



Bath-Clog

Date

1875-1899

Medium

Wood

Description

Painted palm wood, inlaid with bone Padukas (wooden toe-knob sandals) like these were worn by mendicant holy men in India, known as sadhus, who travelled between

villages on the journey to enlightenment. They passed on traditional teaching, such the practice of yoga and meditation. Padukas are made of the most hardwearing material available, wood, and are designed to withstand rough roads and long days walking from place to place. The Indian tradition uniquely venerates the feet, and the positioning and clothing of the feet can be very significant. The raised platforms of Paduka lifts the wearer, and minimises the contact with the ground. This might be to prevent the unwitting crushing of insects or plants, as for sadhus, all life would be holy, however small. Not only holy men have worn Padukas, however. As well as representing the ascetic lifestyle of the holy man, they are also used to symbolise the sacred in other rituals and rites of passage: sandals like these may have formed part of a bride's trousseau, or been worn at the wedding ceremony. They are rarely worn today, however are still produced for their symbolic and spiritual associations. Padukas (also known as kharawan or karom) are found in a rich variety of shapes and styles, which reflect the variety of people who wore them. Some are carved into the shape of a fish, an hourglass, or a footprint. These Padukas are inlaid with bone, and painted with stylised plant forms. They are often inlaid with jewels or precious metals, and decorated with appliqué or embroidery.