

# Optimism, Harmony and Sincerity: The Translation and Interpretation of Two Tujia Enshi Folk Songs

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**Abstract:** As one of the typical forms of Tujia culture, Tujia folk songs have colorful forms and profound contents. It reflects the cultural psychology and humanistic spirit of Tujia people who are hardworking, sincere, resolute, united, tolerant, pioneering and innovative. Enshi Tujia folk song is the Tujia people's tribute to life, the praise of life, and the singing of love. Its unique artistic charm not only belongs to the Tujia people, but also belongs to China, and should belong to all mankind. Therefore, through the translation and interpretation of two Enshi Tujia folk songs, this article hopes to find out the rules of the linguistic artistry of Tujia folk songs and the socio-cultural characteristics they reflect, so that Tujia culture can be widely inherited and carried forward in this translation and interpretation. It is found that dialect, proverbs and colloquial words are often used in the lyrics of Enshi Tujia folk songs. In terms of rhythm, it often uses lining words and ending rhyme to set off the atmosphere. In terms of structure, its sentence pattern is neat, and the structural style of "five sentences" folk song has a unique form. In terms of rhetoric, folk songs like to use analogy and metaphor, which makes folk songs sound vivid and joyful. In addition, these two Enshi folk songs are integrated with Tujia folk cultures and daily life. They not only express the optimistic life attitude and passionate character of Tujia people, but also vividly describe the results of Tujia people's harmonious coexistence with nature, and show their sincere concept of love and traditional folk customs.

**Keywords:** Tujia Folk Songs, Language Arts, Cultural Connotations

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## 1. Introduction

Tujia folk songs not only move people with their beautiful melody, but also impress people with their profound cultural connotation. In the cultural transmission of folk songs, it is more important to convey the meaning of lyrics, especially the effective dissemination of cultural meaning, which is a difficult problem to be dealt with in the study of folk songs. In order to convey the cultural and local characteristics of the lyrics authentically, it is crucial that people have a thorough understanding of the cultural message of the original text, which is an important condition for the transnational dissemination of Tujia culture. Therefore, this article first translated two Enshi Tujia folk songs, and then interpreted the two songs from the aspects of content, language and cultural connotation, hoping to peep into the mystery of its

language artistry and the social and cultural characteristics it reflects.

### 1.1. Geographical Environment of Enshi

Hegel pointed out that the natural type of the place is closely related to the type and character of the people who grow on it [1]. Enshi Tujia folk songs reflect their cognition of their natural environment, and the geographical environment of Tujia nationality is also an important material basis for the occurrence of Tujia folk songs. The Tujia nationality belongs to the mountain minority in southwest China. The settlements are mainly in the Wuling mountainous areas<sup>1</sup> at the junction of Hunan, Hubei, Guizhou and Chongqing. This area is

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<sup>1</sup> Wuling mountain area is an adjacent area of four provinces (cities) of Hunan, Hubei, Chongqing and Guizhou with Wuling Mountain as the center and Tujia, Miao and Dong ethnic minorities as the main body.

dominated by complex and diverse mountainous terrain, surrounded by hundreds of rivers and streams. This kind of landform has caused long-term traffic obstruction. This also restricted the production and life of the Tujia people in the past, and made the social development of the Tujia people relatively slow. Their residences are either lying on mountains, riding on mountain beams, or hiding valleys. However, the ancient history and beautiful landscape have nurtured the unique Tujia culture. And a gorgeous flower with local fragrance, Tujia folk songs are bred from Tujia culture.

The life of the Tujia people maintains an affinity with nature, forming a cultural mentality of harmony between man and nature, emotion and reason [2]. The aesthetic concept of Tujia folk songs generated in this background reflects the strong personality and optimistic spirit of Tujia people. Their folk song activities sincerely express their spirit, ethics and value orientation, and have a distinctive flavor of life.

### **1.2. Historical and Cultural Environment**

The social environment in the Tujia area has influenced the occurrence and development of Tujia folk songs, which is mainly manifested in the fact that the social and historical environment of Tujia have enriched the content and form of folk songs. And the social history of the Tujia area has become a reflection of folk songs.

Xiang Da and Pan Guangdan [3] demonstrated the view that Tujia is the descendant of Ba people<sup>2</sup> with sufficient arguments, which also laid a solid foundation for Tujia to become an independent minority. But until today, the ethnic origin of Tujia nationality is still under discussion, and new views of ethnic origin often appear. At present, most scholars believe that Tujia ethnic origin is a complex with Ba people as the main body and integrating many other ethnic groups. The Ba descent and other tribes living in this area have been living together for a long time, gradually forming a new ethnic group with its unique customs, beliefs, art, and psychological qualities. Until 1949, the primitive production and lifestyle of the Tujia people have gradually changed, and the demand for a large amount of relevant knowledge and skills has stimulated the birth and development of more dialogue and antiphonal folk songs to a certain extent.

In the long historical development process, the Tujia culture derived from the Ba culture is not only deeply influenced by the Han culture<sup>3</sup>, but also interacts and infiltrates with the cultures of Miao, Dong, Yao and other nationalities. The Tujia culture that has grown up in such a cultural context shows the characteristics of a wide variety of content, rich connotation, and varied forms. The phenomenon of group antiphonal songs has increased, and various mountain songs, love songs, and life songs have appeared, and the form of expression has also developed from solo to alternate duet, and a large number of

folk songs have been derived from it. It is this unique cultural condition for the coexistence of multiple cultures that affects the formation and development of Tujia folk songs.

