



Chinese porcelain figure group of the Hehe Erxian

Jiaqing period circa 1810

European Market

Height: 9 inches; 23cm

from the Golden Gate Collection, GG1099

Priced in US dollars

\$9,500

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A Chinese export porcelain figure group of two laughing figures, one carrying a lotus bloom and with the toad on his shoulder, the other holding a flattened basket containing cash, all brightly enamelled in famille rose.

This is a lively and entertaining figure group showing the best quality of figures that was still being produced in the early 19th century in China.

The figures are the laughing boys known as hehe erxian or the Twin Immortals of Harmony, linked with Caishen, the God of Wealth.

Another Daoist God of Wealth (or Luck) is Liu Hai, (sometime considered an embodiment of Caishen) who is usually accompanied by a three legged toad. Originally a politician in the Five Dynasties period, Liu Hai vanquished a demon in the form of a golden toad, in the process severing one of its legs. The toad lived in dark places and had been lured out by Liu Hai with his string of coins. Afterwards the tripodal amphibian swore fealty to Liu Hai and was able to transport him anywhere he wished. The toad also had the useful habit of vomiting up quantities of gold and silver coins - hence many Chinese shops have a toad near the door with a coin in its mouth. He is usually depicted sitting on Liu Hai's shoulder, as here in the left hand figure.

The right hand boy has a flattened basket which is slightly open to reveal a row of Chinese cash, coins with holes in them.