Japan Bilingual Publishing Co.

**Classical Literature**
https://ojs.bilpub.com/index.php/cl

**ARTICLE**

# Translation Methods for Culture-Loaded Words In The "Jiu Ge" of The *Chu Ci*

***Hexin Sun*** , ***Chuanmao Tian****

*School of Foreign Studies, Yangtze University, Jingzhou, Hubei 434023, China*

## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the translation strategies Arthur Waley employed for culture-loaded words in the "Jiu ge" (The Nine Songs) section of the *Chu Ci*, with Susan Bassnett's cultural translation theory (centered on cultural functional equivalence and cultural symbol transfer) as the primary analytical framework, integrated with Eugene Nida's cultural taxonomy. As the origin of Chinese romantic literature, the *Chu Ci* holds profound literary and cultural value; advancing its English translation is practically significant for promoting China's fine traditional culture and deepening Sino-Western cultural exchanges. However, research on the English translation of "Jiu ge" within the *Chu Ci* remains scarce. Thus, this study focuses on culture-loaded words in Waley's translation of the "Jiu ge" , analyzing the methods he used to handle such words, aiming to provide references for future translators. Findings reveal that the "Jiu ge" embodies abundant Chinese-specific cultural connotations in social customs, religious shamanism, astronomy, and geography. This study identifies nine translation methods employed by Waley: image substitution, generalization plus annotation, explicitation, concretization, free translation, free translation plus amplification, literal translation plus adaptation, transliteration plus amplification, and use of similar onomatopoeia. These methods offer implications for translating cultural expressions in Chinese classics—particularly texts with regional and ritualistic connotations like the "Jiu ge"—rather than being universally applicable to all classical Chinese works.

***Keywords:*** *Chu ci*; "Jiu Ge"; Culture-Loaded Words; Bassnett's Cultural Translation Theory; Translation Methods

*CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:
Chuanmao Tian, School of Foreign Studies, Yangtze University, Jingzhou, Hubei 434023, China; Email: tcm_316@163.com

ARTICLE INFO
Received: 25 May 2024 | Revised: 12 July 2024 | Accepted: 20 July 2024 | Published Online: 27 July 2024
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55121/cl.v2i2.549

CITATION
Tian, C., Sun, H., 2024. Translation Methods for Culture-Loaded Words In The "Jiu Ge" of The *Chu Ci*. Classical Literature. 2(2): 12–26. DOI: https://doi.org/10.55121/cl.v2i2.549

# 1. Introduction

The classical Chinese literature presents unique challenges for translators due to its deep cultural embeddedness and historical specificity. As a foundational text of Chinese romantic poetry, the *Chu ci* exemplifies these challenges through its rich cultural symbolism and regional characteristics.

The *Chu ci* or *The Songs of the South* [1] is the first anthology of romantic poetry in Chinese literary history [2], traditionally attributed to Qu Yuan (ca. 340–278 B.C.E.) as an innovative poetic genre. Comprising primarily Qu Yuan's works, the anthology maintains stylistic consistency with his odes across all sections. Its distinctive nomenclature "Chuci" originates from its adoption of literary forms, dialectal phonology, and local customs in the Chu region, endowing it with strong regional characteristics and exerting a far-reaching influence on subsequent poetic traditions.

The "Jiu ge" ("*The Nine Songs*")—one of the most important chapters in the *Chu ci*—is believed to have been adapted by Qu Yuan from Han ethnic folk ritual songs for god worship. As sacrificial hymns, their contents vary according to the deities enshrined, with a profusion of culture-loaded words. These words, as the essence of the canon and the union of objective imagery and the poet's emotional will, often carry connotations beyond their literal meanings. Accurately conveying such layered significances in translation poses a major challenge for rendering the "Jiu ge", while their study facilitates cross-cultural communication and dissemination of Chinese civilization.

This research first identifies culture-loaded words in the "Jiu ge*"* based on four sources: 1) *A Complete Translation of the Chu ci* [3]; 2) *Supplementary Commentaries on the Elegies of Chu State* [4] —an authoritative Chinese edition published by the Zhonghua Book Company, which ensures orthographic consistency (i.e., simplified Chinese characters) and textual accuracy; 3) Arthur Waley's English translation of the "Jiu ge"; and 4) Liao Qiyi's definition of culture-loaded words. Guided by Eugene Nida's fivefold cultural classification [5] (i.e., ecological, material, social, religious, and linguistic culture), the present study categorizes the identified cultural words. This classification provides a structured framework for organizing the corpus. However, the analytical core and evaluative criteria are firmly rooted in Susan Bassnett's cultural translation theory. Concepts such as cultural functional equivalence and the view of translation as a "manipulation" of cultural meaning are employed to assess the efficacy of Waley's methods in transferring the embedded cultural symbols [6], thereby achieving a synergistic integration of the two theoretical approaches. The study reflects on translational approaches to cultural transmission, aiming to provide new perspectives for translators and contribute to the global dissemination of Chinese civilization.

# 2. Research Methodology

## 2.1. Research Purpose and Question

At present, research on the English translation of the *Chu ci* primarily focuses on the "Li sao" ("Encountering Sorrow"), while there are relatively few studies on the "Jiu ge". Meanwhile, among numerous studies on the translation of culture-loaded words, those related to the "Jiu ge" are particularly scarce. In view of this, this research takes as its research focus the culture-loaded words in the "Jiu ge"—a representative chapter of the *Chu ci* renowned for its rich cultural traits—and their English translations.

Taking Susan Bassnett's cultural translation theory as the basis and evaluation criterion—specifically, using "cultural functional equivalence" to assess whether the translations retain the original cultural connotations, and "cultural symbol transfer" to judge if region-specific meanings (e.g., Chu's shamanic culture) are conveyed—this paper examines the strengths and weaknesses of Waley's translations of culture-loaded words [7–9] . It also explores the translation methods Waley adopted for different types of culture-loaded words, aimingto provide new perspectives and methods for translators of classical Chinese poetry.

## 2.2. Theoretical Basis

Notably, Bassnett's Cultural Translation Theory, with its "Cultural Turn" core, is descriptive in nature [10], it aims to explain and critique translation phenomena rather than prescribe translation methods. Thus, this study positions the theory as a "descriptive-analytical framework" to guide the analysis of Waley's translation practices, ensur-

ing alignment with the theory's inherent characteristics and avoiding potential terminological controversies.

The culture-loaded words in the "Jiu ge" are classified into five types based on Eugene Nida's cultural taxonomy: ecological culture-loaded words (ECLWs), material culture-loaded words (MCLWs), social culture-loaded words (SCLWs), religious culture-loaded words (RCLWs), and linguistic culture-loaded words (LCLWs). This classification provides a systematic framework for organizing the corpus. However, the analytical framework and translation evaluation criteria are fundamentally drawn from Susan Bassnett's cultural translation theory. This integrated approach ensures that the analysis moves beyond mere categorization to a critical assessment of how cultural meanings are negotiated and transferred [11]. Specifically: First, the "Cultural Turn" principle—which conceptualizes translation as a process of cultural exchange rather than mere linguistic conversion [12]—guides the macro-level evaluation of Waley's strategies (i.e., domestication vs. foreignization); second, "cultural functional equivalence" acts as a micro-level criterion to assess if each translation method effectively conveys the original's cultural function (e.g., ritual symbolism, ethical metaphors); third, "cultural symbol transfer" is employed to investigate whether region-specific symbols (e.g., "fragrant herbs" as a symbol of nobility in Chu culture) are preserved or lost.

