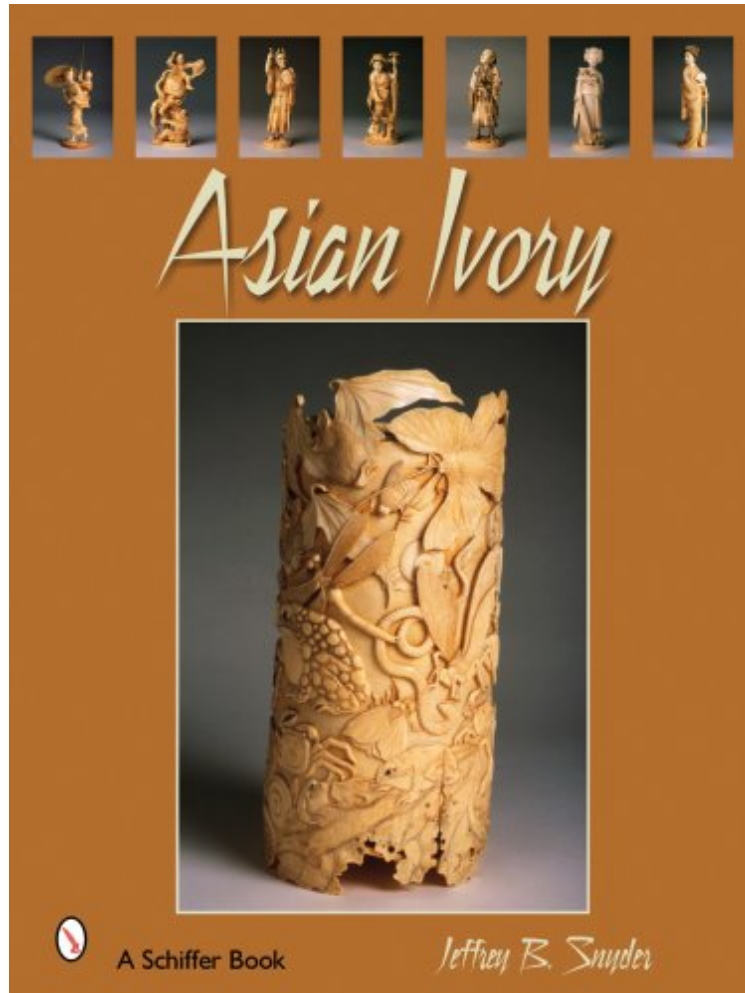


## Asian Ivory

*Jeffrey B Snyder*

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**Jeffrey B Snyder : Asian Ivory** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Asian Ivory:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Asian Ivory By R. Campbell The book, Asian Ivory, will serve a useful purpose for the beginning collector of Chinese and Japanese ivory sculpture since the middle of the 19th century. The major of pieces shown are of rather ordinary quality items. For an advanced collector such as myself, the book does not include very many top quality pieces nor does it include much discussion of what makes quality in Asian Ivory sculpture. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Interesting book but with odd omissions By hoffmanjade(dot)com Ivory is a near-perfect material for carving. Dense, hard, and durable, it allows the carver a full range of artistic expression down to the finest detail. Ivory carving in China dates back more than 6000 years. Japan adopted the art much later and carried it to new heights. This beautifully produced book showcases hundreds of ivory

artworks from these two cultures. Jeffrey Snyder has authored 25 other books for Schiffer, with topics ranging from oyster plates to walking sticks. For this book, his first on Asian antiques, he received help from a few "able guides" and selected pieces from five important private collections. The book is divided into an Introduction, a History of Ivory Production, The Scholar's Life, and a section on Ivory Figures. A brief introduction to the material itself includes a warning about the many imitators of true elephant ivory, but little in the way of practical advice on how to detect them. Likewise, the reader receives little help in distinguishing elephant ivory from, for example, mammoth ivory, walrus tusk, hippo teeth, or other "ivories" that might be encountered. There is a useful two paragraph summary of the Endangered Species Act (CITES) provisions as they relate to ivory. The History section begins with Chinese ivory but quickly moves on to Japanese. No truly ancient Chinese ivories are shown, possibly because the author apparently elected not to include museum examples in this book. The author explains some of the cultural aspects and symbolism important to understanding the motifs commonly seen in Chinese carvings and Japanese okimono cabinet pieces. Some vignettes from books written by travelers to Asia 100 years ago and more enliven the text. These include interesting discussions of how the raw material was obtained and worked, how the art dealers operated, and an "Interview with a Japanese Ivory Carver." The pieces illustrated are mainly Japanese and mostly from the 19th and early 20th centuries. The quality ranges from superb down to a few that are fairly crude. Some readers may be disappointed that the very finest examples of each type, which most likely reside in museums, are not illustrated here. This is a limitation of relying on a small number of private collections. To respect the collectors' anonymity the pieces are not attributed to their source, except for one collection. There is an entire section on colored ivories imitating flowers and fruits (as well as a warning about staining used to "antique" ivory). The advanced collector will notice that little is said about ivory connoisseurship that would help the reader distinguish first-rate from lesser carvings. The photography throughout is excellent, and where possible the carver's seal is also shown. A minor quibble is that most of the photographs share the same background, which can get boring. A concise but useful Bibliography (including some Web sites) rounds out the book. But it omits some classic ivory references, such as the books by Laufer, Cox, Eastham, and Wills, and the ivory catalogs of the Seattle Art Museum and the Oriental Ceramic Society. Overall, this book will be of interest to every collector and dealer of Asian ivory, as well as a treat for those interested in Asian decorative arts in general. Originally published in *Adornment* magazine, Vol. 7, No. 4, Winter 2009. 2 people found the following review helpful. A superb reference work of impeccable scholarship. Carved ivory from Asia, particular from China and Japan, has long been highly prized by European and American collectors and are a staple of regional and national art museums around the world. "Asian Ivory" by antiques expert Jeffrey B. Snyder concentrates on nineteenth and early twentieth century ivory carvings, along with brush holders and wrist rests for scholars, cricket cages, card cases, match holders, sword hilts, and sword scabbards. Enhanced with more than six hundred full color photographs showcasing magnificent examples, the informed and informative text provides an historical overview and history of the ivory trade, laced with quotations of nineteenth century European travelers and their encounters with Japanese ivory carvers and merchants. The inclusion of folk tales provides fascinating insights into the figural characters carved in ivory and the beliefs they personified for their carvers. A superb reference work of impeccable scholarship, "Asian Ivory" will be of immense interest to collectors and dealers of Asian ivory, and is highly recommended for non-specialist general readers with an interest in Asian culture in general, and ivory carvings in particular.

Graceful okimono figures in many forms, dating from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, are the primary focus of this book, while scholar's brush holders and wrist rests, cricket cages, card cases, match holders, sword hilts, and scabbards are also presented. Finely carved ivory from China and Japan is featured here, along with artist's signatures, in over 600 beautiful photos. An engaging text explores the history of the ivory trade from East to West, quoting nineteenth century European travelers' encounters with Japanese ivory carvers and merchants. Folk tales provide insight into many of the figural characters represented and beliefs they personify. This book will be treasured by all who enjoy finely crafted art.

About the Author Jeffrey B. Snyder is an active author and editor. His books and articles cover a wide range of antiquities and collectibles. He and his family live in southeastern Pennsylvania.