Finch & Co



FIJIAN TWO HANDED CEREMONIAL WAR CLUB 'GATAWAKA'

A FINE AND RARE LARGE FIJIAN TWO HANDED CEREMONIAL WAR CLUB 'GATAWAKA' CARVED OF HARDWOOD AND INLAID WITH NINE HUMAN TEETH

SUPERB OLD SILKY PATINA

18TH – EARLY 19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 101CM LONG – 39¾ INS LONG

LITERATURE

THE HEAVY TWO HANDED WAR CLUB IN ALL ITS VARIOUS FORMS IS REGARDED AS BEING THE FAVOURITE ARM OF THE FIJIAN WARRIOR. TO SLAY AN ENEMY WITH A CLUB BROUGHT THE WARRIOR MORE PRESTIGE THAN TO KILL WITH ANY OTHER WEAPON. SOMETIMES IN ORDER TO GAIN 'KOROI', KILLER STATUS, A DETAINED PRISONER WOULD BE SPEARED AND THEN ADMINISTERED A KILLING BLOW BY A WARRIOR TO THE HEAD WITH A CLUB. THE FACT THAT THE CLUB SHATTERED THAT PART OF THE BODY HELD MOST SACRED BY FIJIANS; THE HEAD, ACCOUNTED IN SOME DEGREE FOR THE SPECIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL AURA SURROUNDING IT AND DISTINGUISHING IT FROM EVERY OTHER WEAPON IN THE FIJIAN WARRIOR'S ARMOURY.

A TALLY OF KILLS MADE WITH A CLUB WAS OFTEN KEPT BY A MEANS OF NICKS OR NOTCHES ON THE HEAD OR HANDLE, BY BORING SMALL HOLES IN THE SHAFT AND, AS IN THIS EXAMPLE, BY INLAYING A TOOTH FROM EACH VICTIM IN THE CLUB'S HEAD.