

TITLE
In Quest of the Genuine

ABSTRACT

The seventeenth century thinker Gu Yanwu notes that the word *zhen* (genuine, sincere, authentic), so prevalent in late Ming writings, does not appear in the Five Classics, and he contrasts its uses in *Zhuangzi*, where it carries implications of Daoist transcendence and immortality, with its implication of the correspondence between name and actuality in early historical writings. I will try to investigate when and how the word *zhen* acquires specific associations with sincerity and spontaneity. My discussion will focus on how and why this word is central to late Ming sensibility and its critique after the fall of the Ming.