
PAGODA RED



PAIR OF SILK LOTUS SLIPPERS WITH IRISES

\$188

c. 1850 • Northern China, China • Silk, Fabric • Collection #PR0013AAA

W: 5.0" D: 6.5" H: 3.25"

These dainty, pointed slippers, made of black silk and beautifully embroidered with yellow irises, were shaped to resemble a lotus bud and enhanced the diminutive shape of bound feet. A practice that began in the Tang dynasty and reached the height of its popularity in the Qing dynasty, foot binding was a painful process intended to make a woman's feet as small as possible by restricting bone growth from an early age. The smaller the feet the more attractive and erotic they were, giving elite women a mark of elegance and a distinctive - albeit tortured - gait of small, light steps. Continued...



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These beautifully preserved lotus slippers give us a glimpse into this curious practice and the complicated role fashion played in gender identity throughout China's past.



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