



根付研究会

NETSUKE
KENKYUKAI

Study Journal

Volume 3, Number 4, 1983



Bone, large figure of an unidentified "Sennin" of fierce countenance carrying in his arms a decorative "tama" within which is a loose ball. Unsigned, early 18th century. (a fine massive old figure of powerful character, probably the best "netsuke" in bone that I have seen)

M 457

58/5/14





The rakan Ashita Sonja with his shishi. Unsigned, Kyoto School, 18th century, ivory. H. 4½".

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Cover:
Stag antler Senin together with
the original Meinertzhagen
Index Card. Mang Collection.
Photo by Michael B. Glass

NETSUKE KENKYUKAI

Study Journal

Volume 3, Number 4 December 1983

Table of Contents

The Cover Photograph
page 3

From Your Editor
page 4

President's Message
page 4

Letters to the Editor
page 5

The Washington D.C. Convention
by James Newton
page 8

The Mang Collection: A Shared Endeavor
by Isabel Cunningham
page 12

Please Take My Kokusais (Part II)
Anonymous
page 22

A Netsuke of Multiple Functions
by Raymond Bushell
page 34

Masterpieces and Misconceptions
by Neil K. Davey
page 39

PRESIDENT
James Hume

EDITORS
Robert L. McGowen
Virginia Atchley

ART DIRECTOR
Thomas O'Toole

ADVERTISING MANAGER
James Hume

PUBLISHER
Michael B. Glass & Associates, Inc.
Old Westbury, New York 11568

Printed in the U.S.A.

Submission of articles and materials for consideration for publication in the Study Journal are solicited at the submitter's risk. Send to Netsuke Kenkyukai Study Journal, c/o Robert L. McGowen, 2400 First National Tower, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74103, U.S.A.

Advertising and other information may be obtained by writing to us at P.O. Box 309, Monroe, Connecticut 06468, U.S.A.

Additional copies of this Study Journal may be ordered from P.O. Box 309, Monroe, Connecticut 06468, U.S.A. at a cost of U.S. \$10.00 each.

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Netsuke Kenkyukai Society

Netsuke Kenkyukai Society is a non-profit organization. The purpose of the Society, as stated in its By-Laws, is to promote the study of netsuke and their related appurtenances, the artists who created them and the society from which they evolved. Such study is accomplished through conventions, exhibits, lectures, workshops and the dissemination of written materials, photographs and its Study Journal, published four times a year.

FROM YOUR EDITOR

A great Convention, marked particularly by the superbly prepared presentations of the workshop leaders. Everyone gained from the experience.

Your Study Journal has a particular gain in the undertaking by Virginia Atchley to sign on as co-Editor. I am sure that readers are tiring of my repeated calls for the sharing of the knowledge and experience of the more expert collectors-Virginia has been most exemplary in that regard. A great number of my netsuke friends will extoll the generous contribu-

tions given us by Virginia. Her connoisseurship and unjaded appreciation of "things netsuke" coupled with a contagious enthusiasm and exudation of marvel for this art have initiated, instructed and inspired a great number of us. In addition, Virginia's charm and her broad with netsuke collectors should provide the Study Journal access to contributions and a sharing of knowledge by collectors worldwide.

Best holiday wishes.

Bob McGowen



Robert L.
McGowen

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Washington Convention was a wonderful experience. Just the opportunity to meet so many nice netsuke enthusiasts was worth all the effort. Thanks again to those who worked so tirelessly to make this a most remarkable event. And a special vote of thanks to Bernard Hurtig for his generous donation to our organization.



James Hume

The Board of Directors has approved several organizational changes:

- To resolve some of the identity problems encountered since we formed chapters it was decided to dissolve the position of Chapter President and replace it with the position of Regional Vice-President. The Regional Vice-Presidents not only oversee the operations of the Chapters but also have an executive vote in the operations of the world-wide organization. Congratulations to our Regional Vice-Presidents:
Betty Dore - San Francisco
Victor Israel - Los Angeles
James Rose - Washington
Jerry Spiller - New York
- Each Chapter will have a slate of Directors, as may be required to perform special duties in the Chapter.
- In replacement of our previous Directors, The Board has elected:
Virginia Atchley (who will serve as Co-Editor of the Study Journal)
Shirlee Guggenheim.

- Adele Murphy has completed her term as Membership Chairman and gives up the position to newly appointed Kemi Eisner. Thank you so much, Adele, for the tremendous amount of work you have done during your term, and the support you have given me during the past two years.

- Members who serve in an advisory capacity will serve as Directors and no longer as Vice-Presidents. The position of Vice-President will be reserved for those who manage the day-to-day affairs of the organization. The following Vice-Presidents have been appointed.

Robert McGowen - V.P. Communications
Kemi Eisner - V.P. Membership

- The Board has asked me, and I have agreed, to serve another term as President.
- I am seeking suitable candidates for the positions of:

Advertising Manager
Legal Advisor
Treasurer

Preferably, these should be filled by persons living in the New York area.

- Membership fees for 1984 will increase. The new fees, effective January 1, 1984 are:
North America - \$58.00
Rest of the World - \$64.00

These increases are necessary to maintain the high quality of our Study Journal and provide some improvements during 1984. I sincerely hope that the additional cost will not discourage any of you from renewing.

Best Wishes and Happy Collecting!

James Hume



LETTERS

Until we meet again!

I am new to netsuke and was very hesitant about going to the convention, but thanks to the encouragement of John Mang, of Kirin Books, I decided to attend.

I must state it was certainly to my advantage to do so. The education I received from the numerous workshops was worth the trip in its own right, along with the experience of meeting the pros of netsuke and the dealers who were always willing to stop and answer questions about netsuke. I thank you all, and really appreciate the opportunity I had in seeing and handling so many good netsuke which I had not the opportunity to do previous to the Convention.

Also thanks for the fun and life long friendships that in one short week started to develop between myself and the other members. It was truly a joy. All of this was only enhanced by the warmth of the hospitality shown to all of the conventioners by the board members of Netsuke Kenkyukai and its welcoming committee.

I am grateful and want to say thank you for making all of us feel at home, also for your hard work on our behalf.

To all of you, hats off and good cheer until I see all of you again at the next Convention.

John McCarthy
Palmyra, N.J.

Minko Norbert ???

I especially enjoyed *Reminiscences of a Collector* by Barbara J. Norbert, Vol. 3 No. 2. Her participation as a member of the select coterie of early English collectors that included Meinertzhagen, Hindson, and Winkworth, marks her with the status of a

semi-legendary. I believe it was Meinertzhagen himself who told me that each member of the group was known by the name of his favorite carver. For example, Mrs. Norbert's pet name was *Minko*. Hindson's was *Goho*. I believe Meinertzhagen's was *Shugetsu*. By tacit agreement an adverse bid by one of the others for a *Shugetsu* would have been regarded as a trespass, an ungentlemanly intrusion on Meinertzhagen's preserve, and was avoided.

It may interest readers to know that Barbara Norbert's decapitated head passed from her hands to Mr. Levett's, and is illustrated as Fig. 521, *Netsuke Familiar and Unfamiliar*. The subject is best identified as the head of an ordinary female criminal, the model inspired by a horrifying painting of the subject by *Hokusai*.

Raymond Bushell
Tokyo

We tasted gold for breakfast!

Among the many excellent workshops we were fortunate to have at the Washington Kenkyukai Convention, none was more enlightening or interesting than Mrs. Sadae Walters, on Japanese lacquering techniques. Not only did Sadae infuse us with her enthusiasm and instruct us with her knowledge, but she also afforded us the opportunity to handle rare brushes made of virgin human hair, as well as samples of mother of pearl shells. At one point, she gave us a very thin sheath of gold leaf she uses for inlays and encouraged us to "taste it, for it has good therapeutical quality". Well, let me tell you, it beats "Breakfast at Tiffany"!

Denise Cohen
Ronin Gallery
New York City

Preservation of netsuke!

Your members may be interested in two little known pamphlets dealing with the preservation of netsuke in ivory and horn whether rhinoceros or buffalo. The advice applies of course to all art objects made of these materials.

