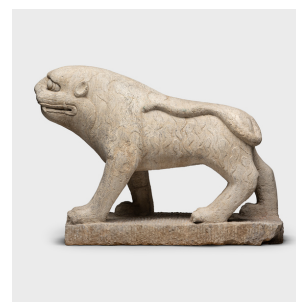
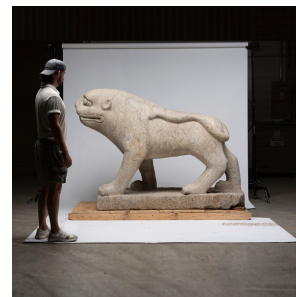

PAGODA RED



PAIR OF MONUMENTAL STONE SPIRIT WAY TIGERS

\$118,000

c. 1850 • Northern China, China • Limestone • Collection #CMCL084

W: 72.0" D: 24.0" H: 60.0"

These monumental stone tiger sculptures offer protection to all those who stand before them. Hand-carved from solid limestone with terrific scale and careful detail, the majestic tigers date to the late Qing dynasty and were intended as benevolent protectors of an important person or place. Given their monumental proportions, the tigers were likely part of a traditional spirit way, or shéndào.

Also known as a spirit road, sacred way, or pathway of the soul, the shéndào was a feature of large tomb complexes and was usually a winding road lined with a protective cortege of animals, figures, and mythical creatures. Continued...



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PAIR OF MONUMENTAL STONE SPIRIT WAY TIGERS

These larger-than-life sculptures honored one's legacy and offered unending protection. Should one's spirit wander too far, these stone guardians served as eternal landmarks to guide the spirit back to its long home.

Considered the king of wild beasts, the tiger is an apt addition to a spirit way and is thought to be especially terrifying to demons and malignant spirits. However, it's possible these tigers had another purpose entirely, as it's unusual for a spirit way figure to be depicted in motion. Sculpted with curious expressions and unrealistic proportions, these particular stone tigers seem less like fearsome predators and more like benevolent celestial beings.

The stone tigers are carved in a simplified style common of later Chinese statuary, with abstracted forms and minimal surface decoration, save for low relief carvings of flame-like stripes. Strong yet cautious, the tigers stand forever in mirrored postures, with heads tilted upwards, legs extended mid-stride and tails curled along their sides.

From the MacLean Collection of Asian Art.

Dimensions listed are approximate. Approx. 3,500 lbs each.

