

The Reception and Translation of Classical Chinese Poetry in English

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Abstract

Translation and reception are inseparable. Translation helps disseminate foreign literature in the target system. An evident example is Ezra Pound's translation based on the 8th-century Chinese poet Li Bo's "The River-Merchant's Wife," which has been anthologised in Anglophone literature. Through a diachronic survey of the translation of classical Chinese poetry in English, the current paper places emphasis on the interaction between the translation and the target socio-cultural context. It attempts to stress that translation occurs in a context—a translated work is not autonomous and isolated from the literary, cultural, social, and political activities of the receiving end.

Keywords: poetry translation, context, reception, target system, publishing phenomenon

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中詩英譯與接受現象

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摘要

研究翻譯作品，必得研究其在譯入環境中的接受反應。透過翻譯，外國文學在目的系統中廣宣流布。龐德的〈河商之妻〉（譯寫自李白的〈長干行〉）即一代表實例，至今仍被納入英美文學選集中。藉由中詩英譯的歷時調查，本文側重譯作與譯入文境間的互動，審視前者與後者的社會文化間的關係。本文強調翻譯行為的發生與接受一方的時代背景相互作用。譯作不會憑空出現，亦不會在目的環境中形成封閉的狀態，而是與文學、文化、社會與政治等活動彼此交流、影響。

關鍵字：詩詞翻譯、文境、接受反應、目的/譯入系統、出版現象

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Writing does not happen in a vacuum, it happens in a context and the process of translating texts from one cultural system into another is not a neutral, innocent, transparent activity. Translation is instead a highly charged, transgressive activity, and the politics of translation and translating has played a fundamental role in cultural change. (Bassnett 160-161)

The objective of the current paper is to offer a survey of pre-modern Chinese poetry in English, starting from the late nineteenth century and focusing on book-length publications of representative significance, excluding occasional pieces in conference presentations, journal papers, dissertations, and on the World Wide Web. The compilation of volume publications here cannot be exhaustive, since the main purpose is to conduct a diachronic investigation into trends in the translation of classical Chinese poetry, not to attempt an exhaustive bibliography of Chinese literature. The basic premise is the inseparable connection between translations and the cultural, social, and political trends of the Anglophone world.

Chinese poetry before the nineteenth century remained distant and exotic in the receiving system. It did not appear in volume-form publication until 1782 when John Scott, an English Quaker poet, published his *Oriental Eclogues III: Li Po [Li Bo 李白¹]; or, The Good Governor: A Chinese Eclogue*. This is not a translation of Li Bo's poems, but a work of chinoiserie, which reflects Scott's own imagining about China. Li Bo is depicted as "mild prince" governing people with a good heart and even encountering Confucius in his dreams (157-163). It is interesting to note that a renowned 8th-century Chinese poet in the source context was represented as an imaginary prince rather than in his true identity at the hands of an English poet in the late eighteenth century. This phenomenon implies that the translation of any form of Chinese literature was not yet accommodated to the English literary repertory despite the vogue for chinoiserie. Art objects, such as porcelains and statues, were relatively better received.

With increased missions and the development of commercial and diplomatic relationships between Great Britain and China, Chinese literature in English translation started to develop in the nineteenth century. Scholars of Chinese studies were usually missionaries and diplomats, who made contributions to the establishment of sinology in Britain during the century. John Francis Davis, the second Governor of Hong Kong, brought out his *Poeseos Sinicae Commentarii: The Poetry of the Chinese* in 1829. Four Chinese characters "*Hanwen shijie* 漢文詩解" were printed on the title page above its English title, meaning literally "understanding Chinese poetry." In an era when the receiving end had rare understanding or no poetic equivalent of the condensed meaning in a Chinese poem through natural images, the square characters could be seen as a reminder of the foreignness of what target readers were reading. It is worth a mention that Davis's assertion of possible Chinese literary influence on English poetics seems to be a prediction of the translation of Chinese poetry as an innovative source to inspire the imagistic spirit of "Make It New" one century later when literary Modernism emerged:

The excellent use which has already been made ... of oriental thoughts and imagery ... might encourage some extension in the range of our enquiries. Fruits of the highest culture may be improved and varied by foreign grafts; and as our gardens have already been indebted to China for a few choice flowers, who knows but our poetry may some day lie under a similar obligation? However small the prospect of advantage, every scrap of novelty may turn out to be a real gain. (79-80)

¹ The Hanyu Pinyin romanisation system for Mandarin Chinese is adopted for the transliteration of Chinese book titles and proper names as it is widely used in the large majority of publishers and journals. However, quotations and volumes using Wade-Giles transcription have been retained.

