

suffers from several major and numerous minor errors. To give a few examples, *jingren* 淨人, the technical term for lay monastic servants, is rendered as “people purifying themselves” (83); *du* 度, the word for ordination, is translated as “conversion” (97); *jingfa* 經法, rituals involving scriptures, is translated as “the methods of the scriptures” (161); and *fa* 法 is translated in a varied and haphazard manner. Contextually, the most serious misreadings were in the list of people not fit for ordination. Here, to give only a couple examples, “dismissed ministers and rejected sons” are erroneously made into those who “desert ministers and act contrary to their sons,” while “descendants of executed criminals” appear as those who “execute sons and grandsons” (99).

Overall, Reiter’s work is commendable in its effort to present highly interesting and fascinating medieval materials to a scholarly audience. Lack of in-depth historical research, proper argumentation, and accuracy in the translation, however, make it a highly problematic proposal. A more limited study with more substance would have provided greater profit.

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LI YU. *A Tower for the Summer Heat*. Translations from the Asian Classics. Translation with a new preface by Patrick Hanan. Columbia University Press: New York, 1998. xi + 258 pages. Cloth US\$39.50 (international price US\$45.00); ISBN 0-231-11384-6. Paper US\$15.50 (international price US\$18.00); ISBN 0-231-11385-4.

In a brief preface to this text, professor of Chinese literature and translator Patrick Hanan points to the innovative qualities one comes to expect in the writings of Li Yu (1611–1680). Western readers may be familiar with Li Yu, author of the erotic classic, “The Carnal Prayer Mat,” written during the same years (1657–1658) as *A Tower for the Summer Heat*, and thus prepared for a humorous, enjoyably straight-forward treatment of matters related to sex, courtship, and marriage. “More than any other writer in premodern China, he stressed the absolute need in literature to ‘make it new,’” comments Hanan (vii).

Indeed, the distinctive “newness” of the six stories that comprise *A Tower for the Summer Heat* is evident. In my view, the newness shows itself in the author’s particularly vigorous (almost aggressive) co-mingling of classical Chinese writing devices with an abundance of lively observations about society and human nature.

A Tower for the Summer Heat fits readily into the repertoire of classical Chinese literary pornography, providing the term is taken as a catchall for storytelling that centers unblushingly on the joys of sex, while simultaneously appealing to wider, ultimately more important aesthetic interests. When read as a sweep of fiction that concentrates on romance in all its disguises and variations, the half dozen narratives take on the quality of a single, moderately

long novel. This is all basically good, rollicking fun, one realizes by the end of the text, and if we have been treated to a lush celebration of desire and the conspiracies of trickery or seduction that often accompany it in life, we have also learned much of how at least some members of the wealthy merchant and ruling classes might have interacted with matchmakers, rivals, maids, and mistresses in seventeenth-century China.

Among the traditional conventions employed by Li Yu are moralisms, usually placed at the end of individual stories or significantly lengthy episodes within stories; humorous narratorial insertions that smack of the oral storyteller lurking beside the stage of action, also mentioned in Hanan's preface (viii); rich poetic couplets at the head of chapters; a plethora of wise sayings mouthed by characters or the bubbly narrator; and numerous references to literary personages presumably cherished by the original, well-read seventeenth century audience.

Sometimes the narrator works as a weaver, pulling at threads and patching them together to form a colorful pastiche, as in this passage from "The Cloud Scaper." Here the two-timing groom, Septimus, dashes from the embraces of his lover to those of his new bride, Nenghong, who pensively awaits his attentions at her bedside:

[S]he received him with special warmth while dispensing high-sounding advice that he go back to the mistress. She even quoted a couple of lines from the Poetry Classic: "The rain falls first on my lord's fields/And then on my private plot."

But she immediately began to worry that he really would go back, so she tried to save the situation by quoting from the Four Books: "Having persuaded him to come, give him comfort." In his overwrought state, Septimus was afraid to delay a moment longer. Without a word he pulled her to the bed—a case of being "in too great a hurry to spell out the message." Entrusting herself to experienced hands, Nenghong made no resistance as he undid her sash, took off her gown, and... (164)

Clearly, the lines reveal a talent for appealing to literarily sophisticated readers, as well as enthusiasts of lively, good-humored, fairly explicit sex.

Li Yu is careful to position narratorial cautions throughout his tales. The caveats seem to function as defensive measures for readers or authorities who may attack his motivation for writing about sex. At times these cautionary words are so heavily laced as to smack of irony. The sample below is again taken from "The Cloud-Scaper," and follows the eight line poem which begins Chapter 1 of the tale. Lectures the narrator:

This poem, like the story that follows, emphasizes the willfulness and treachery of serving-girls and maidservants. The story's aim is to alert heads of households to the danger and induce them to take precautions and check on their maids' activities, lest their womenfolk suffer dishonor... It is a work of moral education, not a tract to promote immorality and decadence. (118)

To the delight of readers, the narrator then indulges in a pedantic little essay about the psycholinguistic difficulties of finding names for maids in households. Use of the word *mei* (plum blossom), he explains, could trigger an association with *mei* (matchmaker). If linked with *xiang* (fragrance), a multiplication of confusion might result, because the word could also mean "hither and thither."

