

# TENDING THE ROOTS OF WISDOM

## 菜根譚

汉英对照

【明】洪应明◎著

Compiled by Hong Yingming

寒 钟 / 注

Annotated by Han Zhong

【英】保罗·怀特 / 译

Translated by Paul White

新世界出版社

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栖守道德者，寂寞一时；  
依阿权势者，凄凉万古。  
达人观物外之物，思身后之身，  
宁受一时之寂寞，  
毋取万古之凄凉。



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## 前 言

《菜根谭》一书问世于明朝万历年间(1573—1620),作者洪应明。四百多年以来,该书在海内外流传不广,知之不多。在二十世纪的一百年间,洪应明的《菜根谭》并未引起中国思想界、文化学术界的足够重视。反观日本,情况则有些不同。在二十世纪八十年代出现了一阵“《菜根谭》热”。不少日本企业对《菜根谭》中的一些思想相当推崇,将其纳入自己经营管理的理念之中。在日本,有人甚至说,“论企业经营管理的书籍成千上万,不过,多数抵不上一部《菜根谭》”。可见《菜根谭》在日本多么受人欢迎。

洪应明以“自诚”为字,以“还初”道人为号。前者表达了他以儒家之诚修身养性的人生体验,后者则富有释教悟禅之味,并兼有释道两家“反朴归真”的蕴味。从字到号,无不反映出洪应明融释道入儒理,使儒、释、道三教融会贯通的传统思想。细读《菜根谭》,不乏儒、释、道修身养性的警句,其中蕴涵的人生哲理在现代中国仍有很强的生命力。

洪应明生活的时代,是中国近代资本主义萌芽时期,社会上出现了一种物欲横流的新环境。这种环境与中国上古、中古时期的环境有很大不同。那时,芸芸众生的心态是建立在农耕经济基础上的,脱离了商业市井的庸俗之气。因此,教人如何面对纷繁复杂的社会,以及如何在这种社会中安身立命成了人们追求的目标。充满劝世之说的《菜根谭》满足了人们的这一需要。明治维新以后的日本有着极为相似的情况。进入西方资本主义思想体系后,日本和其他西方国家,资本主义经济得到充分发展。这种发展不仅产生了高度的现代文明,同时不可避免地出

现了“金钱拜物教”。然而,社会上不乏一些有识之士,他们对迷恋物质世界的“拜物教”进行了反思。在这种情况下,道教的修炼成仙、佛教的看破红尘可以使人从尘世的烦恼中解脱出来。这与现代的西方社会追求“反朴归真”及基督教拯救人类“原罪”的思想殊途同归,因而产生了许多共鸣。《菜根谭》除对国内读者有借鉴意义外,对海外读者也会有些教益,这就是我们出版《菜根谭》一书汉英对照版的初衷。

《菜根谭》是以处世思想为主的格言式小品文,采用语录体,书中不乏嘉言格论,丽词醒语,深入浅出,发人深省,是一部有益于人们陶冶情操,磨练意志,奋发向上的通俗读物。作者以“菜根”为本书命名,意谓“人的才智和修养只有经过艰苦磨练才能获得”。但是《菜根谭》毕竟成书于四百年前,所以在借鉴其有益方面的同时,对其中占有一定篇幅的封建糟粕,也应作为弃物之菜根而弃之。

本书为汉英两种语言对照形式,汉语原文采用流传较广的版本,英译文由对中国文化颇有研究的英国友人提供。为方便读者阅读,编者对中文原文加注了汉语拼音,原文之后加了注解。另外,书中配有几十幅插图,以期增加读者的阅读兴趣。

## FOREWORD

*Tending the Roots of Wisdom* was written by Hong Yingming during the Wanli reign period (1573 – 1620) of the Ming Dynasty. In the 400 or so years following its first appearance, the book was not widely disseminated either at home or abroad, and was not well known. Throughout the 20th century, it failed to arouse much attention in philosophical, literary or artistic circles in China, but in Japan a different situation arose in the 1980s, when a “*Tending the Roots of Wisdom* craze” swept the business world. A number of Japanese corporations, impressed with the philosophical approach of the work, adopted it as a component part of their management concepts. The book is so revered in Japan that it has even been said that, “there are thousands of books on management, but most of them cannot compare at all with *Tending the Roots of Wisdom*.”