Davis was one of the earliest translators of the *Shijing* 詩經 or *The Book of Poetry*. After him, both James Legge and William Jennings, who were also missionaries, translated this anthology. Legge, who served for over thirty years in Malacca and Hong Kong and later worked as a professor of Chinese in the University of Oxford, was the first to translate the complete collection of over three hundred poems in 1876. The next translation of the *Shijing* did not come out until 1891 when Jennings, then the chaplain of St John's Cathedral in Hong Kong, brought out his *The Shi King: The Old "Poetry Classic" of the Chinese*. In the same year, Clement Francis Romilly Allen, a British diplomat to China, published *The Book of Chinese Poetry*. Legge, Jennings, and Allen all produced metrical versions with detailed annotations or commentaries. Here is one example from Legge – a stanza from the first poem in “Book II: The Odes of Shao and the South under Part I: Lessons from the State”: “In the magpie’s nest / Dwells the dove at rest. / This young bride goes to her future home; / To meet her a hundred chariots come” (1-4). It is about the celebration of the marriage of a princess to the prince of another state. The translators’ attempt at a rhyming scheme may be understood from their understanding of Chinese, which stresses the principle of rhyming. As Jennings puts it:

Chinese verse *began* with rhyme, and it seems ... that the older the poetry is, the greater is the frequency of rhymes; whereas, in Western poetry, as is well known, - whether Greek, Latin, or English, - measure and not rhyme was its characteristic in the earliest stage. (8)

Two similarities found in the translations are the printing of Chinese characters on the book cover and detailed explanatory notes. In an era when the receiving end had rare understanding or no poetic equivalent of the condensed meaning in a Chinese poem through natural images, the square characters reminded the reader of the foreignness of what they were reading. In addition, the commentaries offered the target readers a context where background information on cultural, historical, literary, philosophical, religious, and socio-political dimensions of the foreign are provided. Some might be tired of the detailed annotations which could distract from their reading, while some might find it helpful to understand a foreign country. From this aspect, the translation of the poems at that time seems to fulfil the purpose of cultural communication rather than aesthetic and poetic appreciation. The abovementioned translators’ effort gives a snapshot of trends in translating Chinese poetry during the last three decades of the nineteenth century and can be seen as a preparatory phase for an increase of translation of Chinese poetry in the century to follow, when the West began to learn more about the far-away Oriental country, geographically and psychologically.

In the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, Chinese literature entered a new stage in the English-speaking world when substantial translations were made available. Using the *Shijing* as an index and bridge connecting the two centuries, poets and scholars (sinologists) joined to try their hand at translating this anthology. Herbert Giles, a diplomat to China and later a Cambridge Chinese professor, is an example who introduced the content and form of the collection to the early twentieth-century readers in his *A History of Chinese Literature* first published in 1901. Giles regarded his work as “the first attempt made in any language, including Chinese, to produce a history of Chinese literature” (v). This anthology, composed of eight sections, attempted to provide a panoramic view of Chinese literature. In addition to Confucian classics and Qing-era novels, Giles made a chronological introduction to Chinese poetry ranging from prose poetry, metrical Tang poetry to Song lyric poetry across historical periods from 600 BC to AD 1900. Tang poets such as Meng Haoran 孟浩然, Wang Wei 王維, Li Bo 李白, Du Fu 杜甫, Bo Juyi 白居易, and Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 were given space in the first chapter of “Book the Fourth—The Tang Dynasty.” It is perceived that these representative Tang

poets were later rendered and researched in anthologies and/or single-poet volumes in the following periods.

During the early twentieth century, while traditional rules of classical writing were overthrown in the May Fourth period of 1919 and the vernacular replaced archaic and literary language as the principal medium for writing in China, a few anthologies of Tang poetry were published in the Anglophone world. Launcelot Alfred Cranmer-Byng's *A Lute of Jade: Being Selections from the Classical Poets of China* was brought out as a volume of "The Wisdom of the East Series" by the publisher John Murray in 1909. The overall objective of the series was to help the East and the West communicate as Cranmer-Byng and S.A. Kapadia indicated in their "Editorial Note":

These books shall be the ambassadors of good-will and understanding between East and West ... A deeper knowledge of the great ideals and lofty philosophy of Oriental thought may help to a revival of that true spirit of Charity which neither despises nor fears the nations of another creed and colour. (8)

A Lute of Jade, collecting nearly sixty poems from 600 BC to AD 1200, introduced poems from the *Shijing*, the rules and structure of Chinese verse, and the Tang poets mentioned above. The four poets with most poems being selected were Bo Juyi 白居易(15 poems), Sikong Tu 司空圖(10), Li Bo 李白(8), and Du Fu 杜甫(5). Two pieces of information are worth noting in the opening pages of the book. On the page preceding the title leaf is printed "To Professor Herbert Giles." Throughout the book, references to Giles's *Gems of Chinese Literature* and *A History of Chinese Literature* appear in footnotes. Thus, it is not surprising to see "With lutes of gold and lutes of jade – Li Po [Li Bo]" printed in the middle of the title page right below the translator's name. Cranmer-Byng introduced Li Bo as "the most famous name in Chinese literature" (57), corresponding to Giles' introduction: "By general consent Li Po [Li Bo] (AD 705-762) would probably be named as China's greatest poet" (151). In Giles's translation, Li Bo's poems account for over twenty, the most of all poets in his *A History of Chinese Literature*.