Under the combined influence of the complex geographical environment, social history and cultural context, the hard-working, brave and intelligent Tujia people created folk songs and gradually enriched the content and forms of folk songs. The folk songs of the Tujia nationality have always maintained their vitality under the protection of mountains and rivers, and have become an important cultural form that shows the original landscape, material world and spiritual world of the Tujia nationality.

### **1.3. Tujia Folk Song**

Folk songs have a long history, and at the same time it is a kind of “alive” cultural phenomenon that always maintains its fresh vitality. It is one of the Tujia music and art forms that were collectively created by the Tujia people in their long-term labor and social life, and inherited and developed through oral teaching and action imitation. In the constant changes of the times, the clothing, housing construction and other living lifestyles of the Tujia people have undergone significant changes. This also makes the folk songs that reflect people’s lives appear rich in types and artistic styles, so that Tujia folk songs still maintain a unique aesthetic value.

The Tujia folk song is the true expression of the Tujia people’s heart and the call of the soul, and the inheritance of culture. The lyrics and music of Tujia folk songs are unpretentious and sincere, reflecting the beauty of human feelings, artistic conception, customs, music and form, showing the history, society, daily life, customs, love and marriage of Tujia nationality, with distinctive regional characteristics. In the process of inheritance, folk songs absorb colorful Tujia culture and become thumbnails of folk culture.

In short, through the translation and cultural interpretation of folk songs, the unique spiritual values, way of thinking and imagination of the Chinese people can be brought out, which is conducive to the erection of China's cultural identity and gives China the ability to express its own cultural diversity.

## **2. Literature Review**

Since the beginning of the study on the ethnic identification of the Tujia nationality, the research fields of the Tujia nationality have continued to expand. From the origin of Tujia nationality to the history of Tujia nationality, from politics, economy, culture to daily folk events, from the collation of literature to a series of problems of Tujia nationality, these theoretical studies have achieved fruitful results. And the research on Tujia folk songs is also flourishing.

### **2.1. A review of Tujia Folk Songs Research**

The research results of Tujia folk songs from the perspective of musicology are very prominent, with certain influence and value. Xie Lunan [4] summarized the three characteristics of folk music in Western Hunan, and put

<sup>2</sup> The history of Ba nationality can be dated back to 4000 years ago. It was an ancient tribe living in Chongqing, Hubei, and Sichuan, and they were called the Ba people.

<sup>3</sup> Han culture is the main body of Chinese culture, which refers to the culture formed by the continuous evolution and development of Confucian culture and other theories such as legalism, Taoism, Mohism and so on.

forward a new viewpoint that the study of folk music is a localized, humanistic, and persistent research. His views promoted the study of folk music to a certain extent. Meng Xianhui [5] studied Tujia folk songs from the aspects of genre and musical characteristics, and found out the musical characteristics of Tujia folk songs. Based on the theories and methods of ethnomusicology, Xiang Hua [6] sorted and collected Tujia folk songs of different types and regions. And he tries to explain the function, ethnic characteristics, formation reasons and profound cultural connotation of Tujia folk songs through music form. From the above research, it can be seen that the research on Tujia folk songs has experienced a process from shallow to deep. Some scholars began to pay attention to the cultural connotation behind folk songs and believe that folk songs are not only a form of folk literature and art, but also a regional culture and the core part of Chinese music.

Studying Tujia folk songs from the perspective of folk culture can reveal the deep connotation or meaning of Tujia folk songs. Chen Li and Qi Baiping [7] are the ones who study Tujia culture from Tujia folk songs. Their attention to the content and origin of folk songs has an important enlightening effect on the research idea of this article. They obtained a large amount of Tujia folk songs materials, and made incisive analysis and research on the basis of these materials. Li Li [8] analyzed the three important effects of Enshi dialect on cultural development, and explored the secrets of national folk culture. The research of Hou Wanping [9] believes that folk songs are not only a kind of folk art, but also an important carrier of Tujia culture, with rich cultural value. These studies show that the Tujia people's values, ethics and spiritual pursuit behind Tujia folk songs are more worthy of people's thinking and research.

Regarding the study of Enshi Tujia folk songs, it mainly analysis the artistic characteristics of Enshi Tujia folk songs, the characteristics of Tujia folk culture and the inheritance and development of folk songs. Wang Chunpeng and Liu Changyu [10] took Enshi Autonomous Prefecture as an example to explore the typical artistic characteristics of Tujia folk songs. They analyzed the genres and themes of Tujia folk songs in detail, and summed up six characteristics of Tujia folk songs. Zhou Shiquan [11] studied the inheritance of the traditional folk songs of the Tujia people in Enshi area. He believes that the inheritance of folk songs not only maintains the cultural memory of a nation, but also embodies the cultural vitality of a nation. This is a heavy mission for cultural departments and art researchers.

Generally speaking, researches on Tujia folk songs began to try to explore and interpret the cultural connotations and aesthetic pursuits as well as the humanistic spirit and development value embodied in the unique art of Tujia folk songs. However, there are relatively few research results on the detailed description of the linguistic and cultural characteristics of folk songs. And in many areas, folk songs are facing the threat of lack of successors. As an intangible cultural heritage, the protection and inheritance of folk songs are related to the national cultural security, the harmonious

development of society and the inheritance of national culture. Therefore, this article hopes to explore the linguistic and cultural features of Tujia folk songs, so as to inherit and protect Tujia folk songs and culture, and promote its dissemination abroad.

