Finch & Co



TIBETAN CARVED BONE PLAQUE FROM A RITUAL APRON OR PARURE DEPICTING A DANCING SKELETON

A TIBETAN CARVED BONE PLAQUE FROM A RITUAL APRON OR PARURE DEPICTING A DANCING SKELETON
LATE 17TH – EARLY 18TH CENTURY
SIZE: 10CM HIGH, 3CM WIDE – 4 INS HIGH, 1¼ INS WIDE

LITERATURE

CARVED FROM HUMAN OR YAK BONE, THESE PLAQUES ARE WORN AT THE CENTRAL CROSSING OF THE TIBETAN BUDDHIST MONK'S CEREMONIAL CHEST ORNAMENT OR ON THE TOP OF A RITUAL APRON THAT IS USED IN MONASTIC DANCES FOR THE ELIMINATION OF ILLNESS.
THESE SKELETON BEINGS ARE KNOWN AS 'CHITAPITTRI' MEANING 'LORDS OF THE FUNERAL PYRE' AND ARE ONE OF THE UNIQUE FEATURES OF TIBETAN ART. THEY ARE THE ATTENDANTS OF YAMA, THE GOD OF DEATH, AND ARE OFTEN DEPICTED DANCING AND SOMETIMES HOLDING THUNDERBOLT STANDARDS. TIBETAN ART FREQUENTLY EMPHASISES THE CERTAINTY OF DEATH, BUT IT IS NOT A MORBID OBSESSION, IT IS A REFLECTION OF THE POSITIVE AND PRAGMATIC VIEW THAT TIBETAN BUDDHISTS TAKE OF LIFE AND THEIR BELIEF IN THE NEED TO APPRECIATE THAT ALL EXISTENCE IS TRANSITORY.