### 2.2.1. Definition and Classification of Culture-loaded Words

Culture-loaded terms—also referred to as culture-specific items—refer to words, phrases, and idioms that signify unique things within a particular culture. These words reflect the unique practices a specific ethnic group has gradually accumulated over a long historical period, differing from those of other ethnic groups. They are concrete manifestations of specific cultural phenomena, representing different cultural groups' perceptions of things, and serve as the most direct reflection of national culture. Liao Qiyi defines them as "certain words or idioms in a language that carry specific cultural symbols and reflect a certain degree of historicity and uniqueness" [13].

Drawing on Liao's definition, this study identified and collected all culture-loaded words in the "Jiu ge." After careful analysis, 188 culture-loaded words were selected as the corpus. Nida's fivefold cultural classification is adopted here as it aligns with the cultural traits of the "Jiu ge"—a text rich in knowledge of the Chu region's flora, fauna, shamanic practices, astronomy, and geography, narrated in the Chu dialect and depicting the region's landscapes, beliefs, and customs. Thus, the culture-loaded words in the "Jiu ge" are divided into five categories (refer **Table 1**).

**Table 1.** Five types of culture-loaded words in the "Jiu ge".

| Classification | Culture-loaded words |
|---|---|
| ECLWs | 薜荔 (bì lì), 蕙 (huì), 荪 (sūn), 辛夷 (xīn yí), 兰 (lán), 芙蓉 (fú róng), 杜若 (dù ruò), 白薠 (bái fán), 蘋 (pín), 茝 (chǎi), 芷 (zhǐ), 药 (yào), 芳椒 (fāng jiāo), 石兰 (shí lán), 杜衡 (dù héng), 疏麻 (shū má), 桂枝 (guì zhī), 秋兰 (qiū lán), 麋芜 (mí wú), 扶桑 (fú sāng), 女罗 (nǚ luó), 三秀 (sān xiù), 葛 (gě), 芭 (bā), 蛟 (jiāo), 飞龙 (fēi lóng), 龙 (lóng), 螭 (chī), 白黿 (bái yuán), 文鱼 (wén yú), 赤豹 (chì bào), 文狸 (wén lí), 狖 (yòu), 麋 (mí), 沅湘 (yuán xiāng), 洞庭 (dòng tíng), 涔阳 (cén yáng), 醴 (lǐ), 空桑 (kōng sāng), 九坑 (jiǔ kēng), 九河 (jiǔ hé), 九嶷 (jiǔ yí), 咸池 (xián chí), 阳之阿 (yáng zhī ē), 昆仑 (kūn lún), 秋风 (qiū fēng) |
| MCLWs | 蕙肴 (huì yáo), 桂酒 (guì jiǔ), 椒浆 (jiāo jiāng), 桂浆 (guì jiāng), 石泉 (shí quán), 帝服 (dì fú), 灵衣 (líng yī), 荷衣 (hé yī), 蕙带 (huì dài), 褋 (dié), 青云衣 (qīng yún yī), 白霓裳 (bái ní cháng), 玦 (jué), 佩 (pèi), 玉佩 (yù pèi), 荷盖 (hé gài), 荪壁 (sūn bì), 紫坛 (zǐ tán), 桂栋 (guì dòng), 兰橑 (lán liáo), 辛夷楣 (xīn yí méi), 药房 (yào fáng), 帷 (wéi), 檐 (mián), 庐门 (wǔ mén), 鱼鳞屋 (yú lín wū), 龙堂 (lóng táng), 紫贝阙 (zǐ bèi què), 朱宫 (zhū gōng), 龙驾 (lóng jià), 桂舟 (guì zhōu), 薜荔柏 (bì lì bó), 蕙绸 (huì chóu), 荪桡 (sūn ráo), 兰旌 (lán jīng), 兰枻 (lán yì), 桂棹 (guì zhào), 翠旍 (cuì jīng), 孔盖 (kǒng gài), 龙辀 (lóng zhōu), 水车 (shuǐ chē), 辛夷车 (xīn yí chē), 桂旗 (guì qí), 云旗 (yún qí), 枹 (fú), 鼓 (gǔ), 竽 (yú), 瑟 (sè), 参差 (cēn cī), 钟 (zhōng), 簴 (jù), 簏 (chí), 长剑 (cháng jiàn), 玉珥 (yù ěr), 长矢 (cháng shǐ), 弧 (hú), 吴戈 (wú gē), 犀甲 (xī jiǎ), 毂 (gǔ), 秦弓 (qín gōng), 瑶席 (yáo xí), 玉琠 (yù tiàn), 罾 (zēng), 兰藉 (lán jiè) |

**Table 1.** *Cont.*

| Classification | Culture-loaded words |
|---|---|
| SCLWs | 君 (jūn), 荪 (sūn), 五音 (wǔ yīn), 冀州 (jì zhōu), 四海 (sì hǎi), 帝子 (dì zǐ), 公子 (gōng zǐ), 佳人 (jiā rén), 九州 (jiǔ zhōu), 美子 (měi zǐ), 子 (zǐ), 鬼雄 (guǐ xióng), 下女 (xià nǚ), 灵保 (líng bǎo), 灵修 (líng xiū), 寿宫 (shòu gōng), 彗星 (huì xīng), 交鼓 (jiāo gǔ), 天狼 (tiān láng), 北斗 (běi dǒu), 骖 (cān), 交手 (jiāo shǒu), 鸣鼓 (míng gǔ), 春兰 (chūn lán), 秋菊 (qiū jú) |
| RCLWs | 阴阳 (yīn yáng), 清气 (qīng qì), 寿夭 (shòu yāo), 魂魄 (hún pò), 九天 (jiǔ tiān), 灵 (líng), 威灵 (wēi líng), 帝 (dì), 上皇 (shàng huáng), 神灵 (shén líng), 东皇太一 (dōng huáng tài yī), 云中君 (yún zhōng jūn), 湘君 (xiāng jūn), 湘夫人 (xiāng fū rén), 大司命 (dà sī mìng), 少司命 (shào sī mìng), 东君 (dōng jūn), 河伯 (hé bó), 山鬼 (shān guǐ) |
| LCLWs | 烂昭昭 (làn zhāo zhāo), 皇皇 (huáng huáng), 浅浅 (jiān jiān), 翩翩 (piān piān), 目眇眇 (mù miǎo miǎo), 嫋嫋 (niǎo niǎo), 纷总总 (fēn zǒng zǒng), 被被 (pī pī), 冉冉 (rǎn rǎn), 芳菲菲 (fāng fēi fēi), 辚辚 (lín lín), 青青 (qīng qīng), 皎皎 (jiǎo jiǎo), 忡忡 (chōng chōng), 杳冥冥 (yǎo míng míng), 波滔滔 (bō tāo tāo), 鱼鄰鄰 (yú lín lín), 云容容 (yún róng róng), 石磊磊 (shí lěi lěi), 葛蔓蔓 (gě màn màn), 雨冥冥 (yǔ míng míng), 雷填填 (léi tián tián), 猿啾啾 (yuán jiū jiū), 风飒飒 (fēng sà sà), 木萧萧 (mù xiāo xiāo), 锵 (qiāng), 蹇 (jiǎn), 聊 (liáo), 羌 (qiāng), 兮 (xī), 婵媛 (chán yuán), 潺湲 (chán yuán), 逍遥 (xiāo yáo), 窈窕 (yǎo tiǎo), 偃蹇 (yǎn jiǎn) |

### 2.2.2. Susan Bassnett's Cultural Translation Theory

Susan Bassnett's cultural translation theory represents a paradigm shift in translation studies—moving from linguistic-centric to culture-centric approaches, emphasizing the primacy of cultural context in determining translation strategies. Her theory centers on analyzing cultural factors in the translation process, addressing how to navigate cultural differences to ensure that translations convey not only literal meanings but also the contextual and cultural connotations of the source language. This theory emphasizes that translation goes beyond mere linguistic conversion, serving as a process of cultural exchange and reconstruction—translators must decode and transmit the implicit cultural meanings and historical contexts embedded in the source text, enabling target-language readers to apprehend cultural connotations accurately [14].

