

Yellow River Odyssey

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Yellow River Odyssey: Amazon.co.uk: Porter, Bill: Books

Yellow River Odyssey fits into the latter category and is a recounting of a journey Porter made in 1991 for a radio station in Taiwan. The aim of the trip was to track the Yellow River from its mouth to its source and it resulted in a series of radio scripts which now, more than twenty years later, have been transformed into this book.

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While Porter's work often focuses on religion, especially Taoist and Buddhist texts, Yellow River Odyssey is travel literature without a religious agenda and thus will appeal to armchair travelers of all stripes. In an interview with the Chinese press, Porter said this journey surprised even him with "how diverse the cultures were along the river.

Bill Porter is the ideal travel companion. His depth of knowledge of Chinese history and culture is unparalleled. His wit is ever-present. And his keen eye for the telling detail consistently reminds us that China is not what you think it is. Yellow River Odyssey, already a best-seller in China, reveals a complex, fascinating, contradictory culture like never before.

A CHINESE-INDIAN SCHOLAR'S VISION OF THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE OF CHINA DEVOID OF CHINA-BRAGGING OR CHINA-BASHING□ In this endearing book on China, Tan Chung distills tons of information about China's historical evolution and complex vicissitudes in a freewheeling style describing how the third longest river in the world, Yangtze River, and the fifth longest, Yellow River, carved out the contours of China on the globe millions of years before the arrival of man-apes. From this geographical entity, there emerged a common civilization, political entity, and common entity of destiny within and around the valleys of these two civilization-forming rivers. The author advocates that China is a "civilization country" that has existed for more than two millennia but the nation-state world interrupted the Chinese odyssey for many centuries. Like the legendary phoenix rising from the ashes, China resumes its odyssey and also joins the comity of globalization leaving behind the "Thucydides Trap".

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In the spring of 2006, Bill Porter traveled through the heart of China, from Beijing to Hong Kong, on a pilgrimage to sites associated with the first six patriarchs of Zen. *Zen Baggage* is an account of that journey. He weaves together historical background, interviews with Zen masters, and translations of the earliest known records of Zen, along with personal vignettes. Porter's account captures the transformations taking place at religious centers in China but also the abiding legacy they have somehow managed to preserve. Porter brings wisdom and humor to every situation, whether visiting ancient caves containing the most complete collection of Buddhist texts ever uncovered, enduring a six-hour Buddhist ceremony, searching in vain for the ghost in his room, waking up the monk in charge of martial arts at Shaolin Temple, or meeting the abbess of China's first Zen nunnery. Porter's previously published *Road to Heaven: Encounters with Chinese Hermits* has become recommended reading at Zen centers and universities throughout America and even in China (in its Chinese translation), and *Zen Baggage* is sure to follow suit.

To travel upon the Silk Road is to travel through history. Millennia older than California's Camino Real, and perhaps even a few years senior to the roads of the Roman Empire, the Silk Road is a network of routes stretching from delta towns of China all the way to the Mediterranean Sea — a cultural highway considered to be essential to the development of some of the world's oldest civilizations. It was upon this road that that Chinese silk traveled and was exchanged for incense, precious stones, and gold from India, the Middle East and as far the Mediterranean, contributing to the great tradition of commercial and idea exchange along the way. In the fall of 1992, celebrated translator, writer, and scholar Bill Porter left his home in Hong Kong and decided to travel from China to Pakistan by way of this famous and often treacherous Silk Road. Equipped with a plastic bottle of whiskey, needle-nose pliers, and the companionship of an old friend, Porter embarks upon the journey on the anniversary of Hong Kong's liberation from the Japanese after World War II and concludes in Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan, at the end of the monsoon season. Weaving witty travel anecdotes with the history and fantastical mythology of China and the surrounding regions, Porter exposes a world of card-sharks, unheard-of ethnic minorities, terracotta soldiers, nuclear experiments in the desert, emperors falling in love with bathing maidens, monks with miracle tongues, and a giant Buddha relaxing to music played by an invisible band. The Silk Road is the second of a three-book memoir series about Porter's travels in and around China to be published by Counterpoint. With an eye for cultural idiosyncrasies and a vast knowledge of history, Porter continues to make with his mark as an expert and travel writer.