Hong Yingming adopted the style (a name which an educated man chose for himself at the age of 20) of Zicheng, or “self-cultivation,” and the Taoist name of Huanchu, or “back to the beginning.” The former embodies the Confucian virtue of spending one’s life in a process of self-improvement, and the latter is redolent of the Buddhist concept of enlightenment, together with the Taoist and Buddhist doctrine of “returning to simplicity and the unadorned truth.” These two appellations thread together and fuse the three major trends of traditional Chinese thought — Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism. In fact, *Tending the Roots of Wisdom*

is filled with precepts stressing self-cultivation which stem from those three ideological systems, whose philosophy of life still thrives in China today.

The era in which Hong Yingming lived was the one which saw the buds of capitalism sprout in China, and a new environment pervaded by rampant materialism took shape. This milieu was very different from that which had prevailed in ancient and medieval times, when the entire social consciousness had been constructed on a base of agricultural production — a far cry from the philistine world of the market place. Then men began to search for a way to cope with the turbulent new social situation, and finding a way to lead their lives in serenity amid all the hustle and bustle became an urgent quest. *Tending the Roots of Wisdom*, with its abundance of insightful aphorisms, was crafted to meet this demand.

Following the Meiji Restoration of 1870, Japan found itself in a strikingly similar situation to that in China in Hong Yingming's time. Importing capitalist ideology from the West, Japan saw its economy enter a stage of all-out development along capitalist lines together with those of the Western countries. But while this development produced an advanced modern civilization, it could not avoid bringing Mammonism in its wake. In reaction to this, there appeared no shortage of intellectuals who opposed the "infatuation with the fetishism of the material world." At this juncture, Taoism, with its stress on attaining immortality through self-cultivation, and Buddhism, with its claim to be able to free human beings from the stresses and cares of the "dusty world," found themselves in chorus. And nowadays, together with the trend in the modern Western world of seeking the truth by "returning to the simple life," and



Christianity and its doctrine of salvation from original sin, all these ideologies seem to be making for the same goal by different routes. And so, our object in publishing this Chinese-English version of *Tending the Roots of Wisdom* is to provide enlightenment for readers overseas, as well as to provide a mirror for self-reflection for those at home.

*Tending the Roots of Wisdom* is a book of aphorisms written in essay form, mainly dealing with the topic of how to conduct one's life properly. Employing a wealth of quotations and elegant phrasing, its elegant observations explain profound truths in simple terms and provide much food for thought. Aimed at helping the reader to mold his values and temper his will, it is a book for ordinary people who are prepared to make efforts to improve themselves. In choosing the title of his book, the author explained, "Talent, wisdom and self-improvement can only be attained through a process of rigorous cultivation" — hence the stress on tending the roots.

This work, after all, was compiled some 400 years ago. So, while making use of it as a mirror for self-reflection, we must bear in mind that it also contains some feudal dross, and be careful to discard those of the "roots" which are rotten.

The Chinese text used here is that of one of the most popular editions, and the English translation was contributed by an Englishman well versed in Chinese culture. For the convenience of the readers, the editor has provided a version of each section in *hanyu pinyin* (Chinese phonetic alphabet), along with notes on the original text. In addition, the book is enlivened with copious illustrations.

# 1

Qī shǒu dàodé zhě, jìmò yīshí; yī'ē quánshì  
 栖守道德者，寂寞一时；依阿<sup>①</sup>权势  
 zhě, qīliáng wàngǔ. Dárén guān wùwài zhī wù, sī  
 者，凄凉万古<sup>②</sup>。达人<sup>③</sup>观物外<sup>④</sup>之<sup>⑤</sup>物，思  
 shēn hòu zhī shēn, nìng shòu yīshí zhī jìmò, wú qǔ  
 身后之身，宁受一时之寂寞，毋<sup>⑥</sup>取  
 wàngǔ zhī qīliáng.  
 万古之凄凉。

Those who preserve their moral integrity suffer only fleeting loneliness. But boundless misery is the lot of those who toady to the powerful. Those who aspire to the truth must fix their gaze on spiritual cultivation, which transcends material things. They must think of how their reputations will live on after them, and choose fleeting loneliness over boundless misery.

