

# Between Loss and Gain: Translating the Taiwanese Praise Ballads on the Pescadores into English

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The “praise ballad” is a specific type of local folk literature handed down from generation to generation in traditional agricultural and fishing societies by means of chanting in the local vernacular dialect. It was composed and sung to express the villagers’ emotions, thoughts and feelings. The content of the praise ballads sung on the Pescadores is largely and tightly connected to the hardship of fishing life because the Pescadores are surrounded by the salt waters and savaged by the Northeast monsoons. When the author of a praise ballad narrates his/her personal feeling or mood towards a particular living condition, he/she appeals to an intense emotion regarding the daunting adversity of fishing on the open seas, which is called “begging the sea” in the local Taiwanese dialect. Although praise ballads play a decisive role in the promotion of Penghu cultural tourism, the unique folk chansons are facing a vital predicament, namely, they are being forgotten by the people of our time and have been gradually sinking into absolute oblivion. Based on Hung Min-Tsung’s authoritative work on and collection of local Penghu praise ballads, the research seeks to examine the “loss” and “gain” in the English translations of some representative local praise ballads collected in Hung’s book. Can the original message and flavor of a praise ballad be fully retained in a Taiwanese-English translation via the mediation of the Chinese language? Can a Taiwanese-Chinese-English translational grand tour manage to faithfully render the original beauty, charm and humor of the Pescadorean songs of the old times? What can be regained and what are lost in the English translation? These are the questions the paper endeavors to investigate.

*Keywords:* praise ballads, lyrical translation, translation studies, the Pescadores, Taiwanese-Chinese-English translation

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## Praise Ballads

### What Is a Praise Ballad?

Praise ballads used to be sung in Taiwan and the Southern Min region (閩南地區); nowadays, they remain to be circulated on the Pescadores as a representative local folk impromptu oral literature. Praise ballads feature in natural language, tonic variation as well as a unique ambiance of regionalism. Altogether, the content of praise songs consists of a large-scale social dimension, such as daily life, personal interest and all sorts of local folkways. Besides, congratulatory speeches, moods aroused by particular occasions and local proverbial expressions can also be heard among the praise songs. Most of them are sung to express personal experience, make jokes with each other and even unveil an ambiguous relationship between man and woman. According to Professor Hu Wan-Chuan (胡萬川) (2003), if we compare praise ballads' contexts, we can find that its singing involves two roles: the major one is in charge of singing itself and the other one has to join the singing in chorus. Their roles are opposite to each other in this kind of occasion. The motif of the songs is oftentimes meant to criticize and the words used in the songs are by and large quite freely chosen by the author.<sup>1</sup> “*Bao*” (褒) in the Taiwanese dialect means “commendation” and “award”; “*ko*” (歌) means ballad, song, or singing. “*Bao Ko*” (褒歌) altogether signifies an expression of commendatory feeling towards each other by means of singing, but sometimes the word “commendatory” has to be understood in an ironic manner.

According to previous scholars' researches and studies, “praise ballads” bear about seven different names based on different connotations. Wu Ying-Tao (吳瀛濤) (1990) thinks that praise ballads are male and female oral duets. In Hung Min-Tsung's (洪敏聰) (1997) opinion, praise songs fall into the category of folk literature. During the Japanese occupation period, Cheng Kun-Wu (鄭坤五) considered praise songs to be Taiwanese folk songs (“*Guofeng*” 臺灣國風); he thought that the praise songs and *The Book of Songs* (《詩經》) have the same beautiful literature and art value (qtd. in 許淑月 2004). Huang Ching-Lien (黃勁連) (1997) thinks that praise ballads are a type of tonic and rhythmic literature which describes Taiwanese local conditions and customs. Hung Wei-Jen (洪惟仁) (2000) considers praise ballads to be a genre of Taiwanese (閩南語 South Fukien dialect) tea harvest melody (採茶歌) which is generally sung in flirting. Wang Teng-Shan (王登山) (1959) thinks that praise ballads are also known as Hakka folk songs (山歌) which are famous in the countryside and they usually depict relationship between man and woman. Weng Sheng-Feng (翁聖峰) (1996) also thinks that praise ballads are Hakka folk songs (山歌) which started to spread from the mountain areas. Hung Te-Shih (黃得時) (1952) considers that praise songs are mainly composed of seven characters and for this reason they are also called “the seven characters” (七字仔). Shih Ping-Hua (施炳華) (2001) thinks that praise ballads are similar to the Tang dynasty's “*qiyān jueju*” (七言絕句), and “seven words’ or more precisely “seven characters” stands for the main formal feature of the praise songs.<sup>2</sup>

Praise ballads can be read or sung as a sort of traditional folk music. They are rich in lyrics and tunes and they describe all-encompassing contents related to local people's lives on the islands. This kind of improvisation was written in different times, occasions and moods by authors or performers of the praise songs.<sup>3</sup> What is more, praise ballads are written in simple words with rhyme and couplet to concretely express emotions; they also show the cultural and historical background of a particular time and reflect local people's peculiar lifestyles.

<sup>1</sup> 〈有關台灣「褒歌」與「茶歌」相關性探討與界定〉 15 Dec. 2015 <<http://blog.ilc.edu.tw/blog/blog/484/post/2661/7699>>.

<sup>2</sup> 《瀕臨消失的海島歌聲：澎湖古老褒歌》 15 Dec. 2015 <<http://www.phsong.npu.edu.tw/new.php?id=1>>.

<sup>3</sup> 《臺灣大百科全書》 15 Dec. 2015 <<http://taiwanpedia.culture.tw/web/content?ID=25468>>.

### Origin of Praise Ballads

Modern people created music to release their emotions. Before they started to write lyrics, they had to possess basic language ability. The development and usage of languages are tightly related to human civilizations. This section focuses on the origin of Penghu praise ballads, including when the local people started to live here, what languages were used in this artistic genre, and the reasons for which they created these praise songs.

After the Ching Dynasty occupied Penghu, the Ching court set up an inspection section on the Pescadores. In the 5th year under the reign of Emperor Yongzheng (A.D. 1727), the Ching government transformed it into an administrative unit known as “controller-general,” which paid more attention to military system but ignored local reclamation and construction. During the 200 years from the Ching government to Japanese occupation, the population in Penghu increased, but cultural development fell largely behind.

During the period under Japanese domination, the Japanese contributed a lot in cultural construction besides material construction. They set up Japanese learning centers and gave every student 3 dollars to encourage them to study Japanese. Those who were excellent in study could be directly upgraded to high school. They set up public schools, Penghu Marine and Fishery Vocational High School, and Makung Senior High School. So many constructions were made during Japanese rule. “During the 51 years under Japanese rule, there was no massacre in Penghu. On the contrary, the colonial rulers were engaged in local geological survey and historical archaeology of the Penghu islands” (蔡平立, 1979, p. 15).