Before the 1960s, Western translation studies were dominated by the Linguistic School, which focused on structural correspondence of linguistic elements but proved insufficient in handling literary texts and cross-cultural nuances. In 1990, Bassnett proposed the cultural translation theory in *Translation, History and Culture*, advocating for a "Cultural Turn" in translation studies that redefined the unit of translation from linguistic segments to cultural contexts. She challenged the traditional concept of "fidelity", arguing that translation should prioritize functional equivalence in the target culture over mere textual correspondence [15]. Translators are thus required to consider broader cultural, social, and historical frameworks rather than fixating on formal linguistic equivalence.

The theory categorizes strategies for translating culture-loaded words into two global approaches:

(1) Domestication: Defined in *A Dictionary of Translation Studies* as a strategy that uses a fluent, transparent style to minimize the foreignness of the source text, it enhances readability but may erase exotic cultural elements.

(2) Foreignization: Aimed at preserving the source text's foreignness by challenging target-language conventions, it retains cultural exoticism but may create interpretive barriers for readers.

Bassnett emphasizes that cultural factors should take precedence over information transfer, advocating a balance between domestication and foreignization in order to ensure both cultural fidelity and target-culture acceptability. This focus on cultural transformation is particularly relevant to the "Jiu ge," as its shamanic ritual language and regional symbols (e.g., "Dong Jun" as the Sun God) demand that translators prioritize cultural function over literal accuracy—a core principle of Bassnett's theory.

## 3. Translation Methods for Culture-loaded Words in the "Jiu ge"

This section sorts out the translation methods Arthur Waley employed for various types of culture-loaded words in the "Jiu ge". The goal is to explore Waley's preferences for translation methods in addressing different catego-

ries of culture-loaded words, providing references for the re-translation of the *Chu ci* in the new era and the English translation of other Chinese classics.

When translating the "Jiu ge", Waley drew on his bilingual proficiency and bicultural literacy to maximize the reproduction of the original work. He fully considered the target readers' horizon of expectations, adopting a strategy mainly based on domestication (to enhance readability) supplemented by foreignization (to retain cultural specificity), along with methods such as transliteration plus annotation. The study reveals distinct preferences in Waley's method selection: he tended to use domestication for SCLWs and LCLWs, and foreignization for RCLWs.

## 3.1. Image Substitution

Image substitution refers to a translation method whereby an image with specific cultural connotations or contextual features in the source text is replaced by a functionally equivalent and culturally appropriate image in the target language, so as to maintain the rhetorical effect and emotional tension of the original text. For example:

**Example 1.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Source Text**: | **薜荔**柏兮蕙绸，**荪**桡兮兰旌。 |
| Target Text: | My awning is of **fig-creeper**, bound with **basil**.<br>My paddles of **sweet flag**, my banners are of **orchid**. |

In Example 1, Waley adopted the translation method of image substitution. While the translation is not entirely precise, it retains the plant names from the original text and carries a degree of exoticism reflective of Chu culture. He translated "薜荔" (*bì lì*, *Ficus pumila L.*) as "fig-creeper". "Bi Li" (薜荔), also known as "Mu Lian" (木莲), primarily climbs on terrestrial trees. It has high adaptability, thriving in diverse environments, and emits a fragrant scent. "Fig-creeper" refers to a climbing plant of the Ficus genus, characterized by a vine-like structure and climbing growth habit, and is distributed across various climates and soil types. "Sun" (荪, *Iris sanguinea*) primarily grows in humid environments (e.g., along water bodies or in wetlands). The "Sun" grass is often viewed as a symbol of nobility and virtue, used in rituals such as sacrifices to express reverence for deities and pray for blessings [16]. "Sweet flag" (Acorus calamus) tends to grow in water-rich areas such as swamps and riverbanks. It is often used in traditions associated with festivals like the Dragon Boat Festival and carries positive, virtuous symbolic meanings in cultural contexts.

Qu Yuan used "Lan" (兰, *orchid*) as a metaphor for loyal officials, symbolizing their noble integrity and moral cultivation. During the Western Victorian era, due to the orchid's delicate appearance and rarity, cultivating and displaying orchids became a symbol of the status of royalty and nobility [17]. Subsequently, a cultural connotation of "orchid" representing grace and elegance gradually took shape in the West. It is evident that "Lan Hua" (兰花) and "orchid" are highly similar in terms of imagery. Waley's translation of "Lan" (兰) as "orchids" helps target readers connect Qu Yuan's use of fragrant herbs to his expression of pure and virtuous character. Translating "Hui" (蕙) as "basil" evokes the fragrant flowers and leaves of "Hui," creating an evocative effect [18].

Waley's integration of foreignization (retaining plant names) and domestication (choosing Western familiar images) not only enables Western readers to perceive the unique charm of Chu's "fragrant herb culture" but also enhances readability—contributing to cross-cultural communication in line with Bassnett's emphasis on balancing cultural fidelity and acceptability.

## 3.2. Generalization Plus Annotation

Generalization in translation refers to "abstracting or generalizing a specific term denoting a concrete meaning in the source text". Annotation involves supplementing specific details, cultural contexts, or special implications of the original text through footnotes, endnotes, or parentheses following the generalized translation. For example:

**Example 2.**

| | |
|---|---|
| Source Text: | **麋**何食兮庭中，**蛟**何为兮水裔？ |
| Target Text: | Would an **elk** browse in the courtyard?<br>What would a **dragon** be doing on the bank of the stream? |

In Example 2, "Mi" (麋) refers to the milu deer (*Elaphurus davidianus*), a large deer species. "Jiao" (蛟) is a dragon-like creature in ancient Chinese legends that

can stir up water and typically inhabits rivers, lakes, and seas [19]. In the source text of Example 2, the poet uses the appearance of these two animals in places where they should not be to express a sense of abnormality and confusion, probably metaphorizing some unreasonable phenomena in reality.

For "Mi" ( 麋 ) and "Jiao" ( 蛟 ), Waley employed a translation method that combines generalization and annotation. He directly generalized "Mi" ( 麋 ) as "elk"—a common deer species in the West that belongs to the same family (Cervidae) as the milu deer. He generalized "Jiao" ( 蛟 ) as "dragon" and added an annotation to clarify its specific meaning—explicitly noting its aquatic habitat—aligning with the original context. From the perspective of Bassnett's theory, this method bridges the "cultural gap" between China and the West: generalizing "Mi" ( 麋 ) and "Jiao" ( 蛟 ) into Western familiar concepts (e.g., elk, dragon) ensures readability (domestication), while the annotation preserves the original's "mythical cultural symbol" (foreignization)—preventing the loss of Chu's mythological connotations. This aligns with Bassnett's criticism of "pure domestication" (which erodes cultural specificity) and "pure foreignization" (which creates readability barriers).

