

# Big turnout for Xiling seal and Qingtian stonecarving exhibits

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**H**undreds of Xiling seals and Qingtian stonecarvings were on display recently in Jiading District's Han Tianheng Art Museum, which is celebrating its 10th anniversary.

Around 400 masterpieces representing the fine skills and techniques of Qingtian stonecarving, as well as seals made by about 100 renowned artists from across the nation, attracted visitors to the museum over the past few weeks. Qingtian Town, in neighboring Zhejiang Province, borders the cities of Wenzhou and Taizhou and is known in China as the stonecarving capital. It is famous for producing an abundance of Qingtian rock, which is one of the best types of stone for making seals and carvings.

For centuries, Qingtian stone has been the first choice for engravers, not only because of its early extraction and high production, but also because of its unique and perfect trait for seal-carving expression.

Qingtian stones are smooth and delicate and have long been preferred by seal engravers.

During the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), literati began to use Qingtian stone for seal engraving, which led to



The largest Qingtian stonecarving, named "Palace in Heaven," on display. — Photos courtesy of Han Tianheng Art Museum

the stone's popularity throughout the country.

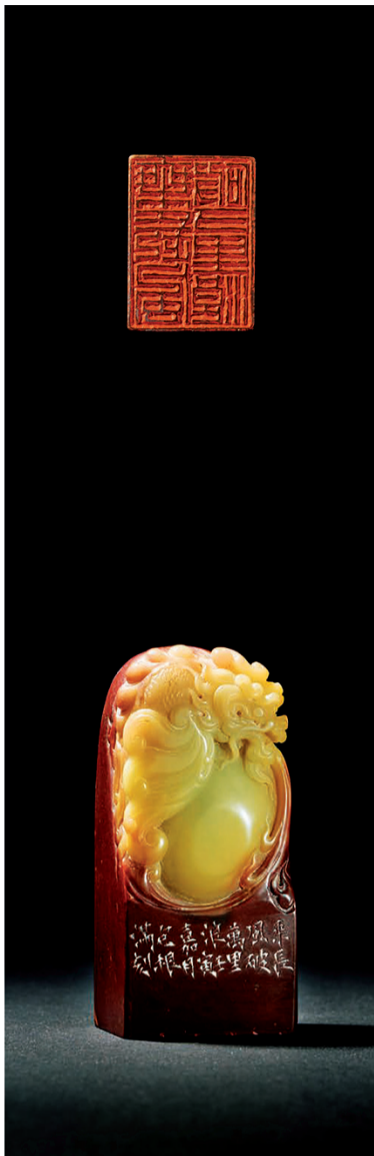
"Palace in Heaven," a daunting masterpiece, was the largest among all exhibits. The rendering of the palace, mountains, rivers, grasses and trees onto the different natural hues of the stone itself leaves a dynamic visual impact on the viewers.

Indeed, as one of China's intangible cultural heritages, Qingtian stonecarving is constantly evolving and innovating on the basis of traditional carving, which is primarily limited to landscapes, flowers and animals.

Among the exhibits were the 108 generals from "Water Margin," one of the four classic novels of Chinese literature, also known as "All Men Are Brothers."

The legendary figures are vividly carved in stone, with details ranging from their clothing to their facial features to the knives and swords in their hands.

For those who missed the exhibition, we reproduce here some of the stunning images of the traditional art of stonecarvings for you to appreciate the unique charm of the Qingtian stone.



A seal work by Bao Genman. Bao uses a stone from Qingtian's Zhou Village to create the image of a dragon hatching an egg. The characters on the seal read: riding the long wind to break the waves for 10,000 miles.



Nan Hanbin's stonecarvings, Song Jiang (left) and Flowery Monk Lu Zhishen, from the 108 generals mentioned in the classic Chinese novel "Water Margin."