



7573      A bronze figure of Putai seated on rocks and resting upon his cloth bag

China 17th century Ming dynasty

Dimensions: H. 11cm x W. 11cm x D. 7.5cm (4½" x 4½" x 3")

Putai (Japanese Hotei) is a legendary Buddhist monk who allegedly lived in 10th century China and is regarded as a symbol of abundance and good fortune. He is usually depicted showing his bulky stomach, joyously laughing and resting upon his cloth bag.

Putai came to be popular with children, for his happy-go-lucky smile; with merchants, who believed his bag was full of goods and with Zen monks, who believed his bag was full of nothingness.

A poem dedicated to Putai by a Japanese monk Fugai Ekun (1568-1654) reads:

How can he smile so happily?

Do not compare him with others:

His worldliness is not worldly,

His joy comes from all his own nature

