



The Eight Daoist Immortals

Date

17th century

Primary Maker

Artist Unknown

Medium

stone

Description

The Ba Xian, or eight immortals, appear to have been adopted as part of the development of religious Taoism from the 4th-8th centuries but does not appear to have been fully codified until the early 13th century. There does not appear to be any historic basis for any of the immortals. The eight include Zong-li Zhuan who is said to have lived during the Zhou Dynasty and was said to have the power of transformation. He is also considered to be chief of the eight immortals. His emblem is the fan. Zhang Guo-lao was said to have lived between the 7th and 8th centuries and had the power to render himself invisible. His emblem is the Yu-gu, a musical wind instrument. Lu Dung-bin lived was a scholar who was said to have lived around the mid-8th century. He is the patron said of barbers and is worshipped by the sick. His emblem is the fly-whisk. Cao Guo-jiu was said to be the son of a 10th century military commander in the early Song Dynasty. He is the patron saint of the theatrical profession.

Dimensions

Overall: 11 1/2 x 19 7/8 x 2 1/8 in. (29.2 x 50.5 x 5.4 cm)