



Dayak Shield "klebit Bok"



8 500 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Painted wood

Length : 39cm

Height : 137cm

Description

Among the Dayaks of Borneo, particularly in Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo) and Sarawak (Malaysian Borneo), the "klebit bok" is a distinctive war shield associated with the era of ritual headhunting. In Kenyan and Kayan languages, "klebit" means "shield" and "bok" means "hair," a direct reference to the human hair ornaments traditionally attached to these shields. Used primarily by Kenyan and Kayan Dayaks, this elongated hexagonal shield served not only as physical protection in combat but also as a powerful psychological tool. Its surface was typically painted with ferocious demonic faces and adorned with the hair of vanquished enemies, intended to intimidate adversaries and invoke spiritual protection. The example shown here is a reference specimen. The obverse is decorated

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with expressive demonic faces, characterized by elongated tusks and bold stylization. No fewer than 54 tufts of human hair are attached to the surface using natural resin, according to tradition. The wooden body is reinforced with rattan braiding for added strength. A built-in handle on the back, carved from a single piece of wood, ensures robustness in combat. The entire back is richly decorated with "Aso" motifs, the mythical dragon-dog figure, an important element of Dayak culture, believed to bestow protection and spiritual power upon the warrior.