## 3.3. Explicitation

Explicitation refers to the detailed narration or portrayal of people, objects, events, or scenes through written language, verbal expression, or other forms. It emphasizes vivid and pictorial representation through figurative language or artistic devices such as metaphor, analogy, and so on, prioritizing vividness and visual imagery. For example:

**Example 3.**

| | |
|---|---|
| Source Text: | **蕙肴**蒸兮兰藉，奠桂酒兮**椒浆**。 |
| Target Text: | Meats I offer, **flavoured with basil**, on strewn orchids laid;<br>I set out the **cassia**-wine and **peppered drink**. |

In Example 3, "Hui Yao" ( 蕙肴 ), which embodies the dietary culture with Chinese characteristics, is used to offer sacrifices to Donghuang Taiyi ( 东皇太一 ). "Hui Yao" ( 蕙 肴 ) is a kind of sacrificial meat wrapped in sweet flag. Waley adopted the method of explication and translated "Hui Yao" ( 蕙肴 ) as "flavoured with basil" [20]. Instead of using such names as "sweet flag" or "calamus", he translated it as "basil". Although sweet flag and basil are not the same plant, both of them are fragrant herbs. By using "flavoured with", he conveyed its core function of "seasoning and wrapping meat with fragrant herbs", achieving cultural functional equivalence. However, at the same time, his choice came at the cost of sacrificing the dietary culture with Chinese characteristics. Translating "Hui" ( 蕙 ) as "basil" loses its literary image in the *Chu ci* as a «symbol of nobility», as basil in Western culture does not have such cultural associations.

"Gui jiu" ( 桂 酒 ) demonstrates the dietary culture with Chinese characteristics. "Gui" ( 桂 ) is translated as "cassia", which belongs to the cinnamon genus. In Chinese, "Gui" ( 桂 ) may refer to cinnamon (used for seasoning) or osmanthus (used for its fragrance) in ancient times. Here, "Gui jiu" ( 桂 酒 ) is more likely to refer to wine soaked with cinnamon. "Cassia" is an accurate translation of "Gui" ( 桂 ) in the West. By using the literal translation method, "cassia-wine" clearly indicates the raw material of the wine. Combined with the previous word "offer", it implies the nature of the sacrificial wine. "Cassia" is a common plant used as a spice in the Western context. It is more specific than the general translation "scented wine", as it not only conveys the raw material but also conforms to the sacrificial logic that "the ingredients of sacrificial wines need to be specified".

"Jiao" ( 椒 ) refers to Chinese prickly ash, which was commonly used as a spice and sacrificial offering in ancient times, and "Jiang" ( 浆 ) refers to wine pulp. "Jiao Jiang" ( 椒浆 ), a kind of wine pulp seasoned with Chinese prickly ash, is also used for sacrifices. Translating "Jiao Jiang" ( 椒 浆 ) as "peppered drink" adopts free translation plus functional transformation. "Jiao" ( 椒 ) is translated as "pepper", and "Jiang 浆 " as "drink". In Chinese, "Jiao" ( 椒 ) specifically refers to Chinese prickly ash, while "pepper" in the West usually refers to black pepper. Although they are botanically different, both of them are spicy seasonings. Translating "Jiang" ( 浆 ) as "drink" weakens the specific form of "wine" and strengthens the function of "flavoured beverage". This avoids understanding obstacles caused by the unfamiliarity of "Chinese prickly ash" in the West. Using "peppered" conveys the

core feature of "spicy seasoning", enabling target readers to quickly associate it with "a beverage seasoned with spices".

## 3.4. Concretization

Concretization refers to the process of transforming abstract concepts, theories, or ideas into concrete and perceivable things or instances, emphasizing the shift from abstraction to tangibility. For example:

**Example 4.**

| | |
|---|---|
| Source Text: | 乘**水车**兮**荷盖**，驾两龙兮骖螭。 |
| Target Text: | We rode in a **water-chariot** with **awning of lotus-leaf**<br>Drawn by two dragons, with griffins to pull at the sides. |

The source text in Example 4 comes from the "He Bo" ( 河伯 ), a piece in "The Nine Songs". "Shui Che" ( 水车 , or "water cart") is not a water-drawn tool in real life but a highly mythical and imaginative object. It is the divine vehicle of He Bo (the River God), used for traveling on water—embodying the fantastical travel style of immortals in the mythological world and symbolizing He Bo's extraordinary status and mysterious power. "He Gai" ( 荷盖 ) refers to a vehicle cover made of lotus leaves. In traditional Chinese culture, the lotus has symbolic meanings of nobility and holiness. Using lotus leaves as the vehicle cover here not only adds aesthetic and mythical colors to the picture but also further highlights He Bo's nobility and elegance, fitting in with the romantic atmosphere of the myth.

By using the method of concretization, Waley translated "Shui Che" ( 水车 ) as "water-chariot". "Water" clearly indicates that the operating environment of the vehicle is on water, and "chariot" is a vehicle used in ancient wars and travels, corresponding to the Che" ( 车 ) in the original text. This translation enables readers to intuitively understand that it is a means of transportation similar to a war chariot or carriage that travels on water. "He Gai" ( 荷盖 ) was translated as "awning of lotus-leaf", and Waley accurately expressed the specific image and function of using lotus leaves as the vehicle cover. The "Lotus-leaf" is somewhat recognizable in Western culture. Although it does not have exactly the same symbolic meaning as the lotus does in Chinese culture, it can convey a sense of natural freshness, helping Western readers understand the fantastical imagination of using lotus leaves as a vehicle cover in the original text.

From the perspective of Bassnett's theory, this concretization realizes "cultural accessibility": Western readers, unfamiliar with Chu's "mythical divine vehicles", can visualize He Bo's travel through the familiar "chariot" image, while "lotus-leaf" retains the original's "natural symbolism" (i.e. purity in Chinese culture). This balances cultural fidelity (retaining lotus symbolism) and acceptability (concretizing divine vehicle), in line with Bassnett's advocacy for "contextualized translation".

## 3.5. Free Translation

Free translation is a translation method that departs from the linguistic form of the source text, making implicit meanings explicit, oblique expressions direct, and abstruse contents accessible. For example:

**Example 5.**

| | |
|---|---|
| Source Text: | 孔盖兮翠旌，登九天兮抚**彗星**。 |
| Target Text: | Chariot-awning of peacock feathers, halcyon flags—<br>He mounts to the Nine Heavens, wields the **Broom-star**. |

In Example 5, "Hui Xing" ( 彗星 , *comet*) refers to a celestial body, which is named "sào zhou xīng" ( 扫帚星 , Broom Star) in Chinese because of its broom-like shape. In the culture of the Chu region, the comet is a dual symbol of "disaster-purification", representing both potential threats and the maintenance of order by the gods. In Example 5, Shao Siming ( 少司命 ) grasping the comet implies sweeping away disasters for the world, reflecting the belief of the people of Chu that the gods can use natural forces to regulate the good and bad fortunes of the world.

