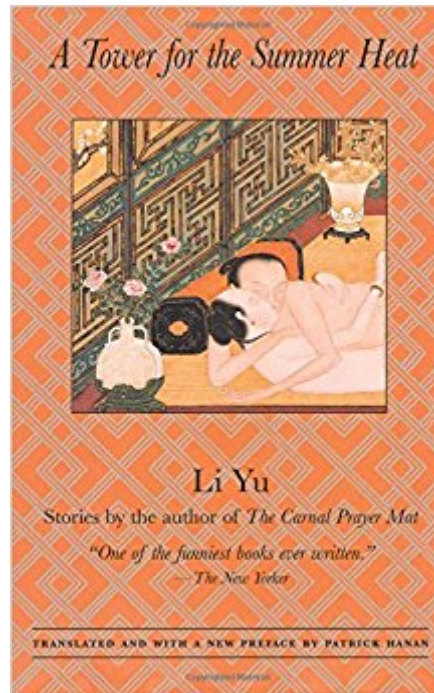




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Tower For The Summer Heat



Synopsis

Hanan has translated six of the twelve stories in the Sh'ier lou collection, which is the most famous individual collection of vernacular stories from premodern China. With Hanan's introduction and notes, and containing Li Yu's emphasis marks, notes, and critiques, this volume will interest students of Chinese literature and general readers alike.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Don't think of these as 17th century stories, though they certainly are. Instead, this readable translation brings an easy flow and modern language to these half-dozen episodes. And don't think of it as just Chinese, even though Chinese history and culture pervade each story. Like all good literature, these show that loyalty, lust, the urge for revenge, and family joy are human qualities, where- and when-ever humans might live. The first of these stories, "A Tower for Summer Heat," uses that Western novelty, the telescope, to gain an edge in the mating game. Although sneaky, the suitor has basically kind intent, though, and his eventual wife takes his ploy in good spirit when he reveals it to her. "House of Gathered Refinements" has some unrefined moments, but offers a working lesson in being careful who you wrong, and how. The last story, "Nativity Room," presents a wildly improbable tale of family separations, hidden identities, and joyous reunions worthy of Shakespeare at his finest. The Bard, incidentally, wrote not that long before Li Yu did, and their lives overlapped even if they could never have crossed. Hanan has done an outstanding job of translating

these stories, as he has with other bawdy Chinese classics. I recommend these to anyone with an interest in Eastern culture - and, come to think of it, to anyone.-- wiredweird

If you are a Li Yu fan, you must know that Patrick Hanan is the best biographer and English translator of Li Yu out there. No question: Hanan has single-handedly updated Li Yu for the modern literary enthusiast. A witty addition to your Li Yu collection. Who would have thought Ming short stories could be so awesome, accessible, and funny.

This book consists of six short stories from an original collection of twelve stories by the 17th century Chinese literati writer Li Yu. They are wonderfully translated by Patrick Hanan, whose renditions make each story both fresh and interesting to western audiences. Most of the narratives are propelled by the theme of Karma as well as Daoist imperatives for transformation, balance and harmony. Although each and every story is engaging, I recommend three in particular. In "A Tower for the Summer Heat" events are propelled forward because of the hero's possession of a telescope, which allows him to spy on a young woman and therefore appear to her as an all-seeing immortal. "House of Gathered Refinements" is totally focused on male homosexual relationships and how these play themselves out in the economic and political realities of the day. "Nativity Room" is an absolutely amazingly conceived and eminently satisfying narrative of the convoluted workings of the cosmic karmic rewards of Confucian filial piety.

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