



Japanese Bronze Depicting Toba On His Mule Japan, Meiji Period, Late 19th Century



1 260 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Parfait état

Material : Bronze

Description

A very fine Japanese bronze with deep brown patina depicting Toba, the famous Japanese monk, calligrapher and caricaturist traditionally represented travelling on his mule. The figure is shown wearing flowing robes and a large conical hat, holding an unfurled scroll in his hands in a calm and contemplative attitude. The sculpture is particularly appealing for the elegance of its silhouette and the quality of its modelling. The mule, represented with its head lowered in a peaceful and natural posture, gives the composition a remarkable sense of balance. The restrained treatment of the forms, the broad flowing drapery and the sobriety of the overall composition give the piece a refined and timeless presence. Unlike many Japanese Meiji bronzes created for the Western export market and

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conceived as functional objects -- especially incense burners richly adorned with mounts or cloisonné decoration -- this example was intended as a purely sculptural and decorative work. The absence of the very common cloisonné ornamentation further emphasizes the quality of the modelling, the purity of the volumes and the richness of the patina. The old patina, warm and nuanced, beautifully highlights the details of the face, the animal's coat and the folds of the garments. This type of decorative bronze perfectly illustrates the refinement of Meiji period Japanese production inspired by literary culture and traditional scholarly figures. Very good overall condition with beautiful original patina and light wear consistent with age. Dimensions: Height: 36 cm Length: 31 cm Depth: 11 cm Gallery View What we particularly appreciate in this sculpture is its quiet and contemplative rhythm. The lowered head of the mule, the dignified presence of Toba and the scroll held delicately in his hands create a scene of remarkable serenity. The composition feels almost minimal in spirit while retaining the richness of material and surface that characterizes the finest Japanese bronzes of the Meiji period.