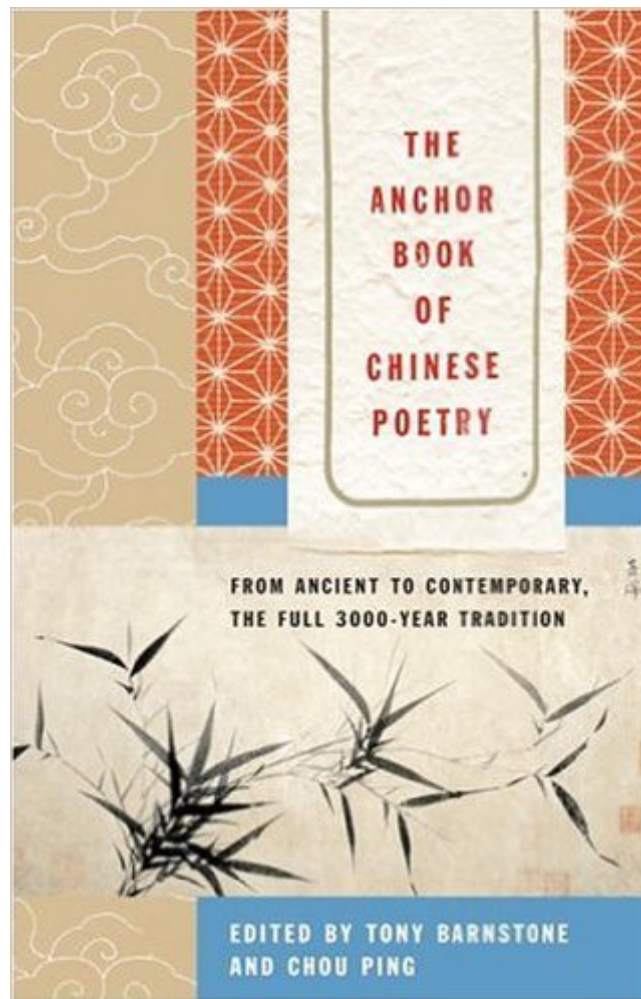


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The Anchor Book Of Chinese Poetry: From Ancient To Contemporary, The Full 3000-Year Tradition



Synopsis

Unmatched in scope and literary quality, The Anchor Book of Chinese Poetry spans three thousand years, bringing together more than six hundred poems by more than one hundred thirty poets, in translations “many new and exclusive to the book” by an array of distinguished translators. Here is the grand sweep of Chinese poetry, from the Book of Songs “ancient folk songs said to have been collected by Confucius himself” and Laozi’s Dao De Jing to the vividly pictorial verse of Wang Wei, the romanticism of Li Po, the technical brilliance of Tu Fu, and all the way up to the twentieth-century poetry of Mao Zedong and the post-“Cultural Revolution” verse of the Misty poets. Encompassing the spiritual, philosophical, political, mystical, and erotic strains that have emerged over millennia, this broadly representative selection also includes a preface on the art of translation, a general introduction to Chinese poetic form, biographical headnotes for each of the poets, and concise essays on the dynasties that structure the book. A landmark anthology, The Anchor Book of Chinese Poetry captures with impressive range and depth the essence of China’s illustrious poetic tradition.

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Customer Reviews

All lovers of Chinese literature will know how central a contribution the Barnstones, father and son, have made to the gradual Anglicization (or Americanization) of at least a small part of the poetic treasures now pouring out of the Middle Kingdom for the world to wake up to at last. This Anchor collection is a noble enterprise and a huge achievement, comparable in scope to earlier anthologies

such as those compiled so magisterially by Cyril Birch, Burton Watson, Jonathan Chaves, Victor Mair and Stephen Owen. It is worth buying for the introduction alone, but the originality of the enterprise consists largely in the novelty of so many of the poems chosen. Of course any anthology that claims to include 'the Full 3000-Year Tradition' is guilty of massive over-exaggeration, since it is the nature of anthologies to be highly selective. And if, in your pursuit of the new and the unexpected you choose to leave out a lot of the 'old familiar faces', as Barnstone does, then perhaps the danger is that you may inadvertently give readers who are themselves new to Chinese poetry a slightly false picture of its most salient geographical features. He is a good enough translator at his best to do ample justice to many of those anthology 'plums' that most other anthologists consider indispensable. On the other hand, one can have too much of a good thing, and he may well be right to have sometimes wandered away from the well-trodden highway. A good guide is one who makes the tour idiosyncratic and personal, and Barnstone is certainly that. The overall quality of the poetry, considered as poetry IN ENGLISH, is pretty consistently high: perhaps not quite in the same class as Kenneth Rexroth, Sam Hamill, David Hinton or David Young, but still often bright, fresh and bubbling with energy. No library of Chinese literature in translation should be without this cornucopia of delights.

I have purchase many books of poetry for my kindle. I bought this book on a whim (perhaps late night wine-addled buy-now-clicking, which now I find would be applauded by most of the poets over the past 3000 years of Chinese poetry) Anyway, I bought this book..., then I started reading the poems. What a joy!! The poets and their works are well reviewed and presented in this very readable book. I cannot comment on the accuracy of the translations since I cannot read Chinese, but even if the poems are very loosely put forth to the reader (as most translators are accused) I still would strongly recommend this wonderful book.

This is the best one-volume collection of Chinese poetry I've yet come across. 600 poems over 3,000 years, step into this book and enter a world. The translations are simple, clean and clear, and, for that, deeply moving.

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