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THE ROLE OF ANCIENT CHINESE IMAGINATION IN TAOIST TREATISE *HUANG T'ING JING (THE BOOK OF YELLOW COURT)* AND ITS REFLECTION IN LIFE AND WORKS BY HUANG T'ING-JIAN

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The *Book of Yellow Court* (《黄庭经》, *Huang T'ing Jing*, below--*The Book*) is a treatise on internal alchemy and one of the basic works in the School of Higher Purity (Shangqing, 上清派); it ascends to verbal tradition and to the dynasty of Han (206 BC-220 A.D.). *The Book* combines the ideas of Zhuang-zi, Confucius and Buddha as well as it contains the detailed information about various methods of self-improvement. In the Wei-Jin period (220-420), the internal (《黄庭内景经》) and external (《黄庭外景经》) variants of *The Book* were spread, and on their basis a lot of Taoist treatises were created afterwards. Having accumulating the basic Taoist postulates about preserving the energy of physical and mental

bodies, they combined with traditional medical theory about the human internals--all that outpoured in the slender and developed system of self-improvement and the achievement of immortality.

The central principle of *The Book*, as Zhang Zhen-qian points out, is the following:

抚养性命守虚无，恬淡无为何思虑。 [If] to rear life and to follow nonexistence (keep emptiness), [be] quiet and in non-action--then what [is it possible] to think about? (from the “External chapter”)¹

Consequently, for successful Taoist self-improvement, it is enough to find rest, give up all the material desires, forget about the outer world and concentrate on one’s own microcosm. The basic condition for attaining longevity is a “sitting in the half-conscious state” (坐忘)--this notion ascends to the writing of “Zhuang-zi” (《庄子》, 4th–3rd cent. BC):

随肢体，黜聪明，离形去知，同于大通，此谓坐忘。 [You] forget about the body, get rid of hearing and sight, abstract from forms and knowledge, [you] are single with Great Unity, that is just “sitting in the half-conscious state” (from a Chapt. 6 “Great teacher”, 《大宗师》)².

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Such “sitting,” surely, must be harmoniously combined with different internal practices, described in *The Book*. It should be noticed that Buddhist meditation of *chan* (禅) has similar nature: anything external, any feeling must not bother your mind, and then a lucid moment, that is feeling Unity with the Universe, will come by itself.

Before considering the role of *The Book* in life and works of Huang Ting-jian, we should briefly recount its conception--the peculiarities of Taoist adherent “rising in the world of immortals” process. Our recount will be based mainly on the fundamental research of modern Russian scientist Sergey Filonov³.

Taoist adherents considered that by means of physical body perfection it is possible to influence great forces of the Universe and so-called Spirits-Keepers that are the deities

¹ Zhang, Zhen-qian. “Discussing Huang Ting Jing’s Influence on Lu You” (论《黄庭经》对陆游的影响). Journal of Beijing Technological University (Social and Scientific Sciences) 13 (1). [URL]: <http://www.docin.com/p-287044021.html>. (February, 2013). P. 129.

² Wang, Fu-zhi. 1981. Zhuang-zi with comments (庄子解). Beijing: Chinese Press.

³ Filonov, Sergey. 2011. Golden Books and Nephrite Letters: Taoist Written Monuments of 3rd–4th cent. (Золотые книги и нефритовые письма: даосские письменные памятники III–VI вв.). St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg Oriental Studies.

personifying these forces in the “internal space” of physical body (内神). Affecting these forces also supposes the receiving of their return beneficial response--their protection and help. Afterwards, an adherent can attain special wonderful qualities⁴. The method that allows to “see” definite organs and their Spirits-Keeper is the “internal sight” (内观), by means of which Taoist adherent revives and gives life to the images of Another World who inhabit the “internal landscape” of human organism. Surely, such “vision” is possible as a result of the special Taoist meditation, and also after imagining what exactly is needed to “see”. In such a way we can explain the exact description of all these spirits that is produced, undoubtedly, by folk imagination. From the modern scientific point of view, it is possible to say that such visualization, and then perfection and rising, are just auto-suggestion, and anything else. The adherent rises spiritually because human organism initially has enormous potential (both on physical and energetic levels), so Taoist apologists exposed these capabilities by different methods.

