

# Translation and Appreciation of Tujia Minority Ballads *Hands on My Girl's Shoulders* and *Embroidering the Satchet*

Lu Weijian<sup>1</sup>, Chen Kaiju<sup>2, 3, \*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Business and Economics, Maastricht University, Maastricht, The Netherlands

<sup>2</sup>Center of Business Culture and Philosophy of Culture, Institute of Hermeneutics, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, Guangzhou, China (PRC)

<sup>3</sup>Institute of Advanced Studies, University of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Guangzhou, China (PRC)

## Email address:

bona.luweijian@outlook.com (Lu Weijian), 200010931@oamail.gdufs.edu.cn (Chen Kaiju)

\*Corresponding author

## To cite this article:

Lu Weijian, Chen Kaiju. Translation and Appreciation of Tujia Minority Ballads *Hands on My Girl's Shoulders* and *Embroidering the Satchet*. *International Journal of Literature and Arts*. Special Issue: *Translation and Interpretation of 28 Chinese Tujia Minority Ballads*. Vol. 9, No. 6, 2021, pp. 261-268. doi: 10.11648/j.ijla.20210906.12

**Received:** September 29, 2021; **Accepted:** November 5, 2021; **Published:** November 17, 2021

---

**Abstract:** With the advancement of the industrialization and digitalization of China, minority cultures are being impacted and transformed. Tujia minority ballad, as an essential form of Tujia culture, provides an ideal perspective to understand Tujia minority character, language, habits, and customs, and also reveals cultural connotations towards the current times. Based on the investigation, two Tujia minority ballads--*Hands on My Girl's Shoulders* and *Embroidering the Satchet*--with the same theme of love and labor are chosen in this paper for translation and appreciation. Tujia minority ballads originated from the living and production work of the Tujia minorities, and they contain rich ethnic memories and other cultural aspects. Our research shows that Tujia minority ballads reflect the worship to life, the relief from life hardships, and the pursuit of beauty, indicating that Tujia minority ballads not only have extremely high artistic and aesthetic value, but also contain the Tujia cultural and social backgrounds, and are a treasure house for understanding Tujia society and culture. Meanwhile, with the development of media and consumerism, the younger generations increasingly lack such awareness of truth, goodness, and beauty promoted in Tujia minority ballads, so Tujia minority ballads are still of great significance as a warehouse for traditional and minority cultures.

**Keywords:** Tujia Minority Ballads, Cultural Studies, Translation and Appreciation

---

## 1. Introduction

In southwest Hubei, the Tujia minority mainly inhabit the vast area of the Qing River basin in the Wuling Mountains and has a long history with unique history, culture, and folklore. The Tujia minority ballads are music art created by the Tujia people in the process of collective labor. They are not only a heritage of customs and habits, but also a vivid and visualized history reflecting people's life and labor, and their inquiries and interpretations of life and survival [1]. Although the Tujia minority has a long history and has its spoken language, they have not created their written language, thus its history has not been recorded, and has been memorized in stories and legends instead. These important historical and cultural stories and folk culture are preserved in the minority ballads. Tujia

minority ballads cover all aspects of social life, involving various aspects of labor work, religious rituals, festivals, wars, entertainment, and recreation [2]. Therefore, Tujia minority ballads are a window to Tujia culture and a precious intangible cultural heritage of China.

Enshi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture, an area where Tujia minorities have lived for thousands of years, is currently one of the best-preserved areas for Tujia minority ballads and Tujia culture [3]. According to an interview with Mou Bingjin, the inheritor of local minority ballads in Liangwu (a small town in Lichuan County, Enshi Autonomous Prefecture), and Chen Ligao, "king" of Tujia minority ballads in Lichuan County, the most well-known Tujia minority ballads currently spread in Enshi can be roughly divided into

two categories: love songs and labor songs<sup>1</sup>. Love songs focus on the expression of love through songs. The sincerity of love and the rebellion against feudal rituals of Tujia youth are most intuitively and strongly expressed in these songs [4]. The primary function of labor songs is to reduce the boredom of labor. Since Enshi is located in a mountainous area, the terrain is rugged, and labor is arduous. Therefore, collective labor is very prevalent, and labor songs are produced in this context. In the past, when working in the fields, repetitive movements would exhaust workers quickly, so that concentration and efficiency would be significantly reduced. However, when everyone sang labor songs and trumpets together, this sense of collectiveness would relieve fatigue, stimulate enthusiasm, and improve efficiency [5]. Therefore, Tujia minority ballads are a link of emotional and ideological exchange, and reflect the customs and living conditions of the Tujia minority.