Then comes the quick thrust of the scholarly note, jabbing the target nicely, even as it hints at the plot to follow:

The plum sends the message of spring and its fragrance drives the bees wild. But when

the message of spring is inside the house and the bees are outside, how are the twain going to meet unless she goes hither and thither and brings them together? The ancients gave maidservants this name to remind people of the danger and put them on their guard. (118)

But this is not an instance of Li Yu's usual game of titillate-and-delay, as, with the jump of a single brief paragraph, we find:

In the Ming dynasty there lived a chaste widow.... Still only half awake, she felt a man's weight on top of her and, thinking she was back in the days when her husband was alive, clasped the adulterer in her arms and indulged her passions to the full. (118–19)

Touches of satire emerge in characterizations that portray the practicality of virtue. In "Return to Right Hall," a renowned confidence man named Bei Qurong wants to reform himself, and resolves to build a temple with his ill-gotten money as a sign of repentance for his sinful past. "If you have this much money and don't distribute any of it, he thought, you're bound to bring disaster upon yourself. I'd better find a few good deeds to perform" (60). But as the story nears its conclusion, we see the surface quality of his spirituality. Reflecting on his temple project, Bei rationalizes, "...somehow I still pulled off a couple of jobs and conned two donors into contributing. Fortunately both men could afford it, and the project I tricked them into was a good one, so I don't feel too guilty about it" (78).

Li Yu is adept at picturing the inner terrain of his characters, and at times offers keen insight into the human psyche. A rogue by the name of Duan Pu lacks the virtue to have deserved his beautiful wife, Jade, in "Homing Crane Lodge," for example. Duan's conscience-driven musings reveal a comic, but accurate understanding of human nature.

[Duan] was constantly on tenterhooks about possessing so much beauty. The most beautiful girl in the world is like a priceless jewel, he told himself. Why am I so lucky as to possess her? ... Even when he was making love to Jade, these thoughts would flash through his mind, and he would start having qualms—as if the beautiful girl in his arms was not his own wife, and as if what he was doing with her was somehow disreputable. (185)

"House of Gathered Refinements," the third section of stories in the text, is not for the timid. In all the classical literary canon, it ranks among the most searing of looks at homosexuality in seventeenth-century Chinese culture. In his use of verbal and physical violence, Li Yu treats homosexuality with wild exaggeration, and thus deflates the impression the practice was too common among his contemporaries. Nevertheless, writing so directly about the topic is in itself an acknowledgement of its practice. Underlying motives of desire and jealousy, and a handful of schemes for seduction betray here a hard, cynical edge. In one of the story's tamer scenes, the villain Yan is frustrated in his efforts to win the attentions of a young man already involved with not one, but two rivals. The narrator introduces Yan at the beginning.

Yan was devoted to homosexual affairs, and... even his subordinates, qualified officials though they were, if they were young and good-looking [reviewer's note: here begins a two line euphemism] and willing to mount the stage, would be shown exceptional favor and invited to a rendezvous in the rear courtyard.... [W]hen he saw that Quan's skin was as smooth as butter and his rump whiter than snow—virginal, despite the two husbands—he fell madly in love with him and insisted that he stay. (99)

Angry at his failure to win Quan's affections, the disappointed suitor decides that if he can't have him, no one can. He will lure the fellow into a drunken stupor, and then have him castrated. The conspiracy is planned (101–2) and brutally executed (104), but, consistent with the text's principle of moral if not poetic justice, the hapless victim strikes back in the end (113).

A Tower for the Summer Heat is a tour de force. The six tales succeed as adventures of romance and love-making, but also as candid studies of life behind the bamboo screens of not so ancient China. Scholars of anthropology and folklore would surely find interesting the book's treatment of customs related to courtship and marriage, and an array of practices in the context of relations between daughters, wives, concubines, and maid servants in daily life affairs.

Sincere congratulations to Patrick Hanan for another important and sparkling translation in the Columbia Asian Studies Series.

This reviewer is disappointed to find only romanization, and a complete absence of Chinese characters, even in the helpful footnotes. He is also intrigued by the beguiling cover portrait. Could not the publishers have told us the source of that beautiful painting?

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INDONESIA

BOS, PAULA R. *Biographies of Florenese Musical Instruments and Their Collectors*. Bulletin of the Royal Tropical Institute 347. Amsterdam: Royal Tropical Institute, 1999. 95 pages. Map, b/w photographs, line drawings, bibliography, appendices. Paper Dfl 19.50; ISBN 90-6832-8336.

While the major court music traditions of Java and Bali have succeeded in attaining something like "classic" status in the ethnomusicological canon, other Indonesian types of music, in no way inferior, have long been neglected by both scholars and the recording industry. This situation is not simply the result of a natural evolution of interests from the center to the periphery: Sumatra, for example, is certainly no more peripheral than Bali. Rather, the order in which Indonesian cultures have been studied has had far more to do with the political history than it has with the intrinsic interest of the cultures concerned. In particular, musicological interests have been more or less based upon the random presence of missionary headquarters, colonial government offices, merchant and trading facilities, army outposts, and marketing decisions by commercial recording companies. In the last few decades, however, as the number and influence of missionaries and foreign occupiers has decreased, musical genres of other islands in the Indonesian archipelago have begun to receive the attention they deserve. Among such areas is Flores, whose music was already admired by Jaap Kunst in the 1930s, but has rarely become a target for Western record companies. That things are beginning to change may be sensed from the fact that today at least two compact disks of the Smithsonian Folkways series "Music of Indonesia" (vols. 8 and 9) devoted to Flores are easily procured by anyone who wishes to take the time. Together with another release announced by Celestial Humanities, and a selection of field recordings from the 1950s and 1960s made by Pé (Peter) Rozing (published by Pan Records in Leiden), sound recordings are now available that offer the musicologist and the audiophile a smattering of the rich and highly varied Florenese musical culture.