The Care of Ivory, Number Six,
London 1971
Victoria and Albert Museum,
Conservation Department
London SW7

Control of Insect Pests in Museums
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
London Road
Slough, Berks SL3 7HJ

Raymond Bushell

Concerning women's rights!

Before addressing an issue of concern for a number of Netsuke Kenkyukai members, I want to thank all those involved in the 1983 Convention, both organizers and participants, for a truly memorable experience.

Now to the issue at hand. It seems that the struggle for rights must exist in the netsuke world as well as the rest of the world!

The existence of blatant sex discrimination may have become apparent to some in attendance at the Washington, D.C. Convention. This was evidenced by the fact that the name tags invariably were lettered "A" for men and "B" for women. Mind you, my co-leaders in this struggle and I are not claiming superiority over the male gender, but merely equality! (In fact we are superior in the majority of cases.)

As leader, the thought occurred to me to circulate petitions espousing our cause during all

workshops, lectures, and the closing board meeting. I also thought of enlisting *Kodo's* assistance in designing placards for picketing the Quorum Lounge. Upon consideration, I selected the written word as the most effective method. (Mind you, we are not eliminating the use of violent means should it be necessary in the future.)

At this time, I would like to acknowledge my dedicated co-leaders in this struggle. They are Ruth Rotman, Mary Bosque, Sue Horn-Caskey, and Barbara Bocquet. These ladies join me in urging the Board of the Netsuke Kenkyukai to help us raise the status of women in the netsuke world.

Cookie Wenneker
Lexington, KY

Our President replies...

Dear Cookie:

You caught me! I'm guilty!! I'm surprised you haven't recruited Isabel Cunningham to your cause because she beat you to the punch. I received a severe tongue lashing prior to the Convention for using the A and B designation for men and women respectively.

I would, however, like to pass some of the blame on to my computer. I've always assumed computers to be neuter and while I have checked very thoroughly I can find no suggestion that mine is a male, so I assume it's a prejudiced neuter. In the process of putting the Convention attendance list on a computer, we arbitrarily assigned a number to each confirmation as we received it. A few weeks before the Convention we realized that it was necessary to make up name tags, etc., for both parties in cases

where couples registered. We tried desperately to get the computer to accept A for women and B for men. However, since Mr. comes before Mrs., in alphabetical order, the computer simply could not accept the reversal. We even tried changing all the Mrs. to Ms. but to no avail. I investigated several alternatives: (a) Find someone to write new programs for the computer at a cost of \$5000. (b) Buy a new computer system at a cost of \$14000, or, (c) Do all convention processing manually, at a cost of \$6000 to handle my divorce.

Unfortunately, I must now own up that I consciously discriminated against women by leaving it as is, hoping no one would notice it!

In an effort to compensate for this unfortunate decision, I tried to talk our editor, Bob McGowen, into publishing only articles written by women and only featuring netsuke carved by women carvers. As a typical lawyer, Bob states that he will "take it under advisement".

My wife tells me that she is in perfect agreement with you and suggests that I can compensate by being especially nice to her in the future. I have agreed to do so!

Actually, my personal feeling is that the best solution would be for me to step aside in favor of an immediate appointment of a woman president. Any volunteers?????.....PLEASE!!!!

Sincerely
James Hume

Worthy of Mention!

There are at least two excellent books recently published that are worthy of mention to our members. They are both

interesting, well written, informative, and worthy of belonging in your oriental art library.

One of the books is **A SPRING OF GOLD: The Lacquer Box Collection** of Elaine Ehrenkranz, by Barbra Teri Okada, noted author, lecturer, and authority on Japanese Art. The book features the beautiful collection exhibited at the Newark Museum in Newark, New Jersey as part of their special exhibition on Japan. The book uses drawings and text to explain exactly how lacquer boxes are made and decorated, and provides a detailed explanation of 56 rare and unusual works of art. It is extremely well researched, written, and presented, and has been favorably reviewed. There are over 110 large photographs, (42 in full color and over 70 in black & white). The book is available both in hard cover (case bound), and in soft cover, and is available from The Newark Museum, 49 Washington Street, P.O. Box 540, Newark, New Jersey 07101.

The other book is **THE GŌ COLLECTION OF NETSUKES**: Tokyo National Museum, by Hirokazu Arakawa, and features the important 272 piece collection assembled by Gō Seinosuke of the most famous artists of the Edo and Meiji periods that was donated to the museum. The book is well done and has 346 color and 237 black & white photos of netsuke never before exhibited or photographed, as well as valuable appendices and other information. The book is available from Kodansha International 10 East 53rd St. New York, N.Y. 10022. (See their advertisement in this issue)

DO YOU KNOW WHERE WE ARE ???

In recent months, our Society has had several address changes. Although a few very loyal and agile followers have been able to keep pace with us as we moved, most members and advertisers have been left one or even two post offices behind. In order to clarify the confusing situation, our official current headquarters address appears below. Please make a note of it.

The Netsuke Kenkyukai Society
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Washington .D.C.
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THE WASHINGTON CONVENTION

by James Newton



THE most ambitious conclave ever attempted went off like clockwork September 19 through 23 at the L'Enfant Plaza Hotel in Washington, D.C. There was something for every one of the 171 people who attended. Educational seminars, dealer sales areas, lectures, a banquet meeting, unique exhibits, and an auction filled the five-day Netsuke Kenkyukai Convention 1983.

If you missed it, you missed a great deal!

But if you were one of the farsighted NK members who took advantage of convention offerings, you know the incomparable educational opportunities offered. Seventeen workshops presented an array of subject matter that read like chapter headings in a netsuke encyclopedia:

- Symbolism in Netsuke — Sharon Chappell
- Appreciation of Lacquer Art
 - Elaine Ehrenkrantz & Joy Epstein
- Origin of Netsuke Found in Chinese Art
 - Paul Moss
- Japanese Prints of the 19th Century
 - Jane Oliver
- The Unique, Extraordinary, and Unusual
 - C. Van S. Roosevelt
- Netsuke Basics - James Rose
- Influence of Japanese Art in Western Europe
 - Jerome Spiller
- Netsuke Materials - Norman Sandfield
- Contemporary Netsuke and Their Place in the World of Antiques - Richard Silverman
- Japanese Porcelains as seen in Netsuke Art
 - Denis Szeszler
- The Ojime - Cynthia Wagner
- Japanese Lacquering Techniques
 - Sadae Walters
- Painting Styles, Netsuke and Inro of the Edo Period - Howard Zar
- Signature Reading - Paul Moss/Richard Silverman
- The Manju - John Mang, Sr.
- Pipe Cases - Virginia Atchley



Two lectures touched on areas seldom covered: The Erotic Aspects of Japanese Art by Lawrence Gichner of Washington, D.C., and Masterpieces and Misconceptions by Neil Davey of Sotheby's, London. A third lecture was unique because of subject matter — Kōdō. Robert Kinsey presented a slide-illustrated guided tour of Kōdō's superlative carvings, from the mischievous *Oni* who has eaten out the inside of a watermelon and fallen asleep, to the incomparable ivory leaves, seemingly poised to blow away at the slightest breeze.

Attendees who hadn't yet seen Kōdō's work, other than in pictures, enjoyed a comprehensive view of his capabilities at a tastefully laid out exhibit which featured each piece as if it were a single artistic triumph — which each was!

Also on exhibit were twelve Japanese prints provided by Norman Sandfield. This innovative display illustrated the wearing of netsuke and *inro*, *kiserusutsu*, and other *sagemono*.

Fourteen dealers filled three activity rooms with an array of netsuke, *inro*, and other Japanese art works. In addition, four dealers displayed in their hotel rooms. The range of choice was truly astounding.

An international flavor was definitely in evidence: Alain Ducros — Paris, Barry Davies — London, Constantine Ltd. — London, Eskenazi —

London, Kyoto Gallery — Brussels, Sydney L. Moss Ltd. — London. American Dealers included: Denis Szeszler — New York, Ehrenkranz & Epstein — Miami, The Galerie — Connecticut, Kurstin/Chappell — Washington, Midori Gallery — Miami, Norman Sandfield — Chicago, The Oriental Corner — California, Oriental Treasures & Points West — Hawaii, Orientations — Miami, Ronin Gallery — New York, The Rosett Collection — New York, Ted Adameck — Hawaii.

