



To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth: A Translation and Study of Ge Hong's Traditions of Divine Transcendents

By Robert Ford Campany, Ge Hong

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In late classical and early medieval China, ascetics strove to become transcendents--deathless beings with supernormal powers. Practitioners developed dietetic, alchemical, meditative, gymnastic, sexual, and medicinal disciplines (some of which are still practiced today) to perfect themselves and thus transcend death. Narratives of their achievements circulated widely. Ge Hong (283-343 c.e.) collected and preserved many of their stories in his *Traditions of Divine Transcendents*, affording us a window onto this extraordinary response to human mortality.

Robert Ford Campany's groundbreaking and carefully researched text offers the first complete, critical translation and commentary for this important Chinese religious work, at the same time establishing a method for reconstructing lost texts from medieval China. Clear, exacting, and annotated, the translation comprises over a hundred lively, engaging narratives of individuals deemed to have fought death and won. Additionally, *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth* systematically introduces the Chinese quest for transcendence, illuminating a poorly understood tradition that was an important source of Daoist religion and a major social, cultural, and religious phenomenon in its own right.

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Editorial Review

Review

"This book marks a new milestone in the study of Chinese religious history. Only a scholar as intelligent and dedicated as Campany would dare tackle and so eloquently translate one of the most important and difficult works of early Chinese religious history."-Paul Katz, author of *Images of the Immortal: The Cult of Lu Dongbin at the Palace of Eternal Joy*; "A pathbreaking work of lasting significance to the field of Chinese religious history. The scholarship is solid and current, drawing upon the best research from America, Europe, China, and Japan. The translation is accurate, clear, and elegant, based upon an innovative analysis of surviving sources."-Terry Kleeman, author of *Great Perfection: Religion and Ethnicity in a Chinese Millennial Kingdom*; "Campany's annotated translation of Ge Hong's (283-343) classic, the first in English, admirably captures the book's rich evocation of the religious culture of Southern China in the fourth century. Ge Hong here offers a series of case studies of what he regarded as the historical and exemplary evidence for the existence of immortals. This translation of *Traditions of Divine Transcendents* conveys a lively and multifaceted vision of the Taoist conception of physical immortality. The book's emphasis on practices related to the cult of the immortals and the hope for transcendence squarely places its subject in the religious life of traditional Chinese society."-Franciscus Verellen, co-editor of *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Guide*

From the Inside Flap

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From the Back Cover

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