku
民谷



264
Chikusai
竹齋



290
Jugyoku
壽玉



291
Kyokusai
旭齋



292
Gyokuso
玉藻



293
Sokei
藻溪



294
Gyokuso
玉藻



265
Toshimasa
壽正



267
Hojitsu
法實



268
Masayoshi
正義



270
Ryukei
龍珪



272
Yasuaki
保明



295
Sokoku
藻谷



296
Soya
藻也



297
So
宗



298
Sosui
藻水



300
Tsunemasa
常政



273
Yasuaki
保明



274
Kokei
光慶



276
Naoyuki
直雪



277
Miwa
三輪



279
Toshichika
俊親



302
Masakatsu
正克



309
Koku
谷



310
Kokusai
谷齋



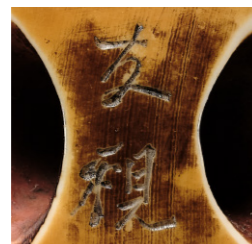
312
Genmin
玄民



313
Ko
光



280
Chikusai
竹齋



281
Tomochika
友親



282
Fuetsu
負越



283
Gyokushi
玉芝



284
Baiko
梅湖



320
Masa
正



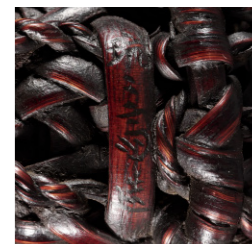
321
Sangetsu
山月



322
Kokusui
谷水



323
Kosen
小仙



326
Ryuryusai
琉々齋

ARTIST SIGNATURES



328
Somin
宗民



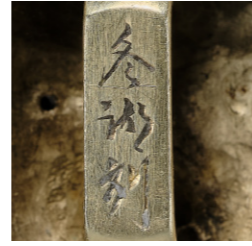
329
Masayuki
政隨



331
Ryumin
立民



333
Gyokuzan
玉山



335
Toko
冬湖



359
Michael Henry Birch



360
Guy Shaw



361
Guy Shaw



362
Adam Bland



363
Clive Hallam



336
Shibayama
芝山



337
Norikazu
則一



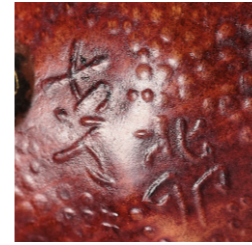
340
Masakiyo
正清



342
Gyokkin
玉琴



343
Hideyuki
秀之



364
Nikita Strukov



365
Vadym Pyvovar



344
Hideyuki
秀之



345
Bishu
美洲



346
Tanetoshi
胤寿



347
Bishu
美洲



348
Bishu
美洲



349
Kangyoku
寬玉



350
Seiho
声方



351
Kozan
恒山



352
Ango
安剛



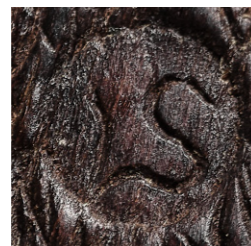
353
Rokusho
鹿正



354
Matt Kowollik



355
Michael Webb



356
Leigh Sloggett



357
Leigh Sloggett



358
David Carlin

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TERMS OF AUCTION

§ 1) The auction shall be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the rules of procedure of GALERIE ZACKE©, SZA VERSTEIGERUNGEN UND VERTRIEBS GMBH, Zelinkagasse 6, 1010 WIEN (hereinafter referred to as the company) as well as in accordance with sections 244-246 of the GEWERBEORDNUNG (Industrial Code) of 1994. The auction shall be carried out on commission. The auctioneer shall be entitled to withdraw lots exceptionally, to conduct the auction deviating from the order of the catalog numbers and to offer lots jointly. In the event of any dispute concerning a double bid or if the auctioneer has missed a bid, the auctioneer shall be entitled to revoke acceptance of a bid and to continue auctioning the item. The figures stated in the catalog shall be the highest bid in Euro (€) expected by the respective expert. As a rule, the bid shall be increased by 10% of the last bid. (See table of the bidding increments).

§ 2) The acceptance of a bid shall be granted to the highest bidder unless a hidden reserve has been agreed upon with the consignor of the item in question. Such a hidden reserve (also called limit or just reserve) shall be the minimum price under which the item will not be sold during the auction. This reserve will be disclosed upon request and after the auction only and may exceed the estimate. The auctioneer will in this case bid on behalf of the seller against all other bidders until the reserve has been reached. If a reserve is not reached during the auction, the auctioneer will knock down the item to the highest bidder at the final bid, but the sale will be conditional of the acceptance of this final bid by the seller. In this case the highest bidder shall be bound to his/her last bid for a term of 8 days starting with the day of the knockdown. If the winning bidder does not receive a written cancellation notice within this term of 8 days, the knockdown becomes unconditional and the sale is final. Typically, only a minority of all items in an auction have a hidden reserve.

