This bold Japanese okimono of Daruma powerfully portrays the legend of the patriarch of Zen Buddhism. This important figure in Asian religious history is about to embark from China to bring his rarefied philosophy to Japan, crossing the sea with supernatural ability. He holds a nyo-i scepter, symbolizing his authority and ability to manifest spiritual aspirations for his followers.

The accomplished artist Sato Hideaki (circa 1870–1925) of Tokyo has crafted a magnificent and vibrant vision of Daruma’s journey. Three beautiful bronze tones define the sculpture. His facial features and gold earrings reflect his Indian origins (Bodhidharma in Sanskrit). The intense gaze indicates his determination to endure rigorous meditation, and this is magnified with the double-inlaid eyes of gold and rare shakudo. The unembellished surface of the robes express the simplicity and restraint that are hallmarks of Zen Buddhism, while the dynamic motion of the wind and waves imparts the importance of his mission.

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Bronze okimono of Daruma by Sato Hideaki
Height: 16.6 inches (42.2 cm)
Japan, Meiji-Taisho period
International
Netsuke Society

Volume 32, Number 4
Winter 2013

Contents

2 President’s Letter
3 INS London Convention Bulletin
4 Chapters
11 Questions & Answers
   Yukari Yoshida and Joseph Kurstin
14 Nanban-Style Revival? Inrô Decorated with a Western Coat of Arms, and Other Works by (Kajikawa) Koryūsai
   Else and Heinz Kress
26 Netsuke Basics A-Z—R is for Rishi
   Gabor Wilhelm
32 On the Continent
   Gabor Wilhelm
36 Auctions – UK
   Douglas J. K. Wright
45 Auctions – USA
   Michael J. Strone
55 Book Review
   Norman L. Sandfield
56 Memoriam
58 Membership Form
59 Index of Advertisers
59 Back Issues

Cover:
Kudan, boxwood, 18th C, signed Ichi (?).
See page 11

International
Netsuke Society

INQUIRIES AND PAYMENTS
P.O. Box 223218
Hollywood, FL 33022 USA

PRESIDENT
Marsha Vargas Handley
140 Maiden Lane
San Francisco, CA 94108
Tel: (415) 392-9999
Fax: (415) 984-5856
E-mail: mvargas@mindspring.com

EDITOR
Linda Meredith
Cell: (360) 734-7319
E-mail: insjeditor@aol.com

MEMBERSHIPS
Aisha Buntin
E-mail: memberships@netsuke.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
John D. Hawley, Finance
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President’s Letter

Now that we have moved into 2013, our London Convention will be only three months away when you receive this Journal, and I hope many of you have registered to attend. The program is being finalized, and there should be some very interesting presentations ranging from Kyushu tall figures to Mitsuhiro to masks, as well as workshops on identifying various woods to discussing the Osaka-Kyoto carvers — something for everyone.

An exhibition of netsuke from various European collections will be on view at the Japanese Embassy, with a fully illustrated catalogue, as well as a special display of netsuke at the British Museum. Many of the British Museum netsuke are from the collection of Augustus Wollaston Franks and have not been exhibited for many years.

In addition, there will be netsuke exhibitions on view at the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh and at the Bath Museum for those of you who might have extra time to make a trip outside of London and have not had enough netsuke during the Convention.

Our website, www.netsuke.org, continues to grow and improve. I hope many of you have had an opportunity to visit the site, and we welcome comments or suggestions. The Forum continues to be a place where you can participate in a number of interesting discussions, both learning and/or sharing your knowledge with others. Become involved.

As a new year begins I want to thank some of you who have enabled the Society to continue to publish a first class Journal and manage our membership and website. Linda Meredith, our Journal editor, has worked for many years to maintain the quality of the Journal. Thank you to all of the contributors to the Journal as we could not publish a journal without new and interesting articles, to Aisha Buntin who has taken over our membership duties as well as being our website coordinator and maintenance person, and to Alan Fisher, David White, and Antonio Pereda who work on the website Forum promoting the study of netsuke by volunteering their time and expertise. We could not continue the Society without the work of these people.

Marsha Vargas Handley
mvargas@xanadugallery.us

*Announcement: As we go to press we have learned that Virginia G. Atchley has passed away. A memoriam will appear in the next issue.*
International
Netsuke Society Convention
London
10–14 May 2013

LECTURES
Katherine Martin – Netsuke Subjects and Ehon
Clive Hallam – A Thought-Provoking Talk from a Carver’s Perspective
Barbara Warren – A Look at Japanese Legends and their Western Counterparts
Paul Moss – Mitsuhiro
Alain Ducros – Kyushu Tall Figure Carvings
Geoff Dorey – Masks and Other Quirky Ramblings
Nori Watanabe – Kabuki and Netsuke
Sue Wraight – Contemporary Netsuke
Sem Djelal & Jay Hopkins – Stag Antler Netsuke from the 17th to 19th Centuries

WORKSHOPS
Max Rutherston – Identifying Wood
Bob Goode – Collecting on a Budget
Klaus Riess – Anabori Netsuke
Rosemary Bandini – The Osaka-Kyoto Dilemma

Gala Dinner and Fun Auction, Tuesday, May 14, 2013, 7 pm.

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Rosemary Bandini
rosemarybandini@hotmail.com
On December 2 an overflow crowd [some members of the New York chapter] filled Madison Square Garden [a table at the Szechuan Gourmet on 2nd Avenue] to hear Robert P. Goode, Professor of Junishiology, give his annual zodiac lecture. His talk on the Year of the Snake, the result of exhaustive [exhausting] research, and his vast [half vast] knowledge left his audience spellbound [glassy-eyed].

The snake is a frequent participant in the mythology and art of many cultures (think of the snake seducing Eve into eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil). The snake is prominent in Japanese legend and mythology and, because of its compact shape, when coiled is a perfect subject for netsuke carvers.

Snakes in Japanese mythology take three major forms: as messengers of Ryujin, the Dragon King, as shape-changers (usually women), and as Thunder Deities. Some myths and legends discussed included Benten; Japanese variants of the Chinese legend of the shape-changing white snake (the tale of Dojoji Temple, the boy and the multicolored turtle/snake woman, Prince Homuchi and Hiagahine, the “one-night bride”); urban legends, such as Nure-Onna (snake woman) and Tsuchinoko (“hammer’s spawn”), Orochi and Susana-O (in some tellings Orochi is an “eight-headed snake” rather than a dragon). Finally [finally!!!], Professor Goode related the long, complex story of Jiraiya, which in its narrative brings together the toad, snail, and snake (the sansukumi), as well as the association of snakes with death and retribution (snake and skull netsuke).

Professor Goode then gave examples, from illustrations and netsuke from his collection, of the many different representations of snakes in netsuke: alone, coiled and extended; with other animals: toads, the sansukumi, monkeys, boars (opposites, the snake representing 9–11 A.M. and the boar, 9–11 P.M.), the turtle (subtle shunga because the snake and turtle were once considered male and female, respectively, of the same animal), rats (snakes helped farmers rid their crops of rats); associated with lotus pods, gourds, pumpkins, and tree trunks; associated with mythological figures and as part of the body of mythological animals (nue, Shokuin).

Professor Goode ended his presentation when he observed members of the audience sharpening their chopsticks. •
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On the 16 October members of the European chapter of the INS were very privileged to attend a meeting in a study room of the Victoria & Albert Museum, where Julia Hutt showed us around forty netsuke from the collection.

The meeting was arranged by committee member David Louis Brown, who has been very proactive in setting up special museum visits for our group and the selection of netsuke was made by him together with Julia. Museum visits of this type are always restricted to twelve people and the spaces were eagerly snapped up.

Julia presented each piece with a little explanation, before passing them around for discussion and study. The V&A probably has the best of its collection already on permanent display, well worth a special visit. Julia explained that the design of the vitrines in the galleries makes changing the display a major (and almost impossible) task. The netsuke which we were able to handle would all have merited a place in the public display.

It was a particularly enjoyable and relaxed meeting and we are all very grateful to Julia for sparing her afternoon for us. Julia is the author of the newly published *Japanese Netsuke*, co-authored with Edmund de Waal (Far Eastern Series, Victoria & Albert Museum). •

Rosemary Bandini
rosemarybandini@hotmail.com

While the Seattle chapter gathered under dark and damp skies on December 9, our spirits were lifted in the beautiful surroundings of the Sandpoint Country Club, thanks to our hosts Karen and Eric Knudson. INS President Marsha Vargas Handley flew up from San Francisco to discuss aspects and basics of netsuke collecting.

Marsha’s slide presentation was broken into several categories. To show that there are netsuke that can still be collected for modest amounts, she discussed multifunctional netsuke. Netsuke are by nature utilitarian, as they counterbalance the *sagemono* ensemble to the *obi*. However, some provide a secondary function such as the abacus, ash tray, compass, map, etc. These netsuke tend to be overlooked by many collectors, along with masks and *kagamibuta*, and thus are often available at auction for more modest prices than other netsuke types. •

(L to R) Ben and Pamela Harer; Anatol Lonis; Karen Knudson; Marsha Vargas Handley; Richard Hieronymus; Mike Langen; Alyson Langen; Lew Hemenway.

Continued on p. 8
To welcome in the Year of the Snake, we present a striking contemporary netsuke of a sinuous snake. Boxwood with water buffalo horn inlays.

Height: 1 1/8 inches (2.85 cm).

Leigh Sloggett

P.O. Box 324, Pompton Lakes, New Jersey 07442 Tel/Fax: (973) 616-2988 E-mail: netsuke@takaraasianart.com Website: www.takaraasianart.com
While discussing the factor of size, Marsha noted that the baku on the cover of the Mang Collection of Japanese Netsuke catalog (Quinn’s Auction Galleries) could possibly have sold for considerably more if it had been larger in size.

While discussing quality, she showed two dragon photos. The first was a model “from an older collection,” and the second was a similar model from the Mang collection (Lot 48). A side-by-side comparison helped emphasize important standards of quality, such as movement, definition, and compactness.

While discussing condition, she compared two ivory kingfishers with gilt metal bills. Prior to finding the second example, Marsha noted that she had concluded the ivory bill had likely been broken and replaced with a gilt metal one. However, when another kingfisher flew into the netsuke world with an almost identical gilt metal bill, it was time to reconsider. A possible explanation is a collaboration between the carver and a metal-smith. These netsuke date to a time when desire to sell to the Western market was high and demand for sword fittings was low.

Seattle Chapter attendees

**UKRAINE**

Recently we celebrated the tenth anniversary of formation of Ukrainian Netsuke Society. As part of our celebration we participated in the Japanese Culture Festival in October. The festival is devoted to the anniversary of formal diplomatic relations between Japan and Ukraine, which were established in 1991 after the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Alexander Derkachenko
netsuke@i.com.ua

---

**Ambassador of Japan Mr. Sakata Toichi at the Netsuke Gallery exposition.**

**Left to right: President of the Ukrainian Netsuke Society Alexander Derkachenko, artist and collector Irina Germanova with her daughter Thaisia, Irina Derkachenko, art director of the Netsuke Gallery, artist Galina Mudrovskaya, artist Sergei Gorkov, collector Pavel Demchenko, artist Oleg Doroshenko.**
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Q&A

Yukari Yoshida and Joseph Kurstin

Q: A collector asks, “The *kudan*, sold as Lot 483 in the recent sale of the Mang collection (ex Hindson), made me wonder, what is the rarest mythological animal in the Japanese netsuke mythological lexicon?”

