Emmett & White
ANTIQUES & INTERIORS

Tibetan Buddhist Copper Ceremonial Butter-Tea Ewer, 19th Century

£245

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REF: 6784

Height: 44 cm (17.3")

Width: 39 cm (15.4")

Depth: 20 cm (7.9")

Description

A superb 19th-century Tibetan Buddhist copper ceremonial butter-tea ewer, distinguished by its exceptionally elaborate casting and commanding sculptural handle. Made for the serving of butter tea in a ritual or monastic context, the vessel combines practical form with the rich visual language of Tibetan Buddhist decorative arts.

The generously proportioned copper body is enhanced with finely cast ornament, while the handle is formed as an animated serpent entwined with a goddess figure. This powerful combination of deity and serpent imagery gives the ewer an unmistakably ceremonial character, transforming an everyday serving vessel into an object of symbolic and devotional significance. The tall spout, fitted cover, and carefully balanced silhouette further demonstrate the skill of its maker.

Butter tea has long held an important place in Tibetan life, serving both daily and ceremonial purposes. In a Buddhist setting, vessels such as this would have been used in the hospitality of monasteries, religious gatherings, or other formal occasions. Its ornate modelling reflects the esteem in which such objects were held, where function, ritual, and artistic expression were closely intertwined.

Now highly decorative in its own right, this ewer has considerable presence as an object of Tibetan metalwork. The warm copper surface, elaborate cast detail, and wonderfully expressive figural-serpent handle make it an exceptional focal point for a collection of Himalayan art, Buddhist ritual objects, or antique metalwork.

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