

# The Eight Immortals



**Popular to Taoism, this group of individuals gained immortality and became heroes to the Chinese people.**

According to Chinese mythology, these eight individuals were just ordinary people who through their actions, gained immortality. Gifted with immortality and special powers, they banded together as kindred spirits, and together embarked on many adventures throughout China fighting dragons or demons, and righting wrongs. Through their travels they became heroes of the general population curing them of illness or disease, fighting against oppression, and teaching them how to evolve spiritually to greater heights.

They are:

**He Xian Gu** – The Immortal Woman – often depicted holding a magic lotus flower.

**Cao Gou Jiu** – Royal Uncle Cao – wears formal court dress and holding castanets.

**Li Tie Guai** – Iron Crutch Li – able to free his soul from his body and travel in the celestial world. On one travel, they thought he was dead and burnt his body,

forcing him to enter into the body of crippled beggar when he returned. Often seen carrying a double gourd, a symbol of longevity.

**Lan Caihe** – The Hermaphrodite - is depicted either as a young boy or girl carrying a basket of flowers.

**Lu Dongbin** -- The Chief Leader – a scholar carrying a magic sword on his back.

**Han Xiang Zi** – The Philosopher – depicted as playing a flute that can soothe wild animals.

**Zhang Guo Lao** – The Elder – a recluse often seen with a mule and carrying a bamboo drum.

**Zhongli Quan** – The Fat Man – depicted carrying a fan which can bring the dead back to life.

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In art, the 8 Immortals are often used as symbols of prosperity and longevity. Look at the following picture, one taken without flash and then taken with flash:

**Without flash**



**With flash (shows the 8 Immortals)**



*The Chinese character is longevity.*