



Growling Bear, Ainu Carved Wood, Japan, Circa 1970 #4



220 EUR

Period : 20th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Solid wood

Length : 39,5

Width : 23

Height : 19,5

Description

Direct hewn wood - teeth knocked. The Ainu are an aboriginal population living in northern Japan. They arrived around the 14th century BC, in the Kuril Islands and Sakhalin; (1000 years before the Wa people, ancestors of the current Japanese people). During the Meiji era, forced assimilation prohibited their culture, dispossessed them of their lands, until the complete annexation of Hokkaido. For the Ainu, in nature are divine spirits "kamuy", male or female, some good, others malevolent. A major ceremony concerns the Kamuy Kim-un (bear). The village captures a cub, carefully cares for it for a whole year, before taking its life with an arrow. Its flesh is then eaten to free the spirit, which can then return home, carried by a ceremony. For the Ainu, this is a charity ceremony: the Kim-un kamuy was

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pampered for a year, and only its "body shell" was consumed. It is believed that the origin of the statuettes is in the miniature animist "inoka" figurines of stylized bears, showing the animal's power of metamorphosis. Kimun kamuy, when he descends from the mountains, dons his bear costume. The bear thus becomes "a man of the mountains." Just like the Eskimo populations of Canada, the Chukchi of Siberia, the Ainu, perceive the bear as equal to humans. From 1924, bears were produced - In 1933 Emperor Hirohito commissioned sculptures, this event brought public attention to this craft. After the war, carved wooden bears spread to homes throughout Japan. A decline began in the 1980s, with the rural exodus. A detailed illustrated note on Ainu bears will be given to the purchaser.