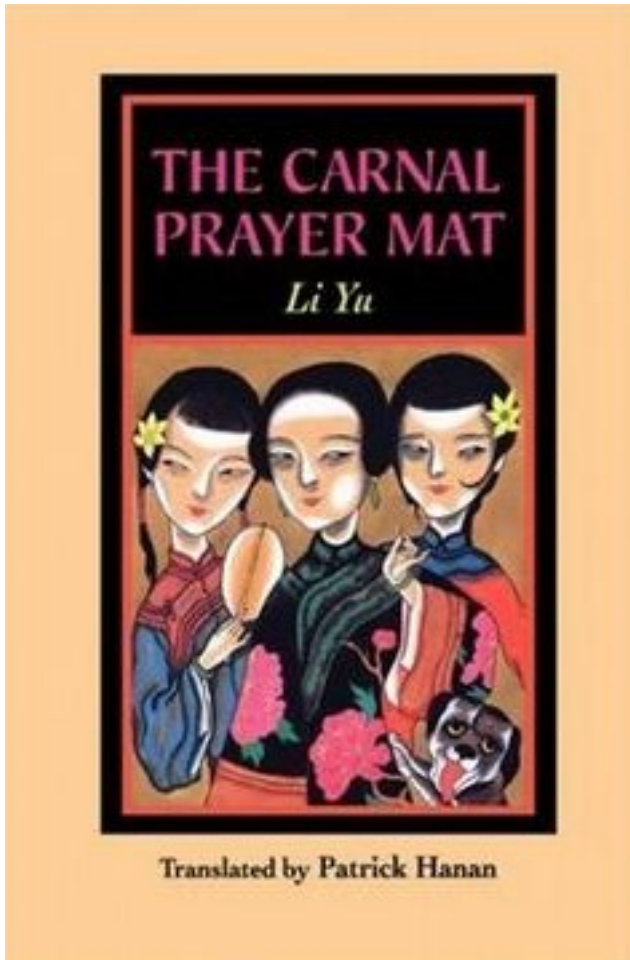


The Carnal Prayer Mat



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著者:Li Yu

出版者:University of Hawaii Press; New Ed edition (April 1, 1996)

出版时间:1996

装帧:9 x 6.4 x 0.9 inches

isbn:9780824817985

This is a review of The Carnal Prayer Mat by the seventeenth-century Chinese author Li Yu, in the translation by Patrick Hanan. (In Chinese, family names are written first, so the author's surname is "Li.")

This book is a classic that is sexy, witty, fast-paced and fun to read even if you don't like "classics." It also has interesting philosophical aspects that raise it above the level of simply an entertaining read. Some of these philosophical points are raised in the "Critique" sections that come at the end of every chapter (probably written by a friend of Li Yu's). You should be warned that this IS an erotic novel. It is not any more graphic than lots of popular novels today, but if you are offended by explicit sexual discussions, you should not read it.

The novel's main character is Vesperus, an extremely talented scholar who has two ambitions in life: "to be the most brilliant poet in the world" and "to marry the most beautiful girl in the world" (p. 24). Vesperus is warned by the Buddhist monk Lone Peak that this second quest will lead him to numerous wicked acts. Because he wants only the most beautiful woman, he will never be satisfied with any woman he marries, and will even commit adultery with other married women if they seem more beautiful to him. And because of the law of karmic retribution, Vesperus will be punished, either in this life or the next, for his evil deeds. Vesperus scoffs at this admonition, so Lone Peak advises, "gain your enlightenment on the carnal prayer mat; then you'll discover the truth" (p. 30).

What makes this novel so philosophically interesting is that we're never sure quite what perspective the novel takes on all this. At a surface level, the novel is a straightforward moral tale. In an introductory chapter, Li Yu tells us that he wants to teach people that a moderate amount of sex within marriage is good, but that excessive sex or sex outside of marriage is dangerous. He claims that his explicit sexual descriptions "are all designed to lure people into reading on until they reach the denouement, at which point they will understand the meaning of retribution and take heed" (p. 11). And, indeed, the life of Vesperus does follow a path that suggests such a message.

However, there is much in the text that is potentially subversive. For example, Vesperus learns, to his surprise, that he is very poorly endowed compared to most men. Li Yu describes this as an opportunity for him to curb his inappropriate lust, comparing him to two Confucian sages noted for their sexual restraint: "Who knows, perhaps Lu Nanzi, who shut his door against an importunate widow, and Liuxia Hui, who kept his self-control with a girl on his knee, may have shared these very thoughts of his, thoughts that may have made them the leading paragons of all time" (pp. 105-106). Chinese thinkers were sophisticated enough to realize that virtue requires appropriate motivation, and that fear of sexual inadequacy is not a virtuous motivation for sexual restraint.

