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Translator's Introduction

When I was preparing to translate these poems by Jidi Majia, I had the good fortune to accompany him on a trip to his native district in Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture, which is located in mountainous west Sichuan. In the secluded Nuosu villages of Butuo and Zhaojue counties, I was struck by the attachment of the Nuosu hill people to their time-honored ways. Where old cob [i.e., clay and straw] houses had been replaced, I could see that new ones had been built according to the space-conserving pattern, with clusters of small buildings interspersed among gardens and pastures. The Nuosu women still sit in small groups in front of their houses, weaving strips of cloth on waist looms. I saw men wearing black capes of hand-woven wool similar to the ponchos of Bolivian Indians.

The Yi people, of which the Nuosu make up the most populous branch, are a mystery that is only beginning to declare itself to the world. There are at least seven million Yi, and several million of them still speak their own language, which belongs to the Tibeto-Burman language family. They live in pockets in southwest China, in the provinces of Sichuan, Guizhou, and Yunnan.

The Nuosu have their own independent mythology and folklore. In some ways it reminds me of Tibetan and Han Chinese ways of thinking, but it is different. They have oral epics, for instance the *Book of Origins* and *Zhyge Alu*. They have

译者的话

在我着手翻译这本诗选之前，我有幸在吉狄马加先生的陪同下，到他的故乡——位于川西山区的凉山彝族自治州走了一趟。在布拖和昭觉两县的诺苏彝族村庄里，我被诺苏彝族山民们对于他们的传统的怀念和依恋所深深打动。旧日的土坯房已经不见踪影，代之而起的是瓦舍。这些瓦舍仍然按照节省空间的老格局在原址上建造，散落在田园或牧场上。诺苏彝族女人们依旧三五成群地在门前用系在腰部的小型织布架织布，男人们肩上依旧披着类似玻利维亚的印第安人穿的那种披肩。

目前，彝族共有七百多万人口，主要分布在中国西南腹地的四川、贵州和云南等省，其中有数百万人口依旧讲属于藏缅语族的彝语。诺苏是彝族这个古老而神秘的民族中人口最为繁盛的支系，她刚刚开始向世界显示她的存在、传统和荣耀。

诺苏彝族有自己的神话传说，而其神话和传说所体现的思想体系跟汉族、藏族的思想体系有一点相似却又有微妙的不同。诺苏彝人有靠口耳相传的史诗和长篇叙事诗，譬如《勒俄特依》和《支呷阿鲁》。他们氏族的图腾是山鹰，而这个鹰经常被描绘为银色的，这让我想起了藏族的银翅鸟。此外，他们还有属于自己的送魂经。

a myth of a great ancestral bird totem, which reminds me of the Tibetan garuda. They often portray the great bird in beaten silver, which also reminds me of the garuda. They have their own scriptures for sending off souls after death. The *bimo* (ritual priest) waves a prayer scepter and bell through the smoke of a fire while chanting the scriptures; his only incense is the smoke of this fire. Unlike the thunderbolt-shaped *dorje* of the Tibetans, the *bimo's* prayer scepter resembles a smoke-inhaling bird. The *bimo* does not sit in a temple when reading his scriptures; he sits on a mat out in the open. The scriptures are written in a pictographic script which is independent from the Chinese writing system.

If you spend any time around Nuosu villages, eventually you will see one of the *bimos*, wearing a toadstool-shaped hat of black felt. When a *bimo* is not doing ceremonies for healings or funerals, he goes off to a quiet spot at the edge of a village. You can never predict where you will happen upon a *bimo* reading his scriptures, often with an acolyte beside him tending a small fire. The scriptures are copied out on papyrus-like material or thin sheepskin. There is another kind of priest-figure, a *sun*i, who is a kind of shaman. He drums on a waist-mounted hoop-drum (which looks very Siberian); he dances and sings for hours in a trance; he often has matted hair going down past his waist.

