PAGODA
RED

PAIR OF GUARDIAN FU LIONS WITH RIDERS

$19,800

c. 1850 • China • Limestone • Collection #CMCL087

W: 14.0″ D: 22.0″ H: 32.0″

This pair of intricately carved limestone fu lions once protected the entry of a grand courtyard home in 19th-century China. Also known as shizi or foo dogs, the mythical creatures are believed to be benevolent protectors and are traditionally placed at the thresholds of sacred spaces, such as homes, temples, and tombs. The pair represents yin and yang, the balance of male and female energies and all dual forces of the universe.

Carved with expressive facial features and elaborate manes, each fu dog sits with its foot resting on its characteristic accessory - the female shizi with a baby fu dog, representing the cycle of life, and the male shizi with an embroidered ball, representing dominion over the universe. Continued...

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A child rides on the back of each fu lion, one playing a flute and one holding a ruyi scepter, the auspicious 'wish granting wand' associated with blessings and longevity. Seated on limestone pedestals carved with geometric scrollwork, these lively fu lions are the ultimate protectors of the home or garden.

Deaccessioned from the MacLean Collection of Asian Art.