



## Octagonal Gourd-Shaped Cloisonné Bottle

掐絲琺瑯八角葫蘆形壺

Height: 21.3 cm (8 3/8 in.)

Diameter: 10.5 cm. (4 1/8 in.)

Early Qing dynasty 清早期

Second half 17th century A.D.

Formerly in a Japanese collection

Of elegant elongated gourd shape, the basic rounded form of each bulb is subtly faceted and each bulb decorated with fanciful lotus borne on leafy scrolling stems of gilt wire. The blossoms are inlaid with multi-colored enamels within gilt wire-formed cells, the colors including white, red, dark cobalt blue, yellow, and mixed colors including dark and lime green and pink, all on a turquoise ground between a lappet band at the foot and pendant chains below the flared mouth.

The distinctive shades of green and a pink hue along with the geometricized and decoratively manipulated floral motifs, had become commonplace characteristics of Qianlong period cloisonné. The abstract lotus blossoms had their genesis in the cloisonné of the Ming period (fig. 1) and the present bottle retains characteristics of those emblematic designs as they developed during the 17th century. This is illustrated here by a *hu* from the first half of the century (fig. 2) and a pair of gourd forms from the second half (fig. 3). The key fret and “drape beaded jewels,” as well as the lotus panel borders, standard in Ming decorative arts, were quite popular during the Qianlong period and appear on an octagonal gourd-form vessel similar to the present and the only such comparative

piece that has come to light thus far (fig. 4).[1] In their catalog of the Uldry collection, the authors noted that “...the variety of the color palette, increasing throughout the seventeenth century, proves that enamellers were not averse to technical experiments.”[2] The Clague and the present vessel were the results of this searching creativity aimed at pleasing their privileged clientele.

1. See Claudia Brown’s discussion in a very similar piece in Claudia Brown, *Chinese Cloisonné: The Clague Collection*, Phoenix Art Museum, 1980, p. 88.

2. Helmut Brinker and Albert Lutz, *Chinese Cloisonné, The Pierre Uldry Collection*, The Asia Society Galleries, New York, 1989, p. 118.



Fig. 1: Cloisonné *gui*-form vessel, Ming dynasty, first half of the 15th century, The Pierre Uldry Collection, after Helmut Brinker and Albert Lutz, *Chinese Cloisonné, The Pierre Uldry Collection, The Asia Society Galleries, New York, 1989, pl. 18.*



Fig. 2: Cloisonné *hu*-form vessel, late Ming-early Qing dynasty, first half of the 17th century, The Pierre Uldry Collection, after Helmut Brinker and Albert Lutz, *Chinese Cloisonné, The Pierre Uldry Collection, The Asia Society Galleries, New York, 1989, pl. 124.*



Fig. 3: A pair of cloisonné gourd-form vessels, early Qing dynasty, second half of the 17th century, after Helmut Brinker and Albert Lutz, *Chinese Cloisonné, The Pierre Uldry Collection, The Asia Society Galleries, New York, 1989, pl. 192.*



Fig. 4: Cloisonné octagonal gourd-form vessel, Qing dynasty, late 17th-early 18th century, The Clague Collection, after Claudia Brown, *Chinese Cloisonné: The Clague Collection*, Phoenix Art Museum, 1980, pl. 36.