



China, Qing Dynasty, Qianlong period (c. 1735-95)
**Jade Mountain Illustrating the Gathering of Scholars
at the Lanting Pavilion** (1735-1736)
Light green jade

The Jade & Stone Study Fund and Gift of the Thomas Barlow Walker Foundation
© 2012

The Qing dynasty emperor Qianlong (c. 1735-95) commissioned this jade
mountain, apparently the largest piece of historic carved jade outside of China.
It depicts a literary gathering of scholar-officials at Lanting, the Orchid
Pavilion described in "Lanting Jue" (Preface to the Poems Composed at the
Orchid Pavilion), by Wang Xizhi (c.312-365), recognized as the greatest
calligrapher of the Far East. The prose itself is carved on the front. Wang Xizhi,
and engaged in a drinking contest, wine cups were floated down a small
winding creek as the men sat along its banks. Whenever a cup stopped, the
man closest to the cup was required to drink it and write a poem. In the end,
twenty-six of the participants composed thirty-seven poems. Emperor
Qianlong's own poem appears carved on the reverse.