Chinese Bone Vases



Bone vase depicting Quan Yin, the goddess of compassion, and Shou-Lou

These beautiful carved bone vases were made in the style of the Qianlong period, which lasted from approximately 1735-1796. It was a period of peace and prosperity in China, which saw the broad expansion and proliferation of the arts under the reign of the Qianlong Emperor. Facilitated by an expansion of trade with Europe and the western world, China saw an explosion of art forms and craftsmanship that was inspired and colored by European taste and traditions.



Vase with Birds · and Quan Yin Motif · China · Late 19th / Early 20th C. · Carved bone · 6 W x 3.5 D x 15.5 H inches

Item #A1300-042

The vases depict symbols that draw on both ancient and contemporary Chinese folklore. Both vases depict Quan Yin, who is the Eastern deity known by most as the goddess of compassion. Both Vases also depict the scholar Shou-Lou on their face, who is the deity of longevity and is depicted with a prominent forehead and long beard that celebrate his experience and maturity. He is holding a peach in his left hand, which is often associated with immortality in Chinese folklore.

The ornamental scrolls that serve as handles on both vessels actually represent the Ruyi scepter, which is a symbol of royal status held by emperors throughout Chinese history. It can trace its roots back to the Han Dynasty, which lasted from 206 B.C-220 A.D. The vases were originally created as decorative art to satisfy the growing market for fine Chinese artwork as Europe developed trade relations in the east.