



Kayan Mandau, Left-handed



1 200 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Metal

Length : 62.5cm

Description

The "mandau," also known locally as the "parang ilang," is the traditional headhunting sword of the Dayaks of Borneo, a region that today includes Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei. Traditionally used during headhunting expeditions, the "mandau" is distinguished by its asymmetrical blade, featuring a concave edge and a convex edge, allowing for precise and effective cutting. The blades are often adorned with small protrusions, interpreted as genital symbols or as "krowit" (caterpillars), and embellished with traditional motifs such as "aso," notably "mata kalong" and S-shaped elements called "mata djoh." The example shown here is a rare left-handed variant, with the concave cutting edge on the left. The quality of the decoration, particularly the finely carved handle, suggests a

Dealer

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Kayan origin from the Mahakam River region.

The deer antler handle is finely carved with "aso" motifs and features a finely crafted rattan grip, secured at its base with "damar," a natural resin.

Tufts of human and goat hair, traditionally associated with headhunting, are attached to the handle. Deer-antler handles were generally reserved for seasoned warriors who had captured a head, while others typically carried models with wooden handles. In some contexts, antler handles were also considered auspicious and treated with special reverence. The scabbard is complete and consists of two wooden halves, held together by three rattan ties, one of which shows signs of wear due to its age. The front is adorned with bone and antler inlays, including at the tip. The opening of the sheath is reinforced by an antler ferrule, secured with bone pegs. The back features a rattan suspension system and is adorned with a cord and a tassel made of brightly colored beads, characteristic of Dayak ornamentation. An inscription on the back of the sheath reads "1-7-58 N.H.," which likely corresponds to July 1, 1858. The initials "N.H." may refer to a former European owner, suggesting that the piece was collected or gifted during that period. Plus de photos sont disponibles sur notre site web.