

Types and Connotations of Culture-loaded Words in the “Jiu Ge” of the *Chu Ci*

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Received: 23 March 2025; Accepted: 28 April 2025; Published: 16 July 2025

Abstract:

At present, in order to promote Chinese culture and enhance Chinese cultural soft power, the “going-out” of Chinese culture has become a national strategy. The *Chu ci* is the origin of Chinese romantic literature, with a great literary value. Therefore, promoting the study of culture-loaded words in the *Chu ci* is of great practical significance for carrying forward excellent traditional national culture and deepening cultural exchanges between China and the West. Based on the complete vernacular Chinese translation of the *Chu ci*, by Huang Shouqi and Mei Tongsheng (1991), and the English rendering of the “Jiu ge” in *The Nine Songs: A Study of Shamanism in Ancient China*, by Arthur Waley (1955), this study selects the culture-loaded words in the “Jiu ge”, a chapter with unique cultural characteristics in the *Chu ci*, as the research object. According to the five categories of culture divided by the American translation theorist Eugene Nida, namely ecological culture, material culture, social culture, religious culture, and linguistic culture, the culture-loaded words collected from the “Jiu ge” are classified, and the cultural connotations contained therein are explored. The research findings are that the culture-loaded words in the “Jiu ge” of the *Chu ci* contain rich and unique cultural connotations and possess significant value. They serve as important windows for presenting the unique charm of Chinese culture to the world.

Keywords:

Chu Ci, “Jiu Ge”, Culture-loaded Words, Types, Cultural Connotations

1. Introduction

In the context of globalization, exchanges among countries are becoming increasingly frequent, especially in the cultural field. Ancient Chinese classics, as an important part of China's excellent traditional culture, are not only the essence of China's 5000-year history and culture but also fully demonstrate China's national image. The *Chu ci* is the pioneering work of Chinese romantic literature, created by Qu Yuan and his followers during the Warring States period (476 - 221 BC) and the Han Dynasty (202 BC - 220 AD). The “Jiu ge”, an extremely exquisite and outstanding chapter in it, was adapted and processed by Qu Yuan based on the folk sacrificial songs in the Chu area. The “Jiu ge” consists of eleven pieces in total. The

first piece, “Donghuang taiyi”, is a song to welcome the gods, the last poem, “Li hun”, is a song to send off the gods, and the piece “Guo shang” is to mourn and praise the soldiers who died in the war. The remaining nine poems are each a sacrificial song for a god. It is a classic work in the history of Chinese literature, containing a large number of culture-loaded words with profound cultural connotations. The study of these words is helpful for promoting cultural exchanges and dissemination of Chinese culture. This paper first identifies the culture-loaded words in the “Jiu ge” according to the definitions of culture-loaded words in the complete translation of the *Chu ci*, as well as “The Nine Songs”. Then, based on the five categories of culture divided by Eugene Nida, namely ecological culture, material culture, social culture, religious culture, and linguistic culture, the collected culture-loaded words are classified, and the cultural connotations of the culture-loaded words are explored.

2. Literature Review

This section gives a brief introduction to previous studies on the “Jiu ge” as well as culture-loaded words.

2.1. Research Review on the “Jiu ge”

As one of the sources of Chinese poetry and even Chinese culture, the *Chu ci* has always attracted the attention from domestic and foreign academic circles. The “Jiu ge”, as an important part of the *Chu ci*, contains 11 poems, brilliantly mirroring Chu culture from a unique perspective.

Domestic scholars’ research on the “Jiu ge” can be traced back to 1936, mainly focusing on the cultural image research of the “Jiu ge”, translation strategy research, and the analysis of each piece in the “Jiu ge”. Through the study of the characteristics of mythological images, animal and plant images, beauty images, and mountain and river images in the “Jiu ge”, scholars have deeply explained the cultural connotations they contain.

Among numerous foreign research literatures on the *Chu ci*, the author sorted out the research literatures on the “Jiu ge” and found that they can be classified into the evaluation of the English translation of the “Jiu ge” and the study of the “Wu” culture in the “Jiu ge”. In 2019, Thomas Michael published the article “Shamanism, Eroticism, and Death: The Ritual Structures of the Nine Songs in Comparative Context”. This article studied the “Wu” culture in the “Jiu ge”, and through the comparative positioning of the witchcraft rituals in the chapter, it revealed the deeper genetic relationship among shamanism, pornography, violence, and death.

