The Sources of Ezra Pound's *Cathay*: Fenollosa's Notebooks and the Original Chinese Texts

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Introduction

Perhaps, no discussion of Ezra Pound's *Cathay* would be relevant and truly productive without tracing it to its very source: a small corpus culled discriminatingly from some of the best classical Chinese poets. Nor would there be any depth and accuracy of thoughts on which we base our arguments, if no efforts are made to corroborate the various editions which have stemmed, throughout a history of two or three thousand years, from the "authentic" or "authoritative" original source. It is well known that Ezra Pound used the Notebooks and manuscripts of the American Orientalist and art historian, Ernest Fenollosa (1853 – 1908) to accomplish his work, *Cathay*. Because of this fact, far more attention is drawn to this immediate source than the original Chinese texts.

The immediate source: Fenollosa's notebooks

Some scholars, such as Zhao, Qian and Yip,[①] have studied Ernest Fenollosa's manuscripts at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Yale University, and made fruitful discoveries. According to Zhao, the collection includes Fenollosa's twenty – one notebooks under the following headings:

1. *Noh*[②] Plays; 2. Notes to Chinese lessons; 3. Notes to Chinese lessons; 4. Chinese Thoughts; 5. Intermediate Chinese lessons; 6. Chinese and Japanese Poetry: Abstracts and Lectures; 7. Chinese Po-

etry: Lectures by Professors Hirai and Shida; 8. Chinese Poetry: Qu Yuan; 9. Chinese Poetry: Lectures by Professor Mori; 10. Ditto; 11. Ditto; 12. Chinese Poetry: Notes; 13. Chinese Poetry: Notes and Translations; 14. -21. Chinese Poetry: Notes and Translation.[③]

In what he calls the "Pound - Fenollosa Venture", Qian provides more detailed information about this valuable source, so here I quote it in full:

...The "Fenollosa Papers" kept in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Yale University are filed in sixty - two folders (Folders 3370 - 3431) that are stored in Boxes 89 - 94 of Ezra Pound Papers YCAL MSS 43, Series V. As these sixty - two folders are also marked by a number starting from 1 through 58 (with split numbers for 42 and 48), investigators, for convenience sake, often choose it over the four - digit number to refer to the notebooks and sheaves of leaves kept in the folders. I follow this practice despite my awareness of its probable confusion. First, a number of the folders - for example, nos. (9), (10), (12), (13), (15), (18), and (19) - contain sheaves of leaves rather than notebooks. Second, a number of the folders, —nos. (9), (10), (15), (18), and (19) —are composed of material contributed by Pound rather than by Fenollosa.

The following provides the listing of the first twenty - one folders that contain "Fenollosa's Papers". In the list that follows the box number and the folder number is the reference number I use in parentheses followed by the title. The forty - one folders unlisted here contain notes and manuscripts on the Chinese Written Character (92 3391 - 92 3401), Landscape Poetry and Painting in Medieval China (92 3402 - 93 3407), and Japanese Noh Play (93 3408 - 94 3431).

