



Fig. 2: Peasant shoes. Chinese Collection. Donor: Laufer (AMNH).

entire culture of China of the present day and to illustrate the products of the country and the general every-day life of the people, – their customs and industries, their amusements and pastimes and their religion and art" (*Chinese Hall* 1905: 7 f.). As guests made their way into the Chinese Hall, they must have felt astonishment as they confronted many unexpected pieces. Instead of poring their eyes over splendid samples of porcelain, they found themselves studying crude

examples of "modern crockery ... in its simple burnt state." Similarly, the display of footwear must have prompted bafflement. After all, the tiny silk shoes worn by Chinese women with bound feet had by this time become *de rigueur* in a Chinese exhibit because Americans enjoyed contemplating a custom they regarded as bizarre. Yet Laufer defied this expectation by replacing the silk shoes with the rustic footwear of peasant farmers (Fig. 2). This is not to say that Laufer

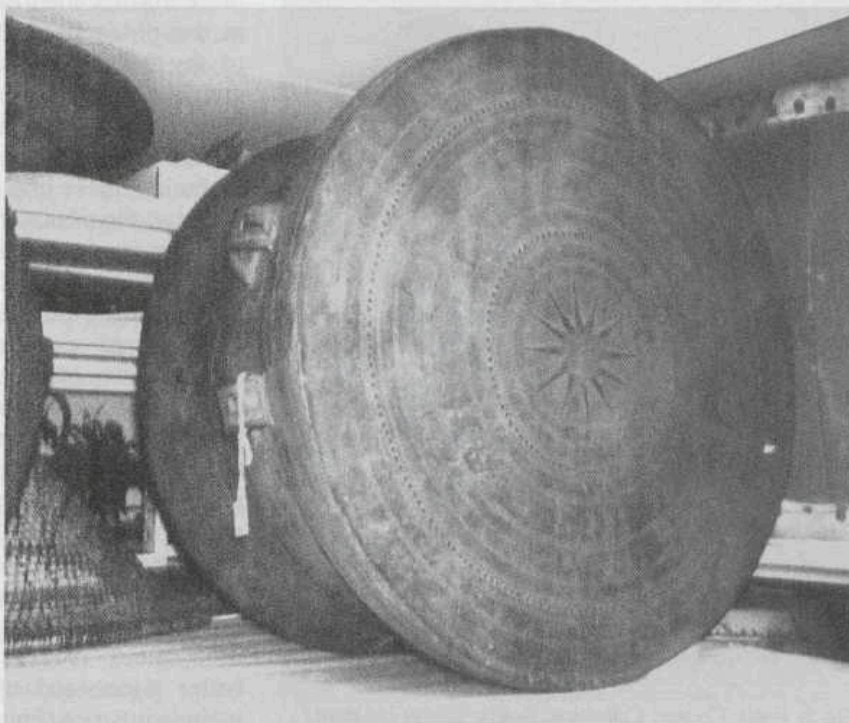


Fig. 3: Iron drum. Chinese Collection. Donor: Laufer (AMNH).