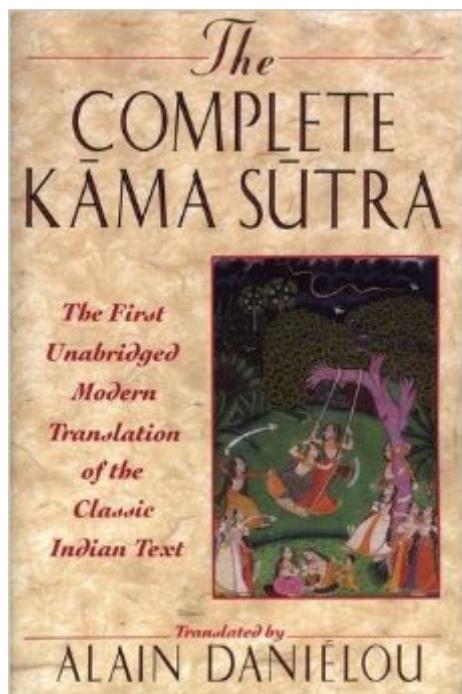


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The Complete Kama Sutra: The First Unabridged Modern Translation Of The Classic Indian Text



Synopsis

The world's oldest and most widely read guide to the pleasures and techniques of sex, the Kama Sutra was compiled in the fourth century A.D. by a Brahmin and religious scholar name Vatsyayana, who worked from texts dating back to the fourth century B.C. Until the present, the only English translation of his Hindu love classic was that of the famous English explorer Sir Richard Burton, published in 1883. Unlike Burton's version, Alain Daniélou's new translation preserves the numbered verse divisions of the original and includes two essential commentaries: the Fayamangala commentary, written in Sanskrit by Yashodhara during the Middle Ages, and a modern Hindi commentary by Devadatta Shastri. Whereas Burton's Victorian reluctance to translate certain terms obscured our understanding of the philosophy and techniques of the Kama Sutra, Daniélou has preserved the full explicitness of the original, dealing with everything from the art of scratching to relations with the wives of others. Realistic and pragmatic in its approach, the Kama Sutra deals without ambiguity or hypocrisy with all aspects of sexual life--including marriage, adultery, prostitution, group sex, sadomasochism, male and female homosexuality, and transvestism. The text paints a fascinating portrait of an India whose openness to sexuality gave rise to a highly developed expression of the erotic.

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Customer Reviews

It was the film "Kama Sutra" that led me to this classic. The idea of someone documenting various forms of making love was intriguing and I started exploring further on the original work. Once I got

past a few mindnumbing translations, I discovered this work. I saw my initial curiosity turning into fascination at first, but when I finished the work I had nothing but respect for this work ("Eroticism is firstly a search for pleasure, and the goal of the techniques of love is to attain a paroxysm considered by the Upanishads (holy texts) as a perception of the divine state, which is infinite delight "). Alan Danielou's seems to have impressive credentials that bring an impeccable authenticity to this work. There is hardly a subject the author has not dealt with. If the range of subjects dealt with fascinates you (marriage, adultery, prostitution, group sex, sadomasochism, male and female homosexuality, and transvestitism) the scientific approach and the depth of classification in dealing with those subjects might bewilder you. ("There are different types of men and women according to their sizes of the organs, their moment of sexual enjoyment, and the violence of their sexual impulse"). The part dealing with occult practices is a blast. These practices include ointments for the body, marks on the forehead, powders sprinkled over the woman and substances that she be made to ingest, the surprising things she must be shown, as well as the means and remedies for subjugating her. This section also manifest the thoroughness of the research done almost 2000 years back. While the considerable pains the author has undergone to protect the integrity of the original work makes this a classic, it is possible that at times the casual reader will be hard pressed to follow. The author emphasizes that this is not a pornographic work and is merely an impartial and systematic study of one of the essential aspects of existence. There is ample proof of that throughout the book.

I bought this book a few years ago and is one of the most intriguing books I have read. It gives an unique perspective at the life of ancient India (c 100-500AD) on how the people lived and the society flourished. What strikes most is when ancient India was talking about souls and spirits, on how life is vain etc, here is a book that says "being materialistic is not bad". If the society didnt consider that such a book isnt a blasphemy how great it should have been. And the book survived! Apart from the usual sexual poses, Kamasutra, is a history book. It also lists the 64 ancient arts of India, which I was trying to find for more than a decade and I never quiet expected to find in this book. Also the lives of courtesans are an interesting read. Alan Danileou's translation is straightforward and it also includes commentaries on KS by other authors which helps to know different views. Though it lacks pictures (precisely the reason I bought it - not to get distracted from the original composition) it is a much better translation than Richard Burton's (which also I own). At times Richard gets squeaky in explaining very "intimate" things (its not a complete translation, looks like he left things that are too un-Victorian to translate) but Alan is more straightforward and

complete. Also translated are the chemistry of love potions, how to make money (of course not relevant to modern times) etc. If it contained the original Sanskrit quotations, I would have enjoyed the poetic flow. Anyways it adorns my book case.

This is an outstanding new translation of the Indian classic, dating from the fourth century BC. It is widely misunderstood in the west, largely by people who never read it, but also by people who only read Burton's unfortunate Victorian translation. Well over 500 pages, this may seem intimidating - I promise you, it's worth your effort. This includes Vatsyayana's complete text, not just the extracts that Burton chose. Danielou interleaves it with not one, but two different commentaries, one traditional and one modern. These add insight, not just to the Vatsyayana text itself, but also to how later ages of India view this classic. The Kama Sutra describes the culture in which it arose. At least for the upper classes, it's a remarkable image. Although male-dominated, women had surprising autonomy. Many services - jewelers, perfumers, and the like - create the objects and gifts of a rich society. Even prostitutes have a more or less respectable place in that world - more like geishas, entertainers with wide repertoires, not just vessels for sexual release. This book is surprisingly clinical in its outlook. Vatsyayana describes a range of sexual practices. Some, he notes, are not widely considered proper - but all things have their time and place, if that's what the practitioners want. Describing a practice does not imply approval of it; in that vein, he mentions seductions and even capture of a woman by force. Prostitutes, too, have a code of behavior. Although they may develop feelings for a customer, their work is their business and their livelihood. This justifies, even demands behavior that would not be proper for a partner of another kind. The largest part of the book is more mundane. It sets out a plan for being a happy, healthy member of society: the skills needed, grooming, social behaviors, and lots more. Despite repressive eras that followed (down to our own), the appeal of this document persists. Today's readers, nearly 2500 years later, can still learn from it, about that ancient time but also about our own.//wiredweird

This book was incredible. I felt a bit overwhelmed at first. So much writing and no pictures to show you different positions, etc. But it was so informative I had no idea how much I would learn from just one book. A definite must for anyone who is slightly insecure or bored with tradition sexual intercourse. (is there even such a thing any more?) I think that anyone who reads this book will definitely become a better lover, on one level or another.

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