Abstract

_Caigentan_, written by Hong Yingming in the Ming dynasty, is a book which comprises 360 aphorisms on the way of living as manifested in the cultivation of the mind-heart, the handling of worldly affairs and people of different temperament, and so forth. The main focus of this thesis is on how the author enjoys life by cultivating an artistic outlook through his appreciation of the physical surroundings around him.

Chapter 1 gives an introduction on the author’s background and discusses the definition of “art” which includes the appreciation of the little things in life. This definition shapes the discussion in the subsequent chapters. Chapter 2 discusses the profound understanding of nature that the author derives from his astute observations of his physical surroundings. Chapter 3 explains the importance of cultivating one’s moral character and managing the relationships with people around us as they enable us to better appreciate the beauty of life. Chapter 4 explains the importance of our mind-heart, which can be said to be the core of our being; the mind-heart decides how we view the world around us. Finally, Chapter five offers a conclusion of the thesis.

_Caigentan_ is indeed a book that shines through the ages. It teaches us about the real appreciation of life through the little things we take for granted in life. In our society, everyone is too busy with their own concerns to have time for anything else. I think _Caigentan_ definitely offers us valuable advice on how to relax and loosen ourselves from our worldly pursuits. The key is the willingness to let us relax from this fast-paced society to appreciate the little things around us. We need to feel life so as to feel the amazing moments with our heart before we can realize the profound joy in life.

在我们生活的周围，艺术无处不在。无论是音乐、绘画、摄影，还是日常生活中的点滴，都有其艺术的元素。《菜根谭》中，作者以他欣赏艺术的眼光，来欣赏大自然的景色。在欣赏的时候，作者并不是在心中创造出对事物的看法，这样的心境创造了一种"艺术"。