Chinese Jade Books
in the Chester Beatty Library
Chinese Jade Books in the Chester Beatty Library
The Buddha enthroned, with worshippers and Heavenly Guardians.
Chinese Jade Books in the Chester Beatty Library

Described, and the Chinese texts translated by

WILLIAM WATSON

of the Department of Oriental Antiquities, British Museum;

the Manchu texts translated by

DR. J. L. MISH

of the New York Public Library.

Dublin: Hodges Figgis & Company Limited: 1963
Contents

9 Preface
11 Introduction
19 Book I: The Song of the Jade Bowl
24 Book 2: Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra
25 Book 3: On the Western Lotus
27 Book 4: The Genealogy of the Seven Buddhas
29 Book 5: The Carriage with League-recording Drum
31 Book 6: Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra
32 Book 7: The Sixteen Lohan
35 Book 8: The Emperor Shun Chih Honours an Ancestor
36 Book 9: A Retreat on Jade Spring Hill
38 Book 10: On the Poems of Po Chü-i
40 Book 11: On the Pacification of Zungaria
42 Book 12: On the Mandate of Heaven
43 Book 13: Two Poems by the Emperor Ch'ien Lung
45 Book 14: The Emperor Ch'ien Lung on his old age
46 Book 15: Proposal of a Temple Name for the Emperor Ch'ien Lung
List of Plates

facing  
Title-page    FRONTISPIECE (colour): BOOK 6; The Buddha enthroned, with worshippers and Heavenly Guardians

19  PLATE 1: BOOK 1; The end-folios with title and imperial dragons

24  PLATE 2: BOOK 2; The opening of the text of the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra

27  PLATE 3: BOOK 4; The wooden cover with the title

29  PLATE 4: BOOK 5; The end-folios with title and imperial dragons

31  PLATE 5: BOOK 6; Opening of a section of the text of the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra

32  PLATE 6 (colour): BOOK 7; The Second Lohan, Ajita

34  PLATE 7: BOOK 7; The Sixteenth Lohan, Abheda

35  PLATE 8: BOOK 8; The folios with the posthumous title, in Chinese and in Manchu

46  PLATE 9: BOOK 15; The front folio with imperial dragons

47  PLATE 10: BOOK 15; The Manchu text
First of Plats

First of Plats

First of Plats
Preface

Among its treasures of oriental literature the Chester Beatty Library includes what is probably the largest collection ever formed of the jade books of the Chinese imperial court. The fifteen items represent the full range of interest, both as craft and literature, which is to be found in these prized products of the jade factory of the Peking palace. Sir Chester Beatty's generosity has made it possible to publish the first catalogue of jade books. It is hoped that their descriptions, with the translation of their contents (except the sūtras), will serve as a preliminary account of a subject which has hitherto attracted little attention from students of the Chinese arts. The author wishes to thank Mr J. L. Mish of the New York Public Library, who has contributed the translations of Manchu texts, and an elucidation of the elaborate dating in book No. 8; Mr Walter Robinson for his help with the difficulties presented by book 13, particularly his suggestion regarding Kao Yün; and above all Dr R. J. Hayes for his critical reading of the text and constant helpfulness. WILLIAM WATSON
Although no jade books are known of earlier date than the 17th century, the idea of inscribing special texts on this most noble of all materials probably goes back much further. The form of the jade books, oblong tablets about twice as high as they are wide, follows a very ancient precedent. We know that the first Chinese books, of the time of Confucius and earlier, consisted of long plaques of wood, sometimes bamboo, bound together in much the same manner as the traditional leaf-books of India and Burma, the habit of writing vertically requiring the longer axis of the tablet to be held upright. The plaques seem to have been held together merely with a cord or thong. The earliest examples of them, which belong to the 3rd century B.C. and the following Han dynasty, are long, very narrow wooden strips containing a single column of writing. These slips were the regular form of military communications, and many such have been excavated in the vicinity of the Great Wall on the northwestern frontier of China.

With the invention of paper in the 2nd century B.C. the use of wood as a writing material must have gradually been discontinued. Although it would be in keeping with Chinese ceremonial usage that the ancient shape of the book should be revived on certain ritual occasions, there is no evidence that books consisting of plaques of hard material were at any time used in the imperial ceremonies. The oblong jade sceptres used in ceremonial, called kuei, which the emperor was said in ancient times to hold in sacrificing to the East, seem not to have been inscribed; though in Ming times inscriptions taken from ancient texts were often added to kuei which were made as gifts and ornaments, and to satisfy the trade in antiques. The kuei and its ritualistic use cannot have supplied the idea of the jade book as we know it in the 17th and 18th centuries. On the other hand instances can be cited from comparatively early times of august texts inscribed on tablets of the august material.

In his study of the religious rites performed on the sacred Mount T’ai, Edouard Chavannes tells of the use of jade tablets in imperial sacrifice. For this purpose the Emperor Kuang Wu ordered a search for a blue stone without blemish. In this case the slabs were inscribed in red ink;
but under the T'ang dynasty (A.D. 618-906) the writing was engraved in the jade and gilded. In a decree of the emperor T'ai Tsung (A.D. 627-649) jade is described as the indispensable material for these ceremonies. In 1747 two boxes of jade holding seventeen jade slabs were found on the summit of Mount T'ai. These dated from 1008, when the emperor Chen Tsung had performed the fêng sacrifice. The manufacture of jade books by the Ch'ing emperors thus followed an ancient tradition, though the texts inscribed on them were mostly secular, or, if scriptural, not connected with the ancient sacrificial rites.

A glance at the list of fifteen jade books constituting the Library's collection gives another clue to the reason for their manufacture. No less than ten of them are inscribed with texts composed by the Emperor Ch'ien Lung himself, and four of these reproduce his handwriting. This scholar-emperor, the success of whose rule in every material respect gave his subjects no less than himself a sense of their unapproachable superiority over all other nations, was an indefatigable student and writer. Pride in his prose and poetry was equalled, if not surpassed, by the pride he took in his calligraphy. Ch'ien Lung's reign, from 1736 to 1795, covers a period of revival in all the court arts, from porcelain to furniture. It was traditional and natural that the craft of jade carving should take pride of place in the emperor's eyes. Jade was at once a precious material commanding almost religious awe, and the medium of the most exacting products of the patient skill of the Chinese craftsmen, whose fame, as Ch'ien Lung knew, had spread even to the Far West. On a more mundane level the abundance of jade at the imperial court was testimony of the effectiveness of Chinese control in remote regions, for the jade came from beyond the natural frontiers of the empire.

The jade book dated to 1648, the earliest in the collection and apparently the earliest which survives, records a title conferred by the Emperor Shun Chih, Ch'ien Lung's great-grandfather, on his ancestor in the sixth generation (Book 8). These tablets come near in intention, as they do approximately in form, to the tablets set up to represent ancestors in an ancestral shrine, on which laudatory titles are inscribed. The awarding of such titles was a means of conveying to the ancestor the success achieved by his descendants, supposedly under his aegis. It was a small step from this to the recording of the success of arms on jade tablets, of which we have an example in Book 9. Ch'ien Lung also delighted in transcriptions on jade of his own compositions, especially perhaps (to judge from the recurrence of these sentiments on the books of the Library's Collection) of his poetic reflections on the burden of the Emperor's duties.

The revival of jade carving in the late 17th century under imperial patronage was motivated in part by admiration for the imitation of
European inventions. These were communicated to the Chinese court by western missionaries, particularly those of the Jesuit order, whose influence at the Peking court had been established by the astronomical and other work of Ferdinand Verbiest in the middle of the 17th century. Verbiest was consulted when the Emperor K‘ang Hsi, Ch‘ien Lung’s grandfather, conceived the idea of fostering all branches of craft in workshops built within the palace grounds. By 1680 some thirty workshops were established, employing European as well as native craftsmen. Clocks, which intrigued the Chinese above all other mechanisms, were manufactured to European design, metal and glass were worked, maps and astronomical instruments were made on European lines, and the traditional Chinese crafts of ornamental work in gold, enamel, lacquer, ivory and jade were called on to produce fine objects for furnishing the palace or to serve as imperial gifts. A Bureau of Works, the Tsao Pan Ch‘u, was in charge of all these activities, and the emperor’s personal interest ensured that high standards of craftsmanship were maintained. All this Ch‘ien Lung inherited; the activity of the workshops continued through the 18th and into the 19th century, though after Ch‘ien Lung’s death they gradually ceased their operation, the last of them being destroyed by fire in 1869.

For the manufacture of vessels and ornaments of the quality of material and carving judged necessary to satisfy the imperial taste, the palace workshops required a supply of the best available material. Although efforts have been made to prove the truth of an old tradition that jade was once found in China itself, this has not been convincingly demonstrated. Certainly in historical times, and probably from the time of the first Chinese jade carving in the 14th–11th century B.C., the sources of the stone have always been well beyond China’s natural boundaries. The principal source has been the foothills and river valleys near the oasis of Khotan, in the south-western corner of the Sinkiang basin, which is bounded to the north and south respectively by the chains of the T‘ien Shan and K‘un lun mountains. From the time of the former Han dynasty, whose forces occupied the region in the first century B.C., Khotan was subjected intermittently and in varying degrees to Chinese control. Apart from the natural wealth of its once broad fertile territory, now sadly shrunk between encroaching desert, the fortunes of Khotan owed much to its position on the chief east-west trade route between the Near East and China. The continuation of this prosperity depended largely on the pax sinica, which guaranteed the free passage of merchandise over its enormously long journey. At all times however the Chinese remained the chief, when they were not the only, customers for the main local product of jade. The stone was quarried in the foothills of the K‘un Lun mountains or recovered in the form of boulders from the beds of the Karakash
(black jade) and Yurungkash (white jade) rivers. It is a nephrite or true jade, varying in colour from white to grey, from bluish-green and various shades of sombre green to a colour which is almost black. There is nothing to indicate that the jade was ever worked for artistic purposes in Khotan itself. It was exported to China in the form of blocks and boulders, the greatest value attaching naturally to the largest pieces and to the material with the finest colour and purest texture.

