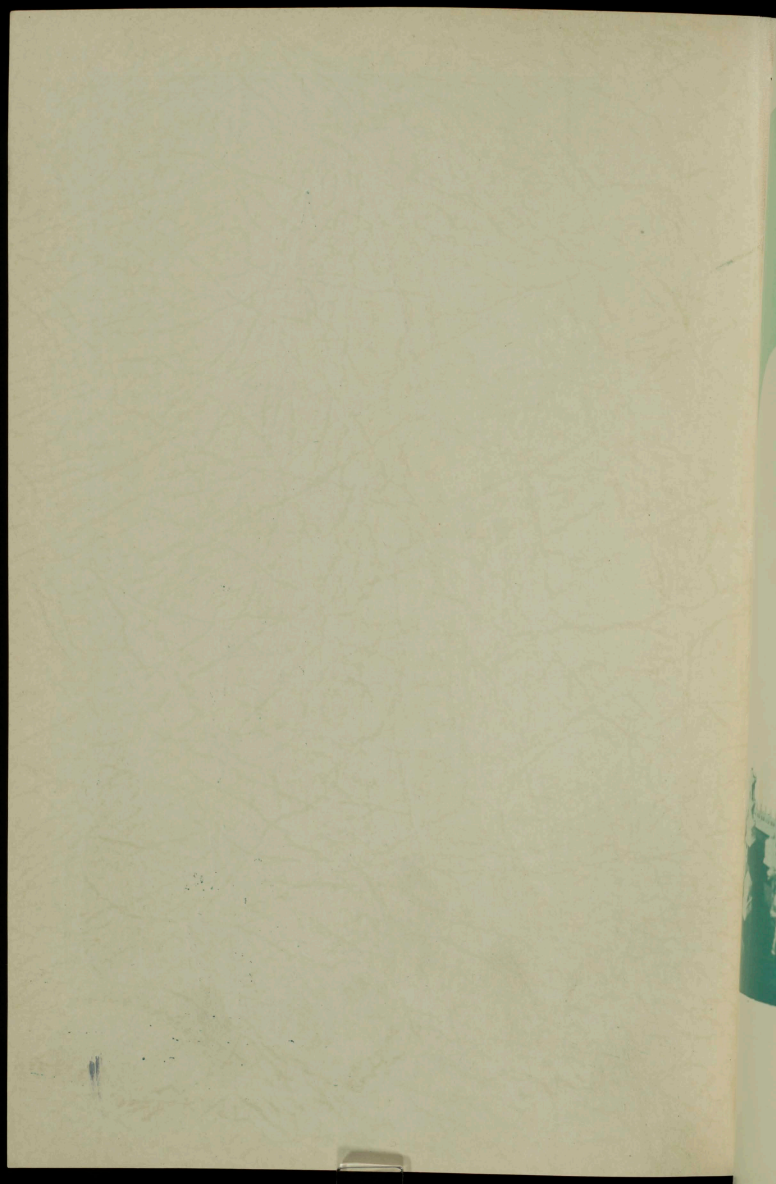
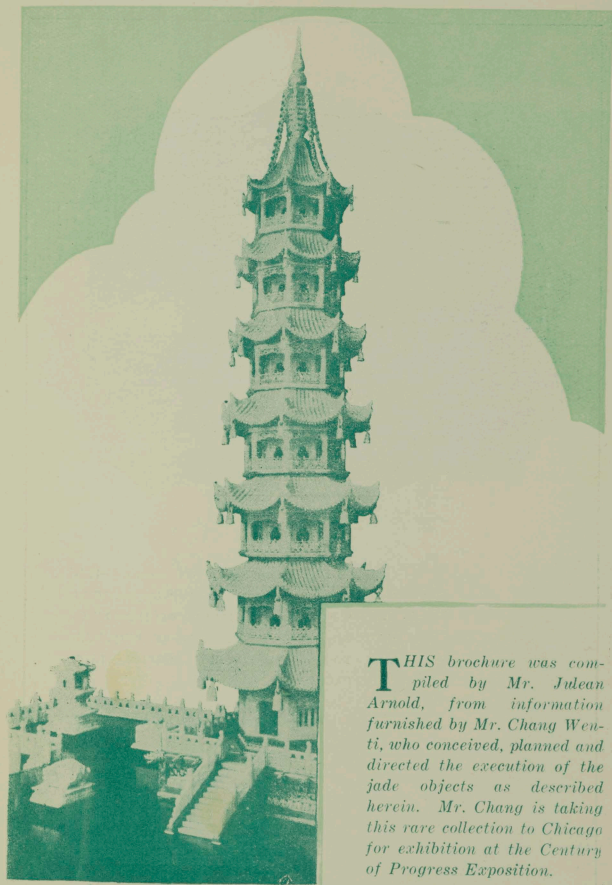


