Snuff bottle

Place of origin: China (made)

Date: 1796-1850 (made)

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Porcelain, with decoration painted in underglaze blue

Credit Line: Burman Bequest

Museum number: CIRC.1380-1926

Gallery location: Ceramics, Room 137, The Curtain Foundation Gallery, case 14, shelf 7

Public access description
Snuff is powdered tobacco, usually blended with aromatic herbs or spices. The habit of snuff-taking spread to China from the West during the 17th century and became established in the 18th century. People generally carried snuff in a small bottle. By the 20th century these bottles had become collectors' items, owing to the great variety of materials and decorative techniques used in their production.

Descriptive line
Chinese snuff bottle, 1796-1850, Qing dynasty; porcelain, with painted decoration depicting a dragon boat race.

Physical description
The bottle is a cylindrical form with convex sides and a short receding neck with a splayed neck-rim. It does not have a stopper. The decoration depicts a dragon boat race and there is a partial debased spearhead border and dots around the neck. The receding foot, unglazed at the edge, has a glazed indentation underneath with a Yongzheng (1723-35) mark in blue regular script. A miniature bottle of the sort often adapted for use as snuff bottles.

Dimensions
Height: 8.5 cm

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URL
http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O9068/snuff-bottle-unknown/