At the same time, many minority ballads have elements of both love and labor, which exactly reflects the characteristics of the agricultural civilization of the Tujia minority. Among them, *Hands on My Girl's Shoulders* and *Embroidering the Satchet* are two minority ballads with very high popularity. *Hands on My Girl's Shoulders* is sung in antiphonal style by two lovers, and divided into 7 stanzas, ending with the boy winning the heart of the girl, while *Embroidering the Satchet* is sung by a female solo, and divided into five stanzas, depicting what the girl thinks when embroidering the satchet for her beloved. These two minority ballads reflect the worship to love, the relief from living hardship, and the pursuit of beauty.

Tujia minority ballads have been an essential tool for the working people to express themselves from the day they were created until today. However, under the impact of the global economy and modernization, the society and culture of the Tujia minority are undergoing drastic changes, especially the traditional economic structure that has been inherited for thousands of years in the current Tujia region is disintegrating [6]. The language, culture, cognition of the Tujia minority traditions are on the verge of extinction. Enshi Tujia minority ballads, as a kind of intangible cultural heritage, have been strongly impacted in the process of the advance of modernization. In the current era of cultural diversification, minority ballads are in a disadvantaged position [7]. It is increasingly essential to protect Tujia minority ballads from the perspective of inheritance and development. As an integral part of Chinese nationality, minorities have rich and diverse ethnic cultures. Therefore, the effectiveness of spreading the minority culture will directly affect the development and growth of the minorities, as well as the diversity and richness of Chinese culture [8]. Therefore, the importance of protecting and spreading minority cultures is becoming increasingly prominent in this era of globalization.

The authors conducted a field investigation in Badong County, Enshi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture, Hubei Province, and specially invited two inheritors of Enshi Tujia

minority ballads to verify the culture and folklore behind the minority ballads. Through translation and appreciation, the authors have analyzed the cultural characteristics behind the two Tujia minority ballads from the perspective of cultural studies, and examines the cultural connotation underlaid the Tujia minority ballads, in the hope to protect Tujia minority ballads and the culture of Tujia minority, as well as promote the intercultural communication of Tujia culture with other cultures.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Translation for Intercultural Communication

In the context of globalization, telling the Chinese story well is a heatedly discussed research topic. It is an effective way to disseminate culture in the form of folk culture and folk art, especially in the form of music, opera, and ballads, which contain the unique background of Chinese social life [6-8]. Therefore, translation plays a vital role in intercultural communication. Differences in language and culture have far-reaching effects on the effectiveness of translation. For culture to play the role of soft power, successful translation is needed to realize effective intercultural communication and promote intercultural exchange and acceptance, since only readable and acceptable translations can help people break cultural barriers and promote intercultural communication [9]. In addition to the vital role of translation, the effectiveness of intercultural communication is also affected by other factors. Especially, translation must be combined with countermeasures to overcome the predicament of intercultural communication to promote Chinese culture [11].

Intercultural communication is a phenomenon of information and cultural integration and resource sharing among global societies in different cultural contexts [12]. Translation is a creative process and a form of intercultural communication. Once considered a language-conversion activity, translation is now seen as a dynamic interaction between language and culture. It enables the communication between different cultures and makes an essential contribution to bridging cultural divides and promoting cross-cultural understanding [13]. Translation studies have developed to date with different schools, and translation phenomena, translation theories, translation methods, and translation practices have been analyzed and described from different perspectives, such as linguistics, culture, philosophy, and ethical studies [14]. Like intercultural communication studies, translation is also an interdisciplinary field of study.

The first step of promoting Chinese culture is to solve the language barrier. Due to the complexity of the Tujia dialect, it often poses more problems to translators in terms of intra-linguistic conversion and comprehension than those faced by interlingual communication. Some scholars believe that alienation strategies should be used to guide the translation of minority culture, preserving as much of the cultural information in the original language as possible [15]. Others propose that the primary purpose of intercultural

<sup>1</sup> The authors participated in the field investigation in the summer of 2016 to gather first-hand materials and consult Mou Bingjin and Chen Ligao about the culture behind the Tujia minority ballads.

communication should be the exchange and transmission of information, but at the same time, the acceptability of the readers of the translated language and the readability of the translated text should also be taken into consideration [16]. Therefore, translation is a game of alienation and domestication. According to the Functional Equivalence Theory, Chinese to English translation cannot just require words to correspond to words in a rigid translation, but achieves functional equivalence between the two languages [17]. Therefore, in the translation process, the translator should authentically translate the actual meaning contained in the original minority ballads, which requires the translator to be familiar with the social conditions, history, and beliefs in both the original culture and the target culture [18]. Therefore, both cultures are respected, ensuring the successful intercultural communication.