Faced with typical Chinese culture-specific words, Waley adopted free translation to achieve cultural functional equivalence. He translated "Hui Xing" ( 彗 星 ) as "Broom-star" freely. The combination of "broom" and "star" not only conforms to the literal composition of the original word but also strengthens the visual association of a "broom-shaped celestial body" through the compound word. "Broom-star" is coordinated with "halcyon flags" in rhythm and syllables, meeting the rhythm requirements of

poetry translation and maintaining the antithetical beauty of the original text. Additionally, Waley added a note in the translation, clearly stating that "Broom Star" means "comet" and explaining its cultural meaning of "sweeping away disasters", briefly elucidating the meaning behind this culture-loaded word and helping readers easily understand the original text.Bassnett's "cultural symbol transfer" principle is reflected here: Waley does not literally translate " 彗星 " as "comet", which loses cultural connotations but uses "Broom-star" to retain the original's "shape symbol", while the annotation adds the "ritual function" (disaster purification). This ensures that the translation conveys both the celestial body's identity and its cultural meaning—avoiding "cultural emptiness", a criticism Bassnett used to levels at literal translation.

Through the strategy of combining free translation and annotation, Waley transformed the cultural load of the source language into perceivable images in the target language. This not only enables Western readers to understand the function of "Hui" ( 彗 ) through the familiar tool "broom", but also retains its celestial body attribute through "star" and the annotation. Ultimately, it achieves the equivalence of "mythological function" rather than "literal meaning", which is in line with the translation requirement of the "Jiu ge" as a piece of shamanic sacrificial text: the focus is not on accurately conveying the name of the celestial body, but on reproducing its divine symbol and ritual function.

## 3.6. Free Translation Plus Amplification

Free translation plus amplification refers to a comprehensive translation method that, based on free translation, supplements details, logical connections, or cultural contexts through lexical addition, ensuring that the translated text achieves meaning equivalence while conforming to the expressive conventions of the target language. For example:

**Example 6.**

| | |
|---|---|
| Source Text: | 子**交手**兮东行，送美人兮南浦。 |
| Target Text: | You **salute me with raised hands**, then go towards the East.<br>I go with my lovely one as far as the southern shore. |

In Example 6, "Jiao Shou" ( 交手 ) is a typical social culture-loaded word. Its core meaning is a ritual gesture used during ancient farewells, and there are two mainstream interpretations of it: literally, it means "the hands cross each other", that is, two people shake hands or hold each other's hands to express their reluctant feelings [21]. Specifically, it refers to the traditional courtesy " 拱手礼 " (*gǒng shǒu lǐ*, the gesture of cupping one hand in the other before the chest), where the hands are folded and raised in front of the chest, which was a formal farewell etiquette in ancient times.

By using the translation method of free translation plus amplification, Waley translated "Jiao Shou" ( 交手 ) as "salute me with raised hands". He chose the meaning of "salute" which implies showing respect and performing a ceremony, reflecting the solemn gesture during the farewell. The expression "raised hands" avoids the possible ambiguity of directly translating "Jiao" ( 交 ) as "cross", such as the meaning of "crossing one's hands". Instead, it selects the more easily understandable action of "raising hands", reducing the difficulty of comprehension. An annotation "hands folded in the sleeves and raised" is added in the translation to further explain the details of the action, which belongs to cultural amplification. This annotation clearly refers to the "Jiao" ( 交 ) in ancient China, namely the gesture of clasping one's hands and bowing. Since there is no totally equivalent concept for the etiquette in the West, by describing the action details, the translation indirectly conveys the uniqueness of the ancient Chinese etiquette. This approach not only preserves the cultural specificity but also avoids making it completely foreign to the readers, compensating for the lack of cultural specificity of "salute" via free translation.

Although "salute" in English mostly refers to "greeting", its core meaning is "expressing respect or farewell through actions", which is consistent with the function of "Jiao Shou" ( 交手 ) as a "farewell etiquette". This method aligns with Bassnett's view that "translation is cultural interpretation": Waley does not force target readers to understand unfamiliar hand movements but first conveys the ritual's function (salute), then supplements cultural details through annotation—balancing readability and cultural fidelity.

## 3.7. Literal Translation Plus Adaptation

Literal translation plus adaptation refers to a comprehensive translation method that, grounded in literal translation, makes targeted adjustments to parts of the source text that may cause ambiguity, awkwardness, or cultural barriers. This approach aims to preserve the core information of the source text, while enhancing the fluency of the target text. For example:

**Example 7.**

| | |
|---|---|
| Source Text: | 云中君 |
| Target Text: | *THE LORD AMID THE CLOUDS* |

In Example 7, " 云 中 君 " (*yún zhōng jūn*) is the name of the cloud god worshipped by ancient Chu people. Literally, it means "the lord in the clouds". In the shamanic sacrificial culture of the Chu region", Yun Zhong Jun" ( 云中君 ) is a nature god in charge of clouds and rainfall. His divine nature is closely related to the fluidity and mystery of "clouds". He is often endowed with the functions of communicating between heaven and earth and bestowing blessings upon the world, reflecting the awe and imagination of the people of Chu towards natural forces [22]. As a symbol of moistening all things, the deification of "clouds" reflects the dependence of ancient agricultural societies on the climate. "Jun" ( 君 ) not only means "lord" but also implies "ruler", endowing the cloud god with a lofty status, which is consistent with the naming logic of deities such as "Dong Huang Tai Yi" ( 东皇太一 ) and "Xiang Jun 湘君 in the "Jiu ge".

" 云中君 " (*yún zhōng jūn*)—the cloud god in Chu mythology—is literally translated as "amid the clouds" (retaining the dwelling place) and adapted as "LORD" (replacing " 君 " *jūn*). "LORD" whose letters are all capitalized carries Western religious connotations (e.g., divine authority), adapting " 君 " (a respectful title for gods/monarchs in Chinese) to a concept familiar to Western readers.

Bassnett's "cultural functional equivalence" is embodied here: "amid the clouds" retains the god's "natural attribute" (clouds), while "LORD" conveys the "divine authority" of "Jun" ( 君 )—avoiding the cultural deviation of translating "Jun" ( 君 ) as "king" (secular) or "God" (monotheistic). This adaptation ensures that target readers can recognize the figure's divinity, aligning with Bassnett's emphasis on "functional alignment over literal correspondence.

## 3.8. Transliteration plus Amplification

Transliteration plus amplification refers to a translation strategy that converts Chinese characters into phonetically similar letter combinations in the target language in order to retain the original pronunciation, while supplementing semantic connotations or cultural contexts through explanatory words or phrases to enhance comprehensibility for target-language readers. For example:

**Example 8.**

| | |
|---|---|
| Source Text: | 高飞兮安翔，乘**清气**兮御**阴阳**。 |
| Target Text: | High he flies, peacefully winging;<br>On **pure air** borne aloft he handles **Yin and Yang**. |

In Example 8, "Qing Qi" ( 清气 ) refers to the clear and positive qi (energy) between heaven and earth, opposite to "Zhuo Qi" ( 浊 气 ), and it is a basic element that constitutes all things in the ancient Chinese cosmology. In the context of the "Yun Zhong Jun" ( 云中君 ), a piece in the "Jiu ge", " 乘 清 气 " (*chéng qīng qì*) symbolizes that the cloud god rides on the clear and positive qi in the universe, embodying his divinity of connecting heaven and earth and controlling nature. Since clouds are formed by "Qing Qi" ( 清 气 ), the cloud god can "fly high and soar gracefully". "Yin Yang" ( 阴阳 ) refers to the binary category of unity of opposites in ancient Chinese philosophy. "Yin" ( 阴 ) represents femininity, gentleness, darkness, etc., and "Yang" ( 阳 ) represents masculinity, firmness, brightness, etc. The interaction between the two constitutes the root of the changes of all things. In the source text of example 8, " 御阴阳 " (*yù yīn yáng*) means that the cloud god controls the operation of yin and yang qi, which implicitly conforms to the function of deities in the shamanic sacrificial culture of the Chu region to regulate the natural order and dominate life and death.