① 依阿：依附曲从。阿，曲从，迎合。

② 万古：千秋万代，形容时间长久。

③ 达人：通达知命的人。

④ 物外：超脱于世事之外。

⑤ 之：的。

⑥ 毋：不要。



Shèshì qiǎn, diǎnrǎn yì qiǎn; lì shì shēn, jīxiè  
涉世<sup>①</sup> 浅，点染<sup>②</sup> 亦<sup>③</sup> 浅；历事深；机械<sup>④</sup>  
yì shēn. Gù jūnzǐ yǔqí liàndá, bùruò pǔlǔ; yǔqí  
亦深。故<sup>⑤</sup> 君子与其练达，不若<sup>⑥</sup> 朴鲁<sup>⑦</sup>；与其  
qūjǐn, bùruò shūkuáng.  
曲谨<sup>⑧</sup>，不若疏狂<sup>⑨</sup>。

A man with but slight experience of the world will likewise be only slightly stained with its impurities. A man well versed in the world and its ways will likewise be replete with its tricks and treacheries. Therefore, it is better for the upright man to be careful to preserve the plainness of his inborn nature than to acquaint himself with the world and its denizens, and it is also better for him to cast off all restraints than to yield for the sake of the overall benefit in matters of trifling importance.

① 涉世：经历世事，立身处世。

② 点染：熏染，此处指受社会不良风气影响。

③ 亦：也。

④ 机械：机巧诡诈。

⑤ 故：所以。

⑥ 不若：不如。

⑦ 朴鲁：朴实愚钝，指不黯人情世故。

⑧ 曲谨：委曲谨慎，指在无关紧要的事情上小心谨慎。

⑨ 疏狂：狂放不羁。

### 3

Jūnzǐ zhī xīnshì, tiān qīng rì bái, bùkě shǐ rén bù  
 君子之心事，天青日白，不可使人不  
 zhī; jūnzǐ zhī cáihuá, yù yùn zhū cáng, bùkě shǐ rén  
 知；君子之才华，玉韞<sup>①</sup>珠藏，不可使人  
 yì zhī.  
 易<sup>②</sup>知。

The heart of a man who cultivates virtue should be as clear as the blue sky and the broad daylight, so that others may never misunderstand it. But his talents should be carefully locked away like precious jewels, so that others may not lightly ascertain them.



① 韞：蕴藏。

② 易：容易。



Shìlì fēnhuá, bù jìn zhě wéi jié, jìn zhī ér  
 势利<sup>①</sup> 纷华<sup>②</sup>, 不近者为洁, 近之<sup>③</sup> 而<sup>④</sup>  
 bù rǎn zhě yóu jié; zhìxiè jīqiǎo, bù zhī zhě wéi gāo,  
 不染者尤洁; 智械<sup>⑤</sup> 机巧, 不知者为高,  
 zhī zhī ér bù yòng zhě wéi yóu gāo.  
 知之而不用者为尤高。

A person who shuns power, wealth and luxury is clean. But a man who comes into contact with power, wealth and luxury and still remains unsullied is even cleaner. He who is unacquainted with wiles and intrigues is noble. But a person who is acquainted with wiles and intrigues but scorns to use them is even nobler.