Ch’ien Lung inherited the political suzerainty of the Khotan region. He increased his effective political control by designating Khotan as a territory for direct administration, chiefly, it seems, to ensure the supply of jade to his workshops. Every year a campaign of jade quarrying and collecting was organized, three thousand local men being employed for this purpose in the mountains, and two hundred elsewhere. At the same time all other, private, collecting of jade was forbidden. But the trade was too profitable for the prohibition to be effective; officials and merchants alike pursued an illicit trade. It was sufficient if a speculator handed over 50 catties of jades to the official collection, the remainder being despatched eastwards, with connivance, for private gain. A scandalous case, however, was that of a Chinese military commander of Khotan, Kao P’u. Having employed the regulation three thousand men in the collection of jade, he arranged for a member of his household, Ch’ang Yung, to transport five cartloads of the yield to China, starting from the neighbouring town of Yarkand. In Kansu this jade was sold to the merchants, and contributed to meeting the demands of the jade workshops in Nanking, Suchow and Yang Chou. The amount of jade which reached Suchow alone was valued at 128,000 silver liang. But this abuse was too great to be tolerated. Kao P’u was arrested and executed at his post, and his body was forbidden the customary return to China.²

If these facts illustrate the seriousness of the imperial monopolistic quest for jade, the many thousand fine jades which have been transmitted to us from the eighteenth century testify to the high standards set by the imperial workshops. Large vessels of every kind, surpassing anything produced in earlier times, adorned Ch’ien Lung’s numerous palaces and were distributed as imperial gifts. Imperial quality is a phrase as significant for jade as it is for the porcelains produced under similar official direction. Many imperial pieces have found their way into private hands in East and West. The products of the imperial workshops were naturally imitated in other cities, and the mark “period of Ch’ien Lung” was often added to jades carved outside the precincts of the Peking palace, and continued to be used even after the close of Ch’ien Lung’s reign. Some time during this period, probably in the later part of the eighteenth century, a new material began to be imported from Burma. This stone, termed jadeite, is a little softer
than nephrite, but displays light bluish-green colour of even greater purity and translucence. It could not have the noble associations of the harder material, but in the form of large vessels (and the jadeite blocks seem on average to have come in larger size than those of nephrite) outdid it in brilliance and lent itself more readily to ingenious carving. Its finest colour, fei ts'ui, the blue-green of kingfisher's feathers, was greatly admired as a new discovery. The supply of jadeite remained in private hands, as also the occasional supply of a dark green nephrite, distinguished by its inclusion of black specks, which reached China from deposits situated at the end of Lake Baikal in South Siberia. But neither jadeite nor Baikal nephrite appear to have been used for the jade books, and all the books in the Library's collection are made of the Khotan type of true jade.

Although at first sight the engraving of characters and linear figures on jade may seem an easier task than the carving of ornamental motifs in high relief and in the round, the manufacture of the jade books must have required little less in long and exacting labour than the larger jade vessels and ornaments. In the jade of the books no flaw could be tolerated, or avoided by adapting the ornament. Steel-edged and diamond-edged instruments were at the disposal of the craftsmen of the imperial workshops and no doubt were employed on the books; but the drilling and cutting devices which abbreviated the work in other jades would give no assistance after the plaque had been ground smooth and the edges finished. The characters and linear figures of the ornament had then to be engraved by hand. A jade book formerly preserved in the Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin is said to contain a few lines carved by Ch'ien Lung himself in his summer residence of Jehol. This is plausible if unproved. On his walks around the palace grounds and buildings the emperor is said often to have been accompanied by a eunuch bearing writing materials. When inspiration and a suitable surface for inscription concurred, Ch'ien Lung would write his thought with ink and brush; later, if the writing was on stone, masons would complete the engraving.

The only jade book in the collection where the imperial connexion is not apparent is No. 7, the portraits and characteristics of the sixteen Lohan. In this instance figures and text are painted in gold, not engraved. The postscript to the descriptions of the Lohan refers to a visit paid by Ch'ien Lung to the temple where the originals of the Lohan portraits are said to have been preserved, but it is not suggested that the book was made at the emperor's command. Nor is anything said of this in Books 2 and 6, texts of the Buddhist Scripture of Wisdom, but here the quality of the work leaves no doubt that these books were produced in the imperial workshops. Book No. 8, which antedates Ch'ien Lung's reign, does not mention the emperor's initiative in its
production, but the subject of the text, which confers a posthumous title on an imperial ancestor, leaves no room for doubt on this point.

The imperial connexion of the jade books is recorded in their titles and signatures either as yü chih “imperially made”, or yü pi “imperial brush”, claiming, respectively, that the book was produced by imperial command or permission, or that the text is a facsimile of the emperor’s writing, in which case the implication of yü chih also goes without saying. This distinction of yü chih and yü pi is confirmed by the style of the calligraphy, for each yü pi text recognisably copies Ch’ien Lung’s writing. It is interesting that another phrase, yü t’i, “imperial composition”, which is frequently placed after poetic inscriptions on other jades produced in the palace workshops, does not appear in the jade books. A yü t’i is one taken from Ch’ien Lung’s writing, but perhaps not expressly selected by the emperor. Occasionally the writer of the text engraved in a yü chih book is named, as in Book 13, which copies the brush of Liang kuo-chih. In one case, Book 5, which is yü pi and manifestly reproduces Ch’ien Lung’s hand, the name of the copyist of the script is stated on the wooden box holding the jade plaques.

Historically the greatest interest attaches to Book 8, both for its early date and its content. A pendant to this book is Book 15, which belongs to the first year of the emperor Chia Ch’ing, the fifteen-year-old grandson and successor of Ch’ien Lung, and records an address to the throne petitioning for a temple name for the recently deceased emperor. It eulogizes Ch’ien Lung in the traditional manner. Book 11 commemorates the subjugation by the Chinese of the Central Asian principality of Zungaria, though the language used to describe these events and the state of affairs at the frontier, being mostly culled from ancient history, hardly enlightens us on the political situation.

Another group of the jade books purports to record the more intimate reflections of the emperor. Such a book is No. 12, an essay on the mandate of Heaven. The melancholy reference to the emperor’s loneliness is perhaps no less conventional than the professed adherence to the principle of Heaven’s mandate. Ch’ien Lung seems never to have chaffed at the burden of the emperor’s life, unless it was at the very end of his reign, just before his abdication in 1796. The essay engraved in Book 14, in which the emperor celebrates his advanced age and anticipates the decision he was to take six years later, belongs to his decline. Necessarily the most obscure of the imperial writings committed to jade are the verses, which consist (one might almost say) of a mosaic of phrases taken from the classics, and of allusive comments on poetry and court ceremonial. It is here that the misunderstanding of some obscure classical line quoted out of context, or of a detail of court life and ceremonial, may lead the translator absurdly astray, and when the allusiveness is too broad (as the genius of the Chinese language so
readily allows) he is forced into paraphrase. Ch'ien Lung often delighted in writing a difficult poem in Chinese and matching it with a Manchu translation. By his time Manchu had lost its practical usefulness, and Chinese was the normal language among Manchus both at court and elsewhere. The composition in Manchu was a tour de force of the learned emperor, as he strove to show that his ancestors' tongue, now in his hands become a dead, literary language, might be made as expressive as the language he had adopted from his subjects. The first Manchu emperors had realized at once that the mastery of literary Chinese and of the classics was essential to the ruler if he was to command the respect and loyalty of the Chinese educated class. In Ch'ien Lung's endless writings we see the result less perhaps of literary inspiration than of the terrible inculcation of scholarship which he had experienced in his boyhood. The most important jade book with poetic content is No. 1, the famous Song of the Jade Bowl, by the emperor himself. Book 13 offers an example of the rather inconsequential (and in some places grievously obscure) jottings, arising from some verses suspended in an imperial room, which the emperor amused himself with and others took steps to perpetuate. Book 10, recalling the strange ritual of music and dance observed at Chinese imperial courts from very early times, reminds us suitably of the exotic ceremonial surroundings of the writer of these texts.