2.2. Research Review on Culture-loaded Words

Language and culture are inseparable from each other. Culture in a broad sense includes language and constantly influences language, making language adapt to the needs of cultural development and change. Language is both the carrier and the reflection of culture. As the basic unit of language, vocabulary is the component with the largest cultural load in language. The unique development history, social system, living environment, religious beliefs, and customs of a nation will leave their marks on the vocabulary of its national language, thus giving rise to a large number of “culture-loaded words”.

At first, foreign scholars tried to analyze culture-loaded words from a linguistic perspective. The famous linguist Robert Lado (1972) defined culture-loaded words in

his work as “lexical items that have similar primary meanings in the source language and the target language but different connotations”. In 1945, Eugene Nida gave the definition and classification of culture-loaded words, believing that culture-loaded words in a specific language system are words that reflect the social life and cultural background of human beings. Domestic scholar Xu Guozhang first proposed the concept of “culture-loaded words” in the article “Culturally Loaded Words and English Language Teaching” in 1980.

3. Types and Connotations of Culture-loaded Words in the “Jiu Ge”

Culture-loaded words, also known as culture-specific items, refer to words, phrases, and idioms that mark unique things in a certain culture. These words reflect the unique ways of activities gradually accumulated by a specific nation in the long historical process, which are different from those of other nations. Culture-loaded words are the concrete manifestation of specific cultural phenomena, and the different reflections of different cultural groups on things, with distinct national characteristics. They are the essence of the national language and the most direct reflection of national culture. Liao Qiyi (2000) defined them in *Exploration of Contemporary Western Translation Theories* as “certain words or idioms with special meanings in a certain language, with certain cultural marks. These words reflect a certain historical nature and uniqueness”.

According to Liao Qiyi’s (2000) definition of culture-loaded words, we identified and collected all culture-loaded words in the “Jiu ge”. After a careful analysis, 188 culture-loaded words were selected as the corpus of this study. Eugene Nida, an American translation theorist, once divided culture into five categories: ecological culture, material culture, social culture, religious culture, and linguistic culture. This cultural classification is one of the most authoritative classifications at present. The “Jiu ge” contains rich knowledge of animals, plants, religion, witchcraft, astronomy, and geography. It describes the mountains, rivers, and people in the Chu state with the sounds of the Chu dialect, including vivid images of religious beliefs and historical customs, showcasing a strong local cultural flavor of the Chu state. These cultural characteristics are in line with Nida’s cultural classification. Therefore, in this paper, the culture-loaded words in the “Jiu ge” are divided into five categories according to Nida’s cultural classification: ecological culture-loaded words (henceforth “ECLWs”), material culture-loaded words (“MCLWs”), social culture-loaded words (“SCLWs”), religious culture-loaded words (“RCLWs”), and linguistic culture-loaded words (“LCLWs”) (see Table 1).

Table 1. Five types culture-loaded words in the “Jiu ge”.

ECLWs	薜荔, 蕙, 荪, 辛夷, 兰, 芙蓉, 杜若, 白蘋, 蘋, 菝, 芷, 药, 芳椒, 石兰, 杜衡, 疏麻, 桂枝, 秋兰, 麋芜, 扶桑, 女罗, 三秀, 葛, 芭, 蛟, 飞龙, 龙, 螭, 白鼋, 文鱼, 赤豹, 文狸, 狄, 麋, 沅湘, 洞庭, 涪阳, 醴, 空桑, 九坑, 九河, 九疑, 咸池, 阳之阿, 昆仑, 秋风
MCLWs	蕙肴, 桂酒, 椒浆, 桂浆, 石泉, 帝服, 灵衣, 荷衣, 蕙带, 裸, 青云衣, 白霓裳, 玦, 佩, 玉佩, 荷盖, 荪壁, 紫坛, 桂栋, 兰橑, 辛夷楣, 药房, 帷, 檣, 庑门, 鱼鳞屋, 龙堂, 紫贝阙, 朱宫, 龙驾, 桂舟, 薜荔柏, 蕙绸, 荪桡, 兰旌, 兰枻, 桂棹, 翠旌, 孔盖, 龙辂, 水车, 辛夷车, 桂旗, 云旗, 枹, 鼓, 竽, 瑟, 参差, 钟, 簴, 簴, 长剑, 玉珥, 长矢, 弧, 吴戈, 犀甲, 轂, 秦弓, 瑶席, 玉珥,

