India, Late 19th - Early 20th Century, Large Polychrome Wood Panel Depicting Varaha



1 950 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Solid wood

Width : 43.5 cm hors socle

Height : 103.5 cm hors socle

Description

Important polychrome wooden processional chariot in polychrome wood depicting Varaha, one of the ten avatars of Vishnu South India, State of Tamil NaduLate 19th - Early 20th century Vishnu is represented in his third incarnation, here Varaha, half-man half-boar (Nara Vahara). He stands in a dynamic posture, combining a slight wiggle in tribhanga and an accentuated athibhanga inflection. His bent right leg rests while the left is raised and bent. Endowed with six arms, he holds his traditional attributes: the conch shell (panchajanya), the scepter (danda), disk (chakra), sword (nandaka) and bow (sarnga). Engaged in a martial and heroic attitude, at the momentas he strikes down the demon Hiranyaksha, he is richly adorned: ornaments on his arms, wrists and ankles, heavy,

Dealer

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finely-worked necklaces and a brahmanical cord across the torso and down to the reeds. Her head is crowned with a high, richly decorated kirita-mukuta, symbol of his divine omnipotence. His boar-like face, with visible tusks, expresses an attitude of intimidation. The defeated demon Hiranyaksha is depicted upside down, in a disarticulated posture (nipatita), his face remaining impassive while he still holds his sword and circular shield, witnesses to the battle he was about to wage.The upper register is dominated by a terrifying head of kirtimukha, intended to repel evil forces: a gaping maw from which stylised scrolls stylized foliage, exorbitant eyes and exposed teeth. At the base of the composition, on either side of the fallen demon, are two celestial musicians, gandharva, playing drum and cymbals respectively, celebrating the divine victory. Both are richly adorned, topped with a high kirita-mukutaand haloed by a radiant halo. The ensemble rests on a frieze decorated stylized lotus petals. Our piece depicts an emblematic scene from Hindu mythology. The avatarof Vishnu, Varaha, appears against a backdrop of major imbalance, caused by the action of the demon Hiranyaksha. Following a rigorous asceticism, he obtains relative invulnerability from Brahma, which he immediately diverts to the service of a domineering enterprise. By opposing the divine powers, he alters the order of the world by plunging the Earth into the waters, suspending the course of the manifested world and creating a situation of chaos.Denuded of its support function, the Earth then appeals to Vishnu, whose intervention becomes necessary to restore the broken balance. He assumes the form of Varaha, an incarnation which, by its very nature, escapes the conditions of protection enjoyed by the demon. A prolonged battle ensues, at the end of which Vishnu overcomes Hiranyaksha, then lifts the Earth with the help of his tusks before returning it to its original position. By this act, he restores cosmic order and ensures the continuity

of the world's cycle. Our carved panel depicting Varahais in the tradition of Tamil Nadu processional chariot decorations, called ther. These monumental panel are used during major religious festivals to transport the image of the deity out of the temple, allowing the faithful to enter into direct contact with it through the darshan (vision of the divine). The sculpted panels adorn them, like this one, depict mythological scenes that are immediately recognizable, serving as a medium for devotion while conveying sacred narratives. They play a full part in bringing the divine in the public space, transforming the float into a veritable mobile temple, making the procession a central moment of religious and community life.The last image depicts Varaha striking down the demon Hiranyaksha.Halebid site in the state of Karnataka, South India.Hoysala dynasty, 12th century.Polychrome wood103.5 cm x 43.5 cm excluding baseSurface wear, otherwise very good overall conditionFrom a French private collectionContact us: culturesetcivilisations@orange.fr