So, in what way the confluence of internal and external deities took place? The Book answers this question as follows:

治生之道了不烦，但 ... 兼行形中八景神，二十四真出自然。Tao, that leads life to the harmony, does not stand any fuss. When you ... send Eight jing--effulgent deities, that live in your body--on veritable ways, only then twenty four Perfects will come out [to you] from the upper Heavens (from the 23th Chapt. of “internal” variant of *The Book*)⁵.

Thus, a Taoist adherent should make his internal souls (spirits 神) luminous, and that will enable him to observe his own entrails. Besides, this light will go outside, reach Skies and cause the return response of Higher Forces which supposedly must descend to Earth and reunite with the internal spirits of Taoist adherent who is perfecting himself. As we can see, the way to self-improvement does not stand any fuss: first you should get a clear idea of wisdom from the books and treatises, and then practice “actions” with deities in your own body. In the mentioned fragment from The Book it is said about naturalness (自然) that is true essence of a human: one must complete one’s own nature, calling out from it--but higher, celestial--spirits to the physical body.

It should be noticed that the medieval western theurgy suggested a similar “algorithm” of opening the adherent’s soul, its “alchemic treatment”: the first theurgic stage is that “in a state of

⁴ Ibidem, p. 167.

⁵ Huang Ting Jing with Comments (黄庭经集释). Comment by Liang, Qiu-zi and others. 2005. Beijing: Central Translation Press. Pp. 34-35.

meditation an invocation of Divine emanations takes place”, afterwards the latter “penetrate inside the Soul of person,” and yet through a few stages the “alchemic treatment of the soul” ends with preparation of Medicine and “revitalization” of the primary state of organism”⁶ As we can see, external alchemy, more popular in the West, than in the East, supposed the inalienable affecting of the internal world of human; the idea of Unity with the Universe and its “Divine emanations” is also evident.

It is *The Book* where for the first time in the history of organized Taoism it is stressed that the search of the higher state of existence should take place not outside a human being, but inside. “Only turning the eyes into oneself, not metaphorically, but in the most direct sense of this word--reviewing oneself from inside with efforts in the visual wandering on “cultural space” of one’s own body--a person can attain the state of the *xian*-immortal.”⁷ Such position is akin to the buddhistic one (comp. the methods of self-concentration aimed at spiritual self-improvement in different yoga practices that are actively reviving nowadays); this once again confirms the common roots of Taoism and Buddhism and explains the reason why the Indian Buddhism so easily got accustomed on Chinese soil, afterwards having combined with Taoism and Confucianism and forming the very Taoist-Buddhist-Confucianist syncretism (三教合一).

Naturally, a question arises: how accurate was the picture of internals that the ancient Chinese had, in order to force them to shine (using their own imagination) or to cause other mystic effects? As Sergey Filonov considers,

Taoist adherents and Taoist text of the Six Dynasties period (3rd–4th cent. – *Ya. Sh.*) describe the world of images, far from being at all times corresponding to the earthly world and those images in which a modern human perceives the world and himself in it⁸

In those distant times in China the art of treatment was better developed than in the West, and the location of the main internals was roughly known, but their exact “placing” by a Taoist adherent (but not by a doctor) was rather doubtful. Therefore, another question arises: in such an enigmatic way, even not imagining their own organs in their right places and, moreover, possessing real functions--how could a Taoist adherent effectively perfect himself, not only

⁶ Kleshchevich, Olga. 2013. The Content Problem of 16th–17th cent. Alchemic Treatise as a Manual for Individual’s Spiritual Perfection (Проблема содержания алхимического трактата XVI–XVII вв. как пособия по духовному совершенствованию человека). Abstract of Diss... Cand. of Culturology. St. Petersburg: Russian Pedagogical A. Gertsen University. P. 23.