Listed prices for individual pieces ranged from high five-figures at Bernard Hurtig's Oriental Treasures and Points West to a two-digit price for a contemporary *ojime* carried by Ted Adameck. Between these extremes a wealth of netsuke and other Japanese art works were available for the discerning buyer. Each dealer area was an education, whether or not a sale was made.

The Sotheby Auction, held Wednesday afternoon, saw Howard Zar smoothly suave in his presentation of some 200 pieces of netsuke, *inro*, and other Japanese art objects. The sale grossed in the neighborhood of \$200,000, accomplished by eager competitive audience bidding for lots ranging from the low-hundreds to a top of more than \$8,000.

The Thursday evening reception and banquet was a memorable one. After an enjoyable hour of socializing, NK members and guests sat down to a



Japanese-style meal, served with plum wine. (The hotel had no facilities to properly warm sake.)

The program got underway with an NK business meeting, chaired by President James Hume. The first announcement was that President Hume has agreed to serve a second term, and will be helped in Kenkyukai expansion by Regional Vice-Presidents. (See President's Message, this issue)

The entertainment for the evening was threefold: an impromptu exchange between convention coordinator/MC Jim Newton and "Professor diGiovani" who expounded for a few moments on the largest of the netsuke schools — the *So-So School*. This was followed by two charming and witty presentations by Michael Birch and Neil Davey. Their tongue-in-cheek expositions on the world of miniature carvings had the audience chuckling, chortling, and guffawing in a dessert of a program finale.

Neil Davey (Sotheby's London), having heard of N.K.'s need of additional funds (rumor has it that James Hume's children are becoming ill from licking so many stamps, because we can't afford a postage meter) informed the gathering that Sotheby's has a plan to raise funds for N.K. . . . Auction off several of the members. Neil proceeded to read catalog descriptions of the members to be auctioned (most of which cannot be printed here since this is a family publication).

An unexpected highlight of the meeting was Bernard Hurtig's announcement from the floor that he would donate \$5,000. The generous gift will be used, President Hume stated, in helping ensure the continued excellent quality of the *Netsuke Kenkyukai Study Journal*. (and to purchase a postage meter!!) Thanks, Bernie!

A voluntary field trip (actually a two-block walk from the hotel) took about 50 conventioners to the Freer Gallery, part of the Smithsonian Institute.

This was the final planned activity of the 1983 Netsuke Kenkyukai Convention. By 10 o'clock Friday evening, all the details of the wind-down were complete, and the NK was just a name in an account ledger. Thanks for all the administration details throughout the five-day affair go to: James Newton, coordinator; Paul Nose, dealer liaison;

John Mang, exhibits; Rosita Mang, food service; Isabel Cunningham, assisted by Beverly Fox, registration; James Rose, program; and Sondra Katz, administration.

A job well done! ■

THE MANG COLLECTION: A SHARED ENDEAVOR

by Isabel Cunningham
Photographs by James Rose

FOR decades the latchstring has been out to netsuke collectors at the home of Jack and Helen Mang. Visitors have come from England and Europe, from Hawaii and Japan, and from the continental United States to enjoy their gracious hospitality and judiciously selected netsuke. The Mangs have shared their enthusiasm and broad knowledge generously with beginners, as well as with collectors of international reputation. Reserved and scholarly, Jack offers his perceptive comments almost tentatively, while Helen's warm smile and eagerness to inform complement his quiet manner. Their sensitivity, discriminating taste, and precise scholarship are tempered by kindness, humor and delight in netsuke as a miniature art form.

How did this shared interest in collecting netsuke begin? Like so much else that has brought them happiness, Helen recalls, it began in 1936, the year they were married. In the December issue of *Coronet*, they read about netsuke for the first time and studied the accompanying illustrations, wishing they could learn more about these fascinating carvings. Two sons completed their family and World War II intervened before they had that opportunity. The war years took Jack to India and Africa where he bought many ivory and wood carvings, but he and Helen first saw netsuke in a shop window in New York in 1950. Fascinated by their small scale and exquisite workmanship, they bought a gold lacquer *inro* with a netsuke attached.

Isabel Cunningham is the author of Frank N. Meyer: Plant Hunter in Asia, soon to be released by Iowa State University Press.



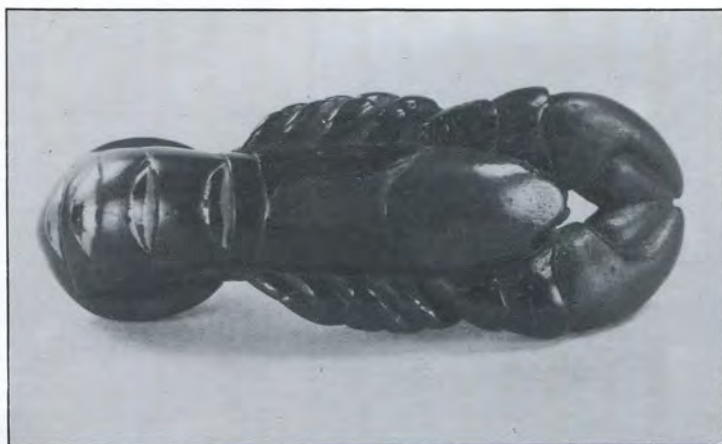


Fig. 1. Lobster. Wood, partly lacquered, with pottery claws. *Ryukei*.

While they were vacationing in New Hampshire a few weeks later, they willingly missed an opportunity to see Mt. Washington on one of the few days in the year when a clear view is possible in order to visit a netsuke collector. For the first time, they were able to spend several hours examining the small carvings and experiencing the tactile pleasure

of handling them. Soon afterward, they arranged to see the large collection of netsuke in storage at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Thereafter, they were eager to learn more about this form of sculpture.

As novices the Mangs wanted guidance, but three decades ago no journals, seminars, or conventions offered information or

brought netsuke collectors together. Guided by a curator at the Metropolitan Museum, they found their mentor in Roland Koscherak, a dealer who sold netsuke privately. He told them many of the legends associated with netsuke and taught them to understand why one piece was superior to another. Over a period of years, he developed their appreciation of netsuke as an art form and provided fine pieces for their collection.



Fig. 2. Monkey. Wood, eyes inlaid with nacre.

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Beginning collectors in 1950 lacked not only the resources furnished by membership in an organization but basic reference materials as well. The only available books about netsuke were those written by Brockhaus and Jonas. Jack and Helen supplemented this short list by reading about Oriental art at the public library and the Library of Congress. Though they found little about netsuke, they realized the importance of studying the history and customs of the Japanese in order to understand their art. Returning home with pages of notes, they would spend hours assimilating information. They even learned to



Fig. 3. Karako tearing drum. Ivory. Kimono stained green. Inlaid silver and tortoise shell decorations. Yasumasa

made of pottery. She not only saw shipments of netsuke as they arrived in Washington, but also met Raymond Bushell, dean of the netsuke world, as well as other collectors and dealers. All her experiences she shared with Jack. The arrival of a fine group of netsuke triggered a phone call that brought him to Kriger's at the first opportunity.

Though the Mangs had not consciously decided to build a collection, they found that they needed to establish guidelines and priorities for choosing among the infinite variety of available netsuke. Almost nothing had been published about signatures or schools of carvers and



Fig. 4A. Ship. Sail and Steam. Ivory



Fig. 4B. Reverse: Mythological figures and dial

read some signatures, with Brockhaus as their sole guide.

In 1951 Helen assumed responsibility for the Japanese room at S. Kriger, Inc., in Washington. During nine years there, she handled thousands of netsuke and transmitted her love of these carvings to many customers. She also continued to learn. Her ability to identify certain materials by touching them to her teeth dates to this period and never fails to impress beginning collectors. Using this method, she discovered that the claws of *Ryu-kei's* lacquer lobster (Fig. 1) appear to be

few comparative studies had been made. Since Brockhaus had organized his collection by subject, Jack and Helen followed his example, selecting pieces to represent each of his classifications.

