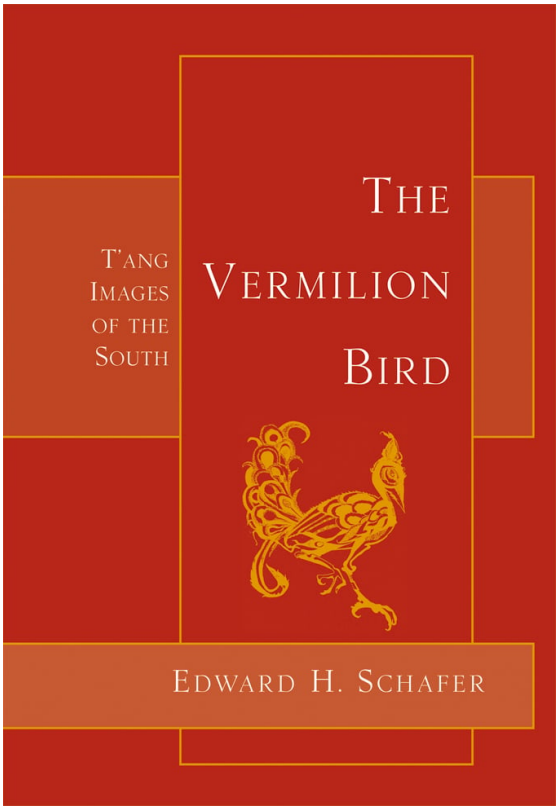
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The Vermilion Bird

T'ang Images of the South

Edward Schafer

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- An indispensable work of reference on medieval China

In the seventh century the great T'ang nation was obliged to reconquer the southern most portion of what had been considered Chinese territory for many centuries. The region had in fact remained largely an unassimilated wilderness, whose heavily forested marshes – monsoon lands with fringes of the true tropics – corresponded roughly with modern North Vietnam, along with the Chinese provinces of Guangxi and Guangdong. *The Vermilion Bird* attempts to recover the actual character of the monsoon realms of T'ang: a scattering of palisaded garrisons, isolated monasteries, and commercial towns, all surrounded by dark, haunted woods. The soldiers, administrators, colonists, and political exiles who lived there were constantly threatened by hostile inhabitants, disease, wild animals, and supernatural powers. On the other hand there were new and beautiful flowering plants and luscious fruits for the delectation of the connoisseur, enchanting limestone grottoes ready to be explored, and every sort of ravishing image available for the exploitation of poets. Professor Schafer examines the thoughts, emotions, imaginations, and daily lives of the men.

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