

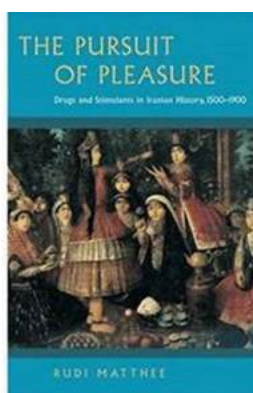
The Hidden Story: Drugs And Stimulants In Iranian History 1500-1900

Iranian history is rich and diverse, encompassing centuries of political, social, and cultural developments. However, one aspect that often remains overlooked is the extensive use of drugs and stimulants during this period. From the 16th to the 19th century, Iran witnessed a flourishing trade of various substances, shaping the landscape of everyday life, medicine, and even the ruling class.

The Persian Empire and Its Greed for Opium

During the 16th century, the Persian Empire, led by the Safavid dynasty, developed a strong affinity for opium. Opium was primarily imported from India, making it a highly sought-after and expensive commodity. Not only was it consumed recreationally, but it also had medicinal uses, with Persian physicians prescribing it to alleviate pain, induce sleep, and treat other ailments.

However, opium's popularity went beyond its medical benefits. The Safavid emperors were known for their hedonistic lifestyle, with opium consumption becoming an integral part of their courtly pleasures. The lavish opium parties, referred to as "majlis," were a common feature of the Persian elite, serving as a means of entertainment and social bonding.



The Pursuit of Pleasure: Drugs and Stimulants in Iranian History, 1500-1900 by Meghan Daum (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.1 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 13275 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled



The Advent of the Tobacco Revolution

In the early 17th century, tobacco emerged as a new stimulant in Iran. The discovery of the New World brought tobacco plants to Europe, and from there, it quickly made its way to the Persian Empire. While the Safavid rulers had initially banned tobacco consumption due to its association with the Ottoman Empire, a significant shift occurred during the Qajar dynasty.

Mirza Taqi Khan, a prominent statesman and diplomat in the Qajar court, became an advocate for the tobacco trade. He saw the economic potential of tobacco cultivation and pushed for its legalization, resulting in a thriving tobacco industry throughout Iran. Tobacco became a symbol of social status and wealth, with smoking becoming an integral part of Persian culture.

The Rise of Hashish and Its Cultural Impact

While tobacco gained popularity, another stimulant quietly made its way into Iranian society – hashish. Derived from cannabis plants, hashish was consumed either in the form of edibles or through smoking. Initially used for medicinal purposes, hashish gradually spread among the lower classes, offering an affordable escape from the hardships of daily life.

With its increasing popularity, hashish found its way into Persian literature, poetry, and music. Writers and artists often celebrated the euphoric effects of hashish, considering it a source of inspiration. Many renowned Persian poets, including Hafez and Saadi, were rumored to have been influenced by hashish, which

contributed to the proliferation of this stimulating substance throughout Iranian society.

The Opium Wars and Their Impact on Iran

The 19th century brought significant changes to global drug trade, and Iran found itself caught in the crossfire. The Opium Wars between Britain and China had a profound impact on Iran's access to opium. As the British Empire dominated the opium trade in the region, Iran experienced a surge in opium addiction, leading to detrimental societal consequences.

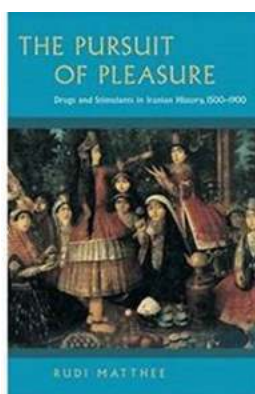
The excessive opium consumption among the lower classes resulted in widespread addiction and economic decline. The ruling elites, on the other hand, became increasingly reliant on opium to maintain their political power. The social fabric of Iranian society was marred by opium addiction, leading to growing concerns among intellectuals and reformists.

The End of an Era

By the late 19th century, the negative effects of drug addiction became impossible to ignore. Intellectuals and reformists began advocating for stricter regulations on the drug trade, recognizing its detrimental impact on society. Iran started implementing anti-opium policies, marking the beginning of the end for the extensive use of drugs and stimulants in the country.

Despite the decline of widespread drug consumption, the legacy of opium, tobacco, and hashish remains deeply ingrained in Iranian history. These substances not only shaped cultural practices but also had a significant impact on the social and political landscape of the time.

