



MAO'S
GOLDEN
MANGOES
AND
THE
CULTURAL
REVOLUTION



Mao's Golden Mangoes and the Cultural Revolution

Alfreda Murck

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World excluding Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Puerto Rico, United States, Canada, and Japan

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240 mm x 170 mm

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100 color, 50 b&w

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- An interesting case study on how symbols are constructed by politics, which explores Chairman Mao's Mangoes' reverberations throughout Chinese culture for years to come
- Presents around fifty artefacts from the Alfreda Murck Collection at Museum Rietberg Zürich
- Accompanies the exhibition *Mao's Golden Mangoes and the Cultural Revolution* at the Museum Rietberg in Zürich from February to May 2013

In August 1968, the Pakistani foreign minister visited Beijing and presented Chairman Mao with a crate of mangoes. Apparently, Mao immediately sent the mangoes, a fruit unknown so far in China, as a gift to the "Worker-Peasant Mao Zedong Thought Propaganda Teams" deployed into Qinghua University to put down warring factions of Red Guards and occupy the campus, with the implicit political message that workers were now made managers of education. The exotic fruit were then distributed over the following weeks to various factories. Thus the mangoes, perceived as coming from Chairman Mao, transformed from mere fruit into near-divine symbol. They were celebrated by the workers as tokens of Mao's love and compassion and worshipped as a kind of religious relic. The Golden Mango powerfully symbolised the slogan "The working class must be the leaders in everything", and soon appeared on all kinds of household products. The new book *Mao's Golden Mangoes and the Cultural Revolution* illustrates how factory workers tried to preserve Chairman Mao's precious gift, how the mango transformed into a religious symbol, and how the political spectacle of the 1968 National Day Parade featured the mango. Contents: Albert Lutz – Introduction Zheng Xiaowei – *Narrative of the Incident*

Wang Xiaoping – *Golden Mangoes: Recollections of a Factory Worker* Alfreda Murck – *Designing a Spectacle: The National Day Parade of 1968* Carma Hinton – *Golden Mangoes: Recollections of a Student*

Alfreda Murck – *Symbolism of Edibles in Chinese Literature and Painting* Adam Y Chau – *The 1976 Movie The Song of the Mango*

Alonzo Emery – *The Status of Workers Then and Now*

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Alfreda Murck received her Ph.D. in art history from Princeton University. She has been a curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York 1978-91. She lives and works in Beijing as an independent scholar.