	罍, 兰藉
SCLWs	君, 荪, 五音, 冀州, 四海, 帝子, 公子, 佳人, 九州, 美子, 子, 鬼雄, 下女, 灵保, 灵修, 寿宫, 彗星, 交鼓, 天狼, 北斗, 骖, 交手, 鸣鼓, 春兰, 秋菊
RCLWs	阴阳, 清气, 寿夭, 魂魄, 九天, 灵, 威灵, 帝, 上皇, 神灵, 东皇太一, 云中君, 湘君, 湘夫人, 大司命, 少司命, 东君, 河伯, 山鬼
LCLWs	烂昭昭, 皇皇, 浅浅, 翩翩, 目眇眇, 嫋嫋, 纷总总, 被被, 冉冉, 芳菲菲, 磷磷, 青青, 皎皎, 忉忉, 杳冥冥, 波滔滔, 鱼鳞鳞, 云容容, 石磊磊, 葛蔓蔓, 雨冥冥, 雷填填, 猿啾啾, 风飒飒, 木萧萧, 鏐, 蹇, 聊, 羌, 兮, 婵媛, 潺湲, 逍遥, 窈窕, 偃蹇

3.1. Ecological Culture-loaded Words

Culture originates and develops in a specific ecological environment. As recorded in the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, “ecology” is “the pattern of relationships between plants, animals, and people, and their surroundings”. The word “ecology” reflects the characteristics and conditions of the natural geographical environment and climate where a nation lives. In short, ecological culture includes animals, plants, geographical environment, climate change, and so on. Gao Wencheng and Wu Chaoyi [16] defined ecological culture-loaded words as follows: “Ecological culture-loaded words refer to words related to natural ecology, such as environmental landforms, natural climate, animals, and plants.”

Chinese ecological culture-loaded words refer to words and expressions that are unique to Chinese culture and related to the ecosystem. These words and expressions are deeply marked by the region and era of a specific Chinese language society and are words that express unique things and concepts in Chinese culture. The “Jiu ge” was created in the Chu state during the Warring States period about two thousand years ago. Most of the animals, plants, mountains, and place names described in the poems, such as “薜荔” (bi li, a plant) and “蛟” (jiao, an animal), have unique local characteristics. According to statistics, there are 46 ecological culture-loaded words in the “Jiu ge”, which can be divided into four aspects: plants, animals, places, and climate (see Table 2 in the Appendix). With the help of these ecological culture-loaded words, Qu Yuan expressed his inner feelings. For example:

Example 1:

Source Text:	采薜荔兮水中, 搴芙蓉兮木末 (Huang & Mei, 1991: 36)
Target Text”	Can one pluck tree-creepers in the water? Can one gather water-lilies from the boughs of a tree? (Waley, 1955: 29)

The source text (ST) in example 1 comes from the “Xiang jun”, and there are two plants in the verse: “薜荔” (wild fig) and “芙蓉” (*fu rong*, lotus). In daily life, “薜荔” usually climbs on trees on land, and “芙蓉” mostly grows in water. These are common natural phenomena. However, here, “薜荔” grows on land but is picked in water, and “芙蓉” grows in water but is picked from the tree-top (树梢). This is contrary to the common sense and impossible to do, which is used to metaphorize that Xiang Furen’s pursuit and expectation of Xiang Jun are like looking for something in the wrong place, which is fruitless and reflects her disappointment and pain of failing to obtain what she wants. Qu Yuan used Xiang Furen’s feelings for Xiang Jun to express his loyalty and expectation to the King of Chu, as well as his resentment and depression

at being not appointed by the King of Chu and his inability to realize his ideals and ambitions.

Example 2:

Source Text:	麋何食兮庭中? 蛟何为兮水裔? (Huang & Mei, 1991: 38)
Target Text:	Would an elk browse in the courtyard? What would a dragon be doing on the bank of the stream?(Waley, 1955: 33)

The ST in example 2 comes from the “Xiang furen”, and there are two animals in the verse: “麋” (mi, deer) and “蛟” (water dragon). “麋”, as a water animal, should originally forage by the lakeside, but now it appears in the courtyard; “蛟”, belonging to the dragon family, mostly inhabits the mountains, but now it appears on the water's edge. The habitats of these two animals are completely contrary to their habits, which is likely to arouse people's doubts and uneasiness. Qu Yuan used this unique abnormal phenomenon to deeply express his sorrow and deep concern about the unreasonable phenomena in the political life of the Chu state. In the Chu court, villains who should have been in the mountains were promoted to the court, while sages who should have held high positions were forced to become servants. This sentence is not only an expression of his indignation at his unrecognized talent but also a powerful criticism of the dark political situation in the Chu state.

