



## Burma, 18th-19th Century, Set Of Ten Bird-shaped Opium Weights, Bronze With Brown Patina

499 EUR



Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Bronze

Width : voir descriptif

Height : voir descriptif

### Description

Set of ten bird-shaped opium weights  
Burma 18th-19th century  
These small bronze objects, commonly called opium weights, actually belong to a weighing system used in Burma from the 16th to the 19th centuries. Before the introduction of industrial weights by the British colonial administration, much of local trade relied on weighing rather than currency. These weights were used to measure high-value goods such as silver, gold, precious stones, and sometimes also opium, hence the modern name. Burmese artisans fashioned these weights in the form of animals or mythical creatures. Among the most common representations is the *hinta*, a mythical bird related to the sacred goose, which occupies a central place in the Burmese imagination. A symbol of purity, wisdom, and

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prosperity, it is closely associated with royal power, justice, and cosmic balance. Its adoption as a form for weights conferred moral and political legitimacy upon the object, guaranteeing the fairness of transactions and the authority of the state or sovereign who controlled its use.

Produced for over three centuries, these weights gradually disappeared in the 19th century when British authorities imposed standardized iron models, putting an end to a tradition where economic functionality, religious beliefs, and symbolic aesthetics intertwined. Bronze with a brown patina

From 1.6 x 1 cm to 6.8 x 5.2

cm Signs of wear Private collection Contact us:

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