A: In the forty-five years I have been collecting, it would appear that the *kudan* is the rarest of those beings. I have seen only seven antique netsuke carved as a *kudan*. The Hindson collection actually boasted three, one by Kagetoshi and two that are unsigned. The British Museum has one by Masanao of Kyoto, the Roosevelt collection had an early unsigned ivory *kudan*, and I found one other unsigned in wood. The Jahss collection had a boxwood model signed within the himotoshi, “Ichi.”

1. Kudan, ebony, 19th C, unsigned, ex Hindson collection (L 4.7 cm).

2. Kudan, stained boxwood, 18th C, signed: Ichi (?) inside himotoshi, ex Jahss collection (H 4.5 cm).
The kudan is a zoomorphic animal with the stylized body of an ox, the face of a man, and nine eyes (three on the face, with two set regularly and one in the forehead, and six more that appear as three on each side of the body along the flanks). It has multiple horns, two on the forehead and multiple ones also along its flanks. It speaks in a human voice and only speaks the truth. It foretells of disasters such as wars and earthquakes and dies three days after the prophecy.

I have found the kudan only in Japanese mythology, and it may be unique to Japan. It certainly has been known to the Japanese netsuke-shi as far back as the 17th to 18th centuries. Information on the kudan is rare and sparse in all the texts in which I researched.

Henri Joly, in Legend in Japanese Art, suggests that the kudan might be comparable to or derived from the three-legged ass from the Persian Palhlavi texts in Bundahis XIX where it is described as having six eyes, nine mouths, one horn, and a white body, and residing in the middle of the sea. It is righteous, eats spiritual food, and cleanses the
ocean of all corruption. It is associated with a divinity called Tistar who has three forms, that of a man, a bull, and a horse.

For many centuries myths were transmitted orally in Japan. In A.D. 712, a written version of the mythology, the *Kojiki* ( Records of Ancient Matters) was compiled for the Japanese imperial court. The tales in the *Kojiki* tell of the creation of the world, the origin of the gods, and the ancestry of the Japanese emperors who claimed descent from the sun goddess Amaterasu.

Another early source of Japanese mythology is the *Nihongi*, or *Nihonshoki* (Chronicles of Japan). Completed in 720, this work also includes various myths and legends, and it helps establish the genealogy of the imperial family. The *Nihongi* was greatly influenced by Hachiman, one of the most popular gods of Japanese mythology, who was the patron of warriors. •
During the mid to late sixteenth century, the imagination of the Japanese was stimulated by the arrival of Portuguese and Spanish ships filled with sailors and missionaries who were called “southern barbarians” (Nanban-jin). The missionaries were expelled as early as 1614, while the Dutch merchants of the VOC (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie) were allowed to remain on the tiny island of Deshima. Intent on trading and earning money, the Dutch kept a low profile. However, by importing to Japan Western books on strictly non-religious subjects, the merchants slowly gained goodwill and influence among scholars as well as in the highest circles. Dutch studies (rangaku) became increasingly popular, and a number of schools specialized in the study of the Dutch language. “Shōgun [Tokugawa] Yoshimune (reigned 1716–45) himself contributed enormously to the development of Western learning in Japan simply because of his own keen personal interest in science and technology. He put entire generations of future scholars in his debt by allowing Chinese translations of Western books into Japan after 1720.”

Providing their Japanese interpreters and other contacts with Western publications was good for business, as was supplying Japanese luxury objects to VOC directors and other important persons back home.

Japanese lacquerware and porcelain were especially desirable and prestigious when decorated with the owner’s personal coat of arms or initials. Artisans needed detailed drawings for such decorations because “at a rough estimate there are about 250 different coats of arms of Dutch VOC directors, wealthy merchants and burghers or people connected with the China [and Japan] trade.” Dutch scientific books, as well as the detailed drawings of coats of arms, suitable for decoration of a variety of items, were widely studied, copied, and used by Japanese scholars and artisans.

Some of the long-forgotten drawings of Western coats of arms may have inspired a nineteenth-century lacquer master to decorate a few inrō with these fascinating designs. Although using the name of Koryūsai, he was a member of the Kajikawa workshop. The large and extremely prolific Kajikawa workshop was founded in Tokyo in 1683. At any given time, a number of highly skilled artisans were active in the workshop, but only one of them was appointed as its head. However, some of the senior members were allowed to sign with their personal art names.
Fig. 1. Inrō decorated in "Nanban-revival" style with a design resembling Western coats of arms. The inrō is decorated in shades of gold and silver hiramakie and takamakie on a dark lacquer and sparse gyobu-nashiji ground. One side is filled with a pair of snarling shishi facing each other, their bodies forming a circle. Between them is placed a Japanese shippō design (七宝 Seven Precious Things) with ribbons. The reverse depicts two mythical animals (crossed dolphins ?) shown standing on their tails within an ornamental frame of leaves and scrolls. Top, bottom, and sides are covered with a dark silver lacquer design resembling garbled Western letters bordered by double lines. The inrō measures 7.0 x 4.7 x 2.2 cm and is signed in archaic characters KORYUSAI 胡柳斎, with square red seal reading (from left to right) wagon 和言. KORYUSAI was a member of the KAJIWA workshop.

The attached matching manju netsuke is decorated in the same shades of gold lacquer with a Hō-ō bird encircled by its own tail feathers. The manju, 3.7 x 3.7 x 1.7 cm, is signed KORYUSAI 胡柳斎, written in less formalized characters, and with a square red seal reading wagon 和言.

Royal Museum of Art & History, Brussels, Belgium, inv. no. VDB.11, formerly in the collection of ERNEST VAN DEN BROEK, bequest 1934. Inrō Archives no. 20034.0179.
Fig. 2. Between the two snarling shishi, facing each other in Fig. 1 and Fig. 6, is placed on golden ribbons one of Japan’s Seven Precious Things (shippō 七宝), the golden coin.3

Under the name Korūsai 胡柳斎, this skilled and versatile lacquer master of the Kajikawa workshop produced at least four small oval inrō with a striking decoration based on Western coats of arms (shown here as Figs. 1, 3, 5, and 6). The same lacquer master also produced a number of well-made standard-type gold lacquer inrō, of which five examples, each depicting the Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road, are shown below as Figs. 9 to 13.

These inrō and others in our archives show that he either signed Kajikawa 梶川, Korūsai 胡柳斎, Wagon 和言, Fukuōsai 福王斎, or Kan’ōsai 寛王斎, and that he combined his signatures either with an unusually long-handled variation of the red jar-shaped seal (tsubo) often found with a Kajikawa signature or with a square red seal inscribed with the characters 英 ei (to excel) or 和言 wagon (和 harmony and 言 to talk).

So far we have documented two of the coats-of-arms inrō by Korūsai. The first one is owned by the Royal Museum of Art and History, Brussels, Belgium (Fig. 1). Another (Fig. 3) was formerly in the Brenot and W. L. Behrens collections, now in the E. A. Wrangham collection. Exactly one hundred years ago, in the 1912 Behrens catalogue, it was described as follows: Two cases, olive green, border of light grey, almost Korean in style with birds and Karakusa in line work enclosing two panels, one with coat of arms of crossed dolphins as shown on Plate [17], surmounted by imitation of Russian characters, at back a stylized peony in a circular wreath of narrow leaves, and conventional clouds all round, signed in Tensho [script] Koriusai with red seal. Ex-Brenot Collection (359).4 Basically, the design of crossed dolphins resembles the one seen on the inrō in Fig. 1, except that here the animals are standing on an opened blossom accentuated with red lacquer and are placed within a wreath of laurel leaves.

A different aspect of the design is an arrangement of four garbled Western letters placed near the top at either side of the wreath surrounding the crossed dolphins. These letters and words do not resemble any known Western language; they are placed there simply to increase the exotic appeal of the design. It seems likely that the letters were copied from one of the coloured woodblock prints made by Keisai Eisen (Fig. 7).

From around 1830 to 1844, in the Tempō period (天保), theukiyo-e painter, printmaker, and illustrator Keisai Eisen 濁斎 英泉 (1790–1848) published a set of woodblock prints showing some views of Edo (Tokyo).5 The prints, in which he used Western perspective as well as imported blue pigments, are surrounded by a narrow band of some partially distorted and legible Western letters, printed in white on black ground.
Fig. 3. The shape, style of decoration, and lacquer technique of the four inrō discussed here are very similar. Here one side is decorated with a stylized peony within a circle of lancet-shaped leaves surrounded by formalized clouds. The reverse depicts a slightly different version of the “crossed dolphins” seen on the inrō in Fig. 1. The dolphins are standing here on an opened blossom and are placed within a wreath of laurel leaves. An arrangement of intentionally garbled Western letters, placed near the top, enhances the exotic appeal of the design. The inrō measures 6.7 x 4.5 x 2.2 cm, signed KORYOSAI with square red seal ei 英. Formerly BRENOT collection, no. 359, W. L. BEHRENS collection, no. 143, now E. A. WRANGLHAM collection no. 130; Inrō Archives no. 19943.0130.

Fig. 4. The square hako netsuke is decorated with an exotic flower arrangement in a lobed panel formed by a red and black version of the silver lacquer design resembling garbled Western letters seen on the inrō in Fig. 3. In this colour combination, the design resembles the kinma technique, imported from South-East Asia, which was popular with tea ceremony aficionados. The hako netsuke is signed KORYOSAI in archaic characters above a large square red seal reading wagon 和言. E. A. WRANGLHAM collection; Inrō Archives no. 19943.2997.
Two more illustrations of this type of inrō were shown in 2007 in French publications, one in an auction catalogue (Fig. 5), the other some months later in an advertisement (Fig. 6). Considering how rare this type of inrō is, it is not impossible that the photographs show the two different sides of the same inrō.

Fig. 5 (left). The inrō, illustrated in an auction catalogue, resembles the two seen above. Its symmetrical design includes Western letters, crosses, and arrangements of tama jewels. In the catalogue the signature is read as Kisensai, but considering the archaic style in which Koryūsai wrote his name on this type of inrō, it may be a misreading of the name. The shape, lacquer base, and style of decoration all point to the same lacquer master as the inrō in Fig. 1 and Fig 3. Height is 6.7 cm. Offered on March 9, 2007, at Beaussant Lefèvre, Paris, lot 161. Inrō Archives no. 20071.0004.

Fig. 6 (right). Another inrō with a pair of snarling shishi forming a circle resembles the inrō in Fig. 1. The animals are surrounded by scattered crosses, or stars, and other exotic design elements. No signature is mentioned, but considering the similarities of the design on the inrō Figs. 1 and 3, it seems likely that this one was also made by Koryūsai. The inrō was reproduced in the Gazette of the auction house Hotel Drouot, September 25, 2007, in an advertisement for Massol Auctions, Paris. Inrō Archives no. 20071.0154.

Koryūsai’s coat-of-arms design concept on dark lacquer ground is very different from most inrō produced in the conservative Kajikawa workshop, which for centuries made series of the gold lacquer inrō appealing to samurai working in the shōguns’ offices.