3.2. Material Culture-loaded Words

Material culture-loaded words are words related to human labor products or material gains, involving many aspects such as people's clothing, food, housing, and transportation. They usually reflect the specific living phenomena and material needs of a country and are the concrete manifestation of the Chinese nation's material civilization. They are unique to Chinese culture and represent tangible and specific things, such as unique clothing, food, transportation, utensils, and architecture in Chinese culture (see Table 3 in the Appendix). Gao Wencheng and Wu Chaoyi (2021: 43) defined material culture-loaded words as follows: “Material culture-loaded words emphasize things related to human social life, such as diet, clothing, transportation, and production tools.” There are many material culture-loaded words in the *Chu ci* that reflect the combination of Chinese historical traditions and folk customs. According to statistics, there are 64 material culture-loaded words in the “Jiu ge”, which can be divided into seven categories: food, clothing, architecture, transportation, instruments, weapons, and other items. For example:

Example 3:

Source Text:	蕙肴蒸兮兰籍, 奠桂酒兮椒浆 (Huang & Mei, 1991: 33)
Target Text:	Meats I offer, flavoured with basil, on strewn orchids laid; I set out the cassia-wine and peppered drink. (Waley, 1955: 23)

The ST in example 3 comes from the “Donghuang taiyi”, and there are two plants in the verse: “蕙” (*hui* basil), “兰” (*lan*, orchid), “桂” (*gui*, cassia), and “椒” (*jiao*, pepper). “蕙” is a kind of fragrant grass, and “蕙肴” is a dish wrapped or decorated with the “蕙” grass. “兰” is also a fragrant grass, and “兰籍” refers to using the “兰” grass as a mat. Both symbolize nobility and beauty, reflecting respect for the gods. “桂酒” is wine brewed with osmanthus fragrance, and “椒浆” is water pulp soaked with pepper. They have a strong aroma. In the sacrificial ceremony, wine and pulp play a

role in communicating with the gods. The ancients believed that the aroma could reach the sky, allowing the gods to smell the aroma of the offerings, thus accepting the sacrifice and bringing blessings. Here, they are the medium for people to express their piety to the gods and express people's piety and prayers to the gods.

Example 4:

Source Text:	龙驾兮帝服， 聊翱游兮周章 (Huang & Mei, 1991: 35)
Target Text:	In dragon chariot and the vestment of a god; Hither and thither a little while he moves. (Waley, 1955: 27)

The ST in example 4 comes from the “Yunzhong jun”, and there are two cultural terms: “龙驾” (*long jia*, dragon chariot) and “帝服” (*di fu*, imperial robe). “龙驾” means using a dragon as the driving beast of the chariot. The dragon is a highly symbolic divine being in ancient Chinese culture, representing strength, nobility, mystery, and extraordinary power. “帝服” refers to the clothing like that of the emperor of heaven, symbolizing the noble status and majestic temperament of Yunzhong Jun. The poet described Yunzhong Jun as extremely noble and sacred by using “龙驾兮帝服” (“In dragon chariot and the vestment of a god”), with a dragon as the chariot and the clothing of the emperor as the decoration. This expression of respect stems from the ancients' awe of natural forces and their belief in the gods. As the cloud god, Yunzhong Jun is in charge of natural phenomena such as rain, which is closely related to people's production and life. The poet used magnificent words to describe Yunzhong Jun's image, which is a praise of his divinity and power, hoping to please the god and pray that Yunzhong Jun could bring good weather and a bumper harvest to the world.

3.3. Social Culture-loaded Words

Social culture-loaded words are a category of vocabulary that germinates and evolves within a specific social and cultural context. They encapsulate the rich and distinctive cultural information of that society, covering diverse aspects such as social structure, traditional customs, values, religious beliefs, and historical changes. These words serve as a concentrated expression of culture, vividly reflecting the cultural traits, thinking patterns, and behavioral norms of the society they belong to. Gao Wencheng and Wu Chaoyi [16] defined social culture-loaded words as follows: “Social culture-loaded words are related to political systems and folk cultures.” According to statistics, there are 24 social culture-loaded words in “The Nine Songs”, which can be classified into two aspects: appellations, alternative names, and social customs (see Table.4 in the Appendix). For example:

Example 5:

Source Text:	霾两轮兮縶四马， 援玉枹兮击鸣鼓 (Huang & Mei, 1991: 51)
Target Text:	The wheels are embedded, the foursome entangled: Seize the jade drumstick and beat the sounding drum! (Waley, 1955: 55)

The ST in example 5 comes from the “Guo shang”, and there is a cultural terms: “击鸣鼓” (*ji ming gu*, beat the sounding drum). The phrase “击鸣鼓” vividly depicts the scene of warriors straining to beat the drums. The sound of the drums resounds across the battlefield, creating a powerful auditory impact. Drums played a crucial role in ancient warfare. They not only boosted the morale of the soldiers but also directed the

army's advancement and retreat. Here, the image of beating the drum represents the warriors' unwavering determination to fight in difficult situations. They use the passionate drumbeats to inspire themselves and their comrades, bravely resisting the enemy without retreating.

Example 6:

Source Text:	怨公子兮怅忘归， 君思我兮不得闲 (Huang & Mei, 1991: 50)
Target Text:	Wronged by my Lord I am too sad to think of going back. You love me, I know it; nothing can come between us. (Waley, 1955: 53)

The ST in example 6 comes from the “Shan Gui”, and there are two cultural terms: “君” (jun, lord) and “公子” (gong zi, young master). “君” and “公子” are the objects of Shan Gui's love. The emotional entanglement among them deeply reflects the love theme of the poem “Shan gui”. Shan Gui's complex emotions towards them and her various experiences in love showcase the beauty and cruelty of love, highlighting the helplessness, persistence, and struggle within it. Both “君” and “公子” refer to the person Shan Gui misses. By alternating these two terms, the monotony of the language is avoided, and the emotional layers of the poem are enriched. Shan Gui's emotional responses to “君” and “公子” form the main plot and emotional thread of the poem. Her feelings range from eagerly anticipating the arrival of the young noble to feeling resentful due to his absence, and then making excuses for him, all centered around her relationship with “君” and “公子”.

3.4. Religious Culture-loaded Words

Religious culture-loaded words refer to those within a religious system that contain rich religious connotations, including specific religious doctrines, rituals, belief concepts, and mythological legends. They are the key language carriers of religious culture, capable of accurately reflecting the spiritual core, behavioral norms, and value orientations of a particular religion. These words carry the spiritual sustenance and emotional perceptions of believers. Their unique semantics are formed within a religious context and hold great significance in the fields of cross-cultural communication and religious research. Gao Wencheng and Wu Chaoyi [16] defined religious culture-loaded words as follows: “Religious culture-loaded words encompass religious beliefs, mythological legends, and value systems.” According to statistics, there are 19 religious culture-loaded words in “The Nine Songs”, which can be divided into two aspects: ideology and religious beliefs (see Table 5 in the Appendix). For example:

Example 7:

Source Text:	一阴兮一阳， 众莫知兮余所为 (Huang & Mei, 1991: 42)
Target Text:	One Yin for every Yang; The crowd does not understand what we are doing. (Waley, 1955: 37)

The ST in example 7 comes from the “Da siming”, and there are two cultural terms: “阴” (yin, negative force) and “阳” (yang, positive force). “阴” and “阳” are the core images of this sentence, representing two opposing yet interdependent forces or states. They construct a mysterious, grand, and ever-changing picture of the cosmic order, creating a profound and mysterious atmosphere. Da Siming sighs, “众莫知兮余所为” (“The crowd does not understand what we are doing”), revealing a sense of loneliness

at not being understood by others. It also shows Da Siming's unwavering commitment to his mission of controlling life and death, remaining undeterred by others' lack of understanding. There is a sentiment of solitary yet resolute adherence to the will of heaven.

Example 8:

Source Text:	身既死兮神以灵， 魂魄毅兮为鬼雄 (Huang & Mei, 1991: 52)
Target Text:	Their bodies may have died, but their souls are living: Heroes among the shades their valiant souls will be. (Waley, 1955: 55)

The ST in example 8 comes from the “Guo shang”, and there are three cultural terms: “身既死” (*shen ji si*, “their bodies may have died”), “神以灵” (*shen yi ling*, “their souls are living”), and “魂魄” (*hun po*, souls). “身既死” represents the physical death of the warrior in the brutal war, marking the end of life. However, “神以灵” indicates the immortality of the spirit. The contrast between “身” and “神” highlights a solemn and noble mood, with the passing of the body and the eternity of the spirit reflecting each other. “魂魄” is a spiritual image, symbolizing the heroic spirits of the warriors. It represents their unyielding will and valiant spirit that remain even after death, evoking a strong sense of spiritual shock and awe.

