

HANNA URBAŃSKA*

(University of Wrocław)

Atharvavedic *Kuṣṭha* Herb, Ṛgvedic Soma and Their Equivalent in Taoist Texts

ABSTRACT

This article touches upon the question of the healing herb *kuṣṭha* (*Costus Speciosus*) which several *Atharvavedic* hymns (V 4; XIX 39; VI 95) were dedicated to. Some verses repeated in each of the hymns seem to be particularly intriguing. The following stages are mentioned: stages: 1. The birth of *kuṣṭha* in the third heaven in the seat of Yama, the Fathers and the gods – from the fig tree (*aśvattha*) with beautiful leaves. 2. The birth in the Northern Mountains – *Himavat* (where eagles with beautiful wings are born – or plants with beautiful leaves) 3. The preparation of the herb by the gods and its transportation to Earth (in a golden ship with golden oars, along the golden path). A comparative analysis of these passages and the corresponding passages of the Ṛgvedic magical hymn (10.97 – the praise of medicinal herbs) – and also other selected verses from *Ṛgveda* – shows that the aforementioned pattern applies to all herbs with magic properties; besides it enables us to notice a profound connection between *kuṣṭha* and Soma – the Lord of herbs.

A similar pattern functions also in ancient Chinese literature, in the texts influenced by religious Taoism (among others *Dong Tao Xing*; *Tian Wen*; poetry of *Li Tai Bo*), full of magic and folk beliefs. The descriptions of a divine herb, which appear in them, contain almost all the components of the pattern: 1. The birth in the heaven inhabited by immortal deities (神仙) from the top of the Weak Tree (若木) 2. The birth in the mountains (among others Western Mountain – Kun Lun (昆仑山)) 3. The preparation of the drug in the heavenly palace of the Jade Emperor (transformation into immortality pills) 4. The distribution of the drug (also by means of moon-bow or aurora) among Taoist sages.

* Department of Indian Philology
Institute of Classics, Mediterranean and Oriental Studies
University of Wrocław, Poland
e-mail: hanna.urbanska@gmail.com

According to the majority of researchers a heavenly origin was attributed to herbs because of their miraculous healing properties. However in the case of *kuṣṭha*, the herb referred to as the flower of *amṛta* – an immortality drink growing out of divine fig tree – as in the case of the Soma herb (whose “higher” heavenly version located on the Moon is accessible only to immortals) – the elements of the popular myth concerning a lunar immortality drink seem to be emphasised. Besides, Soma plays a major role as a ritual object on Earth. The Taoist version take the form of a complex Chinese myth of the herb growing in heaven to be processed on the Moon and transformed into pills or a drink. Chinese texts, however, seem to be deprived of an earthly version of this myth.

KEY WORDS

immortality herb, *kuṣṭha*

This article touches upon the question of the healing herb *kuṣṭha* – *Costus Speciosus*) which several Atharvavedic hymns (5.4; 19.39; 6.95 AVP) were dedicated to. Extremely intriguing stanzas describing the origin of *kuṣṭha*, repeated in each of the hymns, mention the following stages: 1. The birth of *kuṣṭha* in the third heaven in the seat of Yama, the Fathers and the gods – from the fig tree (*aśvattha*) with beautiful leaves. 2. The birth in the Northern Mountains – *Himavat* (where eagles with beautiful wings are born – or plants with beautiful leaves) 3. The preparation of the herb by the gods and its transportation to Earth (in a golden ship with golden oars, along the golden path).

A comparative analysis of these passages and the corresponding passages of the R̥gvedic magical hymn (10.97 – the praise of medicinal herbs) – and also other selected verses from *R̥gveda* – shows that the aforementioned pattern applies to all herbs with magic properties. A similar pattern functions also in ancient Chinese literature, in the texts influenced by religious Taoism (among others *Dong Tao Xing*; *Tian Wen*; poetry of Li Tai Bo), full of magic and folk beliefs. The descriptions of a divine herb, which appear in them, contain almost all the components of the pattern: 1. The birth in the heaven inhabited by immortal deities (神仙) from the top of the Weak Tree (若木) 2. The birth in the mountains (among others Western Mountain – Kun Lun (昆仑山)) 3. The preparation of the drug in the heavenly palace of the Jade Emperor (transformation into immortality pills) 4. The distribution of the drug (also by means of moon-bow or aurora) among Taoist sages.

THE HIGHEST (THIRD) HEAVEN AND *AŚVATTHA* TREE – INDIA

The seat of the *kuṣṭha* herb is – according to Atharvavedic tradition (AV 5.4.3) – the highest (third) heaven, which is at the same time the seat of all the gods, reached by the top of the sacred *aśvattha* (fig tree):

Aśvattho devasadanastṛṭṭīyasyāmito divi / tatrāmṛtasya cakṣaṇam devāḥ kuṣṭhamavanvata

There is the *aśvattha* tree – the seat of the gods, in the third heaven from here;
There the gods procured the *kuṣṭha* herb, appearance of amṛta.¹

References to this place can be found in several hymns of *Ṛgveda*; one of them (RV 10.97.5), which is both a magical hymn and an eulogy of medicinal herbs at the same time, mentions the fig tree as the seat of all herbs endowed with medicinal properties:

Aśvatthe vo niṣadanam parṇe vo vasatiṣkṛtā / gobhāja itkilāsatha yatsanavatha puruṣam

In the *aśvattha* tree is your home, in the *parṇa* tree / in leaves² – your dwelling-place

¹ This stanza is repeated in two hymns of *Atharvaveda* devoted to the *kuṣṭha* herb: 5.4.3 and 19.39.6.

² “In leaves” – *parṇe*. Griffith translates this passage as follows “the holy fig is your home, your mansion is the *parṇa* tree” since “sacrificial vessels are made of the wood of these trees which are therefore said to be the home of plants used in religious ceremonies” (*The Hymns of the Ṛgveda*, trans. R. T. H. Griffith, Delhi 2004, p. 610). Compare with O’Flaherty’s translation: “in the sacred fig-tree is your home; in the tree of leaves your dwelling-place has been made” (*The Rig Veda: An Anthology of One Hundred Eight Hymns*, trans. W. D. O’Flaherty, New Delhi 2000, p. 285, 287). However, Sāyaṇa, when translating this word as *palāśa* (*palāśa*-leaf or *palāśa*-tree), in the case of this verse quotes an appropriate passage from *Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa* (1.1.3.10), which seems to be an etymological explanation of both mentioned nouns: *aśvattha* and *parṇa*. In the case of the latter, the story about Soma brought by *Gāyatrī* from the third heaven – after cutting its leaf (*parṇa*) off – has been added (Compare *Vedic Mythology*, Vol. 1–2, trans. A. Hillebrandt, S. W. Sarma, Delhi 1999, p. 193, where the other versions of this legend – included in *Brāhmaṇas* i *Yajussamhitas* – have been analysed; also in this case ambiguity of word *parṇa* has been emphasised – the *parṇa* tree is born from the a feather of *Gāyatrī* or a leaf of Soma, shot down by an archer – *Śatapatha*

has been made;
You can win cows as your share if you win this man.