The Altar  
Of The Green  
Jade Pagoda

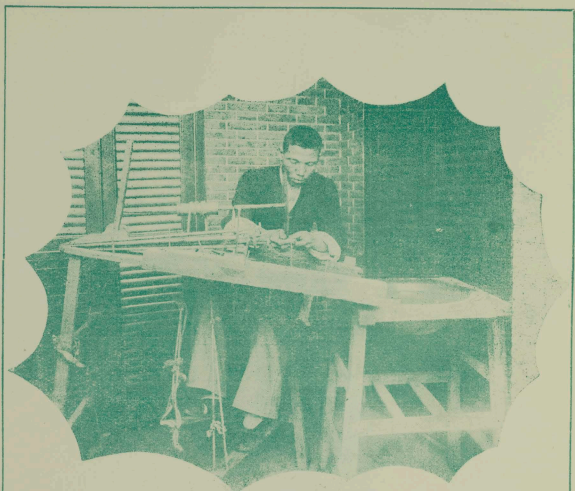






**T**HIS brochure was compiled by Mr. Julian Arnold, from information furnished by Mr. Chang Wenti, who conceived, planned and directed the execution of the jade objects as described herein. Mr. Chang is taking this rare collection to Chicago for exhibition at the Century of Progress Exposition.

Shanghai, China May 1, 1933.




A JADE CARVER AT WORK—TEN YEARS OF EXACTING, PATIENT WORK, AT THE HANDS OF HUNDREDS OF SUCH ARTISANS, WERE REQUIRED TO COMPLETE THE GREEN JADE PAGODA.



*The Altar  
of the*  
GREEN JADE PAGODA

**T**he miniature Green Jade Pagoda is a wonderful exemplification of the jade-carvers' art, in China, the land of pagodas. It is unique, inimitable and unequalled in the history of jade-carving. It is triply wonderful; firstly for the unprecedented size and quality of the jade; secondly, for the grand and daring conception of its design; and thirdly for the unparalleled patience and superb excellence of the teamwork of the most experienced handicraft artisans in the whole of China.

The pagoda as a form of religious architecture was of Hindu origin. It was carried to China by Buddhist missionaries shortly after the advent of the Christian era, that is, about two thousand years ago. China proved to be a fruitful field for this mystical structure. It caught the imagination of Chinese converts to Buddhism. Though not of native origin, the pagoda, in its evolution in Chinese hands during many centuries, has developed characteristics that are distinctively Chinese. Thus





in China they have been erected not only in honour of Buddhist deities, but also for perpetuating the memory of ancestors, as well as for other purely Chinese conceptions. Their presence in a community is presumed to produce good wind-and-water-spirit influences, and ward off evil. They are also supposed to assure, to the communities in which they stand, a state of prosperity. Pagodas are always in odd-numbered storeys, odd numbers being the most propitious and seven or nine being the most usual. The loftiest rise to a height of more than two hundred feet. It is estimated that there are at present upwards of two thousand pagodas in China. These comprise probably as many as a hundred different designs or models. Miniature replicas of these varied models may be seen in the Field Museum in Chicago.



EXQUISITE

These picturesque structures that crown a jutting eminence, or stand on a swelling hill, or rise from the general dead-level of the shanty-like buildings forming a Chinese city, or again are seen breaking the monotony of low-lying lands, are so common that they seem almost a natural feature in a Chinese landscape.