## ***2.2. A Review of Tujia Folk Songs Translation Research***

As a special art form that vividly reflects the daily life, values and culture of ethnic minorities, folk songs have become an important part of Chinese culture with their strong regional and cultural characteristics. Therefore, the translation of folk songs also shoulders the historical mission of cross-cultural communication.

As scholars at home and abroad pay more attention to the text of folk songs, more and more translators devote themselves to the research and practice of English translation of folk songs. Some domestic scholars have noticed the importance of the translation of ethnic minority folk songs. The current research and practice of folk song translation mostly take traditional translation theories such as functional translation theory, relevance theory, constructivism theory, translation aesthetics, reception aesthetics, ecological translatology as the starting point, focusing on the study of translation techniques and strategies at the language level. Gan Lu [12] used "Six Sips of Tea" as an example to explore the translation of Enshi Tujia folk songs using German functionalist translation theory. Taking reception aesthetics and post-structuralist literary thoughts as the theoretical basis, using the methods of diachronic and synchronic, comparison and analysis, deduction and induction, Gou Bin [13] put forward the idea of reversing and smoothing, and concrete operable translation strategies and methods. Starting from multiple dimensions such as language, culture, communication, and music, Zhang Xingling and Zhang Jian [14] used ecological translation as a theoretical guide to compare and analyze the advantages and disadvantages of three different English translations of the Yi folk song "The Stream Flows". It is not difficult to see that the translation of ethnic minority folk songs in China basically follows the traditional theoretical model and takes less account of the actual situation of the translated language and culture. And the English translation of Tujia folk songs cannot well meet the aesthetic taste and reading expectations of the target language readers. Some translations of folk songs are poorly readable and difficult to be widely disseminated and accepted.

We are in an era of globalization in which "culture" is everywhere and pervasive, and also in an information age of cross-cultural and interdisciplinary. Translation is difficult to get rid of the shadow of "culture", and its own definition is constantly changing [15]. Therefore, translation research from the perspective of culture has gradually become a new topic in the field of Chinese translation studies. The influence of cultural turn on translation studies also urges scholars to summarize the previous experience of folk song translation research and practice, and examine folk song translation from the cultural level. Therefore, the translation practice and cultural interpretation of folk songs are of great practical

significance to the dissemination of Chinese minority culture. This is also the reason why this article not only translated two Enshi folk songs, but also interpreted their cultural connotation.

### 3. Translation and Interpretation of Two Enshi Folk Songs

There are many kinds of Tujia folk songs: Tujia love songs with sincere and strong feelings; wedding songs that shake the soul; tea-picking songs that are full of joy of labor; funeral songs embodying Tujia people’s open-minded outlook on life, etc. *Cuckoos Croon Sounds Far Away* and *Peeping Eyes in the Door’s Sieves*, which are popular in Enshi, are two Tujia folk songs with rich cultural connotation and distinctive artistic characteristics. The following part will first translate these two folk songs, and then interpret them from the aspects of content, language characteristics and cultural connotation.

#### 3.1. Translation and Interpretation of “Cuckoos Croon Sounds Far Away”

Mountain song is a popular form of folk songs in Enshi. Mountain songs are usually produced by Tujia people working on the hillside. This folk song describes Tujia people's praise and love for folk songs. It not only reflects the open-minded and optimistic characteristics of Tujia people, but also shows the beautiful scene of harmonious coexistence between Tujia people and nature. The following table shows the Chinese version of this folk song and the English version translated by the author.

Table 1. Chinese version and English translation of this folk songs.

Chinese Version	English Translation
chàng gē yào chàng gāo shān yīn 唱歌要唱高山音	Mountain tunes carry soul away
qí mǎ yào qí xiǎng tóng líng 骑马要骑响铜铃	Horseriding with loud bells on th' way
mǎ pǎo shí lǐ tóng líng xiǎng 马跑十里铜铃响	The bells' sound melodies ten miles
gē chàng shí lǐ yǒu rén tīng 歌唱十里有人听	Tunes touch listeners miles away
yáng què gāo jiào yuǎn chuán míng 阳雀高叫远传名	Cuckoos croon sounds far away

The high tune mountain songs of Tujia people have a unique aesthetic appeal. It is the song of free life that is truly sung with pure musical melody. Whether it is melodious, sharp and high-pitched, or deep and vigorous, it makes the melody and harmony stir in people's soul. The first sentence of the lyrics expresses the heart directly. The author translated it into “mountain tunes carry soul away” can express the touching characteristics of this mountain song.

When Tujia people sing this folk song, they naturally vent some primitive passion and express some emotions from the depths of their hearts. Tujia folk songs generally use analogy, with interesting meaning. For example, the second lyrics use the sound of copper bells to compare with the volume of singing folk songs. And this lyrics are translated into "horseriding with loud bells on th' way " to highlight the word "loud". In order to convey the meaning expressed in the

original text that when the song rings a few miles away, the copper bells also jingle all the way, the third lyrics are translated into “the bells' sound melody ten miles”.