According to the Vedic tradition the heavenly tree appears to be the place where Yama drinks (Soma) accompanied by other gods and at the location of the ancestors' dwelling-place (RV 10.135.1):

Yasminvṛkṣe supalāśe devaiḥ saṁpibate yamaḥ / atrā no viśpatiḥ pitā purāṇām anu venati

On which tree endowed with beautiful leaves Yama drinks [Soma] together with the gods,
There our father, master of the house, looks for the friendship of ancestors.

The word *supalāśa* appears in *R̥gveda* twice only – in the verse quoted above and in the third stanza of 43 hymn in the tenth *maṇḍala* (RV 10.43.4). This passage mentions Somic birds – rays of light – staying within the vessel (Sun?) and bringing the brightness down to the Aryan people:

vayo na vṛkṣam̐ supalāśam̐sadansomāsa imdraṁ mam̐dinaścamūśadaḥ
praiśāmanīkam̐ śavasā dāvidyutadvidatsvarmanave jyotirāryam

Birds (rays of light? streams?) rest on the fair-leafed tree – Somic and intoxicating for Indra, staying within the vessel;
Their face (edge? splendour?) through mighty power sent heavenly brightness for man – Aryan light.

In another passage, which can be found in the ninth *maṇḍala* of *R̥gveda* (RV 9.86.1), the birds are described as *suparṇā madhumantaḥ indavaḥ* – “fair-feathered / fair-leafed drops filled with honey,” sitting around the vessel:

Brāhmaṇa 1.7.1.1). This way of interpretation seems to be supported by the passage of *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, in which the *aśvattha* tree as the seat of all the herbs sown and harvested by Adhvaryu was mentioned: “On the *Aśvattha* tree is your [herbs] abode, in the *Parṇa* dwelling is made for you” – ŚB XIII 8.3.1. What’s more, the same belief on can find in *Avesta* (*Yašt* 12.17): there is the[cosmic] tree of magic healing [standing in the middle of the sea] which holds the seeds of all plants (D. M. Knipe, *The Heroic Theft: Myths from R̥gveda IV and the Ancient Near East*, “History of Religions” 1967, Vol. 6, p. 351). Comparing the passage quoted from the *R̥gvedic* hymn with another verse quoted below where the epithet related to the *aśvattha* tree appears (*supalāśa*), the following interpretation is acceptable: *parṇa* appears to be in this case an expression defining the fig tree (*aśvattha*).

divyāḥ suparṇā madhumarīta indavo madimtamāsaḥ pari kośamāsate

The heavenly fair-winged/ fair-leafed ones, filled with honey – the most intoxicating drops – seated around the drinking-vessel

Another Ṛgvedic hymn (RV 1.164.22) mentions two fair-feathered / fair-leafed ones, united in friendship, sitting on the same tree; one of them eats its fruits, the other one looks at them, without eating. In the next stanza the number of them switches from dual to plural – they become honey-eaters with beautiful wings (leaves), which descend and reproduce on the fig tree; there is a sweet fig growing on the tip of that tree – accessible only for those, who knew the Father (Yama?):

yasminvṛkṣe madhvadaḥ suparṇā³ niviśarīte suvate cādhi viśve
tasyedāhuḥ pippalaṁ svādvagre tannonnaśadyaḥ pitaraṁ na veda

On which fig tree all the honey-eaters with beautiful wings (leaves) settle down and create [reproduce]

On the top of that tree, they say, there is the sweet fruit; no one eats it who does not know Father⁴

Term *su-parṇa* (“fair-winged”) can be interpreted differently; in most cases it is translated as a *bahuvrīhi*-compound defining a bird (and denoting an eagle⁵); according to Sāyaṇa’s interpretation *su-parṇa* could mean “ray of

³ The compound *suparṇa* (“beautiful-feathered,” or “having beautiful leaves”) is usually translated as a bird; according to Sāyaṇa’s interpretation, the top of the tree symbolises the Sun (*Āditya*) – being the dwelling-place [source] of all fruits (*yasmināditye vṛkṣe – vṛkṣavatsarvaphalāśrayabhūte*); the honey symbolises water (*madhvityudakanāma*); the beautiful-feathered ones are “water-drinkers” – the speedy rays of the sun (*udakasyāttāraḥ suparṇāḥ supatanā raśmayah*), which during the night-time take shelter in the sun, at sunrise release their light. A similar picture can be found in the 20th stanza, where fair-feathered ones are mentioned – this time in the plural version (*viśve*).

⁴ Yama? Compare stanzas from RV 9.113, in which an undecaying world of immortals is mentioned (*amṛte loke akṣite*), where the King, Son of Vivasvat (*rājā vaivasvataḥ*) – Yama – rules; this place is also described as the region of the Brilliant / Ruddy (*bradhna*) – the Moon? The Sun? – and dwelling-place of the Sun (*svah*) together with everlasting Light (*jyotir ajasram* – the Moon?). Another hymn (RV 124.1–4) mentions Agni staying in a mysterious residence – long darkness (*dīrgham tamas*) in friendship with Father Asura (*asura pitṛ*).

⁵ *The Rig Veda: An Anthology of One Hundred Eight Hymns*, op. cit., p. 78; *The Hymns of the Rgveda*, op. cit., p. 111.