The texts of the jade books in the Library's collection (except that of the scriptures) are translated after their descriptions in the catalogue. Fragmentary and disconnected as some of them are, they afford an insight into the quality of the emperor's writing, and are interesting as showing what Ch'ien Lung considered fit to be perpetuated in jade. From what we know of his passion for scholarship, calligraphy and fine craft, we must assume that imperial approval in some form was given for the engraving, whether yü ̄ pi or yü ̄ chú-h. It is only our interest in the man that can sweeten a little the task of interpreting Ch'ien Lung's obscurely archaizing and not infrequently, if it may be said of an emperor, tiresomely pretentious phraseology. One may smile to find a writer in this style praising its very opposite in an essay on the T'ang poet Po Chü-i (Book 10). In the expression of feeling literary convention dictated the contents almost as much as the form. But when Ch'ien Lung speaks plaintively of the burden of his office, wistfully of the delightful scenes and fragrance of the southern provinces which he saw on his rare and longed-for tours of the southern region, or curiously of a league-measuring instrument, the sentiments have a genuine ring for all their stiff dress.

1 Ref. E. Chavannes, Le T'ai Shan, p. 22.
2 Sugimura Yūzō, Kenryū Kōtei (The Emperor Ch'ien Lung), pp. 207-8.
PLATE I  Book I  *The end-folios with title and imperial dragons.*
The Song of the Jade Bowl (Yü Weng Ko), a poem by the Emperor Ch'ien Lung

The book consists of ten tablets of very dark green nephrite, measuring 7½ x 4½ inches. The script, engraved and gilded, reproduces the hand of Ch'ien Lung. It covers the eighteen inner folios of the book, with three columns on each side of each folio. At the end is the date “early winter of the year i ch'ou”, corresponding to 1745, and finally the words “imperial brush” followed by “Ch'ien Lung” engraved as two seals.

The front folio bears the title “Song of the Jade Bowl written by the Imperial Brush” in a panel flanked by a pair of five-clawed dragons with their heads looking upwards from the lower end. The back folio is occupied by a single five-clawed dragon shown full face, writhing amid clouds about a flaming jewel. All this decoration is engraved and gilded. The book is held in a box of dark blue linen of recent date, and the plaques are interleaved with yellow silk.

Hansford in his *Chinese Jade Carving* gives the fullest description and history of the famous Black Jade Wine Bowl which is the subject of this poem. The bowl is approximately circular and cushion-shaped, with a rounded profile, measuring 23½ inches in height and 52 inches at its greatest diameter. The material is dark green nephrite mottled with passages of lighter green, grey and white, these markings being to some extent accommodated to the carving on the sides. This consists of dragons and monsters amid waves, represented in fairly high relief. The interior of the bowl is, in Hansford’s words, “inscribed with three poems in its praise by the emperor Ch'ien Lung, deeply cut in reproduction of the imperial calligraphy. The longest, consisting of 406 characters, is on the floor of the vessel, and the other two, of 113 and 304 characters, on the inner walls. They are dated 1746, 1749 and 1773, respectively.”

The text of the jade book is identical with that of the longest bowl inscription, except the final column with the date, the book being dated to the 10th month of 1745, and the bowl inscription to the 3rd lunar month of 1746. The poem is composed of seven-character couplets, each second line of a pair conforming through the whole poem to one of two rhyme classes. The accumulation of rarely seen characters, denoting aquatic monsters and their fuming and commotion, often defies exact translation, and then only paraphrase is possible. The poem speaks allusively of jade, its properties, the ornament carved on
this bowl and on other pieces, ending with reflections on antiquities in
general and their significance. There is a prose preface.

The jade has white veins, and the carving, which follows the patterns they form,
represents fish and monsters diving in and out of waves. The bowl is large enough
to hold more than 30 piculs of wine. It is probably ancient, dating from the
Chin or Yuan dynasty. Once it stood in the Kuang Han Tien on the Wan Sui
Shan. Later, outside the Hsi Hua Men, the Taoist priests of the Chen Wu
Miao used it to store vegetables (for which see the Cho keng lu and the Chin
ao t'ui shih pi chi). It was bought by command for a thousand silver taels,
placed in the Ch'eng Kuang Tien, and inscribed with a poem.

Long ago when the kings of the house of Hsia held sway and their fame was
universal and their teaching completed, the governors of the Nine Provinces
sent their tribute of metal to the Wei Palace. The sacred tripods were cast with
representations of gods and demons. The influence of king-sages reached
mountain and marsh, but the monsters of the sea were left. The sages conformed
to creative nature, their virtue pierced to the heart of the earth. The mountains
of Lan T'ien bared their bones in the sun's heat. Kung Ch'ui draws back his
hands and dares not hew. But take an axe of steel, and lo! the Mountains of the
Moon! Form without, empty of shape within, but lo! the powers of ocean are
figured forth!

The measureless spirit of creation drives through infinite chaos. Terrifying
waves seethe and surge through a waste of loud contorted waters, and the earth
is borne up secure in the midst of a gulf of perils. Alternate day and night rise
and sink again into the abyss. Three corn grains floating — and lo!, three peaks!
How can Mount T'ai and Mount Hua flaunt their lofty heads? Every
monster of fable is among the creatures thronging the thunderous upsurging
waters. Here is the mountain-bearing turtle and leviathan lying athwart the
seas; the heaven-bright Wang Hsiang rages and snorts; the king of the
ch'ih dragons looms purple, and red the giant turtle and lizard; monstrous serpents
and crabs abound, scarlet dragons breathe fire and the host of great sea-turtles
swim. The blue ch'in raises its fins, sea-horses rush forth. All the monsters of
the deep are here. Coral and tortoiseshell and mermaids' pearl tears; a womb
of precious things in unending abundance, destined to harmonize what is above
and below, to ensure Heaven's blessing, to add authority to the Nine Tripods
and lustre to the ritual robes. From all eternity the order of nature manifests
spirit wonders, sprouting up like clouds, pressing down vast ocean.

Quite other are the treasured things bequeathed from antiquity which are
for the service of man: the great teaching of the Chou kings and of the T'ao
Wu book of Ch'u. The beauty of chia and kuei and their surpassing mystery!
The ritual vessels of Shang and the bells of Chin, buried in countless numbers!
Spread before us is the ever-changing scene of the Beautiful Isles in the Breath
of Spring; and when clouds are swept from a clear sky, we behold the vast cold
citadel of the moon. The brinjal hangs down its serried red leaves; the garu-
wood spreads along the ground with richest scent. My servants wish me life as long as that of the Southern Mountains, and reverently present their gifts: wine jugs carved like white animals or the striped knee-pads of sacred rite. Mirages of landscape rise and fade as we gaze at their elusive shapes. Among such valleys and hills the men of Ch’in have left their scattered valour, 17 golden dews and autumn wind recall the scent of cinnamon. Cold approaches and the villagers in the mountains burn their charcoal. 18

In the imperial capital the young men prize their gilded swords. What reck they to search after inscribed tablets in some abandoned shrine? Alas, the pity that ancient treasure should turn to dust; it is a paradox, as if one presenting a pi to the throne were for his pains condemned to lose his feet by the executioner’s axe. 19 Scrape off the moss, wash off the dirt, reveal their bright sparkle! If these things are to be abandoned to nature, what purpose is served by engraving words on them?

The watery tribe squirm and leap. Light falls on them, they look about and join a mass of clouds. Men have affections and attachments, may not all matter have them also? Could one but achieve the antiquity of these relics! But then the bronze immortals 20 of our capital would be discountenanced and wroth.

Ch’ien Lung, the year yi ch’ou, the 10th month, written by the Imperial brush.

1 S. Howard Hansford, Chinese Jade Carving, pp. 75-78.
2Chin or Yuan dynasty: No other bowls comparable to the bowl described here are known to have survived from the Chin or Yuan periods (1127-1368), or indeed from any other time. But Ch’ien Lung’s claim for the age of his bowl may not be so far from the mark, and Hansford accepts a Yuan date for it. The style of decoration suggests that it is not earlier than the late Yuan period, the 13th or 14th century. Some writers would identify it with a “great jar more than two paces in height” seen in Peking by Odoric of Pordenone. This identity has been doubted, but Hansford is inclined to entertain the idea, pointing out that height is perhaps a textual corruption for width, and that “paces” about fits the width of Ch’ien Lung’s bowl. The word “pigna” used in the Italian version of Odoric’s Travels does not necessarily mean a vessel measuring more in height than width, and “paces” is a strange measurement for height.

Kuang Han Tien: Wan Sui Shan: The Wan Sui Shan (Hill of a myriad years) is an island in the Pei Hai lake on the north side of Peking, on which an artificial hill was built in the Chin period and covered with a garden by Kublai Khan in the 13th century. The hill, known to Europeans as the White Pagoda Island, is alternatively called Wan Shou Shan (Hill of a Myriad Ages). It is worth noting that the text of the 1746 inscription of the bowl has Wan Shou Shan, and that of the jade book Wan Sui Shan. Apart from this one character the two texts of the introduc-
tion to the poem are identical. The Kuang Han Tien was a building in the Wan Sui Shan, so called after a legendary palace in the moon.

Hsi Hua Men, Chen Wu Miao. The Hsi Hua Men (Western Flowing Gate) is a gate in the wall of the Forbidden City, near which stood the Taoist Temple called the Chen Wu Miao. Chen Wu is another name for Hsüan Wu, the guardian of the northern quarter of the heavens, by the Taoists treated as a celestial emperor. According to Hansford it is distinguished from other similarly named temples as the Yü po (Jade bowl) Chen Wu Miao, which confirms the statement of our text. Hansford learned that a stone bowl similar to the jade wine bowl stands in the temple yard, and suggests "perhaps some of the emperor's thousand taels were laid out on the purchase of a substitute to console the Taoist priests for their loss!"