However, Kajikawa Koryūsai was skilled also at producing the standard-shape gold lacquer inrō typical for the workshop. These he signed either with the name Kajikawa or also with another one of his many art names and seals.
Fig. 7. One of a set of woodblock prints focusing on the Famous Views of Edo (Tokyo) by Keisai Eisen (1790–1848). Shown here is a view of the Kannon Hall and the compounds of the Kinryūzan Temple at Asakusa. Tokyo’s famous views were already rather well known in the nineteenth century. In order to increase the appeal of the prints, the artist used Western perspective, imported blue pigments, and added a border of (mostly) garbled Dutch letters and words. A version of the Dutch trading company’s VOC emblem appears at the top right corner followed by the word Holland.5 The set of woodblock prints was published in the Tempō period (1830–44), supporting a likely production date of the inrō discussed here within the first half of the nineteenth century.

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Five very similar gold lacquer inro decorated with the Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road are shown below to document KAJIKAWA KORYŪSAI's various signatures and some of his other creations.

Fig. 8. The lacquer master KAJIKAWA KORYŪSAI is listed with a rubbing of his signature and typical "long-handled" tsubo seal in an unpublished manuscript. Above the margin is added another entry concerning works by KORYŪSAI WAGON, also placed under the heading of KAJIKAWA KORYŪSAI.

Fig. 9. Gold lacquer inrō in five parts decorated with the Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road, Museo d'Art Orientale, Venezia, Italy. Inrō Archives no. 2004.3206.

Signed Kajikawa 梶川, with red tsubo seal reading Wagon 和言

Fig. 10. Gold lacquer inrō of five parts decorated with the Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore. Inrō Archives no. 19704.0057.

Signed Kanōsai Wagon 寛王斎和言, with red tsubo reading: ei 英
Fig. 11. Gold lacquer inrō in five parts decorated with the Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road, Klefisch auctions, Cologne. Inrō Archives no. 20031.0057.

Signed Koryūsai 胡柳斎, with red tsubo reading: WAGON 和言

Fig. 12. Gold lacquer inrō in five parts decorated with the Fifty-Three Stations of the Tōkaidō Road, Sotheby's Los Angeles in George Lazarnick's Netsuke & inrō artists and how to read their Signatures, II, 1982, p. 1209a. Inrō Archives no. 19761.0127.

Signed Fukuosai Wagon 福王斎 和言, with red tsubo reading ei 英
The above very similar inrō, decorated with the Tōkaidō Road, are signed as follows:

1) KAJIKAWA 梶川, with red tsubo reading wagon 和言 (Fig. 9)
2) KAN'ŌSAI WAGON 寛王斎 和言, with red tsubo reading ei 英 (Fig. 10)
3) KORYŪSAI 胡柳斎, with red tsubo reading wagon 和言 (Fig. 11)
4) FUKUŌSAI WAGON 福王斎 和言, with red tsubo reading ei 英 (Fig. 12)
5) KAN'ŌSAI WAGON 寛王斎 和言, with red tsubo reading ei 英 (Fig. 13)

Another three very similar inrō are not reproduced here because their signatures were not shown:

6) KAJIKAWA 梶川, 1982, Japan, Inrō Archives no. 19822.2015, signature not shown.
7) KAJIKAWA 梶川, 2000, Tokyo National Museum, Inrō Archives no. 20004.5013, red tsubo reading ei 英.
8) KORYŪSAI 胡柳斎, Christie’s, London, November 19, 1986, lot 572, Inrō Archives no. 19861.0201, with red tsubo.
Of the 33,690 entries currently in our archives, 2,713 of these inrō have a KAIKAWA signature. The majority of them are signed with the workshop name KAIKAWA only, but some members were allowed to add their personal art names. Best known (and most often copied) is the name of KAIKAWA BUNRYUSAI. We have recorded 238 inrō inscribed with this name.

In combination with the KAIKAWA workshop name are found more than fifty different artists’ names, such as KAIKAWA HIDETAKA (18 inrō), HISATAKA (18 inrō), KYUJIRÔ (8 inrō), SHÔSUI (15 inrō), TOMOHIDE (5 inrō), TÔSHÛ (3 inrō), YOSHINOBU/KEISHIN (7 inrō), and so on.

Most books on Japanese lacquer masters list between twenty-five and forty personal art names used by direct members of the KAIKAWA workshop. A closer study of the various KAIKAWA masters, comparing their choice of designs and style of work in connection with currently documented signatures and seals, would be very interesting. However, the vast quantity of material found in our database makes it a formidable task.

It can be concluded here that some members of the KAIKAWA workshop were also free to use other art names. The lacquer artisan KAIKAWA KORYUSAI chose to sign his name in archaic characters on the Nanban-style inrō (Figs. 1–6). But even when signing standard-shape gold lacquer inrō (Figs. 9–13), he used several names and seals, such as KAIKAWA, KORYUSAI, WAGON, FUKUÔSAI, and KANÔSAI. This artisan most probably was active in the first half of the nineteenth century, a dating supported by KEISAI’s woodblock print (Fig. 7), published between 1830 and 1844.

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Notes:


3 Hawley, W. M. and Kei Kaneda Chappelear, Mon, The Japanese Family Crest, 1976, p. 22. (Fig. 2, shippô)


5 Ueno, Kenjutsu et al., Oranda shumi 阿蘭陀趣味, Inspiration from Holland, A Special Exhibition, Tobacco & Salt Museum, 1996. Fig. 7 is reproduced from p. 150, Fig. 202.
Ivory netsuke of a dog with an awabi shell
Signed Okatori. Late 18th century.

140 Maiden Lane, San Francisco, CA 94108 USA
Tel: 415.392.9999 / Fax 415.984.5856
mvargas@xanadugallery.us
R for Rishi

The name Rishi, or better known by collectors as senrin (Ch. Sien Lung), designates immortals, men who have reached this exalted state through asceticism, meditation, and following Taoist teaching, and who have acquired wondrous magical powers. Of Buddhist origin, they have been divided by the Chinese into five orders: Deva, Purucha, Nara, Bhumi, and Preta. Let it be said that those we are principally interested in here will mostly come from the order of Nara. Whatever the name be, it evokes for us lives spent separated from the rest of mankind, in faraway mountain fastnesses and regions teeming with hosts of genii, immortal creatures, and mythical trees. Henri Joly cites a netsuke that belonged to him: “...an old man with bald pate and long wispy beard, displaying a scroll, inscribed with a Chinese poem: Under the shadow of the pine and the plum tree, sleeping on a high rock, Unkaku (cloud-man) knows not how run the years; there is no calendar in the mountains.”

The number of these immortals of Chinese lore is almost past count; but those part of a group of eight called Pâ Sien are the most highly regarded by the Chinese, namely Shoriken, Chokaro and his magic horse which has a gourd for a stable (Fig. 1)—Riotoshin, Tekkai—who could send his soul on a voyage simply by exhaling it (Fig. 2)—Ransaika, Sokokukio, Kanshoshi, and Kasenko. But, as far as we are concerned, there are many others. Well known to collectors, and to name only the best known and more often met in the world of
netsuke, will be *sennin gama* and his three-legged toad (*Fig. 3*), even if mostly portrayed with two legs only; Kanzan and Jittoku (*Fig. 4*); Chorio, Kosekiko and the Dragon lurking under the bridge (*Fig. 5*); Kinko riding his giant carp (*Fig. 6*); Roshi on his ox (*Fig. 7*); Tobosaku and his pilfered peaches (*Fig. 8*); Handaka Sonia and his dragon (*Fig. 9*); Shubaka Sonia astride his *shishi* (*Fig. 10*); and the Sennin Tōyenmei and his flowers (*Fig. 11*).

The legendary (but real) painter/carver Shuzan of *Soken Kisho* renown devoted himself exclusively to the creation and carving of mythical creatures, be they human or animal. The long line of sennin invented and carved during the best part of the 18th century are mostly recognizable by long ear-lobes and bushy, sometimes extra-long eyebrows and with attitudes bordering on the bizarre. They will be dressed in a leaf coat, generally over a Chinese dress, if not simply in
Chinese garb. They often carry or lean on a knotted and crooked staff and may flaunt wispy beards. For more about their lives, habits, and attributes we can only encourage those who wish to delve deeper into the mysteries of the sennin to look them up in Joly’s *Legends in Japanese Art* or, even better, in the *Koji Hoten* (in French only). But, before closing this chapter, we must cite, verbatim and with pleasure, the Rishi Oshikio’s prescription for eternal life, as quoted by Joly from the *Wakai Sansai Zuye*:

“Gather from a chrysanthemum the young shoots on the day of the Tiger in the third month, the leaves in the sixth, the flowers in the ninth, and the remaining stem and root during the twelfth month. Dry separately in the shade; pulverize on the day of the Dog equal parts of each. Make into pills with honey or mix with wine, one momme (four grammes) of the powder and take daily three times, each dose being divided into seven parts the size of a small seed. After a hundred days the body will become lighter, white hair will blacken in a year, and in two years new teeth will have grown; and after five years’ steady absorption of this nostrum an old man of eighty will again feel young, his skin will be supple and fair, and he will never age again.”
Naito Toyomasa (1773-1856)
A classic example of a wood tengu no tamago sitting comfortably with its right hand resting on the rim of the broken shell and its left wing sweeping around it in an open fan.
The eyes are of dark horn with drilled pupils.
Signed beneath: Toyomasa
Width: 3.8cms
This large netsuke of *reishi*, symbolic of longevity, is extremely rare. It is made from an authentic fungus, preserved within a coat of lacquer which lends it a pleasing surface quality. It is applied with metalwork and lacquered metal additions of toads and ants, and bears two inlaid metal plaques on the underside, one in silver and one in gold, with Ichiryū's signature and a date of the eighth year of Kyōhō (1723) respectively. Lazarnick states: “This is the earliest date I have found on a netsuke.” We concur. The date refers to the original metalwork of the toads, removed at some point from a defunct sword scabbard; the lacquering and the ants very much recall Gambun in hand and spirit, and we suppose that the putting-together of earlier metalwork and fungus with ants – to create a unique netsuke – dates from his mid-late C19th period. It may well have been made by Gambun; if not, by someone ambitious, thoroughly familiar with his work.

The art name of Ichiryū (alternately: Hitotsuyanagi) may refer to an early master of the line of Hirano Tomoyoshi – retainer of the Tokugawa Daimyo family of Mito, Hitachi province – in the 18th century. As is the case with much sword furniture manufacture, exact identification is ambiguous and inconclusive. But although we may not be able to put our finger precisely on the sword furniture maker responsible for the toads, and although the making of the composition must date from late Tokugawa to early Meiji, this remains the earliest date on any netsuke.
A fruitwood netsuke of a seated Fukurokuju.
Signed Toyomasa (I).
Early 19th century.

A narwhal netsuke of Fukurokuju in the form of the macroencephalic dwarf Fukusuke.
Signed Garaku (I).
Late 18th century.

A old dark open-grained wood netsuke of Fukurokuju holding a stag-antler scroll.
Unsigned.
Early 19th century.

These four netsuke are amongst 60 or so of June Schuerch’s 550+ collection currently being lovingly prepared for publication in our next infamously luxurious and expansive fold-out flyer. The illustrations will be life-size. The full collection, incorporating one-off masterpieces, low-rent figural netsuke selected for their unusual subject matter, old European taste touchy-feelies and an extraordinary group of works in every conceivable exotic material, will be available from us once her estate is settled and the family gives us the go-ahead. We are planning to exhibit the collection at the INS London convention in May 2013. In the meantime if you would like to receive one of our flyers upon their printing please make sure that you are on our mailing list.
On The Continent

Gabor Wilhelm
gabrielwil@mac.com

Prices stated include buyers’ premium with the exception of the shishi in the Lyon sale.