sunlight coming from the Sun – the Tree.” In the Upanishadic tradition, these two beings symbolise *paramātman* and *jīvātman*.⁶ Thieme – interpreting the entire picture as the night-time sky – argues that the two fair-winged ones represent the waxing and the waning Moon; accordingly – when they become many – the stars are represented. Thieme concludes that the sweet fig and honey refer to light and life (immortality), which is the heavenly Soma juice. The stars are contrasted with the Moon, as they can taste Soma-juice all the time, whereas the Moon “sleeps” for three nights in each lunar cycle.⁷ What is worth emphasising here is that Thieme explains this R̥gvedic riddle in a context of the Moon’s connection with Soma (Somic juice). We should recall the word *indavaḥ* – “drops” – related to fair-winged ones, filled with honey: the word *indu* – “drop” – can denote in *R̥gveda* both Soma and the Moon, and its plural form⁸ – *indavaḥ* – in post-Vedic literature refers to the periodic changes of the Moon.⁹ Now let us compare the stanzas quoted above with some references to the origin of the *kuṣṭha* herb (and other medicinal herbs – see RV 10.97.2; 17) sprouting from [the top of] the fair-leaved fig tree (RV 10.135.1), and having the appearance of *amṛta* (and *amṛta* is identified with *madhu* – honey in R̥gvedic hymns); it seems probable in such a case that the epithet¹⁰ *suparna* can be related to fair-leaved herbs. In the stanza quoted above, word *svate* has been used – from verb *sū* – “to procreate, produce, bear;” it brings to mind another verb – *su* – “to extract, press out” (especially the juice from the Soma plant). The picture alluded to can be reconstructed as follows: fair-leaved plants – among them *kuṣṭha* herb – ruled by Soma (which can be interpreted as a bowl filled with *amṛta* or divine herb as well) – grow on the top of the fig tree, in the third heaven ruled by the Father (Yama?); being of divine origin, they celebrate their share of immortality; while descending downwards, they become “mortal” versions of themselves; eventually, the Soma exists in two aspects: immortal (as *amṛta* on the Moon) and mortal (in the shape of an earthly plant – compare RV 10.85.3–4). This descent is described in terms of extraction connected with

⁶ Muṇḍaka UP.3.1.1; Kaṭha UP.1.3.1.

⁷ W. L. Johnson, *Poetry and Speculation of the R̥g Veda*, Berkeley 1980, p. 48.

⁸ *Vedic Mythology*, Vol. 1, op. cit., p. 204, 211. In RV 6.39 this term – *indu* (“drop”), which lights darksome nights throughout years (*śaradaḥ*), has been identified by Sāyaṇa with Soma and Candra as well. Compare RV 10.85.5 – here the Moon is that which shapes the years, being the sign of the days (*ketur ahnām*).

⁹ M. Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Delhi 2008, p. 166.

¹⁰ Honey is said to be the juice flowing from the (Soma) stem milked on the mountains (RV 5.43.4).

lunar cycles. This way of interpretation does not exclude others – in common with most of Vedic stanzas, ambiguity seems to be intentional.

The Tree growing in the third heaven is also mentioned in Upaniṣadic literature; it is worth pointing out that an inseparable element of this description is the extraction of Soma:

Brahma-loke ṛṭiyasyām ito divi [...] tad aśvatthaḥ soma-savanaḥ – “in the third heaven, in the world of Brahma [...] there is fig tree yielding the Soma [juice]¹¹ (from which Soma juice is pressed out) (Chāndogya UP 8.5.3)

As one can see, there is a close relationship between Soma and *kuṣṭha* herb, and other herbs with healing properties as well. *Kuṣṭha* is described to be Soma’s best friend (*somasī sakhā hitaḥ* – AV 5.4.7; compare also AV 19.39.5, 8); on the other hand, Soma is considered to be the lord of all plants (herbs) (RV 10.97.18):

Yā oṣadhīḥ somarājñīrbahvīḥ śatavicaḥṣanāḥ / tāsām tvamasyuttamāraṁ kāmāya śam
hr̥de

Of all so many plants in hundreds of forms, whose king is Soma,

You are the supreme herb,¹² remedy according to wish and blessing for the heart.

HEAVEN AND THE RUO MU TREE – CHINA

A magical divine herb/drug – referred to very often in Taoist literature, particularly in religious Taoism, was produced – according to some ancient beliefs – inside the Moon, in the residence of Jade Emperor, associated

¹¹ Epithet *savana* means “extracting the Soma-juice.” In *R̥gveda* the connection between Soma and the heavenly tree can be noticed in several hymns, among others RV 1.24.7 (“Abudhne rājā varuṇo vanasyordhvaṁ stūpaṁ dadate pūṭadakṣaḥ / nīcīnāḥ sthurupari budhna eṣāmasme am̐tarnihitāḥ ketavaḥ syuḥ” – “in bottomless space [region] Varuna, the king of trees (plants), pure-minded Lord, supports the erected pillar [tree trunk]; its [rays of light,] which have their root high above, flow downward. They may be hidden deep within us.”) RV 3.40.7 (“Abhi dyumnāni vanina im̐draṁ sacam̐te akṣitā pītvī somasya vāvṛdhe” – “with Indra are associated the indestructible powers of the Tree; indeed, he becomes strong, drinking Soma.”) RV 10.138.2 (“Avāsraḥ prasvaḥ śvam̐cayo girīnudāja usrā apibo madhu priyaṁ avardhaya vanino asya dam̐sasā śūsoca sūrya ṛtajātayā girā” – “You released the waters, opened the mountains, you drove out the cattle; you drank the pleasant honey. You gave greater thanks to the might of that Tree; the Sun shone with the Hymn born from the Eternal Law.”)

¹² The medicinal herb which the magician is about to make use of.

sometimes with the Ruo Mu Tree. Almost all the passages cited below (except for the final poem by Li Tai Bo) mentioning a herb or drug (藥) which is said to be a divine substance which gives a long life or even immortality – seem to be representatives of a separate branch of herbal magic; as regards Chinese alchemy, it should be emphasised that herb or flower ingredients are rarely used. But the world of Immortals (神仙¹³) often connected with the mountains (like Peng Lai Land/Mountain) was associated with herbal magic.¹⁴

The motif of herbs or drugs is used by the famous poet from Tang Dynasty period Li Tai Bo (李太白); in one of his poems – *Asking the Moon with a wine cup in my hand* (把酒问月) – Li Tai Bo mentions a [divine] herb being crushed [to prepare medicine] from it – like Soma in Vedic tradition – by a hare living on the Moon (or rather inside the Moon):

白兔搗藥秋夜春

[On its disc] the white hare/ In the autumn night grinds some herbs (or drug).

Another edition includes another version of this verse:

白兔搗藥秋復春¹⁵

¹³ Compare for example K. Hung, L. Ch. Wu, T. L. Davis, *An Ancient Chinese Alchemical Classic. Ko Hung on the Gold Medicine and on the Yellow and the White: The Fourth and Sixteenth Chapters of Pao-P'u-tzu*, “Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences” 1935, Vol. 70, p. 249 (The juices of herb, trees and chrysanthemum flowers, mixed with cinnabar, are heated and then ground to a powder to prepare an elixir); E. Feifel, *Pao-P'u Tzu Nei-P'ien, Chapter IV*, “Monumenta Serica” 1944, Vol. 9, p. 21 (A sap from red grass is mixed with jade, eight stones, gold and silver and then turned into pills).

