



6122 A bronze censer in the form of a peach with bats in flight, the cover formed as a recumbent stag

China 16th/17th century Ming Dynasty

Dimensions:

Censer: H. 40cm x W. 37cm x D. 31cm (15 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 12")

Stand: H. 10cm x W. 32cm x D. 25cm (4" x 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ ")

The three universal energies, Fu (happiness), Lu (wealth) and Shou (longevity) are combined in this censer. Fu (bat) is emblematic of happiness and longevity, Lu (deer) is believed by the Chinese to live to a very great age, and has therefore become an emblem of long life. It is said to be the only animal which is able to find the sacred fungus of immortality. Shou Lao, the God of Longevity is often depicted either riding on a deer or leaning on it. Shou (peach) has an important place in Chinese superstitions and appeals highly to the aesthetic sense of the people. It is an emblem of marriage and the symbol of immortality and springtime. Shou Lao is also often depicted as issuing from a peach.