



China's Golden Age: Everyday Life in the Tang Dynasty

By Charles Benn

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China's Golden Age: Everyday Life in the Tang Dynasty By Charles Benn

The Tang Dynasty (618-907), traditionally regarded as the golden age of China, was a time of patricians and intellectuals, Buddhist monks and Taoist priests, poetry and music, song and dance. In *China's Golden Age: Everyday Life in the Tang Dynasty*, Charles Benn paints a vivid picture of the lifestyle behind the grandeur of the Tang culture.

All aspects of day-to-day life are presented, including crime, entertainment, fashion, marriage, food, hygiene, dwellings, and transportation. Attend an ancient feast to celebrate an imperial birthday, where ale was served in elaborate pitchers before a meal of fourteen hors d'oeuvres and twenty-three courses. Learn which colors concubines used for their eye makeup and beauty marks, and what jealous wives did to discourage such enhancement. See the similarities between today's pubs and the Tang alehouses, where women were hired to dance and sing to encourage patrons to stay longer and spend more money. Decide for yourself why Yangzhou, a city on the Grand Canal close to the Yangtze River, was considered one of the greatest cities in the Tang Dynasty.

Benn translates and paraphrases his classical Chinese sources from the Tang era with fresh and polished prose. He also includes his own illustrations of everything from tools and hairstyles to musical instruments and courtyard dwellings. A history of the rise and fall of the dynasty is presented, as is a look at the societal structure of the aristocracy, bureaucracy, eunuchs, clergy, peasants, artisans, merchants, and slaves. This thorough explanation provides fascinating insight into a culture and time that is often misunderstood by Westerners and brings alive both the everyday routine and the timeless splendor of this intellectually and artistically powerful epoch. Enjoy your journey in *China's Golden Age*, and come back to the present with a greater understanding of this amazing time.

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Charles Benn is an independent scholar and an adjunct professor at The University of Hawaii.

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