



6606 A bronze kōro (incense burner) in the form of a shishi (Chinese guardian lion) holding a decorated ball under its left paw.

China 17th century Ming Dynasty

Dimensions: H. 5¾" x W.9½" x D.5¾" (14cm x 23cm x 14cm)

Shishi (Chinese guardian lions, or Imperial guardian lions) have traditionally stood in front of Chinese Imperial palaces, Imperial tombs, government offices, temples, as well as the homes of government officials and the wealthy, since the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220), and were believed to have powerful protective powers. Although not indigenous to China, lions are known to have been imported as gifts to the emperor, and their symbolic representation was introduced later via Buddhism to both China and Japan, portraying them as the defender of the law and protector of sacred buildings.