The history of drugs and stimulants in Iran from 1500 to 1900 provides a captivating glimpse into a lesser-known aspect of Iranian society. From the opulent opium parties of the Safavid emperors to the thriving tobacco industry of the Qajar dynasty, these substances played a central role in shaping Iranian culture and the lives of its people. While the negative consequences of drug addiction eventually led to stricter control measures, their impact on Iranian history cannot be overlooked.



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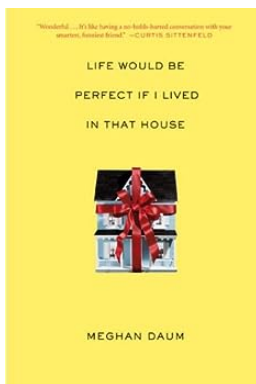


From ancient times to the present day, Iranian social, political, and economic life has been dramatically influenced by psychoactive agents. This book looks at the stimulants that, as put by a longtime resident of seventeenth-century Iran, Raphaël du Mans, provided Iranians with damagh, gave them a "kick," got them into a good mood. By tracing their historical trajectory and the role they played in early modern Iranian society (1500-1900), Rudi Matthee takes a major step in extending contemporary debates on the role of drugs and stimulants in shaping the modern West.

At once panoramic and richly detailed, *The Pursuit of Pleasure* examines both the intoxicants known since ancient times--wine and opiates--and the stimulants

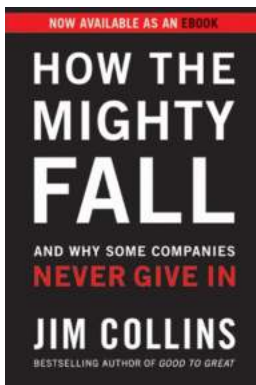
introduced later--tobacco, coffee, and tea--from multiple angles. It brings together production, commerce, and consumption to reveal the forces behind the spread and popularity of these consumables, showing how Iranians adapted them to their own needs and tastes and integrated them into their everyday lives.

Matthee further employs psychoactive substances as a portal for a set of broader issues in Iranian history--most notably, the tension between religious and secular leadership. Faced with reality, Iran's Shi`i ulama turned a blind eye to drug use as long as it stayed indoors and did not threaten the social order. Much of this flexibility remains visible underneath the uncompromising exterior of the current Islamic Republic.



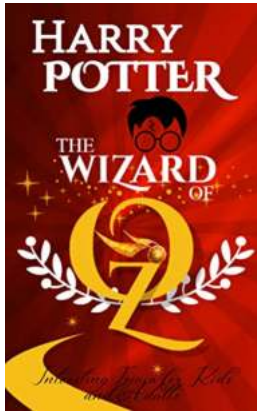
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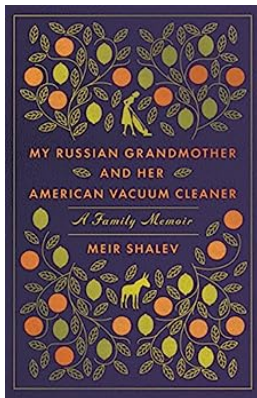
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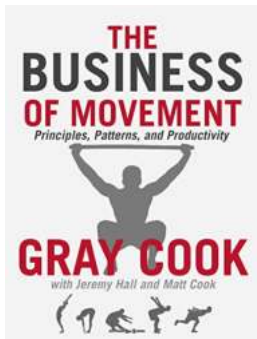
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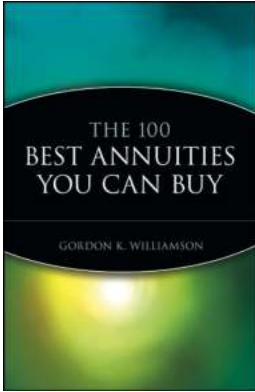
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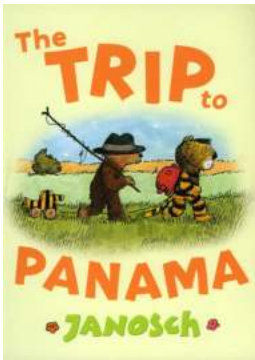
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drugs robots and the pursuit of pleasure

the pursuit of pleasure drugs and stimulants in iranian history