Although it was against everyone’s will to be ruled by foreigners, the contributions made by Japanese governing cannot be denied. According to *The Chronicle of Penghu County* (《澎湖縣誌》) edited by 李紹章 (1983), most people living in Penghu came from Zhangzhou and Quanzhou which were two cities in the Minnan area. Only few of them came from Guangdong. These people brought in the main dialects of Penghu. The most widely used dialect was called Minnan dialect. But there were some differences in pronunciation among the Minnan dialects spoken by the people who came from different places. Some pronunciations were similar to the dialect of Quanzhou, and others were similar to the dialect of Zhangzhou. Thanks to the convenience of transportation and the development of information communication, the residents of Penghu were gradually influenced by the accent of the people living in Taiwan. Besides, the Mandarin Chinese language policy launched by the ruling Kuomintang party also made Chinese to be the most dominant official language on the Penghu islands. The Minnan dialect spoken in Penghu was similar to the same dialect used in Taiwan as far as general pronunciation was concerned. By and large, special local phonological features are kept only by the elder who live on the islands almost all their lifetimes (李紹章, 1983, pp. 130-135).

People brought their customs, beliefs, language and culture here when they immigrated to Penghu, which was a completely unfamiliar island for them at the beginning. The poor and barren environment inspired them to pray to their gods. The tough living condition and their desperate spirits made them sing the songs of their native hometowns to relax themselves, and the singing habits and oral customs were gradually handed down from generation to generation.

Praise songs were used for chatting, flirting, communicating, wit competition, pressure release, or simply as a way of individual or mutual entertainment. Penghu praise songs mainly inherited the oral literary heritage of Fujian Province. Afterwards, they were so deeply affected by the peculiar environment on the Penghu

Archipelago and the unique living condition on the Pescadores that they gradually developed to form a new praise ballad style that not only maintains the old local oral literary tradition but also contributes to preserving its one-of-a-kind charm, beauty, creativity, as well as primitive humour.

### **Development Background of Praise Ballads in Penghu**

Penghu's praise ballads have been circulated for about 300 years. The cultural history and natural environment described in the praise songs are unique because they record the development of Penghu and reflect local people's ways of life and their spirit. They also reveal the past of the islands to the readers of our times. According to the Cultural Affairs Bureau of Penghu County:

Penghu is surrounded by the sea and composed of a lot of islands or islets. Most inhabitants on the islands tend to engage in jobs related to marine industry or development so that praise ballads' contents are almost inseparable from the sea. Because Penghu residents' lives are attached to the development of local fishing industry, local praise ballads often describe people's unique feelings toward the sea and record the particular tough living conditions on the barren islands under strong northeast winds. In this regard, many sentimental praise ballads serve as a cultural access which allows tourists or readers of our times to savor and experience the special local life style and unique living condition on the islands of blanket flowers.<sup>4</sup>

In other words, Penghu residents' habits and ideas are reflected in the oral literature and songs. Penghu's praise ballads as local folk songs have been circulated among people from mouth to mouth. On the Penghu Archipelago, most ancestral residents came from Fujian Province, so praise songs are sung or read in the Southern Min dialect (also loosely known as Taiwanese). Their contents reflect the everyday plebeian lives of local residents and contain special colloquial language and cultural heritage.

Praise songs are rooted in the plebeian lives and reflect local cultures (Hsu Shu-Yueh I). In the past, written texts were not popular on the islands so people often resorted to songs to express their feelings. Therefore, praise ballads' contents were very common. A variety of emotions have been performed or shown in the praise songs, such as welcoming, blessing, happiness, sadness, lamenting, and so on. Despite the different contents, the plebeian express their feelings which are bound up with their own lives on the offshor islands. Praise ballads use the most common sentence and colloquial style to hand down a unique oral tradition from generation to generation. Residents sing these songs to express emotions, feelings and impromptu thoughts. Song writers or singers attend to both elegant diction and popular witticism to express the residents' living condition in everyday contexts. In order to voice their emotions, the authors rack their brains to create praise lyrics and the readers also intend to understand the hidden message between the lines. Whatever their content is, it is relevant to the life of local people, such as fishing, festivals, rituals, ceremonies, courting, romance, love, relationship, etc. Forms of the praise ballads are basically quite free of strict rules and structures. Singers use succinct lyrics which are in most cases with certain rhyme schemes or in couplets in four lines to convey their emotions specific and appropriate for a given occasion.

### **Characteristic Content of Penghu Praise Ballads**

According to the thesis entitled *Voice of the Islands: A Study on Penghu Praise Songs*, (《海島之聲：澎湖褒歌研究》) by Hsu Shu-Yue (許淑月) published in 2005, we know that Penghu praise songs and Penghu

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<sup>4</sup> 澎湖縣文化局網站 15 Dec. 2015 <http://song.phhcc.gov.tw/pantology/pantology02.asp>.

residents' living conditions are inseparable. In the early years, people in Penghu considered praise songs to be one of their entertainments. The content themes are mostly about emotion and daily life. The "emotional" praise songs are in the majority. From the Penghu praise songs, we can understand the features of local life, historical background and the social status of Penghu's women in the early days.

As far as the features of local life are concerned, Penghu praise songs' content was mostly about fishery. Penghu residents treated the sea as their home. The creator of praise ballads always used familiar things in life to be their inspiration. The geology of Penghu is basically an island terrain. Rainfall was scarce all year round and long-term wind blowing made crops difficult to grow on the barren fields. Only such drought-tolerant plants as peanut, sweet potato and sorghum could be grown in the sterile geological environment, which made people tend to pray to God for agricultural harvest as well as fishermen's abundant catch. Therefore, religion plays a very important role in the daily lives of the inhabitants of Penghu. We can also encounter unique local religious cultural aspects in Penghu praise songs.

In addition, Penghu praise songs also reveal that Penghu people's life was particularly tough during the Japanese occupation period. The difficult living condition forced people to quit Penghu and make a living in Taiwan, which was called "island immigration." These praise songs help descendants understand what happened in the past and review their ancestor's life. Hsu Shu-Yue (許淑月) mentions that "they [the praise ballads of Penghu] are the best witness of local historical evolution" (2005, p. 222).

A certain portion of the contents of local praise ballads sung on the Pescadores narrate the peculiar affection and living condition experienced by the women on the outlying islands. Praise songs also reflect the fact that women's status in the remote society was sometimes tragically negligible at that time. As the ancient Chinese proverb goes, "the three virtues demanded of a traditional Chinese woman are to be compliant to her father at home, to her husband in marriage, and to her sons after her husband's death." The social system was called "patriarchate" in the early days. No matter how badly a woman's husband treated her or how much she suffered from grievance, she could not do anything but submit to humiliation. In consequence, it formed a peculiar local social phenomenon called "a child future daughter-in-law raised in her husband-to-be's family" (童養媳) in the early times. The wealthy family wanted their son to procreate and increase the labor. The poor family could not afford to raise their own daughter to adulthood, so they sold or gave her to the family of rich people. The wealthy family thought that adopting a "child daughter-in-law" could not merely save them their son's future wedding cost, but it could also guarantee him a wife in the future. For the rich people, it was no other than killing two birds with one single stone. Penghu praise songs also reflected and recorded the poor destiny and sufferance of the "child daughters-in-law" who once lived on the islands of Penghu.

