



Manjū

Netsuke from the Collection of the Ashmolean Museum

Joyce Seaman
David Battie

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- A comprehensive study of a fine collection of manjū netsuke in the collection of the Ashmolean Museum
- No other catalogue currently exists on the subject
- Features a foreword by David Battie
- Accompanies an exhibition held at the Ashmolean Museum from 28 February to 19 May 2013

Manjū netsuke have never been the subject of a book on netsuke. Many books ignore them completely and it is hoped that this catalogue will throw light on the differences between the manjū and other better-known types of netsuke. Dr. Barnett was one of a handful of collectors of one particular type of netsuke, the manjū. These were not widely appreciated until about ten years ago when interest began to increase and the exquisite workmanship and design of this group of carvers was noticed as an art in its own right and one which presents the artist with a challenge completely different from the more popular katabori netsuke, carved in the round. Dr. Barnett continued to collect until just before her death in 2000, by which time she had acquired some of the finest pieces to be sold over 30 years which will be presented in this book. Manjū netsuke have played a small part in the many publications on netsuke, but there has never been a catalogue entirely devoted to the subject. The book aims to provide a description of each object and to explain the tales they illustrate and the sources of these tales, from literature and printed picture books. The range of subjects is wide and includes religious images, scenes from festivals, the theater, historical incidents, folktales, classical literature and themes from nature. An introduction will include an essay on the history, uses and the collecting of manjū in which the techniques of carving will be described and materials will be discussed. Artist biographies, a glossary and bibliography will be included. The catalogue will accompany an exhibition of many of the pieces in this collection alongside woodblock prints from the Ashmolean Museum's collection which illustrate the same legends and subjects. This will take place in the Eastern Art Paintings Gallery.

Joyce Seaman is a Research Assistant in the Department of Eastern Art, The Ashmolean Museum, and has been working for the Keeper of Japanese Art since 1998.