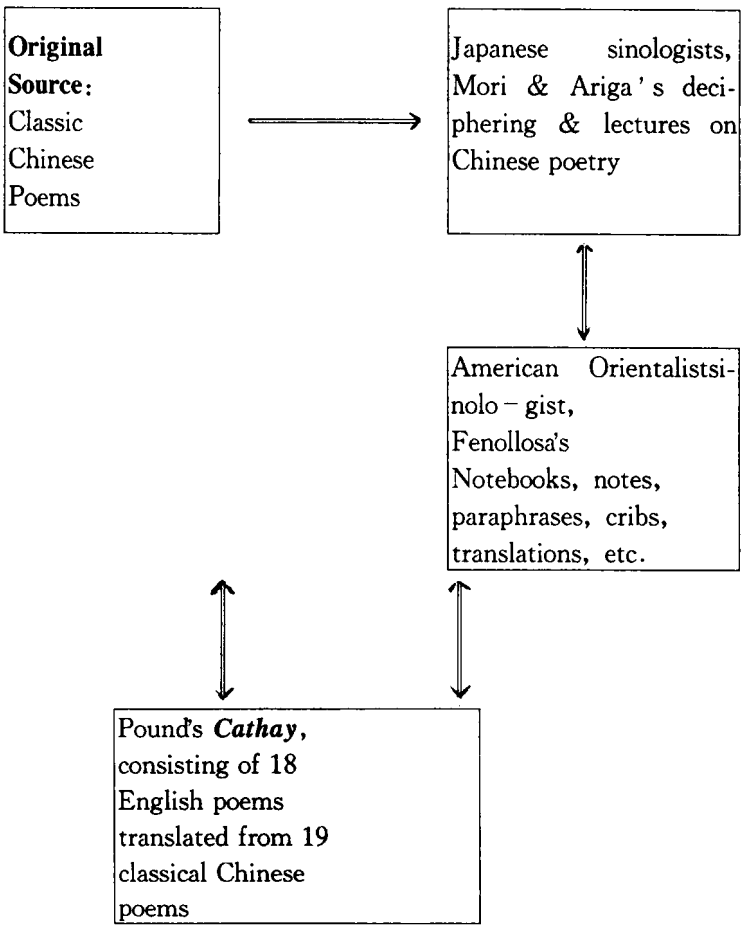
89 3370 (1) Certain Noble Plays: [printed] proofs; 3371 (2) Chinese Course I; 3372 (3) Chinese Course IV; 3373 (4) Chinese Ideals; 90 3374 (5) Chinese Intercourse, 2 Vols.; 3375 (6) Chinese and Japanese Poetry: Synopsis of Lectures, 3 Vols.; 3376 (7) Chinese Poetry, Hirai & Shida; 3377 (8) Early Chinese Poetry: Kutsugen (Ka - Gi): tr. by Ariga; 3378 (9) Chinese Poetry: Mori [E. Pound's notes for editions of lectures, ca. 1935]; 3379(10) Chinese

Poetry: Mori [E. Pound's notes for edition of lectures, 1958 – 59, in part reworked from 1935]; 91 3380(11) Chinese Poetry: Prof. Mori's Lectures [on the History of Chinese Poetry, 3 Vols.]; 3381(12) Chinese Poetry: Notes; 3382 (13) Chinese Poetry: Notes and Translations; 3383 (14) Chinese Poetry: Notes and Translations; 3384(15) Chinese Poetry: Notes by Pound, including translations; 3385(16) Chinese Poetry: Notes (from outside sources); 3386(17) Chinese Poetry: Okakura, Sogioku and others; 3387(18) Chinese Poetry: Sai – bi: Short Introduction; 3388(19) Translations from Chinese Poetry [in E. P's hand]; 3389 (20) Chinese Poetry: Translations: Rihaku (Mori & Ariga), Vol. I; 3390(21) Chinese Poetry: Translations: Rihaku (Mori & Ariga), Vol. II[④]

A glance down the list invites curiosity. What do these notes actually look like? How did Pound make use of them to write *Cathay*? What ideas may have passed through his keen literary mind when he was sampling, tasting, swallowing, chewing, digesting or devouring them? It is tempting enough for us to speculate on these and other questions while going through these notebooks. However, for the present research, I have to be satisfied with these quite comprehensive quotes from other researchers whose works already provide copious examples and evidence. A careful study of the above lists makes it very clear to us that, for his *Cathay*, Pound used mainly Fenollosa's Notebooks 6 – 21, especially Notebooks 20 and 21. In fact, on the title page of *Cathay*, Pound himself made this acknowledgement: FOR THE MOST PART FROM THE CHINESE OF RIHAKU, FROM THE NOTES OF THE LATE ERNEST FENOLLOSA, AND THE DECIPHERINGS OF THE PROFESSORS MORI AND ARIGA (1915). We can interpret this "detour", or paradoxically, shortcut, like this:

Original classical Chinese poems "Decipherings" by Mori and Ariga, Fenollosa's Japanese sinologist – professors, in Chinese literature and poetry, Fenollosa's Notebooks (lecture notes, translations, transcripts, transliterations, paraphrases, cribs, etc.) Cathay by Ezra Pound. This process is illustrated in the following diagram :

Cathay's detour or shortcut to the original source



Now it is the task of this paper to trace *Cathay* to its original source, a corpus of classical Chinese poems.