### **Formal Characteristics of the Praise Ballads**

The praise ballads belong to folk oral literature. As implied in the name, they were orally spread by people from mouth to mouth and from household to household. Authors of the praise ballads expressed their delight, anger, sorrow and happiness by singing these ballads in a largely impromptu manner. The praise ballads not only reveal the singers' frames of mind and structures of feeling but they also reflect the social background of their time. According to Zhu Chieh-Fan (朱介凡):

Ballads are improvisations. When a singer creates a ballad, he/she certainly would not consider the following topics: sentences, constructions, simile, metaphor, tone, rhyme, etc. Of course, they still need to follow some steps and grasp the meaning and rhymes of a ballad. Also, a well-known ballad must be able to touch listeners' heart and arouse their sympathy so that it will be passed down. Most of these song inventors have never taken any vocational training about writing because they belong to the general plebeian public. Although they do not usually lay particular stress on writing techniques, they still follow certain form of rhyming pattern in the composition. (1984, p. 24)

Ballads are usually composed of four lines, with each line consisting of seven words ("characters" to be more precisely in the Chinese language translated and transliterated from Taiwanese pronounced in peculiar heavy local accent for certain phonetic sounds). However, most part of the praise ballads in Penghu were sung based on inventors' emotions. For this reason, ballads' number of lines and sentences were allowed to be added or subtracted. Besides, the rhymes of ballads were different from the rhyme of a four-line verse with seven characters in a line. According to Chung Ching-Wen (鐘敬文), the praise ballads are "just meant to be sung, and there is no need for the lyrics singer to look up a poet's book of thymes to see if the rhymes of a ballad can be sung fluently and perfectly" (1989, p. 38). It can be said that the rhyming patterns employed in Penghu's praise ballads are occasionally looser and freer than those adopted in the praise songs sung in Taiwan.

Although the praise ballads in Penghu belong to folk literature, they are still a highly valuable cultural heritage. Their writing involves three techniques in literary expressions: "direct description, simile and metaphor, as well as symbolism" (賦、比、興). From ancient times till now, theorists have many different opinions about "direct description, simile and metaphor, and symbolism." For example, Wu Hung-Yi's *Book of Songs and Songs of Chu* (《詩經與楚辭》) mentioned that: According to Chu Hsi (朱熹), direct description means to describe the subject directly; simile and metaphor refer to a figure of speech which often describes a subject with an abstract thing; symbolism means to describe a subject with a thing that represents something else (吳宏一, 2000, p. 89).

If one peruses the praise ballads in Penghu, he/she will find that many song singers or writers largely drew on the things that they saw or experienced in their everyday lives. Although inventors of the songs are in most cases nothing but the general public, they can still carefully and deeply observe ordinary things in their daily life and make very good use of them to create praise ballads in a witty manner. Inventors can even apply special writing techniques to the composing of lyrical ballads and make listeners feel attracted to echo to the ballads. This makes these praise ballads a highly representative valuable cultural as well as literary heritage of Penghu.

### **Classification of Praise Ballads**

People are emotional animals and love is an important part of human life. Since ancient times, the pursuit of love and the experience of love have been sung in all sorts of literature. The vicissitudes of love always have been engraved on the heart. The bitterness and suffering from labor always make people feel helpless and painful. The simple and honest ancestors of the Pescadores recorded their feelings by singing praise ballads which were circulated among people in their lifetime and then further handed down to their posterity.

There are a great number of classifications for praise ballads. Some are simple and clear; others are more cumbersome but in-depth. The number of praise ballads that laments romantic love and longing for an ideal partner or spouse is really huge compared to those of other motifs. Ups and downs of a love relationship are

most often recorded in the songs. When a praise ballad sounds sweet, it may even make people feel intoxicated and infatuated while listening to the tune. However, a praise ballad can also break people's heart when it comes to narrate a painful and unforgettable tragic suffering in a most lamentable tone. From an initial crush on some one at the first sight to final courageous efforts in the wooing or courting, from the rising tide to the ending ebb, and from the twists and turns all the way till a couple finally enters the hall of marriage are all vividly recorded and sung in the praise ballads of a certain region. Even if the loving and beloved ones choose to go their separate ways without the chance to embrace "eternal bliss," or if they eventually arrive at the door of divorce, the process of courting is filled with lots of sweet, sad and bitter imprints as sung in the folk ballads.

The research on the classification of praise ballads can be traced back to the Japanese researcher 稻田尹 in the period of Japanese rule. He divided Taiwan's praise ballads into four categories in his book, *Taiwan Ballads*.

- I. Song of gunshots (7 pieces)
- II. Song of the old and new lovers (12 pieces)
- III. Song of exhortation (18 pieces)
  - 1. Song of life
  - 2. Song of conduct
  - 3. Song of filial piety
  - 4. Song about respecting food
  - 5. Song of career
  - 6. Song of the poor
  - 7. Song of gambling
  - 8. Song of the henpecked
- IV. Love song (18 pieces)
  - 1. Lovesickness
  - 2. Dating
  - 3. Jealousy
  - 4. Vow
  - 5. Anguish
  - 6. Leave
  - 7. Resentment (稻田尹, 1944, pp. 39-40)

In contrast, another Taiwan ballads researcher 洪惟仁 maintains that the bulk of the Taiwanese praise songs is by and large about love. He divided praise songs into two categories:

- I. Miscellaneous

1. Work songs
  2. Life songs (describing the daily routine, learning, sightseeing, service in the army, imprisonment)
  3. Customs songs (mainly about marriage, lunar months, festivals and the new year)
  4. Songs to chant things (chanting natural landscape, flowers and trees)
  5. Praising song (praising singing art, craftsmanship, friendship; sighing aging and ugly appearance)
  6. Sarcastic songs (satire on someone having an affair or making a pass at someone)
  7. Cursing prophetic songs (cursing others)
  8. Sermon songs
- II. Love songs (joyous amorous songs and unrequited love songs) (洪惟仁, 2000, p. 231)

According to the praise songs collected by 許淑月, love songs are indeed in the majority. Therefore, the praise songs can be further classified as follows:

