



Nuo Theater Mask, China, Sichuan (??) / Guizhou (??), Late 19th - Early 20th Century



850 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Etat d'usage

Material : Solid wood

Width : 15,5 cm

Height : 20 cm

Description

Nuo (?) Theater Mask -- Bugua Xianshi (????)
Character The Founding Master of Divination by
TrigramsWood, antique brown patina, signs of
internal wearChina, Sichuan (??) / Guizhou (??)
Late 19th - early 20th century Dimensions: 20 x
15.5 cmBugua Xianshi--the Founding Master of
divination by the Trigrams--is identified with
Wen Wang, King Wen of the Zhou Dynasty (11th
century B.C.), to whom tradition attributes the
codification of the Eight Trigrams (Bagua, ??)
and the composition of the Yi Jing, the Classic of
Changes. As foundational cosmological concepts
in Chinese thought, the Trigrams organize the
forces of the world--heaven, earth, water, fire,
thunder, wind, mountain, lake--and form the
foundation of geomancy, Feng Shui, and the
entire range of divinatory practices that shape the

Dealer

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lives of rural communities in Sichuan and Guizhou."In the Nuo (?) repertoire, Bugua Xianshi embodies the supreme authority of esoteric knowledge: he is the one who deciphers the signs, orders the ritual timeline, and opens the pathways between the visible world and the invisible forces. His presence in the ceremony confers cosmological legitimacy on the entire ritual. This mask conveys the power of this figure with rare intensity: the solemn face, with half-closed eyes radiating a striking inner presence, is crowned by a sculpted headdress adorned with scrollwork and two lateral protrusions evoking the attributes of a diviner or a cosmic sovereign. The ancient brown patina, deeply imbued by years of use, bears witness to a piece at the very heart of a living tradition."This mask is reproduced in the book: Paul Louis Couailhac, *The Dragon's Daughter and Other Characters You Might Encounter in China*, Éditions Couailhac, 2019, p. 33

Provenance: Former Collection of Paul-Louis Couailhac (1945-2025) A French expert in East Asian studies, a graduate of INALCO, and a renowned bibliophile known for having assembled one of the most significant private collections of Chinese ritual masks from Nuo theater in Europe. An exhibition showcasing his collection of Nuo masks was dedicated to him in 2026 in Issigeac, organized by the Ocarina Gallery. Sold with a certificate of authenticity from expert S. Reynes and an invoice from the Ocarina Gallery.*

Shipping costs upon request.