## 2.2. Culture Studies for Minority Ballads

Research on Tujia culture in China has been increasing year by year, and there are various directions and categories of research on Tujia culture, such as Tujia folk culture research, literature and art research, and economic and cultural research. In general, the Tujia minority ballads research system has

been gradually constructed [1-2]. Since the minority ballads of Enshi Tujia are rich in genre and diverse in subject matter, they are an accurate depiction of the production life of Tujia minorities. Therefore, they have significance for the construction of the minority ballads research system and the study of Tujia ethnology, folklore, cultural studies, and sociology [3, 8-9, 19]. However, at present, minority ballads research needs to be more closely integrated with other subjects in humanities and social sciences. Only by establishing a rigorous research system can the researchers effectively promote the development of minority ballads research. At the same time, there are still some limitations. At present, there are not many studies that focus on Tujia minority ballads that have risen to a theoretical height. Meanwhile, there are not many specific studies on the unique cultural characteristics of Tujia minority ballads based on in-depth field investigations [6, 20]. Most importantly, scholars from other countries have studied very little of the Tujia minority culture, and the research fervor in the international arena is not enough since the literature in English is scarce. At present, cultural scholars in every country are promoting the cross-cultural exchange of their own cultures, so Chinese scholars should also take up this responsibility.

## 3. Translation of the Two Ballads

### 3.1. Hands on My Girl's Shoulders

#### Chinese Version

男: (我) 双手 (那个) 搭在 (嘛嗯哪嗯) 妹儿 (的) 肩 (哪  
嗟哟喂~喂), (我) 有句 (那个) 话儿 (嘛哎嗨哟哇嗟哟喂  
~) (我) 不好言 (哪哈嗯哪嗯)

女: 你有么子话儿嘛, 只管说嘛

男: 妹儿 (那个) 叫我 (嘛嗯哪嗯) 直管 (的) 言 (哪嗟哟  
喂~喂), (我) 裤儿 (那个) 烂哒 (嘛哎嗨哟哇嗟哟喂~) (我)

无人连 (哪哈嗯哪嗯)

女: 那你去找亲戚撒

男: 妹儿 (那个) 叫我 (嘛嗯哪嗯) 找亲戚 (嗟哟喂~喂),  
(我) 亲戚 (那个) 朋友 (嘛哎嗨哟哇嗟哟喂~) (他) 不凑

成 (哪哈嗯哪嗯)

女: 那你去搭个会嘛

男: 妹儿叫我 (嘛嗯哪嗯) 搭 (一) 个会 (呀嗟哟喂~喂),  
(我) 搭会 (那个) 容易 (嘛哎嗨哟哇嗟哟喂~) (我) 还会

难 (哪哈嗯哪嗯)

女: 你这也难那也难, 只有去死哦

男: 妹儿 (那个) 叫我 (嘛嗯哪嗯) 只有 (的) 死 (啊嗟哟  
喂~喂), (我) 死在 (那个) 阴间 (嘛哎嗨哟哇嗟哟喂~) (我)

专告你 (哟嘛嗯哪嗯)

女: 你告我么子嘛

#### English Translation

M: With (my) hands (that) on (ma en na en) my girl's shoulders (na jie yo wei~wei), (I am) hesitating (that) for (ma ai hai yo wa jie yo wei) getting your answers (na ha en na en).

F: You have anything to say, just say it out.

M: Now that my girl (that) tells me (ma en na en) to say it (na jie yo wei~wei), (my) trousers (that) are in rags (ma ai hai yo wa jie yo wei) and to be mended (na ha en na en).

F: Then you should turn to relative.

M: My girl (that) tells me (ma en na en) to turn to relative (na jie yo wei~wei), but they (that) will not help (ma ai hai yo wa jie yo wei) but leave (na ha en na en).

F: Then you can raise some money.

M: My girl (that) tells me (ma en na en) to raise some money (na jie yo wei~wei), but paying back (ma ai hai yo wa jie yo wei) will drive (me) crazy (na ha en na en).

F: If everything is so difficult, then you could go to hell.

M: My girl (that) tells me (ma en na en) to go to hell (na jie yo wei~wei), (I) die in (that) hell (ma ai hai yo wa jie yo wei) only to sue you (na ha en na en).

F: What would you sue me for?

nán wǒ bù gào qīng mèi (ma en nǎ en) nǐ bù còu chéng (nǎ jiē yō wèi)  
男：(我)不告情妹(嘛嗯哪嗯)(你)不凑成(哪嗟哟喂  
~喂)，专告(那个)妹儿(嘛哎嗨哟嗟哟喂~)(你)狠心  
cháng (nǎ hā ēn nǎ ēn)  
肠(哪哈嗯哪嗯)  
nǚ nǎ nǐ xiē yī wǎn zài zǒu ma  
女：那你歇一晚再走嘛  
nán mèi er (nǎ gè) jiào wǒ (ma en nǎ en) xiē yī (de) wǎn (nǎ jiē yō  
男：妹儿(那个)叫我(嘛嗯哪嗯)歇一(的)晚(哪嗟哟  
wèi wèi) wǒ sǐ zài (nǎ gè) huáng hé (āi hāi yō jiē yō wèi) wǒ xīn  
喂~喂)，(我)死在(那个)黄河(哎嗨哟嗟哟喂~)(我)心  
yě gān (nǎ ā ēn nǎ ēn)  
也甘(哪啊嗯哪嗯)

M: (I) would not sue you (ma en na en) for not helping (na jie yo wei~wei), but for (that) your (ma ai hai yo wa jie yo wei) heart of stone (na ha en na en).