⁷ Filonov, Sergey. 2011. Golden Books and Nephrite Letters: Taoist Written Monuments of 3rd–4th cent. (Золотые книги и нефритовые письма: даосские письменные памятники III–VI вв.). St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg Oriental Studies. P. 169.

⁸ Ibidem, p. 212.

spiritually, but also physically? The only acceptable answer, from our point of view, is that the crucial role here is played by a firm belief which doesn't allow any doubt, and also clear visualization of certain organs in "the right place"--and, consequently, auto-suggestion that some certain processes take place with adherent's "I".

As it is generally known, the perception of the world comes from purely individual experience (the "reference point" is merely an exact person--only from the position of each person a special, unique picture of the world is imagined), consequently, the methods of "ascension" and perfection, surely supposing harmonizing with an environment, must be purely individual for every Taoist or other apologist. From this point of view, common and the only guidance of *The Book*, intended for all the Taoist adherents, does not appear to be completely rational. It can only be supposed that the way of achievement of the higher verity was single for everybody (there was only general "framework"), but exact manifestations depended on the personal traits of the adherent's individual nature.

According to *The Book*, only attentive reading, copying or verbal recitation of Taoist canons⁹ is enough--yet it promotes further absorbing of the adherent in the aura of Taoist conceptions of internal structure of human and invocation of the spirits, which causes further spiritual development and "ascending to the Skies" no less effectively than other, seemingly more effective methods (internal sight 内观, refusing from cereals 辟谷, strengthening of spiritual energy *jing* 固精¹⁰, perfection of energy *qi* 气¹¹, protecting the One 守一¹²)¹³ It should be supposed that the mentioned methods were practiced by Taoist recluses isolated from the society, while statesmen, having no opportunity to become recluses, but having great desire to perfect themselves (Huang Ting-jian also belonged to them), were mostly limited by attentive study of Taoist canons.

We should now consider how the methods of self-improvement expounded in *The Book* have been reflected in the life and works of Huang Ting-jian (黄庭坚, 1045–1105), the famous

⁹ E.g., only the "internal variant" of *The Book* should be read ten thousand times, and only in this case the treatise would influence adherent in positive way: 沐浴盛洁弃肥薰, 入室东向诵玉篇。约得万遍义自鲜, 散发无欲以长存。 *To wash oneself, to fill with purity, to refuse [in meal] fat and smoked, // To enter the room and, turning eastward, to recite hieroglyphs. To read exactly ten thousand times – and the content will naturally become bright, // To let the hair down, not to have any desires – in order to live long life* (from Chapt. 36 "Ablution", «沐浴章») [«Huang Ting Jing» P. 55].

¹⁰ *Jing* is the substance from which the person is born; that is "the main energy" that plays important role for accomplishing all the functions of body.

¹¹ *Qi* is the single spiritually-material substance of the world (pneuma), a part of which exists in every human being, and everything depends on its presence in the body: "when the pneuma suffers from harm, and desires triumph, then the energetic spirituality (*jing shen*) separates from the body" [Ge, Hong. P. 88].

¹² Protecting the One (United) is the concentration of attention on the certain part of the body.

¹³ Filonov, Sergey. 2011. Golden Books and Nephrite Letters: Taoist Written Monuments of 3rd –4th cent. (Золотые книги и нефритовые письма: даосские письменные памятники III–VI вв.). St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg Oriental Studies. P. 167.

poet, calligrapher and statesman of North Song dynasty. Jiangxi province, where the poet was born, is the basic district of spreading and activity of such Taoist trends as the Way of Orthodox Unity (Zheng-yi, 正一派), School of Supreme Clarity (Shang-qing, 上清派), the Way of Clean Precision (诸如净明道) and more, so extraordinary popularity of *The Book* and the methods of self-improvement it describes are highly motivated in this region. Despite the fact that life and works of Huang T'ing-jian were influenced by all three religious-philosophical studies of old China, his insight into the essence of Taoism was the most notable; this determined the poet's philosophical and political views, literary creation, and even his art of calligraphy.