§ 3) Most items shall be subject to differential taxation. A uniform surcharge of 25% plus the value added tax applicable to the surcharge to the amount of 20% shall be added to the achieved highest bid (final and highest bid). Thus, the surcharge shall be 30% of the final and highest bid in total. Items with added VAT are marked † in the online catalog.

§ 4) In the event of sales abroad, the value added tax will be repaid if the item is sold to a country which is not a member country of the European Union (third country), the legal requirements are met, and the proof of exportation is provided. The value added tax shall not be shown separately on the invoice.

§ 5) The auction buyer must pay the purchase price immediately upon acceptance of the bid (final and highest bid plus 25% surcharge, plus the value added tax applicable to the surcharge to the amount of 20%, or the added VAT on top of the final price, when a lot is highlighted accordingly in the auction catalog). The company may grant an auction buyer a term of payment for the purchase price in whole or in part when this has been formally applied for in writing before the auction.

§ 6) In the event of a term of payment, or any payment delay, in whole or in part, the company shall be entitled to charge default interest (12% p.a.) as well as storage charges (2.4% of the final and highest bid per month commenced) after 14 days upon acceptance of the bid. The item purchased at auction shall be handed over exclusively upon full payment of the purchase price including all costs and charges accrued since the acceptance of the bid.

§ 7) The buyer should take acquired items into possession, as far as possible, immediately or after the end of the auction. Items which have been fully paid for shall be handed over in our show rooms in GALERIE ZACKE, Zelinkagasse 6, 1010 VIENNA. If a deferred purchase price is not paid within the set period, the company shall be entitled to auction the item again in order to recoup its claim from the defaulting auction buyer. In this case, the defaulting auction buyer shall be liable to the company for the total loss of commission incurred by the company due to the re-auctioning as well as for any default interest and storage charges.

§ 8) The company shall be entitled to a lien on all items of the buyer irrespective of whether the buyer bought them within the scope of an auction or in free sale or the company secured ownership of these items otherwise. This lien shall serve to secure all current and future, qualified, limited and unmaturing claims to which the company is entitled and which result from all legal transactions concluded with the buyer.

§ 9) The items received for auction will be exhibited and may be viewed prior to the auction. In doing so, the company shall give everyone the opportunity to check the nature and the condition of the exhibited items to the extent deemed possible within the scope of the exhibition. Every bidder shall be deemed to act on its own behalf unless it provides a written confirmation saying that it acts as a representative or agent of a well-known principal. The company may refuse bids; this shall particularly apply if a bidder who is unknown to the company or with whom the company has no business connections yet does not provide a security deposit before the auction. However, in principle there shall be no claim to accept a bid. If a bid has been refused, the previous bid shall remain effective.

§ 10) The company's experts evaluate and describe the items received for auction and determine the starting prices unless otherwise stated in the catalog or expert opinion. The information concerning production technique or material, state of preservation, origin, design and age of an item is based on published or otherwise generally accessible (scientific) findings concluded by the company's expert with the necessary care and accuracy. The company shall warrant to the buyer according to §34-38 of the AGB (Terms and Conditions) that properties are correct provided that any complaints referring to this are made within 45 days after the auction day. Subsequent complaints shall be excluded in principle. The company shall not be liable for any further information in the catalog and expert opinion as well. This shall also apply to illustrations in the catalog. The purpose of these illustrations is to guide the potential buyer during the preview. They shall not be authoritative for the condition or the characteristics of the pictured item. The published condition reports shall only mention defects and damage affecting the artistic or commercial value significantly. Complaints concerning the price shall be excluded upon acceptance of the bid. The company reserves the right to amend the catalog online prior to the auction. These amendments shall also be made public orally by the auctioneer during the auction. In this case, the company shall be liable for the amendment only. All items offered may be checked prior to the auction. These items are used. Any claims for damages exceeding the liability named above and resulting from other material defects or other defects of the item shall be excluded. When making the bid, the bidder confirms that he/she has inspected the item prior to the auction and has made sure that the item corresponds to the description.

§ 11) If a customer is not able to participate in an auction personally, the company shall accept purchase orders. These orders may be placed in writing via mail, e-mail, fax, www.zacke.at or a third party bidding platform. In the case of a purchase order placed by phone or orally, the company shall reserve the right to make the performance dependent on a confirmation from the principal communicated in writing. Furthermore, the company shall not be liable for the performance of purchase orders. Equal purchase orders or live bids will be considered in the order of their receipt. Bids which below the estimate shall be exhausted completely. Bids which do not correspond to the increments determined by the company (see bidding increment table) will be rounded up to the next higher increment. The table of these increments can be sent upon request. The written bid (purchase order) must include the item, the catalog number and the offered top bid limit which is quoted as the amount of the acceptance of the bid without buyer's commission and without taxes.