As usual, Kunsthandel Klefisch of Köln, Germany, opened the autumn season of sales on the 13 October presenting about 140 netsuke and a variety of sagemono. The principal interest of this sale seemed to reside in the considerable numbers of interesting varieties of well-known themes—everyday life, historical, legendary, etc.—many of these hailing from the erstwhile collection of Dr. Schwartz, an eminent student of Japanese lore.

No. 193 was a jovial, suitably roly-poly Hotei leaning against his bulging sac, in well-patinated stag antler; a big silver ring served as a himotoshi, indicating that the netsuke may have been attached by a chain, perhaps, to a smoker’s implement; signed Tomonobu, sold €700. No. 202 represented a rare feminine sennin, Jogen Fujin who reputedly appeared descending from heavens accompanied by sennin Seibo; shown here smiling, holding a scepter, leaning against her favourite kirin. Signed Tomotane, this made €600.

No. 212 was, for me at least, one of the jewels of this sale. It was a small oni, standing, his hair tousled upon head bent aside, doing the bekkanko sign while hiding a probably freshly stolen gong behind his back; wood stained a light hazelnut colour, with traces of negoro; this made €2,100. For a similar model signed Okatomo, see MCI ibid.

No. 215 was a supposedly meditating Daruma, his posturing belied by his face, grimacing on account of the pain inflicted by a posing of moxa just behind a knee; pleasing patina, this sold €850.

The choice was difficult in a group of shishi. No. 226, the classical features of the growling creature safeguarding his ball under a heavy paw, his mane and the bouquet of the upward-opening strands of tail confirming the Okatori signature; ivory, going for €6,800. No. 229, an endearingly comical shishi sporting an upturned nose, his head and a paw leaning upon a mokugyo. The scene was in creamy ivory posed upon an oval base, engraved with a pseudo-seal that could be read as “mugaku” (the ignorant),
a self-mocking joke by the Asakusa master carver, whoever he might have been. Ex Szechenyi, this went for €4,800. **No. 239** was a round silver *manju*, carved on both sides in high relief with two shishi at play among branches of budding and blooming peonies. Ex Wrangham, this went for €1,300.

As for unusual models, we shall cite **No. 240**, showing the shogun Yoritomo and Saigyo Hoshi side by side, discussing, no doubt, some finer points of military strategy; well-patinated ivory, signed by the rarely seen Hikaku, this made €900. In the same vein, **No. 241**, an even more unusual model represented an
enormous karasu tengu, looking down his impressive beak with enormous inlaid eyes. He was carrying a somewhat recalcitrant-looking young Yositsune, no doubt late for his early morning fencing lessons; ivory, signed Ryusensai, this sold €1,100.

The heroic legendary series continued with No. 243, an ivory scene upon a hillock, where we could see the symbolic vengeance of the unfortunate Yoyo under the cruel eyes of Cho passing by on horseback, accompanied by his cronies. Good patina, signed Gyokuhosai, this made €1,100. Still another unusual model was No. 248, presenting in some detail the horrible fate of the wicked Arababa of Shitakiri Suzume fame. While the brave Nasakeji was admiring his treasures, she was submerged by a shrieking horde of bakemono, mitsumekozo, and assorted rokurokubi. Ivory, signed Gyokuzan, this went for €1,100. We continued with No. 253, showing Ono no Tofu, the famous calligrapher, in a really unusual position trying to unsheath his sword while balancing on a single rain geta, his famous frog seeking refuge under same; ivory, signed Kigyoku, this went for €2,400.

From the group of fauna, No. 286 was a powerful ivory tiger in the “Kyoto 18th” style; hunched leaning forward, he was shown devouring his “friend,” a bamboo shoot he was holding between his forepaws. The bent head and hunched shoulders counterbalanced the nervous movement of the upward-twitching tail; big eyes inlaid; multiple orange hues of the finely patinated ivory; this truly royal piece went for €5,500.

Switching from power to charm, No. 295 was a peaceful family scene of a happily smiling mare, forelegs folded in repose, with her foal aligned behind, his head nuzzling against the rump of his mother. Milky ivory, this sold for €2,200.
There was a unique piece in a sale by Millaréde in Lyon on the 20 October: a good group of a defiantly roaring shishi with his offspring under a protecting paw; done in the vein of similar Kyoto groups of tigers, well-toned ivory, this was paid €1,000 on the hammer.


VISIT THE INS FORUM
www.netsuke.org
Auctions – UK

Douglas J. K. Wright
djkwazana@aol.com

The 2012 autumn sales for Asian arts were with us and, once again, especially Chinese art, with some fabulous items coming on the market. I am certain that dealers and collectors from mainland China were out in force to acquire them and return them back to their homeland, but at what price? Far beyond our dreams I suspect.

Both Christie’s and Bonhams were competing with inro, lacquer works, swords and sword furniture, and some outstanding Meiji artifacts to whet all appetites. On this occasion, Bonhams was the only London room to offer a selection of netsuke. So, let’s proceed into netsuke, our field of enjoyment.

Prices include buyer’s premium

I am commencing with Lot 104, a wood netsuke of a tiger by Naito Toyomasa. This excellent beast was muscular and powerful, with a fearsome expression as it squatted, looking back and down over its left shoulder; the tail passed between the hind legs and rose slightly to form the himotoshi. This netsuke was one of the auction highlights and had a guide price of £35,000–£40,000, which told us this was highly thought of, and I have to agree. I penciled in a remark when I viewed it, “could make a little more.” I was thinking along the lines of £60,000–£80,000…but £103,250, goodness gracious! For the record, I noted there was a miniscule anomaly in the kanji character for Toyo. It had a slight variation in one or two strokes from other signatures associated with Naito Toyomasa; strokes 3–4 seem to have been cut before strokes 1–2.

I am not downgrading this magnificent tiger, but one takes these pointers into consideration so we can judge for ourselves. Secondly, an excellent example by Hidari Toyomasa with slightly less fierceness, with its tail rising around the side of the body up to the shoulders—a pose we see quite often in tiger studies—is illustrated in Alain Ducros’ 1978 tome Netsuke and Sagemono. Except for the differences in the tail position and the signatures, one could almost claim they were from the same hand.

In complete contrast to this record-breaking sum for a Toyomasa, we come down to earth and back to normality with two not very exciting wood netsuke of snakes, one signed by an artist who is fairly unknown and the other by an artist working outside
his known subject field. **Lot 105** was a wood snake by Tanri, a somewhat unknown *netsukeshi* who also produced a netsuke of a toad resting upon a discarded sandal, illustrated in George Lazarnick’s *Netsuke & Inro Artists and how to read their signatures* (1981), p. 1078. (Another associated with the artist is recorded in the Meinertzhagen Card Index (MCI), p. 857, and is named for a figural subject depicting an egg tester.) The frog he carved has a feel of movement, and this snake by him has a similar feel, as if about to coil and rest or uncoiling and ready to move. Whichever it may be, it is a change to have a snake that has flow of movement and is not wrapped around a tortoise or coiled, asleep, and somewhat lifeless. A worthwhile acquisition at £1,000.

**Lot 107**, the second snake, was coiled and not too lifeless as it commenced to rouse itself. Well-carved in ebony with details lightly engraved, but well-worn. Described as rare, due I suspect to the artist Deme Taiman, who was a member of the Deme family and classed as a mask carver, thus making the snake a rare subject by him. The resulting £1,625 all in was just about right. As to Taiman, Raymond Bushell, in his *Netsuke Masks* (1995), lists one mask by him, of Daikoku, on pl. 148. Perhaps the snake was a one-off, perhaps for a year of the snake.

On contrast both in quality and subject was **Lot 108**, an unsigned compact wood netsuke with a beautiful overall warm patina. Here again, given a “rare” tag and rightly so. The subject was a male *kirin*, almost equestrian-like as it reclined with head to its left and resting down upon its shoulder. The details of horns, flames, and accentuated backbone were well-defined. If it were not for these pointers, the face and mane would have transposed the subject into equine status. As to artist, at first it had the feel and look of Yamada school at its best. Although the style of the himotoshi hinted at Kyoto, I felt Yamada perhaps had the edge. Nevertheless, this was one outstanding netsuke. Someone felt so and paid £25,000, an excellent addition for any collection.

From the sublime to the ridiculous. But the ridiculous can still have merit and charm, and **Lot 110** was just such a case. Constructed from the husk of a large nut of sorts, which had retained its natural skin striations, and then seemingly lacquered. Upon this outer shell *sentoku* and *shakudo* ants were applied and in pearl and lacquer a slug and lady birds, somewhat suggesting this decorative feature could be the work of Jikan Ganbun, and why not?; such an object would certainly tempt
an artist of his caliber. But, when the artist Somei rings the himotoshi and signs his signature (the latter exquisitely) in mother-of-pearl, then why not concede that he has completed all the inlay work. Furthermore, it also intrigues that there is the possibility there is a cord attachment missing, which I feel would have been somewhat like the stalk of a pumpkin and thus plugged into the husk’s aperture. The buyer of this fascinating piece paid £1,625. If mine, I would find a good artist who could remake such a plug that would enhance the piece.

Lot 114 was not just an ordinary ivory netsuke, but a figural carving by Kyoto’s Masanao. Wood netsuke by this famous artist are sometimes questioned, and figural netsuke come in for the same treatment. To eliminate any misconceptions one has to take into account his work styles and features of his signature kanji. Here we have a delightful study of Daikoku seated upon a sack and playing a *tzusumi* held resting upon his right shoulder. The facial expression says just how much enjoyment he is obtaining from his playing. The overall carving and the way the robes have been formed and shaped very much reflect the work of a skilled netsukeshi, as Masanao is. And, when one compares the signature and that on the figure of a boy mentioned in the catalogue and illustrated in *MCI*, p. 445, one has no doubt as to its parentage; plus, the fact of the £34,850 paid tends to support it also. One small hiccup, the tzusumi had a string missing, but, after surviving all these years, one can hardly make this an issue.

While in a Masanao mood I also selected Lot 115, a rat in wood, which is another material sometimes questionable when associated with the master. But Masanao immediately comes to mind when one looks at the rat and its compact, rounded, plump body; the scratching ear pose, in this occasion with the right hind leg, then again sitting upon its tail and gripping same with the front legs; and finally the large inlaid eyes. In this example, especially the paws and the toes are more animal-like than the ivory rat mentioned as a comparison (on page 280 of Joe Earle’s *Netsuke Fantasy and Reality in Japanese Miniature Sculpture*, published for the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, 2001), which reveals a more human hand characterisation. This was an excellent strong example having some wear and good patina giving the subject a warm feel. The price paid of £22,500 for an excellent Masanao was certainly not over the top.

