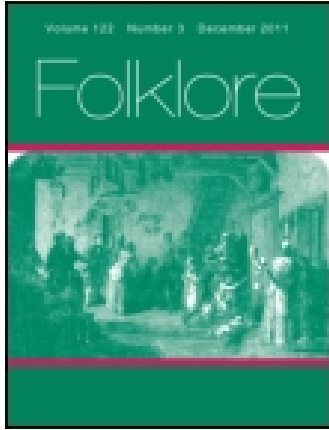


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Publisher: Routledge  
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## Folklore

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rfol20>

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Published online: 14 Feb 2012.

To cite this article: W. Perceval Yetts (1922) Chinese Tomb Jade, *Folklore*, 33:3, 319-321, DOI: [10.1080/0015587X.1922.9720563](https://doi.org/10.1080/0015587X.1922.9720563)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0015587X.1922.9720563>

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## DEVILS IN THE ALPS.

GENEVA, Aug. 3.

THE inhabitants of the little Alpine village of Claro, in the Canton of Tessin, firmly believe that devils have taken up their residence on a peak of the Alps named Peverotto, 3,000 feet above the village. The shepherds and cowherds refuse to make the ascent with their flocks and herds, declaring that many of them have been injured by stones rolled down on them by invisible devils.

Several gendarmes and a priest were sent to the summit recently. No devils were found, but the priest blessed the mountain in order to scare away any devils who might be in hiding. The shepherds and cowherds are still timid. They keep their flocks on the lower slopes so that they can make a hasty retreat to the village if the devils again attack them.

*The Daily Express, 4th August, 1922.*

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## CHINESE TOMB JADE.

ON p. 139 of Mr. Mackenzie's paper, "Colour Symbolism," in the last number of *Folk-Lore*, the author, in referring to Chinese mouth-jades, assumes that their colour was green. It is true that in this country the popular notion is that jade is essentially green; indeed, in some industries "jade" is used as a synonym for a certain shade of green. So far as my knowledge goes, no such intimate association ever existed in Chinese minds. The word *yü*, used for jade, occurs very frequently in euphemistic phraseology; pages might be filled with a bare list of the commoner expressions in which *yü* figures. But its meaning is generally "precious," "rare," "beautiful," "delicate," or "gem-like," and when it does convey a colour significance, it is white or a quality of colourless translucence that is indicated. I would not venture to deny that the word *yü* (jade) by itself ever denotes the colour green or a piece of green jade, but it may safely be stated that such use must be rare. Both Dr.

Lionel Giles and I have for some years been engaged in translating Taoist writings, and they are specially rich in allusions to jade and its magical properties; yet we have not come upon this meaning. Nor have I encountered the use orally in China.

To turn from popular tradition about jade in general (as exemplified in literary allusions, proverbs, tales of magic, etc.) to the actual objects: there is no evidence that mouth-jades were green. On the contrary, it seems likely that they were rarely, if ever, markedly green. Of the four in my collection, one is "mutton-fat" white stained buff underneath, another is honey-colour, another is black and white, and the last is dark ruddy-brown with a thin layer of light stone, faintly bluish-green, on its under surface. I have seen a large number of mouth-jades in the hands of native collectors and dealers, and I do not remember a single green one. It must not, of course, be forgotten that often decomposition and staining have modified the appearance of jade objects after they have lain buried for many centuries. Such changes, however, never completely disguise the colour of pieces which were originally green. There is, too, the fact that ancient tomb-jades were generally fashioned from a kind of stone differing from that imported into China from Turkestan and other countries in large quantities since the beginning of our era. Classical records contain accounts of tribute jade being introduced at early dates from Khotan and neighbouring parts; but these supplies must have been small in proportion to those derived from China proper. Lan-t'ien in Shensi is proverbially associated with the native supply, and there were quarries in other parts of China—all exhausted long ago. Examination of ancient relics show that the Chinese jade has qualities distinguishing it from foreign kinds, and one of these peculiarities is the rarer occurrence of a green colour.

While criticising Mr. Mackenzie's theory in which he attaches significance to a supposed green-colour of mouth-jades, a word about another sort of symbolism should not be omitted. Ancient Chinese tongue-amulets were fashioned in the form of a cicada. There can be little doubt that the cicada shape was

so used as an emblem of new life. Dr. Laufer has called attention to this meaning in his well-known *Jade*, p. 301. The fact that the ancient Chinese shared in the world-wide recognition of the transformation of a pupa into a winged insect as symbolic of resurrection may be proved from many written sources, notably Taoist texts.

W. PERCEVAL YETTS.

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