
PAGODA RED



PAIR OF BLACK PLUM BLOSSOM LOTUS SLIPPERS

\$228

c. 1850 • Northern China, China • Silk, Cotton • Collection #PR0013YY

W: 4.0" D: 6.25" H: 2.5"

These pointed slippers, beautifully embroidered with light blue plum blossoms on black silk, 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 during 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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