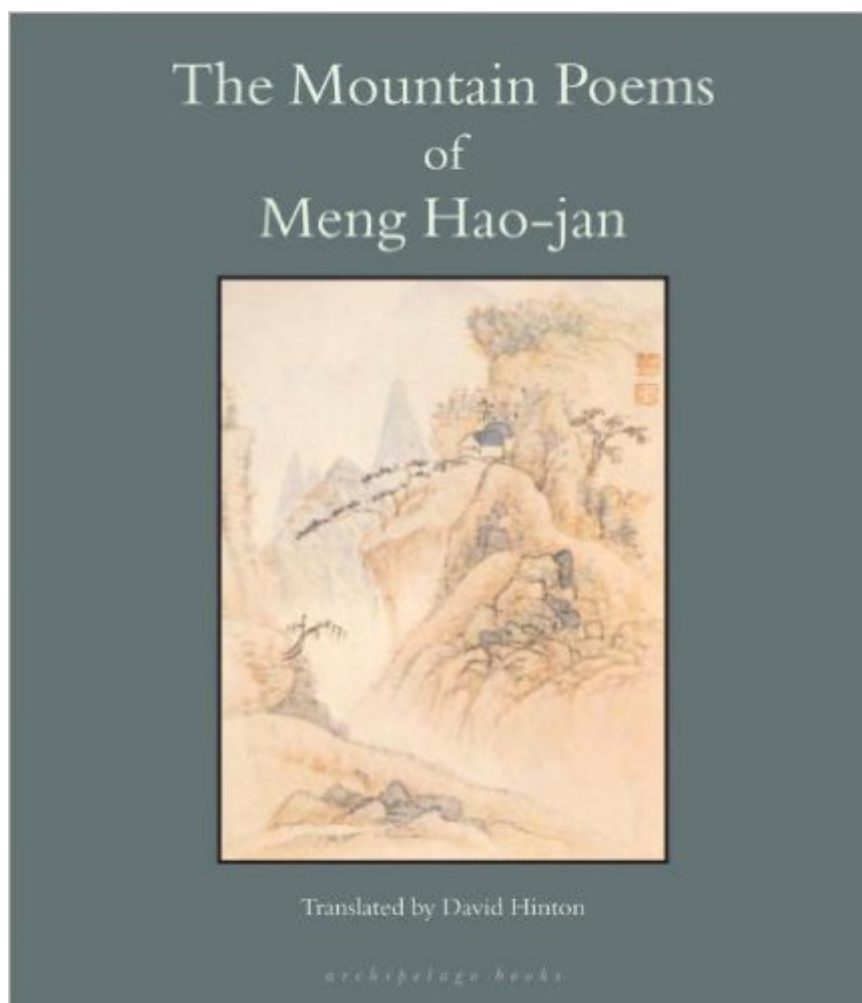


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The Mountain Poems Of Meng Hao-Jan



Synopsis

The first full flowering of Chinese poetry occurred in the illustrious T'ang Dynasty, and at the beginning of this renaissance stands Meng Hao-jan (689-740 c.e.), esteemed elder to a long line of China's greatest poets. Deeply influenced by Chan (Zen) Buddhism, Meng was the first to make poetry from the Chan insight that deep understanding lies beyond words. The result was a strikingly distilled language that opened new inner depths, non-verbal insights, and outright enigma. This made Meng Hao-jan China's first master of the short imagistic landscape poem that came to typify ancient Chinese poetry. And as a lifelong intimacy with mountains dominates Meng's work, such innovative poetics made him a preeminent figure in the wilderness (literally rivers-and-mountains) tradition, and that tradition is the very heart of Chinese poetry. This is the first English translation devoted to the work of Meng Hao-jan. Meng's poetic descendants revered the wisdom he cultivated as a mountain recluse, and now we too can witness the sagacity they considered almost indistinguishable from that of rivers and mountains themselves.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a wonderful collection of beautiful landscape poetry. Most of it is accessible although some is a little obscure. I think David Hinton has done a very good job of translating these poems. These Chinese poems were written in the 8th century A.D. and they are inspired..

This book is great, spellbinding. I would particularly recommend this to anyone who lives in a city

and daydreams about being out hiking. The poet's words instantly transported me to the mountains. The poems are presented simply and speak for themselves. If you have any interest in poetry or writing about the beauty of nature, or questions of human existence, get this book right away. I intend to check out the translator's other collections as well - I had no idea this kind of poetry existed!

Meng Hao-jan (689-740 C.E.) is one of China's greatest poets during the illustrious T'ang Dynasty. A man who was deeply influenced by Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism and provides unique insights encapsulated by succinct language. Now expertly and deftly translated into English for the first time by David Hinton, the poetry of this esteemed elder in the pantheon of China's greatest poets is readily available and accessible to a grateful and appreciative American readership. Adrift at Wu-ling: Wu-ling's river thinned out, my long-ago/boat glides on into peach-blossom forests//where headwaters harbored such quiet/mystery: immortal families so deep away.//Water meanders, blurs into blue cliffs,/darkens green beneath a crossing cloud.//I sit listening. Idle gibbons cry out, mind/sudden clarity far beyond a world of dust.

The insights and zen in these poems is very subtle and deep and anybody interested in the inner soul would get a great experience out of this book. The more study you have done the more you would get out of this. If you have no previous zen experience this is a lovely book of nature, kindness, sadness and friends. The translation which, I assume by his background, is well done, leaves one guessing as he finishes sentences at the start of a new line and uses unusual phrases to substitute for the Chinese poetry. I am delighted to have this book in my collection and it will be one I will pick up and read over and over.

Wonderful

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