Che keng lu is a book by T'ao Tsung-i (14th century) which includes descriptions of palaces; the Chin ao t'ui shih pi chih a book written in 1684, by Kao Shih-ch'i, on the imperial palaces. He mentions the jade bowl as being in the Chen Wu Miao: Ch'ien Lung's remark that it was used for vegetables is taken from this author. The Ch'eng Kuang Tien is a pavilion of the T'uan Ch'eng palace. According to Hansford the jade bowl is now removed from the Ch'eng Kuang Tien and housed in a newer pavilion.

Wei Palace (Wei Chüeh): anciently the palace gate where laws were promulgated.

Tripods: the ting tripod bowls used in sacrificial rites. The t'ao t'ieh monster mask portrayed on the early ting was eventually explained as a cautionary genius, warning against greed. The verse which mentions the ting and their "gods and demons" is shortened from a sentence in the Tso Chuan: "Ting were cast and creatures represented on them. Thus the Hundred Creatures were set forth, and acquainted the people with gods and demons".

Lan T'ien: a mountain, in a prefecture of the same name in Shensi province, where fine jade is said to have been mined. True jade is not now found there, nor is there any reliable historical record of its finding.

Kung Chi is a divine artificer mentioned in Shu ching. The "steel axe" which outdid his prowess must allude to the improved jade-working tools of the palace workshop. "Mountains of the Moon", and "form" (the boulder of jade?) and "emptiness" (the unfashioned substance within?) appear to be descriptions of the texture and markings of the jade.

Mounts T'ai and Hua: two of the five holy mountains of China, the former in Shantung, the latter in Shensi.

Wang Hsiang: a divine marine creature mentioned in the Shan hai ching (Classic of Mountains and Sea), which is indeed the chief source for the strange names of monsters which throng the poem.

This sentence is substituted for two lines of the poem consisting of fourteen characters for marine monsters, each character being compounded with the radical "fish".

In ancient times the power of the ruler was supposed to depend on the possession of the nine ting tripods. They were lost when the Chou king was defeated by Shih Huang Ti of Ch'in, who tried in vain to salvage them from a river.
14 i.e. the sacred books of the founders of the Chou dynasty, and of the southern state of Ch’u, reputed barbarian, with which the northern states were long at war.

15 Ch’ien Lung was an avid collector of the ancient bronze ritual vessels recovered from tombs, which included those called chia and kuei.

16 One of the eight famous views enjoyed from the capital of the ancient state of Yen.

17 The meaning of the line translated by this sentence is very obscure. But the sentiments of this section of the poem are clear: Ch’ien Lung recalls, as often in his poems, the pleasures of the southern tours of inspection to which he always looked forward with keen anticipation.

18 Shan jen can mean inhabitants of the mountain, or recluses, and in the latter sense was applied to themselves by philosophers and artists who sought retreat in nature. The scent of cinnamon alludes to Kwangsi province.

19 i.e. one who persisted in his intention to benefit the ruler, although he was misunderstood and punished; an allusion to a story in the San kuo chih.

20 The “bronze immortals” are the ancient bronze ritual vessels preserved in the palace.
2 The condensed version of the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra

The Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra, also known as the Diamond Sūtra, is the most popular of the Māhāyanist writings and the chief of the wisdom sūtras. It sets forth wisdom as the principal means to the revelation of the unreality of things and so to Enlightenment and Nirvāṇa. The condensed version is the shorter exposition of the Doctrine.

The book consists of eight folios of semi-transparent grey-green nephrite, measuring $6\frac{1}{2} \times 4$ inches, in yellow silk mounts, contained in a brown wooden box, with covers of black wood inscribed on the front with the Chinese title.

The script and the decoration are painted in gold, the latter in two shades of gold. The script is written in four columns on each side of the folios. The decoration is as follows:

FOL. I Recto: Two five-clawed dragons paired vertically with tails at the top and heads at the bottom looking upwards, with clouds below.

FOL. I Verso, FOL. 2 Recto and Verso: Pictures of the Buddha seated on a lotus throne. In the first he holds a bowl, in the second his left hand is raised in abhaya mudrā, in the third his hands are clasped.

FOL. 8 Recto: Picture of the Buddha standing with hands clasped.

FOL. 8 Verso: Full-face dragon, five-clawed, over waves and among clouds, encircling a flaming jewel.

This jade book was formerly the property of the Dowager Empress Tzǔ Hsi.
PLATE 2  Book 2  The opening of the text of the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra.
Four folios of green nephrite, mottled with whitish specks and fairly transparent, measuring $3\frac{3}{4} \times 2\frac{3}{4}$ inches; the tablets are framed in yellow silk as the pages of a book, and interleaved with ink impressions of the text. The covers are of wood, the top leaf inscribed with the title *Yü chih hsı fan lien fu*. The book is held in a box covered with yellow and blue silk, with a key-folding cover.

The text and decoration are engraved and gilded. The recto of the first folio bears the title in a vertical panel with a five-clawed dragon in clouds on either side. Rocks and waves line the lower margin. The verso of the last folio has a similar dragon rearing among clouds over rocks and water, with a flaming jewel behind it. The text, written by Ch‘ien Ju-ch‘eng, is in standard square hand. His signature and seals appear at the end. There is no date, but the book is clearly of Ch‘ien Lung’s reign, and he is the emperor to whom the essay is attributed.

The Lotus of the Western barbarians, as it is called here, is the passion flower. The poem describes it and suggests a Buddhist symbolism.

The flower may be identified by referring to a botanical album. The lotus is not planted in water, yet it is termed *lien*. It had not been seen in China. Who gave it the name of Western Lotus? In the past scholars of the court have described its structure, or – which is no less to the point – have marked a text with the brush in approbation of its beauty. The plant amazes the beholder. What words are adequate for a true description? The flower is supported on a long creeping tendril which turns it towards the sun to unfold its glory. Towards evening it draws in its splendour. Each stem carries a single bud raised over the leaves. Each head has five green sepals which put out five white petals and the delicate mass of the corona. Towards the centre the flower is light blue with outer edges of dark blue. Near its heart it is purple and the heart itself is a knot of bluish green. Five stamens project to the sides, terminating in a form resembling the head of the *ju-i* sceptre. The whole is surmounted by three dark red beads (stigmas). The light coloured leaves are divided into five fingers with indigo veins drawn across them.

Its strange shape and unusual seed set this plant apart from all common plants. For all the drawings and descriptions that have been made of it the fragrance of the Tibetan Lotus owes nothing to the commendation of botanists.
And so I came to ponder on it. It was created a flower with five petals; must this not symbolize the mystic doctrine of the Ch’an Buddhists? Why else never more than five? And the three beads which crown its fruit – can their meaning be other than the Three Vehicles of the Buddhist Law? At its conception the flower received its colour to set off its form, to make a mockery of the muddied things of the commonplace world.

"This flower, a native of Brazil, was introduced into Europe in the 17th century and cannot have reached China any earlier. The Christian symbolism suggested for the flower must have been explained to the Chinese of the Imperial court by Jesuit missionaries: the five petals with the five sepals representing the disciples (less Peter and Judas); the three stigmas, the nails of the cross; the corona, the crown of thorns; the five stamens, the five wounds. The author of the text of the jade book must have had this analogy in mind when he proposed his Buddhist alternatives."
PLATE 3  Book 4  *The wooden cover with the title.*
The text of a tablet composed by the Emperor Ch‘ien Lung for a pagoda erected by him to house a genealogical scroll of the Seven Buddhas presented in tribute by the Panchen Lama of Tibet

Four folios of semi-transparent green-grey nephrite, measuring 4½ x 3¼ inches, set in yellow silk mounts as pages of a book with relief – carved wooden covers. The front of the box has a panel with the title Yu chih ch‘i fo t‘a pei chi between two dragons whose heads meet under it. The back has two dragons head to tail around the longevity symbol formed by the character Shan. The recto of the first folio has five-clawed dragons in clouds on either side of the title panel, and the verso of the last folio two five-clawed dragons in clouds disputing a flaming jewel.

