



## Mao's Golden Mangoes and the Cultural Revolution

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In August 1968, the Pakistani foreign minister visited Beijing and presented Chairman Mao Zedong with a crate of mangoes as a diplomatic gesture. The next day, Mao sent the mangoes to the “Worker-Peasant Mao Zedong though Propaganda Teams,” who had been stationed at Quinghua University to put down warring factions of Red Guards ten days previously. The message of this gift was to dismiss the Student Red Guards, who had been leaders of the proletarian movement in China, and in their stead to install workers as the permanent guardians of China’s education system. During the following weeks, the mangoes were distributed to several factories, where they were treated as though they were religious relics. The golden mango was thus a powerful emblem of the power and respect accorded to the proletariat under Mao’s rule.

*Mao’s Gold Mangoes and the Cultural Revolution* is the catalog for an exhibition of the same title at the Museum Rietberg in Zürich, which explores the golden mangoes’ reverberations throughout Chinese culture for years to come. Included texts focus on the historical narrative of the golden mangoes’ rise to fame; first-person accounts of both students and factory workers; an examination the National Day Parade in 1968, which used the symbol of the mangoes prominently; a critical essay on the 1976 film *The Song of the Mango*; and an in-depth comparative study of working conditions in China from the late 1960s and today.

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