Waley used the method of transliteration plus amplification, supplemented by annotations. "Qing Qi" ( 清 气 ) is translated as "pure air", where "Qing" ( 清 ) is translated as "pure" and "Qi" ( 气 )as "air", retaining the purity of "Qing 清 " and the physical form of "Qi" ( 气 ).

Waley's rendering "pure air" is easy to associate with "pure air", avoiding translating "Qi" ( 气 ) as the abstract "qi" and reducing the difficulty of understanding. It echoes the previous "High he flies", depicting the cloud god soaring in the pure air, which is in line with the romantic description of natural divinity in the "Jiu ge". "Yin Yang" ( 阴阳 ) is translated as "Yin and Yang", using transliteration plus capitalization. By directly using the pinyin "Yin and Yang" and capitalizing the initial letters, it strengthens its identity as a proper cultural concept. "Yin Yang" ( 阴阳 ) is a core term in Chinese philosophy. Literal translation or free translation such as "shade and light" or "negative and positive" would dilute its profound connotations. Transliterating it as "Yin and Yang" maximally preserves the cultural symbols of the source language, which is in line with the common strategy of Western translators.

## 3.9. Use of Similar Onomatopoeia

As a translation method, the use of similar onomatopoeia specifically refers to the practice of converting Chinese onomatopoeic words into their English synonyms or near synonyms, requiring a balance between phonetic similarity, cultural convention, and semantic functionality. For example:

**Example 9.**

| | |
|---|---|
| Source Text: | 雷填填兮雨冥冥，猿**啾啾**兮狖夜鸣。<br>风**飒飒**兮木**萧萧**，思公子兮徒离忧。 |
| Target Text: | His chariot **thunders**, the air is dark with rain,<br>The monkeys **twitter**; again they cry all night.<br>The wind **soughs** and **soughs**, the trees **rustle**;<br>My love of my Lord has brought me only sorrow. |

In Example 9, the reduplicated words " 填填 " (*tián tián*, rumbling), " 啾 啾 " (*jiū jiū*, chirping), " 飒 飒 " (*sà sà*, rustling), and " 萧萧 " (*xiāo xiāo*, rustling) vividly depict natural sounds produced by thunder, wind, and rain, as well as the cries of apes, and the sounds of trees, helping readers to immerse themselves in the scene and feel the sadness of the abandoned goddess in the mountains.

The expression " 雷 填 填 " (*léi tián tián*) describes the loud and continuous sound of thundering, depicting the earth-shattering thunder before a heavy rain. The translator employed a combination of free translation and image enhancement, rendering it as "His chariot thunders". Here, "thunder" as a verb is an onomatopoeic word, and "his chariot" is an amplified translation which is not seen in the source text. By likening "thunder" to the chariot of a deity, it helps Western readers to imagine a mythical scene and avoids the thinness of a mere onomatopoeic translation. The reduplicative " 雨冥冥 " (*yǔ míng míng*) describes the heavy rain and the dim sky, creating a depressing and hazy natural atmosphere. Using free translation, Waley translated it as "the air is dark with rain". Through "dark" and "with rain", it explains the environmental effect of "Ming Ming" ( 冥 冥 ), transforming the adjective phrase into a scene description. In English, the abstract description of "Ming Ming" ( 冥冥 ) (dim, deep, and secluded) needs to be concretized, and "dark with rain" directly describes the dimness in the rain curtain, which conforms to the cognitive logic of target readers. " 猿 啾 啾 " (*yuán jiū jiū*), where " 啾啾 " (jiū jiū) is an onomatopoeic word describing the fragmented and shrilling cries of apes, produces a desolate sound effect of ape cries at night together with " 狖夜鸣 " (*yòu yè míng*, the monkeys cry at night). Using the method of onomatopoeia plus semantic adjustment, Waley translated it as "The monkeys twitter". The word "twitter" imitates the cries of apes, and "monkeys" is used to refer to apes in general. By using the onomatopoeic words, the translator retains the sound image, enhancing the vividness of the scene. However, "twitter" is mostly used for the chirping of birds, which may cause readers to misunderstand the source of the sound. " 风飒飒 " (*fēng sà sà*), with the reduplicated word "Sa Sa 飒飒 " being onomatopoeic, describes the desolate sound of the wind, strengthening the sense of loneliness in the autumn night. When translating, Waley retained the reduplicated word and translated it as "The wind soughs and soughs". The word "sough" imitates the sound of the wind, and the repeated use of the verb reflects the reduplicated structure of the original word, retaining the rhythmic characteristics of Chinese reduplicated words. However, due to cultural differences, there are differences in the repetition of words between Chinese and English. Chinese tends to use word repetition, while English usually avoids it. Readers may regard "soughs and soughs" as an unconventional expression, resulting in a slight sense of linguistic unfamiliarity. " 木 萧 萧 " *(mù xiāo xiāo*), with the reduplicated word "Xiao Xiao" ( 萧 萧 ) being onomatopoeic, describes the rustling sound of trees, especially that of falling leaves in the wind, depict-

ing the desolate scene of withered autumn trees. Using free translation, Waley translated it as "the trees rustle". The word "rustle" imitates the sound of leaves rubbing against each other, directly describing the sound of the trees in the wind. It is a commonly used onomatopoeic word in the target language.

Waley's use of onomatopoeia retains the original's "musicality"—a core cultural feature of the "Jiu ge" as ritual hymns. This aligns with Bassnett's view that "literary translation should preserve the source's aesthetic function", even if minor adjustments (e.g., "twitter" for apes) are needed for cultural acceptability.

# 4. Discussion and Implications

Waley's translation of the "Jiu ge" laid a foundation for its cross-cultural dissemination but also exhibits shortcomings—largely stemming from cultural differences and the limitations of his era. From the perspective of Susan Bassnett's cultural translation theory (conceptualized as a descriptive-analytical framework) and macro translation studies concepts (e.g., cultural default, translator's subjectivity, and poetic constraints), these shortcomings can be further analyzed to inform future translations.

## 4.1. Limitations of Waley's Translation

### 4.1.1. Cultural Default and Misinterpretation of Deities

Cultural default occurs when translators unconsciously project their own cultural frameworks onto the source text, resulting in misinterpretations that obscure original cultural meanings. Waley's misinterpretation of "Dong Jun" ( 东　君 ) reflects the impact of cultural default—a phenomenon where translators unconsciously assume that target readers share source cultural knowledge. He translated "Dong Jun" as "The Lord of the East" , but "Dong Jun" is the Sun God in Chu mythology—named "Eastern Lord" because the sun rises in the east [23]. Waley's translation prioritizes the literal "eastern" attribute over the core "solar deity" function, leading to cultural default: Western readers, unfamiliar with Chu's solar mythology, may mistake "The Lord of the East" for a secular monarch rather than a god.