Later, they sought unusual subjects and materials. The advice their example conveys to beginning collectors is to take plenty of time to read, study, examine, and handle as many fine netsuke as possible; then buy pieces to enjoy living with always. The monkey that is unusually posed to look up at the viewer (Fig. 2) and the little boy wearing a polychrome kimono as he tears his drum (Fig. 3)



Fig. 5. Yakusa. Ivory



never fail to give Jack and Helen pleasure.

During the 1950's Jack frequently traveled for the Civil Service Commission and returned from San Francisco, Chicago, or New York with netsuke. In 1958 he transferred to the State Department and thereafter enjoyed seeing collections in England, France, and Germany. He visited William Winkworth in London, Julius Katchen in Paris, and Mark Severin in Brussels, as well as many dealers who sold Oriental art.

The Mangs realized a dream in 1960 when they spent seven weeks in Japan. While Jack worked at consular offices, Helen searched stores that sold art objects. In the consignment shop

Fig. 6. Sennin. Stag antler and Meinertzhagen index card. Card reads: Bone. Large figure of an unidentified "Sennin" of fierce countenance carrying in his arms a decorative "tama" within is a loose ball. Unsigned. Early 18th century. (A fine massive old figure of powerful character, probably the best "netsuke" in bone that I have seen)

Norman L. Sandfield

Fine Antique &
Contemporary Netsuke

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"L'ao T'se Riding the Unicorn," 19th century, ivory with silver horn, unsigned.

The Oriental Corner

Narwhal ivory
netsuke of Shoki.
Early 19th century
Height 7.5. cm.



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An amusing Oni half way to becoming a Buddhist Priest. However, the mischievous grin and the leer in his eyes make the conversion very dubious! He wears a pouch complete with netsuke and ojime suspended from his sash.

Late 18th Century Polychromed wood Unsigned 10½ cm high \$2500.

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Fig. 7A. Mokugyo. Portrait of Chinese official. Ivory. Tomoshichi



Fig. 7B. Reverse: Portrait of Japanese official.

in Takashimaya's basement, she found a *manju* made from a slice of elephant tusk, carved in relief with a Portuguese ship (Fig. 4A) and, on the reverse, a dial that appears to be a nautical symbol or instrument (Fig. 4B). In the evenings, the Mangs explored shops together until they helped the proprietors to close for the night. At Nakabun's in Tokyo, they bought an oddly posed figure that Raymond Bushell identified as a *yakuza* or street tough (Fig. 5). When they returned home, they brought almost one hundred netsuke with them.

In addition to netsuke, Jack and Helen collect not only *inro*, *ojime*, *kiseruzutsu* (pipe cases), and *tonkotsu* (tobacco boxes), but also old Japanese wood carvings, bronzes, prints, sword fittings, and *mizuire* (water droppers). Their interest in the broad spectrum of Oriental art has led them to acquire Chinese and Tibetan carvings, procelains, jades, and lacquer, as well as Japanese art.

Over the years the Mangs have entertained many collectors — Raymond Bushell, George Cohen, Neil Davey, Julius Katchen, Paul

Moss, William Winkworth, Virginia Atchley, Bernard Hurtig, Melvin Jahss, George Lazarnick, Ann and Hy Meselson, Cornelius Roosevelt, Dave and Sandy Swedlow, and others. Perhaps my own experience best describes the welcome their visitors receive. In 1966, soon after a dealer introduced my husband to Jack by phone, Helen invited us to come to their home in the afternoon to look at netsuke, to join them for dinner, and to stay to discuss more netsuke during the evening. Though we arrived as strangers, we spent six or

NOTICE OF IMPORTANT DATE CHANGE

During the excellent convention held in Washington, D.C., the London Netsuke Committee announced the next London Convention to take place during September 22-29, 1984. Because this proved to be a very difficult time for many of our collecting friends, we have altered the dates of the convention which will now be held on October 20-27, 1984. We apologise for the misinformation, and look forward to welcoming as many collectors and dealers as possible on October 20, 1984.

Neil Davey

eight delightful hours with our new friends, enchanted by netsuke of a quality that we had never before seen. We also were charmed by the way that Helen, her lovely blue eyes shining as she eagerly shared her knowledge, formed a counterpoint to Jack's quiet and deliberate comments; yet she frequently turned to him for confirmation of a point she was making. We left dazed by the netsuke we had seen and amazed that knowledgeable collectors would expend so much time and energy teaching novices as much as they could absorb.

In selecting their favorites for illustration in the *Journal*, the Mangs have avoided choosing pieces similar to those that are often pictured. Instead, they have chosen netsuke that are unusual, either because of the subject, the

material or some other attribute. For example, in 1959 they corresponded with Meinertzhagen and bought from him a powerful 18th C. *sennin* (Fig. 6A), accompanied by his customary index card (Fig. 6B). Another unusual piece, carved about 1890, shows two faces, one certainly Chinese and the other probably Japanese (Fig. 7A and 7B). Other favorites are the single-legged umbrella ghost (Fig. 8), the reticulated gourd made entirely of silver (Fig. 9), and the emaciated *oni* smoking a pipe in a compartment in an opium den (Fig. 10).

Like all collectors, Jack and Helen regretfully remember the ones that got away, but one of these stories has a happy ending. Long ago they bought a wood Daruma with a tilted head and jutting chin (Fig. 11). Though it



Fig. 8. Umbrella ghost. Stag antler



Fig. 9. Double gourd. Reticulated. Silver

was well carved, the distortion of pose and proportion troubled them and they sold it to a dealer. Years later they saw an ivory *kami-fuki* in an auction catalogue and realized that their netsuke represented the man who is trying to blow a piece of paper off his forehead. Their failure to do their homework had caused them to lose a desirable piece. They hurried to the dealer, found it unsold, and bought it once more for double the original price.

Jack and Helen consider themselves fortunate to have a son who appreciates fine netsuke. After growing up in a house filled with books and Oriental art, John Mang, Junior, worked for a while at the Freer Gallery of Art. He now brings his own considerable knowledge of netsuke to discussions with his parents and shares

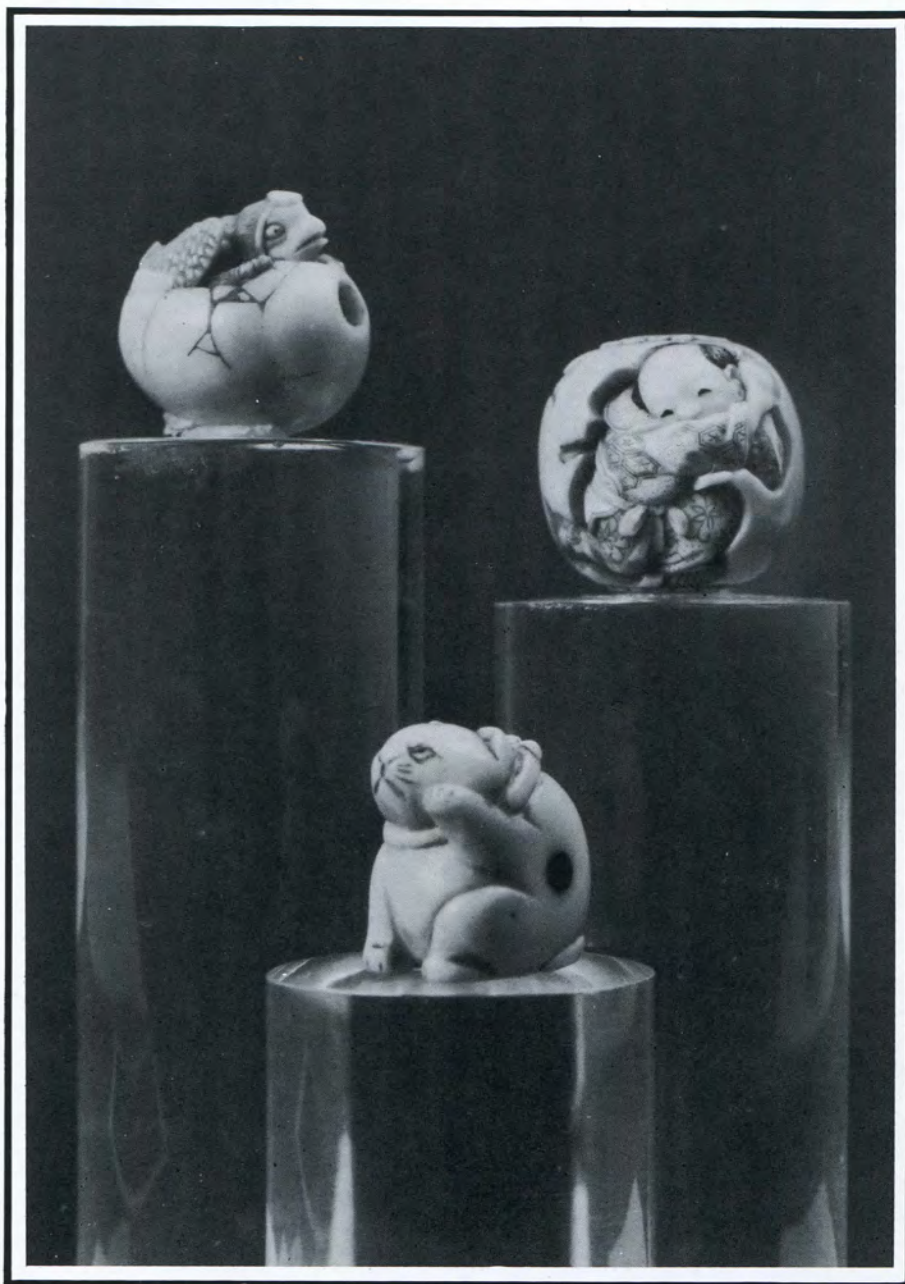
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FROM OUR UNIQUE COLLECTION OF OJIME



