Finch & Co

TIBETAN TALL BOOT OF GILT COPPER ALLOY WITH A RUYI HEAD AT THE TOE

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PROBABLY THE LEG OF A BUDDHIST 'LOKAPĀLA' A PROTECTOR SPIRIT OR GUARDIAN FIGURE

18TH CENTURY

SIZE: 43.5CM HIGH - 17 INS HIGH

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LITERATURE

IN BUDDHISM, A 'LOKAPĀLA' IS ONE OF THE FOUR HEAVENLY KINGS OR PROTECTOR SPIRITS, EACH ONE ASSOCIATED WITH A SPECIFIC DIRECTION. THEIR NAMES ARE 'DHRTARASTRA' FOR THE EAST, 'VIRUPAKSA' FOR THE WEST, 'VAISHRAVANA' FOR THE NORTH AND 'VIRUDHAKA' FOR THE SOUTH. THEY ARE EASILY IDENTIFIED IN TIBETAN AND CHINESE BUDDHIST SCULPTURE BY THEIR ARMOUR AND THEIR BOOTS, SOMETIMES EACH HAVING HIS OWN MAGIC WEAPON. IN TIBET THESE PROTECTOR DEITIES ARE INDIGENOUS MOUNTAIN GODS, SPIRITS, DEMONS OR GHOSTS THAT HAVE BEEN SUBJUGATED BY PADMASAMBHAVA OR OTHER GREAT ADEPTS. AS GUARDIANS OF BUDDHISM THEY ARE INVOKED AND PROPITIATED TO AID A PARTICULAR MONASTERY AND ARE OFTEN BOUND BY AN OATH TO PROTECT THAT MONASTERY AND ITS PRACTITIONERS. IN RURAL COMMUNITIES THEY OFTEN PROTECT A PARTICULAR GEOGRAPHIC REGION ENSURING FAVOURABLE WEATHER FOR CROPS, AND PEACE FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE.

PROVENANCE

EX PRIVATE COLLECTION OF THE LATE RICHARD NATHANSON