Ezra Pound's *Cathay*, based on Ernest Fenollosa's manuscript, came out in 1915. On the top left of the book cover is a Chinese character "耀," read as *yao*, signifying brightness, shininess, and glory. Nearly half of the nineteen poems were based on Rihaku, the Japanese form of Li Bo 李白, one by Omakitsu (Wang Wei 王維), and one by To Em-mei (Tao Yuangmin 陶淵明). In 1918, Arthur Waley's *One Hundred and Seventy Chinese Poems* was published. To provide a historical sketch for his readers, Waley mentioned the limitations of Chinese literature, technique, and the rise and progress of Chinese poetry. This book also saw earlier translations of some poems. For example, literal translations of six poems by Giles in his *Chinese Poetry in English Verse*, published two decades earlier than Waley's, were included in the book, because, as Waley remarks, "they were too typical to omit; and a comparison of the two renderings may be of interest" (v). A point worth a mention here is Waley's motivation for translation that he states in his "Preliminary Note":

I have tried to avoid poems which have been translated before. A hundred and forty of those I have chosen have not been translated by anyone else. The remaining thirty odd I have included in many cases because the previous versions were full of mistakes. (v)

As a scholar of Chinese literature and art, Waley saw the value of those untranslated poems. The lack of translations of Chinese poetry could be further filled in with new input. Waley did not offer extra information as to what the "mistakes" were, though there are possibilities that obvious semantic mistranslations might have existed or Waley might not have agreed with earlier interpretations of a poem. Thus, he decided to provide his own version.

Some of the translated poems of Waley's *One Hundred and Seventy Chinese Poems* coincided with the contemporary socio-political situation when it was first published in 1918 and reprinted in 1947. For example, "Old Poem," originally composed around the first century BC, depicted military service mixed with a sense of nostalgia in ancient China. These sentiments corresponded to the post-war home-coming feelings of soldiers:

At fifteen I went with the army,
At fourscore I came home.
On the way I met a man from the village,
I asked him who there was at home.

.....
Soup and porridge are both cooked,
But there is no one to eat them with.
I went out and looked towards the east,
While tears fell and wetted my clothes. (1-4, 13-16)

Regardless of the age and the location, the poem has universal appeal to humanity and sympathy, especially during wartime. It can be said that identification with human emotions is an important aspect in the reception of the poems in *One Hundred and Seventy Chinese Poems* and *Cathay*. For example, Michael Alexander argues that the beauty of *Cathay* comes from not only its exotic and sensuous qualities, but also its "recognition of humane emotion" (p. 101). In other words, common emotions are communicable and can cross national and linguistic boundaries. As David Hawkes maintains, "it is the emotions evoked rather than the themes which evoke them that are universal in the case of those poems which travel most easily" (*Chinese Poetry*, 106).

However, this paper does not suggest that the translation of classical Chinese poetry has a direct link with the two world wars. It does not imply that Pound and Waley intended to translate poetry connected with war. This does not mean to say that the sample poem above and any other translation provided here are anti-war poems, though it will be seen that the post-war period, especially after 1945, brought more Chinese translations. What is highlighted here is the coincidence between the literary phenomenon and the two wars. In such a context, readers might look at Chinese poetry with different eyes. Personal experience is not isolated from its contextual relationship. Readers' interpretation of a poem interacts with their contemporary environment. The reading of *Cathay* is a typical example. Gaudier Brzeska once wrote of the book, which was kept in his pocket at all times when he was fighting in the Marne, that the poems depicted their situation "in a wonderful way" and he used them to encourage his fellows in the battle: "I speak now of the 'Bowmen' and the 'North Gate' [i.e. 'Lament of the Frontier Guard'] which are so appropriate to our case" (Kenner, 202). It is evident that some of the poems in *Cathay* and *One Hundred and Seventy Chinese Poems* responded to the then chaotic world. It can be assumed that the coincidence led to a different kind of interpretation and the poems came to be read almost as war poems. Hugh Kenner draws attention to this and also the way in which thereafter some Chinese poetry became associated with attitudes to war:

The Chinese poems paraphrase an elegiac war poetry nobody wrote ... Perfectly vital after 50 years, they are among the most durable of all poetic responses to WWI. (202)

In 1918, W.J.B. Fletcher, a British consular official in China, brought out his *Gems of Chinese Verse: Translated into English Verse*. The title shows that Fletcher attempted to keep the original versification, though a difficult task, as he said, "I have usually followed closely the original form of the poems, frequently keeping their meter, but fear that I have lost much of their nuances and fragile delicacy" (i). The Chinese text "*Ying yi Tangshi xuan* 英譯唐詩選" [*English Translations of Selected Tang Poems*] placed above the English title has already indicated that this is a collection of Tang poems. In addition, the titles of the selected poems are provided with the original and listed on the "Contents"

pages. The Chinese poem is given alongside its English translation. Out of the over one hundred and eighty poems, the leading three poets, by order of arrangement and number of poems, are Li Bo 李白 (36 poems), Du Fu 杜甫 (45) and Wang Wei 王維 (13). Published in 1918, the last year of the First World War, Fletcher emphasised the quality of peace displayed through poetry a few times in his three-page introduction: “Will he know the value of the T’ang [Tang] poetry; there will he find *peace*” (iii). He further stressed the “the great charm peace” found in the descriptions of landscapes:

The poems are essentially sketches of Nature, written by true lovers of China’s grand scenery ... One finds in them the Sun, the Moon, the Stars, and “the wind on the heath, brother.” There is no clatter, noise, steam, or hurry the authors float in sailing sampans, noiseless save for the rippling beneath the prow, through scenes peaceful and calm. (ii)

This image of Chinese poetry is thus projected through and integrated with significant issues in the receiving context. Fletcher further remarks that poems on the subject of war dwelled only on its horrors, and illuminated the element of Nature, the integration of beautiful scenes and human life in Tang poetry (ii). In short, the ancient war scenes in Chinese poetry struck a chord with contemporary Western society, while the tranquil ambiance and natural imagery reflected people’s yearning for peace during war time.