Tenguno Tomago
by: *Ryuun*

Piebald Cat

Two Karako playing
with Tama

his pleasure in collecting with his talented wife, Rosita. He also has developed a second vocation, selling rare and new books about Oriental art through Kirin Books, a business he manages with Rosita's help.

In 1972 Jack retired from the State Department. With unabated energy, he and Helen opened a stamp shop called The Postal Bell. Jack had collected stamps for fifty years; Helen, always a devoted partner, brought her experience in merchandising to this joint venture. Since their shop is open five days a week and their Oriental art is no longer readily available, they are not able to share their collection as generously as they did formerly; however, they have not forgotten netsuke. Their logo is a carving representing an *ekirei* (Fig. 12), the bell that the Japanese postman rang when he delivered mail during the Tokugawa period. Both Jack and Helen feel that



Fig. 11. Daruma holding hossu and playing kami-fuki. Wood, inlaid ivory and jade. Keisai



Fig. 10. Oni smoking pipe. Marine ivory. Koichi



Fig. 12. Eki-rei. Boxwood. Matsuda Sukenaga

the formation of an active Netsuke Kenkyukai chapter in the Washington area has added a new dimension to their interest in Japanese art.

Some day Jack expects to retire once more, but he and Helen will not be idle. For years they have been planning a publication about netsuke. Possibly it may take the form of a catalogue of pieces from the Mang collection. When retirement comes, once again the latch string will be out to fellow collectors.

For more than thirty years the Mangs have combined discriminating taste, conscientious scholarship, delight in sharing with others, and never-failing interest in all aspects of netsuke collecting. The enthusiasm of the two young people who were fascinated by pictures of netsuke in 1936 has never dimmed. To the eagerness of youth, Jack and Helen have added wisdom acquired through years of experience — the best of both worlds. ■

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Please Take My Kokusais

Anonymous

Part II

The Frances Numano Collection

Continued from the last issue of our Study Journal

In our preceding issue, our anonymous contributor told us of his dilemma regarding Frances Numano and her Kokusais — on one horn (stag, no doubt) is his love for netsuke while on the other hangs his moral struggle not to take advantage of her generosity. Fortunately, his (our) avarice and her altruism can be reconciled somewhat suitably — if only "vicariously" — by the presentation in the pages of this and the prior issue of photographs of Frances Numano's fine collection of netsuke by Kokusai and his followers.

Editor



*Shishi on a peony decorated bowl.
Ryusa type, lid and bowl. Walrus ivory
Signed: Kōgetsu (See detail in bottom
photo). The shishi's eyes are inlaid.*



*Chrysanthemum Boy (Kikujiō).
Stagantler. Ryusa type. Signed: Hakusai on an
inlaid metal tablet (See detail Fig. 26C).*



*Mokuqyo (Buddhist wooden gong).
Stagantler. Signed: Masayuki.*

*Curled Dragon.
Stagantler. Ryusa type. Unsigned.*



*Stylized Rain Dragon and Bat in circular reserves.
Stagantler. Ryusa type. Unsigned. On the basis of
characteristic design patterns a reasonable attribution
may be made to Kokusai.*



*Stylized Bat and Family Crest designs.
Stagantler. Ryusa type. Unsigned.*

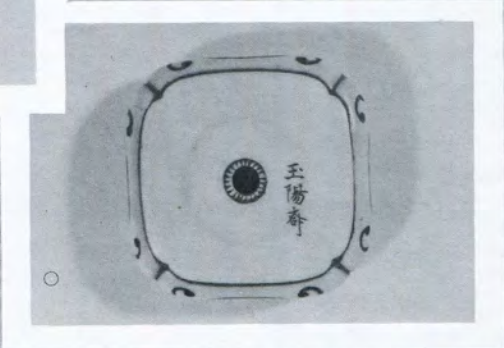


*Stylized wave and spray design.
Stagantler. Ryusa type. Signed with
single kanji Shō to (carved).*



*Shishi on a stylized wave ground.
Ivory. Hollowed manju. Signed: Gyokuyōsai.*

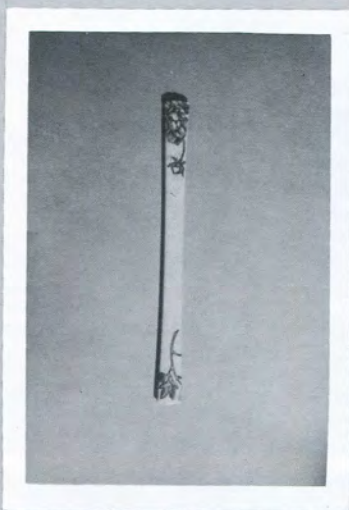
*Munechika forging a blade assisted by the
Fox of Inari. Stagantler. Ryusa type.
Signed: Masayuki.*



*Kirin on a stylized wave ground.
Hollowed manju. Ivory. Signed: Gyokuyōsai.
Note: Gyokuyōsai's inscription here (also above) may
read Seiseizan, the name of a mountain retreat.*



*Animal of fantasy.
Ivory. Ryusa type. Unsigned. Metal ring attachment
for cords or chains. Note the similarity of the animal to the
photo below, especially the curlicue legs.*



*Peony design.
Stagantler. Kōgai (bodkin) used for rolling the hair.
Signed: Koku (sai). Length: 14.5 cm.*



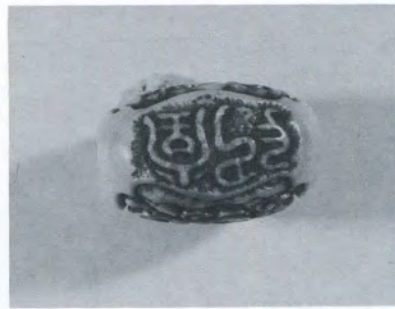
*Animal of fantasy.
Ivory. Solid manju. Unsigned.*



*Dragon and clouds.
Stagantler. Ryusa type. Reverse (not illustrated) shows
dragon's tail. Unsigned.*



Flying bat and reishi designs. Reverse, stylized clouds and other felicitous symbols. Two sides with kanji designs. A possible reading is Hei Zan Gyaku Dō which suggests the ceremonial hall of a monastery. Walrus ivory. Square manju hollowed out. Unsigned. Attributable to Rensai on basis of style and treatment.



Thunder gods.
Stagantler. Ryusa type, two part. Unsigned.



Probably a Taoist saint in isolation.
Stagantler. Ryusa type, two part. Unsigned.