The designer of the miniature Green Jade Pagoda, Mr. Chang Wen-ti, travelled over a large part of China to secure architectural details of many varieties of pagodas. He succeeded in evolving from his observations and studies a distinctive pattern which is not only pleasing in its general proportions, but is marvelously accurate from the standpoint of a student of Chinese architecture. In general contour his pagoda resembles Lung-hwa Pagoda near Shanghai, but the proportions and shapes of the component parts are much finer, being the result of an extensive study of the numerous types. It is octagonal in shape, and complete with doors, windows, balconies, and bells, the latter suspended from the eaves of the curved sloping roofs, reminding of those of the Chinese palace buildings.



GRACE

Mr. Chang painstakingly evolved the lines and carefully laid down the specifications for the execution of this grand conception. He put his complete design into the hands of one of the most renowned of China's jade artists. At times, upwards of one hundred and fifty carefully selected craftsmen and artisans trained in working with a stone of the hardness and tenacity so characteristic of jade were employed upon various phases of this work, much of which was of a peculiarly exacting nature. For instance, the bells suspended from the eaves were, with infinite labor and care, carved from the same pieces of jade as the eaves themselves. Mr. Chang estimates that by actual count, in the aggregate,

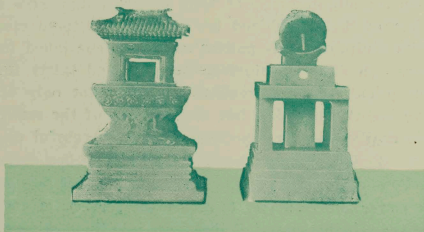
one and a half million hours of patient and at times exceedingly delicate labour were devoted to the completion of this alluring conception. Because these craftsmen were working upon material of extraordinary hardness in efforts to produce an object of exquisitely delicate design, there were times when the slightest slip of hand or tool might have ruined the whole object of their combined labours and shattered eternally the hopes of its sculptor. This patient work was continued for more than ten years. In April of nineteen hundred and thirty three, the original conception became a reality, the pride not only of the artist who gave birth to the idea, but also of each of the small army of skilled jade craftsmen who contributed to its successful execution.

An inspection of the vast array of priceless curios and antiques in the Peiping Palaces produces the impression that only emperors possessed the power and resources to secure the services of such talented artists and the valuable materials that went into the making of such choice art-objects. But even among the old imperial collections, Mr. Chang contends, it is probable that there has never been anything comparable with

this Green Jade Pagoda and that no emperor ever secured a piece of green jade of such size and exquisite beauty. It compares favourably with any piece of a similar work ever executed, even during the prolific periods of the Tang and Sung Dynasties.

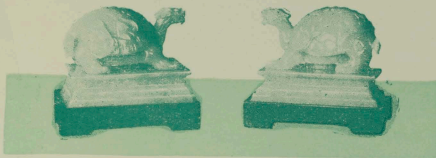
The Pagoda is about fifty inches in height and thirteen inches in diameter, at its base. It weighs about seventy-five pounds. Although each of the seven storeys and the main sections comprising them are separately carved, yet the interlocking joints are so perfectly fitted and with such nice mathematical accuracy and the jade is so carefully matched, that the general effect is that of a carving from a solid piece of stone. The ordinary spectator marvels at the size of the structure, the exquisite green tints of the balconies, roofs, and finial, and the alluring sheen of the finished pagoda; but only a connoisseur in jade art can appreciate the perilous nature of the patient and exacting work of these ten years. The four Chinese characters upon the plaque over the entrance to the first floor of the pagoda set forth the spirit which inspired its conception. Translated into English they read "Let your light shine in full radiance," Truly it represents not only a bold conception but a brave adventure.

