

Vegetable Roots Discourse

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CAIGENTAN by Hong Zicheng

translated and introduced by

Robert Aitken

with Daniel W. Y. Kwok



VEGETABLE ROOTS DISCOURSE

Wisdom from Ming China on Life and Living

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Written 400 years ago by a scholar in the Ming Dynasty, one hundred years after

Columbus and around the time Shakespeare completed Henry VI, accomplished scholar and philosopher Hong Zicheng retired from public life and settled down to write an informal compilation of his thoughts on the essence of life, human nature, and heaven and earth. Though he wrote other books as well, only this one has survived—thanks largely to its continuous popularity, first in China and later in Japan and Korea. Entitled Caigentan (Vegetable Roots Discourse), this book has been studied and cherished for four hundred years.

Terse, humorous, witty, and, above all, timely, this book offers a provocative and personal mix of Daoist, Buddhist, and Confucian understanding. It contains 360 observations that lead us through paths as complex, absurd, and grotesque as life itself. While it has been translated into many languages, this comprehensive version will immediately become the standard edition for generations of English readers to come.

作者介绍:

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