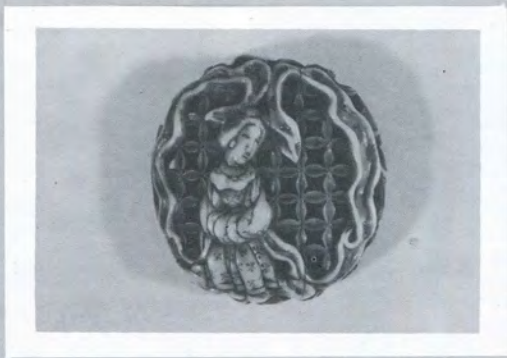
*Ornamental vase for the Chinese scholar's table. Signed: Masayuki.
Signed: Minkoku on a silver inlaid tablet with a stylized Rain Dragon design.*



*Ornamental flower vase for Chinese scholar's table.
Staqantler. Unsigned. The similarities to the set of photos
above suggest an attribution to Masayuki.*

*Pomegranate and leaves.
Staqantler. Ryusa type. Unsigned.*





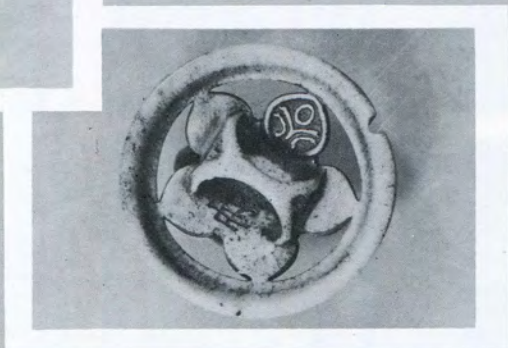
*Dutch lady
Walrus ivory. Ryusa type. Unsigned.*



*Manju type.
Stagantler. A begging bowl partially hollowed out and engraved with a Nyoi in relief. The stylized calligraphy on the front is indecipherable.
Signed: Koku (sai) Width: 3.6 cm.*



*Openwork manju.
Stagantler. Stylized floral design.
Signed: Koku (sai) and the character for Kimi meaning "you", a ceremonial form used only in aristocratic circles.
Its significance as an inscription is a matter of conjecture.
Diameter: 3.9 cm.*





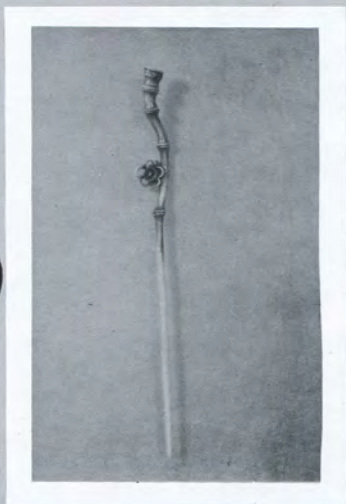
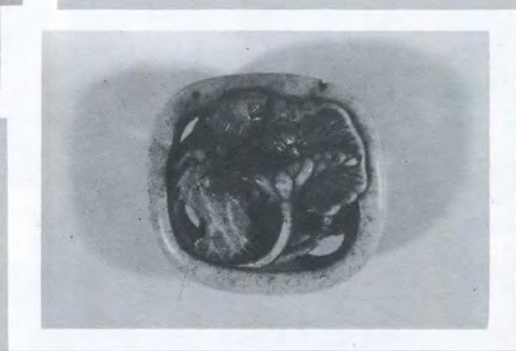
Monkey climbing vines.
Staganter. Ryusa type. Unsigned.



Buddhist priest's scepter.
Lotus bud and leaf.
Staganter. Signed: Kokusai. Length: 34 cm.



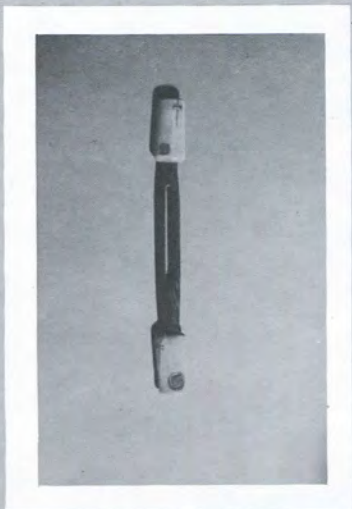
Rakan and dragon; reverse, lotus plants.
Staganter. Unsigned.



Bamboo and Plum Blossom Design.
Staganter. Kangashi (Ornamental Hairpin).
Signed: Koku (sai). Length: 19 cm.
A similar kangashi from the Richard Silverman
Collection is illustrated in *Eccentrics in Netsuke*, page 108.

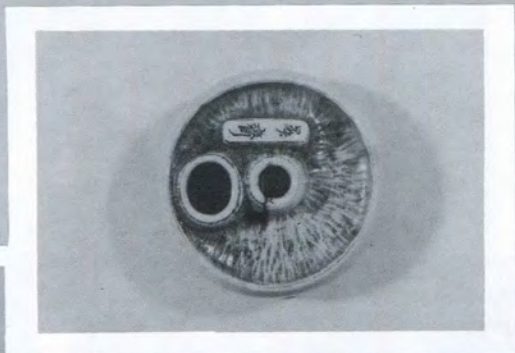


Animal of fantasy.
Staganter. Ryusa type. Unsigned.



Stagantler and Takayasan (Gronwood).
Kōgai (bodkin) used for pinning the hair.
Signed: Koku (sai).
Length: 14.5 cm.

Goose flying across crescent moon.
Stagantler. Ryusa type. Unsigned.



Monster dragon and sacred mushrooms (reishi).
Ivory. Solid manju. Signed: Shōsai.



Animal of fantasy.
Stagantler. Ryusa type. Unsigned.





Priest's scepter and Prayer beads.
Stagantler. Signed: Masayuki.

Shishi.

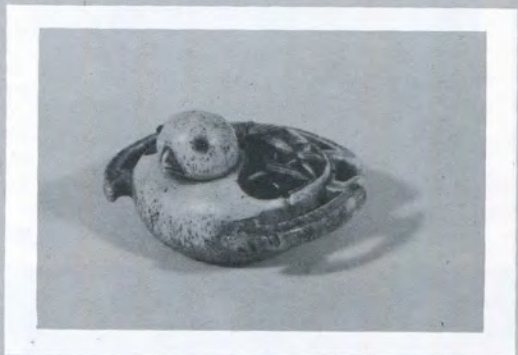
Marine ivory. Tubular shape. Unsigned. On the basis of style and treatment a reasonable attribution may be made to Rensai.



Stylized dragon in center of spokes and arabesques.
Reverse, kanji designs in reserves.
Stagantler. Ryusa type. Unsigned.



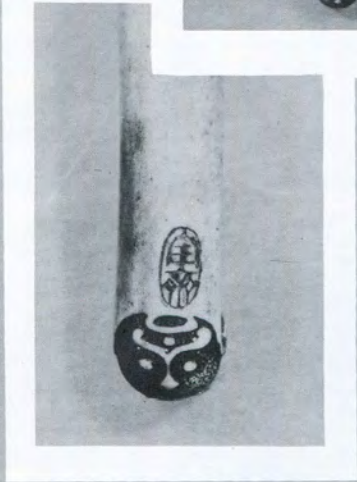
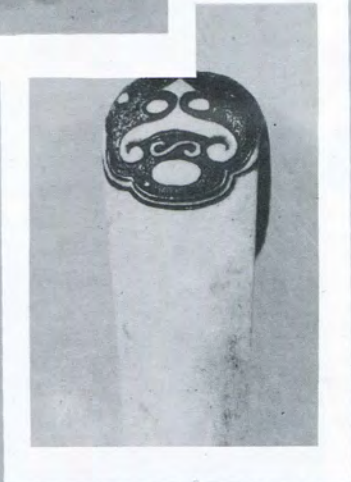
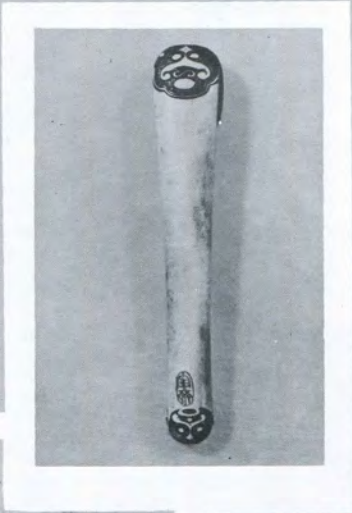
Shishi on stand decorated with good fortune symbols.
Ivory. Lid and bowl type. Unsigned. Similarities to Fig. 21
and to other shishi signed Rensai suggests a plausible attribution.



