

# *Finch & C<sup>o</sup>*



## **NAGALAND TANGKHUL NAGA ELEPHANT IVORY MEN'S EAR PLUGS**

TWO NAGALAND TANGKHUL NAGA ELEPHANT IVORY MEN'S EAR PLUGS DECORATED WITH A GEOMETRIC DESIGN  
OLD SMOOTH MELLOW PATINA

19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 3CM WIDE, 1.5CM HIGH – 1¼ INS WIDE, ½ INS HIGH (MAX)

SEE FINCH & CO CATALOGUE NO. 15, ITEM NO. 66, FOR A SINGLE NAGA EAR PLUG

CF: CIRCA 1890 PHOTOGRAPH OF TANGKHUL MEN WEARING IVORY EARPLUGS, CAMBRIDGE CENTRE FOR SOUTH ASIAN  
STUDIES

## **LITERATURE**

THE TERM 'NAGA' ORIGINALLY MEANT 'NAKED' AND WAS USED BY THE ASSAMESE FOR THE HILL PEOPLE LIVING HIGH UP  
IN THE MOUNTAINS. IT WAS ALSO A BLANKET TERM THAT WAS UNFORTUNATELY ADOPTED BY THE BRITISH AND  
PREVIOUSLY USED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE PLAINS, WHICH HAD PEJORATIVE CONNOTATIONS AND MEANT 'WILDMAN' OR  
'BARBARIAN'. THE CENSUS OFFICIALS AND ADMINISTRATORS OF POST-COLONIAL INDIA ALSO USED THE NAME, BUT NOW  
THE NAGAS WANT TO BE IDENTIFIED BY THEIR SPECIFIC TRIBAL NAMES SUCH AS ANGAM, AO, CHAKESANG, SEMA, RENGMA  
AND TANGKHUL.