The Nuosu people have never accepted a religion from outside. In fact, their belief system has an inherent complexity: it is a tapestry of seasonal rituals, epics about divine ancestors, and stories of nature spirits. Perhaps because the Yi nationality remains an aggregate of branches, their beliefs have never fused into a dogmatic system. Their collection of beliefs provides a sense of belonging to the natural environment; it contains a rich

当超度一个亡灵上天堂的时候，毕摩（即祭奠仪式中的祭司）手里摇动着一个杵形法器和一个小铃，穿过烟火，口中念念有词。他手里拿的香是一撮燃烧的草。和藏传佛教法师手里拿的那种像雷电的金刚杵不一样的是，毕摩诵经的时候手里拿的法器像一只吞食烟火的鸟。毕摩不是端坐在庙堂里念经，而是坐在露天的地上的席子上念经。经卷是用完全不同于汉字的象形文字写成的。

如果你到诺苏彝人居住的村子里转悠一圈，或许你会遇见头戴蘑菇状黑毡帽的毕摩。当毕摩不在葬礼上念经或是驱瘟仪式上做法术的时候，他们通常在村头的一个僻静的角落呆着。在诺苏彝人居住的村子里，你随处可以看到毕摩在为人作法祛病或者为死者念经送魂，他的旁边通常会有一位助手在维护着一个火堆。经文通常被抄写在莎草纸或是薄薄的羊皮上。彝族还有一类神职人物，叫苏尼，是巫师——他，头发凌乱，长可抵胯，腰间挂着一面带箍的腰鼓（颇似西伯利亚人使用的那种腰鼓），神思恍惚地一边跳舞一边击鼓歌唱，他们甚至可以连续几个小时一直地蹦跳歌唱。

诺苏彝人至今还没有接受来自外部世界的任何宗教，因为他们的信仰系统具有固有的复杂性，他们的信仰体系包括多种线索：一是季节性的祭奠仪式，二是关于他们的神性祖先的史诗，三是关于自然力的神话故事。也许因为彝族一直保持着多个分支的缘故，所以他们至今没有形成一个统一的、教条式的信仰。他们的信仰体系像一个编织物，昭示着他们所信奉的归宿是自然；这包含了对于人类生存境况的多方位的思考和透视。它使我

variety of perspectives on the human condition. For these reasons it reminds me of American Indian religion.

The poet Jidi Majia is the child of an aristocratic Nuosu family. After 1949 his father held a leading position in the judiciary of Butuo County, in the Nuosu heartland. Jidi Majia came upon his calling as a poet in his early teens, when a Chinese version of Pushkin's works came into his hands. He resolved early upon his path in life: he would articulate the identity and spiritual outlook of the Nuosu in poetry.

At the age of 17 Jidi Majia was admitted to Southwest Nationalities College in Chengdu. During his college years his hungry mind absorbed Nuosu epics and folklore. He also read great works of Chinese literature: everything from the mythically rich ancient poetry of Qu Yuan to vernacular prose masters of the 20th century. He also read works of world literature, such as the novels of Mikhail Sholokhov and Fyodor Dostoevsky.

After graduation he returned to his home district; his poems soon won province-wide attention when they were printed in the Sichuan journal *Stars*. Before long he was hired by the Writers' Association of Sichuan, and he rose steadily to a position as secretary of that organization. He broke onto the national stage in 1986, when he won the National Poetry Award and became a protégé of the respected older poet Ai Qing. He omnivorously read the works of world-class poets: Paz, Vallejo, Neruda, Lorca, Amichai, Seifert, Szymborska, Senghor.

Jidi Majia concentrated on his vocation, without seeking rewards extrinsic to the writing of poetry, yet such awards came his way when he was given a position in the office of the National Writers' Association. He had chances to participate in

想起了美洲印第安人的宗教。

吉狄马加出生在一个颇有名望的彝族家庭，他的父亲在新中国成立后曾在诺苏彝族腹地的布拖县法院担任主要领导职务。由于读了俄国大诗人普希金的诗歌的缘故，吉狄马加在少年时代就立志要做一位诗人，用诗歌来表达诺苏彝人的个性、身份和精神世界。