The text and decoration are engraved and gilded. The hand is that of Tung K‘ao, a much employed and well regarded scholar of Ch‘ien Lung’s court. The bulk of the text is taken up with the list of names, i.e. those of Guatama Buddha and his six predecessors (Vipaśyā, Sikhi, Viśabhu, Krakuchchhandha, Kanakamuni, Kāsyapa), and for each of these the father and mother, two names assumed in the ubiquitous manifestations of the Buddha (shan tsu) and a servant and a son. Apart from the names the text is as follows:

The sūtra of the Seven Buddhas¹ was first placed in the canon by the Buddhists of the Ch‘an sect. Its import is to be found scattered in the Sanskrit writings, although it was never compiled in Sanskrit in a single sūtra. Recently the tribute received from the Panchen Lama Eh Ehr Tê Ni included a Tibetan scroll of the Seven Buddhas. It gives the names of the parents of the Buddhas and of the members of their households. No ordinary Buddhist priests appear to know how the sūtra came to be composed. But on consulting the great priests (kuo shih) we learn that the origins of the doctrine can be traced, point by point, in Tibetan sūtras entitled Ch‘ang a han ching, Hsien chieh ching and Chiang sheng tz‘ü ching, and in the commentary entitled Lü yüán kuang chieh.²

(Here the names associated with the Seven Buddhas)

There is a doctrine which postulates that the One Buddha is identical with the
Buddhas whose numbers are as the grains of sand in the Ganges river, and that the Buddhas numerous as these sands are identical with the One Buddha. The same is true of their parents and their households, for there can be no grounds for making a distinction here. The Eternal Truth can take no blemish from this world, and at the Gates of a Myriad Entrants no true doctrine is rejected. This being so the predestination of Dharma is in this as in everything. This text has been engraved on pure white stone and a pagoda of the Seven Buddhas has been built and dedicated. The commendation is as follows:

The Kalpa of the past was the Majestic Age; that of the present is the Age of Sages and that of the future will be the Age of the Constellations. In the snap of the fingers the present universe may be overthrown. The Buddhas have said that the three ages are one. The three Buddhas of the past are not three; no more are the four Buddhas of the present four. We distinguish seven, but they are but one. The Seven Buddhas have each their sūtra, and all the sūtras express the same meaning. The Buddha can in truth manifest himself on the tip of a hair. The temple presents the aspect of the full-waxed moon, gathering its seven buildings into a single shrine: like the Flower of the Law (the lotus) the various buildings are not the same, yet are not different. The words of the Buddhas are not idle words. By long study only is their meaning grasped. The Listener to the Law and the Enlightened (pratyeka-buddha) equally are one, and neither kowtows to the other. The symbol on the Buddha’s breast (the swastika) for ever extends its protection over this world of good and evil, granting release to all living creatures. It behoves us all to advance our witness thereof.

Respectfully written by Tung K‘ao

1The doctrine of the Buddhas of the Past assigns twenty-one to the Majestic Age (alamkaraka kalpa) and four to the present kalpa (bhadrakalpa), ending with Gautama, but the last seven are specially commemorated and regarded as the prophets of the religion. In China the Seven Buddhas were first represented by images from the 6th century A.D. onwards.

2The scriptures and the commentary cited are, respectively, Dīrghāgama, or Long Treatise on Cosmogony; Bhadrakalpika-sūtra, or Sūtra of the Age of Sages; Sūtra on the Succession of Earthly Births of Buddhas; and General Exegesis of the Monastic Rules.

3The swastika, the breast symbol of the Buddha, is usually called the “auspicious sea-cloud”, chi hsiang hae yün, but the jade text omits “sea”.
PLATE 4  Book 5  The end-folios with title and imperial dragons.
A Discussion of the Carriage with a League-recording Drum, in the hand of the Emperor Ch'ien Lung. Dated 1778

Four folios of opaque, light-coloured grey-green nephrite, measuring $8\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ inches; contained in a box of brown wood decorated with three dragons around a panel with the title "Yü pi chi li ku chu shuo", followed by "respectfully imitated by the official Ts'ao Wen-ch'ih". The latter was a compiler in the Hanlin Academy in the 1760's.

The text, four columns to the page, is engraved and gilded. The style is the well-known hand of Ch'ien Lung's later years. The decoration is in two shades of gold, and silver. On the front of folio 1 are two five-clawed dragons curving upwards from rocks and waves on either side of a panel containing the title. There is a small rock in the centre and clouds around. The back of folio 4 has a five-clawed dragon leaping upwards from rocks and waves in pursuit of a flaming jewel surrounded by clouds.

The essay is as follows:

The vehicle with a league-recording drum first appears in the Huang ti nei chuan and is next mentioned in the Chin yü fu chih, this notice being derived from the first source. Moreover a record of its construction has been transmitted. Common people think the machine a marvel, but the better informed are aware of its absurdity. Now the tradition says that the contrivance both records distance in leagues and indicates the south. The latter is possible, but the instrument can hardly have been capable of measuring distance. The reason is clear. The iron of the south-pointing needle fixes its bearing by virtue of its magnetism. It inescapably points south, being obliged to return to that position even if it is temporarily displaced. Consequently our ocean-going ships are all furnished with the instrument in order that they may know their bearings. No better proof of the reliability of the compass needle could be asked for.

But as for the claim that the vehicle records distances — that it strikes a note after covering a league — this is beyond the bounds of possibility. Consider that terrain is either difficult or smooth. A horse travels slow or fast, and his speed must vary as the ground is difficult or smooth. How can one estimate the distance covered? Often a European clock is fitted in a carriage, and this marks the time. Thirty or twenty leagues may be covered in an hour according to the speed of travel: the clock revolves at a fixed rate while the speed of the vehicle
is variable. The measurement of distance simply does not come into the question. The Chang wang pu chi chapter of the Yü hai gives further proof that the theory of the measurement of distance does not bear examination.

Early summer of the year
wu hsü (i.e. 1778)
Ch'ien Lung

1 A carriage which indicated the south by turning in that direction was, according to legend, made by the Yellow Emperor. Its structure is not explained in any early text, but antiquarians were fond of speculating on the problem. The books cited in the opening lives are, respectively, Commentaries of the Yellow Emperor, and the Carriages and Costume chapter of the History of the State of Chin. In the latter there is an account of a distance-measuring carriage drawn by four horses, on which stood a wooden figure of a man who struck a drum at the end of each league traversed.

2 The Yü hai or Sea of Jade is a book of Sung date compiled by Wang Ying-lin.
PLATE 5  Book 6  Opening of a section of the text of the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra.
This sūtra is the full exposition of the doctrine of which the text of Book No. 2 is a condensed version. It occupies fifty-three tablets of green nephrite, measuring $9\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ inches, contained in a slate box with the title engraved and gilded.

The text and pictures are engraved and gilded. The script is in graceful formal style. Three of the illustrations represent Buddha seated on a lotus throne, one of the Heavenly Kings, and two groups of three each consisting of a Heavenly King, a layman and a priest.

The date, 10th year of the Yung Cheng period, corresponding to A.D. 1732, is recorded on the last folio, along with the words “Engraved with heartfelt respect for my disciple the serene and wise prince, to ensure his true happiness”. The term used for prince, ch‘in wang, or prince of the first rank, may indicate the imperial heir Ch‘ien Lung himself.
Portraits and descriptions of the Sixteen Lohan

Twelve tablets of dark grey nephrite, measuring 8¼ x 5½ inches, divided into two volumes. The four covers, each framing a tablet, are of bronze, decorated with repoussé dragons, which are gilded on a ground of turquoise enamel. The dragons are of the imperial five-clawed variety, the pairs on the front covers set either side of a panel intended for a title, which is now missing. The tablets are mounted in borders of brocade decorated in blue and red.

The portraits of the Lohan and the accompanying texts are painted and written in gold, not engraved. The date of the work is probably in the later 18th century, after 1757 (see below). The texts describe the paradoxical personalities of the Lohan with some humour.

1. INGITA. His garment is patched in a hundred places and he leans on a bamboo staff. He holds a Sanskrit book with its cover, his eyes stare and strips of dried meat are stretched across him. If he should make a note of anything he omits no detail, and makes no use of writing.

2. AJITA. He sits alone hugging his knees, with a vacant expression as if he were frightened. His heart is that of a Bodhisattva though his shape is that of the king of devils. On the left he is anointed with the fire-resisting balm of sandal-wood, on his right a sharp sword threatens. Why should he harbour resentment? Why should he confer kindness? Escape from karma is assured to him in either case.

3. VANAVASI. He sits in his cave with closed eyes, having entered the state of patient rest in the knowledge that he is assured of no rebirth. Flowing water, moving clouds, the facts and principles of existence for him have passed away. Let him rest so. What profit is there is stirring up the feelings? The Age of the Sages (i.e. the present kalpa) with its majestic gospel will be sped for him in the winking of an eye.

4. KALIKA. He moves a rock and sits with knees across it to rest. This superior being neither speaks nor is silent. His eyebrows, which extend to the ground, he lifts with his hand. Where is greater subtlety than this?

5. VAJIRIPUTRA. Large head and deep-set eyes, the body of a demon yet marked with the signs of goodness. But who can recognise them? He has flung the holy scripture to the ground. He has ended his study of this world, yet the Buddha does not reside in him. How much less is he in truth a Buddha!
PLATE 6  Book 7  The Second Lohan, Ajita.
6. **BHADRA.** With flourishing crown and abundant chin, dressed like a labourer in the rice-field. When a Buddha recites hymns it behoves us all to listen to him. His eyes see far, he is free of all earthly passion. There he sits cross-legged on his jagged rock indifferent to mussel-shells and sea-hawks. He is finished with the business of moving his legs.

7. **KANAKAVATSA.** To the front his body drinks in radiance and behind it grasps the principles of reality. A spiritual vulture hearing of him came flying to him. He is equipped with a few pairs of straw sandals and a bamboo staff which is immovably planted as soon as it leaves his grasp. He dwells for ever in the Law.

8. **KANAKA BHARADVĀJA.** In him the five attributes of man (form, perception, consciousness, action, knowledge) and the six senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, thought) are miraculously varied. By pointing up his finger he sets the Heavenly Dragon at nought. He dwells among trees and rocks and hair grows on his hands and feet. You may ask why scissors should not be used on him. But who shears the pig and deer?

9. **BAKKULA.** With high-riding nose and mouth agape he sits holding his rosary in his hand. For him the myriad laws are resolved into one, yet no single law is acceptable. Beneath the sala tree he sits indifferent to the world of illusion which he has rejected. He recites a silent litany while a novice-lad listens.

