



Portable Buddhist Reliquary, Late Qing Dynasty, China, Late 19th Century



240 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Solid wood

Width : 21 cm

Height : 17 cm

<https://www.proantic.com/en/1488904-portable-buddhist-reliquary-late-qing-dynasty-china-late-19th-century.html>

Description

Portable Buddhist Reliquary, Late Qing Dynasty, China, late 19th century
Description: This carved hardwood travel reliquary is in the form of a folding triptych, to protect the sacred figures inside. When closed, it takes the appearance of a miniature shrine decorated with Chinese inscriptions in regular characters carved on the exterior panels. The whole rests on a base marked with a signet seal, probably indicating the workshop or temple of origin. Material and condition: Hardwood, old patina of use with russet and brown hues, giving the object a beautiful natural shine due to repeated handling. Dimensions: o Open: H: 17 cm, W: 21 cm o Closed: H: 17 cm, W: 9 cm Iconography: The interior of the reliquary reveals a triptych carved in relief, depicting Buddhist figures: o Central

Dealer

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panel: representation of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara (Guanyin), divinity of compassion, seated in a meditation position with several arms, symbolizing his ability to help all beings. He is surrounded by secondary figures, including disciples and protective divinities. o Side panels: bodhisattvas or assistant divinities, under a flaming arch evoking the spiritual aura and enlightenment. These figures express a wish of protection and guidance for the faithful who carries this reliquary. o Carved base: rows of small seated figures, representing disciples or ancestors venerated in the Buddhist context. Inscriptions: The exterior panels bear engraved Chinese inscriptions: o 佛光普照 (Fó guāng pǔ zhào): "The light of the Buddha illuminates everywhere." o 普度众生 (Pǔ dù zhòng shēng): "Save (or guide) all living beings." These formulas, frequently found on Buddhist religious objects, express fundamental concepts related to spiritual enlightenment and universal salvation. The seal stamp under the base remains to be identified, but its presence confirms a religious use and a probable manufacture in a temple or an official Buddhist workshop during the Qing dynasty. Dating and context: This reliquary is attributed to the end of the Qing dynasty, towards the end of the 19th century. Its sculptural style, the quality of the wood and the patina indicate a piece made at a time when these objects were commonly used by itinerant monks or the faithful practicing private devotion. An object that was both utilitarian and sacred, this type of portable reliquary was intended to accompany travels, guaranteeing the faithful permanent access to a protective divine representation.