Lot 119. An ivory netsuke depicting a young Kintoki upon the back of his mother Yama Uba (Yaegari) who is shown semi-kneeling and looking over her right shoulder and gripping his leg as he holds a struggling wild boar by its tail. This has the look of a Kyoto master, but the artist is Toshikata (also can be read as Nenpo), and there is no record of a Toshikata with these kanji. P. G. O’Neil lists four with this name, none with these two kanji. The netsuke itself was fairly standard carving-wise, but the unusual portrayal of the Kintoki legend along with the rare artist helped it reach £4,125.
My next choice was **Lot 120**, a rare miniature marvel netsuke constructed with a mixture of various metals, namely shakudo, copper, and silver, and formed as a rectangular silver-framed box containing five diaper-patterned panels and mounted with a ring for suspension. Whether this was the work of a netsukeshi or a metalworker one will never know, but the work is astonishing. This simple box-like form opened to reveal a typical Japanese residence from the Edo period, or maybe earlier. When fully opened, one sees six sliding doors, each one is movable, and each reveals a hanging scroll and a wall-mounted fan. To the right it opens to reveal a *bonsai* garden and a *tokonoma*, within which a *kakemono* and an ornament are displayed. On the left side is a trellis with Chinese bell flowers, while the frontage dropped down to display a miniature rocky landscape garden with bridge and stream. Such dexterity was rewarded with a handsome result of £4,375.

Lots 143 to 159 were more of the Harriet Szechenyi collection, and amongst this group one or two had some merit above the norm. **Lot 146**. A wood netsuke of a recumbent ox glancing back over its left shoulder. Exceptional, with well-detailed horns and rope halter attached to a nose ring. The wood has a high polish with a strong, wide grain. This again was unsold from the November 2011 auction as Lot 118, there guided at £15,000–18,000 and reached a sum of £13,000. At this auction it realised an exceptional £21,250 against an estimate £8,000–10,000. Strange? Not really. Absence in one sale of interested parties, and those missing buyers are there for the re-offering and like what they see. As to the netsuke, it was signed *Toyomasa Roku-ju-kyu sa* (Toyomasa aged 69) but seemingly by Toyoyo (1811–1883) who was the son of Naito Toyomasa I (who should have been called Toyoyasu, but the pronunciation of this name would have been discourteous to Lord Tadayasu of the Sasayama clan and so the pronunciation became Toyoyo). Work this out, or if you have the *INS Journal*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (which I lack), there is an article by Kazutoyo Ichimichi on Naito Toyomasa that will put you in the picture.

**Lot 148**. A wood netsuke of a tortoise and young walking upon an *awabi* shell. Not a stunning netsuke but selected as a gesture to show that even the somewhat unexciting subjects can fill a hole in one’s collection. The netsuke had acceptably good detail and warm patina but slightly worn. Pleasant enough and better
than just having a simple awabi. The artist Kaho is comparatively unknown. He is mentioned in *MCI* and two others are in P. G. O’Neill’s *Japanese Names: A Comprehensive Index by Characters and Readings*, but none with the kanji as on this example. £1,000 was the end result, which seems quite acceptable.

The two *saishiki* (painted wood) netsuke in Lots 160 and 165 are in the manner of Yoshimura Shuzan whose birth and death details are yet to be verified. If netsuke had an enigma attached to them, this style and artist fit the bill. Shuzan, a Kano school painter with the title *hogen*, is often hailed as the greatest netsukeshi of all time, but he apparently never signed his work. We know that in Inaba Michitatsu’s *Soken Kisho*, published in 1871, are listed fifty-seven netsuke artists and named twenty-two from Osaka, of which Shuzan was one. His work or designs are well-covered in this work.

**Lot 160** is one of them, representing Ryujin the Dragon King very much in the style and pose as illustrated in the aforementioned publication. With his fierce expression, he stands with both arms across his chest as he carefully holds the tide jewel cupped in his hands, his guardian dragon upon his back, the head of which rests crown-like upon his head. The figure, as with nearly all associated with Shuzan, is saishiki-style with pale toned *hinoki*. Dated as 18th century, and from the loss of paint and the overall rubbing and wear, one accepts these early datings, and that is the enigma, as nearly all are found this way, so worn that some figures are almost devoid of detail, such as in **Lot 165**. The subject is extraordinary, being a ghost of a Chinese lady of the court rising from a vapor cloud, both hands across her chest holding a fan. The figure, as with Ryujin, has well-worn coloured pigments and *gesso* that are almost non-existent, seemingly from wear, back to the hinoki wood, suggesting these Shuzan figures were much used. In saying this I note that the comparative and almost identical Ryujin mentioned from the Baron Go Seinosuke collection in Hirokazu Arakawa’s *The Go Collection of Netsuke, Tokyo National Museum* (1983, p. 9, figs 1 and 2) is of a darker wood and from the illustration seems to have lost ninety-nine percent of the coloured pigments and no signs of gesso, but surprisingly has a genuine feel. Another similar study catalogued as extremely important was sold at Sotheby’s auction May 16, 1966, and realised a healthy sum of £300. This sale result realised £9,375. Lot 165 did not find a buyer. As stated above, Yoshimura Shuzan is not easy to authenticate and an enigma.

Away from controversy and on to **Lot 163**, a wood netsuke of Bashiko (the legendary Chinese physician Ma She-Hwang). Credited to have been skilled in treating horses, we
can assume he was a vet. He saved the life of a dragon, which gratefully carried him skywards to a world of bliss. The figure holds his robe as the dragon that appears from a vortex of vapour rising up around his back almost overpowers Bashiko. The details are well-carved with a warm patina and slight wear. £2,250 was a fair result for an acceptable 18th century figural subject. For your interest, Glendining’s sale on July 7, 1965, sold for £68 an excellent almost identical study of this same figure, but called him Chinnan instead of Baishiko, an easy error to make as both are associated with a dragon. However, Chinnan usually has a staff or bowl as symbols associated with his dragon background.

**Lot 168.** A wood netsuke of a carp leaping through waves. A somewhat unusual study, but effective as the waves wrap around its body with the head supposedly out of the water. The details and style of carving, colour, and patina hint at Nagoya, but, whatever its origins, it is a change from the leaping carp at the Dragon Falls and just a nice netsuke for one’s collection at the acceptable sum of £2,125.

**Lot 172.** A wood netsuke of two foals seemingly play fighting. Catalogued as rare due to the artist Awataguchi from the Miwa school whose known netsuke to date have been figural. The two equines are intertwined in a somewhat untidy manner; the small amount of detail of mane and tail are well-worn. One tail forms the himotoshi, ideal for this style of netsuke. I judged the £10,000–£15,000 guide to be a little on the high side, but around the lower guide would be acceptable, and so it turned out to be, a fair sum of £10,625. A comparable horse and foal by Tametaka can be seen in Sydney L. Moss’ catalogue *Meetings with Remarkable Netsuke*, No. 18.

**Lot 184.** We have seen quite a few shishi over the last two or three auctions, and this auction was no exception. Nevertheless, they seem to attract buyers, so I decided to select a couple. This wood example is rather muscular. Its head to the left and glancing down, its right front paw resting upon the wood branch of a peony flower gripped in its jaw; the two together symbolise the poetical association of the King of Beasts and King of Flowers. The wood has slight wear and a good patina over strongly portrayed details. A small flaw is the added himotoshi, as against the original placing through the space of the front and hind legs. Cost to the buyer, £8,750.

**Lot 186.** I selected this because I felt it added a little more interest than just a shishi; it also had quality and detail. Subject-
wise, a lively shishi on one foot seemingly attempting to reach the dragon motif handle of a temple bell. The design of the bells in netsuke and other Japanese art forms can often be traced back to the design and ornamentation associated with the legendary Dojo-ji Temple bell and the tale of Anchin and Kiyohime, but there is nothing to tie this subject with that legend. However, as the shishi and a bell are both symbolic of faith and worship in Buddhist terms, then we have a connection, so the subject makes sense. Although unsigned, the catalogue suggested Tatemaka-style; a fair comment, as the colour, wood, and style compare well with his work. Fortunately, the buyer did not have to pay a Tatemaka price, and £3,750 was a worthwhile result and a good provenance to boot.

Lot 192. A wood netsuke of a reclining shishi by Tomin signed in ukibori. If unsigned, one would undoubtedly attribute it to Minko. Tomin would have been especially displeased in this case, because although he chose a subject already carved by Minko (Lot 25, Harriot Szechenyi Collection of Japanese Art, Bonhams, November 8, 2011), he has without doubt produced a larger, more muscular, and contented looking beast, even though it lacks some detail, such as claws and hair work. Total £4,000.

Lot 217. An ivory netsuke by Yoshinaga of Kyoto, well-known for his excellent figural subjects. This example was catalogued as rare, presumably due to the subject representing a Rakan, and a delightful study to boot. Semi-kneeling, wearing a kiku-decorated skirt, the figure’s left hand is held to his tight lips as if to hide a cheeky smiling face and eyes. The clue to this great facial expression is lost to us, as this would have been in his right hand, which has been replaced and shown holding a fruit. An excellent Yoshinaga that realised £3,750.

Lot 218. Another ivory figure, this one unsigned, perhaps Kyoto school. As with the previous lot, it was somewhat amusing, depicting perhaps an off-duty geisha reclining on her side while a dwarf-like figure (catalogue suggests her son) with mischievous intentions leans over her hips as he lifts her kimono with a long-nosed tengu mask. The woman’s facial expression is somewhat dead-pan, but the eyes glancing towards her abuser show he may be feeling her wrath at any time. Not the greatest of netsuke, but the subject makes one wonder if the artist knew about the lives of the ladies of the Yoshiwara. A good netsuke for discussion with one’s fellow collectors. Not expensive at £1,250.

Lot 227, the last of the netsuke, was by Ohara Mitsuhiro. I reported on a similar subject in the Winter 2011 issue (INSJ, Vol. 31, No. 4,
p. 55) in Bonhams’ sale of the Harriet Széchenyi collection. For your interest, I have since realised that this was also ex Bushell and sold at Sotheby’s July 3, 1964, for £72. Not to go into great detail, but what intrigues me is that this example plus Lot 227 and another ensconced in the British Museum’s Hull Grundy collection give us a total of three known examples of this subject, with slight variations of detail, all seemingly carrying an inscription saying they were made in September, year of the boar (1839). On the one sold in the Széchenyi sale, Frederick Meinertzhagen questioned the signature. With three examples so similar, maybe he had a point. Lot 227 has more affiliation with that of the Hull Grundy piece in as much as the upper surface is smooth as against the more decorative Széchenyi model. Result-wise, this reached an acceptable £11,875 as against Széchenyi’s £46,850.

I hope my selection of netsuke will be of some interest to one and all, and to finalise my auction report I feel a mention of one or two inro might be in order. **Lot 37** from the collection of Dr. Henry Potter Stevens, a collector whom I first met when I joined my uncle’s auction house, Glendining & Co., and to which the aforementioned client attended regularly. This five-case *rogin-nuri* inro by Hara Yoyusai was exquisitely worked in gold and *iroe-takamakie* showing three Portuguese traders wearing extremely fancy feminine *bombacha* pantaloons and rich upper garments and necklaces. The trio seemingly in conversation, two shown on one side, one of which may be a sailor as he carries a Chinese-like sword and a pole topped with a red banner and a feather. His companion, whose hat has a Mongolian style, raises his hand to make a point as the third figure (shown on the reverse), accompanied by a pet greyhound on a lead, listens intently. These foreign subjects are fairly uncommon in inro, particularly of this quality. I was intrigued by the sword-bearing figure and wondered whether they would have allowed them to carry swords. It came with an *ojime* of Ashinaga and a netsuke of an ivory Dutchman holding a flute, somewhat *mingei* in style. The result well-exceeded the guide and reached £46,850.

