



TEN THOUSAND
VILLAGES



About the Artisans

Tara Projects

Tara Projects works to change the lives of India's "untouchables," by eliminating unfair trade practices and child labour, fighting the exploitation of artisans and supporting Fair Trade and human dignity. Tara is a pioneering Indian organization in the field of fair wages, non-formal education programs for children and women, health and environmental awareness, adult literacy centres and further development for its member artisans. Numerous levels of committees with elected representatives from all sections of the project co-ordinate the production, design and marketing of handicrafts. Currently, nearly 1000 artisan families from 35 community-based artisan groups and workshops create products from all the major traditional handicraft lines of northern India. These artisans receive medical insurance, interest-free loans and advances, access to savings programs and skills training.

Soapstone Nativity Carving

The Holy Family sits within this intricately carved piece of palewa soapstone, which is sourced in Agra, India. Palewa is well-known as a carving stone as it's soft yet durable.

Special Details:

A soft stone with a slick, smooth, soapy feel, soapstone (composed of the mineral talc) comes in a variety of colours from various parts of the world. Palewa and Gorara stone, for example, are varieties of Indian soapstone. Palewa stone is grey in appearance and becomes darker when hand-polished. Due to this varied appearance, it is difficult to match pieces since the true colour is not visible until the carving is complete and the item polished. With the cutting, carving, scraping, sanding and polishing, it can take as much as twelve hours to complete a small box. Both Palewa and Gorara soapstone have long been used in India as soft mediums for carving. Centuries ago, skilled stone workers were brought to Agra under Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan to build the Taj Mahal. Today, their descendants remain in the region, using the same tools and methods to achieve intricate soapstone carvings and inlay for beautiful sculptures and decorative pieces.



Materials:

palewa stone

Travel the world with each visit to Ten Thousand Villages.

Learn how Fair Trade really makes a difference. Our goal is to provide vital, fair income to artisans by marketing their handicrafts and telling their stories in North America. Ten Thousand Villages sells product from more than 30 countries, providing work for nearly 60,000 people around the world.

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