Florence Ayscough and Amy Lowell’s *Fir-Flower Tablets: Poems from the Chinese* 松花箋, a volume of around one hundred and twenty poems from two dozen of poets dated 600 BC-AD 960, was published in 1921. Most of the poems were written by Tang poets. Ayscough’s lengthy introduction of nearly eighty pages provided a thorough literary-historical perspective, followed by elaboration of Chinese poetics and an introduction to representative poets. She wrote: “The greatest period of Chinese poetry was during the T’ang [Tang] Dynasty then lived the three famous poets, Li T’ai-po [Li Bo 李白], Tu Fu [Du Fu 杜甫], and Po Chü-I [Bo Juyi 白居易] (lxvii). She devoted a considerable number of pages to Li Bo’s biography and a few to Du Fu’s. In addition, while almost all the other poets were given one poem only, Li Bo was given eighty-six, around two thirds of the entire volume. Du Fu was the second with thirteen poems. Ayscough’s decision to place greater emphasis on Li Bo might have taken into account a potential audience in the United States where this anthology was published. As she puts it:

English writers on Chinese literature are so fond of announcing that Li T’ai-po [Li Bo] is China’s greatest poet; the Chinese themselves, however, award this place to Tu Fu [Du Fu]. We may put it that Li T’ai-po [Li Bo] was the people’s poet, and Tu Fu, the poet of scholars. (lxviii)

Shigeyoshi Obata’s *The Works of Li Po [Li Bo]: The Chinese Poet* published in New York in 1922 may be a testimony to Ayscough’s statement. The book collected one hundred and twenty-four poems by Li Bo, and eight poems written about Li Bo by Du Fu. When it was reprinted by Paragon Books in New York in 1965, the Chinese texts were provided. In the first two decades of the twentieth century when most published volumes were collections of a few poets, Obata’s translation of a single poet and the most received one at that time was clearly a response to market demand.

Fir-Flower Tablets is a pioneering work that an English translation of Chinese poetry is undertaken through collaboration between a poet and a Chinese student. Ayscough believed that the best way to represent the beauty of Chinese poetry was with assistance from one able to capture “fine shades of meaning”:

Without this power, which amounts to an instinct, no one can hope to reproduce any poetry in another tongue, and how much truer this is of Chinese poetry can only be realized by those who have some knowledge of the language. (lxxxvi)

A similar collaboration can be seen in Witter Bynner’s *The Jade Mountain* 群玉山頭, a collection of three hundred and eleven Tang poems translated from Kiang Kang-hu’s 江亢

虎 texts in 1929. It is the earliest English translation fully based on *Tangshi sanbai shou* 唐詩三百首 [*The Three Hundred Tang Poems*], an anthology compiled by Sun Zhu 孫洙(1711-1778) in the 1760s. Kiang recommended this classic to Bynner as it was a book of wide popularity in China, read by almost every household (*The Chinese Translations* 6). Although the order of the poems was re-arranged alphabetically by the author's surname instead of following the original order by poetic styles, the translation offered English readers of the 1920s an opportunity to know what and who had been read in China since the eighteenth century. To facilitate an understanding of exotic allusions and philosophies and to give a rough idea of where the places mentioned in the poems were, nearly sixty pages of exegesis were placed at the end of the book to supplement the translated poems in the main body. Bynner's motivation for translating Chinese poetry is worthy of note. According to James Kraft, Bynner's turning to the Orient was a result of his refusal to fight in the war as he was deeply against it: "the Orient represented for Bynner an escape into a style of life that was more acceptable to him as a man and as a poet" (xlix). It can be said that Bynner's choice of translating *The Three Hundred Tang Poems* reflects his personal taste and the socio-political environment of his era.

According to André Lefevere, "the classics taught will be the classics that remain in print, and therefore the classics that remain in print will be the classics known to the majority of people exposed to education in most contemporary societies" (p. 20). While this statement holds true to *The Three Hundred Tang Poems* in its home system, the translation of the anthology also echoes its canonical status in the source context. The "canon building" of the anthology was reinforced by later publications in the following decades, for example, Soame Jenyns's *Selections from the Three Hundred Poems of the Tang Dynasty* in 1940, 1952 and *A Further Selection from the Three Hundred Poems of the Tang Dynasty* in 1944, 1945, 1948, 1959, Innes Herdan's *300 Tang Poems* in 1972, 1973, 1979, 1981, 2000, 2005, and Xu Yuanzhong et al.'s *300 Tang Poems: A New Translation* in 1987, 1988, 1992, and 2000. Bynner's translation was also reprinted as a bilingual edition in 2005.

