



6888 A bronze kōro (incense burner) of Jurōjin seated on a deer.

Japan 18th century Edo period

Dimensions: H. 8½" x W. 6¼" (21.5cm x 16cm)

Jurōjin is the God of Wisdom and Longevity and originates from China's Taoist pantheon (in Chinese, 'Shoulao'). He is considered to be the personification of the southern polar star. In Japan he became a popular god of longevity and one of the Shichifukujin (Seven Gods of Good Fortune).

The legendary Jurōjin is said to be based on an actual person who lived in the late 11th century, who stood almost 6 feet tall and had an elongated head. He is known in legend as a great lover of sake (rice wine) and as being fond of female company. He is commonly shown as an old man with a long white beard carrying a staff with a scroll tied to it, on which is written the life span of all living things or, in other accounts, a record of all the good and bad deeds committed by all beings. He is typically accompanied by a deer, a symbol of longevity, although is sometimes accompanied by other long-lived animals such as the crane or tortoise.