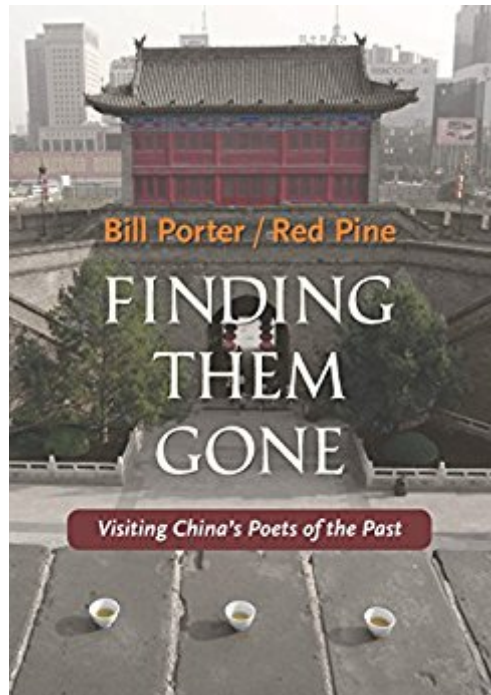


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# Finding Them Gone: Visiting China's Poets Of The Past



## Synopsis

"A travel writer with a cult following."âThe New York Times "There are very few westerners who could successfully cover so much territory in China, but Porter pulls it off. Finding Them Gone uniquely draws upon his parallel careers as a translator and a travel writer in ways that his previous books have not. A lifetime devoted to understanding Chinese culture and spirituality blossoms within its pages to create something truly rare."âThe Los Angeles Book Review To pay homage to China's greatest poets, renowned translator Bill Porterâwho is also known by his Chinese name "Red Pine"âtraveled throughout China visiting dozens of poets' graves and performing idiosyncratic rituals that featured Kentucky bourbon and reading poems aloud to the spirits. Combining travelogue, translations, history, and personal stories, this intimate and fast-paced tour of modern China celebrates inspirational landscapes and presents translations of classical poems, many of which have never before been translated into English. Porter is a former radio commentator based in Hong Kong who specialized in travelogues. As such, he is an entertaining storyteller who is deeply knowledgeable about Chinese culture, both ancient and modern, who brings readers into the journeyâfrom standing at the edge of the trash pit that used to be Tu Mu's grave to sitting in Han Shan's cave where the Buddhist hermit "Butterfly Woman" serves him tea. Illustrated with over one hundred photographs and two hundred poems, Finding Them Gone combines the love of travel with an irrepressible exuberance for poetry. As Porter writes: "The graves of the poets I'd been visiting were so different. Some were simple, some palatial, some had been plowed under by farmers, and others had been reduced to trash pits. Their poems, though, had survived... Poetry is transcendent. We carry it in our hearts and find it there when we have forgotten everything else." In praise of Bill Porter/Red Pine: "In the travel writing that has made him so popular in China, Porter's tone is not reverential but explanatory, and filled with luminous asides... His goal is to tell interested foreigners about revealing byways of Chinese culture."âNew York Review of BooksâPorter is an amiable and knowledgeable guide. The daily entries themselves fit squarely in the travelogue genre, seamlessly combining the details of his routes and encounters with the poetsâbiographies, Chinese histories, and a generous helping of the poetry itself. Porterâs knowledge of the subject and his curation of the poems make this book well worth reading for travelers and poetry readers alike. Itâs like a survey course in Chinese poetryâbut one in which the readings are excellent, the professor doesnât take himself too seriously, and the field trips involve sharing Stagg bourbon with the deceased.â Publishers Weekly "Red Pine's out-of-the-mainstream work is canny and clearheaded, and it has immeasurably enhanced Zen/Taoist literature and practice."âKyoto Journal "Bill Porter has been one of the most prolific

translators of Chinese texts, while also developing into a travel writer with a cult following." "The New York Times" Red Pine's succinct and informative notes for each poem are core samples of the cultural, political, and literary history of China." "Asian Reporter Poets" graves visited (partial list): Li Pai, Tu Fu, Wang Wei, Su Tung-p'o, Hsueh T'ao, Chia Tao, Wei Ying-wu, Shih-wu (Stonehouse), Han-shan (Cold Mountain). Bill Porter (a.k.a. "Red Pine") is widely recognized as one of the world's finest translators of Chinese religious and poetic texts. His best-selling books inc

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Monsieur Pine has outdone himself with Finding Them Gone! His search for China's ancient poets (or at least their graves) is a delightful lesson regarding The Middle Kingdom's vast treasure house of spiritual genius, with enough of Pine's ironic humor tossed in to make the ride both educational and a fun romp. Anyone interested in the backstory on Li Po, Tu Fu, Hsieh Ling-yun, Stonehouse, Han Shan, or a host of other wonderful poets is in for a treat under Red Pine's inimitable guidance.

This is not a dusty academic tome on Chinese poetry, hence it is quite subversive. It is much more

edifying than one of those; it's fun. Written by someone who loves his subject, the verses speak to his heart and that shows through, page after page. Only someone enthralled and following his passion would subject himself to a regimen as rigorous as Porter's---30 days of chasing and honoring Chinese ghosts. You will be all the wiser for what he went through. Want a lover's guide to Chinese poetry? This is it. Buy it. You'll thank yourself. (There is even humor here. Imagine that.)

I've been reading Chinese poetry in English translation since my undergraduate days when I bought the anthology *The White Pony* edited by Robert Payne. Because my wife is Chinese we've been back to China several times and Porter's descriptions of contemporary China jibe well with our own experience. Plus he's describing poets whom I've read in translation for years. I have studied Chinese (both modern and classical) but I'm still too much of a neophyte to read the poems straight through in Chinese. I just limp along as best I can using the translation as a guide. But for anyone who loves both China and Chinese poetry Porter's books are treasures.

Red Pine truly unveiled the Tao Te Ching for me, especially with the well-chosen commentary. In his new book, a travelogue of his pilgrimage to the homes and gravesites a great Chinese poets and philosophers, he has created an entertaining account of his daily experiences and carefully chosen interesting poems with his own commentary on the poets and their poems. It was great fun to read his experiences as organized day by day.

Although he says his books sell better in China than in the U S, Bill Porter's writing on topics of Chinese Taoist and Chan themes are always a delight for those of us in America who appreciate his genius for bringing to life the light, beauty and wisdom of the old poets.

I've been addicted to Chinese poetry for some time, and this book has greatly stimulated that addiction. While travelling for 30 days to the graves and homes of China's poets of the past, Red Pine offers translations of said poets' poems, all of which help tell their life tale or give insight into their character. He also talks about his trip.

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