



Shield

Date

20th Century

Primary Maker

Zande

Medium

Split rattan cane and wood

Description

The Zande of Southern Sudan and northeastern Democratic Republic of the Congo gained significant power and influence by way of warfare. Raiding villages and collecting spoils from the people of the Congo—including their own basketry shields—was extremely common. So common in fact, that the Zande word for warfare can also directly refer to shields. Because of their place in warfare and the prestige that came along with fighting, shields were highly associated with one’s status. Neglecting the care of one’s shield brought great

dishonor. Markings on the shield were created by using black and tan fibers. These identified warriors, and were well known enough to allow one to distinguished friend from foe in the heat of battle.

Dimensions

44 1/2 × 18 × 3 in. (113 × 45.7 × 7.6 cm)