



# Inside the Grass Hut: Living Shitou's Classic Zen Poem

*Ben Connelly*

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## **Inside the Grass Hut: Living Shitou's Classic Zen Poem** Ben Connelly

Enter the mind and practice of Zen: apply the insights of one of Zen's classic poems to your life--here and now.

Shitou Xiqian's "Song of the Grass Roof Hermitage" is a remarkably accessible work of profound depth; in thirty-two lines Shitou expresses the breadth of the entire Buddhist tradition with simple, vivid imagery. Ben Connelly's *Inside the Grass Hut* unpacks the timeless poem and applies it to contemporary life. His book delivers a wealth of information on the context and content of this eighth-century work, as well as directly evokes the poem's themes of simple living, calm, and a deep sense of connection to all things.

Each pithy chapter focuses on a single line of the poem, letting the reader immerse himself thoroughly in each line and then come up for air before moving on to the next. Line by line, Connelly shows how the poem draws on and expresses elements from the thousand years of Buddhist thought that preceded it, expands on the poem's depiction of a life of simple practice in nature, and tells stories of the way these teachings manifest in modern life. Connelly, like Shitou before him, proves himself adept at taking profound and complex themes from Zen and laying them out in a practical and understandable way.

Eminently readable, thoroughly illuminating, *Inside the Grass Hut* shows the reader a path of wholehearted engagement -- with the poem, and with the world. Destined to become a trusted, dog-eared companion.

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