When Tujia people sing the mountain songs, their voices are harsh and high-pitched, and have the potential to reach the depths of the mountains and forests, just as the cuckoo's song can be heard far away. The author uses the words “miles away” and “far away” to express the loudness and far-reaching nature of the mountain song. When hearing this folk song, the audience will feel that their body and mind are strongly stirred and full of passion. The appeal is so strong that distant listeners want to follow. Therefore, the author uses the word "touch" to describe the exciting rhythm of folk songs. As for the last sentence of folk songs, it is also the sublimation of folk songs. The analogy between the folk song and the sound of cuckoo once again emphasizes the loud and penetrating power of folk song. The lyrics describe the wild vitality of folk songs. The author also tries to restore the artistic techniques of the original lyrics in translation, trying to show the Tujia culture.

#### 3.1.1. The Linguistic Features of This Folk Song

According to the classification of singing, mountain songs can also be divided into high tune mountain songs and flat tune mountain songs [16]. High tune mountain songs are high pitched and lyrical, while flat tune mountain songs are gentle and graceful. High tune mountain songs are difficult to sing due to their high pitch, and the lyrics generally do not exceed five or six sentences. Flat tune mountain songs can accommodate longer lyrics due to the low pitch, and the arrangement of words is denser than that of high tune mountain songs. *Cuckoos Croon Sounds Far Away* is a famous mountain song with a high tune.

The "five sentences" folk song has a unique form, with seven words in one sentence and five sentences in one song. It breaks the even structure of ballads and arranges the lines according to odd numbers. The first two sentences rhyme with the last two sentences or the fourth sentence rhymes with the fifth sentence to make the whole rhyme symmetrical and harmonious. This form of folk song is mainly popular in Enshi, Hefeng, Jianshi, Badong and other counties and cities. Compared with the folk songs in other areas, the Tujia folk songs in Enshi Prefecture inherit the odd lines of ancient poetry very completely, especially the “five sentence” ballads, which have a large number and have creative development in form and content. This has promoted the continuous growth of folk song style [17].

In this folk song, it conforms to the characteristics of the "five sentences" folk song. It has five sentences, each with seven words. The first two sentences and the last two sentences are rhymed with Chinese "in" (Yin, Ling, Ting, Ming). In translation, in order to make the meaning consistent with the original text, these rhymes are changed to "/ weI /" (away, way, away, away). In terms of rhythm, out of the consideration of corresponding to the seven words of the original text, the author also pays attention to translating folk songs into seven syllables in each sentence. "Five sentences" folk songs not only have cultural accumulation significance for the aesthetic creation of Tujia folk song

forms, but also have significant value for enriching the aesthetic forms of Chinese folk songs.

### 3.1.2. Cultural Connotation

With high mountains, dense forests, clear streams and mild climate, Tujia nationality has accumulated a lot of cultural wealth. Through this Tujia folk song, in addition to feeling the love of Enshi Tujia for folk songs, we can also get a glimpse of some relics left by the living state and lifestyle of Tujia ancestors, which awakens Tujia's memory of history.

#### (i). Optimistic Spirit

A certain ecological environment creates a certain population, and the culture of this population will be branded with its ecological environment accordingly. The singing of Tujia high pitched folk songs originates from natural ecology and man-made practice. Tujia people live in Wuling mountain area. The mountain is far away from the downtown. The underdeveloped transportation also causes the inconvenience of communication. In their spare time, Tujia people gather in groups to sing pleasant folk songs for entertainment. Tujia people sing this folk song to naturally express their deep feelings. Gradually, the Tujia people accumulated more experience and became skilled from unskilled. This kind of folk song should be sung at a high volume, because the sound should be transmitted to another mountain. In such an environment, the Tujia people have created high pitched mountain songs, with large ups and downs and bright tones. This song not only shows the musical characteristics of folk songs, but also expresses the praise and love of Tujia people for mountain songs. Tujia people live a hard life, but they can talk and laugh and play with songs, which expresses the Tujia people's positive and optimistic concept of life. Therefore, folk songs are born in high mountains, flourished in Tujia nationality, and are also loved by Tujia people. Mountain song is the life song of Tujia people who live in the far-reaching and high mountains.

#### (ii). Harmony with Nature

The Tujia people believe that the existence of ghosts and gods is due to the special geography, humanities, history and other cultural environments that restrict the development of productive forces. When Tujia ancestors were in the situation of backward ideology and low primitive productivity, they attributed many things to the "gods" and prayed for the blessing of the "gods", which naturally formed the primitive nature worship. They believe that everything in the world has its soul and that the soul lives forever. They believe that people have soul and body, so all things in nature related to people do not necessarily have material entities, but they have soul like people. Tujia people understand natural things in their own primitive way of thinking. All natural things are endowed with the same life consciousness and spiritual consciousness as people by Tujia people. Tujia people created Thi Ma<sup>4</sup> culture in order to communicate with the mysterious

forces in nature. In this culture, the communication between man and "god" needs to be realized with the help of Thi Ma's ritual behavior, so as to achieve the purpose of harmonious coexistence between man and nature.

According to the legend of the Tujia people, horse riding can catch up with demons. After the 15th day of the first lunar month, the first horse day will hold sacrificial activities such as horse worship and horse jumping. In ancient times, the Tujia people believed that the eight bronze bell symbolized a horse of Thi Ma [18]. Therefore, a horse head is carved on the upper end of the copper bell, and the neck of the horse is tied with a five-colored ribbon to symbolize the mane. When Thi Ma is ringing the bell and dancing during the sacrificial ceremony, there are often some actions of feeding the horse, teasing the horse, and dismounting the horse. When Thi Ma hits his thigh or shakes it vigorously, it can make a loud clanging sound. These sounds can scare away demons and ghosts, but also summon gods. Therefore, the values and ways of thinking of the Tujia people are also deeply influenced by Thi Ma. The songs and incantations of Thi Ma have become important channels to maintain Tujia spirit, moralize the sentiments of the people, and communicate the feelings between people and things. The horse riding and the ringing of copper bells mentioned in the lyrics are some relics of the Thi Ma culture of the Tujia people.

