

SA1220599

Japanese Arita Figure of Jigoku Dayū, The Hell Courtesan, c.1921

Price

GBP 700

| USD \$945 | EUR 819

Item Reference: SA1220599**Date of manufacture: Edwardian**

Dimensions

Height = 24 cm (9.4")

Width = 16 cm (6.3")

Depth = 13 cm (5.1")

Description

A rare Japanese porcelain figure of Jigoku Dayū, the legendary Hell Courtesan, produced in Arita around 1920. The figure is shown with a traditional kiseru tobacco pipe, the defining attribute that distinguishes her from conventional representations of Kannon, the Goddess of Mercy. According to Japanese tradition, Jigoku Dayū became a symbol of spiritual transformation after her encounter with the Zen master Ikkyū Sōjun. This unusual subject combines Buddhist symbolism with one of the most celebrated legends of Japanese cultural history. The figure is modelled seated in contemplation and painted in the classic Imari palette of cobalt blue, iron-red and gold. Her white porcelain face is finely painted, while a raised gilded urna on the forehead provides a further reference to the spiritual dimension of the subject. The reverse displays karakusa scrolls, chrysanthemum blossoms and a geometric lozenge medallion arranged as a true 360-degree composition. The unglazed base retains its firing ventilation hole and a red overglaze MADE IN JAPAN export mark. Figures of Jigoku Dayū are far less common than conventional representations of Kannon and remain highly desirable among ...

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