¹⁴ Waley states that herbal wizardry was the craft of the educated and ruling classes as opposed to the mineral magic rooted in folklore (A. Waley, *Notes on Chinese Alchemy (Supplementary to Johnson's A Study of Chinese Alchemy)*, “Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies” 1930, Vol. 6, p. 20). Compare W. P. Yetts, *The Chinese Isles of the Blest*, “Folklore” 1919, Vol. 30, p. 43.

¹⁵ Li Tai Bo, 李白诗选, 葛景春选注 [Anthology of Li Bai's Poetry], ed. Jingchun Ge, 北京 [Beijing] 2005, p. 111. The first verse based on Forke's edition (*Dichtungen der T'ang- und Sung-Zeit [唐宋詩集]*, ed. A. Forke, Hamburg 1929, p. 21). In *Dong Tao Xing* there are some references to falling (autumnal) leaves in the description of the mountain tops and the palace, where the hare is grinding herbs. It should be emphasised however that sign *chong* – “grind in mortar, extract juice” (舂) as rarely used could have been replaced by the well known sign *chun* – “spring” (春).

The white hare grinds some herbs in the autumn and again in the spring (=all year round).

However, Chinese texts mention more often grinding herbs on the Moon in the context of the lunar cycle (not the annual one):

白兔搗药成, 问言与谁餐? 蟾蜍蚀圆影, 大明夜已残¹⁶

A white hare [in his mortar] grinds, crushes herbs; the question is – for whom this meal? On the full Moon’s face the shade of the toad can be seen; then the great brightness of the night wanes to disappear.¹⁷

In ancient India, the presence of Soma (*amṛta*) inside the Moon was also closely related to its lunar cycle. The full Moon was believed to be emptied by gods to wane and become crescent and then filled once again with Soma, to regain its full shape.

Li Tai Bo associates the presence of ground herb (搗藥) on the Moon with preparing an elixir of immortality (春). Such a mythological motif was widely known in ancient India; here Soma is extracted in the third heaven on the Moon and also other plants are prepared there to be sent down.¹⁸

One of the Taoist works, a collection of legends, stories, ballads and songs – *Dong Tao Xing* (董逃行) – mentions a jade hare accompanied by a frog living on the Moon, in the palace of the Jade Emperor. Kneeling on the ground, the hare grinds a herb in its jade mortar; the herb is called divine and miraculous, the one growing on the top of the Ruo Mu tree, the mythical Tree of the West, behind which the Sun hides:

[...] 采取神药若木端
玉兔长跪搗药蛤蟆丸

[The servants of Jade Emperor] harvest a divine drug (medicine of the gods, an immortality herb) from the top of the Ruo Mu Tree (the Similar Tree i.e. The Tree of Sunsets)¹⁹

¹⁶ Li Tai Bo, op. cit., p. 202. Compare 古詩, 其十七: 三五明月滿, 四五蟾兔缺 – “Three times five nights will pass- / The full Moon shines / After the fourth five – both / the toad and the hare wane.” (*Dichtungen der T’ang- und Sung-Zeit* [唐宋詩集], op. cit., p. 3).

¹⁷ The phrase 大明夜 – “the Great Brightness of the Night” (similar to 圓影 – “Full Moon”) seems to be a poetic word for the full Moon here.

¹⁸ Hence one can find different compounds in post-Vedic showing connection between the Moon and Soma/*amṛta*: *amṛtasū* – “distilling *amṛta*”; *amṛtādhāra* – “carrying *amṛta*”; *amṛtasut* – “extracting *amṛta*.”

¹⁹ Compare with description of Peng Lai Land/Mountain, where the immortality plant *zhi* is said to be collected in abundance (W. P. Yetts, op. cit., p. 43)

or: herb similar to the tree [growing] on the top [of the mountains]²⁰
 And the jade hare kneeling on the ground [in the mortar] crushes [those] herbs [supported by, together with] the frog,[turning them into] [immortality] pills.

The one who tastes such a herb, or rather pills made from the plant, will enjoy long life (长生) or even gain immortality and become an immortal deity (神仙).

The same drug – divine herb (神藥) appears in some poems of Cao Cao (曹操 – Han Dynasty period), describing Taoistic dream-wandering, a flight in search of immortality. In one of them (氣出唱 [No. 13] – “Song of life-giving vapour emanation”²¹) Cao Cao mentions his arriving at the Tai Mountain (泰山), where Immortals and Jade Maidens (神仙玉女) drink jade broth (玉漿). Being given their drink, he moves to the mythical Peng Lai Mountain (蓬萊山), where he approaches the Gate of Heaven (天之門), and – kneeling down – he receives the divine drug. In this way, Dao comes by itself. The same divine herb is mentioned in another poem of Cao Cao (氣出唱 [No. 15]) in the context of his crossing (in the company of deities) the Kun Lun Mountain and arriving at Peng Lai Mountain in order to obtain the herb – immortality drug.²²

Ruo Mu (若木) – the mythical Tree of the West, The Similar Tree i.e. reflection of Fu Sang (扶桑) – the (Supporting) Mulberry Tree – the Tree of the East. There are ten suns on its branches, starting here their journey through the sky. Not much is known about Ruo Mu: Künstler claims, that its falling leaves mark days gone by; so it could be considered to be a kind of calendar-tree (M. Künstler, *Mitologia chińska* [Chinese mythology], Warszawa 1981, p. 83). In *Dong Tao Xing* analysed fragment is prefaced by a description of lands inhabited by gods in the Kun Lun Mountain; the abundance of leaves falling from the trees mentioned here may indicate autumn – being harvest time (see the quoted fragment of Li Tai Bo poetry, referring to the hare grinding herbs in the autumn night). Kun Lun Mountain was originally believed to be a residence of Yellow Emperor (黃帝), who was credited with the founding of the Chinese calendar and was considered to be adept in the art of immortality.

²⁰ Chinese texts offer a lot of references to divine trees endowed with immortality and representing it. One of them is the Cinnamon Tree – Gui Shu (桂樹) growing in the middle of the Moon and surrounded by deities (Li Tai Bo, op. cit., p. 202). Another one is the Immortality Tree – Xian Shu (仙樹) and the Jade Tree – Yu Shu (玉樹). Some of immortality-giving trees are said to grow on slopes of the Kun Lun Mountain.

²¹ D. Steinen, *Poems of Ts'ao Ts'ao*, “Monumenta Serica” 1939, Vol. 4, p. 165–169.

²² D. Steinen, op. cit., p. 177–179.

This medicine is sometimes called 不死药 (which is an equivalent of Sanskrit word *a-mṛ-ta* (referring to *Soma*) and Atharvavedic *na-ghā-māra* (“not-destroying”), being the epithet of the *kuṣṭha*²³ herb.