3.5. Linguistic Culture-loaded Words

Linguistic culture-loaded words refer to vocabulary that carries rich cultural information within a specific language system. These words embody the values, thinking patterns, social customs, and historical inheritances of the culture to which they belong. They are a condensed manifestation of culture at the linguistic level. Their meanings often cannot be understood merely from the literal sense and require interpretation in conjunction with the underlying cultural background. They are the key focus in cross-cultural communication and language research. Gao Wencheng and Wu Chaoyi [16] defined ecological culture-loaded words as follows: “Linguistic culture-loaded words are characterized by archaic words and poetic rhythms unique to Chinese culture.” According to statistics, there are 35 linguistic culture-loaded words in “The Nine Songs”, which can be divided into reduplicated words and other words, including Chu dialect words and two-syllable terms (see Table 6 in the Appendix). For example:

Example 9:

Source Text:	绿叶兮素华， 芳菲菲兮袭予 (Huang & Mei, 1991: 44)
Target Text:	From green leaves and white branches Great gusts of scent assail me. (Waley, 1955: 41)

The ST in example 9 comes from the “Shao siming”, and there is a cultural term: “芳菲菲” (*fang fei fei*, “great gusts of scent”). “芳菲菲” describes a state of rich fragrance. Through this olfactory image, the atmosphere is further enhanced. The overflowing floral fragrance symbolizes the spread and dissemination of beautiful things, making the entire scene more appealing. The verse line “芳菲菲兮袭予” (“Great gusts of scent assail me”) describes the feeling when the fragrance wafts over, conveying a sense of pleasure and intoxication. The poet is immersed in this beautiful scene, enjoying the beauty and warmth brought by Shao Siming, which also reflects

the longing and affection for the qualities of life and beauty represented by Shao Siming.

Example 10:

Source Text:	抚余马兮安驱， 夜皎皎兮既明 (Huang & Mei, 1991: 47)
Target Text:	I touch my horses and gently drive. The night grows pale; now it is broad daylight. (Waley, 1955: 29)

The ST in example 10 comes from the “Dong jun”, and there are two cultural terms: “夜皎皎” (*ye jiao jiao*, “the night grows pale”) and “既明” (*ji ming*, “it is broad daylight”). “夜皎皎” depicts the brightness of the night sky. “皎皎” emphasizes the purity and brightness of the night, creating a quiet, deep, and slightly mysterious atmosphere. It symbolizes the tranquility and mysterious power in the darkness. “既明” indicates that dawn is approaching, and the night is gradually turning into daylight. It forms a temporal continuation and a transformation in state with “夜皎皎”, symbolizing that light is about to replace darkness, implying hope and new beginnings. Overall, it is an image of the passage of time, presenting the transition from darkness to light and expressing the anticipation and joy of the arrival of light after darkness.

4. Conclusions

This paper first selected 188 culture-loaded words in “The Nine Songs” based on the definitions of culture-loaded words in *A Complete Translation of the Chu ci* (1991), *The Nine Songs: A Study of Shamanism in Ancient China* (1955), and Liao Qiyi’s (2000) definition. Then, according to the five categories of culture divided by Eugene Nida, including ecological culture, material culture, social culture, religious culture, and linguistic culture, the collected culture-loaded words were classified. In “The Nine Songs” of the *Chu ci*, there are 46 ecological culture-loaded words which are divided into four categories: plants, animals, places, and climate. Subsequently, through detailed analyses of several examples, images, and emotions, the functions and meanings of different types of culture-loaded words were explained, demonstrating the unique cultural connotations contained in the culture-loaded words in “The Nine Songs” of the *Chu ci*.

In conclusion, studying the culture-loaded words in “The Nine Songs” of the *Chu ci* is of profound practical significance for promoting cultural exchanges between China and the West, enriching translation theories, and protecting cultural heritage. It also provides new ideas and resources for the development and enhancement of the cultural industry. By researching the *Chu ci*, we can pass on the excellent components of Chinese culture to a wider international audience, make positive contributions to cultural exchanges and dialogues between China and foreign countries, and promote the growth and upgrading of the cultural industry as well as cross-cultural communication and understanding.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

Funding

This research is supported by China’s National Office for Philosophy and Social Sciences (Grant No.: 18BYY032) and Yangtze University’s College Student Innovation Training Project (Grant No.: Yz2024320).