An episode of the publications of *Fir-Flower Tablet* and *The Jade Mountain* is worth a brief discussion here. In 1946, when asked to review a volume of correspondence between Lowell and Ayscough, Bynner discovered that the former had driven the latter very hard to publish their translation ahead of Bynner and Kiang's work, which was expected to be ready in 1921, eight years earlier than the actual date of publication ("The Chinese Translations," p. 7). Bynner made no further elaboration on the issue, but this disclosed a sense of competition in the publishing market for Chinese poetry in the 1920s. It can be assumed that the two anthologies, based on their selection of materials and strategy of representation, would have had different audiences. *Fir-Flower Tablets* might target at readers who might favour books which had been "digested" by translators, editors, or publishers. The readers might expect that the book they chose gave a sense of contemporariness with which they could identify, for example, the vogue of Imagism. They might also expect that the book they read gave more information on a foreign name they might have already heard of and would like to know more, for example, Li Bo. The publication of *Fir-Flower Tablet* shows that readership is by all means a critical factor in the publication of a book, especially for a translated anthology to enter its host system. According to Victor Mair, a translated anthology deals not only the quality and representativeness of a literary work to be included, but also the audience's tastes and ability to comprehend and appreciate what is provided for them ("Anthologizing," p. 231). In an era when the response to Chinese poetry was not as widespread as today in the West, placing emphasis on one or two poets who were known to the target market and meanwhile including new figures might reduce what Mair called "incompatibility." At the

same time, a foreign literature can be gradually introduced into the receiving market. On the other hand, the publisher of *The Jade Mountain* might have aimed for an anthology directed at the original culture. As Kiang remarks: “[It] is but small text-book for elementary students, giving only 311 better-known works by 77 of the better-known writers, the same number of poems as in the Confucian Classic of Poetry” (p. 48). The opportunity for poets in a canonical position in the original culture to be introduced to the receiving culture is thus increased. In Joseph S.M. Lau’s words: “The usefulness of an anthology is often measured in terms of its effectiveness in acquainting the reader with the representative writers and works of a given literature” (p. 222). It is noted that more poems by Wang Wei 王維 were introduced to English readers through this anthology. It collects 29 poems by the poet, ranging from quatrains to longer verse comprising thirty-two lines, only after Du Fu 杜甫(39) and Li Bo 李白(35). Also, the order of poems in the source text is adjusted in the target text. The original anthology arranges poems in accordance with poetic style, so the first poem of Wang Wei which appears is “At Parting 送別.” The translated anthology re-arranges the poems roughly according to length, so “Deer-Park Hermitage 鹿柴” and “In a Retreat among Bamboos 竹裏館,” originally numbered twenty-second and twenty-third, were moved to be the first and second. Both poems, especially the first one, have been interpreted from a Zen perspective in the target context: “There seems to be no one on the empty mountains... / And yet I think I hear a voice, / Where sunlight, entering grove, / Shines back to me from the green moss” (p. 189). The original leading poem “At Parting” in the source text became the twenty-second. This alteration of order discloses the focus of Western interest in the 1920s: direct and precise treatment of imagery associated with nature. *The Jade Mountain* testifies what Burton Watson has maintained: “any anthology inevitably reflects the particular tastes and interests of the compiler and his era” (“Introduction,” p. 16).

The interest in Chinese poetry did not wane in the following decades as some key publications were still reprinted. For example, in addition to the abovementioned *The Three Hundred Tang Poems* in numerous English reprints, Waley’s *One Hundred and Seventy Chinese Poems* was reprinted three times in the 1930s, four times in the 1940s, and twice in the 1960s. Giles’s *A History of Chinese Literature* was republished in the 1970s.

After the 1960s, classical Chinese poetry still held an appeal for English readers, and there has been a growth of interest since the 1950s. The Chinese poetry written around the eighth century might suit the taste of the target culture as Kenneth Rexroth remarks:

The whole spirit of this time in [the eighth-century] China is very congenial today, especially to the romantic, empirical-mystic and antinomian taste which has prevailed in the arts of the West since 1940. (xii)

As translations of Chinese poetry had gained a certain readership, translations began to be published as volumes focusing on a single period, theme, and/or poet while anthologies from different historical periods continued to appear. For example, A.C. Graham’s *Poems of the Late T’ang [Tang]*, as its title suggests, provides helpful notes on many of the Late Tang poems. Jerome Ch’ên and Michael Bullock’s *Poems of Solitude*, which came out in 1960, is probably the earliest collection which anthologises poets according to a particular theme. This reflects the compilers’ interest and preference that they intend to highlight one particular aspect of the source culture. In Douglas Robinson’s words, a single part of the SL [source language] text can be isolated and translated as representative of the whole in the TL [target language] text (p. 153). Ch’ên and Bullock worked on six poets, including Ruan Ji 阮籍, Bao Zhao 鮑照, Wang Wei 王維, Pei Di 裴迪, Li He 李賀, and Li Yu 李煜 from the third to the tenth centuries. Poets, such as Li Bo and Du Fu, with whom English readers were familiar from previous publications, were excluded. In 1965, Gary

Snyder brought out his *Riprap, & Cold Mountain Poems*, which collected twenty-four Hanshan 寒山 poems. Five years later, Burton Watson published his *Cold Mountain: 100 Poems by the T'ang [Tang] Poet Han-shan [Hanshan]* as a volume of "The UNESCO Collection of Representative Works: Chinese Series." Both volumes appeared at a time when Zen became fashionable in American society during the 1960s and the 1970s. In addition to single-poet and single-theme volumes, three works published during the 1970s offered a comprehensive collection of different poetic forms and across different historical periods: *Sunflower Splendor* by Wu-chi Liu and Irving Yucheng Lo, *The Flowering Plum and the Palace Lady* by Hans Frankel, and *A Golden Treasury of Chinese Poetry* by John Turner. The repertoire of Chinese in the receiving system was thus expanded.