In the case of Chinese texts, a close relationship between the miraculous herb growing on the top of the Ruo Mu Tree, the Moon and the residence of immortals is noticeable; it brings to mind some ancient Indian beliefs according to which *Soma* – being the Lord of herbs – grows [sprouts] on the Moon. In all probability the connection with the Moon was the reason why the heavenly Ruo Mu tree was supposed to function as a divine calendar, determining the passage of time with its falling leaves. On the other hand, one of the Ṛgvedic hymns (10.85.4–5) mentions *Soma* growing in the heaven, on (or inside) the Moon, extracted in that place and drunk by the gods only – sprouting again and again, thanks to which it becomes a kind of cosmic calendar:

Ācchadvidhānairgupito bārhataiḥ soma rakṣitaḥ / grāvṇāmicchṛṇvantiṣṭhasi na te
aśnāti pārthivaḥ

Hidden by laws [rules]²⁴ with a cover, o *Soma*, protected by great *Soma*-keepers;²⁵
You stand listening to the pressing-stones. No one eats you on Earth.

Yattvā deva prapibanṭi tata ā pyāyase punaḥ / vāyuḥ somasya rakṣitā samānām māsa
ākṛtiḥ

When they drink you, o god, then you grow up again / Wind is the guardian of *Soma*;
the Moon is the one that shapes the years [that is the constituent part of years].

THE *HIMAVAT* MOUNTAINS [*MŪJAVAT* – *SOMA*] – INDIA

According to Atharvavedic tradition apart from the third heaven, the *kuṣṭha* herb is believed to grow in the *Himavat* mountains – in the North; from there it spreads out to the eastern regions (AV 5.4.8):

udaṅ jāto himavataḥ sa prācyām nīyase janam / tatra kuṣṭhasya nāmānyuttamāni vi
bhejire

²³ According to interpretation of K. G. Zysk, *Religious Healing in the Veda*, “Transactions of the American Philosophical Society” 1985, Vol. 75, p. 43.

²⁴ The meaning of the noun *vidhāna* is not clear. Griffith translates *ācchad-vidhānāni* as “sheltering rules”; O’Flaherty – “those charged with veiling [you].”

²⁵ According to Sāyaṇa, the *Bārhatas* (*Bārhatāḥ*) are seven guardians of *Soma*. Griffith translates “by hymns in *Bṛhatī*.”

Born in the North from the Snowy Mountain [Himavat], you are delivered to the people from East;
There the best names of the kuṣṭha herb were scattered around.

The epithet relating to those mountains, which appears in this hymn – *suparṇa-savana* – seems to be extremely difficult to interpret. In most cases it is translated as “giving birth to the [fair-winged] eagles,”²⁶ which brings to mind the myth connected with the Soma plant growing high in the mountains called *Mūjavat* – and brought downwards by an eagle (RV 1.93.6):

Ānyam divo mātariśvā jabhārāmāmathnādanyaṁ pari śyeno adreḥ

The first one was brought by Mātariśvan from the sky; the eagle churned out another one from rock (mountains).²⁷

Another version of this epithet – *suparṇa-savana* – suggests a slightly different interpretation: similarly to the previously mentioned *aśvattha* tree, its top reaches the sky – the top of the mountains reaching the sky seems to be the place where the fair-leaved herb grows, (*suparṇa*) – and the harvesting of this plant as in the case of Soma extraction (*savana*²⁸) makes the herb fall down and grow on the Earth.²⁹

MOUNTAINS – CHINA

According to Taoist tradition, a magical herb (or herbs) was supposed to grow in the mountains, among others on the slopes of Kun Lun Mountain

²⁶ Compare W. D. Whitney, *Atharva-Veda Samhitā*, Cambridge 2002, p. 374 – “on the eagle-bearing mountain”; *Hymns of the Atharva-Veda together with extracts from the ritual books and the commentaries*, trans. M. Bloomfield, [in:] *The Sacred Books of the East*, ed. M. Müller, Vol. 42, Oxford 1897, p. 4 – “upon the mountain, the brooding-place of the eagle”; *The Hymns of the Atharva-Veda with a popular Commentary*, trans. R. T. H. Griffith, Benares 1916, p. 194 – “born on the high hill where eagles breed.”

²⁷ See also RV 9.62.1. According to this, Soma is called *parvatāvṛdh* – “mountain-grown” (RV 9.46.1; 9.71.4). In *Atharvaveda* the mountains are called *somaprṣṭha* – “carrying Soma on their back” (AV 3.21.10).

²⁸ I found the same way of interpretation in one of the translations made by Indian scholar: “[...] on the snowy mountains, where eagles breed (or where the herbs with fine leaves grow).” M. R. Rajesh, *Atharvaveda Samhita*, Kozhikode 2006, p. 260.

²⁹ Compare quoted before passage from *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (8.5.3).

(崑崙山³⁰), associated with the western region. One stanza of the famous poem *Wen Tian – Heavenly Questions* – specifies three geographical names connected with the herb of immortality and – accordingly – three terms associated with prolonging life:

黑水玄趾, 三危安在? 延年不死, 壽何所止?³¹

Where are the Black Waters, Xuan Zhi mountains; Where are San Wei dangerous peaks?

(of) Prolonged years, immortality Where is the source – and the limits of longevity?

The Black River, mentioned in the stanza, starts in the Kun Lun Mountain; the herbs growing on the river's banks were supposed to give immortality. Similarly the Xuan Zhi Mountain and the San Wei peaks were connected with prolonging life. Obviously immortality is only a deity's or an alchemist's privilege, out of the reach of mere mortals – therefore, the questions concerning its limitations. Three terms meaning longer life can be found in the text: 不死 – “immortality,” 壽 – “longevity” and 延年 – “prolonged years.”

Another poet from the Tang Dynasty period, Bai Ju Yi (白居易) describes in one of his poems³² several Taoist sites in the neighbourhood of the monastery situated on the top of the Fu Ju Mount, among others a herb-drying terrace to the west [of the shrine] – 其西曝藥臺 – facing “the field of numinous fungus and medicinal herbs.”³³ In the next verse Bai Ju Yi mentions the bright (full) Moon night: 明月夜; it brings to mind the previously mentioned connection between divine drugs or herbs and lunar cycles. What's more, the herb-drying terrace is situated to the west [of the shrine] – a direction associated with the Moon and *yin* power.³⁴

³⁰ Some Chinese alchemic texts give us names of mountains suitable for studying and expanding on the medicine of immortality and mentions that in all of them the *zhi* plant (芝) grows. E. Feifel, op. cit., p. 30–31.