Appendix

Table 2. Ecological culture-loaded words in the “Jiu ge”.

Category	Ecological culture-loaded words	Arthur Waley
plants	薜荔	fig-creeper/tree-creepers/Creepers
	蕙	basil
	荪（壁）	sweet-flag
	荪（桡）	sweet flag
	辛夷（楣）	magnolia
	辛夷（车）	magnolia
	兰	orchids
	芙蓉	water-lilies
	杜若	galingale
	白蘋	white nut-grass
	蘋	duck-weed
	茝	angelica
	芷（葺）	Angelica
	药（房）	white angelica
	芳椒	scented pepper-plant
	石兰	rock-orchid/stone-orchid
	杜衡	asarum
	疏麻	sparse-hemp
	桂枝	cassia-branches
	秋兰	autumn orchid
	麋芜	deer-fodder*
	扶桑	Fu-sang*
	女罗	mistletoe
	三秀	Thrice-blossoming*
	葛	vine-creeper
	芭	flower-spray
Animals	蛟	dragon*
	飞龙（驾飞龙兮兆征）	winged dragons
	飞龙（飞龙兮翩翩）	flying dragons
	龙	dragons
	螭	griffins
	白鼋	white turtle
	文鱼	stripy fish
	赤豹	red leopards
	文狸	stripy civets
	狢	monkeys
	麋	elk
Places	沅湘	the YÜan and Hsiang*
	洞庭	Tung-t'ing
	涔阳	Ts'ên-yang*
	醴	the Li
	空桑	K'ung-sang*
	九坑	the Nine Hills*
	九河	the Nine Rivers*
	九疑	Nine Doubts*

	咸池	Pool of Heaven*
	阳之阿	a sunny fold of the hill
	昆仑	K' un-lun*
Climate	秋风	autumn wind

Table 3. Material culture-loaded words in the “Jiu ge”.

Category	Material culture-loaded words	Arthur Waley
Food	蕙肴	Meats I offer, flavoured with basil
	桂酒	cassia-wine
	(椒) 浆	peppered drink
	(桂) 浆	a drink of cassia*
	石泉	a spring amid the rocks
Clothing	帝服	vestment of a god*
	灵衣	spirit-garment
	荷衣	coat of lotus-leaf
	蕙带	belt of basil
	褕	thin dress
	青云衣	Coat of blue cloud
	白霓裳	skirt of white rainbow
	玦	ivory thumb-ring*
	佩	girdle-stones
Architecture	玉佩	girdle-gems
	荷盖 (乘水车兮荷盖)	awning of lotus-leaf
	荷盖 (葺之兮荷盖)	a roof of lotus leaves
	荪壁	Walls hung with sweet-flag
	紫坛	courtyard paved with murex
	桂栋	Beams of cassia
	兰橑	rafters of tree-orchid
	辛夷楣	Door-lintels of magnolia
	药房	alcove of white angelica
	帷	a bed-curtain
	櫺	floor-spread
	庑门	porch and gate
	鱼鳞屋	fish-scale house
	龙堂	dragon-scale hall
	紫贝阙	Portico of purple-shell
	朱宫	red palace
Transportation	龙驾	dragon chariot
	桂舟	cassia-boat
	薜荔柏	My awning is of fig-creeper
	蕙绸	bound with basil
	荪桡	My paddles of sweet flag
	兰旌	my banners are of orchid
	兰柁	steering-plank of magnolia
	桂棹	oars of cassia-wood
	翠旂	halcyon flags
	孔雀盖	Chariot-awning of peacock feathers
	龙辂	dragon-shaf*
	水车	water-chariot

	辛夷车	Chariot of magnolia
	桂旗	banners of cassia
	云旗	a banner of cloud
Instruments	枹（扬枹兮拊鼓）	sticks
	鼓	drums
	竽	reed-organ
	竽	reed-organ
	瑟	zither
	瑟	zither
	参差	pan-pipes
	钟	bells
	簠	bell-stand
	簠	flute
Weapons	长剑	long sword*
	长剑	long sword
	长剑	tall swords
	玉珥	jade grasp
	长矢	long arrow
	弧	bow
	吴戈	flat shields
	犀甲	jerkins of hide
	毂	axles
	秦弓	bows
Other items	瑶席	jewelled mat
	玉璜	jade weights
	罾	fish-net
	兰藉	on strewn orchids laid

Table 4. Social culture-loaded words in the “Jiu ge”.