F: Then you'd better stay for one night.

M: My girl (that) tells me (ma en na en) to stay (for) one night (na jie yo wei~wei), then in (that) yellow river (ma ai hai yo wa jie yo wei) I am willing to die (na ha en na en).

### 3.2. Embroidering the Sachet

#### Chinese Version

yī xiù xiāng dài kāi tóu xiù  
一绣香袋开头绣  
xiù gè shī zǐ gǔn xiù qiú  
绣个狮子滚绣球  
xiù qiú gǔn zài huā yuán lǐ  
绣球滚在花园里  
zhǐ jiàn shī zǐ bù jiàn qiú  
只见狮子不见球  
èr xiù xiāng dài sī xiàn cháng  
二绣香袋丝线长  
xiù kē bǎn lǐ yán biān cháng  
绣板栗岩边长  
bǎn lǐ diào zài yán jiǎo lǐ  
板栗掉在岩脚里  
zhǐ jiàn bǎn lǐ bù jiàn láng  
只见板栗不见郎  
sān xiù xiāng dài xiù táo hóng  
三绣香袋绣桃红  
táo hóng bāo zài lǜ yè zhōng  
桃红包在绿叶中  
yè er bāo zhe táo huā hóng  
叶儿包着桃花红  
gē mèi jǐ shí cái xiāng féng  
哥妹几时才相逢  
sì xiù xiāng dài xiù sì jiǎo  
四绣香袋绣四角  
sì jiǎo xiāng dài xiù suǒ luó  
四角香袋绣梭罗  
gē shì niú láng mèi zhī nǚ  
哥是牛郎妹织女  
niú láng zhī nǚ guò tiān hé  
牛郎织女过天河  
wǔ xiù xiāng dài xiù guò tóu  
五绣香袋绣过头  
huái zàng xiāng dài mén wài liū  
怀藏香袋门外溜  
shǒu pào zhuāng jìn xiāng dài lǐ  
手帕装进香袋里  
xiāng dài sòng gěi wǒ de gē  
香袋送给我的哥

#### English Translation

Firstly, when the sachet is started to be embroidered  
On the sachet a lion rolling a silk ball is tailored  
The ball is accidentally dropped in the garden  
I can see that lion, but my eyesight to the ball is hindered  
Secondly, when the silk thread is to be prepared  
On the sachet a chestnut at the edge of the rock is tailored  
The chestnut is accidentally dropped in the corner  
I can see that chestnut, but my eyesight to my man is hindered  
Thirdly, when the pink is to be colored  
On the sachet a pink peach wrapped in green leaves is tailored  
The peach is blooming with the leaves covered  
When the reunion with my man occurred  
Fourthly, when the corners are to be embroidered  
On the corners the Reevesia trees are tailored  
My man is as the cowherd and I am as the weaving maiden  
On the Milky Way there will always be reunion  
Finally realizing that it's almost belated  
I rushed out with the sachet decorated  
Put the handkerchief into the sachet  
Which is for my man, my beloved

which was not affected by the feudal rituals of the Central Plains, the rebellion of young Tujia men and women against the deepening feudalization of the marriage system and the existence of different and even opposing moral views permeated by different forms of marriage were the true expression and flourishing of a more unrestrained human nature [4]. In the minority areas where chasing love is relatively free, love songs are the medium and tool for young people to convey their feelings. Therefore, there would be no love and union between young men and women in the Tujia area without love songs. Some love songs also show wit and humor, such as *Hands on My Girl's Shoulders* in this article, which fully expresses the pursuit of the beautiful love of young men and women [21]. The free chasing for love in Tujia Minority with minority ballads as the medium is a humanistic

## 4. Appreciation of the Two Minority Ballads

### 4.1. Worship to Life: Hope in the Struggle Against the Harsh Nature

From the ancient worship of totems, singing has become a way of expressing emotions and feelings. This incomparably free way of expression fully expresses the authenticity of Tujia minorities. Love is one of the core themes of Tujia minority ballads, with a large number and the broadest audience. In addition to the two minority ballads in this article, several songs with the same high popularity, such as *Huang Si Jie* and *Dragon Boat Melody*, are all love songs. In the Tujia area,

and interesting form of love and marriage. Its cultural connotation goes far beyond the purpose and form of marriage selection itself, and it is in line with the modern concept of marriage and love first [22]. Moreover, the images of Tujia males and females are also different in Tujia minority ballads. Tujia men are hardworking and dare to pursue love, loyal and loyal to love to the end, witty and flexible to use their minds for love, while women are industrious and kind, resist arranged marriages, and pursue freedom of marriage [19, 23]. In the two minority ballads of this article, *Hands on My Girl's Shoulders* shows a cute and witty male image, while *Embroidering the Sachet* shows a passionate and hardworking female image. Through the shaping of the characters in the love songs, the simplicity, frankness, and honesty of the Tujia people are also vividly displayed.