The area where Tujia people live is surrounded by mountains and rivers. All kinds of animals are very common in Tujia people's life. Therefore, various animal images often appear in Tujia folk songs. People integrate their emotions into different animals and give different meanings to different animals. Tujia people use these different animals to express some spiritual or moral power. The cuckoos mentioned in the lyrics is a migratory bird. When spring comes, it flies to the south. Cuckoos' singing means that spring is coming. Farmers should seize the season to plant Yangchun (crops). Tujia people have always revered cuckoo as a mascot. It can be regarded as an auspicious bird by Tujia people, which shows Tujia people's love for it and Tujia people's worship of nature. Tujia people live close to the mountain and water, and their life is relatively closed. They rely on nature for food and accommodation. And there is a certain regularity in which crops should be planted in which season. In the eyes of Tujia people, the moon, stars, rocks, plants, rivers and lakes and a variety of animals are personified and humanized. They are regarded as living bodies with the same soul as people, and can have mysterious communication with people. It can be seen that Tujia people always have a sense of awe for nature. They respect the laws of nature and maintain a harmonious relationship with nature.

In short, the structure of this "five sentence" folk song is symmetrical and harmonious, the application of ending rhyme is natural and appropriate, and the use of analogy is vivid and interesting. Its vivid wording, rich content and sincere

4 The person who is engaged in worshipping gods and exorcising ghosts and witchcraft is often a Tusi, who is called "Thi Ma" in Tujia language. During the

period of Tusi rule, the Thi Ma had great authority. He could administer a series of activities such as sacrificial ceremony, exorcism, marriage and wedding, praying for rain, resolving disputes, treating diseases, divination, funeral and so on.

emotion make it have quite unique aesthetic value. It shows the life style and wisdom of Tujia nationality. The natural environment, social environment and living situation make Tujia nationality more enthusiastic about singing folk songs, which reflects the optimistic spirit of Tujia nationality. This folk song also records and reflects the living conditions of Tujia ancestors, shows the harmonious relationship between Tujia people and nature, and Tujia people's awe of nature.

### 3.2. Transaltion and Interpretation of "Peeping Eyes in the Door's Sieves"

Tujia love songs are a deep cultural layer in the treasure of

Tujia culture. The performance form of this love song is a duet between men and women. There are five segments, five sentences for each segment. The theme of the lyrics is that two Tujia people express their love for each other in an idyllic mood. In this folk song, there are worries, heartaches, sadness, expectations and shyness. Two lovers want to talk freely from their hearts, but they are afraid of the gossip. There are no vows and gorgeous modifiers in the song, but it is full of endless concerns, love and true feelings. The following table shows the Chinese version of this folk song and the English version translated by the author.

Table 2. Chinese version and English translation of this folk songs.

Chinese Version	English translation
shāi zi guān mén yǎn jīng duō 筛子关门眼睛多 (女)	Peeping Eyes in the Door's Sieves (woman)
láng zài gāo pō pǔ fàng zǎo niú āi, 1.郎在高坡放早牛哎,	1.You herd cattle on hills in a rush (hey);
mèi zài yuán zhōng shū zǎo tóu wā. 2.妹在园中梳早头哇。	2.in the yard my hair is brushed (wow).
láng zài gāo pō zhāo yī zhāo shǒu wā, 3.郎在高坡招一招手哇,	3.You are waving to me, your crush (wow),
wǒ de gē gē yě, 4.我的哥哥也,	4.my dear lad (yeah),
mèi zài yuán zhōng diǎn yī diǎn tóu yǎo wèi yǎo wèi. 5.妹在园中点一点头哟喂哟喂。	5.I'm nodding back in blush (yo-hey-yo-hey).
(男)	(man)
tài yáng yī chū hóng sì huǒ āi, 6.太阳一出红似火哎,	6.The sun scorches since it appeared (hey).
shài dé nà xiǎo mèi wú chù duǒ wā. 7.晒得那小妹无处躲哇。	7.You have nowhere to hide near (wow).
xiǎo láng wǒ xīn zhōng shí nán guò wā, 8.小郎我心中实难过哇,	8.My heart's really full of tear (wow),
wǒ de mèi mèi wèi, 9.我的妹妹喂,	9.my dear lass (hey),
gěi yī dǐng cǎo mào nǐ dài zhuó wā wèi yǎo wèi. 10.给一顶草帽你戴着哇喂哟喂。	10.a straw hat ready for my dear (wow-hey-yo-hey).
(女) 11. bān jiū wú wū mǎn tiān fēi yǎo, 11.斑鸠无窝满天飞哟,	(woman) 11.Without roost turtledoves fly high (yo),
hǎo jiǔ méi yǒu zài yī duī nà。 12.好久没有在一堆那。	12.for long they can't settle thereby (nah).
shuō bù wán de zhī xīn huà yǎo, 13.说不完的知心话哟,	13.Full of love words are untied (yo),
wǒ de gē gē wèi, 14.我的哥哥喂,	14.my dear lad (hey),.
liú bù wán de yǎn jīng shuǐ yǎo wèi yǎo wèi. 15.流不完的眼睛水哟喂哟喂。	15.endless tears flow in my eyes (yo-hey-yo-hey).
(男)	(man)
duì hé duì biān xié duì mén nǎ, 16.对河对边斜对门哪,	16.Across the river door-to-door (nah),
kàn jiàn xiǎo mèi zhǎng chéng rén nà。 17.看见小妹长成人那。	17.saw girl enter mature more (nah).
zǎo pàn fān mā lái xià pìn nà, 18.早盼爹妈来下聘那,	18.Long to send bride-price galore (nah),
wǒ de mèi mèi wèi, 19.我的妹妹喂,	19.my dear lass (hey),
wǎn pàn fù mǔ qǐng mèi rén nà wèi yǎo wèi. 20.晚盼父母请媒人那喂哟喂。	20.yearn for matchmakers therefore (nah-hey-yo-hey).
(女)	(woman)
tóng pén táo mǐ yòng shǒu cuō wā, 21.铜盆淘米用手搓哇,	21.Rinse rice in a browns basin spry (wow).
shì shì nán wéi wǒ qíng gē wā。 22.事事难为我情哥哇。	22.Everything is hard for you, aye (wow).
běn xiǎng liú láng chī dùn fàn nà, 23.本想留郎吃顿饭那,	23.Want to keep him for a meal (nah),
wǒ de gē gē wèi, 24.我的哥哥喂,	24. my dear lad (hey),
shāi zi (mā) guān mén yǎn jīng duō wā wèi yǎo wèi. 25.筛子(嘛)关门眼睛多哇喂哟喂。	25. the door's sieves (hey) show peeping eyes (wow-hey-wow-hey).

