



PROANTIC
LE PLUS BEAU CATALOGUE D'ANTIQUITES

Nakayama Sugakudo (active 1850-1870), Woodpecker And Erythronium Japonicum, Japanese Print 18



250 EUR

Signature : Nakayama SUGAKUDO (actif 1850-1870)

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Paper

Width : 23,4cm

Height : 37,5cm

Depth : oban

Description

Nakayama SUGAKUDO (active 1850-1870)
Woodpecker and Erythronium japonicum
(Kitsutsuki katakuri) Japanese woodblock print
from the 1859 collection "Forty-Eight Birds
Drawn from Nature" 1859 Laid Paper Edo Period
(Tokyo) Publisher: Tsutaya Kichizo Publisher's
Seal | Censor's Seal: Koeido Han | Aratame: Date
seal in the lower left corner of the print
Dimensions: 37.5 x 23.4 cm (Oban) Superb
Japanese print displaying all the beauty of
Ukiyo-e art, with vibrant, still-fresh colors and an
elegant motif of a woodpecker flying at the edge
of a waterfall and above Katakuri or Japanese
Dog's-Tooth (Erythronium Japonicum). It is in
good condition despite a few minor details: the
central crease, characteristic of this period; the
lower left corner, which has some tiny losses and

Dealer

Antic'idées

Généraliste

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creases; and the right margin, which thins towards the bottom and is not trimmed straight. We know very little about the artist Nakayama Sugakudo, who was active in Tokyo between 1850 and 1870. His real name was Nakayama Akinao, and most essential biographical details, such as his birth and death dates, are unknown, adding to the mystery and legend surrounding the artist. He trained under the painter Tazaki Soun, a member of the Nanga or Bunjinga school, a refined style of painting primarily focused on landscape and heavily influenced by ink painting, characterized by great freedom of line. Tazaki Soun was Nakayama Sugakudo, himself a disciple of the renowned painter of this school, Tani Buncho, produced most of his work in the 1850s and 1860s, a period coinciding with the rise of the great landscape painter Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858), whose heir he is considered to be. Hiroshige had captivated the public with his views of famous places (meisho) and other nature scenes. Nakayama Sugakudo specialized in the refined genre of kacho-e, that is, natural scenes featuring birds and flowers. His major work is considered to be the series of forty-eight bird prints titled *Ikiutsushi shijuhachi taka* (1859), published by Tsutaya Kichizo of the Koeido publishing house, where the influence of his teacher, Tazaki Soun, is evident and perceptible. Our print is part of this collection, a rare testimony of the period regarding the artistic and ornithological habits of Japan, and whose publication also proves the interest of such subjects for buyers, whether collectors, local enthusiasts, or even foreigners who facilitated its dissemination as far as France, as exemplified by our print. Sugakudo's main strength lies in the composition of his natural scenes depicting birds in relation to the vegetation that constitutes their habitat, as well as seasonal elements characteristic of each species. In this sense, the series is very varied--with scenes of spring, summer, autumn, and winter--and recognizable at first glance thanks to the characteristic yellow

border. Stylistically, he is a faithful disciple of Hiroshige, with well-constructed compositions, precise drawing, and intense yet harmonious colors. Although these prints are intended for contemplation, they could certainly be used for ornithological study, due to the precision with which the plumage and anatomical details of each specimen are depicted. His work has not been particularly appreciated by critics, perhaps because it falls somewhere between the attractive kacho-e compositions of the ukiyo-e landscape painters of the Edo period (1603-1868), such as the aforementioned Hiroshige, and the more specialized naturalist painters of the Meiji era (1868-1912), such as Kono Bairei (1844-1895), who published extensive albums, sparing no effort, for a more demanding public.