In addition, Li Yu advises us, "Clearly it is wrong to study the bedroom art, for once learned, it tends to corrupt our thinking" (p. 117). But this novel itself is, in part, a treatise on "the bedroom art." There are learned disquisitions on the proper use of pillows in positioning a woman's body (p. 151 ff.), on the advantages of plumper women over skinnier ones in bed (p. 253 ff.), and on the importance of women taking an active role during intercourse, as by "Lowering the Yin to Join the Yang" (i.e., female superior position; p. 280 ff.).

The novel also makes extensive plays on the Confucian classics in ways that sometimes suggest subversive irreverence. Many of these references are to the ancient Confucian Mengzi (also known as Mencius). In fact, Li Yu explicitly compares himself to Mencius (pp. 9-11), who avoided taking an overly puritanical tone with a ruler fond of sex, in order to more successfully direct him toward benevolent government. (See Philip J. Ivanhoe and Bryan W. Van Norden, eds. *Readings in Classical Chinese*

Philosophy, reprint [Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2003], p. 120.) The learned translator, Patrick Hanan, catches many such references, but I suspect that he misses a few. For instance, Vesperus's wife reads some erotic novels, and notices that the men in the stories are described as being much better endowed than her husband. She is not sure what to make of this, since she has never been with another man. She concludes, "Better to have no books at all than to believe everything you read" (p. 207). Hanan puts this in quotation marks, so he recognizes that it is a quotation from something. In fact, it is probably from Mencius 7B3, in which he comments on the Book of History. Drawing this parallel hints that the Confucian classic, the Book of History, is on a level ethically and intellectually with popular erotica (such as The Carnal Prayer Mat itself).

But a simple subversive reading seems inadequate too. The eventual downfall of Vesperus and those whom he entangles in his web is artfully complex, but it does not seem contrived or implausible. In a truly great novel, the author does not try to force the characters to illustrate any particular moral. He creates them and lets them do what they must do, given who they are and the situations they are in. Great novels are ethically complex because life is ethically complex. The Carnal Prayer Mat achieves this kind of greatness, but for that reason it defies easy ethical summation.

作者介绍:

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标签

古典

中国文学

韩南

女性

英语

英文原版

翻译

生活

评论

有两种善良，第一种是无知的善良，且不必说，从娘胎里带出的天真烂漫不曾被污染罢了。另一种是了解了一切邪恶的事仍能够回向本心的善。我是存这样一个念头看这本书的。

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书评

我看了本黄书。本来这该是个不能说的小秘密，不过这本书实在太有名，且被称为古往今来第一黄书，闻者激动，看者汗颜，看完觉得此书真乃古代恶搞佳作，一定要说出来探讨一番。
第一名目太有噱头，李渔这个老不正经，出身中医世家，平常就爱研究点房中术，搞点春方娇酥丸，换在...

有容乃大迄今阅风流之作近60篇，诸君若问哪篇最为文采斐然、让人为之拍案叫绝？则李笠翁之《肉蒲团》也；若问哪篇为冶儒、释、道、兵法于一炉而不失晓然顺畅者？则李笠翁之《肉蒲团》也；若问哪篇为性描写最逼真自然让人若身临其境、至今思之犹想入非非且热血澎湃者？则李笠...

去年台片《肉蒲团之极乐宝鉴》大红大紫，内地禁播，但宣传得，分享得，除却《金瓶梅》，这是听说来的第二部古书新拍。《肉蒲团》确是没看过，可拜同学神通广大，港片《玉蒲团》却是几个大老爷们儿围在一个十五寸的显示器前看的。和《金瓶梅》相比，好的地方，只是画面清晰，女...

虽然署名为情痴反正道人，别题情隐先生，但字里行间处处难掩李渔的痕迹，机锋甚利，妙语叠出，劝惩之意一以贯之，出自其手，料是无疑。李渔的话本素来新人耳目，一

名《觉后禅》的《肉蒲团》共四卷二十回，每卷冠以春夏秋冬之名，以四时喻际遇，形式机巧，没来由地让人想到《林...

首先明确概念，性描写就是表达性的，那些过于隐晦的段子并不在考虑之列。好比<9 Songs>的导演迈克尔·温特波顿回答对片中充斥的露骨场面的批评时说：“如果你要拍一部关于长跑运动员的电影，相信观众也是想看他在跑步当中的场面。”虽然可以把本国文学中的性描写追溯到《诗经...

世人以为淫邪之书，专注在男女交合之事。殊不知作者用心良苦，欲为世人说法，劝人窒欲而非纵欲，为人秘淫而非宣淫。愈用心品读，罪恶感愈深。看官们不可认错他的主意。既是要使人遏淫窒欲，为甚麽不著一部道学之书维持风化，却做起风流小说来？凡移风易俗之法，要因势而利导...