- I. Romantic Songs:
  1. Puberty songs
  2. Yearning-for-love songs
  3. Lyrical songs
  4. Dating songs
  5. Loving songs
  6. Farewell songs
  7. Oath songs
  8. Flirting songs
- II. Tragic Love Songs
  1. Lovesickness songs
  2. Lovelorn songs
  3. Marriage resentment songs
- III. Songs of happiness and banter
- IV. Life Songs
  1. Life of labor
  2. Living in poverty
  3. Being forced to leave one's hometown
  4. Entertainments in life
- V. Admonishing and philosophical songs



1. Philosophical and allegorical praise songs
2. Virtue-encouraging and evil-punishing praise songs

#### VI. Miscellaneous

1. Mocking songs (tease, banter, mock and satire)
2. Tournament's praise songs
3. Congratulating praise songs (許淑月, 2005, pp. 46-134)

By a naive and natural way, the ancestors left behind them vivid traces in the folk praise ballads which recorded their ways of life and reflected the collective moods of the people. Although the 21st century witnesses quite a different world from our ballad-singing ancestors's, the experience and wisdom accumulated from ancient generations remain to be useful for our generation. As a matter of fact, the wonderful praise songs are no other than intangible assets descended from our ancestors to serve as a literary mirror that shows us their culture, history, humor, value, as well as wisdom.

## Translation Theory

### Translation Studies

Translation is not an easy job. There are many dimensions that should be paid attention to. In addition to exempting the target reader from the difficulty in understanding a foreign text in the original foreign language, the author of a source text has to accept the new translated version of his or her work. Usually, the most important error in translation stems from the translator's deficiency in comprehending the source text, which finally leads to inevitable mistakes in translation in the target language. Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953), a renowned French scholar of translation studies, maintains that a translator should not "plod on" word by word, but should always "block out" his work, and follow their original nature to carry out the entire translation. That is to say, a literary translation should not be a verbatim translation. The more reasonable way of translation is to grasp the meaning of the original sentences in the source text and present the intention of the whole paragraphs in the target text. The most important thing is not to embellish the sentences but convey the author's ideas faithfully by using his/her own language and adopting his/her own style so that the reader of the target language can empathize with and accept the spirit of the original author. Therefore, the translator is advised to "transmute boldly," but should never embellish to render perfect translation (Bassnett, 2002, p. 116).

Besides the emphasis on faithfully rendering the original intention as well as style in the source text, Belloc also stresses the need for a translator to consider the prose text as a structured whole. As mentioned above, besides rendering the original text faithfully, the whole structure of a prose text must be taken into account. The whole text in the target language and the original should not be too different to achieve the purpose of faithful rendition. He also accepts that the translator has the right to alter the text significantly in the translation process to provide the TL reader with a text that conforms to TL stylistic and idiomatic norms. Based on the text of the original author, it is appropriate and reasonable for a translator to make some changes in the translation so long as the variations are helpful for the reader to understand and further comprehend the text in the target language (Bassnett, 2002, p. 117).

In fact, translation can never be perfect. It cannot be taken without critical thoughts. Apart from making the target language readers accept the translation, we still need to accept the criticisms from the native readers of the target language and other translation critics's critical examinations. "A perfect translation, it has been said, conveys the spirit of the original author by giving us the words that he would have used had his language been that into which his writings are about to be translated" (Bassnett, 2002, p. 117). It is therefore commendable for a translator to use his/her own words in translation and accept criticisms readily from the public. If a translator manages to concern the words and sentences in a most flexible and expedient manner, he/she could naturally come to sufficiently display his/her original author in the target language. Then, without excessive wording or unnatural emphasizing, it allows the reading public to approach or even accept his/her version of rendition. This may be considered to be some sort of "perfect translation" that a translator may set as a goal to pursue.

### **The Concept of Equivalence**

"Equivalence is a central concept in translation theory, but it is also controversial" (Sánchez, 2009, p. 76). Equivalence is a large and complex theory. "It is impossible to achieve total equivalence between SL units and TL units in any two languages in contact, even in the case of two very closely related languages such as, for example, French and Spanish" (p. 77). Equivalence could be understood as an equal between the original and the translated texts. That means readers who read a translated text receive exactly identical messages as those received by the readers of the original text. J. C. Catford (1917-2009) is one of the earliest advocates of equivalent translation model. According to the theorist, the concept of equivalence can be divided into formal equivalence, functional equivalence, dynamic equivalence, semantic equivalence, and so on.

Formal equivalence not only conveys the original messages, but it lays stress on formal characteristics of the original texts. The so-called part of forms includes levels of every grammatical unit, such as vocabulary, phrase, sentence, text, and so on. Formal equivalence requires that a translator perceive from the original messages' angle and transform original messages into a translated text in a target language. Formal equivalence focuses on the original form and content. It pursues the biggest degree of strength to convey the original messages to target language receivers. However, if we pay too much attention to the original form, it may cause many cognitional problems. Therefore, formal equivalence is sometimes regarded as a translation on the surface level.

Functional equivalence means that a translation should be equivalent to its original text in terms of linguistic function not in the light of linguistic form. According to Eugene A. Nida's (1914-2011) translation theory, functional equivalence is based on psychological reactions of the readers. In other words, psychological reactions that an original text's readers received are similar to those received by the translated text's readers (葉子南, 2000, p. 8). Functional equivalence not only values the original content but also concentrates on the original function and purpose, rhetorical features, descriptive context, narrative method, and influence on the readers. Functional equivalence requires a translator not to pursue the original form but to focus on semantic or pragmatic aspects in actual linguistic communication. Nida analyzes the pragmatic content of functional equivalence based on the parts of speech, syntax and isomorphism (葉子南, 2000, p. 179), pointing out that translation is to display the original information naturally in an acceptable way: the first concern is meaning

and then is style. The best translation should not be read like a translation. We should make the translated text natural if we want to achieve equivalence between the original text and the translated one. Then, we have to flexibly get rid of the structure of the original language which always constrains the translators if we want to reach this goal (葉子南, 2000, pp. 167-168). The sentences that are translated in accordance with functional equivalence not merely conform to the target language's natural expression without sounding like "translationese," but they make readers of the target language understand the translated text easily and immediately. Functional equivalence and content accuracy almost refer to the same way of translation. Thus, functional equivalence can be regarded as a guideline for the majority of translation activities.

Dynamic equivalence requires that words and sentences of a translated text for the target language readers should trigger the same effect as that aroused by the original language for the original readers but the original form has to be changed. This change has to follow the regulations that govern the switch between the original language and the target language and it has to insist on the principle of consistency. Dynamic translation can not only retain the information, but it also makes translation reliable and faithful. The semantic quality of translation is very important. The translators should use the customary ways or expressions that conform to the target language so as to make a translated text fluent and understandable.

