

"Songs from Taiwan"

Dr. Cheng Chi-Jen Concert



**Dr. Chi-Jen Cheng
& Edgardo L. Macapili**



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Lecture Series and Taiwanese American
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Return to Innocence The song describes the complex feelings of one's leaving hometown when young but returns in old age. A person experiences changes in life and looks forward to his return to the nature's quietude and simplicity.

Songs of A Plains Aboriginal Group (in Siraya language) – In addition to about a dozen of mountain aboriginal tribes in Taiwan, there used to be just as many aboriginal groups in the island's west coast plains. Most of the plains aborigines had lost their tribal identity as well as languages by late 19th century as a result of the policy of the government. Siraya is the major group in the southwestern Taiwan and a fast dwindling number of its elders have managed to retain some of their languages. The three songs here are in Siraya language which is a spoken language that does not belong in the Chinese language family.

Taiwan Lily By its name, Taiwan lily is endemic to Taiwan. It blooms throughout the island from June to August. At the top of each stem, there are a number of white, fragrant and elegant trumpet-shaped flowers. Taiwan's aborigines consider it their tribal flower. These days, virtually all Taiwanese love the flower and value it greatly, particularly during the festival season. The vitality of the flower is such that people use it to symbolize the Taiwanese women's spirit of perseverance. In February 2003, the composer represented his island nation Taiwan in the centennial anniversary of the founding of Panamanian nation-state. This song was on a short list of the world's most beautiful national songs. The composer dedicates this song to every mother who loves Taiwan.

Stars in the Sky In night sky, twinkling stars give people extra room for imagination. They enrich the mind. In dark night, the light emitting from the stars is dim and soft. Yet it silently guides us on this vast planet earth in the way that a mother provides her children never-ending love and care. This is a song praising motherly love. It is a contemporary folk song widely enjoyed in Taiwan.

Father's Kite This song recalls the composer's childhood days when his father used kite flying in the sky as a metaphor of life and cautioned the son of the up and down in life. In recent years, some schools have chosen to sing the song at commencement so as to encourage their graduates.

Prayer The verse of this song is inspired by Taiwanese children's writer Lu Chien-hui's work titled "I Believe". With the view of praying for Taiwan, Ms Lu produced the poem showing her love and hope for her motherland Taiwan. Composer Cheng believes that most Taiwanese share Lu's love for their island nation.

Psalm 100 Thanks and Praises A psalm. For giving grateful praise.

1. Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.

2. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

3. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his[a]; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

5 For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Let Me Firmly Hold Your Hand In 1988 the composer wrote the song for Faith, Hope and Love Children's Home in Li-kang, Pintung County. It is also written in memory of the Home's founder Christian Miss Wang Shou-hsin.

Wang-chuan River Wang-chuan was a river in a Chinese legend. It is said that after death, one must drink water from the river so that he could forget his memory in this life and not to take it with him to his next life. The composer believes that this song is the world's first written for people suffering from Alzheimer's disease. He is dedicating the song to all selfless medical personnel, volunteers and groups as well as families with such patients.

Tale of the Eagle In the summer 1995, the composer took his children to his hometown Erh-shui. Playing in a mountain stream, his eldest son Tayu pointed to a big bird in the sky and asked, "What is that?" Answer, "That is an eagle." The boy asked again, "Where is its home? Where is it flying to?" The innocent boy's inquiring mind led the composer to go back in time to his childhood. To him, the major difference between him and his son is probably caused by all the ecological changes in Taiwan since his own childhood. The composer wished that he could become the eagle to bring his son laughs and hope.

Worshipping Gods along an Irrigation Channel In Taiwan, worshipping Heaven and Earth, and showing gratitude to gods and ancestors is a folk belief and custom. Through devotion and rituals, people pray to deities for peace and good harvest, water and sun to aid the growth of crops, Heaven's love and care, and a promising future for Taiwan.

Beautiful Kao-hsiung In 1979 when the Formosan Incident took place in the city of Kao-hsiung, the composer, looking for a job, moved from his hometown Erh-shui to Kao-hsiung. Medical practice, marriage, and child-rearing all contributed to make Kao-hsiung the composer's new hometown. The song describes the city's transformation that the composer has witnessed over the last thirty years. Being proud of the city, he wrote the song to show his gratitude to his second hometown.

Final Resting Place Before composing the song, the composer accompanied his father Dr. Cheng Jui-tang's return to the latter's alma mater Tamsui Middle School to visit Dr. George Leslie MacKay's cemetery on the campus on November 7, 2010. In light rain and nice breeze, they paid homage to Dr. MacKay who was a Canadian medical missionary serving in northern Taiwan from 1872 till his death in 1901 on the island. In addition to reading written historical materials, the composer sought opinions from over twenty church elders and scholars of Holo Taiwanese language. The song was written in Roman alphabet as well as in Chinese script. The composer dedicates the song to all who love and care for Taiwan.

Formosa Song Formosa is the name the Portuguese sailors gave to Taiwan when they sailed through the Taiwan Strait along the island's west coast in early 16th century. Under the guidance of his father Dr. Cheng Jui-tang, the composer wrote the song in 1993. He sees Taiwan in the way a son sees his mother. The song shows his unmitigated love and care for his motherland Taiwan.