The duet between the lad and lass in this love song is vivid and concise, showing their rich emotions. The lad and the lass like each other, but they are very shy and afraid of the attention and rumors around them. The title uses "peeping eyes" to express the gaze and rumors around them.

The first lyrics mentioned that the lad was herding cattle on the high slope in the morning. The phrase "in a rush" is used show that the lad rushed to the mountains early in the morning to herd cattle in order to avoid the scorching sun. The lass ran to the garden to comb her hair early in the morning just to look

at the lad who herded cattle on the hillside. The two waved to each other and nodded. Translating the lass into "your crush" also expressed the lad's love for the lass, while "in flush" showed the lass' shyness.

When the sun gradually rose, the two met on the mountain. In order to highlight the meaning of the hot sun in the original text, the word "scorches" is used. Straw hat is a rainproof tool used by Tujia farmers in Enshi for generations. This ancient sunshade tool was easy to see in mountain villages in the past. The lad loved the lass very much. He was very distressed to see his lass basked in the sun and gave her his straw hat. Naturally, it was a sign of love.

The turtledove symbolizes faithful and unchanging love in Enshi Tujia culture. After the two met, the little girl expressed her thoughts. The eleventh sentence is metaphorical. The lyrics compare the lass to a turtledove to express her desire to be together often. The fourth paragraph of the duet shows that they live very close, on the other side of the river, door to door, but there is still a long way to go to really be together.

The copper basin mentioned in the last paragraph of the duet is a unique washing appliance of Tujia nationality. It is a very common life scene to wash rice in the copper basin, which shows that the lass thinks of her lover even when she is doing chores. Sieve, a living appliance made of bamboo, is round and has many holes, mainly to make small particles fall out through the holes. Tujia people often use sieve to describe people's peeping eyes. The lyrics use analogy to compare the sieve to people's peeping eyes. The lass wants her lover to stay, but she is worried about other people's rumors. And the door's sieves become the best barrier for oral interpretation.

### 3.2.1. The linguistic Features of This Folk Song

The structure of this love song is neat. The clever use of ending rhyme makes folk songs become catchy. The colloquial language and dialect words vividly highlight the inner world of Tujia people, and the whole theme is also coherent.

#### (i). The Beauty of Rhythm

The obvious linguistic feature of Tujia folk songs is to make good use of rhyme. Tujia folk songs often rhyme with the last word, which is more catchy and easier to remember. For example, in the first paragraph of the duet, "shou"(hand) and "tou"(head) rhyme "ou" in Chinese. Because "niu"(cow) makes a sound similar to "ou" in the dialect, it is regarded as rhyme. In translation, it is used in English "/ʌʃ/" to rhyme (rush, brush, crush, flush). In the second paragraph, "huo, duo, guo, zhuo"(fire, hide, heartbreak) all rhyme "uo" in Chinese. Correspondingly, the ending rhyme of "/ɪə (r)/" (appear, near, tear, dear) is used in English. Given the ending rhyme in the third paragraph is "ui" in Chinese, the ending rhyme of "/aɪ/" (high, thereby, untied, eyes) is used in English. The ending rhyme in the fourth paragraph is the Chinese "en". Because people also pronounce "ping" as "en" in dialects, it is also regarded as rhymes. In English, "/ɔ(r)/" (door, more, galore, therefore) is used as the ending rhyme. The ending rhyme of the last duet is the Chinese "uo". Because "ge" can also produce the sound of "guo" in the dialect, it is also counted as a rhyme. Therefore, in English, "/aɪ/" (spry, aye, eyes) is used

as the ending rhyme. In this song, the structure is neat, and each sentence has seven characters. In order to correspond to this feature, the author also tries to translate each sentence of lyrics into a form that contains seven syllables in each sentence. But some sentences have eight syllables for semantic integrity, such as "you herd cattle on hills in a rush".