³¹ Qu Yuan, 楚辭補注, [宋] 洪興祖撰 [Commentaries to Zhu Songs], ed. Xingzu Hong, 北京 [Beijing] 1983, p. 96.

³² J. Chen, *Fazang (643–712) and Wuzhensi: With a Special Reference to His Daoist Ties*, “Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society” 2006, Vol. 16, p. 192–193.

³³ I follow Chen's translation and interpretation in the case of this passage.

³⁴ Compare W. P. Yetts, op. cit., p. 50–51. What is intriguing here is that Bai Yu Ji mentions also “words of yellow cranes heard from above” – it recalls the myth of the Yellow Emperor ascending to Heaven from the Kun Lun Mountain, symbolising his transformation into immortality and connected by some scholars with the flight of the bird (see J. D. Fowler, *An Introduction to the Philosophy*

This fragment from *Dong Tao Xing*, mentioning the Ruo Mu tree, is prefaced by a description of lands inhabited by the gods in the Kun Lun Mountain. Also Cao Cao in one of his poems arrives at the tower of Xi Wang Mu (the Queen Mother of the West) located on the top of the Kun Lun Mountain, where he finds some immortality-giving plants³⁵ – 芝.³⁶

DESCENT TO THE EARTH – *SOMA*, *KUṢṬHA* AND OTHER HERBS

The magical hymn of *Rgveda*, analysed above, mentions some herbs which, in order to appear on the earth in many different shapes, fell down from heaven as embodiments of the divine Soma (RV 10.97.17): “avapatam̐tiravadan diva oṣadhayaḥ” – “the herbs spoke while falling down from heaven.” In the next stanza they are described as manifesting themselves in a hundred forms, ruled by the Soma plant – “somarājñīḥ [...] śatavicaḥṣaṇāḥ.” Accordingly, the *Atharvavedic kuṣṭha* herb is described as having the appearance of *amṛta* (or the flower/blossom of *amṛta*) – AV 5.4.3: “tatrāmṛtasya caḥṣaṇam̐ devāḥ kuṣṭhamavanvata” – “there the gods procured the *kuṣṭha* herb – the appearance of *amṛta*.”³⁷

In the next stanzas, the myth tells us how a golden ship with golden equipment and oars, moving about the heaven, descends from the sky and alights upon the *Himavat* mountains, bringing *kuṣṭha* to the Earth:

hiranyayī nauracaraddhiranya-bandhanā divi / tatrāmṛtasya puṣpaṁ devāḥ kuṣṭhamavanvata

A golden ship with golden equipment was moving about the sky;
There the gods procured the *kuṣṭha* herb – the flower of *amṛta*.

and *Religion of Taoism: Pathways to Immortality*, Brighton 2005, p. 200). The close connection between the immortality drug, the west and the Moon (*yin* power) is noticeable in the lunar tale of Chang E being the personification of the Moon (W. Lai, *Recent PRC Scholarship on Chinese Myths*, “Asian Folklore Studies” 1994, Vol. 53). Chang E, the wife of Archer Yi stole the herb of immortality (不死药) that her husband had procured from the Queen Mother of the West, and escaped to the Moon, where she turned into the Moon Goddess.

³⁵ Compare reference 19, 20.

³⁶ D. Steinen, op. cit., p. 174–175.

³⁷ The next stanza repeats this sentence, but the *kuṣṭha* herb is defined here as blossom of *amṛta* (*amṛtasya puṣpaṁ*).

hiranyayāḥ panthāna āsannaritrāṇi hiranyayā / nāvo hiranyayīrāsanyābhiḥ kuṣṭham
nirāvahan

Golden were the paths, the oars were golden,
Golden were the ships by which they brought [here] the *kuṣṭha* herb.³⁸

According to Müller, the golden ship represents *Soma* or moonlight, thanks to which the *kuṣṭha* herb falls down to the earth. Let us recall several Ṛgvedic stanzas quoted above, in which fair-leafed herbs, described as *indavaḥ* – “drops” – are supposed to have been extracted on the Moon (as a result of lunar cycles). It is also worth recalling once more the passage from *Chāndogya Upanishad*, in which the Soma plant growing in the tree is pressed out and spills down to the earth.

DESCENT TO THE EARTH – CHINESE HERB

One stanza of *Wen Tian* referring to the immortality herb myth, considered by some researchers as an allusion to the Taoist myth about Wangzi Qiao, who preached immortality having taken the form of a white rainbow, can be interpreted as a description of an unintentional distribution of the divine herb:³⁹

白蜺嬰葑, 胡爲此堂?
安得夫良藥, 不能固臧?⁴⁰

When the white rainbow is arching – Will that school be of any use?
Why should you grasp the best herb: You cannot keep it anyway.

Commentary mentions here the Taoist story about Wangzi Qiao:

Cui Wenzhi (崔文子) learned immortality from Wangzi Qiao (王子喬); Wangzi Qiao turned into a white rainbow and stretched himself holding the immortality herb for Cui Wenzhi, who, terrified, grabbed a war-hammer and hit the middle of the rainbow so that he damaged the herb and could see his master’s dead body beneath.⁴¹

³⁸ AV 5.4.4–5.

³⁹ Wangzi Qiao was considered immortal in the Taoist tradition, worshipped as early as the Han Period.

⁴⁰ Qu Yuan, op. cit., p. 101.

⁴¹ Based on commentary in the edition mentioned. The versions of the myth could be different; e.g. in some Wangzi Qiao is not killed, but turns into a white swan and flies to heaven.

The white rainbow phenomenon, seen as an anomaly, is the key to understanding the whole. The solution of the riddle could be as follows: the *Tian Wen* stanza is a description of a rare but confirmed optical phenomenon, a moon-bow (also known as a lunar rainbow, lunar bow). It is difficult for the human eye to discern colours because the light is usually too faint. As a result, a lunar bow often appears to be white.⁴²

According to ancient Taoist stories mentioned above, the immortality herb can be found on the Moon: taking the format of the myth presented above, we can form such a hypothesis: observations of the undoubtedly rare optical phenomenon such as white (lunar) rainbows could have contributed to the birth of such a belief. Seen only during the full Moon phase and some days afterwards, it could have been perceived as a stream of elixir pouring from the sky, inaccessible to mere mortals – who would manage to grasp the vanishing rainbow arch?

