



Chinese porcelain longevity dish Wanli with inscription

Ming Dynasty, Wanli period

dated February/March 1594

Chinese Market

Diameter: 11.75 inches; 30cm

A Chinese porcelain large saucer dish, decorated in underglaze blue with peony and phoenixes, the underside with an inscription in the well of the foot rim.

The translation of the inscription indicates that this extremely rare dish was made for a lady of Shicheng. At least two places in Eastern China could be this Shicheng. Shicheng County is in Jiangxi Province but has no Fangguo district. Or it could be the City of Shicheng, Zhejiang, which is now under Qiandao Lake, created in 1959 for the Xin'an River Dam project. This latter city was built during the Han dynasty and had several elaborate gates.

There is little precedent for a privately made, documentary dish like this. The porcelain and its decoration are fairly standard for the period but the inscription is a remarkable survival.

石城縣坊郭里熊門 陳氏

石中里白茅塘陳玉爵公之女也配

汝行公 生子三長曰墀儀賓

次曰兆楨 壇生幼曰兆泰令史

壽盤萬年不替耳

大明萬曆二十二年四月吉日

御器 廠造

Translation: "For Mrs Chen,

of Xiong Gate, Fangguo district, Shicheng county, the daughter of Mr Chen Yujue of Baimao Pool, Shizhong district, who married Mr Ru Xing, and who has three sons, the eldest of whom, named Chi, married into the Imperial Household, the second of whom, named Zhaozhen, became a Daoist monk, and the third of whom, named Zhaotai became an official,

the Manufactory of Objects for the Imperial Court has made, on an auspicious day of the fourth month of the twenty-second year of the Wanli reign of the Great Ming, this Longevity Dish, to last for ten thousand years without decline."