The very name of Huang T'ing-jian is closely related to *The Book's* name – they differ only in one character. One of the possible reasons of such “coincidence,” in the opinion of Liu Si-zhuan¹⁴, is the following (this version of origin of the poet's name is not connected with the name of *The Book*): since the elder brother was called Da-lin (大临), future poet was given the name of T'ing-jian (庭坚), and younger brother was later named Shu-da (叔达; in fact these were exactly the names of three out of the eight sons of the mythical emperor Zhuan-xu (颛顼, appr. 2514–2437 BC). All the sons were extremely talented, and together they were called 八恺 *eight joys*. It should be supposed that, giving children such names, their father Huang Shu (黄庶), on the one hand, prophesied good fortune to them, and on the other hand, followed the example of ancient wise lords, that was very widespread phenomenon in the Celestial Empire.

The name of Huang T'ing-jian can be also explained in another way. The Yellow Court is an important center of human organism, and its location is determined in various ways: the cavity under a belly-button, or the place above the stomach three *cun* (寸, unit of length approximately 3 cm) below belly-button; the “palace” of the Yellow Court is supposedly a spleen. Sometimes this term is also used to define the special energy *qi*, which is produced in the process of self-perfection. So, in *Meng xi bi t'an* (《梦溪笔谈》, 11th cent.) it is said:

黄庭，有名而无所，冲气之所在也。故养生家曰，能守黄庭，则能长生。Huang T'ing has the name, but does not have place, it's the place which fills with energy. Therefore, those who engage in life rearing, say that if [one] can guard Huang T'ing, one could have eternal life.¹⁵

¹⁴ Liu Si-zhuan. Huang Ting-jian and «Huang Ting Jing» (黄庭坚与《黄庭经》).

¹⁵ Shen, Kuo. 1998. *Meng Xi Bi Tan* (梦溪笔谈). Guiyang: Guizhou Public Press. P. 265.

Anyway, as to the location of the mysterious Yellow Court, Taoist adherents are convinced: it is worthy to train it to the 坚 *strong, reliable* state--and attaining the immortality is quite possible. (Note that in *The Book's* name the character 经 means 径, that is *way, path* to revealing the Yellow Court). From this point of view it can be assumed, that, having the corresponding last name (Huang) and cherishing Taoist traditions in the family, Huang T'ing-jian's father, who was good at "Tao of life rearing" (养生之道) in particular, thought this way and gave such a name to his son.

The second name of Huang T'ing-jian (字 子, given to a person in the age of 20, expressed the best features of its owner and was most often semantically related to the first name) is Lu Zhi (鲁直). Literal translation is: 鲁 *foolish; poor in mind*; 直 *direct, straightforward*; the meaning of dissyllabic lexeme is similar: 鲁直 *rough; rectilinear, sincere*. Some views of different researchers on the origin of the poet's second name are presented by Liu Si-zhuan¹⁶; here is the version which has a direct relation to our research. The very nature of the poet's second name is connected with the homonymy of Chinese language: the character 鲁 is homonymous to 努 *make efforts*; giving the second name to the son, his father skillfully hid one of the basic methods described in *The Book*--the method of "direct penetration inward" (中黄直透). Its essence is given in the *Large dictionary of Chinese Taoism*:

脐后闾前，中有一窍，曰关元，乃是理进下黄，升由黄道、直透中黄、上黄者。Behind the belly-button and before the "entrance," inside there is a hole called guan-yuan (acupuncture point of the middle meridian, three cun under the belly-button--Ya. Sh.)-- so nature enters lower xia-huang, rises along the middle meridian, straight penetrates into zhong-huang and shang-huang¹⁷.