**Lot 43.** A fine gold lacquer four-case inro by Ganshosai Shunsui of rich *gyobu hirame* and *gyobu nashiji* boldly highlighting a brown and silver *hiramakie* python writhing around all sides of the inro; the interior is basic *nashiji*. Seemingly, snakes are thought to have magical powers and transform into human guise (hum, probably into politicians) and also became the emblem of
female passions such as sensuality, hatred, and jealousy, of which the last two make sense (oops). Provenance: Lt. Col. J. B. Gaskell and Mrs. T. S. Hall collections, and purchased at Glendining & Co., London, 1952. It made £15,000, the top guide price and an acceptable sum overall. This inro brings back memories for me: an almost identical example, but I believe the interior was decorated differently but by the same artist, was on offer by Spink & Sons in the 1970s that I tried to purchase. However, I was told it was being reserved for a private client. I was a little peeved, especially as it was still there about a month later, but I ignored the inro and the snub.

Finally, from the Bonham offerings, **Lot 71**, a fine three-case red lacquer inro of broad form by Shiomi Masanari, a much sought-after lacquerer known for his fine *togidashi* work. This example says it all with a sleeping ox-herder resting against a basket of flowers beside (and almost overpowering the scene) a large, muscular, recumbent black ox finely-detailed with piercing, alert eyes and a rope halter attached to a nose ring. The rich colour and the continuous scene make this a perfect subject for such a broad inro; the interior nashiji with kinji edges adds to the quality. A black ox and a boy is a parable of Zen Buddhism and associated with Sugawara no Michizane. It is also associated with Roshi (Lao Tsze), the founder of Daoism, and is symbolised by a black ox reclining and resting from his labours. Signed Shiomi Masanari with the familiar rectangular panel of seal characters. (See E. A. Wrangham’s *Index of Inro Artists*, p. 167.) A must for any inro collector, and the £23,750 result certainly reflects the overall quality of this inro. For the record, another inro with a black ox theme can been seen in the catalogue of *The Elly Nordskog Collection*, no. 21, published by Sydney L. Moss, Ltd., 2010. It is a four-case inro also by Masanari. Here the scene precedes Lot 71, as the herd boy attempts with a rope and halter to restrain the lively black beast. Another, a two-case inro by Kajikawa with just a reclining black ox on a red ground with symbolic plants on the interior and risers, is illustrated in Julia Meech’s catalogue *Lacquerware from the Western Collection: A Selection of Inro and Boxes* (Christie’s, New York, 1995, p. 106, no. 52).
Auctions – USA

Michael J. Strone
Harrison, New York
kokoro@japanart.us

Quinn’s Auction Galleries, Falls Church, VA, December 7, 2012
The Helen and Jack Mang Collection of Japanese Netsuke

Prices Include 18% Buyer’s Premium.

Where to begin? Well, first and foremost, condolences to the family of John Mang, Jr., who died tragically after supervising the cataloguing of his parents’ netsuke and only two weeks after the sale at which he was present—even bidding occasionally to buy back a couple of netsuke from the Estate. All those present at the preview and the auction got a chance to get to know John who, by all accounts, was a netsuke enthusiast himself and a gentle soul. A remembrance of John may be found elsewhere in this issue.

A collection of nearly one thousand netsuke amassed over a half-century (the first in 1951 and the last in 2003) and disbursed through a small, regional auction house outside of Washington, D.C., at one time on one day in 630 lots. As John Jr. wrote to his (and our) longtime friend Norman Sandfield after the sale, “Of course, the 960 netsuke in the sale does [sic] not include the other seven hundred pieces that they had previously sold or gifted.” With help and expertise from both John Jr. and our esteemed President, Marsha Vargas Handley, Quinn’s produced a beautiful catalogue (from which will be produced an even more beautiful and comprehensive hard-cover version prior to the INS London Convention this coming May) and very intelligently sent a catalogue to each member of the INS. Their on-line catalogue was better by far than those of Bonhams and Christie’s.

However, Quinn’s had never handled a netsuke auction before and, despite their truly best efforts, they were overwhelmed by the worldwide interest in the sale. They scheduled a sale of Japanese art on Pearl Harbor Day for starters, and they were unprepared for the special challenges posed by international participation in the sale, among which is the international shipment of ivory, as well as the logistics of previewing 1,100 netsuke. Unaccountably, there were thirty inro, some of masterpiece quality, and several lots of rare netsuke books that were sold in two other sales, one on the evening before, the other on the day after, presumably (by reference to the prices realized) unbeknownst to many potential bidders. Also, the estimates on the lots often varied widely from the sales results and, thus, are largely omitted from this report. In the end, even with the reserves being announced prior to the sale as fifty percent of the low estimate, 120 lots went unsold at the sale, though many sold in the days immediately following.
That said, Quinn’s conduct of the actual sale was superb, with all 630 lots being presented in a shade under 6½ hours, an average of an amazing one hundred lots per hour, with not a bid being missed; not from the floor (about fifty of the most inveterate dealers and collectors), nor book, nor telephone, nor any of the three live Internet sites (ArtFact, Live Auctioneers, and iCollector). This was a marathon, to be sure, but a marathon run in record time.

In order to understand the totality of the Mang collection, perhaps a comparison might be helpful. The most recent significant single-owner netsuke sale prior to Mang was the collection of Harriet Szechenyi, sold at Bonhams London in November 2011. The Szechenyi collection was, for the most part, magnificent, with blockbuster after blockbuster, many sold to her in the 1990s at very high prices. One dealer has even boasted that a certain netsuke was sold to her at £50,000 and bought back at the sale for £5,500. The Mang collection contained many good pieces and a dozen or so great pieces. The Mangs collected their netsuke largely in the ’50s and ’60s when netsuke were plentiful and very inexpensive—even after adjusting for the value of the dollar—and represented their passion for collecting, their interest in Japanese culture, fables, and their desire to find beauty in the ordinary. It is evident from discussions with John Jr. that his parents collected what they loved, regardless of value. Ms. Szechenyi, on the other hand, seems to have collected, consistent with her good taste, of course, “important” pieces, those that she was told (rightly) were the best.

Accordingly, this sale will have netted a handsome profit for the Mang family whereas, for all of the astronomical prices achieved at the Szechenyi sale, her children will doubtlessly not ever recoup her original investment.

Norman Sandfield who, among other good things, is the great netsuke bibliographer, has graciously provided me with a pre-sale statistical analysis. The collection was purchased from nearly 100 different sources with the largest number (158) purchased from an INS member who is not a public dealer (and, as he is not disclosed in the lot descriptions, will remain anonymous), with five coming from Frederic Meinertzhagen directly (each accompanied by a colored card akin to those seen in the Meinertzhagen Card Index) and with 62 coming from Raymond Bushell, as an example. The collection represents over 350 different known carvers, with another 75 being attributable to a carver or having an unreadable signature or kakihan. There are many fine unsigned netsuke as well. In all, there was to be something for everyone—enough, surely, to attract bidders from all over the U.S., from Russia, the U.K., Japan, Switzerland, and Germany to attend an auction at a regional auction house in Virginia.

Where to begin? At the very beginning, with Lot 1. Acquired in 1958, this model of Sennin Tekkai was carved by the rarely encountered Soken Kisho carver Tsuji and evidences a visualization of his breath from which
his soul leaves his body. Although the breath has been replaced and there is a question about a repair to the legs, this is a graceful model, full of life and movement. That it made $3,835 seemed low and perhaps was blown down by its placement at the head of the auction, with bidders a little nervous about what might be to come. The spirit was willing but the bidding was weak.

There were so many lots that it is impossible to report on everything. Little gems were tucked away among the numerous lots. Among them was Lot 8, an irresistibly comical Rat with an Abacus by one of the myriad Masakazus and purchased in 1956. The precise joke (ruso mitate) here eludes me, except to say that accountants in all cultures are rats (apologies to accountant-collectors). This rat is hunched over the earliest computer, with eyes inlaid in dark horn and a well-carved tail acting as the border of the triangular base. To turn the Mang inventory to account receivable, $2,106 was required, not including taxes. Hopefully, its new owner will find a tiny green visor to shade those eyes from the bare light bulb under which he works.

The first big lot of the day is relocating to Massachusetts, as are many other significant pieces from this sale. Owned by the Mangs since 1968 at the Hindson sale and with a further provenance of renowned collectors, Lot 10 is a very powerful and well-carved model of a Nue, a chimerical beast with, quoting Joly (Legend in Japanese Art, p. 401), “…the head of a monkey, the claws of a tiger, the back of a badger and its tail was like a snake with a head at the end of it.”

This head is more or less monkey and is turned back to the right over his body. It gives one the impression of having been re-carved; one can see in the photograph a phantom set of eye pupils below the horn inlay. The body, as with the other nue examples in this sale (Lots 86 and 383A), has the back of a tiger. Is it a tiger recarved? Undoubtedly, no. The snake-headed tail is not tiger tail but has always been sinuously carved as a serpent, although broken in three places and badly repaired, which one would have thought to have kept the price down. Nonetheless, the peculiar mythological animal was attributed to Garaku (how such attribution was arrived at is somewhat mysterious) and was knocked down at $28,320, establishing early in the sale that good money will follow good pieces.

Next, we come to another attribution from a much later period. Lot 18 is a boxwood representation of Oiwa, the Lantern Ghost, replete with movable arms and head, acquired in 1967 at auction. This netsuke is unsigned, but it may just as well have been signed as the style, the faces, the painted (rather than inlaid) eyes, the detail, even the himotoshi scream “Sansho!” Several others heard that scream as the netsuke reached $34,220.
Every Mitsuhiro and Kaigyokusai seems to suffer from what was termed in the last report, QCS (Questionable Carver Syndrome). There were four netsuke in the sale with a Mitsuhiro signature. Some of those, like Lots 25 and 37, in the humble opinion of this author and many others, are simply not in the style of the carver. Others are arguable. However, **Lot 24** ($12,980), a 1957 acquisition, a graceful and magnificent Seated Crane by Mitsuhiro (despite a missing inlay to the inner right eye); **Lot 35** ($8,850), a perfect Kaigyokusai monkey that was adopted by the Mangs in 1980; and **Lot 38** ($5,310), a magnificently-carved *tokata* ivory, square *manju* of Parrot and Peonies by Kaigyokusai, and bought in Japan twenty years earlier than Lot 35 held captive to QCS. An unsigned netsuke with a Sansho attribution makes more than double those with perfectly good signatures and carved in a style we can associate with a master carver. The netsuke world is topsy-turvy. Netsuke collecting seems still to be about the *carver* rather than the *carving*.

**Lot 68** begs for space in this report for a completely different reason. This netsuke of the Animals of the Zodiac (*junishi*) with the signature of Kagetoshi has, in my
considered judgment, a fake signature. This same model was carved one hundred times by a modern carver at the behest of a certain antiques dealer on Shinmonzen Street in Kyoto. As Willi Bosshard wrote in these pages (see “Fakes, Forgeries and Copies,” INSJ Vol. 22/2, p. 42), names of master carvers were indiscriminately inscribed on each copy in the same blank cartouche on the bottom of the netsuke. I handled another one just like Lot 68 a couple of years ago only this time with the name Ikko inscribed on it. Once again, however, the market is the market, and it went for an incredible $5,015 to a telephone bidder who presumably disagrees with my opinion. I just calls ’em as I sees ’em. Caveat emptor.