① 势利：权力和财势。

② 纷华：繁华富丽。

③ 之：它。

④ 而：却。

⑤ 智械：善于谋略，与“机巧”均为“施展权术”的意思。

5

Ěr zhōng cháng wén nì'ěr zhī yán, xīn zhōng cháng  
耳 中 常 闻 逆 耳 之 言, 心 中 常  
yǒu fúxīn zhī shì, cái shì jìn dé xiūxíng de dǐshí.  
有 拂 心<sup>①</sup> 之 事, 才 是 进 德 修 行<sup>②</sup> 的 砥 石<sup>③</sup>.  
Ruò yányán yuè'ěr, shìshì kuài xīn, biàn bǎ cǐ shēng  
若 言 言 悦 耳, 事 事 快 心, 便 把 此 生  
mái zài zhèndú zhōng yǐ.  
埋 在 鸩 毒<sup>④</sup> 中 矣。

The frequent hearing of what we do not want to hear, and the frequent pondering of what troubles the mind act like a whetstone upon which we refine our nature and conduct. If everything we hear is pleasant to the ear, and everything we contemplate is pleasant to the mind, that is no different from steeping our lives in poisoned wine.

① 拂心：不合心意。拂，违反。下文的“快心”则是“顺心”的意思。

② 进德修行：修身养性。

③ 砥石：磨刀石，此处指磨练品德的逆耳之言及拂心之事。

④ 鸩毒：用鸩鸟羽毛制成的毒酒，人喝之后立刻死亡。鸩，传说中的一种毒鸟。



Jífēng nù yǔ, qín niǎo qīqī; jì rì guāngfēng,  
疾风怒雨，禽鸟戚戚<sup>①</sup>；霁日光风<sup>②</sup>，  
cǎo mù xīnxīn. Kějiàn tiāndì bùkě yīrì wú héqì,  
草木欣欣。可见天地不可一日无和气<sup>③</sup>，  
rénxīn bùkě yīrì wú xǐshén.  
人心不可一日无喜神<sup>④</sup>。

When the wind rages and the rain beats down, even the birds seem woebegone. But when the rain ceases to pelt and the wind subsides, the very grass and trees bloom luxuriantly in the fresh sunshine. So, we can see that if in the world there is no day without a period of sanctified peace, then in men's hearts, too, there can be no day totally bereft of joy.

① 戚戚：忧愁的样子。

② 霁日光风：雨过天晴的明净景象。霁，本指雨止，引申为“风雪停，云雾散，天气放晴”。光风，指雨过天晴时的和风。

③ 和气：自然阴阳调和之气，引申为“吉祥平和之气”。

④ 喜神：欢快的心情。

Nóng féi xīn gān fēi zhēn wèi, zhēn wèi zhǐshì  
 酿肥<sup>①</sup>辛甘非真味<sup>②</sup>，真味只是  
 dàn; shénqí zhuóyì fēi zhìrén, zhìrén zhǐshì cháng.  
 淡；神奇卓异非至人<sup>③</sup>，至人只是常。

Real flavour does not lie in refined liquors or sumptuous dishes; only the insipid is pure taste. The man who has attained the realm of perfect virtue is not the wonder maker who stands out from all his fellows. He is found among the run-of-the-mill.



① 酿肥：醇酒和鱼肉。

② 真味：真正可口的味道，此处比喻人的本性。

③ 至人：思想道德达到最高境界的人。





Tiāndì jìrán bù dòng, ér qìjī wú xī shāo tíng;  
 天地寂然不动，而气机<sup>①</sup>无息稍停；  
 rìyuè zhòuyè bēnchí, ér zhēn míng wàngǔ bù yì. Gù  
 日月昼夜奔驰，而贞明<sup>②</sup>万古不易<sup>③</sup>。故  
 jūnzǐ xián shí yào yǒu chī jǐn de xīnsī, máng chù yào  
 君子闲时要有吃紧的心思，忙处要  
 yǒu yōuxián de qùwèi.  
 有悠闲的趣味。

Although the Universe seems to be at rest, its components are constantly in motion. The sun and moon whirl night and day, and cast ceaseless and eternal beams. Likewise, the accomplished man must engage in mental strife while unoccupied, and enjoy repose while exerting himself.

① 气机：天地有规律的运动。机，活动。

② 贞明：日月永放光明。贞，坚定不移。

③ 易：改变。