Semantic equivalence means that the semantic elements of a translation have to conform to those of its original text. Moreover, semantic equivalence is measured by such units as sentence, components of sentence, phrases, words, etc. And it belongs to the equivalence of content. It is very clear that equivalent translation requires syntactic and verbal equivalence between the original text and its translation in the target language. The content largely relies on the structure and grammar. Semantic equivalence also emphasizes that we should largely base our act of translation on the information of the context to obtain the so-called "correct" semantic interpretation.

The translation equivalence theory advocates that when we cannot find sentences which are equivalent to the original text in the target language, we can only look for a target language expression which has the closest meaning. That is to say, a translator has to find an almost equivalent form with the same pragmatic functions to convey the message of the original text. If we follow the principle of equivalence in the process of translation, the translated text will provide its readers with the same information as that received by the original readers. And it will help the translator attain to the natural equivalence of greatest similarity or identification between the source and target languages.

### **Cultural Equivalence**

Language develops along with the evolution of human civilization. It is also an instrument that people use to communicate with each other. Every language has its long historical background and cultural heritage. Because of languages, society and culture can be created. Language is an indispensable section in the formation of human culture, and these two concepts are very closely connected and inseparable from each other in the context of communication. The importance of language and culture is different, depending on the role that each of them plays in a given condition.

Vladimir Ivir (1934-2011) contends that: "Translation is a way of establishing contacts between cultures." He then quotes Joseph B. Casagrande and insists that "one does not translate languages, one translates cultures"

(Vladimir Ivir 35). Casagrande contends that a perfect translator has to be bicultural as well as bilingual, implying that, no matter how proficient they are, translators of the classics or of other documents in non contemporary languages must come to contact with a living language and a living culture (Casagrande, 1954, p. 338). In other words, translation is a medium that people of different languages and cultural backgrounds use to communicate and understand each other. Furthermore, translation involves not only transforming linguistic characters, symbols and alphabets but also transforming different cultures across language borders. In other words, culture plays an important role in translating and there are a lot of theorists who address the relations between these two concepts in many ways. According to J. R. Gladstone: Languages and cultures are inexorably intertwined (1969, pp. 114-115). Language usage is based on culture, and one important element in the formation of culture is language itself. If there is no language, culture will have no instrument to spread. Besides, different cultures have different influence upon languages. Thus, language and culture are always closely and inseparably related to each other.

For a long time, researches of equivalence in translation have been done both at home and abroad. For example, Shen Su-Ju's (沈蘇儒) (2000) *On Fidelity, Intelligibility and Elegance: A Study on Yen-Fu's Translation Theory* (《論信達雅：嚴復翻譯理論研究》) mentions that: Yen-Fu (嚴復) of the Ching Dynasty has made a point on the difficulties and standards of translation: "fidelity, intelligibility, and elegance." These three succinct standards of translation can be said to be the essence of Chinese translation theory. However, many Chinese contemporary theoreticians have made some supplements and revised the three standards in some aspects. Because cultural equivalence always remains to be a key issue in the discussion of translation, many theorists have raised their different opinions. For instance, Andrew Chesterman admits that cultural equivalence obviously is the key concept of translation (Chesterman, 1989, p. 99). But Mona Baker (2010) thinks that language and culture will come to affect final equivalence, so the so-called cultural equivalence is always an issue of relativity. Even though theorists hold different opinions, equivalence is still a central concept in the analysis of translation as far as its critical standard is concerned.

### **The Uniqueness of Literary Translation**

Literary translation is not an easy task, because literary translation is more complicated and difficult than general translation. Clifford E. Landers, a renowned literary translator, asserts that

in addition to a thorough mastery of the source language, the literary translator must possess a profound knowledge of the target language. In reality, being in love with one or both languages, if not an absolute necessity, is a trait frequently found among the best and most successful literary translators. (Landers, 2001, pp. 7-12)

Xu Yuanchung (許淵冲) (1998) collected and discussed previous Chinese translation theories in his book entitled *On Literary Translation* 《文學翻譯談》, stating that

Yen Fu (嚴復) proposed "fidelity, intelligibility and elegance" (信、達、雅) which mainly came from his translation of *Evolution and Ethics* (《天演論》). These three characters could be so explained: "be truthful to the original content, be fluent in the translated text and take advantage of expression in the target language." The translation theory of Lu Hsun (魯迅), the so-called "literal translation," mainly derived from his translation of *The Dead Souls* (《死魂靈》). (許淵冲, 1998, p. 3)

Because everyone's thoughts and cognition are different from those held by others, and moreover, every translator has different kind of feelings and perceptions when they read an identical article, different translators gradually come to develop their own perspectives on translation. Xu also mentions that

when "truthfulness to the original content" and "fluency in the translated form" can be finally unified, there will be no difference between literal translation and free translation. In such a case, a literal translation is a free translation, and a free translation is also a literal translation. (許淵冲, 1998, pp. 3-16)

Conversely, "when 'truthfulness to the original content' and 'fluency in the translated form' are contradictive to each other, it will result in different levels of literal translation and free translation." In other words, there will be three different kinds of translation, namely translations of "formal," "semantic" as well as "ambient" truthfulness (許淵冲, 1998, pp. 3-16).

We believe that literary translation has a distinctive feature. It requires both scientific exactitude and artistic creativity at the same time. When a translator is translating a literary text, he or she has to take every word and sentence in original text extremely seriously in order to display the most appropriate translated text in the target language. In Clifford E. Landers' *Literary Translation: A Practical Guide*, the author states that "literary translation is the most demanding type of translation" (2001, pp. 7-12). A scientist needs evidence to prove his or her experiment. A literary translator has to deal with both evidence and artistic dimension of a text. In his book titled *Contemporary Translation Theories* (《當代翻譯理論》), Liu Mi-Ching (劉宓慶) (1993) mentions that "St. Jerome and John Dryden (1684) both believe that a translation is valuable in being natural. The aesthetic translation should be as simple and unadorned as a universal language" (pp. 235-256). "The combination of translation theory and aesthetic beauty is a fundamental characteristic of Chinese traditional translation theory" (pp. 235-256). That is to say, literary translation is a well-wrought convergence of the twain—academic exactness and artistic beauty.

### **The Specificity of Literary Translation**

For the theorist Antoine Berman, there exists a "great split that divides the entire field of translation, separating so-called 'literary' translations (in the broad sense) from 'non-literary' translations (technical, scientific, advertising, etc.) (Antoine Berman 123). We can distinguish them only if we have the correct concepts between the "literary" and "non-literary" translations. The differences between the two of them reside in how they are to be translated. First, the difference between "literary" and "non-literary" translation is related to the "object" of translation. For instance, novels, poems, prose, and literary films are objects which belong to the category of "literary" translations. "Non-literary" translations refer to the things outside literary discourse, like theories, scientific works, newspapers, periodicals, political essays, etc. Second, the difference between "literary" and "non-literary" translation lies particularly in wording or diction. "Literary" translations use the words or sentences which are embellished whereas "non-literary" ones use the normal, common or ordinary words and sentences of everyday communication. Third, the difference between "literary" and "non-literary" translations also exists in the ways or approaches of translating. Literary translation resorts to the artistic and literary approaches, which attach more importance to the subjectivity and creativity of the translator; however, non-literary translations hinges on the technical or somewhat mechanical ways of rendering which are much easier to be grasped and controlled in the translation process.