The original source: the Chinese texts

It might sound a bit strange that scholars have so far failed to reach an agreement on the number of English poems that make up *Cathay*, as well as the number of Chinese source texts. Confusion may have been caused by the couple of changes that Pound made in earlier publications, or, by his rather peculiar way of presentation. Some scholars, such as Zhu Hui, give the number as 15,[5] while quite a

few, like my fellow researcher who has recently completed his paper on "The Influence of Chinese Classical Poetry on Ezra Pound's Cathay and the Cantos", claim that "Cathay is a collection of 17 poems paraphrased from the American Orientalist Ernest Fenollosa's literal translation of Chinese classical poems."[6] In fact, except for the suppressions and additions by Ezra Pound himself of a few poems due to some thematic considerations, no change has been made to Cathay in ensuing editions since 1916. "He [Pound] made important adjustments in early 1915, which eventually reinforced the antiwar theme of the volume. Bush [Ronald Bush], who has examined the issue with the greatest care, informs us that Pound's Cathay had gone through two rearrangements before it was brought out by Elkin Mathews in April 1915. Originally, the sequence was made up of eleven poems, of which only one was about war ("Song of the Bowmen of Shu"). The "Cathay" typescript at the Beinecke Library shows that Pound had added four poems (none of which is about war) to the original eleven[7] when he submitted the sequence to Elkin Mathews. However, in the last minute, "perhaps because the war became more oppressive", Pound "suppressed the four appended poems and added "Lament of the Frontier Guard" and South - Folk in Cold Country". And in early 1916, when Pound incorporated "Cathay" into Lustra, he restored the four suppressed poems.[8] In the text box in Figure 1 given above, I state, matter - of - factly, that "*Cathay*, consists of 18 English poems translated from 19 classical Chinese poems". Actually, the mere number of poems that constitute *Cathay* would not be an important issue if the source research were not our major concern. Now it has become obvious that some made their counting to "15" because they regard "Four Poems of Departure "as one, while others give the number as "17", either because they have overlooked, or preferred to ignore, the title poem, or epigram, to "Four Poems of Departure". It is a translated version of a very well - known poem by the great master painter - poet, Wang Wei (王维 701 - 761), *Song Yuan er shi Anxi* 《渭城曲· 送元 二使安西》, variously rendered as "Farewell to Yuan the Second on His Mission to Anxi" by Yu, Pauline (Yu, 1980:

176), and "Seeing Yuan Off on His Official Trip to Anxi" by the Barnstones and Xu, Haixin (Barnstones and Xu, 1991: 65), though Pound chooses to make do without bothering about who's who, or even, inadvertently attributes the piece that he apparently likes so much to "Rihaku [Japanese for Li Bai] or Omakitsu [Wang Wei]". However, when we discuss classical Chinese poetry, Wang Wei is as an unavoidable and prevailing figure as Li Bai. And the theme of profound friendship and separations merging into scenes of nature is so typical of the poetry by traditional Chinese literati that it could not have escaped Pound's sharp poetic eyes. Indeed, Pound may have been struck by the empathy between the ancient Chinese bards and himself. So he grouped these poems together, which definitely constitute a major component of his *Cathay*.

A study of the first few poems of *Cathay* seems to indicate that Pound is heading for a chronological order in his translations. And then it turns out that he becomes so impatient or so intoxicated that he does not seem to care about any order or system of presentation, which does pose problems in tracing the source texts. Fortunately, thanks to the meticulous, pioneering efforts by scholars, both Chinese and Western, the work has now become much easier. Again, Zhao's findings offer this illuminating guideline:

最后选入《神州集》的共十九首，包括《诗经》一首，古乐府二首，陶潜的一首，卢照邻的的一首，王维的一首，和李白的十二首。[9]

(Finally, a total of 19 Chinese poems were selected for *Cathay*, including one from *Shi jing* ["The Book of Poetry", also translated into English as "The Book of Songs" or "The Book of Odes"], two from *Gu Yue - fu*,[10] one by Tao Qian, one by Lu Zhaolin, one by Wang Wei, and twelve by Li Bai.) However, by following this guidance, we get the total of (1 + 2 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 12 = 18) 18 poems, instead of 19. Moreover, Zhao later mentions in the same book something like "20 Chinese poems"[11], which a beginning researcher may find rather confusing.