The Chinese prize the rarer specimens of green jade probably even more highly than does the Occidental the diamond. The latter is matchless in brilliancy but jade vies with the deep sea and the great forest in its variations of shades and colours such as are found in no other gem. Most highly prized is the vivid green variety closely resembling the verdant radiance of spring-time. It is a warm green, suggestive of life, and cheering to the eye. The finest jade is highly translucent and in bright light its soft warm sheen appears as



STANDARD MEASURE AND SUN DIAL





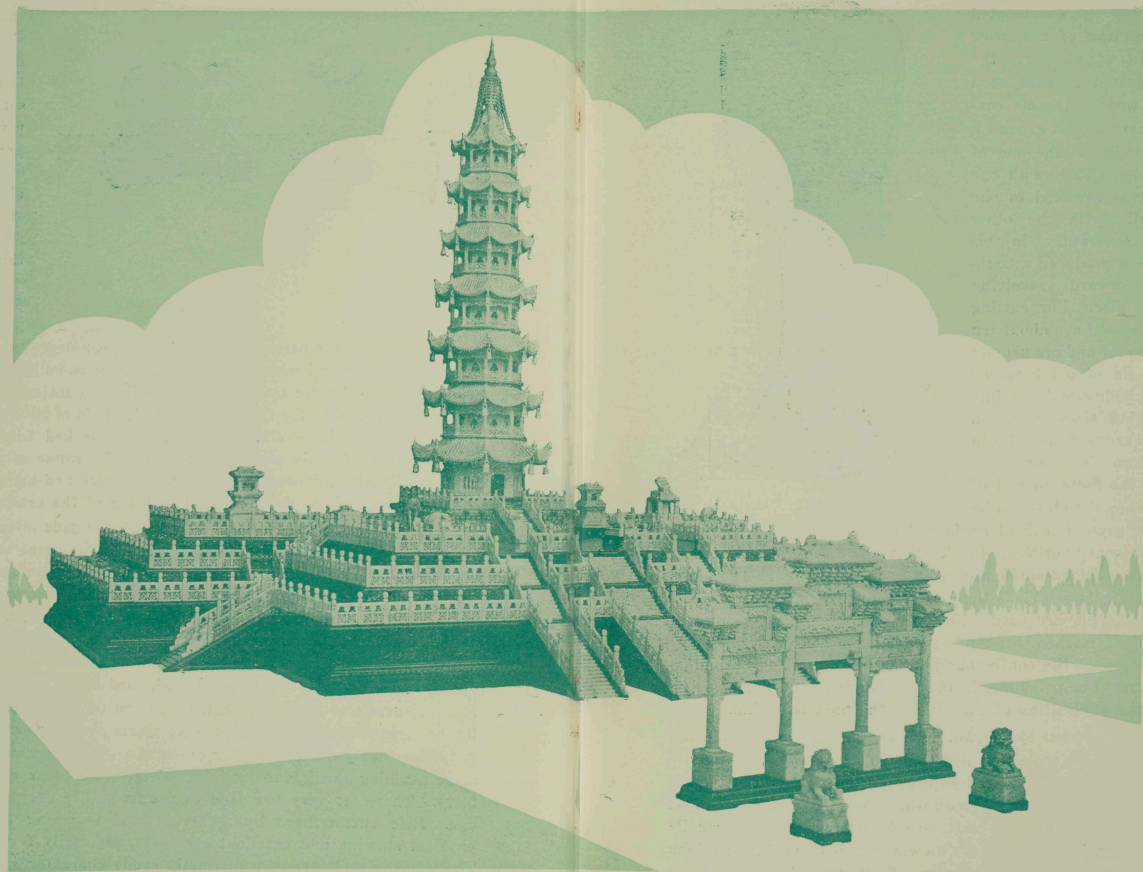
TORTOISES

though some inner life gives it unique radiance. There is a legendary supposition, probably partly based on the chemical formation of jade, that its colour, in the form of green atmosphere constantly as-

cending through the earth from the deep copper deposits underneath, enters the softer and more opalescent varieties more readily than the translucent and harder stones, thus partially accounting for the rarity of the latter. But to the Chinese, jade in itself is of little or no value. In order to merit admiration it must be worked into something ornamental, preferably something artistic. Its range of possibilities is almost limitless, depending upon the ingenuity and artistic sense of the designers and the dexterity and training of the craftsmen.

