Finch & Co



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18TH CENTURY

SIZE: 45.5CM LONG – 17¾ INS LONG

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LITERATURE

ELEPHANT GOADS WERE USED BY THE 'MAHOUT' OR HANDLER TO CONTROL HIS ANIMAL'S ACTIONS, DIRECTION AND SPEED OF PACE, MUCH LIKE A BRIDLE AND BIT IS USED ON A HORSE. AN ELEPHANT'S EARS ARE VERY SENSITIVE AND THE 'ANKUS' IS USED TO PROD AND PULL AT THEM TO AFFECT THE CORRECT RESPONSE TO THE MAHOUT'S GIVEN COMMAND.

THE ELEPHANTS OF CEYLON WERE AN ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENT FOR THE PAGEANTRY OF THE ISLAND'S PRINCES AND KINGS, AND FOR THE PROCESSIONS OF THE BUDDHIST TEMPLES. THE YOUNG, WILD ELEPHANTS NEEDED FOR THESE EVENTS WERE CAPTURED EITHER BY THE USE OF FEMALE DECOYS OR BY THE STRATEGY, CUNNING AND AGILITY OF THE MAHOUT. OF A PARTICULAR CASTE, THESE HANDLERS DEVOTED THEMSELVES TO THE PURSUIT AND TRAINING OF THE ELEPHANTS. LATER, IN THE WAKE OF EUROPEAN COLONIZATION, IT BECAME NECESSARY TO TAKE FURTHER ADVANTAGE OF THE ELEPHANT'S GREAT STRENGTH AND INTELLIGENCE AND THEY WERE CONSISTENTLY USED IN THE CLEARING OF FORESTS AND THE MAKING OF ROADS AND RAILWAYS.

IVORY WAS A FAVOURITE MEDIUM AND WAS WIDELY USED BY THE SINHALESE CRAFTSMEN OF THE MOUNTAIN KINGDOM OF KANDY. THE ROYAL PALACE WAS A CENTRE THAT ATTRACTED THE BEST SKILLED ARTISTS WHO FORMED A GUILD CALLED THE 'PATTAL HATARA'. MEMBERS INCLUDED PAINTERS, JEWELLERS, GOLD AND SILVERSMITHS AND IVORY WORKERS. THEY ENJOYED THE KING'S PROTECTION AND RECEIVED ROYAL DONATIONS. THEIR PRESENCE ATTRACTED OTHER ARTISTS AND PERFORMERS, SUCH AS MUSICIANS AND DANCERS, TO THE COURT AND THE KINGS OF THE SMALL INDEPENDENT KINGDOM OF KANDY BECAME FAMED FOR THEIR PATRONAGE OF THE ARTS.

PROVENANCE

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