More new titles were published between the 1960s and 1970s. Possible influence of contemporary occurrences on the publishing phenomenon should not be neglected. The ten-year Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) forbade all forms of traditional or old style writings, such as Confucian Classics. It might have been a factor which prompted translators, especially the diaspora of Chinese scholars in the United States, to maintain classical poetry through English translation and publication. Here are a few examples: Liu Shih Shun's *One Hundred and One Chinese Poems* (1967), Tang Zi-chang's *Poems of T'ang [Tang]: 600 Poems Written in T'ang [Tang] Style by T'ang [Tang] Poets* (1969), Wang Hui-ming's *The Boat Untied and Other Poems: A Translation of T'ang [Tang] Poems* (1971), and Wu-chi Liu and Irving Yucheng Lo's *Sunflower Splendor: Three Thousand Years of Chinese Poetry* (1975) mentioned above. The publishing phenomenon reached its height around the mid-1970s. According to Jonathan Chaves, "1975 and 1976 have certainly been banner years for Chinese poetry studies" (p. 172). Two crucial diplomatic affairs occurring during the decade, beginning with the ping-pong diplomacy between China and the United States, cannot be ignored. Richard Nixon visited Beijing in February 1972, and brought Mao Zedong a book as a present – *The Poems of Mao Zedong*, which included thirty-seven poems of Mao's (Barnstone, p. 75-76). In 1979, Jimmy Carter established a formal diplomatic relation with Deng Xiaoping. Behind the political implications were all forms of exchanges across boundaries, including translation of literature. In other words, political changes led to a potential market value for all things Chinese. Furthermore, the role of publishing houses is significant. For instance, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) launched a "Representative Works" series in 1948, aiming to "encourage translation, publication and the distribution of texts significant from the literary and cultural point of view, in spite of being little known beyond national boundaries or beyond the frame of their linguistic origin" (UNESCO). Over the last sixty years, publications in the China series can be divided into four main genres: philosophy, poetry, novels, and drama. Out of the thirty volumes, poetry accounts for one fifth, mainly published during the 1960s and 1970s. These publications aimed to introduce classical Chinese literature and poetry to general readers and students of Chinese in particular.

While the 1970s enjoyed a relatively wider reception, the 1980s appeared to be a quieter decade for classical Chinese poetry translation. Anthologies seemed to be favoured by Anglophone readers. Stephen Owen published his *The Great Age of Chinese Poetry: The High T'ang [Tang]*, which focused on the cream of the Tang dynasty, in 1981 to supplement his *The Poetry of the Early T'ang [Tang]* in 1977. Three years later, Burton Watson put out his *The Columbia Book of Chinese Poetry: From Early Times to the Thirteenth Century* under "The Translations from the Oriental Classics Series." Like the abovementioned anthologists of previous decades, Watson's selection took into account canonical poems and his personal taste:

Trying to make selections from a body of poetry that runs into tens of thousands of works is a forbidding task. I have aimed to include as many of the famous and influential pieces as possible, at the same time offering a few less well-known works that I happen to like. (p. 13)

For example, he translated poems from six Tang poets more known to the West in the seventh and eighth chapters, including Li Bo 李白, Du Fu 杜甫, Wang Wei 王維, Han Yu 韓愈, Bo Juyi 白居易, and Hanshan 寒山. The less known poets were arranged in the ninth chapter. His selection and translation of less renowned poems may be regarded as an attempt to provide new input into the translation. Other anthologies in the decade included Jonathan Chaves's *The Columbia Book of Later Chinese Poetry: Yuan, Ming, and Ching Dynasties (1279-1911)* under the same series by the same publisher in 1986 to supplement Watson's volume. A work which needs to be mentioned here is Anne Birrell's *New Songs from a Jade Terrace: An Anthology of Early Chinese Love Poetry* [Yutai xinyong 玉臺新詠], which came out in 1982. This book of over four hundred pages was accompanied with chronological tables, maps, notes, appendices, and introductions to poets and their poems. After Witter Bynner's *The Jade Mountain*, Birrell's translation was another work based on an extant Chinese anthology rather than her own selection of works by one or few poets into a volume. As Watson has pointed out in his "Foreword": "The Yü-t'ai hsin-yung [Yutai xinyong] or *New Songs from a Jade Terrace* [is] an anthology of Chinese love poetry compiled in the sixth century AD" (vii). The anthology, compiled by Xu Ling 徐陵 (p. 507-583), a court poet, around AD 545, collected nearly seven hundred poems in ten volumes by chronological order starting from the second century BC to the fifth and sixth centuries when the genre was in its full blossom (Birrell 1). According to Birrell, what prompted her to undertake this translation was that the anthology had never been fully rendered into any Western language before, except for some early pieces by Arthur Waley, Burton Watson, and John David Frodsham, so she believed that this anthology would provide "a necessary link between the more familiar landmarks of ancient China and the later medieval period of the T'ang [Tang] Dynasty" (p. 1-2). While Tang poetry had made its way into the receiving system over the last century, English readers seemed ready for different poets not as renowned as Li Bo and Du Fu. This can be testified by the new edition published by Penguin in 1986 (reprint in 1987), four years after its first publication by G. Allen & Unwin, added with Burton Watson's foreword and a thirty-page critical essay as postscript by J.H. Prynne. An extensive revision was undertaken for the second edition in 1995. These reprints, supplements, and revisions all implied a potential audience for the volume. Also, the anthology accommodated the Western pre-occupation with love, as Waley remarks, "to the European poet the relation between man and woman is a thing of supreme importance and mystery (p. 4)."