It is said about the true energy *qi* (真气), which without any difficulty rises and goes down along the middle vein; *The Book* says about this fact:

上有黄庭下关元，后有幽阙前命门，呼吸庐间入丹田，玉池清水灌灵根，审能修之可长存。

Above is Yellow Court, down is guan-yuan, behind are kidneys (or: interkidney space), ahead is the "gate of life" ming-men (the place between kidneys--Ya. Sh.); when breathing gets to the stove (metaphor of a human

¹⁶ Liu, Si-zhuan. Huang Ting-jian and "Huang Ting Jing" (黄庭坚与《黄庭经》). [URL]: http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_611bd4e4010189or.html.

¹⁷ Big Dictionary of Chinese Taoism (中华道教大辞典). 1995. Chief Ed. Hu, Fu-chen. Beijing: Chinese Social Scientific Press. P. 1180.

organism--Ya. Sh.) and enters dantian, clear water from the nephrite lake (mouth--Ya. Sh.) irrigates the root of life (tongue--Ya. Sh.)--this process can be perfected, and then eternal life is reachable (from the “External Chapter”)¹⁸.

As we can see, the adherent must make some effort (努力), and then *qi* energy will directly (直) flow to the proper areas of body. This is the method of improvement of one’s nature and crystallizing (cherishing) of one’s initial *qi*--when upper, middle and lower *dantians*¹⁹ in a human organism become three Yellow Courts (that is the reason of absence of one concrete location of this important point which gave name to *The Book*).

The character 庭 *t’ing* of the poet’s first name also has the meaning of “direct” (直). In the dictionary of “Er-ya” (《尔雅》, 3rd cent. BC) it is said: 庭，直也，直而且坚，故曰鲁直。 *T’ing--direct, direct and strong, that’s why it’s said “lu-zhi” (“direct, open, sincere”)*. The poet’s second name probably is the usual decoding of characters of his first name (as a rule, giving *zhi* to the child took place in such a way). Thus, the second name of Huang T’ing-jian (Lu Zhi) accumulated a few ideas among which there are some straight related to *The Book*.

From his childhood the future poet--though born in a Confucianist family--was submerged in the Taoist atmosphere. In the domestic library there was text of *The Book*-- young Huang T’ing-jian rewrote the treatise from the pattern of famous calligrapher Wang Xi-zhi (王羲之, 303–361); in mature age he practiced methods, described in *The Book*. His love for Taoism from young years is testified by such lines, written in eight-year age:

青衫乌帽芦花鞭，送君归去玉帝（一作明主）前。若问旧时黄庭坚，谪在人间今八年。 Blue skirt, black hat, whip with reed flowers, // [I] see you off to the Nephrite emperor (or: Pure emperor). // If [the emperor] asks about Huang T’ing-jian from the old times, // [Answer that he] was thrown down to the secular world already eight years ago (from the poem “Seeing my friend off to take state exams”, «送友人赴举»²⁰).

It should be supposed, that “Nephrite emperor” is the figurative name of the lord of that time; as we can see, future poet was sure of own “celestial” origin: celestials, allegedly, whipped him off to the people’s world for some guilt, so in his earthly life he should constantly aspire to

¹⁸ Huang Ting Jing with Comments (黄庭经集释). Comment by Liang, Qiu-zi and others. 2005. Beijing: Central Translation Press. P. 133-134.

¹⁹ *Dantian* is “the trunk of Tree of person’s life and psychical energy” (lower *dantian* is the root of *jing* and the source of *qi*, middle *dantian* is the root of *shen* spirit, and upper *dantian* is the root of wisdom) [Chen, Xiao-wang].

²⁰ Huang, Ting-jian. 2001. Complete Works (黄庭坚全集). Chengdu: Sichuan University Press. P. 175.

self-improvement in order to become the celestial immortal and in the end return to the Sky for eternal life.

In the poetry--both *shi* (诗) and *ci* (词) genres--Huang Ting-jian does not describe the exact process of self-perfection, but in disguised way he only writes about the state preceding to purification (“preparatory work”) or, on the contrary, about the consequences of an adherent’s internal work. In some poems of *shi* genre there are such references:

行役劳人望县斋，心如枯井垂（一作喜）尘埃。青灯帘外潇潇（一作萧萧）雨，破梦山根殷殷雷。

(In the trip [I] saw people who worked, contemplated districts [and felt] fast [of heart], // The heart is like dried-up well in which specks of dust hang (or: are glad). // In greenish flame of an oil-bearing lamp, behind the curtains rain drizzles (or: wind howls and rain), // Loud thunder has violated [my] sleep at the foot of the mountain) (from the poem “Wandering on service westward of the district, glad to see rain, on a commission send to Gong-jian dafu”, «行役县西喜雨寄任公渐大夫»²¹).