The root cause of the preference of Tujia minorities for love songs is that in order to fight against the cruelty of natural conditions and the fragility of life, they must worship life through minority ballads and encourage the union of men and women as the hope of fighting against nature. The civilization forms that human society has experienced can be divided into primitive civilization, agricultural civilization, and industrial civilization, and the change of civilization forms is the process of human beings from fearing nature to transforming nature, and finally conquering nature [24]. Among them, in the period of primitive civilization and agricultural civilization, human beings were insignificant in the face of nature and could only adapt to nature. In the face of the hardship of nature, human beings have limited ability to protect themselves, and the fragility of life is particularly prominent [25]. The Tujia minorities had experienced a long period of primitive civilization and agricultural civilization in the mountains and forests, where living conditions were harsh, and living was difficult. Therefore, the Tujia minorities needed to worship life and love by singing love songs, advocating reproduction, and encouraging more interaction between men and women, and then through the union of men and women and the birth of new life, the spark of civilization could be continued. As Freud suggested, "Human civilization is sublimated from all instinctive forces." According to his theory, sex is "the tendency of life", and libido (sexual power) is the source of positive energy, and the sexual instinct can serve various civilized activities. In Tujia minority ballads, love songs serve the important civilized activity of encouraging fertility [26]. Through fertility, human beings can multiply, and civilization can be passed on. Therefore, Tujia minority ballads carry praises for the interaction between the sexes, drive the reproduction of life, and fight against the fragility of life. The union of men and women is the most majestic thing in primitive civilization and agricultural civilization. It is through the encouragement of love and the union of men and women that humankind has kept the fire of life alive and the flame of civilization alive.

#### **4.2. Relief from Hardship: Strategy in the Fight Against the Harsh Nature**

Tujia minority ballads are closely related to ordinary lives,

and many of them have strong social functions, as Tujia minorities have created many minority ballads with strong practicality and ethnic characteristics [5]. The most famous of which are labor songs. Due to the geographical constraints of living in the mountains of the Tujia minorities, they often echoed each other across the mountains, and passed on their feelings in pairs, which had the practical function of relieving boredom and expressing feelings [27]. In collective labor, the physical exertion of the Tujia minorities was great, so singing the same labor song played a role in refreshing and unifying the rhythm, which was very effective for improving the efficiency of labor. At the same time, when the Tujia minorities worked collectively in the fields, the singing of labor songs was a means of entertainment for people, and the songs accompanied them in the process of production and life [5, 27].

The critical function of Tujia minority ballads is to alleviate the hardships in lives. The backwardness of production and reproduction conditions during the primitive and agricultural civilizations made lives difficult [24]. Therefore, human beings needed to find strategies to offset this hardship and then make fun of it. For the Tujia minorities, minority ballads carried this critical mission [28]. Freud believed that internal or external stimuli could relieve body tension and make people feel happy [29]. At the same time, people tend to prefer happiness and avoid suffering but often fail to get what they want. This kind of unhappiness makes humans turn to other areas (such as literature, art, etc.) to create happiness [26]. Many daily production scenes are described in *Embroidering the Sachet*, such as picking chestnuts in the rock cracks. Faced with the difficulties, hardships, and even dangers of daily work in the mountains, if there was no input, stimulation, and promotion of positive energy, the tension and pain might be unbearable. Therefore, people chose to create happiness with minority ballads to relieve pain. The Tujia minorities combined labor and love through minority ballads to bring love and hope to life, so that the repetitive and boring daily labor was not just hardship itself, but with longing [3, 21]. Above this, there was an open-minded attitude towards life, through finding hope and pleasure, so as to have fun in hardship. When human beings face hardships, they need positive energy to create spiritual wealth to offset pain [30]. Humankind adopted this strategy and passed the long and dangerous period of primitive civilization and agricultural civilization, and gradually made this strategy integrated into their cultural gene. In modern times, in the face of various new pressures, human beings also adopt this strategy to seek for happiness and place their affection on various literary and artistic works. The succession of this strategy just shows its effectiveness and necessity [31].

#### **4.3. Pursuit of Beauty: Courage in the Fight Against the Harsh Nature**

Human beings feel the beauty of music because, on the one hand, physiologically, the rhythm, melody, and timbre of music can give people more room for imagination, such as fast rhythm brings excitement, high pitch brings distant feeling,

etc. On the other hand, on the psychological level, music can bring satisfaction to the inner world of people. In the process of fighting against harsh nature, human beings need not only physical support, but also psychological support, and Tujia minority ballads gave Tujia minorities the courage to fight against nature [32].