The compactness, tenacity and hardness of jade is unique among precious stones. Jade is, therefore, worked with great difficulty and very slowly. With the aid of modern abrasives, an average jade-cutter will saw about ten square inches of jade in an eight-hour day. After being sawn into approximate shapes, the jade is carved and polished with a laborious skill known only to Chinese craftsmen, who for centuries learned this patient art under the patronage of emperors and officials.

Jade craftsmen are generally recruited from the poorer classes. It is not usual for them to pass the trade on to succeeding generations in the same families. The apprentice starts at fourteen years of age and after four years is a master craftsman. He is usually at his best after reaching thirty and begins to deteriorate after having passed forty. There are very few jade workers who are over fifty years of age. Jade cutting, grinding, carving and polishing require great physical stamina and excellent eye sight, especially for the carving. The working tools are of a distinctly crude character.

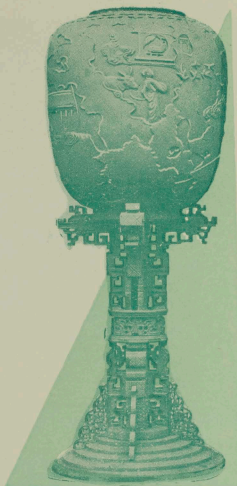


THE ALTAR OF THE GREEN JADE PAGODA

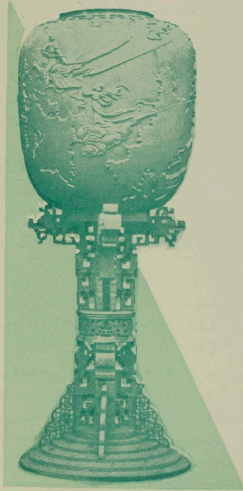
The lapidary's lathe or wheel is a crudely constructed machine, consisting of a narrow wooden bench upon which the operator is seated so that each foot is on a wooden treadle connected by a cord looped around a horizontal spindle, at the end of which is a disc. Thus with one foot, the disc is revolved in one direction while with the other the action is reversed. In this manner there is produced a backward and forward revolving action of the disc. For cutting jade, the discs used are about ten inches in diameter and are usually made of the tin of old kerosene cans. For grinding and carving, discs of varying sizes are used, consisting of crude materials, in some cases iron, in other cases copper coins, the flattened end of a nail, etc. Thus the object to be

cut, carved or ground is held against the operating disc, the latter being in a stationary position. In all cases, the discs are operated in connection with copious applications, by hand, of wet carborundum, which in reality cuts or grinds the jade. However, for drilling holes, diamond edged drills are used. For sawing or cutting, as in grill work, a fine wire stretched between the two ends of a semi-circular bow is used. Here again the continuous application of wet carborundum is all important. For polishing, leather discs are used. The sheen is improved by the application of wax during the final polishing.

The premises used by the workmen are unbelievably small and cramped. In fact, one will often find that the artisan works, eats and sleeps in the same small room and with poor lighting facilities. Thus when one considers the implements with which he works and the cramped quarters in which he plies his craft, one is astounded at the results achieved. However, jade workers are no worse or better off than others of China's vast army of handicraftsmen. Even the Chinese cook, who



EXQUISITE LAMP CARVING



2ND OF THE PAIR OF PALACE LAMPS

is probably the best in the world, will prepare a feast of sixty or eighty most delectable dishes, working with astoundingly simple and crude implements and facilities, in a space which to the Occidental would scarcely be big enough to turn around in.

The jade cutter or lapidary lets out the work to the craftsmen on a contract basis. The contracts are purely verbal. The craftsmen generally take the jade to their own establishments and after completing the work return the articles to the "cutter." They are under no bond, but should a craftsman abscond with a valuable jade object, he chances apprehension and arrest and loses his status with the profession or craft so that he cannot in the future resume work in this capacity. For ordinary work, a jade carver can

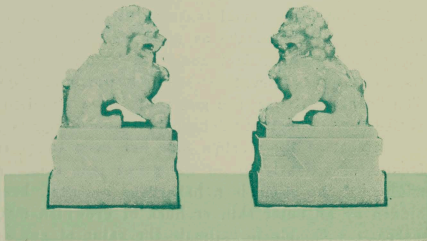
makes as much as \$1.00 Chinese currency (U.S. Gold \$0.25) a day, while a highly skilled craftsman can earn three or four times as much. For very special tasks requiring the highest degree of skill, carvers sometimes make as much as \$20.00 Chinese currency for a day's work. The jade industry in China is pretty well confined to the following four centers:—Canton, Shanghai, Soochow and Peiping. The finest craftsmen are generally to be found in Peiping, although Mr. Chang claims that the best individual carver is a Shanghai artisan.