While flipping through the atlas of Chang Ch'i-yun, one of China's most famous geographers, distinguished translator Bill Porter (Red Pine) developed a curiosity about the southwestern province of China. Dubbed Yun-nan, "South of the Clouds," this was the last area modern China to come under Chinese control. Originally conquered by the Mongols and eventually introduced to foreigners as a vibrant setting for trade, Yun-nan became a critical crossroad connecting East and West. In 1992, Porter left his home in Hong Kong to tour the small towns and major cities of Yun-nan, studying each of their local cultures and larger impacts on the trajectory of Chinese history. Here, he shares his encyclopedic knowledge of the nation's

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beautiful legacy while introducing new insight about the province's landscapes, people, and recent state of affairs. He visited Bulang Mountain, where the local people had no written language of their own, so they sent their children to live as monks in nearby Tai temples to learn Tai script. He saw women in Lijiang who wore traditional sheepskin jackets that bore seven frog eyes without clear explanation. In Dali, a small town turned urban center, he recalls a massive museum built to show off the city's new wealth, only to have half of its halls left empty and unvisited. The first of a series of three China travel memoirs to be published by Soft Skull, Bill Porter's book tells the incredible story of a spread of land with a thousand years of human history. His remarkable insight and unparalleled understanding of China place this book at the forefront of East Asian travel literature.

Like many of us, Mark Hertsgaard has long worried about the declining health of our environment. But in 1991, he decided to act on his concern and investigate the escalating crisis for himself. Traveling on his own dime, he embarked on an odyssey lasting most of the decade and spanning nineteen countries. Now, in *Earth Odyssey*, he reports on our environmental predicament through the eyes of the people who live it. From the gilded boardrooms of Paris to the traffic-clogged streets of Bangkok, we travel from the deep human past to our still unfolding future. Much of the story revolves around people like Zhenbing, Hertsgaard's charismatic interpreter in China, whose desire to escape poverty leaves him indifferent to his country's horrific air and water pollution. We also meet Garang, a proud Dinka tribesman whose response to Sudan's famine shows the difficulty of building an environmentally sustainable future without bridging the gap between rich and poor. Drawing on interviews with Václav Havel, Al Gore, Jacques Cousteau, and numerous other prominent figures, Hertsgaard offers fresh insight into such complex issues as humanity's growing addiction to the automobile, the insidious spread of nuclear technology, and the inevitable tension between unfettered capitalism and the health of the biosphere. *Earth Odyssey* is a vivid, passionate narrative about one man's journey around the world in search of the answer to the most important question of our time: Is the future of the human species at risk? Combining first-rate reportage with irresistible storytelling, Mark Hertsgaard has written an essential--and ultimately hopeful--book about the uncertain fate of humankind.

PSYCHOPYTHON is the fact-based, graphic story of Delia Grey. It is related in two parts; beginning with Part 1, "Dark Odyssey." Cunningly manipulated into an ill-advised second marriage, widowed Delia Grey, finds herself unwittingly catapulted into a horrific life of physical, mental and sexual abuse, terrible beyond anything she could ever have imagined. Her new husband is a cold-blooded, calculating, Jekyll and Hyde character; a psychopython, motivated by emotionless cruelty and greed, and with the determination to force Delia into relinquishing the vast fortune he imagines she owns. He has devised a ruthless plan to destroy her, which he begins putting into effect on their wedding day. He has every intention of coercing and crushing her, in mind and body, in order to take possession of everything she has. From the beginning of the marriage Delia is thrust into a nightmare existence, as she is relentlessly driven, by day and night, towards capitulation and suicide. Delia is an intelligent, and resourceful, professional woman, who is suddenly isolated in a vicious situation from which she can find no way of escape. She quickly realises she is fighting for her own, and her children's survival, against a remorseless psychopath who is determined to destroy her. Can Delia survive the malevolent games being played with her mind and her life? Is there any way for her to escape the destructive evil which has permeated every aspect of her existence? PSYCHOPYTHON, Part 2, "Nemesis", is the concluding sequel to Delia's story.

"A travel writer with a cult following."—*The New York Times* "There are very few westerners who

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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." "The Los Angeles Book Review To pay homage to China's greatest poets, renowned translator Bill Porter—who is also known by his Chinese name "Red Pine"—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 journey—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." "New York Review of Books "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 poets' biographies, Chinese histories, and a generous helping of the poetry itself. Porter's knowledge of the subject and his curation of the poems make this book well worth reading for travelers and poetry readers alike. It's like a survey course in Chinese poetry—but one in which the readings are excellent, the professor doesn't take himself too seriously, and the field trips involve sharing Stagg bourbon with the deceased." "Publishers Weekly "Red Pine's out-of-the-mainstream work is canny and clearheaded, and it has immeasurably enhanced Zen/Taoist literature and practice." "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

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