十七岁那年，吉狄马加考取了设在锦绣蓉城的西南民族学院，大学期间，他如饥似渴地学习诺苏彝族的史诗和传说，此外，还阅读了从屈原开始直到 20 世纪汉语诗歌、散文和小说的经典之作，以及大量的外国文学优秀作品，如米哈伊尔·亚历山大罗维奇·肖洛霍夫、陀思妥耶夫斯基等文学大家的作品。

大学毕业后，吉狄马加回到了家乡凉山彝族自治州文联工作，很快他的诗作就在著名的《星星》诗刊上连续发表，在四川文学圈子里产生了很大影响。不久，他就被调到四川省作家协会工作并很快就担任了秘书长的职位。1986 年，他的诗作获得中国作家协会颁发的青年文学奖，并受到大诗人艾青的青睐。其间，他阅读了大量的世界著名诗人的作品，包括帕斯、巴列霍、聂鲁达、洛尔迦、阿米亥、赛弗尔特、辛波丝卡、桑戈尔等大师级诗人的作品。

吉狄马加执着于诗歌，视诗歌创作为己身的使命和追求，尽管他不期待任何外在于诗歌的奖励，但是他的诗作还是不断获得国家级奖项，并在 35 岁那年被调到中国作家协会担任书记处书记，从此开始了他诗歌创作和人生事业的新天地。其间，他曾多次率领中国作家

conferences of writers and poets around the world; he was invited to observe the workings of the U.S. government for one month, as a guest of the U.S. Congress' International Young Leaders' Program. To appreciate the breadth of Jidi Majia's activities as a cultural figure in recent years, it helps to know that he has been creative director of musical stage productions ('Qinghai's Secret Realm' and 'White Dove') and has organized major cultural festivals (Qinghai International Poetry Festival—2007 and 2009).

Jidi Majia has never stopped being what he always was: a great soul who emerged from among an indigenous group in southwestern China and undertook to bridge his people's ethos with realities of the outside world. For Jidi Majia, the project of articulating his identities as a Nuosu, as a Chinese, and as a world citizen are in no way mutually exclusive.

The Nuosu are a proud people whose antecedents lie on the margins of Sinitic culture. Being a long-embedded element within the Sinitic cultural sphere, yet never having been fully absorbed by it, they represent a unique position on the continuum of Chineseness. With respect to influences across the Han-Nuosu cultural interface, they have contributed as much as they have received in music, folk art, and myth.

The position of Jidi Majia as a Nuosu poet writing in Chinese reminds me of Irish writers who emerged on England's literary scene in the late 19th and 20th centuries. Irish writers and poets brought a tremendous vitality to the English language. Though the Queen's English was a borrowed language for them, they were able to make it fresh, perhaps because of Ireland's strong oral tradition. This tradition gave them an eloquence

代表团出访，与国际文学界对话与交流；另外，他还曾应邀作为美国国会青年领导者项目一员的身份赴美观察美国政府的工作达一个月之久。为了充分了解吉狄马加近年来在文化领域里的作为和影响，我们不妨参考一下他的另一些活动：比方说他担任了舞台史诗剧《秘境青海》和舞台音乐剧《雪白的鸽子》的总策划和编剧；作为一位在国内外都颇有影响力的文化人物，吉狄马加还创办了青海湖国际诗歌节，并担任该诗歌节的组委会主任。青海湖国际诗歌节于2007年8月在青海西宁举办了第一届，2009年8月举办了第二届，已在国际诗歌界产生了广泛影响。

吉狄马加从未停止过他的追求，作为一个来自中国西南部少数民族的伟大灵魂，他要用诗歌承担起他的民族和民族精神与外部现实世界交流的使命。就文化身份而言，吉狄马加既是一个彝人，也是一个中国人，也是一位世界公民，这三者是互不排斥的。

诺苏彝族是一个自豪的民族。尽管他们先祖的根扎在中国汉文化之边缘，且长期受到中国汉文化的影响，但它最终没有被汉文化所完全同化，在中国性的序列上，他们依旧保持着自己民族文化和精神的独特地位。至于说在汉-诺文化相互影响方面，诺苏彝人在音乐、民间艺术以及神话方面所贡献出来的跟他们所得到的似乎一样多。

吉狄马加是一位用汉语写作的彝族诗人，这让我想起了19世纪末和20世纪在英格兰文坛上颇为风光且为英语注入了巨大活力的爱尔兰作家群。尽管“女皇英语”（即标准英语）对于爱尔兰作家诗人们来说是借用语言，

which we sometimes describe as the 'gift of blarney.' Several examples spring to mind: W. B. Yeats, George Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde, James Joyce, and Samuel Beckett.