Ambiguities shall be carried by the bidder. A purchase order which has already been placed may only be cancelled if the written withdrawal is received by the company at least 72 hours prior to the beginning of the auction.

§ 12) The company may refuse a purchase order without explanation or make its execution dependent on payment of a security deposit. In the event of an unsuccessful order, such a deposit will be reimbursed by the company within 5 working days. Processing of purchase orders is free of charge.

§ 13) Every seller shall in principle be entitled to withdraw the items offered for auction until the start of the auction. Therefore, it is impossible to assume liability or to give warranty for the actual offering.

§ 14) Paid items must be collected within 30 days after payment. Items which have not been collected may be re-offered without further communication at the starting price from the recent auction reduced by 50%. Items which have not been collected within 30 days after the auction or for which the company does not receive any proper shipping instructions stating the type of shipping and the address of dispatch (independent of a possibly placed purchase order) shall be stored at the owner's risk.

Furthermore, the company shall be entitled to store items which have been purchased at auction and paid but not collected at the buyer's risk and expense, including the costs for an insurance, with a forwarding agency. It shall be understood that the provision concerning the re-auctioning of unpaid and paid but not collected items must also apply to items not exhibited or stored on the premises of the company. The ownership shall be transferred to the buyer at the time of handing over the issuing note.

§ 15) In the case of mixed lots with a starting price of less than EUR 350.00, the company shall not warrant for the completeness or correctness of the individual items within a mixed lot.

§ 16) A registration for a bid by telephone for one or several items shall automatically represent a bid at the starting price of these items. If the company cannot reach a bidder by telephone, it will bid the starting price on behalf of this bidder when the respective lot is up for auction.

§ 17) Payments made to the company by mistake (through the payer's fault) (e. g. due to miscalculation of the exchange rate by the payer) or payments made to the company for the same invoice several times shall be compensated in form of a credit note for goods for an indefinite period of time. The repayment of such payments in cash shall be excluded.

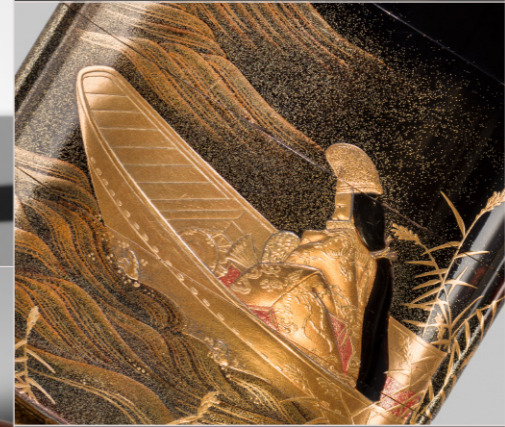
§ 18) Certain auction lots may exist several times (multiples). In such a case, the auctioneer may accept a second, third or even more bids from the underbidder(s). In this case, the text in the catalog and not the illustration shall be exclusively binding with regard to the warranty.

§ 19) The company reserves the right to assign to the buyer all rights and obligations resulting from the contractual relationship between the company and the seller by way of a respective declaration, as well as to assign to the seller all rights and obligations resulting from the contractual relationship between the company and the buyer by way of a respective declaration, in each case in terms of a complete assignment of contract with the result that the contractual relationship - following the submission of the aforementioned declarations by the company - shall exclusively be between the seller and the buyer, all of which is in accordance with the basic model of the commission agreement. Buyers and sellers shall already now give their explicit consent to this contract assignment.

§ 20) The place of performance of the contract brought about between the company on the one hand and the seller as well as the buyer on the other hand shall be the place of business of the company. The legal relationships and contracts existing between the company, the sellers and the buyers shall be subject to Austrian law. The company, the sellers and the buyers shall agree to settle all disputes resulting from, concerning and in connection with this contract before the territorially competent court of Vienna.

§ 21) The export of certain art objects from Austria shall require a permit from the Bundesdenkmalamt (Federal Monuments Office). The company will orally provide information about art objects for which such export permit will probably not be granted at the beginning of the auction.

§ 22) Whenever making a bid, whether personally or via an agent, in writing, online, telephone, or in any other way, the bidder fully and unconditionally accepts the Terms of Auction, the 'Important Information' section in the auction catalog, the Terms and Conditions (AGB) of Galerie Zacke, §1-50, the Fee Tariff, and the Bidding Increments table, all as published on www.zacke.at on the day of the auction.





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