Zhu gives a similar profile,[12] and Zhang even provides ten titles of the Chinese texts:

李白的《江上吟》,《天津三月时》,《胡关饶风沙》,《忆旧游寄谯郡元参军》,《送友人入蜀》,《登金陵凤凰台》,《黄鹤楼送孟浩然之庐陵》,《代马不思越》,《诗经·小雅》中的《采薇》,汉乐府中选的一些诗,以及陶渊明的《停云》等。[13]

A more recent research into the source of *Cathay* done by the Yuan Xingpei concludes:

《神州集》将费诺罗萨一部分笔记中的日译汉诗翻译成英文,一共十九首。其中包括《诗经》一首,古乐府二首,陶潜诗一首,卢照邻诗一首,王维诗一首,李白诗十三首。[14]

For the sake of convenience, this search still follows the *Cathay* sequence and numbers the poems from 1 to 18. And then what has emerged from the location, identification and matching between the source texts and *Cathay* is that the original Chinese poem for no. 15 "Sennin Poem by Kakuhaku" is still missing from the Chinese inventory. Again, this note by Qian casts light on the search:

> …Kenner [Hugh Kenner] reports that in 1900 "Fenollosa was also working at early and Taoist [Daoist] poems with another teacher"(Kenner, 1971: 198). This unnamed teacher was Kakuzo, whose sessions covered eight poems, among which no. 30 is the source of the "wind poem" of Canto 4, 31 that of "A Ballad of the Mulberry Road" and 36 that of "Sennin Poem by Kakuhaku."[15]

However, there are numerous ancient Chinese poets writing "sennin" poems. And Fenollosa's notebooks may not be of much help here because, according to Zhao, "...Some of the notes are quite illegible and for many of the poems no original Chinese texts are given. There are only Japanese transcriptions...." [16] Then, who is this ancient Chinese poet by the name of "Kakuhaku" in Japanese? Perhaps it is not so difficult to turn a Chinese name into Japanese, but it can be quite a task to back – translate it into Chinese because there are many

sets of probabilities and options. However, we are not left completely without clues to the identity of the author and his poem. It seems intuitively obvious that the poet should be someone very famous, and his poem well known, since all the other poets picked up by Pound for his *Cathay* —Li Bai (Rihaku), Tao Yuanming (To Em - Mei), Lu Zhaolin (Rosoriu), and Wang Wei (Omakitsu) — are all great names in the history of Chinese literature, and their poems are among the best known masterpieces. Indeed, over the centuries, these poems have been printed in innumerable editions, and the names of their writers are familiar words in the mouths of millions. Interestingly, and unexpectedly, translation experience can also play a part in a source search. Usually, the title throws a cue, and, if there is no title, as sometimes the case with classical Chinese poems, the first line of the poem serves the purpose. Some special ideas or even the transcriptions of foreign proper names can also help. The "Sennin" in the title of Pound's poem is "仙人"[xian ren] in Chinese, meaning a celestial being, or an immortal, suggesting a poetic theme on immortality, longevity, hermitism, spiritual peace and emancipation underlying a traditional Chinese attitude towards nature and the life that is lived in the midst of natural surroundings. And these objects in the first line, "red and green kingfishers", "orchids" and "clover", are fresh images typical of such a theme. Further reading down a couple of lines reveals an element of mysticism and a sense of the supernatural, thus confirming the suggestion of the title. Now let's come back to the Japanese Romanized transcription of "Kakuhaku".[17] Based on transcriptions of family names in countries such as Japan, Korea, Vietnam, etc., where the Chinese written characters are used, as defined by *A Comprehensive Dictionary of Names in Roman - Chinese*,[18] Kaku - in Japanese surnames can be: 角、觉郭、赫、格、鹤、加九、加来、状书、胜来、贺来、嘉九, while -haku- in Japanese first names are: 伯、博、白、朴, etc. So, guided by all these clues, and if we follow the trail of great poets in the history of Chinese literature, from the High Tang Li Bai and his complete collections,[19] and *Quan Tang shi A Complete*