If we put together two parts of the stanza, the first of which one mentions the white rainbow full of immortality herb extract while the other states that no mortal is able to keep the divine drug⁴³ – the whole becomes a consistently built image, clearly inspired by one of many versions of the legends about the elixir and the failed attempt to capture it. Just like the real, divine Soma cannot be obtained and eaten by any mortal living on the earth – “na te aśnāti pārthivaḥ” (RV X.85.4), similarly the best herb is not available for

⁴² In *An Account of Strange Stories* mentioned by Kang-I Sun Chang (Chang Kang-I Sun, *Symbolic and Allegorical Meanings in the Yüeh-fu pu-t'i Poem Series*, “Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies” 1986, Vol. 46, p. 365) we can find a fable about Ming Huang, who travelled with Taoist deity to the Moon. He saw there Moon fairies dressed in white, riding on white phoenixes. After returning he was supposed to compose the famous tune of the “Rainbow Skirt and Feathered coat.” The rainbow – according to Chang’s explanation – refers to the [white] gowns of the Moon fairies and the coat – to the wings of the white phoenixes.

⁴³ The rainbow seems to symbolise the connection between mortal and immortal worlds. Hence the Chinese term 虹丹 – “rainbow pill, the pill in the rainbow.” Another variant of this story can be found in the Rainbow Bridge myth. It tells us that on the night of the Moon festival of 245 BC the Jade Emperor invited people to attend the feast on the summit of Curtain Pavillion Peak. A rainbow (moon-bow?) slanting from the top served as a bridge for them. At the end of the feast musicians sang a sad song of the rare meeting between immortals and mortals. When the ceremony was finished, people descended by the same rainbow bridge and a violent wind snapped it into pieces (Chi Li, *Chu Hsi the Poet*, “T’oung Pao” 1972, Vol. 58, p. 111).

mere mortals. Just like *kuṣṭha*⁴⁴, having the appearance of *amṛta*, which descends to the Earth in lunar ships to become a medicinal herb, the best herb spills down in the shape of the moon-bow – to become lost.

IMMORTALS MEDIATE IN THE DELIVERY OF THE HERB TO EARTH – INDIA

It is emphasised many times in *Ṛgveda* that heavenly herbs descend to Earth thanks to the intervention of the gods, and a Ṛgvedic hymn mentions Bṛhaspati as their ruler (RV 10.97.19):

yā oṣadhīḥ somarājñīrviṣṭhitāḥ pṛthivīmanu / bṛhaspatiprasūtā asyai sam datta vīryam

You herbs, ruled by Soma, scattered all around on the earth
Ordered by Bṛhaspati – unite your power for this [herb].

The *kuṣṭha* herb is also described as protected by the gods in their seat – in the third heaven in order to be sent downwards to Earth in golden ship[s] – “tatra [...] devāḥ kuṣṭhamavanvata”; „nāvo hiraṇyayīrāsan yābhiḥ kuṣṭham nirāvahan.” It is also said that the *aśvattha* tree, being the dwelling-place of all the herbs, is protected by the Father (Yama?).

Similarly, Soma is protected by Vāyu and cosmic rules/ laws (RV 10.85.4).

IMMORTALS MEDIATE IN THE DELIVERY OF THE HERB TO EARTH – CHINA

The passage from *Dong Tao Xing* quoted above mentions the palace of the Jade Emperor as a place where the divine herb/drug is harvested in order to be crushed in a mortar and turned into immortality pills. In the case of the Wangzi Qiao myth, the activity of the Taoist master is the reason for creating the moon-bow filled with drug. Cao Cao mentions Immortals (神仙) and Jade Maidens (玉女), bestowing upon him a Jade Broth (玉浆) and – after reaching the Gate of Heaven – a divine herb (神藥).

⁴⁴ Ancient Chinese texts often emphasise the inaccessibility of the immortality herb: 服食求神仙, 多為藥所誤 – “So many search for the elixir [Wanting to live among] the immortals; So many have been cheated by the Herb and led along the wrong path!” (*Dichtungen der T’ang- und Sung-Zeit* [唐宋詩集], op. cit., p. 8).

Another extremely intriguing fragment of Li Bai's work is worth recalling here, although it does not mention the immortality herb (藥) – in this case the alchemic substance cinnabar (丹) appears. This passage contains references to Taoist studies at the monastery situated on the mountain top; Li Bai mentions writings, concealing knowledge about Dao. White writing silk covered with red characters looks like an aurora blending white with red:

羨君素書常滿案，含丹照白霞色爛⁴⁵

I wish to taste my lord's silk scrolls of [Taoist] scriptures covering the long table – [It's like] having inside red and luminous whiteness of aurora blending colours.

White writing silk is compared here to a white aurora, and the characters written with red ink on it to the red streaks blending with the aurora's whiteness. In the next verses, Li Bai mentions receiving instructions about Dao (学道⁴⁶); in his dream, at night his mind wanders to immortal lands inhabited by deities, to palaces situated high on the mountain tops; the commentary interprets the passage as an allusion to Dao studies connected with preparing elixir; 学大丹之道, and to Dao itself helping to achieve immortality, to become an immortal deity 成仙得道.⁴⁷

In case of the second part of this verse, the ambiguity of some terms used by Li Bai is striking. The choice of such characters seems to be an intended poetical effect:

含 – bear inside, hide inside – have in the mouth; in the throat (contains the character 口 – mouth)

丹 – red, red colour – in the Taoist mythology: immortality elixir – cinnabar

霞 – Aurora – in the Taoist mythology: the splendour of immortal life (霞人 – immortal, deity)

爛 – flash; to play, blend – to be overcooked, brewed (contains the character 火 – fire)

The idea of absorbing and spreading Taoist teachings is presented simultaneously in two aspects: the first is studying scrolls or books and the second is consuming an elixir brewed in heaven – in the world of immortal

⁴⁵ Li Tai Bo, op. cit., p. 226.

⁴⁶ Commentary from Song dynasty period (mentioned in Li Bai's poems in the edition cited above) states that Taoist scriptures (道書) were written on white silk with red ink.

⁴⁷ Li Tai Bo, op. cit., p. 228.

deities, the marvel of the white aurora.⁴⁸ In the next verse, Li Bai mentions there secret mountains and a monastery, where an earthly elixir is brewed:⁴⁹

隐居寺, 隐居山, 陶公炼液栖其间

Hidden in the temple, hidden in the mountains – Here the ceramist⁵⁰ brews the juice – Staying on the top of the mountain these days.

The brewing of the drink or juice (炼液) mentioned above can be interpreted as smelting an immortality elixir (炼丹液) in specially designed ember pits hidden in stone temples. What is important here is that Li Tai Bo seems to emphasise a general equivalence between the two concepts: producing an immortality substance in the macrocosm and microcosm, mirroring each other. The primeval birth-place of the divine elixir is heaven – here, in the seat of immortals, the immortality juice is brewed. On Earth, this kind of activity is imitated by alchemists staying in the temples hidden in the mountains and studying scrolls containing both philosophical wisdom and magical formulas. Similarly the Vedic Soma-*amṛta* is believed to be extracted on the Moon, and the same activity is repeated on Earth.

