

"Taoism from early days has taken the peach as its particular fruit, signifying longevity, much as the apples of Hesperides were symbolic in the Grecian mythology.

"Furthermore peach stones are often made into rosaries which are considered specially fine. There is a collection of tales by one Cornaby to be found in almost every library called 'A String of Peach Stones.' And a host of legends cluster around the tale of Sun, the stone monkey, eating the peaches of immortality stolen from the gardens of the genii, whereby he attains immortality. This theme is seen elaborated in many scenes, that decorate pottery, textiles, and congratulatory scrolls.

"I wish that I were not tied down so much by tedious detail in the medical work, as there is a most interesting book that needs to be translated telling much of the folk lore of the peach interwoven with the plot, which is supposed to be the journey of Hsien tsang to bring back the sacred sutras of Buddha from India. It is said that this is an actual historic occurrence, but this tale is evidently semi-religious and allegorical, as well, combining in itself the characteristics of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, Hans Christian Andersen, and the Arabian Nights, if you can imagine such a mixture, yet giving graphic pictures of Chinese life in various phases that are as true as when the book was written.

"However this is wandering far from the subject in hand, of the true type of the peaches of the north China group. I will make further inquiries of gardeners and orchardists as I have opportunity, but I think you may feel pretty sure, the fruit-bearing kinds are the white-flowered small kinds, and the large pure white are only for ornament; often they are grown so large and full as to be like small roses. But why here in the north the white should predominate I am puzzled, unless the symbolism has something to do with it, for I recollect that both in west and south China and Japan the large double cerise colored peach blooms were quite common. In Japan the single pink large flowered variety was sold quite as freely as the white, but I do not have any clear recollection of this light pink being doubled in any profusion, and certainly since my residence here in north China I have not seen any double light pink peach flowers, though the generally accepted idea is that the peach flower is pink. Maybe it does not lend itself so readily to the doubling process as the white or cerise varieties, but there is very evidently a prejudice against the pink colored ones, nearly all the distinctly pink flowers being apricots, against which, strange to say, there is no prejudice.

"One of the most charming legends of peach flower lore is that of the 'Peach Blossom Fountain,' an allegory