In view of the difference between the two kinds of translation, the requirements of them are also different. Non-literary translations require the translations to be fluent and easy to understand. Furthermore, it has to meet the style which native speakers use to convey the original content accurately, but this standard is not strict enough for literary translations. Literary works are pieces of art created by a special language that includes its image, artistry and the artistic characteristics of the author in order to be attractive as well as creative to the readers of the original text. Literary translation is demanding for the translator because he or she must have literary attainment and talent so as to comprehend the original works profoundly and grasp their spirit before he or she can undertake to convey the source text's content and form coherently and equivalently in the target language.

Liou Jie-Ming (劉介民) states that "literature is an art of language. We use words to create an image, to reflect the beauty and ugliness of social life, and to express our appreciation of beauty" (2004, p. 59). Although the translator is the "subject" of translation, the process of translating itself can be rather passive in effect. It is just following the original work step by step. The statement is exactly even more so for the non-literary translation. Such a translation centers on the rational and adopts a certain mode of language as the guiding principle. However, such a statement appears too simple when it comes to literary translation. Literature could be a complicated art. Its content is the most changeful and Proteus-like if we take both various literary genres and styles into subtle and meticulous consideration. It could be a person's monologue, or a moment of a person's feeling, a piece of impressive canvas of war, a paragraph of a poetic love story, or even an interesting life picture. It also could be a microcosm of the whole community. Literary translation has a lot to do with the translator's and the author's aesthetics. The translator's notion of beauty and his or her aesthetic experience and affection are the critical factors that decide to what degree the translator can accurately convey the original works across the boundary of languages (Sánchez, 2009, p. 123).

From appreciation, acceptance to expression, there lies a critical element called aesthetic re-creation during a translator's translating process. We can find that the creativity of modern literary translation largely derives from the translator's subjectivity invisibly involved in the act of translation. We can also figure out that the translator's subjective judgement and preference may sometimes amount to the critical factor in literary translation. In other words, literary translation could be regarded as an original subjective activity and engagement at the center of a complex network of social and cultural practices, because it covers an enormous spectrum of semantic and stylistic elements and dimensions which are practically impossible to measure in any precise singular form (Sánchez, 2009, p. 125).

Just as mentioned above, the translator knows the language symbols through the vision, uses the brain to change these symbols into a notion and then contemplates over it so that the whole invisible process of translating itself in fact involves a series of highly sophisticated thinking and re-thinking activities. To put it another way, the translator's brain germinates the ingredients of notion and connects the information of the original language further to realize the whole textual picture and then adds personal judgement and subjective emotion when he or she engages him- or herself in the act of bilingual translation known as performing without a stage. Compared with non-literary translation, literary translation is much more challenging and demanding for the translator, and most of the time, it is done with a lower rate of satisfaction if absolute fidelity is held as the standard of tribunal. A literary translation could even be mistaken or unsuccessful in the long run, because it

has to tackle with a vast array of literary aspects while rendering the language dimension—grammatical structures, connectors, agreement, naturalness and even a certain amount of sophistication in order to produce a satisfactory translated text (Sánchez, 2009, p. 125 ).

### Translation Results

Ballad 1: Your hearts will be tied up in perfect harmony

永結同心傳圓彩

永結同心傳圓彩  
宜家宜室永和諧  
國器偕來心上願  
明珠樂的掌中來

Your hearts will be tied up in perfect harmony

Your hearts will be tied up in perfect harmony,  
And your bride keep the family in unison.  
Your newborn son'll be a pillar of the country,  
And your daughter be the apple of your eyes.

Ballad 2: They cherish each other their whole lifetime

相親相愛伴一世

相親相愛伴一世  
第一親密是夫妻  
天賜良緣是絕配  
滿門榮耀共一家

They cherish each other their whole lifetime

They cherish each other their whole lifetime.  
Husband and wife is the closest relationship.  
The heavenly marriage is a perfect match.  
The honor belongs to the entire family.

Ballad 3: We work at the same place at dawn

早起做工共所在

早起做工共所在  
下昏煞工分東西  
正手牽衫拭目屎  
倒手拽君攔再來

We work at the same place at dawn

We work at the same place at dawn.  
We go home respectively at dusk.  
My right hand wipes off the tear with my sleeve.  
My left hand waves to invite him to come again.

## Ballad 4: My husband sits in the sampan

阿君坐佇舢舨底

阿君坐佇舢舨底  
阿娘煩惱頭無梳  
聽候我君若轉綴  
梳頭扑粉插紅花

## My husband sits in the sampan

My husband sits in the sampan.  
I'm too worried to comb my hair.  
Once he arrives home safe and sound,  
I'd comb my hair, powder my face, wear a red flower.

## Ballad 5: Hyacinth bean's flowers are as white as snow

肉豆開花白蒼蒼

肉豆開花白蒼蒼  
阿娘飼大就嫁翁  
望欲嫁去邀兄相痛疼  
啥知阿兄愛別人

## Hyacinth bean's flowers are as white as snow

Hyacinth bean's blossoms are as white as snow.  
I have to get married once I'm grown up.  
I wish to be loved and cherished by my husband,  
Who to my sorrow ends up loving someone else.

## Ballad 6: Carry a basket to pick coriander

手攢菜籃挽芫荽

手攢菜籃挽芫荽  
三挽四挽挽罈開  
父母問罔去佗位  
神魂邀哥分罈開

## Carry a basket to pick coriander

I carried a basket to pick coriander.  
I picked and picked but I couldn't pick it up.  
My parents ask me where I have been.  
My heart flew to my love from whom I can't part.

## Ballad 7: I lift head and see a beautiful lady

擰頭一看嬌阿嫂

擰頭一看嬌阿嫂  
問嫂有尪抑是無



若是無尪上介好  
自嫂親情配阿哥

I lift head and see a beautiful lady

I lift my head and see a beautiful lady.  
I ask her whether she is married or not.  
It will be the best if she be still single.  
I hope she will long to love and marry me.

Ballad 8: A timely eve at dusk of a good day

下昏暗良時日子好

下昏暗良時日子好  
夫妻雙人練柔道  
聽講實力平平好  
兩個工夫差不多

A timely eve at dusk of a good day

It's a timely eve at dusk of a good day.  
Husband and wife practice judo in the bed.  
It's said that they draw a deuce in the rally.  
Even and equal are they in such a duet.

