

Sandalwood Buddha Statue in Kadamwood Jali Box



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The art of sandalwood carving is an exquisite and ancient craft that has been practiced in the southern Indian state of Karnataka for centuries. This craft involves carving intricate designs into blocks of fragrant sandalwood, creating intricate sculptures, figurines, and other decorative items.

*Sandalwood tree (*Santalum album*), a species native to India, has been an important part of Indian culture for centuries, and it is widely*

regarded as one of the most valuable and prized woods in the world. Indian Sandalwood is one of the most sacred herbs of Ayurveda. Sandalwood powder and essential oil are renowned for their many medicinal and spiritual uses. But the wood itself can be used in creating wonders in much different ways. It has a distinctive fragrance and a smooth texture that makes it ideal for carving. Karnataka is home to some of the best sandalwood forests in the world. The state is also sometimes called gandhadagudi – the Land of Sandalwood.

The art of sandalwood carving has been an integral part of Karnataka's cultural heritage for centuries. Its earliest origins can be traced back to the 3rd century BCE, when sandalwood was used to make wooden idols and carvings for temples and other religious sites. Over time, sandalwood carving evolved into a sophisticated art form, with skilled craftsmen producing intricate carvings of deities, figures from Indian mythology, animals, and other decorative objects.

The growth of sandalwood carving can be traced back to the reign of the Hoysala dynasty, which ruled over Karnataka from the 10th to the 14th century. During this period, sandalwood was widely used for carving religious idols, decorative panels, and other objects of art. The Vijayanagara Empire, which ruled over Karnataka in the 14th and 15th centuries, continued the tradition of sandalwood carving. The empire's craftsmen produced some of the most exquisite sandalwood carvings in India, which were used to adorn the palaces and temples of the empire. During the reign of the Wodeyar dynasty in the 17th and 18th centuries, sandalwood carving reached its zenith. The Wodeyars were great patrons of the arts and encouraged the development of sandalwood carving as a fine art form. The craftsmen during this period produced some of the most intricate and delicate carvings ever seen, which were used to decorate the palaces and temples of the Wodeyar dynasty.

Sandalwood is a precious and valuable wood and has become increasingly rare. The state of Karnataka has also set up a Sandalwood Development Board to ensure that the precious sandalwood resources are sustainably managed. A government sponsored sustainable harvesting program involves controlled harvesting of mature trees and replanting of saplings, ensuring that the resource is replenished. This approach not only ensures the continued availability of sandalwood for handicrafts but also preserves the natural habitats of the sandalwood forests and supports the livelihoods of local artisans and craftsmen.

The craft of sandalwood carving is a highly skilled and time-consuming process that requires great patience, precision, and attention to detail. The carvers use a variety of tools, including chisels, knives, and saws, to carve the wood into intricate designs and shapes. The finished products are then polished to a smooth, glossy finish, giving them a beautiful and timeless look.

The sandalwood carvings of Karnataka are known for their intricate designs and attention to detail. The craftsmen draw inspiration from a wide range of sources, including mythology, religion, and nature, and their creations often depict scenes from Hindu epics and mythological stories. These carvings are not only decorative but also have religious and cultural significance, and they are often used in temples and other places of worship.

The art of sandalwood carving has been passed down from generation to generation, and it continues to thrive in Karnataka today. The intricate carvings produced by the skilled craftsmen are not only decorative but also have religious and cultural significance, and are widely used in temples and other places of worship. The art of sandalwood carving continues to thrive in Karnataka.

The figure of Buddha: The image of Buddha holds great significance in Indian culture and religion, and sandalwood carving has long been used to create intricate representations of this revered figure. Modern sandalwood carving in Karnataka, India has continued this tradition, producing exquisite carved images of Buddha that reflect the skill and artistry of the local craftsmen. The finished products are not only beautiful but also serve as powerful symbols of peace, tranquillity, and enlightenment. These sandalwood carvings of Buddha are highly valued by collectors and spiritual seekers alike, and their timeless elegance and cultural significance ensure that they will continue to be cherished for generations to come.

The Buddha figure is made of pure sandalwood. It has hand carving along with traditional designs and natural scenes, created by expert craftsperson. In this posture Buddha is sitting in Dhyana mudra under the Bodhi tree. The Dhyana mudra is the mudra of meditation, of concentration on the Good law, and of the attainment of spiritual perfection. According to tradition, this mudra derives from the one assumed by the Buddha when meditating under the bodhi tree before his Enlightenment. The obverse of the image has intricate carving of the

Bodhi tree.

Kadamwood Jali Box: The figure comes encased in a Kadamwood Jali Box. The Kadamba wood is considered auspicious in Indian culture. The designs on the exclusive Kadamwood Box are handcarved by expert craftsmen in the most synchronized manner. Imprints of birds and animals, the leitmotif of Indian art for countless generations, add a special quality to the final product.