Collection of Tang Poetry,[20] through Han dynasty poets and their works, to Jin dynasty, then it is no longer a problem to locate, in *Gu shi yuan*《古诗源》*Sources of Ancient Poems* edited by Shen Deqian of the Qing dynasty,[21] the very poem,《翡翠献兰苕》, and its author, the well-renowned Jin dynasty poet, Guo Pu (郭璞 276-324), who has left behind him some four-character or five-character poems, and in particular, 14 sennin poems (*Youxian shi*"游仙诗").

Now the list is complete. To match the number of the source texts with that of the *Cathay* poems, it is necessary for us to make a mention of the anecdote that has shocked and amused so many readers, and which has struck many an expert as "bizarre". And, naturally, it has become a topic often discussed in literary and translation circles. No. 3 poem of *Cathay*, "The River Song", is actually a translation of two of Li Bai's poems: *Jiang shang yin*《江上吟》("The River Song"), and *Chi cong Yichun yuan feng zhao fu longchi liu se chu qing ting xin ying bai zhuan ge*《侍从宜春苑奉诏赋龙池柳色初青听新百转歌》. The title of the second poem of Li Bai's is so long that it takes Pound five lines of English to continue his "River Song". Perhaps, it is necessary to note that, although I am well aware that there are numerous extant editions regarding the Chinese sources, (which will be touched on in another paper), this complete list, i.e., 18 English poems in *Cathay*, translated from 19 Chinese source texts, can serve as a common ground for discussions of *Cathay* both as a translation and a creative poetic work.

1. Song of the Bowmen of Shu (《诗经·小雅》《采薇》); 2. The Beautiful Toilet [古诗十九首 (其二)《青青河畔草》]; 3. The River Song (唐·李白:《江上吟》及《侍从宜春苑奉诏赋龙池柳色初青听新莺百转歌》); 4. The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter[唐·李白:《长干行》(其一)]; 5. Poem by the Bridge at Ten-shin[唐·李白:《古风》(其十八)《天津三月时》]; 6. The Jewel Stairs' Grievance (唐·李白:《玉阶怨》); 7. Lament of the Frontier Guard [唐·李白:《古风》(其十四)《胡关绕风沙》]; 8. Exile's Letter (唐·李白:《忆旧游寄谯郡元参军》); 9. (A title poem for "Four Poems of Departure") [唐.王维:《渭城曲》(《送元二使安西》)]; 10. Separa-

tion on the River Kiang (唐·李白:《黄鹤楼送孟浩然之庐陵》); 11. Taking Leave of a Friend (唐·李白:《送友人》); 12. Leave - taking Near Shoku (唐·李白:《送友人入蜀》); 13. The City of Choan (唐·李白:《登金陵凤凰台》); 14. South - folk in Cold Country [唐·李白:《古风》(其 六)《代马不思越》];15. Sennin Poem by Kakuhaku [晋·郭璞:《游仙诗》(其 三)《翡翠戏兰苕》]; 16. Ballad of the Mulberry Road (汉乐府 无名氏《陌上桑》); 17. Old Idea of Choan by Rosoriu (唐·卢照邻:《安古意》); 18. To - Em - Mei's "The Unmoving Cloud"(晋·陶渊明:《停云》[②]).

It is also worth pointing out that, though Pound did not depend directly on the original Chinese source for his *Cathay*, and in spite of the absence of a time order, or system, in the arrangement of his *Cathay* poems, Pound, in fact, owes his success to his knowledge of the history of Chinese literature, in addition to Fenollosa's Notebooks, his poetic gifts and sensitivity.

Indeed, *Cathay* has been such an influential work in 20th century poetics, poetry and literary translation studies that we cannot afford to lose sight of its sources. In the final analysis, it is the source text, the original Chinese text, that is the yardstick by which *Cathay*, like all translations, must be measured, studied and discussed.

