
TEXT AND ITS CULTURAL INTERPRETATION

I. Alimov

“RECORDS OF THE DELIGHTS ABOUT THE EASTERN CAPITAL”: INFORMATION ABOUT THE OUTER CITY

The work of Meng Yuan-lao (孟元老, the 12th century) “Dong jing meng hua lu” (“東京夢華錄”, “Records of the Delights about the Eastern Capital”) dates to 1147 and is one of the rare Song texts, which gives a detailed description of the eastern capital of the empire — the city of Kaifeng. “Dong jing meng hua lu” is the most important source for the reconstruction of the outward appearance of the Song Kaifeng and its structure — city walls, quarters, markets, etc., as well

as the actual capital life with its manners, customs and traditions. “Dong jing meng hua lu” handed down to our times unique information about the Song Kaifeng, which are nowhere else to be found, which insistently demands that this written monument is to be introduced to broad scientific circulation. Below the reader is given a small fragment from the beginning of “Dong jing meng hua lu”, supplied with necessary commentaries.

The Outer City of the Eastern Capital (*fig. 1*)

The perimeter of the wall of the Outer City [1] of the Eastern Capital is forty *li* and more. The city ditch is called Hulonghe [2], it is ten *zhang* [3] and more and on both [banks] it is planted with poplars and willows; there [stands] a white wall, [in it] there is a red door — no entry. The wall by the gate [4] is three-level high, the gates [in it] are located on each sides [of the city gate] and only by the gates of Nanxunmen [5], Xinzhengmen [6], Xinsongmen [7] and Fengqumen [8] [the wall by the gate] is two-level high, and [the gate in it] are located strictly across the gates — for this gate is the main one, through which the imperial road lay.

There are three gates in the southern walls of the Outer City [9]: the one strictly [facing] south is called Nanxunmen, to the east of it is the gate of Chenzhoumen [10] and right next to it there is a lock, [through which] Caihe [11] [flows]; to the west of it is the Dailoumen gate [12] and there is a lock right next to it, [through which] Caihe [flows]. The real name of Caihe is Huiminhe, but [it] is called Caihe, because [this river] flows through Caizhou [13].

There are four gates in the eastern wall: the gate in the southern part is called Dongshuimen, Eastern lock [14]; this is where the Bianhe river flows, the lock is located on its bed and has an iron fold, which goes down into wa-

ter at nightfall, and on both banks of [Bianhe] there are special gates to pass through, and in between the corner gates [in the wall by the gate] from one bank to the other there is one hundred *zhang* and more; the next [gates] are called Xinsongmen; the next ones are Xıncaomen [15]; and there are also Dongbeishuimen, the South-Eastern lock, through which the Wuzhanghe [river flows].

There are four gates in the western wall: the one in the southern part is called Xinzhengmen; the next one is called Xishuimen, the Western lock, though which Bianhe [river flows]; the next one is Wanshengmen [16]; and the following one is Guzimen [17]; and there is also Xibeishuimen, the North-Western Lock, where the Jinshuihe river flows.

The northern wall has four gates: the most eastern one is called Chenqiaomen [18] (here was the road that was used by embassies of the Great Liao Dynasty [19]); the next gate is called Fengqumen (this is where the august [exit] to the northern suburb lay [20]); the next one is called Xinsuanzaomen [21]; the next one is called Weizhoumen [22]. (All these names for the gates are colloquial; their real names are as follows: for Xishuimen it was Lize[men], Xinzhengmen in reality was named Shuntianmen, Guzimen in reality was Jinyaomen).

After every one hundred *bu* there are battle ledges *mamian* [23] and defence planking built into the wall of