In the U.S. we also have examples of ethnic groups whose historical position as embedded outsiders lent strength to their literary expression. These include black American writers such as Langston Hughes and Ralph Ellison, as well as writers from the Jewish immigrant community such as Isaac Singer and Saul Bellow. More recently, we have heard strong voices from the native American poet Sherman Alexie and from the ethnic Chinese immigrant Li-Young Lee.

It comes as no surprise to learn that Jidi Majia has a strong affinity for figures of America's Harlem Renaissance. Only a great-souled poet could have succeeded in the project that Langston Hughes attempted: to revive a people's identity, from the roots up, in a modern setting of cultural dislocation and anomie. The Harlem Renaissance figures started from a position on the margin, but their voices were eventually heard and felt by the cultural mainstream. Such was also the mission which Jidi Majia settled upon as a poet. But his affinity with the Harlem figures also lies on a more elemental, symbolic level—in the phenomenon of blackness. The most populous branch of the Yi call themselves the Nuosu, which in their language means the 'black people.' Their holy men wear black hats and capes. Their formal decorative scheme features a black background with red and yellow patterns. In one poem Jidi Majia writes: 'I write poems, because it seems to me that the spirit of our introspective, ruminative tribe is shown outwardly in a melancholy color. For a long time this color has been harbored deeply in our souls.' ('One

但也许正是因了爱尔兰强烈的口语传统，他们却使得英语更具新鲜感。这种传统给他们带来了文才，也就是我们有时候所说的那种“胡侃天赋”。具有这种“胡侃天赋”的爱尔兰作家诗人有：威廉·巴特勒·叶芝、乔治·萧伯纳、奥斯卡·王尔德、詹姆斯·乔伊斯和塞缪尔·贝克特等。

在美国，我们也可以找到不少属于少数民族或种族的作家诗人用他们被作为“局外人”的本民族或种族的历史和传统为文学表现“输血”的范例，譬如美国黑人作家兰斯顿·休斯和拉尔夫·埃里森、美籍犹太裔作家伊萨克·辛格和索尔·贝娄，此外，还有美洲印第安裔诗人谢尔曼·亚历克斯以及美籍华裔诗人李立扬等。

由此，我们不难发现，吉狄马加的文化主张和美国的哈莱姆文艺复兴有着惊人的相似之处，只有具有伟大情感的诗人才可能完成兰斯顿·休斯所企图完成的那种文化使命：在现代的文化错位和迷离的语境下，从根开始，将自己民族的身份认同重新加以唤醒。哈莱姆文艺复兴是从文化的边缘地带开始的，他们的声音最终被主流文化所接纳。这也正是吉狄马加作为一位诗人所为之奋斗的方向。他和哈莱姆文艺复兴的类同之处还在于，其特质都建立在一个更具有自然力和象征性的水平——黑色现象上。彝族中人口最为繁盛的一支称自己为“诺苏”，在彝族语言中即“黑族”的意思。他们中的圣者或毕摩惯常戴着黑色的帽子，日常生活中最常见的图案以黑色为基调，配之以红色和黄色。所以，吉狄马加说，“我写诗，是因为我相信，忧郁的色彩是一个内向深沉民

Kind of Voice') The color black, as a symbol of an emotional atmosphere, indicates an awareness of suffering and death; it is also the color of spiritual knowledge and depth.

There has been conflict and suffering in the history of the Nuosu's dealings with their Han and Tibetan neighbors. Of course, they have more often co-existed peacefully. In recent times, the timber cutting practices which scarred the Nuosu homeland were an unfortunate side-effect of modernization that was basically imposed upon them. This is part of the Nuosu burden of sadness, a loss of harmony with the environment which they feel keenly because of their attachment to traditional beliefs and values.