10. **RAHULA.** He has haughty eyebrows and staring eyes. On an occasion of anger he asks other disciples of the Buddha what the source of anger is. Joy, he says, is the pendant to anger. Joy and anger are one. The painter’s brush was guided by the spirit of the Lohan himself.

11. **CHUDA PANTHAKA.** Leaning against a hacked and knobbly tree-trunk he rests his hunch-back body. One never knows on whom he will turn his back and whom he will receive as a guest. He either welcomes visitors with his two fingers or sweeps them away with his fan. It is impossible to get to close quarters with him, nor will he ever enter into a discussion.

12. **PINDOLA BHARADVĀJA.** High back and wide eyebrows, a book of scriptures across his knees. He has no system of rules and he does not meditate. To the venerable ones he bows low. What antiquity! He lights lamps and sees to mats while he tarries waiting for Maitreya.

13. **PANTHAKA.** He understands the whole of the Law and impeaches or justifies the scriptures. Around him waters flow, the rocks are cold, the wind passes, flowers are fragrant. He proclaims the glorious holy scripture to the whole universe. He sweeps all prejudice away. Of him it may be truly said that he has seen the futility of the senses and the intellect.

14. **NAGASENA.** He has the gleaming eye and protruding brow of a demoniacal scribe. But those who see him are not afraid. He is greatly compassionate, imbued with the eternal truth. He yawns and groans, reclines and stares upwards joining the palms of his hands. He seems neither holy man nor layman. You cannot say he does not exist and you cannot say he does!
15. GOPAKA. If he waves his fan he is warm. If he covers himself with garments he is cold. He says there are no such things as cold and warmth. His is an unorthodox creed. For him warmth is ever in the midst of warmth and cold is unalterably in cold, metal cannot revert to the ore and ice is still water.

16. ABHEDA. He warms the bent-legged ting tripod with garu-wood. He goes through the whole canon of scriptures in the snap of the fingers. But the Law does not yet reside in him.

How have these pictures survived? If you ask who took the trouble to preserve them, the answer is Kuan Hsiu. Kuan Hsiu of the T'ang dynasty painted true portraits of the sixteen Lohan, which may be seen from the Hsüan Ho Painting Album. They have been transmitted from the Kuang Ming period (A.D. 880) to the present, a space of a thousand years, in the province of Chekiang. The paintings were dedicated and preserved in the Sheng Yin temple in Ch'ien T'ang Hsien. In the ting ch'ou year of the Ch'ien Lung period (A.D. 1757), during an imperial tour of inspection, when the Emperor resided in the Bamboo Palace on the Western Lake, the temple was granted the honour of a visit and the wonders of the Imperial brush were displayed for all to see. The venerable ones of the temple enjoy great fame and are long practised in the translation of the scriptures. But they did not adhere to the original Sanskrit sounds of the Lohan names, and the order of the names they observed was entirely different from that established by the great abbots and priests. (So the Emperor made) the transcriptions agree with the established standard, and added the order of the names at the foot of each of the slips on which he described the characteristics of the Lohan. Each comment takes praise of the Lohan for its theme. The written slips are still preserved in the temple for future generations.

Whether the paintings Ch'ien Lung saw were indeed those painted by the celebrated Kuan Hsiu (A.D. 832-912) we cannot be certain. The postscript implies that the descriptions of the Lohan written in the jade plaques are those composed by Ch'ien Lung. The facts cited in the postscript are vouched for in a Japanese work of 1862, Rakan-zu Sanshū (Collected Pictures and Eulogies of Lohan), by Tetsutei, in which Chinese texts concerning Lohan are compiled. When the emperor Ch'ien Lung, during his southern tour of 1757, visited the Sheng Yin temple near the Western Lake, he asked to see the paintings of the Sixteen Lohan by Kuan Hsiu. He composed short eulogies on slips of paper which he presented to the temple. Ch'ien Lung was interested in assuring that the traditional transcriptions of the Lohan names, which he thought incorrect, were replaced by the transcriptions established, in compliance with an imperial order, by Khutuktu, a high abbot (chang chia) of the Lamaist order; also that the order of the Lohan names used in Nandimitra's text and traditional in China, should be superseded by the order observed in Tibet. In the jade book the transcriptions and the order of names are as the emperor desired. The fullest account of the growth of the Lohan cult has been given by V. S. Lévi and E. Chavannes, *Les seize Arhat protecteurs de la loi* in Journal Asiatique vol. VIII (1916) p. 279.
PLATE 7  Book 7  The Sixteenth Lohan, Abheda.
PLATE 8 Book 8  The folios with the posthumous title, in Chinese and in Manchu.
Ten tablets of opaque light grey nephrite, measuring $11\frac{3}{4} \times 5$ inches. The text is engraved on one side only of each folio; the names and title characters are gilded and the rest of the text painted dark blue. The text is in Chinese and Manchu, each version occupying four pages. The Chinese is in the standard square hand, less elegantly engraved than the texts of the later imperial jade books. The front and back of the book are engraved each with a pair of five-clawed dragons in clouds, disputing a flaming jewel. This jade book has claim to being the earliest made by a Ch'ing emperor; and among surviving Manchu writings it is fourth in point of age, being preceded only by Nurhaci's political essays of 1616, an inscription of 1639, and the earliest printed Manchu, which was a translation of the sacred edicts of the emperor Hung Wu made in 1646.¹

In the fifth year of the Shun Chih period (A.D. 1648), the year being wu tzu, in the eleventh month, on the day hsien yu, being the eighth day wu ch'en, of the lunar month (21st December), your great-grandson Fu Lin, bound by filial piety, successor to the Imperial power, prostrated himself in obeisance, and reported upwards to my Imperial Ancestor Ch'ing Wang as follows:

The great deed now accomplished in bringing the whole Empire under our single rule has been wrought wholly with the valiant assistance of my Imperial ancestor. Therefore in strict conformity with usage and rite, with filial heart I respectfully recommend that the master of the rolls of nobility and the seals of office inscribe a posthumous title thus:

Sublime Ancestor Just Emperor (Hsing tsu chih huang ti). Thereby may your merits and virtues be transmitted to posterity for a myriad years.

Spoken from the heart.

¹Berthold Laufer; Jade, A Study in Chinese Archaeology and Religion, pp. 117-119.
9 A Note by the Emperor Ch‘ien Lung on a Rustic Retreat on Jade Spring Hill, dated 1753

Four folios of dark green nephrite, measuring $6\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ inches, are fitted into wooden stands. The text, which reproduces the hand of Ch‘ien Lung, and decoration are painted in gold. The sides of the folios have a scrolled floral border, and the cover a pair of five-clawed dragons either side of a panel containing the title, over rocks and waves. The text describes, with many learned allusions, a structure lu which the dictionaries define as an “earthen chamber for storing wine”. In the following translation however the chu lu is rendered simply as “bamboo hut”.

The Whetstone Table, Crab’s Eye and Fish’s Eye, near which the hut is situated, are perhaps intended to be taken here as strangely shaped rocks. The last two terms are fanciful names for the bubbles of boiling water, and, together with the sound of wind blowing through pines, occur in a poem on tea-making by the eleventh century poet Su Tung-p‘o.

A record made by the Imperial brush at the Mountain retreat of the Bamboo Hut on Jade Spring Hill.

The ancients drank hot water in winter and cold water in summer. What we call tea-drinking was not known to them. Tea-drinking caught on in the Han dynasty and reached its greatest height in the T‘ang dynasty. Where did the practice arise? A holy priest was the first man to set the fashion of tea-drinking in a rustic retreat when he went to Mount Hui and there built a bamboo hut.¹ The tradition he established survived to later times, and eventually reached this spot in the Western Hills. Men of merit and virtue are to be sought among the streams and snows, and high-minded priests are led to forsake the world by the attractions of moving clouds and flowing water. But to return to the Jade Spring: its water proves to be better for tea-making than the water of Hui Shan itself. So I have built a hut of two rooms at its side. To the front are massed mountain tops. Below and all around are flowing streams. The wind of heaven sweeps through the forest and the forest rejoices. The rolling noise of a rushing wind drumming and soughing through the branches is like the sound of strings and flutes. The ripple of water is my familiar music. Above and below the forms of nature affright our eyes. No ears can penetrate this vast
noise. But undismayed I have built here my replica of the hut of Mount Hui. It is felicitously sited between (the rocks called) the Whetstone Table, the Crab’s Eye and the Fish’s Eye, and around it the lonely wind whistles unceasingly. Men who have left their occupations to cultivate peace take pleasure in such a place, spending whole years in it without once leaving. But how could I be such a one? From time to time I come here to dispel care and to clear my mind, and this recreation is essential to me. I have built my hut in the fashion of that of Mount Hui, which can be copied like any other sweet rustic hut. But my hut need owe nothing to Mount Hui, and indeed there is something here which the spring on Mount Hui cannot emulate. May I perhaps boast to have enjoyed to the full the pleasure of drinking tea? Certainly I could never forsake this creation of mine, this mountain hut.

Ch‘ien Lung, in the year kuei yu (A.D. 1753), in autumn, after crossing the I Sun river to draw water for making tea. This inscribed to record his pure delight. By the Imperial brush.