Most of the world's jade has been taken from the Himalaya Mountains. Nearly all of the green jade comes from Burma. The mining of the stone is a hazardous business, because most jade is hidden by an outer skin or husk of brownish matrix which at best makes it a gamble to estimate the value of any section of the rock without close examination of that particular bit. Furthermore, the green jade is nearly always found imbedded in the white, which in turn is covered by its brownish husk.



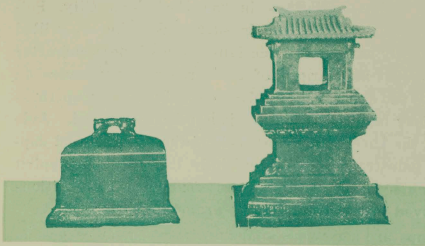
In buying jade for cutting, the "cutters," as they are known to the trade, purchase from the dealers in crude jade, who are either Cantonese or Yunnanese. The "cutters" accuse the dealers of being a crafty or shrewd lot, but the dealers make the same accusation against the cutters. At all events when two or more dealers or cutters are present while bidding is in progress, the price parleys are conducted by dealer and cutter communicating with their fingers up each others sleeves. Trading in crude jade is a hazardous, or, at best, a highly speculative business for the reason that it is, as already mentioned, almost impossible to appraise its value from its outward appearance. The presence of a green eye in a slab or block of jade may be a very uncertain index as to the extent of the green vein. Furthermore, irregularities, crackings, faults and other imperfections are apparently only discernible when the stone is cut preparatory to its being worked. The cutters must exercise ingenuity and judgment in getting the maximum of value from the stone in plans for its utilization.

The particular piece of crude jade from which the pagoda was carved was of enormous size, weighing about eighteen thousand pounds. It was obtained eighteen years ago by Mr. Li Pen-yin from a quarry in Burma. Of the original stone, five pieces ranging from twelve hundred to eighteen hundred pounds each and totalling about seven thousand pounds were brought to Shanghai. The remainder was not considered of sufficient value to guarantee the expenses of transportation. Thus Mr. Chang purchased from the jade dealer about one-third of the original piece measuring about eight by four by two feet and weighing nearly nine tons. Later investigations proved that superb green tints spread throughout the white portions of much of this jade. The



GUARDIAN LIONS





AN IMPERIAL EDICT CONTAINER AND REPOSITORY

ordinary procedure would have been to saw the crude jade into small slabs for the making of bracelets, trinkets, beads, and other ornamental articles. But Mr. Chang had for years dreamed of doing something startling-

ly grand in the world of jade should the opportunity ever present itself. After several years of thoughtful planning he conceived the gorgeous idea of producing this huge jade pagoda, as a worthy and striking exemplification of Chinese art. The determination of the approximate shapes and sizes of the various parts of the pagoda were contingent upon the idiosyncrasies of these pieces of jade from which they would have to be constructed. Apparently in the jade world, any one rock is as distinctive from any other rock as is any one person different from any other. Mr. Chang states that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to draw upon any other sources than this original stone for contributions helpful to the completion of this pagoda, without producing a discordant tone in the blending of the material. Thus, in planning a monumental task of this character, much depends upon the ingenuity and judgment of the author, as may well be imagined.