Ballad 9: A beautiful flower grows on a collapsed wall

一儂好花栽半牆

一儂好花栽半牆  
一陣清芳飛過鄉  
下晝食飽倒咧想  
下昏流山樺無娘

A beautiful flower grows on a collapsed wall

A beautiful flower grows on a collapsed wall.  
A fragrant breeze flies over the village.  
After lunch, I lie pondering in the bed:  
At dusk I won't find her across the hill.

Ballad 10: The soup will be scorched in a burning pot

燒鼎熱灶會焦湯

燒鼎熱灶會焦湯  
無燒無冷較久長  
聲聲句句嫌咱稜  
交著別儂才會知

The soup will be scorched in a burning pot

The soup will be scorched in a burning pot.

With moderate temperature, it cooks longer.  
 Words from his mouth keep detesting my looks.  
 He'll ne'er know who's better 'til he finds another.

Ballad 11: Love each other all your lifetime

相親相愛伴一生

相親相愛伴一生  
 美滿良緣自天成  
 緣結今生姻緣定  
 古來才子配佳人

Love each other all your lifetime

You're blessed to love each other all your lifetime.  
 Happy marriage is a match made by Heaven.  
 You're meant to be husband and wife in this life.  
 Wits and belles are known to be born for each other.

Ballad 12: A pair of pillows set side by side

一對枕頭

一對枕頭排倚倚  
 阿娘佻君結相伴  
 若是想無也著煞  
 心肝若悶啊用手捋

A pair of pillows set side by side

A pair of pillows is set side by side.  
 How I wish to be your lifelong companion.  
 If you don't want me, it's but a helpless thing.  
 While depressed, I'll rub my chest with my own hand.

Ballad 13: Raindrops are falling east and west

天頂落雨粒粒墜

天頂落雨粒粒墜  
 白米綁粽結做堆  
 舊年邀兄佻相捌  
 今年邀兄分膾開

Raindrops are falling east and west

Rain drops are falling east and west.  
 Rice grains are tightly wrapped up in a dumpling.  
 Last year, I didn't even know who you were.  
 This year, I can't be parted from you ever.

## Ballad 14: Hearts beat as one for everlasting blessing

永結同心百年福

永結同心百年福  
 並蒂花開四時春  
 滿堂集慶樂天倫  
 天送貴子傳千孫

## Hearts beat as one for everlasting blessing

Two hearts beat as one for everlasting blessing.  
 Twin flowers bloom and spring lasts for the four seasons.  
 The whole family abounds in domestic grace.  
 May god send them sons to carry down the blessed race.

**Conclusion**

This research not merely engages in the practical English translation of certain representative praise ballads in Penghu but it also leads us to ponder on the art of literary translation. When it comes to English-Chinese translation, most people simply try their best to find the “literally corresponding words” in the target language that match the meaning of the words used in the source text. Sometimes, word-by-word translation happens to be acceptable in the target language, but there are cases in which word-by-word translation does not work at all because the original expression of the source language violates the grammatical rules, cultural taboos or linguistic restraints of the target language. Therefore, a literal translation might not be able to produce “an equivalent translation” in the target language. As J. B Casagrande reiterates in “The Ends of Translation,” “people are not translating language, but translating culture instead” (1954, p. 107). Languages have been slowly changing as time goes by and this factor has to be brought in to consideration by those who are engaged in cross-cultural translation, especially in literary translation. The classical Chinese used in ancient China about two or three thousand years ago is quite different from the contemporary vernacular Chinese used in our times. The way people talk and the way they apply rhetoric differ a lot along the evolution of history and civilization. Thus, an ideal translator has to adjust his/her modes of translation and manners of diction so as to meet the requirements of certain current historical elements and linguistic development. However, cultural specificities seem to remain a disadvantage to those who are willing to traverse the boundary of languages. For instance, festival rituals and allusions are strikingly different between the Western and the Eastern worlds. It would be rather difficult for a translator to deal with these cultural elements if there is no such an exact equivalent festival in the culture of the target language. María T. Sánchez once said: “It is impossible to achieve total equivalence between SL units and TL units in any two languages in contact, even in the case of two very closely related languages” (Sánchez, 2009, p. 77). Since the Mandarin Chinese characters that Hung Min-Tsung employs to transcribe, translate and transliterate the original Taiwanese praise ballads essentially deviate from traditional official Chinese character system in either signification or pronunciation, the translator is inevitably forced to suffer from being “twice removed” from artistic reality in the original folk ballads. He or she may take greatest effort to render such semnatical registers as pertinent to marriage, family, sex, courting, longing, labor, waiting, etc. As for the original folk assonance and rhyming pattern expressed in the Minnan dialect,

though much less strict and stern compared with the rhyming scheme of ancient Chinese traditional regular verse, they are largely lost in the English translation, except when the translator sometimes manages to render original rhymes with flexibly new schemes or couplets in the English language. On the other hand, the translator endeavors to represent the Taiwanese praise ballads with a succinct and polished style that limits the syllabic number of every line of the ballad within 8 to 12 syllables so that the chanting of the songs does not sound a false note or a far cry from what we have been used to as far as poetic tradition and lyrical convention are concerned. It is with such efforts that the translator on the whole manages to regain the original spirits, flavors and true colors of the praise ballads sung across the islands of the blanket flowers in the earlier times. In some cases, particulars of the Penghu Archipelago have to be attended to in the translation of the ballads. For example, in translating Ballad No. 9, “A beautiful flower grows on a collapsed wall,” the translator attempts to render the parallel structure of the original Taiwanese couplet 下晝食飽倒咧想／下昏流山標無娘 with a similar parallelism in the target language: “After lunch, I lie pondering in the bed: At dusk I won’t find her across the hill.” Furthermore, the Chinese character 山 is translated into “hill,” instead of “mountain” or “mount,” as Chinese-English dictionaries always indicate or predicate, since the translator takes the realistic geographical fact into consideration that there is in fact no such a thing as mountain across the flat islands of the Pescadores.

The present research investigates the translingual and transcultural journey of the praise ballads sung on the Pescadores from their original Hoklo dialect with peculiar heavy local accent, via the written translation in official Mandarin Chinese, into the terminal target language in English. Actually, “praise ballads” refer to a special lyrical genre of songs in Taiwan; it can also be regarded as a collection of local folk songs (as “*guo feng*” in the *Book of Songs*). Apart from theoretical analysis and discussion, we attempt to translate some famous local praise ballads into the English language. Unique local colors and charming folk customs characterize the string of islands of blanket flowers. Penghu’s praise ballads are considered to be the essence of local folk culture. In the early times, the society on the Pescadores didn’t have as many entertainments as does the modern society of the 21st century. Besides, there is an estranging and separating strait lying between Taiwan and Penghu, which is called the “black ditch” by the local inhabitants on the Pescadores because of the seasonal black currents flowing between Taiwan and Penghu. The transportation at that time was not as convenient as it is nowadays. Gradually, a unique way of entertainment, be it individual, mutual or communal, the so-called praise ballads, was born for the villagers or fishermen to amuse themselves and entertain each other. Due to the fact that Penghu is surrounded by the sea and that it is composed of several islands and islets, most local residents make a living by means of fishing on the boundless ocean. Accordingly, the content of local praise ballads is tightly related to the ocean and thus forms a unique fisherman style, also known as “sea-begging” (“*tao hai*” in local Taiwanese dialect) style.