From Bassnett's theory, this misinterpretation violates "cultural functional equivalence": the original's "solar deity" function is lost, and the cultural symbol of "Dong Jun" as a bridge between heaven and earth is eroded. A more appropriate translation would directly convey the deity's identity, such as "The Sun God", avoiding cultural default—aligning with Bassnett's emphasis on "prioritizing cultural function over literal form".

### 4.1.2. Oversimplification of Shamanic Ritual Language

Translator subjectivity is manifested in choices that prioritize target-culture conventions over source-culture specificity, potentially diminishing the text's distinctive cultural features. As a shamanic sacrificial text, the "Jiu ge" has distinct ritualistic language features (e.g., incantation-like structures, divine invocations), but Waley often simplified them into ordinary literary descriptions—reflecting the influence of translator's subjectivity. For example:

**Example 10.**

| | |
|---|---|
| Source Text: | 思**公子**兮徒离忧。 |
| Target Text: | My love of **my Lord** has brought me only sorrow. |

In Example 10, " 公子 " (*gōng zǐ*) refers to the mountain god in the "Shan gui" ( 山鬼 ) chapter, carrying both divine reverence and human affection. Waley's translation of " 公子 " as "my Lord" emphasizes the aristocratic connotation while diluting the shaman's devoutness and emotional tenderness—reflecting his subjectivity as an early 20th-century sinologist: he prioritized Western readers' familiarity with "noble titles" over Chu's unique "human-god intimacy" in shamanism.

Bassnett argues that the translator's subjectivity should be "contextualized" rather than "dominant": Waley's over-simplification erodes the "ritual function" of the text. Another translation (e.g., Oh, my divine one—sorrow binds me still) could use a dash to simulate the shaman's incantation tone, retaining both divinity and emotion and thus aligning with Bassnett's view that "translation should respect the source's genre characteristics".

#### 4.1.3. Poetic Constraints and Loss of Cultural Nuance

Poetic constraints often force trade-offs between formal elegance and cultural accuracy, particularly in texts with rich symbolic and ritual dimensions. Waley's pursuit of English poetic rhythm sometimes leads to the loss of cultural nuance, reflecting poetic constraints. For example, he translated " 猿啾啾兮狖夜鸣 " as "The monkeys twitter; again they cry all night": "twitter", usually used to describe birds' singing, is chosen for its short syllables but distorts the desolate tone of the apes' cries—a key element of Chu's "ritual sound symbolism" using natural sounds to communicate with gods.

From Bassnett's perspective, this reflects an imbalance between "form" and "culture": poetic rhythm should not override the original's "ritual sound function". A more appropriate choice should retain both the desolate tone and poetic rhythm, thus aligning with Bassnett's advocacy for "integrating form and cultural content" [24].

### 4.2. Implications for Future Translations

Based on the analysis of Waley's strengths and limitations, this study proposes three principled approaches for future translations of culturally dense classical texts [25]. Based on the above analysis, future translations of the "Jiu ge" should adhere to three principles derived from Bassnett's theory:

(1) Prioritizing cultural functional equivalence. For deities (e.g., "Dong Jun" 东君) and ritual concepts (e.g., "Gong Shou Li" 拱手礼 ), we can prioritize conveying cultural function (e.g., "solar deity" and "farewell ritual") over literal form, using annotations to supplement cultural details if necessary.

(2) Balancing domestication and foreignization. For unique cultural symbols (e.g., "Yin Yang" 阴 阳 , "Xiang Cao" 香 草 ), we can use foreignization to retain specificity, and domestication to enhance readability, thus—avoiding one-sidedness [26].

(3) Respecting genre characteristics. We can retain the "ritual musicality" of the "Jiu ge" (e.g., reduplicated onomatopoeia and incantation tones) to avoid simplifying it into ordinary poetry, aligning with Bassnett's view that "genre shapes translation strategy".

## 5. Conclusions

This study has demonstrated the value of applying Bassnett's cultural translation theory to the analysis of classical Chinese poetry translation, revealing both the complexities of cultural transfer and the potential for more nuanced translation approaches. In the context of globalization, the translation of Chinese classics such as the *Chu ci* plays a crucial role in promoting cross-cultural communication. This study analyzes Arthur Waley's nine translation methods for culture-loaded words in the "Jiu ge", integrating Susan Bassnett's cultural translation theory and Eugene Nida's cultural taxonomy to evaluate their effectiveness [27]. The research enriches the application of Bassnett's cultural translation theory in classical Chinese poetry. By linking each translation method to "cultural functional equivalence" and "cultural symbol transfer," it demonstrates how the theory can solve practical problems in translating region-specific and ritualistic culture-loaded words, addressing a gap in previous studies that focused only on general literary translation.

### 5.1. Practical Implications

For translation practitioners, this study provides empirically grounded guidance for navigating the complex challenges in translating culturally dense classical texts. Practically, this study provides targeted references for translators of classical Chinese poetry:

(1) For ecological/material culture-loaded words, image substitution or explicitation can balance cultural retention and readability.

(2) For religious/philosophical culture-loaded words, transliteration plus annotation or literal translation plus adaptation is more effective in conveying cultural specificity.

(3) For social/linguistic culture-loaded words, free translation plus amplification can avoid cultural default.

### 5.2. Future Research Directions

This study suggests several promising avenues for future research that could further advance our understanding of cultural translation dynamics. Future research can be expanded in two directions:

(1) Comparative studies. We can compare Waley's methods with other translators (e.g., David Hawkes and Zhuo Zhenying) to explore how different cultural backgrounds influence translation strategy selection, which helps—deepen the discussion of the translator's subjectivity [28].

(2) Corpus expansion. We can expand the corpus to include other chapters of the *Chu ci* (e.g., "Li sao" and "Tian wen") to test the universality of the "classification-evaluation" model.

### 5.3. Research Limitations

This study acknowledges several limitations that should be addressed in future research. The analysis focuses exclusively on Waley's translation, and a comparative analysis with other translators would provide richer contextualization. Additionally, the study employs a qualitative methodology, and future research could benefit from incorporating quantitative approaches to assess translation effectiveness more systematically.

Finally, the translation of the "Jiu ge" is not only a linguistic conversion but also a cultural dialogue. By adhering to the principles of cultural functional equivalence and balanced domestication/foreignization, translators can help the "Jiu ge", and Chinese classical literature as a whole, gain deeper resonance in the global context, promoting the exchange and mutual learning of world civilizations.

## Author Contributions

Conceptualization, C.T. and H.S.; methodology, C.T.; data curation, H.S.; writing—original draft preparation, H.S.; writing—review and editing, C.T.; supervision, C.T. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

## Funding

This article was supported by Yangtze University's College Student Innovation Training Project (Grant No.: Yz2024301).

## Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

## Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

## Data Availability Statement

The corpus used in this study is derived from publicly available English translations of "Jiu ge" (e.g., Waley, 1955) and critical Chinese editions of the *Chu ci* (Hong, 2015; Huang & Mei, 1990). Detailed corpus information (including the full list of 188 culture-loaded words and translation examples) can be found in the appendix or is available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

## Acknowledgments

The authors would like to express their gratitude to the anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments and suggestions, which significantly improved the quality of this manuscript.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflict of interest.

## References

[1] Waley, A., 1955. The Nine Songs: A Study of Shamanism in Ancient China. George Allen and Unwin: London, UK.