Notes:

① Zhao, Yiheng 赵毅衡: *Yuanyou de shishen* 《远游的诗神》 *The Muse from Cathay*, Chengdu: Sichuan People's Publishing House, 1985, p. 147; Qian, Zhaoming: *Orientalism and Modernism*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995, pp. 55 - 71.

② Classical theatre of Japan in which imitation, gestures, dance, mask - work, costume, song and music are fused in a concise stage art. Five schools of *Noh* exist, and most of the plays they perform were written before 1600. Pound's translation of Japanese *Noh* was published in 1916. For details, see Pound's *Translations*, London: Faber and Faber, 1970, p.213.

③ Zhao, Yiheng: *Yuan you de shishen*, 1985, p.147.

④ Qian, Zhaoming: *Orientalism and Modernism: The Legacy of China in Pound and Williams*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995, pp. 190 - 1.

⑤ Zhu, Hui, 《中英比较诗艺》 *Comparative Studies on the Art of Chinese and English Poetry*, Chengdu: Sichuan University Press, 1996, p.16.

⑥ MA thesis in MA Program in British and American Literature, Guangdong Foreign Studies University, 2000, p.1.

⑦ Actually there are twelve poems in the earlier *Cathay* sequence. Bush, like many later scholars, has overlooked the title poem to "Four Poems of Departure".

⑧ Qian, Zhaoming, *Orientalism and Modernism*, 1995, pp.60 - 1.

⑨ Zhao, Yiheng, *Yuan you de shishen*, 1985, p.148.

⑩ Gu here means "old" or "ancient", while *Yue - fu* literally means "Music Bureau", the title of a government office set up in Han dynasty to collect folk songs. From this, the term came to designate the songs themselves. The early *Yue - fu* songs or ballads are often irregular in form, but later songs and poems in folk song style tend to use regular lines of 5 - character or 7 - character length.

⑪ See Note 1 above, p.188.

(A note by the author of this paper: if the works cited are in Chinese, the quoted parts are translated into English by her. This applies throughout this paper.)

⑫ Zhu, Hui, 《中英比较诗艺》 Comparative Studies on the Art of Chinese and English Poetry, Chengdu: Sichuan University Press, 1996, p.317.

⑬ Zhang, Ziqing (张子清), Ershi shiji Meiguo shige shi 《二十世纪美国诗歌史》 (A History of 20th Century American Poetry), Jilin: Jilin Education Press, 1997, p.105.

⑭ Yuan, Xingpei 袁行霈, Zhongguo gudian shige de yixiang 《中国古典诗歌的意象》, *Imagery in Classic Chinese Poetry*, *in Zhongguo shige yishu yanjiu* 《中国诗歌艺术研究》, Beijing: Beijing University Press, 1997, p.62.

⑮ Qian, Zhaoming, *Orientalism and Modernism*, 1995, p.190.

⑯ Zhao, Yiheng, *Yuan you de shishen*, 1985, p.148.

⑰ Some scholars mistakenly ascribe this poem to Li Bai, perhaps because the last four letters of both Ri - haku and Kaku - haku are the same.

⑱ 新华通讯社艺名室编(1993)《世界人名翻译大词典》, 中国对外出版翻译公司出版.(" A Comprehensive Dictionary of Names in Roman - Chinese", compiled by Proper Names and Translation Service, Xinhua News Agency, published by China Translation & Publishing Corporation).

⑲ 李白(唐代)《李白全集》 *Complete Collection of Li Bai*, 包方校点, 上海古籍出版社出版.

⑳ 《全唐诗》 *A Complete Collection of Tang Poetry*, 上海古籍出版社出版, 1986.

㉑ 沈德潜编(清代) Qing dynasty, Shen, Deqian, ed.)《古诗源》*Source of Ancient Poetry*, 岳麓书社出版, 1998年第一版.

㉒ Ieong, S. L., *Source Study and Translation, the Case of Cathay* [*Shenzhou ji*] Yu Lin《语林》, *Macao Daily*, 28 June 2000.

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