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A wood Noh mask of Koomote

Japan Edo period 17th century

Dimensions: H. 18cm x W. 15cm x D. 7cm (7" x 6" x 2¾")

Koomote (lit. 'small face') is one of the most common types of onnamen (women's masks) used in Japanese traditional Noh theatre. The face with engaging, gentle smile represents the innocent beauty of a young lady and is used for both main and supporting roles portraying young women and girls.

Based on the beauty ideal of aristocratic ladies of the Heian period (794-1185), the mask is painted in whitish colour, the smiling red lips reveals teeth in black (called ohaguro), the smudge-like eyebrows are painted, and the black hair is neatly combed and parted in the middle with three hair along each side of the forehead.

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