Stylized sparrow and bamboo leaves.
Stagantler. Unsigned. May be attributed to Rensai.
A similar stylization signed Ren (sai) is illustrated
in Collectors' Netsuke, Fig. 235 and another similar
model, though unsigned, is illustrated in Netsuke
Kenkyukai Study Journal Vol. 2, No. 3, Kokusai
and His World, Paul Moss.

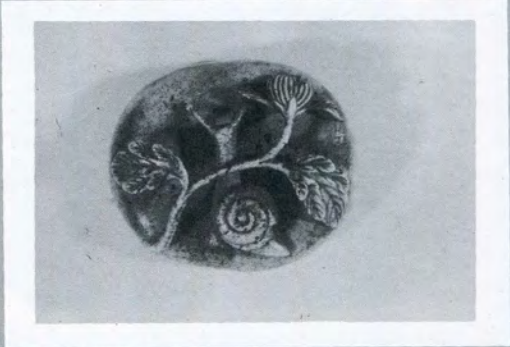


*Obhasami type.
Staganter. Signed with two stylized
forms of Koku and with Hosai in
an oval reserve. Length: 10.5 cm.
Hosai was a contemporary of Kokusai.
The relationship of the two as
indicated by this obhasami is unknown
so far as I am aware.*



*Phoenixes affronte.
Walrus ivory. Ryusa type. Unsigned.*

*Snail and lotus.
Staganter. Manju. Unsigned.*



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A NETSUKÉ OF MULTIPLE FUNCTIONS

by Raymond Bushell

MANY years ago — probably 1966 — Mark Hindson sent me a photograph of a sashi netsuke (Fig. 1A) and his drawing in ink on the reverse side (Fig. 1B). The notations are in Hindson's handwriting.

In response to my recent request Cornelius Roosevelt sent me the description of the piece composed by W. W. Winkworth for the Sotheby sale catalogue dated February 11, 1964 (Janek Kahn Collection). The netsuke was purchased by John Crichton, the London dealer, for £38, the then equivalent of \$106.40, and I assume he sold it to Hindson:-

"37 A very rare sashi netsuke, length $5\frac{1}{4}$ in., of flat form, one side carved as a man with the correct hair arrangements behind the head, the other as a woman with a head-scarf, seated on a three-legged vessel like a stove, with curved rope handles tinted black; early middle period.

* The color of the wood is golden brown, and the attachment is on either side of the hair-pin on the head of the male

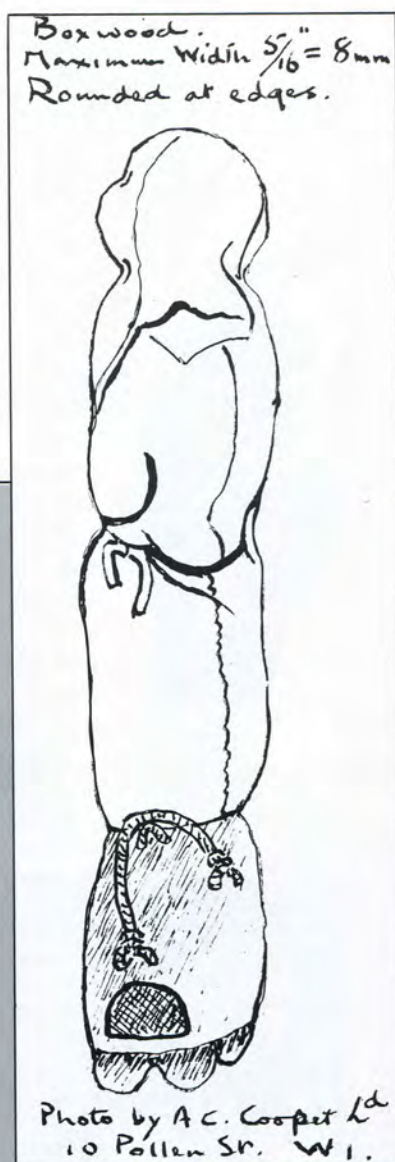


Fig.1B Mark Hindson's drawing with his notations.

Fig.1A Mark Hindson's photo with his notations.

Kyoto Feb. 4th 1966.

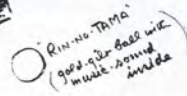
Dear Mr. Raymond Bushnell:

In answer to your letter of Jan. 26th I like to say that I have seen your enclosed photo of a Sashi-hetsuke and felt it very unusual design. I think this design came from the Harikata (槍刺) and it was especially made to the order by some-one.

The Harikata is one of the objects used by court women (Yokugawa court) for their secret self-complaisence or self-abuse. (There were some more objects like "Yoro" (armour) "rin-no-tama" (ball of noise-sound when used) and some more. Those objects seem to be very hard to know by people of today.

The above said is my opinion, but I like to talk about it with my old-friend next week and after then I like to return you the photo. It is so cold here in Kyoto. I do not go out but usuall sit by the fire - not to be caught by the cold.

Yours very truly,
K. Imai.



Kyoto Feb. 17th --6.

Dear Mr. R. Bushnell:

As I have told you previously, I talked with my old friend about the SASHI-NETSUKE. He was agree with my opinion - that I told you in my last letter.

Herewith I am returning the picture of it.

Further I like to tell you that the HARIKATA was made of Tortoise-shell, hoof of horse, horn etc and put-hot-water inside and keep warm on a portable furnace.

Wishing you are well.

Yours very truly,
K. Imai.

figure, which seems to be almost naked but for a loin cloth while the female is clothed."

The identical netsuke is described in Neil Davey, *Netsuke*, Fig. #1223. Eskenazi bought it for \$528. (Hindson, Part VII, Fig. 138. *Netsuke Familiar and Unfamiliar*.)

While I cannot find Hindson's covering letter I recall that he asked for an explanation of its significance. It had to be a rare subject to puzzle Hindson. I referred the picture and the question to Kenzo Imai for elucidation. Although Imai *san* never once ventured outside the area of Kyoto where he lived and died he was a "living national treasure" so far as "things Japanese" were con-

cerned. He wrote me two letters in response to my request. I reproduce them in their original form with Mr. Imai's drawings.

I have a pair of *Rin-no-Tama* which may differ slightly from the gilt ball described by Mr. Imai. Mine is a thin iron shell enclosing a ball. The ball is magnetized and exerts a slight pull on the shell. When the ball collides with the shell it produces a metallic note. According to Mr. Imai it was inserted and produced a pleasurable sensation as the woman rocked back and forth.

Praise be current permissiveness which allows the dildo to be mentioned in these columns. ■

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Ex: Seymour Trower Collection
Ex: Col. Gaskell Collection
Ex: Marcus Huisch Collection
Ex: H.G. Beasley & M.A. Beasley Collections
Ex: George Weil Collection

Illustrated: Transactions of the Japan Society, Ca. 1920.

Illustrated: Contrasting Styles, London Netsuke Committee, 1980, No. 115.

Illustrated: Meinertzhagen card file, British Museum, with one of Frederick Meinertzhagen's meticulous oil-coloured line drawings.

An almost identical figure, by the same hand, is in the collection of the Newark Museum, New Jersey. No other example comparable to this "very remarkable" piece seems to be recorded.



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Okakoto: A netsuke of two puppies enjoying their youth with vigour, carved in ivory and lightly stained. The composition is harmonious and the excellent hairwork is partly rubbed to give a fine, lustrous, honey coloured patination.
Signed: *Okakoto*. Length 4.2 cm.