The extremely complex Chinese myth of a herb used to create an immortality or longevity drug seems to have been formed – similarly to the post-Vedic Soma-*amṛta* myth – under the great influence of lunar beliefs. Thus, both the Indian and Chinese versions presented and analysed above could be independent adaptations of the lunar mythology popular in many cultures. But it is also possible that the traditional idea vivid in religious Taoist of searching for an immortality drug adopted new Buddhist motifs (like the presence of the hare on the Moon, the source of which is Pali *Sasa-jātaka*), coming to China from the West – western direction is associated with this particular myth – and combined them successfully with native concepts. There are, however, complexities with Soma and *kuṣṭha* that do not burden the Chinese versions of the herb of immortality. Ṛgvedic Soma – apart from

⁴⁸ One can find an allusion here to the Jade Emperor and The Weaver Girl; deity popular during Tang Dynasty period: Lord of Jade Dawn of the Great Way of the Greatest Loftiness (太上大道玉晨君), or Lingbao Tianzun (靈寶天尊), who was associated with the rhythms of *yin* and *yang* in the universe, rhythms of time and magical texts (J. D. Fowler, op. cit., p. 203).

⁴⁹ The commentary to the next verses mentions the spreading of the Taoist teachings.

⁵⁰ 陶公 means: “potter, ceramist, preparing (brewing) immortality juice (alchemist),” but also “studying and teaching Dao.”

its heavenly version, identified with *amṛta* and associated with the Moon, the gods' highest residence, and the lunar cycles – functions also in the form of an earthly plant, as a ritual object. Just like Soma seems to play a major role in ritual, the Atharvavedic *kuṣṭha* plant is first of all a magical herb used here on Earth; its strong connection with Soma, emphasised many times in hymns, could be a result of the same myth explaining the origin of the significant herb. The Chinese immortality herb myth – although related in many respects to magic and alchemy – seems to be deprived of its “earthly version.”

REFERENCES

1. *Bolshoj kitajsko-russkij slowar*, ed. I. M. Oshanin, Vol. 1–4, Moskwa 1983.
2. Chang Kang-I Sun, *Symbolic and Allegorical Meanings in the Yüeh-fu pu-t'i Poem Series*, “Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies” 1986, Vol. 46, p. 353–385.
3. Chen J., *Fazang (643–712) and Wuzhensi: With a Special Reference to His Daoist Ties*, “Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society” 2006, Vol. 16, p. 179–197.
4. Chi Li, *Chu Hsi the Poet*, “T'oung Pao” 1972, Vol. 58, p. 55–119.
5. *Dichtungen der T'ang- und Sung-Zeit* [唐宋詩集], ed. A. Forke, Hamburg 1929.
6. Dong Tao Xing 樂府詩集, [宋] 郭茂倩編 [Collection of Yuefu-Poetry], ed. Maoquan Guo, 北京 [Beijing] 1998.
7. Feifel E., *Pao-P'u Tzu Nei-P'ien*, Chapter IV, “Monumenta Serica” 1944, Vol. 9, p. 1–33.
8. Fowler J. D., *An Introduction to the Philosophy and Religion of Taoism: Pathways to Immortality*, Brighton 2005.
9. Greenler R., *Rainbows, halos and glories*, London 1980.
10. Hung K., Wu L. Ch., Davis T. L., *An Ancient Chinese Alchemical Classic. Ko Hung on the Gold Medicine and on the Yellow and the White: The Fourth and Sixteenth Chapters of Pao-P'u-tzu*, “Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences” 1935, Vol. 70, p. 221–284.
11. *Hymns of the Atharva-Veda together with extracts from the ritual books and the commentaries*, trans. M. Bloomfield, [in:] *The Sacred Books of the East*, ed. M. Müller, Vol. 42, Oxford 1897.
12. Johnson W. L., *Poetry and Speculation of the Rg Veda*, Berkeley 1980.
13. Knipe D. M., *The Heroic Theft: Myths from Rgveda IV and the Ancient near East*, “History of Religions” 1967, Vol. 6, p. 328–360.
14. Künstler M., *Mitologia chińska* [Chinese mythology], Warszawa 1981.
15. Lai W., *Recent PRC Scholarship on Chinese Myths*, “Asian Folklore Studies” 1994, Vol. 53, p. 151–161.
16. Li Tai Bo, 李白詩選, 葛景春選注 [Anthology of Li Bai's Poetry], ed. Jingchun Ge, 北京 [Beijing] 2005.
17. Monier-Williams M., *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Delhi 2008.

18. Qu Yuan, 楚辭補注, [宋] 洪興祖撰 [Commentaries to Zhu Songs], ed. Xingzu Hong, 北京 [Beijing] 1983.
19. Rajesh M. R., *Atharvaveda Samhita*, Kozhikode 2006.
20. Steinen D., *Poems of Ts'ao Ts'ao*, "Monumenta Serica" 1939, Vol. 4, p. 125–181.
21. *The Hymns of the Atharva-Veda with a popular Commentary*, trans. R. T. H. Griffith, Benares 1916.
22. *The Hymns of the Rgveda*, trans. R. T. H. Griffith, Delhi 2004.
23. *The Hymns of the Rig-Veda in the Samhita and Pada Texts*, Vol. 1–4, ed. F. M. Müller, London 1877. (RV)
24. *The Principal Upanishads*, ed. and trans. S. Radhakrishnan, London 1953 (Chāndogya UP; Kaṭha UP; Muṇḍaka UP).
25. *The Rig Veda: An Anthology of One Hundred Eight Hymns*, trans. W. D. O'Flaherty, New Delhi 2000.
26. *The Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, Part 5, trans. J. Eggeling, [in]: *The Sacred Books of the East*, ed. M. Müller, Vol. 44, Oxford 1900. (ŚB)
27. *The Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa with the commentary of Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara Misra*, Mysore 1908–21. (TB)
28. *Vedic Mythology*, Vol. 1–2, trans. A. Hillebrandt, S. W. Sarma, Delhi 1999.
29. Waley A., *Notes on Chinese Alchemy (Supplementary to Johnson's A Study of Chinese Alchemy)*, "Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies" 1930, Vol. 6, p. 1–24.
30. Whitney W. D., *Atharva-Veda Samhitā*, Cambridge 2002.
31. Yetts W. P., *The Chinese Isles of the Blest*, "Folklore" 1919, Vol. 30, p. 35–62.
32. Zysk K. G., *Religious Healing in the Veda*, "Transactions of the American Philosophical Society" 1985, Vol. 75, p. 1–311.