Category	Social culture-loaded words	Arthur Waley
Appellation habits	君（君思我兮不得闲）	You
	君（君思我兮然疑作）	You
	君（君欣欣兮乐康）	The Lord
	君（思夫君兮太息）	Lord
	君（君不行兮夷犹）	The Princess
	君（望夫君兮未来）	The Princess
	君（隐思君兮陴侧）	my Lady
	君（君回翔兮以下）	The Lord
	君（吾与君兮齐速）	the Lord
	君（君谁须兮云之际？）	lord
	荪（少司命）	You*
	五音	The five notes*
	冀州	the province of Chi*
	四海	the Four Seas
	帝子	God's child
	公子（思公子兮未敢言）	this royal lady
	公子（怨公子兮怅忘归）	my Lord
	公子（思公子兮徒离忧）	my Lord
	佳人	my lovely one

	九州	Nine Provinces*
	美子	lovely young ones
	子（子交手兮东行）	you
	子（子慕予兮善窈窕）	you
	子（子魂魄兮为鬼雄！）	they
	鬼雄	Captains among the ghosts, heroes among the Dead
	下女	waiting-maids
	灵保	Spirit-guardian*
	灵修	the Divine One
Social customs	寿宫	the Abode of Life*
	彗星	the Broom-star*
	交鼓	drum answers drum
	天狼	the Heavenly Wolf*
	北斗	the Dipper*
	骖	with sth to pull at the sides
	交手	salute sb with raised hands*
	鸣鼓	beat the rolling drums
	春兰秋菊	In spring, the orchid, in autumn the chrysanthemum

Table 5. Religious culture-loaded words in the “Jiu ge”.

Category	Religious culture-loaded words	Arthur Waley
Ideology	阴阳	Yin and Yang*
	阴、阳	Yin、 Yang
	清气	pure air
	寿夭	his task*
	魂魄	souls
	九天	the Nine Heavens*
religious beliefs	灵（灵何为兮水中）	The Spirit
	灵（灵偃蹇兮姣服）	The Spirit*
	灵（灵连蜷兮既留）	The Spirit
	灵（灵皇皇兮既降）	The Spirit
	灵（灵之来兮如云）	The Spirit
	灵（灵之来兮蔽日）	The Spirit
	威灵	the dread Powers
	帝	God
	上皇	the Monarch on high
	神灵	magic*
	东皇太一	THE GREAT UNIQUE(Monarch of the East)
	云中君	THE LORD AMID THE CLOUDS
	湘君	THE PRINCESS OF THE HSIANG
	湘夫人	THE LADY OF THE HSIANG
	大司命	THE BIG LORD OF LIVES
	少司命	THE LITTLE LORD OF LIVES
	东君	THE LORD OF THE EAST
	河伯	THE RIVER GOD (Ho-po)
	山鬼	THE MOUNTAIN SPIRIT (Shan-kuei)

Table 6. Linguistic culture-loaded words in the “Jiu ge”.

Category	Linguistic culture-loaded words	Arthur Waley
Reduplicated words	烂昭昭	a blaze of brightness
	皇皇	in great majesty
	浅浅	be hard to pass
	翩翩	sweep her far away
	目眇眇	gaze far away
	嫋嫋	Nao nao
	纷总总	people in throngs
	被被	trails
	冉冉	creeps on
	芳菲菲	Great gusts of scent
	辘辘	loudly rumbling
	青青	in its splendour
	皎皎	grows pale
	忡忡	sad
	杳冥冥（杳冥冥兮以东行）	mirk and darkness
	杳冥冥（杳冥冥兮羌昼晦）	be murk and gloom
	波滔滔	The waves surge on surge come
	鱼鳞鳞	Fishes shoal after shoal
	云容容	the clouds sweep past in droves
	磊磊	a welter of rocks
	葛蔓蔓	vine-creeper spreading between
	雨冥冥	the air is dark with rain
	雷填填	His chariot thunders
	猿啾啾	The monkeys twitter
	风飒飒	The wind sighs and sighs
	木萧萧	the trees rustle
Other words	锵	tinkle with a ch'iu-ch'iang
	蹇	Chien!
	聊	/
	羌	Ch'iang!
	兮	/
	婵媛（chán yuán）	Reluctant
	潺湲（chán yuán）（横流涕兮潺湲）	in an endless stream
	潺湲（chán yuán）（观流水兮潺湲。）	swirling by
	逍遥	loiter, pacing to and fro
	窈窕	my lovely ways
	偃蹇（yǎn jiǎn）	proudly

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