The beauty of Tujia minority ballads firstly lies in the merit of being easy-to-understand. Verbal language is the primary language (not written language) of the Tujia minority, which determines that Tujia minority ballads must adopt a large number of dialects as the basis for rhyming, especially for the minority ballads in Enshi. Although the minority ballads are all in popular colloquial language and look rough and raw, some of which even vulgar, it is this roughness that reflects the authenticity of Tujia minorities [33]. The two minority ballads in this article have no gorgeous rhetoric or excessive modification, and the language is easy to understand, but they make people feel extra fresh and comfortable. Secondly, the beauty of Tujia minority ballads is rich in connotation. Tujia love songs are often funny and humorous, reflecting the optimistic, heroic, open-minded, and humorous characteristics of the Tujia minorities living in the mountains [34]. Just like *Hands on My Girl's Shoulders* in this article, people cannot help laughing after reading or listening to it, feeling the man's wit and humor and the woman's pretense of refusal but welcome. Finally, the beauty of Tujia minority ballads is reflected in the unique ethnic charm [1, 21]. Whether it is the high-pitchedness of *Hands on My Girl's Shoulders* or the tactfulness of *Embroidering the Sachet*, they all reflect the profound feelings of the singer. Language form is the carrier of meaning, and rhythmic language form also has its own content: the beauty of rhythm. The rhythms of Tujia minority ballads, such as the long and short sentence duet of *Hands on My Girl's Shoulders* and the antithetical and neat construction of *Embroidering the Sachet*, all reflect the pursuit of beauty.

Ideas from Kurth imply that music is a natural power in human beings, and a dynamic of impulses of the will. The presence of psychological power allows the appreciator to derive a sense of beauty from music, which arises when the creator and the appreciator substitute their own emotions into the artwork [35]. Tujia minority ballads have been handed down for thousands of years because the beauty of the rhythm and text contained in them has made the Tujia minorities empathize with them. Under the harsh living and production conditions, the elements of love and labor in the Tujia minority ballads gave the Tujia minorities the courage to fight, and these elements were exactly what the Tujia minorities wanted to hear, to say, and to spread through the form of singing [36]. Therefore, Tujia minorities have taken the initiative to become the inheritors and participants of this cultural form generation after generation. The pursuit of artistic beauty has given Tujia minorities the courage to fight and spiritual support in the face of the cruelty of nature. Tujia minorities spread their courage in the form of art, so that people of the same generation and future generations can

gather courage, transform from fearing nature to transforming nature, and finally conquering nature. Artistic beauty plays a significant role in this process of transformation.

## 5. Criticism and Discussion

The Tujia minority ballads contain rich cultural information, are the crystallization of beauty and wisdom, have folk sentiment and charm, and reflect the pursuit and aspiration of Tujia minority for a better life. As a primitive Tujia musical art, minority ballads are carrying precious cultural information on various aspects of Tujia culture, history, customs, and life [1, 36]. The ancestors of the Tujia minorities have left an extremely rich intangible cultural heritage for future generations, and the contemporary Tujia minorities are not only the inheritors and enjoyers of their own intangible cultural heritage, but also have to shoulder the important responsibility of prosperity and innovation of Tujia minority ballads.

However, under the strong impact of globalization and modernization, all minorities in China have experienced social and cultural transformation, and the Tujia minorities are no exception for the cultural transformation from traditional society to modern society [7-9]. It is the unique productivity and lifestyle of the Tujia minorities that have created the unique minority ballads culture, but also the traditional productivity and production methods have been gradually lost under the impact of contemporary production methods and cultural products [7]. Nowadays, the inheritance and dissemination of minority ballads have changed dramatically. The cultural ecology of singing for a living, for fun, and as a medium no longer exists, but has become more of an old memory for the elderly. With the mainstream of market economy values, the cultural field of minority ballads has again suffered a heavy blow, and the younger generation has become culturally disconnected from Tujia minority ballads and cultures. As a result, the transmission of minority ballads is no longer the tradition, but has become a protected cultural heritage [6]. With the development of the tourism economy, the natural ecology and human ecology in which Tujia minority ballads were originally rooted have changed drastically [40]. Some of the songs rated as intangible cultural heritage are constantly used as tourism items in scenic spots, while the rest of the vast number of Tujia minority ballads are gradually forgotten. The use of Tujia minority ballads as tourist commodities is reflected in the motive of satisfying the needs of tourists for leisure and entertainment and experiencing minority culture. Therefore, Tujia minority ballads are packaged, promoted, and operated on a large scale, which inevitably brings fragmentation of Tujia minority ballads. Along with the disappearance of the sense of mystery and difference of Tujia minority ballads, the cultural characteristics of the Tujia minority is then diluted and disappeared, which may be the prospect of Tujia culture [37].