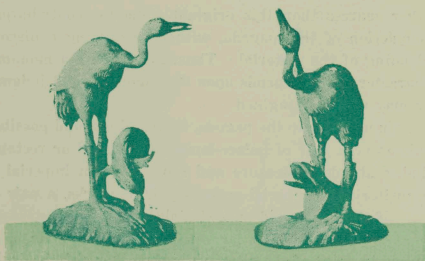
In addition to the pagoda, it was also found possible to fashion from this stone a pair of palace-lamps, a "pailou" or rectangular arch, a sundial, a standard measure and repository, an imperial edict container, a repository for imperial seals, a pair of storks, a pair of tortoises and a pair of lions mounted on pedestals, all of which are symbolic of ancient monarchical China. The lanterns, the "pailou" and the guardian lions are placed in front of the altar while the other objects, including the pagoda, are appropriately set upon the altar, which is composed of a series of three terraces, each about six inches high and made of elegantly carved

hardwood. The altar is designed after the model of that of the audience hall of the palace buildings in the Forbidden City, Peiping. Each of these receding terraces is surrounded by a grided jade balustrade, uniformly carrying the design of the Chinese character for longevity. The lowest and largest of the three terraces covers an area of approximately six and a half by five feet. In setting up these fretted balustrades, four hundred miniature jade pillars are used. Jade stair-cases lead from the base, connecting each of the terraces and supported with grided balustrades. An exquisitely carved dragon-spirit plaque leads up the center of the main staircase, following the traditions so beautifully portrayed in the architectural art of Imperial Peking.

The palace lamps are somewhat similar to a melon in shape and size, and are supported by an artistically carved column and pedestal. They are of an ancient design evolved in the palace during the Han Dynasty, about two thousand years ago. These jade lanterns follow closely the classical model. The stone from which they were carved was much larger than a melon, for the total height, including that of the pedestals, is about twenty inches. Pictures depicting classical legends are carved on the outside surfaces of these lanterns, the softly rich green jade blending into impressive cloud effects. The carving was so skillfully and so artistically done that the figures stand out in strong but pleasingly delicate relief, the workmanship forming an excellent representation of Chinese pictorial art. This pair of lanterns may well be

described as the quintessence of the beautiful in a blend of green and white jade.

The miniature "pailou" or rectangular arch, measuring about sixteen inches in height and twenty-two inches in width, is another typical form of Chinese art. Such monu-



STORKS

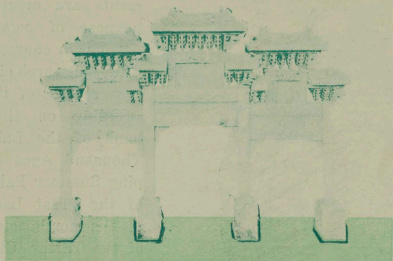


OBJET D'ART

ments are erected for the purpose of commemorating virtuous or courageous deeds. The jade arch is a miniature replica of the "pailou" standing on the northern bank of the Lake of Ten Thousand Ages in the Peiping Summer Palace or that of the great Lama Temple in the northeastern section of the Tartar City of Peiping. The former capital is noted for its colorfully artistic "pailous."

These art objects possess translucency, lustre and rich green tints to a very high degree. They blend color and sheen because they were carved from the same piece of stone. Probably never before in history has such a wonderful piece of jade been combined with such exquisite workmanship. The three main pieces, the pagoda, the palace lamps and the "pailou" are truly among the great masterpieces of Chinese art and craftsmanship. Of these three, the

green jade pagoda is considered by Mr. Chang as not only the grandest conception but the most marvelously executed. In this wonderful collection, Mr. Chang has assembled what is probably the finest group of green jade works of art that has ever been produced throughout the four thousand years of jade craftsmanship in China.



THE "PAILOU"

SUCH MONUMENTS ARE ERECTED FOR THE PURPOSE OF COMMEMORATING VIRTUOUS OR COURAGEOUS DEEDS. THE JADE ARCH IS A REPLICA OF THE "PAILOU" STANDING ON THE NORTHERN BANK OF THE LAKE OF TEN THOUSAND AGES IN THE PEIPING SUMMER PALACE, OR THAT OF THE GREAT LAMA TEMPLE IN THE NORTH-WESTERN SECTION OF THE TARTAR CITY OF PEIPING.