After such self-improvement *without* special psychotechnics and active internal work (sitting in half-conscious state 坐忘 and fast of heart 心斋²²) a person simply merges with nature and sees the very essence of the environment with quite different, “clean” eyes--but not with eyes polluted with stereotypes of society.

Huang Ting-jian, however, does not describe in his works the complicated manipulations of a Taoist adherent with his inner world--the manipulations to which *The Book* is devoted; only separate lexemes (*to sit in a half-conscious state, fast of heart* etc.) hint at poet’s attentive study and practice of the methods of Taoist self-improvement. For example, in the poem “Together with Zi Zhan-shu write on the last rhymes of the *Book of Yellow Court* and present to Taoist Jian” (“次韵子瞻书黄庭经尾付蹇道士”) the poet expressed his understanding of the self-improvement method offered by *The Book*. Let’s present an original and interlinear translation of this poem:

琅函绛简蕊珠篇，寸田尺宅可蕲（一说祈）仙。

高真接手玉宸前，女丁来谒粲六妍。

²¹ Huang, Ting-jian. Cited work. P. 283.

²² Fast of heart – long period of self-wiping from passions; according to «Zhuang-zi»: 气也者，虚而待物者也。唯道集虚。虚者，心斋也。Let the spirit of life in you be empty and spontaneously respond to external things. The only Tao gathers in emptiness. Emptiness is a fast of the heart (from Chapt. 1 “Carefree Wondering”, «逍遥游»).

金龕（一说轮）闭欲形完坚，万物荡尽正秋天。
 使形如是何尘缘，苏李笔墨妙自然。
 万灵拱手书已传，传非其人恐飞骞。
 当付骊龙藏九渊，蹇侯奉告请周旋，纬萧探手我不眠。

Taoist books on bamboo planks fell down from Ruizhu [palace],
 The point between eyebrows and face--you can beg celestials for [longevity].
 Perfect Taoist adept stretches out his hands in front of Jade palace,
 Six graceful beautiful women came to the [table with] tasty dishes.
 The golden flute (or: a wheel) is closed--its form is perfect and strong,
 Lots of things have gone away--it is autumn now.
 [Celestials] made so that the forms [of things] are connected to the secular world,
 Brush and ink [of artists] Su and Li depict nature.
 Ten thousand spirits stretched hands – the books have been already passed,
 [But passed] not to this person, [he] is afraid that [the celestials] will fly away.
 [Books] have been passed to the Black Dragon who has hidden in a water depth.
 Jian then will tell [about it], [I] ask [the celestials] to float in the air,
 [I] weave [something] from weeds, stretch out my hands--I don't sleep.²³

Unfortunately, since we did not manage to find comments to this poem of Chinese literary critics, we can only speculate on its content. So, in the first line the author mentions the palace of Ruizhu that was situated in the world of Higher Purity (Shangqing), and supposedly from there the bamboo planks with the text of the “internal” variant of *The Book* were thrown into the frail (secular) world. Taoist Jian, whom Huang Ting-jian dedicated his poem to (unfortunately we did not find any information about him), was trying to get Taoist books from the celestials, but they were passed to the Black Dragon (骊龙, mythological creature, the owner of the wonderful pearl, which can be taken from his chin when the dragon is sleeping), who afterwards hid in the river depths--a symbol of the Taoist wise hermit, who does not show his wisdom to the people.

²³ Huang, Ting-jian. 2001. Complete Works (黄庭坚全集). Chengdu: Sichuan University Press. P. 243.