With the rapid development of society and the economy, the social culture is diversified. New ideas and new cultures are flooding various media platforms and deeply influencing the

thinking and consciousness of young people, as well as their behaviors [41]. Some of these new cultures and ideas represent the pace of the times, such as the rapid advancement of technology, the use of big data, etc., which further improve living environment and quality of life of human beings [9-10]. However, there are also negative parts of the new culture and new ideas, such as consumerism wrapped in the capital, for example a lot of milk is wasted in order to vote for idols. Young people, who were originally vigorous and energetic, pursuing their ideals and fighting bravely, are influenced by capital and addicted to the game it has created. The good spiritual qualities, such as love, loyalty, responsibility, and labor, are being eroded by enjoyment, laziness, and indulgence of consumerism. Those excellent spiritual qualities still shine in the minority ballads, highlighting the wisdom of the Tujia ancestors. From these minority ballads, people nowadays can still feel the spiritual connotation and draw spiritual sustenance from them to make meaningful judgments and choices under proper guidance. Therefore, the significance of studying, passing down, and interculturality spreading minority ballads is huge and worthy of perseverance for a long time [38].

The flexibility of Tujia minority ballads determines that they will not wither in silence in a static state, but will absorb nutrients in real life and exude the fragrance of the times. The original method of oral transmission has developed into the multimedia era nowadays, and the methods for people to understand the Tujia minority ballads have become diversified [39]. Our times strongly advocates the development of ethnic culture, which has helped the transmission and communication of Tujia minority ballads. The true heritage of the Tujia minority spirit is the never-failing minority ballads, which preserve the most positive part of the Tujia spiritual sphere, raging with the blood of the nation and containing brilliant humanity. In many folklore activities, people acquire rich knowledge from minority ballads. At the same time, minority ballads play a significant promotional role in manifesting the development of production and social progress, which is the profound social significance of Tujia minority ballads [1, 6-9].

## 6. Conclusion

Through the translation and appreciation of two Tujia minority ballads, this article analyzes the cultural factors and practical significance of Tujia minority ballads, and proposes the spiritual resources of Tujia minority ballads in view of the lack of spiritual pillars in the present society. The importance of preserving, inheriting, and promoting ethnic culture is becoming increasingly prominent in today's globalization era. Only by absorbing sustenance from history and culture can one build a solid wall for one's soul in the wave of consumerism and avoid being held hostage by capitalism and losing one's spiritual freedom. With the development of the society and the passage of time, Tujia minority ballads will continue to carry on their profound spirits.

## References

- [1] Yang, T. (2011). Study on the Aesthetic Culture of Tujia Ethnic [Doctorate Thesis]. Southwest University.
- [2] Xie, Y., & Wang, H. (2007). Western Hubei Folk Songs and Tujia Folklore—Take Sancha Village in Enshi City as the Example. *Journal of Hubei University for Nationalities*, 03, 73–76.
- [3] Dai, L. (2015). The Origin and Folk Cultural Connotation of Five Sentences Song in Enshi [Master Thesis]. Hubei University for Nationalities.
- [4] Huang, J. (2014). The Aesthetic Characteristics of Tujia Love Songs [Master Thesis]. Hubei University for Nationalities.
- [5] Li, J. (2009). On the Features of Haocao Gong and Drum art of Tujia Nationality in Wuling Area. *Journal of Guiyang University*, 4 (03), 68–71.
- [6] Tan, Z. (2011). On the Conservation and Exploitation of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Tujia Ethnic [Doctorate Thesis]. South-Central University for Nationalities.
- [7] Xu, J. (2013). Minority Areas of Mass Media on Transmission and Dissemination of Intangible Cultural Heritage [Master Thesis]. Central China Normal University.
- [8] Liu, Y. (2015). Study on the Influence of New Media on the Tujia Folk Culture in Enshi Area [Master Thesis]. Southwest Jiaotong University.
- [9] Xiong, Q. (2018). System, Content, Media: The Study on Tujia Folk Culture Communication Activities of Enshi State Government [Master Thesis]. Bohai University.
- [10] Xu, H. (2018). A Study of Translation and Dissemination of Tujia Folk Songs in Western Hubei Province. *DEStech Transactions on Social Science, Education and Human Science*.
- [11] Xu, H. (2018). The Application of Multi-modal Discourse in English Translation of Tujia Folk Song Long Chuan Diao in Western Hubei Province. *MATEC Web of Conferences*, 232, 02010.
- [12] Bennett, M. J. (1998). Intercultural communication: A current perspective. *Basic concepts of intercultural communication: Selected readings*, 1, 1-34.
- [13] Jiang, X. (2016). On Chinese-English Translation of Hua Er, the Northwest Love Folk Song. *Journal of Lianyungang Technical College*, 29 (04), 13–16.
- [14] Spivak, G. C. (2000). Translation as Culture. *Parallax*, 6(1), 13–24.
- [15] Franzon, J. (2008). Choices in Song Translation. *The Translator*, 14 (2), 373–399.
- [16] Wang, W., & Chu, Y. (2011). On the Translation of Chinese Traditional Folk-custom Artifacts from the Perspective of Eco-translatology. *Journal of Hefei University of Technology*, 25(05), 87–90.
- [17] Lu, W. (2017). On the Translation of English Folk Songs from the Perspective of Functionalism. *Journal of Shanxi Datong University*, 31 (04), 81–84.