通过《笠翁对韵》认识了李渔，又通过《十万个为什么》认识了《肉蒲团》。那时节作为一名青春叛逆的少年儿童，对世界名著毫不感冒，看到些官方说法含糊其辞的作品却趋之若鹜。正巧有一阵子通览国内近当代色情文学，对其中粗糙的修辞大感腻味（那时还不了解渡边淳一与维多利亚时...

進日閒來無事，恰逢《3D肉蒲團》上映，遂趕個時髦，找來李漁的原著讀它一讀。李漁的原著頗短，放在KINDLE裡，只百來頁，花了幾日的閒暇功夫，便讀完了。書的內容不消說，無非“你弄我弄，忒煞精多”，倒是裡面的花樣甚是不少，謄錄如下： 姿勢一：縱蝶尋芳 女子坐太湖石上，兩...

据说江西省原副省长胡长清除了爱写字，更爱读书。经常读的书是：《肉蒲团》《素女心经》《金瓶梅》，读完后学的是有模有样，养情妇嫖妓女，躺在床上一边读一边练，反复研读，细心体会，实践出真知，最后得出的结论竟是：“妓女和做官是最相似的职业”。不管你是胡省长，还...

上初中的时候不懂事，把这本书当成一般的黄书看了，还觉得它不够味道，徒有虚名。昨天无意中又在网上重温一遍，才发现这书实为中篇黄色小说的翘楚，非大家不能为。若从这书中归纳出什么人生的道理，伟大的理论，我看这无异于郑人买椟还珠。李渔对

男人心理精妙的刻划，才是...

举凡明清时期有造诣的禁毁小说，多半能从儒释道三家出发，共同阐发性爱与为人的道理。从《肉蒲团》中摘得几句：

“人生在世，易得者是形体，难得者是性资。易过者是时光，难过者是劫数。”
“岂不闻人间私语天闻若雷乎？” “本来使身子立在不生不灭之处便是佛了。”
这是...

先看《金瓶梅》，再读《肉蒲团》，外人看来是堕落日深，自己感觉倒是佛性愈增。肉者之于金者，篇幅短小，人物简单，性之描写不但露骨而且密集，非常适合电纸书——省却前后翻找之苦。可是，最欣赏肉者之语言俏皮，比喻新鲜，便是讲理，也要佯装附会一番，颇令人忍俊不禁；而...

我一直想告诉自己 五百年前的明朝，想象 一次很好的晚餐 那些平凡的爱和兴趣
在明朝，也许十个女人 簇拥在一起的欢乐 一把钥匙轻轻转动 男人的舌尖轻轻濡湿
雨落下，未央生知道 女人深不可测的巨大子宫 有呜咽的泉声穿过 她们否认自身的腐蚀
衣服深藏在红木衣橱里 丝绸一般...

“肉蒲团”这个名字起的很妙，蒲团是佛家的参佛之物，肉欲是俗世割舍不断的情欲，佛与俗组合成了一个名字，恰好“肉”在前，“蒲团”在后，或许就是在表达俗世渡劫方成佛的道理。
虽然有些咬文嚼字，但整体小说的布局也比较契合此理。未央生拜访孤峰山高僧，表露自己想做法王...

《肉蒲团》又名《觉后禅》全书二十回，作者一般认为是清代戏曲家李渔，它在清代列入禁书目录，与《金瓶梅》并称为“著名之淫书”。《肉蒲团》实际上就是男主人公未央生的性历险，故事始于未央生拜访孤峰道人又终于未央生向孤峰求道，在严谨的环形叙事中传达了隐含作者的思...

自从看了《进化心理学》对性的理解变的更生物，完全理解未央生的所做作为，要不然怎会有那么多富二代官二代左拥右抱？说不定还搞搞基。文中对性爱和美女的描写觉得不错，中国古典文学对什么的描写从来都不露骨，偶尔来个直接的描写颇有感官刺激。

伴随着感官刺激和对美女的幻想...

按照作者所写橄榄入口酸吝，人不肯咀嚼，只当把枣肉裹着橄榄，引他吃到回味处莫厌，以此劝人为善，确实想法不错，400年前的人写的书，能流传下来我觉得应该也算是经典之作，再加上最近网上传的沸沸扬扬的什么3D版的肉蒲团，不断吸引人眼球来关注，电影没看过，翻来这本书读了一...

李渔的好处，在于没有年代感。看《肉蒲团》，你不会觉得你和这个写书的流氓中间隔着400年，似乎他就是同时代的人一样。就是网上常出现的那种又聪明、又流氓、又坏的写手。李渔的有趣，处处体现在这部小说中，其脱略形骸，不拘小节，简直就是这部书的精髓。说性，...

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