The holy priest who drank tea in a hut on Mount Hui in Kiangsu was Hui Chao of the T'ang dynasty. Jade Spring Hill is in the Western Hills near Peking.
Only a single folio of this book is present, measuring $8\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$ inches, of light grey jade. One side of this folio has the title in a panel flanked by imperial dragons, on the other the beginning of the text. There is no means of inferring the number of folios which completed the book. All the engraving is gilded.

When I was young I learned the fifty sections of Po Chü-i's poems by heart. I delighted in the beauty of his diction and in his gift for recording the doings of men. Indeed in the poems one finds equally the praise of good and the satire of evil. His work is the epitome of an age. He has bequeathed his thought to us in some three hundred compositions. The occasions of his verse are lords, ministers, people and things. His work is no mere exercise in empty phrase-making. For long I have wished to write poetry in his style, but the distractions of a busy life have allowed me little leisure, and days and months have stretched out leaving my intent unfulfilled. His manner is great and his matter universal, and neither is to be imitated by a casual brush; but the desire to make the attempt has stayed with me. Such poetry is most truly worthy of the name. It is rooted in his times, with all the depth of feeling of one who knows the Way.

To use the past as an example for the present and in the present to exemplify the past, these are principles on which our state and kingship are founded. Through the high endeavour and devotion of our ancestors their descendants are made aware of the difficulty of creating an empire. To preserve our traditions the practice of literature is essential. No obscurity can be tolerated. Every word must be considered in its original meaning and accepted or rejected accordingly. Length is not a primary concern. The essential thing is to convey one's thought and nothing more. Excessive revision only prolongs the time taken to complete a composition. The reader must not be required to seek some external aid for understanding what he reads.

The Dance of the Seven Virtues.

This is a pageant of the achievements of kings, performed to music. The Po Ch'en ('breaking the ranks') music was composed in the Wu Tê period (A.D. 618-626). The choreography of the performance was revised in the Cheng Kuan period (A.D. 627-649). Wei Cheng received the imperial command to arrange the words, and the title Seven Virtues was chosen.
The purpose was to demonstrate the supreme statesmanship necessary for laying the foundation of a state.

Of the Seven Virtues and the Po Ch‘en there are two versions, and it is really impossible to discriminate between them. Wei Cheng composed the words, but how can we be sure what they are? If we look closely at the Dance of the Nine Merits it is clear that it is quite discountenanced by the Seven Virtues and the Po Ch‘en music.

When the Sui ruler lost the throne his government was in disorder and he was pursued by a band of heroes, who surged up from moor and marsh to follow T’ai Tsung of T‘ang. While the palace concubines were engaged in plundering their own fathers, while the officers to whom the reins of government has passed at their master’s departure, were in open rebellion, T’ai Tsung’s supporters knew the horrors of internecine war and issued from it victorious. Their elated valour outdid even Kao Tsu and Ming Tsu of the house of Han. Can the dance performed at my court, the Congratulation to a Sublime Sovereign, be compared to a performance such as this?

Po Chü-i was promoted to a rank befitting his genius, but although he received a brilliant title of nobility, from the beginning he was called merely The Stranger of the Horse-halter. He was a plain man living on his land and eating its produce.

Since even Kao Tsu and Ming Tsu of Han never achieved a Dance of the Seven Virtues, how much less need we compare this performance with the Congratulation to a Sublime Monarch, the performance prescribed in my court as a commemoration of royal achievements.

The ordeals which our ancestors suffered in establishing the state are reverently recorded in . . . (incomplete)

1The *Hsin yüeh fu*, or New Verses on Traditional Models, named in the title of this jade book, contains the poems of Po Chü-i’s earliest years. It was published in A.D. 824 as part of the collection entitled *Ch‘ang ch‘ing chi*.

2The *Hsin yüeh fu* consists of fifty poems, of which the first is entitled “The Dance of the Seven Virtues, a poem in praise of a king who established order in his country”. The Seven Virtues – putting down rebels, stopping war, preserving the greatness of the state, recognizing and rewarding merit, establishing peace, harmonizing the people, creating riches – were the theme of one of the three great ballets performed at the T’ang court. It recalled the prowess displayed by the second T‘ang emperor, T’ai Tsung (A.D. 627-649), while he was crown prince with the title of King of Ch’in. “Breaking the ranks of Ch’in” was an earlier title of the ballet. “The Dance of the Nine Merits”, mentioned in the jade text, and “The Dance of the Fifteenth Day of the First Month” were the other ballets of the trio. Besides this poem, there is other evidence of Po Chü-i’s interest in ceremonial music and dance.
II The text of a stone tablet for the Imperial College, celebrating the completion of the pacification of Zungaria

A single tablet of grey jade, measuring 8\(\frac{1}{2}\) x 3\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches. The text, engraved and gilded in square, formal hand, occupies one side of the tablet, and is incomplete. The other side has the title in a panel between imperial dragons.

Barbarians inhabiting remote mountains, eaters of fragrant gruel, wearers of felt and fur, dwellers in felt tents, raise their wild horses on the borders of the north-western confines of the empire. They have no regular occupation, but they are divided into tribes. Now from the beginning there have been Eastern Yi barbarians and Western Yi barbarians, each inhabiting their own regions. There is ancient mention of the Ch'uo Wei as ancestors of the Huns, but this is mistaken, lacking reasonable foundation. From remote antiquity no texts survive which record that they were ever seen. But after the punitive campaign of King Hsüen of Chou in T'ai Yuan, and when Ch'in constructed the Great Wall reaching to the sea, there was never a moment when we did not fear their raids across our frontiers. Their periods of turbulence could be foretold according to the season. Afterwards one or two energetic rulers magnanimously hoped to break their power and bring them within the empire, but they relented and failed to achieve any result. Circumstances and the state of our material resources were against us, and our difficulties were aggravated by the great distance of the theatre of operations and the ever-changing location of the enemy. The hardships of our troops and the great expense of material yielded only a tenth of the return we looked for. The learned officials of the court, all who defended law and order and were accustomed to bear arms, called again and again for an expedition against these barbarians. So the strength of our people was exhausted, and our efforts to secure peace by royal marriage with barbarian princes only brought ignominy on the state. We were obliged to keep the halter on the necks of the barbarians of the four regions. Unceasingly our fields were left unploughed. The people could not . . . (incomplete).
The Zungar, tribes of Mongolian affinities whose home was on the slopes of the K'un Lun Shan in southern Hsinkiang. They had extended their rule over Tibet in the time of the emperor K'ang Hsi. In 1720 a campaign by two Chinese armies forced them to yield this conquest to the Chinese. In the middle of the 18th century the Zungar state was in dissolution, rent by internal dissension. One contestant for power, the Khoit prince Amursana, took refuge in China in 1754, placing himself at Ch'ien Lung's disposal. A campaign launched in the spring of 1755 aimed at installing Amursana as ruler in Zungaria by force of Chinese arms. After some misadventures, in the course of which Amursana turned against his backers, Chinese control was effectively established. Zungaria lost its independence and Amursana fled to the Russians. These events were completed in 1757, and the inscription and engraving of the jade book must have followed soon afterwards.
Two tablets of dark green nephrite, measuring 7⅛ x 4⅛ inches, set in wooden stands, the text and decoration engraved and gilded. The front of the first has the design of a tablet on a stand, framed with floral scrolls and surmounted by a five-clawed dragon. The space on the tablet where the title of the book would be expected, is not inscribed. The script is the hand of Ch‘ien Lung as it appears in his old age, when he was over eighty years old. The essay on the Mandate of Heaven appears to be complete but for a final folio, the back cover which probably had a signature and date.

To become Emperor a man must receive the Mandate of Heaven. This is a doctrine bequeathed to us by Mencius, and in my opinion the examples of turbulent adventurers who seized power in no wise invalidate it. The doctrine was vindicated in the beginning. Yi Yin and Chou Kung achieved the positions of power appropriate to them. They did not fail to achieve the status to which they were destined. Confucius himself did not treat of this; and in a commentary to Tzū Hsi’s⁴ supposed writing on this subject Chu Hsi⁵ concludes that it is not authentic. No words can express the tragedy of this loss. As for my own succession, it was commanded by Heaven and Earth, and the throne was handed down to me by my ancestors. Were either of these circumstances lacking how could I have assumed power? And it is a position beset with fears and perils, cares and loneliness. What leisure has such an officer as I to extol himself? He can only hold himself aloof from all about him . . . (incomplete).

¹Yi Yin was a minister who helped to establish the first emperor of the ancient Shang dynasty, and Chou Kung, the Duke of Chou, played a similar rôle in the advent of the succeeding Chou dynasty.

²Confucius’ grandson.

³The great Neo-Confucian philosopher (A.D. 1130-1200).
Two Poems by the Emperor Ch'ien Lung, with an introduction

Four folios of grey-green, semi-transparent jade, measuring $4\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$ inches, in yellow silk mounts measuring $6\frac{1}{10} \times 3\frac{7}{10}$ inches. The folios are interleaved with pages of white-on-black rubbings of the text. The characters reproducing the writing of Liang Kuo-chih¹ (as noted at the end of the text), are engraved and gilded, and cover both sides of the tablets. The first and last pages are decorated with five-clawed dragons disputing a flaming pearl. The covers consist of carved sandalwood boards, the upper of which bears the title “Fragrant flowers and spring birds; a clear moon and pure breeze”.