Translations of a range of classical Chinese poetry were still in progress in the 1990s. Three theme-based anthologies were brought out by Wellsweep Press in 1990, with parallel texts. The first is *Poems of the West Lake: Translations from the Chinese* by A.C. Graham. It consists of more than forty poems (mostly quatrains) about Hangzhou's scenic West Lake dated AD 800-1600. The second is *Du Mu, Plantains in the Rain: Selected Chinese Poems* by R.F. Burton. This small book contains more than ninety poems of the Tang poet. The third is *The Deep Woods' Business: Uncollected Translations from the Chinese* by Arthur Cooper, who was described by John Cayley, the publisher of Wellsweep, as the "finest translator from Chinese poetry since Arthur Waley" (p.10). This volume includes over thirty poems, ranging from the *Shijing* to two poems by Mao Zedong. Victor H. Mair brought out *The Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature* in 1994. It is a wide-ranging collection from poetry and travelogues to literary criticism and theory. In 1996, Stephen Owen's *An Anthology of Chinese Literature:*

Beginnings to 1911 came out. It has over one thousand and two hundred pages with a historical timeline, an author/first line/title index, and a general index, attempting to offer a comprehensive introduction to the development of all forms of Chinese literature across historical periods. In terms of single/multi-poet volumes, Li Bo 李白, Du Fu 杜甫, and Wang Wei 王維 still received more publicity as can be seen in David Young's *Five T'ang [Tang] Poets*. The book consists of nearly seventy poems by Li Bo (17 poems), Du Fu (16), Li Shangyin 李商隱(14), Wang Wei (12), and Li He 李賀(10). Each poet is given an introduction of seven to nine pages as to how they are received and represented in their original culture.

In 2000, Columbia University and the Chinese University of Hong Kong published *Classical Chinese Literature: An Anthology of Translations (Volume I: From Antiquity to the Tang Dynasty)*, which was inscribed to David Hawkes, the late scholar and Chinese translator, by both editors, John Minford and Joseph S.M. Lau. The reference, with nearly one thousand and two hundred pages, is to serve an educational and self-study purpose, providing maps of ancient China, a further reading list, notes on pronunciation, conversion of different spelling systems, names of historical periods, and indices of authors, translators and commentators. Victor Mair brought out *The Columbia History of Chinese Literature* in 2001 to supplement his *Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature* published in 1994. It covers all genres and periods of poetry, prose, fiction, and drama. In 2003, *The New Directions Anthology of Classical Chinese Poetry* edited by Eliot Weinberger was published. This volume is different from others in a way that the publisher promoted the book as “the first collection to look at Chinese poetry through its enormous influence on American poetry” (xvii). It begins with various writers associated with New Directions, the primary American publisher of international modernism, from Imagists like Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams through Beat poets like Kenneth Rexroth and Gary Snyder to contemporary translator-scholar David Hinton. Weinberger reiterated that this book was intended to be “a book of poetry” rather than “a reference work”:

The dream of comprehensiveness among anthologists and reviewers – a dream of a library, not a book – leads only to shelves of the massive and the unread. (xxvii)

All of the one hundred and eighty poems selected from the *Shijing* to Song lyrics are rendered by the five American poets. Tang poets account for over a half out of the thirty-five poets anthologised (excluding anonymous poems). About seven non-anthology volumes were published in this decade, including *Po Chü-i [Bo Juyi]*, a title of the “Translations from the Asian Classics” series, by Burton Watson, *Rediscovering Wen Tingyun: A Historical Key to a Poetic Labyrinth*, a title of the “State University of New York” series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture, by Mou Huaichuan, and *The Selected Poems of Wang Wei* by David Hinton, *Out on the Autumn River: The Selected Poems of Du Mu* by David Young and Jiann Lin, *Facing the Moon: Poem of Li Bai [Li Bo] and Du Fu* by Keith Holyoak, *Du Fu: A Life in Poetry* by David Young, and *In Such Hard Times: The Poetry of Wei Ying-wu [Wei Yingwu]* by Red Pine. This first single-volume about Wei's poetry consists of one hundred and seventy-five poems with an informative introduction, annotations, and source texts.