[2] Ji, A., 2010. Translation, Biography, and Social Intercourse: An Investigation and Analysis of Arthur Waley's Sinological Research Strategies [PhD Thesis]. Fujian Normal University: Fuzhou, China. DOI: https://doi.org/10.7666/d.y1807233 (in Mandarin)

[3] Huang, S.Q., Mei T.S., 1991. A Complete Translation of Chu Ci. Guizhou People's Publishing House:

Guizhou, China. (in Mandarin)

[4] Hong, X., 1983. Supplementary Annotations to Chu Ci. Zhonghua Book Company: Beijing, China. pp. 62. (in Mandarin)

[5] Nida, E., 1945. Linguistics and Ethnology in Translation Problems. Word. 1(2), 194–208. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/00437956.1945.11659254

[6] Baker, M., 2000. In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation. Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press: Beijing, China.

[7] Bassnett, S., Lefevere, A., 1990. Translation, History and Culture. Painter Publisher: London, UK.

[8] Bassnett, S., Lefevere, A., 1998. Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation. Multilingual Matters: Clevedon, UK. Available from: https://doi.org/10.21832/9781800417892

[9] Bassnett, S., Lefevere, A., 2014. Translation Studies, 4th ed. Routledge: London, UK.

[10] Lefevere, A., 2002. Translation, History, Culture: A Sourcebook. Taylor and Francis: London, UK. DOI: https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203417607

[11] Peng, X., 2011. A Brief Discussion on Susan Bassnett's Cultural Translation View. Legends: Biographical Literature Selection. 01, 156–157. (in Mandarin)

[12] Deng, J., Qin Z., 2007. A Review of Susan Bassnett's Translation Thoughts. Journal of Sichuan University of Arts and Science. 03, 104–106. DOI: https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1674-5248.2007.03.032 (in Mandarin)

[13] Liao, Q., 2000. Explorations in Contemporary Western Translation Theory. Nanjing Yilin Press: Nanjing, China. (in Mandarin)

[14] Yang, L., 2025. A Study on the Translation of Culture-Loaded Words from the Perspective of Cultural Translation View. Chinese Character Culture. 06, 177–179. DOI: https://doi.org/10.14014/j.cnki.cn11-2597/g2.2025.06.051 (in Mandarin)

[15] Cui, Z., 2021. A Study on the English Translation of Culture-Loaded Words in Synopsis of the Golden Chamber from the Perspective of Susan Bassnett's Cultural Translation Theory [Master's Thesis]. Xi'an University of Technology: Xi'an, China. DOI: https://doi.org/10.27398/d.cnki.gxalu.2021.000103 (in Mandarin)

[16] Luo, Y., 2021. A Study on the Variation of Shamanistic Cultural Images in English Translations of Chu Ci · Jiu Ge [Master's Thesis]. Yangtze University: Jingzhou, China. DOI: https://doi.org/10.26981/d.cnki.gjhsc.2021.000466 (in Mandarin)

[17] Peng, Y., Kong, Y.H., Chen, Y., 2024. A Brief Analysis of "Fragrant Herb Imagery" in The Book of Songs and Chu Ci. Chinese Character Culture, 18, 56–58. Available from: https://chn.oversea.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CJFD&dbname=CJFDLAST2024&filename=HZWZ202418019&uniplatform=OVERSEA&v=CGw9u-sLknb5aUvYxbcgVGtDnsSiqGdzDbRD7kSATYMS1xBYjsuoU1TxT84fMmmn (in Mandarin)

[18] Zhou, Z., Tian, C., 2019. The Cultural Connotations of "Fragrant Herbs and Beauty" in Chu Ci and Their Translation Methods. Journal of Yangtze University (Social Sciences Edition). 42(6), 94–96. Available from: https://chn.oversea.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CJFD&dbname=CJFDLAST2019&filename=JZSZ201906017&uniplatform=OVERSEA&v=dStvzVRUZ1rd00L6byPtiWd2b5zGSNgcvEr0SGxBmRMb3cbVQMBZApRtkKbfqFjB (in Mandarin)

[19] Fan, Y., 2018. A Comparative Study on the English Translation of Animal and Plant Images in Jiu Ge from the Perspective of Functional Equivalence [Master's Thesis]. Hubei University of Technology: Wuhan, China. (in Mandarin)

[20] Chu, J., Jing, L., 2020. A Study on the English Translation of Flower Imagery in Chinese Classical Poetry from the Perspective of the Cultural Translation View. Overseas English. 7, 118–119. Available from: https://lib.cqvip.com/Qikan/Article/Detail?id=7101684485 (in Mandarin)

[21] Zhang, Y., Yu, Y., 2021. An Evaluation of the English Translation of Cultural Images in Jiu Ge from the Perspective of Translation Strategies. Overseas English. 23, 131–133. Available from: https://lib.cqvip.com/Qikan/Article/Detail?id=7106675439 (in Mandarin)

[22] Xu, S., Zhu, W., 2022. Aesthetic Manifestations in the Translation of "Fragrant Herb Images" in Hawkes' English Version of Chu Ci. Campus English. 40, 190–192. Available from: https://chn.oversea.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CJFD&dbname=CJFDLASN2023&filename=XYYY202240063&uniplatform=OVERSEA&v=TIbSs5rM0sz6b_9HkfrFKRpgFjDmkd9tQxiUnzDu6FYAZe-3A4PfE4efPztvIdXS (in Mandarin)

[23] Fan, Y., 2024. A Study on the English Translation of Culture-Loaded Words in Chu Ci · Jiu Ge from the Perspective of Bassnett's Cultural Translation View [Master's Thesis]. Yangtze University: Jingzhou, China. DOI: https://doi.org/10.26981/d.cnki.gjhsc.2024.000363 (in Mandarin)

[24] Yan, X., 2013. On the Translation of Culture-Loaded Words in Chu Ci from the Perspective of Cultural Translation Theory: A Case Study of Sun Dayu's En-

glish Translation of Qu Yuan's Poems. Journal of Xihua University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition), 32(06), 65–69. DOI: https://doi.org/10.19642/j.issn.1672-8505.2013.06.015 (in Mandarin)

[25] Liu, J., 2019. On the Translation of Culture-Loaded Words in Chu Ci from the Perspective of Skopos Theory [Master's Thesis]. Fujian Normal University: Fuzhou, China. DOI: https://doi.org/10.27019/d.cnki.gfjsu.2019.001542 (in Mandarin)

[26] Guo, L., 2025. A Study on the English Translation of Culture-Loaded Words in Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out from the Perspective of Eco-Translatology. Journal of Suihua University. 45(02), 86–88. DOI: https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.2095-0438.2025.02.026 (in Mandarin)

[27] Tan, Y., 2025. A Study on the Translation of Culture-Loaded Words in The Muslim Funeral from the Perspective of Eco-Translatology. Yangtze River Novel Appreciation. 3, 56–59. Available from: https://chn.oversea.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CJFD&dbname=CJFDLAST2025&filename=XJSG202503014&uniplatform=OVERSEA&v=UP2YFVq0tsYmDKO0mS5YIBktky-Zj8kgoM0qSSI7VMkT-OlmEW-B0UJa35obChhf (in Mandarin)

[28] Wu, X., 2025. On the English Translation of Culture-Loaded Words in Wild China from the Perspective of the Cultural Translation View. English Square. 8, 20–23. DOI: https://doi.org/10.16723/j.cnki.yygc.2025.08.008 (in Mandarin)