#### (ii). Features of Word Selection

The language of Enshi Tujia folk songs is close to colloquial, and the lyrics are simple and unpretentious. And the straightforward Tujia people expressed their sincere emotions through these distinctive words.

For example:

láng zài gāo pō fàng zǎo niú ài; mèi zài yuán zhōng shū zǎo tóu wā  
郎在高坡放早牛哎; 妹在园中梳早头哇

You herd cattle on hills in a rush (hey); in the yard my hair is brushed (wow).

The language of the lyrics does not depend on modification, and less use of descriptive rhetorical techniques, showing a natural and simple beauty. The descriptions of the daily life of the Tujia people are appropriate.

And in the lyrics, ancient famous sayings and folk proverbs are often used to explain the thought expression in folk songs. Like the turtledoves and sieves mentioned before, these famous proverbs usually use relatively simple and understandable words to express and reflect the profound philosophy of life.

In Enshi Tujia folk songs, a large number of lining words are often used. Lining words are also called interposition characters or pad sounds, which are words that do not express actual meaning and play a role in supplementing melody. In this folk song, there are many lining words at the end of each sentence, mainly including the Chinese "ai, wa, ye, na, yo, wei, yo wei yo wei, na wei yo wei, wa wei yo wei" (hey, wow, hey, nah, yo, hey, yo, hey, yo hey yo hey, nah hey yo hey, wow hay yo hey).

For example:

mèi zài yuán zhōng diǎn yì diǎn tóu, yō wéi yō wéi  
妹在园中点一点头, 哟喂哟喂.

I'm nodding back in blush (yo-hey-yo-hey).

In Enshi Tujia folk songs, the lining words can play a role in setting off the atmosphere, and can better express emotions and enrich the content. And the use of "yo", "wow", "hey" and "nah" makes the lyrics more lively and flexible.

In addition to the use of colloquial words, proverbs and lining words, there are also many appellation words in this song.

For example:

wǒ de gē gē yě, wǒ de mèi mèi wéi  
我的哥哥也, 我的妹妹喂

my dear lad (yeah), my dear lass (hey)

In the language system of the Tujia nationality, if the lad call a girl "jie" (elder sister), he is showing his respect to the girl. If he call a girl "mei" (younger sister), it means that they are close to each other. There are appellation words in every duet, which shows that the relationship between the lad and the lass is quite intimate.

To sum up, the lyrics of Tujia folk songs are the epitome and crystallization of Tujia oral language art. It is also an intuitive carrier of local Tujia folk customs and culture. It uses rich

language expression to vividly display the profound cultural connotation of Tujia nationality.

### 3.2.2. Cultural Connotation

Affected by the long-term agricultural production and the harsh geographical environment, the Tujia people regard survival as the most prominent and most urgent problem. As a result, the Tujia people have formed a hardworking spirit. Therefore, diligence is the criterion for choosing a spouse. This folk song also reflects the hardships of the Tujia people's labor life from one aspect. The lad woke up early in the morning to herd the cattle, and the lass also got up early to work. And when the sun rises, with such a venomous sun, the petite girl still has to work in the fields. The lass has to cook after she comes back from work. These all show their diligence. Various working occasions enable Tujia people to have extensive contact, provide opportunities to enhance their mutual understanding, and generate love for each other. They often express their emotion in the form of singing.

#### (i). Love Song as Matchmaker

In the history of Tujia nationality, due to the sparse population, women's status was relatively high for the needs of labor force. At that time, the feelings of Tujia ancestors were relatively more unrestrained, and their love and marriage lives are also more open and free. If Tujia people have feelings for each other, sometimes they don't need a matchmaker. Just by giving each other gifts and singing love songs, they understand each other's intentions and get married, and their parents don't intervene much. Thereby, the need for emotional expression and the unique folk customs have created a cultural phenomenon of using songs as a matchmaker.

"Full of love words are untied (yo), endless tears flow in my eyes (yo-hey-yo-hey)." This lyric bluntly revealed the girl's heart, and she could no longer hold back the thoughts in her heart. A turtledove without a nest can only wander around. They have no shelter, nor the warmth of cuddling each other. Looking at those birds in pairs, the lass thought of herself. There was both yearning and worry in her heart. These lyrics fully reflect the romantic and free love of Tujia people. "Everything is hard for you, aye (wow)" This lyric expresses the lass' concern for her lover. But the two are afraid of other people's gossip. The lyrics use a sieve to compare everyone's peeping, showing the lass' carefulness and shyness. Both lad and lass have affection for each other, which is a manifestation of the free love of Tujia people. Love songs have become a medium for people in love to express their love.

#### (ii). Sincere Love

However, with the establishment of the "Tusi system"<sup>5</sup> and the emergence of the privileged class, the status of Tujia men and women began to change significantly, and the ancient

marriage custom tradition based on songs began to be destroyed. Especially after the "bureaucratization of native officers"<sup>6</sup>, the central government dispatched officials to abolish, reform and dominate the traditional customs in the original Tusi area. In the formulated proclamation, the provisions on folk marriage reflect the patriarchal factors. On the one hand, some ignorant and backward marriage customs were abolished. On the other hand, patriarchal culture developed rapidly. Feudal arranged marriage replaced free marriage. The patriarchal factors in Tujia marriage customs also increased greatly, and its influence still exists today [19].