Penghu is famous for her abundant cultural particulars as well as local specialties. One of these valuable features is the “praise ballads” in Penghu. Local people created and sang praise ballads according to their personal emotions and thoughts, so their contents embrace almost all sorts of subjects or topics related to the peculiar daily life on the islands. Praise ballads’s subjects therefore may range from everyday matters to bygone wisdom of the ancestors. People expressed their moods and relieved their fatigue by means of chanting the praise ballads to oneself or to each other as an individual or mutual amusement. Although praise ballads requires certain formal unity, their formal requirements and rhyming schemes are not as strict or exacting as the

rhymes and meters required by traditional Chinese classical poetry. Therefore, it is said that in the prime time of such a folk literary genre almost everybody on the Pescadores was able to create and sing his or her own praise ballads. Because every praise ballad's inventor possesses his or her own frame of mind and structure of feelings towards the surrounding reality and living condition, each praise ballad is considered to be a unique piece of artwork. In the past, people were so conservative that they had few ways to express their interior feelings and thoughts. Women especially did not have the right to express their discontent with pressing hardship assigned to them by fate in the early days. Therefore, praise ballads became a special instrument in Penghu with which local people could not only expound their innermost emotions but they could also record their mental activities, psychological longings along with physical endeavors on such wind-devastated and sun-scorched outlying islands in the Penghu Archipelago.

However, along the evolution of time and the globalization of language in Taiwan, praise ballads which were sung in local Taiwanese dialect have been gradually forgotten by the people of Taiwan and the inhabitants on the islands of the blanket flowers. Setting foot on the villages to visit praise ballad authors, composers or chanters at each corner on the Pescadores, Hung Min-Chung (洪敏聰) (2003, 2010) managed to collect the praise ballads which are still being circulated in Penghu. He visited a great number of song writers in person and collected the praise ballads together into a book form to provide scholars with detailed materials for their research. By so doing, he leads the young generation to witness the long existing local folk culture which is worth saving and keeping on their native islands. Besides Hung's constructive action, authorities concerned of the local county government also took effort to promote the praise ballads of Penghu so that the orally transmitted art full of local charms and humors will cease to fall into oblivion. With the present research, we try to make the extremely local-styled Penghu praise ballads go international. We want to show foreign tourists and readers that Penghu is not only famous for water activities and seafood but she also boasts a unique cultural heritage that is seldom known or experienced elsewhere in the world.

It seems that people today can establish an invisible link between the present and the past when they are listening to or singing a praise ballad. The old songs make listeners feel the ancestors' frames of mind and they tend to soak themselves in the atmosphere of traditional society of agriculture and fishery on the off-shore islands. Listeners can also realize that people's life styles and thoughts in the old time are quite different from those of our times. Every country has her unique music features and praise ballads can be said to be the most representative folk songs of Penghu. Nowadays, we are allowed to appreciate such a precious folk oral literature because certain local scholars and organizations have been involved in related investigation and collection. We hope that praise ballads are not only savored by the Taiwanese people but enjoyed by readers and tourists around the entire world.

Praise ballads are sung or read in Minnan dialect (also loosely known as local Taiwanese). However, Taiwanese and Chinese are so different from each other that we must first convert Taiwanese into Mandarin Chinese before we engage in the final Chinese-English translation process. It makes the whole research much more difficult, complicated and challenging. Before we started to translate, we had to understand the content of each line of the praise ballad. However, the original texts are and should be pronounced in local Taiwanese dialect; in lots of cases the surface literal words and expressions refer to a deeper, hidden, and ulterior motif between the lines which has to be discovered, if not decoded, by experts or scholars of such a unique literary

genre. In fact, the literal lines on the surface always insinuate something quite different and hidden. If a translator does not pay enough attention to the hidden message and fail to grasp the ulterior signification of the ballad, he or she might easily get confused, miss the point, and therefore produce for the foreign readers a confusing, misleading or even nonsensical translation in the English language. Needless to say, it is a demanding and challenging task to build such a bridge of communication that crosses a vast boundary between more than two different languages and cultures.

Through the discussion and study on translation theories, we deeply realize that literary translation is categorically different from the translation of non-literary texts. Most translation theorists, Chinese and foreign alike, unanimously emphasize that the target language should not only accurately convey the original semantic dimension in the source language but it should try to maintain the original syntactic fluency and retain the literary style and verve of the source text. Moreover, a successful translation must be accepted by the readers of the target language. In order to make target language readers accept the translation, a translator's first and foremost work seems to make it clear who the readers of the original text are. Based on the whole context of the original text and its cultural background, a translator might manage to obtain correct information before he or she manages to comprehend the source text adequately. Thus, he or she might be able to make the reader of the target language appreciate the wonder and charm of the original source language. In short, if the reader cannot fully comprehend the source language due to cultural differences, spatio-temporal background and other linguistic barriers, a translator should try his or her best to utilize and adjust what is allowed in the target language to make the target language reader enjoy the translated text as much as does the reader of the original text.

Yu Kuang-chung once said: "A good translation is an approximation in a certain degree, not a total equalization." To pursue the perfect in an imperfect translation is not to impose a herculean task on someone but to reveal a translator's thirst to make his or her cultural heritage circulate around the world so that more and more people can come to realize and admire the charm and beauty of the praise ballads in Penghu. Hung Ming-Chung made every endeavor to be a cultural pioneer who spent some ten years's time collecting local praise songs and published books for his collection which leave a concrete written record in history for such an oral artistic tradition so that it will not be gradually forgotten by all. However, in this ever-changing historical time of ours, Chinese version of the praise songs alone seems to be still insufficient as far as praise ballads's international circulation is concerned. In the 21st century when our government has been making every effort to develop tourism and emphasize local-globalization, our immediate task lies in promoting Penghu praise ballads and making more and more people read, hear and even chant the primitive joy, humorous gestes, natural music as well as local colors of this unique regional artistic genre. For that reason, translating the Hoklo praise ballads on the Pescadores accross the lingual and cultural barrier of Mandarin Chinese into the English language symbolises not just an indispensable measure but also an exigent enterprise to promote Taiwan's cultural tourism and Penghu's cultural heritage onto the far-reaching stage of the flat world of the 21st century.

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