Kyoto School, 18th Century

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Masterpieces & Misconceptions

by Neil K. Davey

Director, Japanese Works of Art, Sotheby's, London



IN the June 1983 edition of the INCS Journal, Mr. Bernard Hurtig made several interesting observations which I thought were worthy of some reply. To this end, I took the liberty of addressing a few remarks to the delegates at the Netsuke Kenkyukai Convention in Washington on September 20th.

The following is a brief resume of my remarks together with a few further comments.

It was stated in the INCS Journal that "Netsuke that were regularly selling in the \$500 to \$3500 range are virtually unsaleable today, other than at some auction houses which cater to specialized, isolated markets." I felt it prudent to point out that my own company, Sotheby's, together with our friendly rivals Christie's and Phillips, although island based, do not consider ourselves particularly isolated and regularly enjoy success in the sale of netsuke in the price range mentioned.

It is further stated that those that are selling briskly are "The finest quality superstars — perhaps only three hundred netsuke exist in the category." I assumed that this statement was intended for debate and I was delighted at the Washington Convention to enter into it with my own personal thoughts on the matter.

Firstly, approximately three hundred wonderful netsuke which could be termed superstars, or as we used to say in the art world, Masterpieces, have been published as parts of well known existing collections or as parts of

1. Cat with captured rat by Tomotada; a magnificent sculptured work of the 18th C.



2. Tiger by Okatomo; a fine compact example and probably even rarer than examples by Tomotada.

exhibitions in the pages of the INCS Journal over the last few years. These pieces are well known and need not be discussed at length, save to say that there is little question as to their collective merit. However, there are countless other netsuke that have not had the privilege of this exposure and which through no fault of their own have gone largely unrecognised but yet must fall into this category of masterpiece.

Mr. Hurtig's definition of a superstar is "a superior sculpture executed to perfection such as the famous Okatomo horse and the unsigned Ama and squid. It has rare or unique subject matter; it has provenance and has been illustrated in important publications.

While largely agreeing with this, I would like to reword this as follows.

A masterpiece is:

1. Extremely finely carved
2. Of an eminently functional form
3. Preferably without major damage.
4. A suitable size for its use
5. By the artist who signed it (if signed)
6. Very rare

It has little or no bearing on the merits of a netsuke if it has:

- A. A provenance
- B. Been exhibited in a major exhibition
- C. Been published in a major publication
- D. Changed hands in the past for a large sum of money

Notwithstanding the inescapable fact that items A through C often have a considerable bearing on item D, it remains true that the question of whether or not a netsuke is a masterpiece is based upon the inherent qualities of the object itself as designed and produced by the *netsukeshi* before these extraneous factors were envisaged.

I feel that I should mention, by way of footnote, a few riders to the brief definition above.



4. The Yama Uba and Kintoki; a powerful depiction of this famous legend. Unsigned. 18th C.

Questions can certainly be raised on the statement regarding the form of netsuke pertaining to its function. It was certainly true in the early days of collecting that most aficionados regarded any netsuke which had breakable protuberances as more of an *okimono*, whether or not there was a suitable cord attachment. The arguments surrounding these pieces have mostly abated though there is still doubt in the minds of some older collectors as to whether or not the artist of the "So" school or Tokoku and his followers, for instance, were true *netsukeshi* or *okimono* makers who placed *himotoshi* in their smaller works because it made them sell better.

Regarding the size of netsuke, it has been mentioned recently on a number of occasions that a netsuke that has been sold at auction was "A good work but rather too small" or words to that effect. It cannot have escaped the notice of experienced collectors that the work of different artists vary in size. Can it be said



3. Wolf with crab by Okatomo; a fine example and somewhat rarer than those in which the wolf is seated, facing ahead.

for instance that the work of Okatomo or Okatori is generally inferior to that of Tomotada because their works tend to be a little smaller; or the work of Mitsuhiro or Kaigyokusai was inferior to that of all three for the same reason? No, the simple answer is that the artists produced

netsuke for their clients, often to order, for use with different types of *sagemono*. The netsuke made for use with a light object like an *inro* would necessarily be smaller and lighter than that made for use with a tobacco pouch and tinder lighter, but not necessarily of lesser quality. In short, size does not matter.

The extraneous factors surrounding a netsuke have a strong bearing on collecting today, more so than at any time in the past. Because netsuke have risen in price considerably over the last few years, some collectors require more than just a small piece of



5. Rat on a large peach by Rensai; a superb rendition in a somewhat poor piece of heavily grained stag antler.

In London:
Important Netsuke
from the H.G. Beasley Collection

sold on Behalf of the Executors of the Estate
of the Late Miss M.A. Beasley



Dutchman with his Kill, unsigned, 18th century.

Auction in London: Wednesday, March 14.

Illustrated catalogue available at our galleries and offices worldwide.

Inquiries: *In New York*, Howard Zar, (212) 472-3525. Sotheby Parke Bernet Inc.,
1334 York Avenue at 72nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10021;

In London, Neil Davey, (01) 493-8080. Sotheby Parke Bernet & Co.,
34-35 New Bond Street, London W1A 2AA.

SOTHEBY'S

Founded 1744



6. A roof tile with fallen maple leaves by Ohara Mitsuhiro; a fine compact study of a simple subject, superbly rendered in lightly stained ivory.

wood or ivory carved in a recognisable form and with a name inscribed on it. The provenance and other factors add a piece of history to the netsuke and make it a little more exciting. Thus for example, a netsuke that was formerly in the Behrens and Hindson collections, exhibited in the Red Cross Exhibition of 1915 and published in Bernard Hurting's *Masterpieces of Netsuke*

Art will, if sold today, probably command a greater price than a comparable netsuke which has remained virtually unrecognised since it left Japan. This is not to say, however, that one is any better than the other.

It could be argued with confidence that the more well known members of the Kyoto school of *netsukeshi* were the superstars among carvers. Others would cite the Iwami carvers or those from Nagoya or the carvers of powerful early figure netsuke. Others still would place the late metalworkers who produced such wonderful designs on the plates of *kagamibuta* as the superstars of all time. Many would heatedly support the carvers from Asakusa, the "So" school, *Toyomasa* and his group from Tamba, *Sukenaga* and his pupils, the early *Masanaos* of Ise or the finest of the *netsukeshi* working today.

All of these and many more produced fine work and every so

often would produce a netsuke that, by anybody's standards could be called a masterpiece.

For the collectors who are not fortunate enough to own one of the "300" there is still hope. Old, almost forgotten collections still turn up on the market; individual pieces known only by illustrations in early catalogues are still hidden away but will some day emerge. One such group will be sold at Sothebys in London in March 1984 and will include pieces that SO FAR can be called unique, but for how long? For every "Superstar" known to exist, there are probably ten that have never been seen in any publication and are, to the present generation of netsuke students, unknown as yet.

The illustrations show several examples which reside in private collections, have hardly been published and which are yet to be offered for sale to the present generation of collectors. ■



Front view



Back view

Barry Davies ORIENTAL ART

E14/17 Grays Mews
1-7 Davies Mews London W1
Telephone 01-408 0207

Wood Netsuke of a
Nio and *Oni* wrestling
in the *Kawasu* throw
position.
Signed: *Hozan*.
Mid/Late 19th C.

Kurstin / Chappell

fine netsuke, inro, lacquer ware and pipe cases



*As blue
as the deepest ocean...
As rare as perfection itself...*

Lacquer pipe case with waves highlighted
by silver dewdrops.

Unsigned Late 19th Century

Eddie Kurstin

63 Valerian Ct. — Rockville, Md. 20852
301-984-3207

Sharen Chappell

P.O. Box 2091 — No. St. Paul, Mn. 55109
612-777-8910



Wood frog emerging from bamboo.
Signed: *Goho, Iwami School*, 18th century.
*Provenance: Anne Hull Grundy collection.

Bottom view



Interesting inscription reads: *Nito kashi
Koryo Goho Shujin Kodo koku shi*: Master
Goho of Kodo made this in Japan at the river
branch of Koryo.



ESKENAZI

Oriental Art

Foxglove House
(opposite Old Bond Street)
166 Piccadilly
London W1V 9DE
Telephone: 01-493 5464/5
Cables: Eskenazi London W1

15 Via Montenapoleone
Milan
Telephone: 70 00 22