The implementation of etiquette culture has impacted the ancient marriage customs of Tujia ancestors. Affected by this, the Tujia marriage customs are characterized by complex ceremonies, complete procedures, and exquisite details, which also represents their emphasis on rituals. The wedding procedure can be divided into five parts: asking for a marriage, making a marriage appointment, getting married, accompanying the bride to the groom's family, and returning to the bride's parents' home. Each of them is composed of many small links, the procedures are complex, and the connotation is quite rich, which has become a distinctive folk cultural phenomenon in the Tujia area. "Long to send bride-price galore (yo); yearn for matchmakers therefore" It reflects the proposal section in the wedding process. After the lad is attracted to the lass, he invites the matchmaker to the lass' house to ask for the permission of the lass' family. And the lad needs to bring a lot of bride price to show his sincerity.

In this folk song, there are worries, expectations and shyness. In just a few words, the feelings of the lad and the lass were expressed vividly and vividly. The complexity of etiquette and the rumors of the people around did not prevent them from falling in love. They expressed their serious and sincere attitude towards love through folk songs.

In short, in this song, people can't see the softness of the Central Plains culture<sup>7</sup>, let alone the restraint and moderation of Confucian culture<sup>8</sup>. What people feel more is the extroversion and freedom in Tujia culture. Changes in history and policies have made Tujia wedding ceremonies more elaborate and complicated, but they have not changed Tujia people's sincere and romantic attitude in pursuing love. The lyrics of this folk song are concise and comprehensive, and metaphors are used appropriately and vividly. The language with the imprint of Tujia culture not only enriches the content of lyrics, but also reveals local characteristics. This folk songs show the life vitality and aesthetic taste of Tujia people, and their customs are exposed.

5 Tusi system is the organizational form and system of local political power established in ethnic minority areas by the Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties. "Tusi", also known as "Chieftain", is a local official appointed and enfeoffed by the central dynasty in ancient China. He has the hereditary ownership of the land under his jurisdiction and the hereditary rule over the farmers attached to the land.

6 The bureaucratization of native officers began in the middle and late Ming Dynasty, which means that the chieftain who originally ruled ethnic minorities was abolished. The central government appoints officials to rule directly and implement the same local administrative system as in the mainland.

7 Central Plains culture is the general name of material culture and spiritual culture in the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River. It is the matrix and backbone of Chinese culture.

8 Confucian culture is a cultural school with Confucianism as the guiding ideology. It advocates kinship and human relations, worldly merit, self-cultivation and moral rationality. Its central ideas are forgiveness, loyalty, filial piety, fraternity, courage, benevolence, righteousness, courtesy, wisdom and faith.

## 4. Conclusion

In the content of Enshi Tujia folk songs, the first Enshi folk song is a kind of ballad created by Tujia people when they work in the mountains. They not only reflect the optimistic character of the Tujia people, but also show the Tujia people's respect for nature and the beautiful scenery that they live in harmony with nature. Another Enshi love song expresses the Tujia people's ardent desire for free love and happy marriage, and also shows the Tujia people's sincere attitude towards love. As for the language characteristics of Tujia folk songs, it has a special phonological beauty and structural beauty, which constitutes its unique beauty of form. The use of ending rhyme and lining words not only adjusts the rhythm, but also sets off the atmosphere. In terms of word selection, colloquial vocabulary, slang and dialect are used in the lyrics, which makes the folk songs have a strong flavor of Tujia culture. In terms of structure, except for the lining words, the number of words in each lyrics is the same, which makes the sentence patterns of the two Enshi folk songs neat. The "five sentences" folk song of seven words and five sentences is full of fun, which is an artistic reconstruction of the form of folk songs.

From the perspective of music, folk songs are a kind of performing art. In the sight of literature, folk song is a language art with aesthetic value. From the standpoint of research, folk song is a historical text and a carrier of culture. As a carrier of culture, folk songs go beyond the singing behavior that focuses on expressing emotions, and become an accumulation with a sense of history and culture, accumulating cohesion for the survival and development of ethnic minorities. An in-depth cultural interpretation of Tujia culture can reveal how Tujia, as a minority, can survive and thrive in a unique way while maintaining its beauty, soul and spirit.

Through appreciating the two folk songs, it is found that the reason why Enshi Tujia folk songs can take root, grow and last for a long time in history is closely related to the attitudes and concepts of Tujia people towards life, nature and love contained in Tujia folk songs. Tujia folk songs are rooted in the desire to seek freedom and happiness in life. Tujia folk songs, driven by the optimistic personality characteristics of Tujia people, not only sing the harmonious relationship between Tujia people and nature, but also reveal the sincere love concept of Tujia people, thus forming a unique aesthetic interest. They vividly reflect the social life and local customs of Tujia nationality in various periods. The profound cultural connotation of Tujia folk song makes it have a very important cultural function. It strengthens the cultural inheritance of Tujia folk songs from the perspective of conceptual culture, adheres to the national spirit, and constructs the strong cohesion of Tujia nationality with unique cultural ecology. The translation and cultural interpretation of Tujia folk songs to make such a brilliant Tujia culture go to the world is not only related to the inheritance and development of various minority cultures in China, but also related to the manifestation and construction of national identity and national discourse. It is hoped that Enshi Tujia folk songs,

which nurture the soul of Tujia and contain Tujia culture, can follow the pace of the times.

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