It is perceived from the survey that Ezra Pound and Arthur Waley play an influential role in the translation of classical Chinese poetry. Pound and Waley demonstrate that cultural and literary fashions in the target context are of certain influence in the reception of translated literature. As George Steiner puts it:

The China of Pound's poems, of Waley's, is one we have come fully to expect and believe in. It matches, it confirms powerful pictorial and tonal anticipations. Chinoiserie in European art, furniture and letters, in European philosophical-political

allegory from Leibniz to Kafka and Brecht, is a product of cumulative impressions stylized and selected ... The Western eye has fixed on certain constants ... of Chinese landscape, attitude, and emotional register. (p. 378)

Before Pound and Waley, Chinese poetry translators mainly comprised missionaries and diplomats, who tended to produce rhymed versions. Pound and Waley were inclined to render Chinese poems in a free manner, emphasising the value of imagery and the translator's interpretation or recreation. After their translations appeared, poet-translators and/or scholar-translators emerged in the field of Chinese poetry translation. They helped the genre enter the mainstream repertoire of the receiving system. The most typical example may be Pound's "The River Merchant's Wife: A Letter," adapted from Li Bo's "Changgan Song I" [Changgan xing 長干行(一)]. It is collected in *The Norton Anthology of American Literature* (Baym, p. 1207-1208) and *The Oxford Book of American Poetry* (Lehman 301-02). As for Waley, two of his translations of Bo Juyi's poems are anthologised into *The Penguin Book of Contemporary Verse 1918-60* (Allott, p. 111-112). In 1953, Waley was awarded the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry for his achievement in the translation of classical Chinese poetry (The British Monarchy). The award served as official recognition and acceptance of Chinese poetry into the English literary repertoire in the mid-twentieth century. As Humbert Wolfe puts it, "As we are ... incapable of comparing the English and the Chinese, we must address ourselves to these poems as though they had been written by an Englishman of the twentieth century, and judge them on that basis" (iii). In an interview on the BBC, Waley also wished his translations could be considered as "experiments in English verse" (Rapp, p. 138). Waley borrowed Gerard Manley Hopkins' "sprung rhythm" for his metrical translation of Chinese poetry, intending to produce a regular rhythmic effect similar to that of the original. Simply speaking, it is to have one stress to each Chinese one-syllable character. David Hawkes states that Waley's creation or evolution of "sprung rhythm" is both suitable to Chinese poetics and acceptable to the literary tastes of his own day ("From the Chinese," p. 46). Waley's translations have had a considerable impact on later translators. For example, when translating Wang Wei's poems, Pauline Yu said that she had followed Waley's example and given as many stresses to an English line as there are syllables in the original text although no effort had been made to reproduce rhyme schemes (xii). Watson reiterates the contribution of Pound, Waley, and other translators to the translation of Chinese poetry:

This act of creation [as to the translation of classical Chinese poetry] ... was brought about largely through the efforts of Pound, Waley, and other translators of their ilk in the early decades of the present century, and all of us who work in the field today stand immensely in their debt. As a result of their pioneering efforts, the poetry of premodern China, though perhaps not always fully or correctly understood, has come to be widely admired in the West, and in fact has become a major influence on the contemporary poets writing in English (*Columbia Book*, p. 13)

The current survey testifies that translation is always intertwined and interacts with elements of one or other system. From the survey, it is found that the development and translation of classical Chinese poetry in English is connected to and reflects the contemporary socio-political situation of the receiving end. For example, two Chinese poems rendered by Arthur Waley and Ezra Pound in the early twentieth century were included in *The Oxford Book of War Poetry* edited by Stallworthy (p. 10,17). The post-war period led to an interest in Chinese and Japanese literature, especially in North America. It can be seen from involved publishing houses, translators and scholars that the centre of Chinese poetry in English translation shifted from Britain to the United States after the 1950s. As Chih-Tsing Hsia has pointed out, American readers were fascinated by China and their writers wrote profitable books about the country after World War II although the

audience for translations from classical Chinese literature was not yet sizeable (p. 8). The humanitarian spirit embedded in classical Chinese poetry corresponded to various peace movements against H-bombs and the budding ecological consciousness of the post-war period. In 1981, the T'ang [Tang] Studies Society was established by a group of scholars from American universities and has dedicated itself to research on the Tang dynasty. The association also publishes an issue of *T'ang [Tang] Studies* on an annual basis. Its establishment is indicative of the rising academic interest in Chinese poetry and the reception of Tang poetry in the United States. *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, a comprehensive reference work dealing with all aspects of poetry, even added major new entries on contemporary development in non-Western poetry, such as Arabic, Hebrew, Chinese, and Japanese Poetics in its 1993 edition. It reflects literary changes and trends since its previous edition in the mid-1970s. The entries for "Chinese Poetics" and "Chinese Poetry" were allotted fifteen pages (p. 87-200). However, this does not mean that the translation and reading of classical Chinese poetry has entered the mainstream of Anglophone literary and cultural repertoire. The target readership of the publications is still small. As Hsia maintains:

The general public has not been sufficiently impressed to sample this large body of literature now available. The potential target of all this scholarship and translation, then, are our fellow specialists and the serious young students to be attracted to the field. (p. 12-13)

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