Almost four inches tall and very angry, Lot 78 was one of those five purchased from Meinertzhagen in 1958. Catalogued as being carved from bone, this is a Sennin Holding a Mokugyo, but one wonders why he seems so perturbed? After all, following payment of $27,440, he will beat his old drum to a New England collector who is second-to-none. Next time we see this sennin, betcha he’ll be smiling.

The next two lots offer a conundrum. Both were purchased on the same day in 1953. Though lacking in hair work, Lot 115 is a very well-carved model of a Shishi and Cub by Gyokuyosai, the 19th century carver from the Asakusa area of Tokyo, who is best known for being the teacher of Kokusai. It went to a relatively new collector for the very acceptable sum of $2,770. Yes, the hair work is present and nicely done, but how does one explain the disparate result of $10,030 for Lot 115’s mate, Lot 116, a Gyokuyosai Shishi on a Mokugyo? Was that too much or was the other too little—or both? Beats my mokugyo….

Lot 140 was one of the true sleepers of the sale. True, the Mangs did not collect many Meiji period carvings, and true, this is a netsuke that does not inspire in photographs, but, my goodness, this is doubtlessly the authentic work of Meikeisai Hojitsu, a vassal of the shogun. Purchased at Sotheby’s London in 1967, this Sambaso Dancer with Hobby Horse is a technical masterpiece brimming with joy! At $3,422, it was an absolute steal. Giddy up! Hi-yo-Hojitsu, away!

Speaking of Meiji carvings, Lot 170 is an ivory Cherry Blossom by Kyokusai with 47 stamen (count ’em!) owned by the Mangs since 1958. The obvious master workmanship is by a carver of the Tokyo school about whom next to nothing is known. The curvature of the petals is so natural that one expects to smell that wonderful redolence of springtime Japan. It is only when compared to a similar but even more extraordinary carving by Morita Soko that sold for more than $35,000 at the Kirchhoff sale in late 2010 that one can see the evolution of the form. The Kyokusai petals are translucent but milky, evidencing perhaps a desire for a stronger structure in an
era when netsuke may still have been made for wear. With no such constraints on him, Soko’s petals are as thin as they could possibly be, permitting a translucence of truly awesome proportions. At $21,060, this was no shrinking violet either and should not be sneezed at!

Now, what good would blossoms be without insects to pollinate them? As we move into the 20th century, we come to Soko’s working buddy, Gyokuso, who, with Soko, are the earlier proponents of the So school, studying under Joso, the school’s founder. Gyokuso is represented in this sale by **Lot 189**, a *ryusa* manju in ebony, an array of realistically carved **Insects**, flying, crawling, and wriggling and bought in Kyoto in 1960. A technical *tour-de-force*, it is somewhat static for all its variety, and $6,490 seemed enough. Fast-forward some fifty years to see what the *über*-talented but idiosyncratic Nishino Shoko does with an insect. **Lot 192** is imbued with so much motion, it is nearly alive. Carved from the boxwood that Shoko invariably utilized, a molting **Cicada** grabs onto a leaf to aid him as he tries to pull himself out of his carapace. This made $16,520 and left the crowd buzzing. At around the same time that **Lot 192** was carved, Senpo was also cicada-ing around with a very different interpretation (**Lot 194**) of the insect. This **Cicada** was carved in 1953 and came to the Mangs via Bernard Hurtig in 1974. You be the judge. The netsuke is anatomically perfect, with multi-toned staining. Perhaps it is unfair to compare Senpo (or anyone) to Shoko, but the Senpo is missing the vitality of the Shoko. At $3,422 it was priced very favorably; it was making no pretense and quite content to stand on its own.

The catalogue now veers from Tokyo, west-southwest about 250 km (160 miles) to Nagoya where the 19th century carvers preferred rich red cherry wood. The Mangs collected many Nagoya netsuke—Ikkan, Ikkei, Ittan, Ittei, Ikkyu, Ichimin, Tadatoshi (nine of them!), (Nagoya) Masatami, Masanori, Masakazu, Masakatsu, Masanobu, Masahiro, Masayoshi (six of them!), etc. **Lot 215** is signed Ikkan. But which Ikkan? Alain Ducros points out in his *Promenades dans l’Art Japonais* (Vol.1, p. 272, in French only, unfortunately) that, because the second *kanji* is different from the master’s normal kanji for “kan,” this may be the work of Ikkan’s son. No matter, this is one of the better **Sleeping Shojo** extant. Acquired sixty years ago, the incising of the robe, the hair, the facial features are all perfect, and the form is just right for a *katabori* netsuke. It went for $5,900 and was a great buy. Like father like son?
Lot 246 was acquired from Joseph Seo in 1960 and is a boxwood rendition of a Monkey and Octopus Ghost, catalogued as being by the late 18th century Tsu master carver Tanaka Minko. If one compares the signature as well as the carving style with the other myriad chunky cute Minkos being offered, it was just plain different—extraordinarily so, but different. Vive la difference! Even if by a later carver of the same name, $36,580 was the price to have had this phenomenal netsuke find a new owner.

Space constraints do not permit separate recitations on a Minko South Sea Islander (Lot 236, $30,240) or the rare Masakatsu Camel (Lot 273, $11,800), but note needs to be made before moving on to the real sleeper of the sale. As with the Octopus and Monkey, Lot 282 was tucked into the bottom corner of the recto page. The photo was not terribly flattering but, upon handling (Hold that Tiger!), this Tomokazu Tiger was the perfect netsuke. Also from Joseph Seo fifty-five years ago, the hair work was, oh, so elegantly done—subtle and silky-smooth as if under glass. Its ticket price of $24,780 exceeded its high estimate by seven times and, at that, was relatively inexpensive for what was one of the unexpectedly superb netsuke in this sale. GRRRRRReat!

The next 200 lots were a mixture of interesting subjects—kagamibuta, ceramic netsuke, and manju—for which the prices were ordinary and not particularly noteworthy, with the exception of Lot 434, a seemingly innocuous pencil-thin ivory sashi netsuke in the form of an elongated Dragon looking all for the world like a seahorse. A 1957 acquisition, the 2012 price of $17,700 may seem excessive, but, as it was bought by someone whose opinion is well-respected, something about this netsuke must be elusive.

Moving to the star of the sale, the so-called Baku was heralded as the cover-piece for the catalogue and received a two-page photo spread (calling it a centerfold would be inaccurate but descriptive). This Lot 477 was purchased in 1953 and touted as the #1 netsuke that Raymond Bushell wanted to buy from the Mangs. Obviously, he was unsuccessful. A little on the small side, this is a beautiful carving, to be sure, but two questions occur to your intrepid reporter. What kind of mythological beast is it? And, is it a netsuke? Calling it a baku is plausible with its elephantine head and lion’s paws, but baku generally don’t have scales and do have flames around the body which are absent here. There are no drilled himotoshi; there are two possible places through which a cord could be passed, through the crook in the tail or in the cavity created by the rear paws touching the forepaws. The
challenge is that there is no evidence of wear anywhere; the scales are as crisp as the day they were carved. Most everyone disagrees with this assessment and deems this to be a netsuke, but the person who is writing this report gets to write what he wants and is just not certain. At $53,500 it was far and away the financial star of the sale, and the word in the room was that had it been a couple of centimeters larger, it would have commanded double.

While the buzz and hubbub continued for Lot 477, so did the auctioneer in a rapid-fire manner, and before anyone could say, “Falls Church,” Lot 478 had been hammered down at the bargain basement price of $4,130. Because of the catalogue layout, one had to turn back a page from the double-page for Lot 477, which, unless one was prepared, made it difficult to find with the quick pace of the auction. This more traditional Baku is small for an early piece and is situated on a base, both of which tend to diminish the value of the piece for some reason, but it is a genuine late 18th century baku (perhaps having been refashioned from a 17th century Chinese seal), and its new owner will have sweet dreams knowing that he or she made off like a bandit on this one.

One would have thought that bidders would have been bracing for Lot 483, for it is very rare to see a Kudan at auction. This one hasn’t been seen since the Mangs bought it in the Hindson sale of 1969. The anticipated bidding war did not materialize, however, and it sold for $8,850, unexpectedly inexpensive. The carving itself is less than master quality, but it makes up in provenance (Behrens and Hindson, among others) what it lacks in refinement. Besides, who can resist a nine-eyed animal?! Not eye!

One wonders for what amount Lot 486 would have sold in the Szechenyi sale among its thirty shishi? This ivory Shishi with a somewhat contortionist right foreleg, in a pose reminiscent of Jack Benny, was purchased from Bushell in 1967 when he was still in Tokyo. It is truly quite powerful, and it retains a ball in its mouth, which is quite uncommon for a late 18th century piece. For example, the ball is lacking in the much better Mitsuharu shishi (Lot 65, bought for $11,210). This lot went for only $2,380 and, even with the possibility of a repair to one of the feet, that seems like a real bargain. No wonder he seems a bit confused.

The composition of Lot 513 is a wee bit macabre, but this is one of those netsuke that just has to be held to be appreciated. Another of the Meinerzthagen five, acquired in 1959 with his trademark card and, according to such card, carved from hippo(?) ivory, this piece of the San Sukumi (snail, snake, and frog) crawling around a highly
articulated skull, intentionally lacking the mandible, is remarkable not only for the price of $8,850 but for highly realistic depictions of the animals and a genuine sense of movement in the coils of the snake and the legs of the frog. If only that head could speak, he would probably say, “What is it about the lower right-hand corner of the recto page that produces outrageously unanticipated high prices?!” As with the Tomokazu Tiger and the Minko Octopus Ghost, that is the position to which this tall figure of a Sennin (Lot 521) was relegated. Among the largest netsuke in the sale at 13 cm, it was one of the first pieces purchased by the Mangs in Tokyo in 1951. This unidentified sennin holds a fish in one hand as a humanoid spirit rests upon his shoulders. Despite the fact that the feet have been replaced and there are some vertical age cracks, this sennin stood tall as the spirited bidding only rested at $34,220 where the British finally capitulated to the Bostonians in the Netsuke Wars, exceeding the high estimate (and most peoples’ expectations) by almost sevenfold. Wow!

Wow, indeed. Such could be said for yet another lower right-hand corner recto lot, Lot 529, an apparently innocuous group of two ivory netsuke. But, hold on, the lot went for $14,160! What gives here? Well, it turns out that the model of the Oni with the Arm of the Rashomon Demon has an un-catalogued Otoman signature, which propelled it out of the obscurity to which it had been relegated. Kudos to the few who caught one of the few cataloguing mistakes; this one, as it turns out, to the distinct benefit of the seller who bought the piece in 1979 from a Connecticut dealer. Nobody seemed to notice the Otoman signature which here Otoman-ically increased the price.

The mis-cataloguing of this next lot goes back to Meinertzhagen who sold this Lot 537 and characterized as a deer the young animal carried around the Dutchman’s neck. It is, of course, a young boar and bears old chips to its hooves below the Dutchman’s hands. At $35,400, this netsuke was the second-highest priced lot of the sale, purchased by a British dealer. The composition of the subject is rare but the price was so rarified that one wonders if something else is going on here. Oh deer, not a boar-ing lot after all.

