Finch & Co



JAPANESE NATURALISTICALLY CARVED IVORY OKIMONO

A JAPANESE NATURALISTICALLY CARVED IVORY OKIMONO OF A HUMAN SKULL ENTWINED BY A LARGE SNAKE A TOAD IN ITS JAWS ANOTHER TOAD TO THE REVERSE 'MEMENTO MORI'

MEIJI PERIOD / 1868 - 1912

SIZE: 5.5CM HIGH, 4CM WIDE, 5CM DEEP - 2¼ INS HIGH, 1½ INS WIDE, 2 INS DEEP

LITERATURE

THE BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY OF THE IMPERMANENCE OF LIFE AND THE NON-EXISTENCE OF SELF WERE IMPORTANT INFLUENCES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE JAPANESE SAMURAI TRADITIONS OF SELF-SACRIFICE AND THE ETHICALITY OF SUICIDE. THE ICONIC SYMBOL OF THE HUMAN SKULL AS A 'MEMENTO MORI' WAS TO THE JAPANESE AN ALLEGORY FOR THE VANITY OF LIFE.