



Shrine Statue

Date

19th Century

Primary Maker

Miao

Medium

Wood

Description

This is a shrine sculpture used by the Miao culture of China. The Miao were traditionally animistic and practiced ancestor worship with interwoven elements of Taoism and Buddhism. Every Miao home would have had an altar to spirits of good fortune, dab xwm kab. Mostly this would have just involved a rice paper sheet but in some cases and in the special altars used by shaman other carved figures such as this would be present as well. This particular figure bears a striking resemblance to the Yao wooden statues made up until the 1940s. Part of sets of

three used in the altars of high ranking priests these figures came in sets of three with an ancestor sculpture, a mounted messenger and seated dignitary figures. These statues were imbued with souls by placing small silver strings into a hidden compartment in the figure.

Dimensions

15 1/2 × 4 3/8 × 4 3/4 in. (39.4 × 11.1 × 12.1 cm)