And now for something completely different, a pile of coins ($14,160, in fact) to pay for a netsuke of a Pile of Coins. Lot 572 had provenance, having been acquired from Hindson at the Sotheby’s London sales of 1968, having therebefore resided with T. S. Davey, Behrens, and Sharpe. It is a magnificent, unsigned rendering of oxidizing copper coins, done with lacquer over a very lightweight wood. Both the price and the piece were stunning.
Another unaccountable result was **Lot 596**, an unsigned **Umbrella Ghost** carved from stag antler with hand holding tongue and eyes inlaid with brass. The winning bid was an amazing $22,420. This is another acquisition from Hindson in 1968 and exceeded the high estimate by almost nine times (which is why the estimates are rarely noted). One may assume that this umbrella will never be permitted to get wet.

Lastly (do I detect a collective sigh of relief?) is **Lot 615**, an unsigned, extremely rare sort-of kagamibuta netsuke of a **Dragon Head** carved from rhinoceros horn. Catalogued as an ash bowl netsuke, it has a silver bowl fitted into the neck. One has to question its utility for ashes as the cord (presumably, not fireproof) emerges from the himotoshi in the center of the disk. No matter. This finely carved head with eyes double-inlaid in brass and silver more than merited the $2,714 that it took to buy the piece. Rhino horn is almost never encountered in the netsuke world, so this offering had the double blessing of being a very rare material (CITES required, unfortunately) and superlatively well-carved. A fitting end (well, almost) to a long but productive day.

What might we glean from the Mang Marathon? Well, for starters, four out of the five and seven out of the ten most expensive lots of the day are unsigned. Only the Minko Octopus Ghost and Monkey (is it *that* Minko?), the Minko South Sea Islander, and the Tomokazu Tiger made the Top Ten among the signed pieces. One might conclude from these statistics that the love affair with signatures is over, but the answer is never that simple in our collecting sphere. Two of the seven Top Ten unsigned pieces were tall figures; the rest but one were very rare subjects—Nue, Oiwa, Baku, and Umbrella Ghost, with that Oiwa being attributed to Sansho. The last, the Dutchman, is, of course, not rare, but the animal slung over his shoulders is a rare variant. Each, then, is a unique representation carved in a very high quality manner; no blockbusters, no record-breakers, but a comprehensive collection of good or better netsuke, many of which are unique and which either tell a story or have a twinkle in their eye. Thanks to Quinn’s and to John and Bob Mang for letting us in to see a collection that was assembled when money was really no object. Most of all, thanks to their parents for sharing their lives through netsuke and for permitting these netsuke to have new life. After all, isn’t that what collecting is all about? •
Book Review

THE HARE WITH AMBER EYES
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Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012
Price $40

Edmund de Waal’s best-selling book, The Hare With Amber Eyes, is out in a new hard-cover “Illustrated Edition.” Among the one hundred previously unseen images are fifty-three of his netsuke, illustrated on the front and back endpapers and the cover. Each one is described briefly in the back of the book. This should satisfy the requests of both active netsuke collectors and those who knew nothing about netsuke before they read the book.

From the publisher: “The definitive illustrated edition of the international bestseller with gorgeous new photography of the celebrated netsuke collection and sumptuous full-colour images hand-picked by Edmund de Waal from his family archive.”


de Wall’s website is http://www.edmunddewaal.com. For those who already have a copy of the book, many or most of his collection can be seen on his website at http://www.edmunddewaal.com/writing/the-hare-with-amber-eyes/gallery-3/netsuke/.

There are also several YouTube videos about him and his netsuke at www.youtube.com/ and for de waal amber netsuke.

Norman L. Sandfield
norman@sandfield.org
In Memoriam

John Albert Mang, Jr.

The netsuke world has unfortunately lost another important member. John Mang, Jr. died December 22, 2012 at age 72. He is survived by his wife Rosita, brother Robert, three sons, and three grandsons. Sadly, this occurred only two weeks after the important public sale of his parents’ extensive and celebrated netsuke collection.

John went to the University of Virginia and was a long time Systems Analyst for the House of Representatives. He was also the owner and proprietor of Kirin Books, which for many years was a very important source for books on Japanese art.

All his life he was surrounded by Japanese art and books, as his parents, Helen and Jack, were early and avid netsuke students and collectors. Their large collection was sold at Quinn’s Auction Galleries on December 7, 2012, accompanied by a beautiful full color catalog. It was a much anticipated and successful event. John played a pivotal part in researching and cataloging the collection. The auction catalog had limited descriptions and provenance of the pieces, but there are plans to publish an expanded form with additional history, research and realized prices. This expanded work was largely the result of John’s research.

John had a deep appreciation of all things Japanese, particularly the small applied arts that we all appreciate. He had a small, but choice collection of his own and was an important, long time member of the Washington D.C. chapter of INS. Perhaps, due to his engineering background, John was particularly appreciative of the meticulous details and fine work of the craftsman. He loved netsuke that were finely carved and with great attention to small details and finish. He was also fascinated with legends and obscure carvers. He was facile with the computer and thoroughly enjoyed unraveling these mysteries. He was very good at it. Early in his career he worked at the Freer Gallery of Art which is the segment of the Smithsonian Institution system devoted to Asian Art. He was also quite active on the INS Forum and a regular attendee of our conventions.

The other passion in the family was music. His wife is a well known piano instructor, and one of his sons is an esteemed concert violinist. The home had the ambiance of the literati; i.e., a modern day scholar’s studio.

He unfortunately developed a cancer at an early age, the treatment of which was successful, but the side effects of which left him with many problems and medical vulnerabilities. He was amazingly resilient and uncomplaining. People were always astonished to learn of his medical history. He will be greatly missed.

Jay E. Hopkins
Because he was such a pervasive presence in our netsuke lives, it seems incomprehensible to all of us that Teddy died in December 2012 at the age of 79.

When only twelve years old, he, his mother, and his younger siblings were compelled as war refugees to leave their home in what was then East Germany and is now Poland. This intrepid flight—which he led, so to speak, as head of the family—ended finally in Darmstadt, near Frankfurt. After training as a dental technician, he founded his own very successful dental laboratory. Such experiences, to say the least, were the foundations of his characteristic sincerity, determination, and composure.

Whatever he ventured upon, Teddy pursued with commitment, energy, and endurance. As a devotee of pre-Columbian excavations, he drove a Volkswagen through Peru to unearth original artifacts in remote places. Disregarding import and export regulations, he flew to Taiwan carrying a Chinese vase so that it might be properly appraised by a qualified museum curator. Many will recall the enthusiasm he displayed at the last INS convention in Beverly Hills for the carvings of Natasha Popova, especially the manju she created for him that was so entirely suited to his tastes.

He began to collect netsuke shortly before 1980, and this new passion, enhanced by his first visit to the LINC convention in 1984 in London, changed his life, as he himself acknowledged. Gradually, he learned English and became a valued member of the netsuke family. Another milestone in his netsuke experiences was his close friendship with Barry Davies. As he traveled through Europe, Japan, and the United States, he frequently met with other collectors. In addition to participating in symposiums and conventions, he went to London at least once a year to participate in Asia Week. In 1996, Barry Davies Oriental Art held an exhibition of Netsuke from the Teddy Hahn Collection. The focal points of Teddy’s collection are well reflected in the introduction and illustrations in the catalogue of this exhibition. Teddy found it difficult to reconcile himself to the sale of these netsuke, and he continually showed pictures of the pieces that he loved. In recent years, he even bought back some of them. His extensive collection of snail netsuke began relatively recently, inspired by intense observation of the snails in his garden, particularly their evolving shapes and movements.

What should especially be remembered is his love for New York City, which he explored for weeks entirely by bicycle.

His unexpected death struck us like a paralyzing flash from the heavens. Only in November we had seen him in London, apparently healthy and happy in evaluating and buying netsuke. Etched in my mind is a long-time, honest, and reliable good friend with whom I could discuss anything during daily hours of telephone conversation.

Many will remember him as an art enthusiast with differently colored socks and beautiful, self-created jewelry. He was much more than that. He was a wonderful, lovable person. Our deepest sympathy goes to his wife, Gisela (Maus), his daughter Susanne and his grandson Marlo.

Teddy, thank you for your friendship.

Klaus Riess
Enclosed is my $125 payment for membership in the International Netsuke Society for one year, including the International Netsuke Society Journal.

**Make check payable in U.S. dollars to International Netsuke Society**
P.O. Box 223218, Hollywood, FL 33022 USA. Fax: (954) 925-4362.
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3150 N. Sheridan Road, #10B, Chicago, IL 60657-4838
tel: (773) 327-1733, fax: (773) 327-1791,
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Kokoro 5
LG Asian Antiques 19
Marsha Vargas Handley 25
Michael R. Bernstein IBC
Midori Gallery 25
Norman L. Sandfield 59
Norman L. Sandfield Library 58
Orientations Gallery IFC
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International Netsuke Society members receive a 10% discount on all non-sale items.

Netsuke: The Prince Takamado Collection Tokyo National Museum
Tokyo National Museum
9 x 12”, 96 pp., fully illustrated in color, text in Japanese and English, hardcover, Tokyo, 2011.
This volume features the Prince Takamado Netsuke Collection, an important group of antique and contemporary netsuke Her Imperial Highness Princess Takamado donated to The Tokyo National Museum.

Item # 41033  US$45.00

ICHIRO: Master Netsuke Carver
Featured here is the collection of Huey G. and Phyllis T. Shelton, along with two other collections. Ichiro Inada (1891-1977), the famous Japanese netsuke carver has been popular with collectors around the world. This volume illustrates superb examples of his works.

Item # 36076  US$34.95

Rokusho 4: Netsuke Past and Present
Takano, Akiko. 7.5 x 10”, 119 pp., fully illustrated in color, text in Japanese and English, softcover w/ jacket, Kyoto, 2011.
All netsuke in this book are listed according to their motifs: Figures, Gods, Goblins & Hermits, Animals & Imaginary Beings, Fruits & vegetables and Manju & Box Netsuke. They were carved between 1781 and present, showing a wide range of styles.

Item # 40165  US$55.00

緑青:根付今昔
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Unsigned- mid-18th c.-Kyoto School-A bone model of a sennin, looking every bit a “holy fool”. He carries a large tama. A quite similar model almost certainly by the same hand and also in bone, sold at Quinn’s Auction Galleries December 7, 2012, no. 78. That example is Ex F. Meinertzhagen, and called by Meinertzhagen, “probably the best netsuke in bone that I have seen.” The instant example is an equivalent piece. Another variation of the model by this artist is illustrated in Moss, *Japanese Netsuke-Serious Art*, no. 2.

Provenance: Ex Dr. James Rose, H-3\(\frac{1}{8}\)’ (9.9 cm.)
A theater offering variety shows with songs, dances, skits, comedy, and storytelling was popular in Asakusa district during Kokusai’s lifetime. A storyteller (rakugoka) sat on the stage, his robes spread about him, looking like a fat frog. He carried a fan which was used for emphasis. He told amusing tales and uttered popular proverbs.

The netsuke is a parody of the rakugoka. The mizu character on the frog’s head suggests the proverb: “Kaeru no tsurae mizu” or water on a frog’s face (which means little to a frog). Another proverb is illustrated most cleverly by the upside-down signature of Koku on the reverse. “Hi kuri gaeru” or to turn or flip over. It is a play on words as gaeru sounds like kaeru, the word for frog.

The netsuke is of stag antler, signed: Koku. Asakusa. Mid 19th century.

(Actual size: 3.5 cm x 3.5 cm)