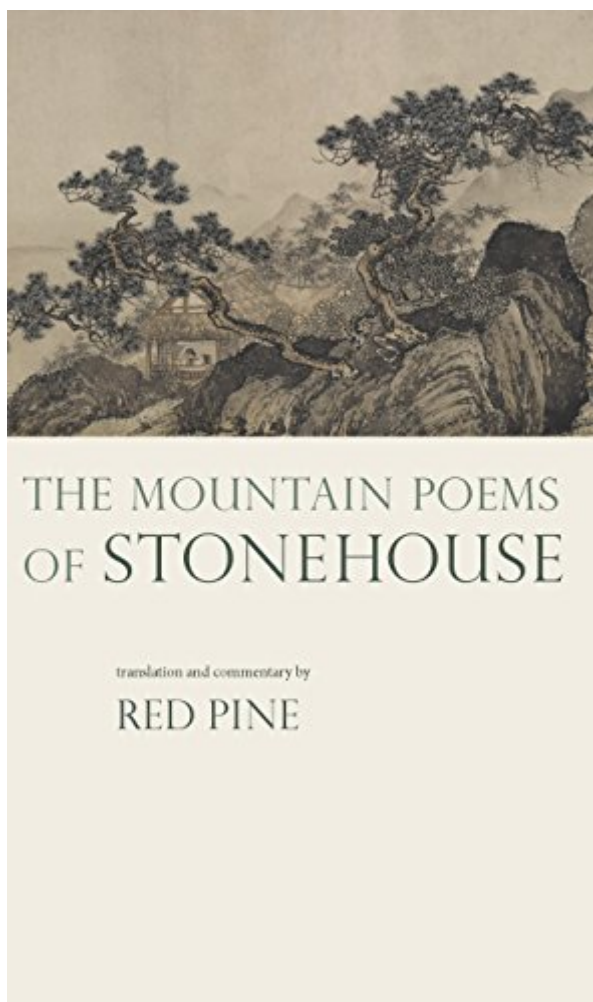


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The Mountain Poems Of Stonehouse



Synopsis

"The Mountain Poems of Stonehouse [is] a tough-spirited book of enlightened free verse."#151;Kyoto JournalThe Zen master and mountain hermit Stonehouse#151;considered one of the greatest Chinese Buddhist poets#151;used poetry as his medium of instruction. Near the end of his life, monks asked him to record what he found of interest on his mountain; Stonehouse delivered to them hundreds of poems and an admonition: "Do not to try singing these poems. Only if you sit on them will they do you any good."Newly revised, with the Chinese originals and Red Pine's abundant commentary and notes, The Mountain Poems of Stonehouse is an essential volume for Zen students, readers of Asian literature, and all who love the outdoors.After eating I dust off a boulder and sleepand after sleeping I go for a walkon a cloudy late summer dayan oriole sings from a saplingbriefly enjoying the seasonjoyfully singing out its hearttrue happiness is right herewhy chase an empty nameStonehouse was born in 1272 in Changshu, China, and took his name from a cave at the edge of town. He became a highly respected dharma master in the Zen Buddhist tradition.Red Pine is one of the world's leading translators of Chinese poetry. "Every time I translate a book of poems," he writes, "I learn a new way of dancing. And the music has to be Chinese." He lives near Seattle, Washington.

Book Information

File Size: 5840 KB

Print Length: 228 pages

Publisher: Copper Canyon Press (June 15, 2014)

Publication Date: June 15, 2014

Sold by:Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00TG2VSBS

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Not Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Not Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #377,039 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #11

inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Chinese #42 inÂ Kindle Store >

Kindle eBooks > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Asian #50 inÂ Books > Literature & Fiction >

Customer Reviews

If you love wilderness, solitude and good poems, then `The Mountain Poems of Stonehouse,` compiled, translated, and commented on by renowned student of Chinese poetry and Zen scholarship, Red Pine, are a must read. Like his fellow hermit-poet, Cold Mountain, Stonehouse was a disaffected monk, student of both the Buddha and the Way. Disillusioned with ritual and even with the `path` itself, he retreated into the mountains to live a life of self-reliance and contemplation. "Ultimate reality isn't created/ready-made koans aren't worth a thought/all day I sit by my open window/looking at mountains without lowering the shade." Stonehouse's philosophy is based on two tenets: survival and solitude. "Don't think a mountain home means you're free/ a day doesn't pass without its cares/...things don't always go my way/what can I do but turn to myself." These poems celebrate rugged self-possession and cheerful austerity. Stonehouse found himself closer to the Path and Way within wilderness than he ever did among his teachers and fellow monks. "I was a Zen monk who didn't know Zen/so I chose the woods for the years I had left/...mountains and streams explain the Patriarch's meaning/flower smiles and birdsongs reveal the hidden key." Red Pine's translations are direct and clear. Hyperbole, pretense, and artifice are all absent from these poems. In their place are plain, clean descriptions of a quiet life in the wild. Unlike other hermit-poets, Stonehouse rarely dons the teacher's robe. Whereas Cold Mountain's poems often preach on how to live, Stonehouse's are more oblique and subtle. Yet, even he has a few sublime moments of instruction.

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