



Vase

Date

ca. 1675

Medium

porcelain, overglaze iron red and enamel

Description

There is no historical evidence for Zhongkui, the Demon Queller, although he is widely revered by both the Chinese and Japanese. He is the protector against evil spirits and is often shown either grasping or holding a demon or oni. He is considered to be the Recorder of Hell. He is also associated with the New Year festivities and the Dragon Boat festival in the fifth month. There is a story that in the third year of the Kai Yuan Period (716), the Tang emperor Ming Huang contracted malaria and was ill for nearly a month. One night, he dreamt he met two spirits, one big and other small. The small figure suddenly stole a sachet and jade lute belonging to the emperor. The larger figure chased and caught the smaller and retrieved the emperor's possessions. The emperor asked who he was and he responded Zongkui, a person who had failed the Imperial Examinations for military posts, and swore to exorcise all evil spirits around the world.

Dimensions

Overall: 10 1/2 x 4 1/2 in. (26.7 x 11.4 cm)