- [18] Wei, L. (2021). Research on multi-dimensional translation of Chinese folk songs. *Learning & Education*, 9.
- [19] Yan, Y. (2017). Ideas on Female in Enshi Folk Songs [Master Thesis]. Hubei University for Nationalities.
- [20] Yang, Y. (2016). Study on Folk Music and Habitat of Adaptation Tujia Race in Sangzhi [Master Thesis]. Jishou University.
- [21] Wang, Y. (2009). A Study of the Culture and National Characters of Tujia Love Songs. *Journal of Hubei University for Nationalities*, 27 (04), 18–20.
- [22] Xie, Y. (2004). Sex Intention in Love and Marriage Courses in Tujia Love Songs. *Journal of Huaihua University*, 06, 33–34.
- [23] Xiao, Y. (2020). Study on Male Aristic Image of Tujia Folk Songs in Southwest Hubei [Master Thesis]. Central China Normal University.
- [24] Morris, I. (2013). *The measure of civilization: how social development decides the fate of nations*. Princeton University Press.
- [25] Gagen, E. A. (2007). Reflections of primitivism: Development, progress and civilization in imperial America, 1898–1914. *Children's Geographies*, 5 (1-2), 15-28.
- [26] Marcuse, H. (2015). *Eros and civilization: A philosophical inquiry into Freud*. Beacon Press.
- [27] Xie, Y., Gan, W., & Liao, Y. (2008). Classical Literary Elements in Traditional Tujia Folk Songs. *Journal of Hubei University for Nationalities*, 04, 7–11.
- [28] Maisels, C. K. (2003). *The emergence of civilization: From hunting and gathering to agriculture, cities, and the state of the near east*. Routledge.
- [29] Freud, S. (1963). Introductory lectures on psycho-analysis: Parts 1 and 2: 1915-1916. In *Introductory lectures on psycho-analysis: Parts 1 and 2: 1915-1916* (pp. 239-239).
- [30] Lopes, L. L. (1987). Between hope and fear: The psychology of risk. In *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 20, pp. 255-295). Academic Press.
- [31] Sinigaglia, J. (2013). Happiness as a Reward for Artistic Work. *Societes contemporaines*, (3), 17-42.
- [32] Khalfa, S., Schon, D., Anton, J. L., & Liégeois-Chauvel, C. (2005). Brain regions involved in the recognition of happiness and sadness in music. *Neuroreport*, 16 (18), 1981-1984.
- [33] Yi, X. (2007). On the Music Style and Characteristic of Tujia's Folk Songs. *Journal of Nantong Vocational & Technical Shipping College*, 01, 11–14.
- [34] Li, J. (2010). On National Identity from the Perspective of Tujia Folk Song: A Case Study on Five Lines Folk Song of Tujia People in Xie Jiaping, Songzi, Hubei Province. *Journal of Original Ecological National Culture*, 2 (04), 97–90.
- [35] Hsu, D. M. (1966). Ernst Kurth and his concept of music as motion. *Journal of Music Theory*, 10 (1), 2-17.
- [36] Xie, Y. (2009). The Categories of the Existing Folk Songs and Their Cultural Traits in Tujia Villages along Qingjiang Vallley. *Journal of Hubei University for Nationalities*, 27 (01), 64–69.
- [37] Yang, J. (2012). Transmission and Variation of Oral Tradition in the Context of Modernity: A Case Study of Enshi Tujia Folk Songs. *Folk Culture Forum*, (04), 13-21.
- [38] Shi-ya, Z. (2006). Education of Folk Songs and Experience Development of the Tujia Ethnic Groups. *Journal of Research on Education for Ethnic Minorities*, (06), 12-16.
- [39] Tian, Y. (2010). Nomenclature, Cultural Connotation and Artistic Characteristics of Tujia Folk Songs. *Journal of Tongren University*, (04). 1-6.
- [40] Jing, C., Zehui, W., Yan, L., & Hua, W. (2020). Inheritance and Protection of Intangible Culture in Minority Areas—Take Enshi Tujia Nationality "Ba Bao Tongling Dance" into the Campus as an Example. In *2020 12th International Conference on Measuring Technology and Mechatronics Automation (ICMTMA)* (pp. 890-894). IEEE.
- [41] Touijar, W. (2020). The Impact of Modernity on Youth Culture: Their Linguistic Choices, Thoughts and Attitudes. *The International Journal of Applied Language Studies and Culture*, 3 (2), 25-34.