Finch & Co



A FINE NEW ZEALAND MAORI GREENSTONE NEPHRITE MERE POUNAMU

A FINE NEW ZEALAND MAORI GREENSTONE NEPHRITE MERE POUNAMU
EARLY 19TH CENTURY
SIZE: 30.5 CM LONG, 9.5 CM WIDE – 12 INS LONG, 3¾ INS WIDE

LITERATURE

THE DELICATE SHAPE OF THIS STABBING CLUB OR 'MERE' PRESERVES THE STRENGTH AND TOUGHNESS INHERENT IN NEPHRITE ESSENTIAL TO ITS PURPOSE AS A WEAPON OF WAR. WHEN IN USE THE CLUB WOULD NOT SHATTER WHEN STRUCK HEAVILY WHILE THE OWNER WAS WARDING OFF A BLOW. THE 'MERE POUNAMU' WAS PROBABLY THE MOST PRIZED WEAPON OF THE MAORI WARRIOR, AND INDEED WAR TO THE MAORI WAS A RECREATION, A FORM OF SPORT CARRIED OUT UNDER FIRMLY ESTABLISHED RULES USING A LIMITED RANGE OF WEAPONS.
PREPARATIONS FOR WAR WERE CEREMONIOUS AND THESE LASTED FOR MUCH LONGER THAN THE BATTLES THEMSELVES. MAORI MEN SPENT A CONSIDERABLE PORTION OF THEIR TIME IN GROOMING FOR BATTLE. THEIR CHOSEN WEAPONS WERE ONLY EFFECTIVE BY REASONS OF CONSIDERABLE DEXTERITY IN THEIR USE AND THEREFORE REQUIRED A HIGH DEGREE OF PHYSICAL FITNESS IN THEIR OWNERS. WAR TO THE MAORI WAS A CONTEST OF SKILL RATHER THAN THE EUROPEAN APPROACH TOWARDS DOMINATION IN BATTLE AND THE CONCEPT OF 'WIN AT ALL COSTS'.