



## Flask

Place of origin: China (made)

Date: 1400-1430 (made)

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Glazed and decorated porcelain and cobalt

Museum number: 554-1878

Gallery location: China, Room 44, The T.T. Tsui Gallery, case 33

### Public access description

The shape of this flask is based on a leather drinking flask traditionally used by the nomadic people of the North west regions of China. It is often referred to in Chinese as a 'Bianhu' and is also widely known as a pilgrim flask. This kind of flask is typically of flattened ovoid or circular form. This one is decorated in underglaze blue with a stylised lotus design, simple banded lines and floral scrolls. It dates to the reign of the Yongle emperor (1402-1424) of the Ming dynasty (1366-1644).

### Descriptive line

Porcelain flask decorated in underglaze blue with dragon design, China, Ming dynasty, ca. 1400-1430

### Physical description

The main body of the flask is of flattened circular form, the neck is narrow at the shoulder and widens at the top. Two slender handles adjoin the neck and the shoulder. Decorated in underglaze blue with a stylised lotus design, simple banded decoration and floral scrolls.

### Museum number

554-1878

### Object history note

Historical significance: The shape of this flask is based on a leather form traditionally used by the nomadic people of the North west regions of China. It is often referred to in Chinese as a 'Bianhu' and is also widely known as a pilgrim flask.

### Historical context note

Similar pieces are known to exist in the Percival David Foundation collection, the Sedgwick collection and the Topkapi Sarray, Istanbul - also dating to the Yongle period.

### URL

<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O176119/flask-unknown/>