In a palace chamber hang two scrolls with inscriptions:

“Scent of flowers and chatter of birds: all creatures rejoice”
“Clear moon and a pure breeze: the Creator’s spirit is in them”.

I have made some six-rhyme verses on each of these themes, and here introduce them with a preface.

The palace wall runs to the right in this western part of the palace grounds. The Hall of Fresh Buds opens its Gate of Heaped Flowers to the east. Time was I could happily turn the pages of the K‘uai Hsiieh album.² But subject as I am at every moment to the duties of my office, what leisure is left me now to go back over the memorial tablets of the past?

Kao Yun³ excels in playing the lute and there is genius in his calligraphy. Here is a pair of scrolls from his brush, with a sentence divided between them. Each scroll bears seven characters expressing his delight in nature. The seal reads “In writing honesty is above all”.

The roots of the human heart are in nature. Flowers may lack feeling, yet they open their petals. How is it that birds can speak of the moon’s brilliance, or the chill of the wind that pierces the breast? Once I listed the manifold phenomena of nature in a book. When I was young I stored them all up and secretly placed them in my record. It was something that could be carried about easily. This was, as I now see it, an ideal to which I aspired. From my early years, reverently and incessantly, I advanced the cause of Confucian truth by diligently inscribing its maxims on wall-tablets. In that time long ago I extolled Confucius even above the Emperor Hsi himself.

Now I shall expand in verse the sentiments of the scroll inscriptions.
Nature takes no heed of us, but by observing with an open heart we can apprehend the spirit that moves in it. In the past this has been a personal pleasure of the mind, to-day I urge all to attend. The scent of flowers is wafted across the shining stone steps. The song of birds is heard through the window, their reedy throats artfully tuned to careless melody. The musk-deer guards the sound of flowing water. A soft harmony of intricate sounds rises and falls, making silence deeper. All nature overflows with life.

The above is a fu on the scent of flowers and birdsong.

A full moon in a cloudless sky, from time to time freshness blown by a gentle breeze. The clouds are blown away, not a spot of the sky is covered. The sound of pipes rises like crystal, harmonious, soothing, a shining light. This radiance is a harmony of sounds. The moon's disc stands on the tip of a branch: ten days of unscanned song. The opening of the plum blossom cannot compare with it. Walking abroad we meet the splendour and the Tao is spontaneously born in us. Light streams through the window. I think how in ancient times this was the same.

The above is a fu on a clear sky with moon and fresh breeze.

Respectfully written by Liang Kuo-chih.

1A secretary in the department of finances.

2The Album of the K'uai Hsüeh Pavilion: Feng Ch'uan of the Ch'ing dynasty called his library the K'uai Hsüeh T'ang or Sudden Snow Pavilion. He collected ancient calligraphies and published them in an album, K'uai hsüeh t'ang t'ieh. This may be the book Ch'ien Lung refers to in the preface to his poems, but more probably he has in mind the album from which Feng Ch'uan adopted the Sudden Snow in the names of his library and book, i.e. K'uai hsüeh shih ch'ing t'ieh (Album of Sudden Snow in Clear Weather), an album of the grass-character calligraphy of the most famous of all calligraphers, Wang I-chih of the Chin dynasty. This was one of Ch'ien Lung's prized possessions.

3Kao Yun was a native of Chekiang and known as the Woodcutter of Lute Mountain. He seems to have lived in the late 17th or early 18th century. He was famous for his mastery of many arts, which included lute-playing and the painting of flowers and people.
An Essay by the Emperor on his old age

A tablet of nephrite from a jade book, measuring $5\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ inches, honey-coloured with grey mottling, inscribed in square hand, the characters engraved and gilded.

The tablet is the second folio of a book (being so marked on the edge). The opening is continuous with the preceding missing text. On the back a single character appears at the top of what would be the 5th last column, and the sentence and probably the whole text ends with it. Probably therefore the book consisted of 3 tablets:

1 **recto**: Imperial dragon and title.
1 **verso**: opening of text.
2 **recto and verso**: the tablet described here.
3 **recto**: date, name and seals of Ch'ien Lung.
3 **verso**: Imperial dragon.

The text is an essay on his old age by the Emperor Ch'ien Lung, composed in 1790, the age of eighty-five and three years before his death, Ch'ien Lung abdicated in favour of his fifteenth ranking son Yung Yen, who became emperor with the title Chia Ch'ing.

... 70 years, one's mind was fitted to the task.

At 80 there is still the pleasure of opening the dispatch-case, of having a seal carved with which, so to speak, to bring up the rear of the imperial script. But one cannot help thinking of what is said about the Eight Proofs in the Great Plan Chapter of the Book of History.¹ When I was young I formed a resolve to hand over government to a deputy as soon as I reached the age of 85, that is, the 60th year of my reign. Now I am 80 years old, and still 6 years remain before I can delegate my duties. Not a day's rest do I ever have from the burden of my vast people. Their welfare is constantly in my heart. Yes, I have good reason to reflect on the Eight Proofs! And to consider the Various Verifications is indeed to consider the people. In strict etiquette the age of 80 is called mao. It is a time when one learns what it is to be reputed senile. But now I am 80 I may be beholden to others for taking over my responsibilities”.

¹The Eight Proofs, i.e. proof of the success of a king's reign, occur in the Hung fan chapter of the Shu Ching. The Various Verifications, one division of the Proofs, concern meteorological phenomena—rain, sun, heat, cold, wind, seasonableness.
An address to the throne proposing a temple name for the deceased Emperor Ch'ien Lung

Seven tablets of green nephrite measuring 5¼ x 11½ inches, engraved and gilded on one side, five with the text and two with pairs of imperial dragons.

The text is in Manchu. There is no sign that tablets with the Chinese text are missing from the set, so it is probable that these had their own end tablets with dragons. Ch'ien Lung had abdicated in 1796 in favour of his son Yung Yen, and died on January 2nd, 1799.

In the fourth year of Chia Ch'ing (1799) on the seventh day of the fourth month of the summer.

Report to the throne: I, the dignitary, have heard that (our late sovereign) by the excellence of his merits and the splendour of his culture achieved the supreme perfection of a hundred emperors. Of resplendent virtue and astonishing knowledge, he shall be praised with titles of honour for ten thousand years. Having long occupied the throne he made his gracious kindness reach everywhere; he was well disposed towards the people and his mind was penetrated with kindness towards them. In following established customs he bestowed jewels and diplomas of honour.

Therefore I beg to consider reverently: Your Imperial Father the Late Emperor, the Supreme Sovereign, was equal to Heaven, Earth and Nature. He set an example of cultivating a truthful heart, constantly improving himself; he devoted himself to making river works and dykes of the sea solid and secure. Over and over again he graciously remitted taxes levied for transporting army provisions. He was careful in his judgment, and made upright decisions. For his public works he hired workmen and did not harm the people. Daily he attended to innumerable kinds of state business, being always thorough, careful and accurate. Thus he strove for sixty years as if they were one day, giving people peace and quiet. Whenever he spoke, he praised Heaven; and he concentrated his mind so that fertile years could always be expected. Thus he completed the five kinds of happiness, extending them to others everywhere. Although the entire world knows that nearing the age of ninety he never tired of striving; that in his sixty years on the throne his upright government surpassed that of all emperors before him; that he made truth his highest principle - nevertheless I cannot sufficiently expound the supreme position of emperor with my inadequate brush. Now, after having described his greatness, I wish to make
PLATE 9  Book 15  *The front folio with imperial dragons.*
PLATE 10 Book 15 The Manchu text.
known his supreme virtue: every year he conscientiously performed the great sacrifice. Every day he read the book of the True Annals with reverence. Discussing ceremonies and establishing the right measure, he laid down laws and regulations. He wrote books explaining the Tao and left behind him a reputation for learning and culture. In his care for the education of the people and for good government, he equalled the standards set by the Emperor Shun on his tours of inspection. By displaying his majestic dignity and performing meritorious deeds he achieved the same as did Emperor Hsien Yuan by using an army. He pitied the misery of the people, and after careful investigation, consideration and calculation he assured their livelihood. During his entire long reign he checked the behaviour of the officials.

He himself saw several generations, and had both great and great-great-grandchildren. He extended the territory of his empire and reached remote boundaries. Foreign nations brought him tribute uninterruptedly, and all nations lived in the enjoyment of profound peace until his end. To this day people yearn in their saddened hearts for the time when he ruled with firmness as the divine sovereign. It is impossible to enumerate all his glorious deeds. Wanting to eulogize him by a special name of honour, and thus comparing the honest sayings of all people, and examining the lines of the ancients, one is reminded of the splendid passage in the Book of Odes: “The height of Heaven has no limit, and the simplicity of virtue has no end”. Remembering his true greatness and majesty, and complying with the true wishes of the officials and the people, I herewith present this precious diploma to honour his name, saying: He imitated Heaven and made his epoch a great one. He modelled himself upon the original divine truth and first principle. He erected the ridge-pole of knowledge and spread civilization and learning. He extended his majestic influence. He was the pious, compassionate, divine, saintly and perfect emperor, whose temple name shall be:

Kao-tsung Ch’ün Huang Ti.

He always made the good shine brightly and left us glorious deeds without end. I therefore humbly beg the throne to take note of this petition graciously. May the throne enjoy everlasting felicity!