This testifies--in artistic, poetic way--that wise Taoist books (including *The Book*) are not easy of access for common people (from the secular world), and only Taoist adherents who constantly improve themselves can get these books.

Second line of the poem contains an allusion to *The Book*:

寸田尺宅可治生，若當決海百瀆傾。 [By means of] the point between eyebrows and face it is possible to exist, [it] is like a hundred large rivers flock to the sea (from the "Internal" variant, Chapt. 21 "Celestials' residence", «瓊室»)²⁴.

This chapter emphasizes the importance of an adept's face in the practice of self-improvement (in the point between eyebrows there is an important chakra Ajna). By using the 寸田尺宅 expression, poet in a hidden way speaks about Taoist Jian's life.

The fifth line of poem can be also interpreted in different ways. The phrase 金轮 has following meanings: 1) *the golden wheel (symbol of supreme power in Buddhism)*; 2) *the golden disk (figuratively about the Moon)*; 3) *sun* etc. The most suitable, in our opinion, in the context of poem is the translation of "Moon"--this is a traditional symbol of eternity, which, however, is constantly changing (Moon phases). Thus, Huang T'ing-jian by means of the Moon image renders strong, adamant and perfect nature of Taoist Jian, as well as fluctuation of time and coming of old age (the symbol of autumn).

Thus, according to *The Book of the Yellow Court*, the main in achievement of immortality is the Taoist concept of inner peace, concentration on the spiritual resources of the follower and waking up--through the power of imagination--so-called Internal Refulgences (*Nei-jing*, deities of all the internal organs) which, having found an echo in the outside world (External Refulgences, *Wai-jing*), contribute to the spiritual growth of the Taoist adept's organism and nurturing of *qi* energy. Various manipulations of adherents with own imagination, and also creative imagination and fantasy of the Chinese poets, which allowed them various reincarnations and incomprehensible wandering (e.g., to the celestials), testify to inexhaustible possibilities of human intellect, known to the Chinese already in those old times. Song poet Huang T'ing-jian, closely connected with *The Book* by his both names, highly appreciated this fundamental treatise on Taoist internal alchemy; he studied and practiced the methods of self-improvement described in it. In his poetic works, however, there are very few direct references on the text of *The Book*; this testifies that it was rather closed for masses and also indicates the mystery of the Taoist study.

²⁴ Huang Ting Jing with Comments (黄庭经集释). Comment by Liang, Qiu-zi and others. 2005. Beijing: Central Translation Press. P. 100.

SUMMARY

The Role of Imagination of Ancient Chinese in Taoist Treatise “Huang Ting Jing” (“The Book of Yellow Court”) and its Reflection in Life and Works of Huang Ting-jian

The Book of Yellow Court (originated, according to different estimations, in the 2nd cent. BC) is the fundamental Taoist internal alchemy treatise devoted to self-improvement and visualization of spirits. The article highlights some aspects of Taoist adept's practice on his way towards self-improvement related to ancient Chinese beliefs about the human body and human existence in the universe. The reflection of teachings of *The Book* in the life and works of the Chinese Song era (960–1279) poet Huang Ting-jian has been also shown; the detailed analysis of some of his poems has been made.

The key idea of this article is the Taoist concept of inner peace, concentration on spiritual resources of the follower and waking up--through the power of imagination--so-called Internal Refulgences (*Nei-jing*, deities of all the internal organs) which, having found an echo in the outside world (External Refulgences, *Wai-jing*), contribute to the spiritual growth of the Taoist adept's organism, nurturing of *qi* energy and, what is the most important, conception and cultivation of the Taoist immortal embryo, which is aimed to bring immortality to the adept. Taoist adherent's various manipulations with the imagination, as well as creative imagination of Chinese poets that allowed them different transformations and incomprehensible journeys (e.g., to the Celestials), indicate the infinite possibilities of the human intellect, that Chinese people have already known in those old times.

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KEYWORDS

“Huang Ting Jing”, internal sight, internal and external spirits, methods of self-improvement, *shi* and *ci* poetry, allusion

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