



Chinese polychrome figure of Guandi, early 19th century POA

Chinese polychrome figure of Guandi, early 19th century, the god of war and justice seated upon a plinth with one leg outstretched and the other foot just visible at the hem of his tunic; wearing brightly-coloured armour with tatoie heads underneath a mantle of bright green decorated with waves, cloudscrolls and a fearsome dragon, holding a book in his right hand and wearing a yellow and turquoise headpiece with scrolling details.

Dimensions:

Height: 22cm. (8 5/8in.)

Condition:

Restored chip to book and tops of fingers to left hand

Notes:

Guandi is the deification of Guan Yu, who was a general during the Eastern Han dynasty (25-220CE) famed for his military prowess and moral qualities. Tales of his deeds and conduct were popular after his death, most notably the 'Romance of the Three Kingdoms', a 14th- century historical novel revered as one of the greatest works of classical Chinese literature. Guan Yu was deified during the Sui period (581-618), around three centuries after his death. He has been worshipped ever since, as a bodhisattva in the Buddhist faith, as 'Emperor Guan' (??; Guandi) in Chinese folk religions and as 'Holy Emperor Lord Guan' (????; Guan Sheng Di Jun) in Daoist belief. Dedicated shrines to the God of War were prayed to in hope of military success but Guandi also came to represent protection against threats (both spiritual and earthly) and longevity. Such small household shrines were extremely popular in the Qing dynasty, and often incorporated porcelain figures of Guandi. It is highly likely that this figure was used in such a setting, and the hole to the back of the figure not only reduced the risk of breakage during firing but also could be used to hold incense during prayer.

Material and Technique	Porcelain with overglaze enamel decoration in the famille rose palette
Origin	Chinese
Period	19th Century
Dimensions	Height: 22cm. (8 5/8in.)



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