Finch & Co



A LARGE NEW ZEALAND MAORI FINELY CARVED 'POUNAMU' GREENSTONE BREAST PENDANT 'HEI-TIKI'

A LARGE NEW ZEALAND MAORI FINELY CARVED 'POUNAMU' GREENSTONE BREAST PENDANT 'HEI-TIKI' OF SYMMETRICAL FORM WITH A FLAT BACK THE OVERSIZED HEAD WITH DEEPLY RINGED EYES

SMOOTH WORN SILKY PATINA

18TH – EARLY 19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 13.5CM HIGH, 9.5CM WIDE – 5¼ INS HIGH, 3¾ INS WIDE

LITERATURE

SYMBOLIC OF THE MAORI, HEI-TIKI WERE FIRST SEEN AND DESIRED BY THE EARLY EXPLORERS AND HAVE CONTINUED IN POPULARITY TO THE PRESENT DAY. IN ANCIENT TIMES BOTH MEN AND WOMEN WORE HEI-TIKI, BUT TODAY THEY ARE ONLY WORN BY MAORI WOMEN.

NEPHRITE, A FORM OF JADE, WAS THE MOST VALUABLE MATERIAL KNOWN TO THE MAORI PROVIDING A DIRECT TANGIBLE CONTACT WITH THE ANCESTORS, THE SOURCE OF LIFE, KNOWLEDGE AND 'MANA'. BY WEARING TREASURED JADE ORNAMENTS ONCE OWNED BY ILLUSTRIOUS WARRIOR ANCESTORS THE LIVING MAORI COULD SHARE IN THE STRENGTH AND POWER OF THOSE ANCESTORS. AT IMPORTANT FUNERAL CEREMONIES GREENSTONE HEIRLOOMS WERE DISPLAYED AROUND THE DECEASED TO DEMONSTRATE STATUS AND TO REINFORCE THE CONTINUOUS LINK BETWEEN THE LIVING AND THEIR ANCESTORS. WHEN THE BODY OF A RELATIVE COULD NOT BE RECOVERED FOR MOURNING CEREMONIES THEIR PERSONAL HEI-TIKI COULD SERVE AS A FOCUS AND SUBSTITUTE FOR THE DISPLAYS OF GRIEF AND AFFECTION TOWARDS THE DEPARTED.