

89. LAMP STAND

Nghia Lu commune, Cam Giang district, Hai Duong Province, 1580
Stoneware, H: 86.2 cm
National Museum of Vietnamese History, Ha Noi, LSb 13771

34

Nguyen Dinh Chien, *Cam Nang Do Gom Viet Nam Co Minh Van: The Ky XV–XIX (Handbook of Vietnamese Ceramics with Inscriptions from the Fifteenth to Nineteenth Centuries)* (Ha Noi: National Museum of Vietnamese History, 1999), 58 and 59, 87–88. The inscription dating the pair is on the other lamp stand (LSb 17250).

35

Trian Nguyen, "Ceramics Used in a Buddhist Context," in Stevenson and Guy, eds., *Vietnamese Ceramics*, 159.

This lamp stand is one of a pair dated the twenty-fourth day, sixth month, and third year of Dien Thanh's reign, which is 1580.³⁴ The inscription on this piece, and much of the inscription on the other one of the pair, lists the donors, who include the high princess Phuc Thanh. The numerous dated ceramics from the fifteenth through nineteenth centuries provide a firmer chronology for later Vietnamese ceramics than we have for the earlier period. They also provide information about the artisans, as in this example, where Hoang Nguu and Nguyen Phong Lai are listed (on the inscription of the other lamp stand) as the makers.

In a temple, the lamp stands were placed in pairs on either side of a censer (the set is then called *tam su* or *bo tam su*), and sometimes with the addition of a pair of vases (*ngu su*) and a pair of water-offering vessels (*that su*). Thus, the vessels relate to the offerings of incense, light, water, and flowers. In central and southern Viet Nam, one of the vases is sometimes replaced with a tray for fruit.³⁵

The dragon, the most popular motif on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century blue-and-white ware, is almost always featured on the inscribed lamp stands. One unique aspect of the ceramics of the period is the use of applied bisque for various motifs, rather than being painted in blue and white. Here, the dragon strides forward in pursuit of the pearl that flies before him.

LITERATURE

Co Vat Viet Nam (Vietnamese Antiquities), 2003; Nguyen Dinh Chien, *Cam Nang Do Gom Viet Nam Co Minh Van: The Ky XV–XIX (Handbook of Vietnamese Ceramics with Inscriptions from the Fifteenth to Nineteenth Centuries)*, 1999.