Jidi Majia accepts suffering as part of the human condition: it is the underlying melancholy color on which the hopeful patterns of creative expression appear by contrast. In his poems about crises of the modern world, he denounces violence but does not seek to attach blame or exact retribution. His attitude toward suffering can be seen in his praise for the people of Chongqing: '...this great city/ Like its kind, generous people/ Always keeps its eyes on the future/ Never seeking to duplicate vengeance/ .../ This city's reflective attitude toward war/ And its longing for peace/ Is no other than what today's China/ Gives as its answer to the world!' ('I Admit It, I Love This City')

In our post-modern context, it is no surprise that a poet of worldwide vision would emerge from a minority people in the isolated mountains of southwest China. After all, nothing could be more fantastic than what has already happened in our 20th-century reality. History has shown that major civilizations produce systems of thought which trumpet certain fundamental

族的灵魂显像。它很早很早以前就潜藏在这个民族心灵的深处”（见《一种声音》）。黑色，作为一种情绪和情感氛围的象征，显示了彝族人民对于苦难和死亡的认识；同时，它也昭示了一种精神上的向度和深度。

诺苏彝族在历史上，曾和他们的汉族、藏族邻居发生过大量的冲突和争斗。当然，更多的时候是和平共处。今天，随着中国现代化步伐的加快，诺苏人的山林被大量采伐，这让他们失去了与他们的传统信仰和价值观相和谐的生态环境，给他们的心灵带来了阴影和不安，这无疑是在给他们带来新生活的同时所带给他们的一种负面影响。

吉狄马加认为，苦难是人类生存境况中难以避免的部分，好多充满了创造性表现力和希望的图案正是由那种代表着忧郁的色彩通过对比的方式显现出来的。在他的一些描述现代社会危机的诗作里，吉狄马加对暴力进行了强烈抨击，但他从不提倡“以暴易暴”的做法或观念。吉狄马加在一首以重庆大轰炸为背景的诗作《我承认，我爱这座城市》里写道：“……这座伟大的城市 / 与它宽厚善良的人民一样 / 把目光永远投向未来 / 从不复制仇恨 / …… / 这个城市对战争的反思 / 对和平的渴望 / 就是今天的中国 / 对这个世界的回答！”

在后工业时代的社会条件下，从中国西南部大山的少数民族里走出一位具有世界眼光的诗人，是不难理解的。首先，在 20 世纪的社会里，一切神奇的事物都变得不那么神奇。历史证明，主流文明所看重的基本思想范畴与大自然是脱离的，譬如上帝、佛陀、道、

categories as standards of truth: God, Buddha-nature, the Dao, the realm of ideal forms, the ground of Being, material forces. These are ideas which tend to deny each other or swallow each other up. In contrast to such monolithic thought systems, the cultures of indigenous peoples possess still-living myths which have room to grow. Indigenous cultures have a responsive emotional attachment to nature; they are quite observant about changes in their natural environment.

Unfortunately, the fundamental thought-categories valued by major civilizations are dislocated from nature. When the danger and absurdity of such dislocation is impressed upon civilized people by one crisis after another, they realize it is time to 'deconstruct' their systems of thought. But 'deconstruction' is yet another absurd exercise which only prolongs their detour from the task of getting oriented to life on planet earth. People with indigenous belief systems don't have to bother deconstructing anything. The detailed structure of an intact indigenous belief system includes a dose of skepticism. Indigenous people have a connection of gratitude and reverence toward nature, but they can take their own beliefs with a grain of salt. As I read Jidi Majia's poetry, I experience the perspective of an indigenous belief system with its windows thrown wide-open to the modern world.

When indigenous people are dispossessed, they grope for memory because the continuity of life across generations has value for them. This theme is addressed from many angles in Jidi Majia's poetry. In 'Sun' he writes: '...Looking at the sun always makes me miss/ Those people before my time/ Who once could feel this warmth/ And are no longer in this world.' As