



The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of T'ang Exotics

Edward H. Schafer

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In the seventh century the kingdom of Samarkand sent formal gifts of fancy yellow peaches, large as goose eggs and with a color like gold, to the Chinese court at Ch'ang-an. What kind of fruit these golden peaches really were cannot now be guessed, but they have the glamour of mystery, and they symbolize all the exotic things longed for, and unknown things hoped for, by the people of the T'ang empire.

This book examines the exotics imported into China during the T'ang Dynasty (A.D. 618-907), and depicts their influence on Chinese life. Into the land during the three centuries of T'ang came the natives of almost every nation of Asia, all bringing exotic wares either as gifts or as goods to be sold. Ivory, rare woods, drugs, diamonds, magicians, dancing girls—the author covers all classes of unusual imports, their places of origin, their lore, their effort on costume, dwellings, diet, and on painting, sculpture, music, and poetry.

This book is not a statistical record of commercial imports and medieval trade, but rather a "humanistic essay, however material its subject matter."

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