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Peach Blossom Shangri-la
Tao Hua Yuan Ji

by Tao YuanMing

February, 2000 [Etext #2090]

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Peach Blossom Shangri-la (Tao Hua Yuan Ji)

By Tao YuanMing

Translated and proofed by Rick Davis and David Steelman

Note from the translators: This file contains this well-known Chinese story in both English translation and the Chinese original. If your computer is not set up to read BIG5 encoding, the Chinese will appear as garbage characters.

Peach Blossom Shangri-la (Tao Hua Yuan Ji)

By Tao Yuanming [1]

During the Taiyuan era [2] of the Jin Dynasty [3] there was a man of Wuling [4] who made his living as a fisherman. Once while following a stream he forgot how far he had gone. He suddenly came to a grove of blossoming peach trees. It lined both banks for several hundred paces and included not a single other kind of tree. Petals of the dazzling and fragrant blossoms were falling everywhere in profusion. Thinking this place highly unusual, the fisherman advanced once again in wanting to see how far it went.

The peach trees stopped at the stream's source, where the fisherman came to a mountain with a small opening through which it seemed he could see light. Leaving his boat, he entered the opening. At first it was so narrow that he could barely pass, but after advancing a short distance it suddenly opened up to reveal a broad, flat area with imposing houses, good fields, beautiful ponds, mulberry trees, bamboo, and the like. The fisherman saw paths extending among the fields in all directions, and could hear the sounds of chickens and dogs. Men and women working in the fields all wore clothing that looked like that of foreign lands. The elderly and children all seemed to be happy and enjoying themselves.

The people were amazed to see the fisherman, and they asked him from where he had come. He told them in detail, then the people invited him to their home, set out wine, butchered a chicken [5], and prepared a meal. Other villagers heard about the fisherman, and they all came to ask him questions. Then the villagers told him, "To avoid the chaos of war during the Qin Dynasty [6], our ancestors brought their families and villagers to this isolated place and never left it, so we've had no contact with the outside world." They asked the fisherman what the present reign was. They were not even aware of the Han Dynasty [7], let alone the Wei [8]

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