ABSTRACT
As the research on the literature of national minorities in China is suppressed by the three discourse hegemonies of the West, the Han nationality, and the elites, it is imperative for us to be soberly aware of the situation. More efforts shall be made to strengthen the research on the literature of national minorities, criticize the discourse hegemonies, advocate the co-existence of multiple cultures, restore the original historical facts, and complement the multi-ethnic culture, thus promoting the normalized national literature ecosystem, further taking into effect the hybrid advantages of multi-ethnic culture, and ushering in the rebirth of Chinese literature.

KEYWORDS
Research on the literature of national minorities; the discourses of the West; Han nationality and elites; hegemony

CONTACT Cao Shunqing shunqingcao@163.com

The Chinese nation has been composed of a lot of nationalities since ancient times, namely, it is a multi-national country; and its history has reflected the combined histories of multiple nationalities; therefore, quite a few historical records in the formal history books in China, such as The Twenty-five Histories, represented the dynasties dominated by the ethnic groups. For example, The History of Wei Dynasty, The History of Northern Qi Dynasty, and The History of Northern Zhou Dynasty are dedicated to the Northern Wei Dynasty, the Northern Qi Dynasty, and the Northern Zhou Dynasty, respectively, which were all established by the Xianbei nationality rather than the Han people during the Northern and Southern Dynasties. Moreover, The History of Liao Dynasty and The History of Jin Dynasty refer to the histories of the regimes set up by such ethnic groups as Qidan and Nuzhen. The histories of these minority regimes were also recorded in The Twenty-five Histories, becoming an indispensable part of the official histories of China. However, few literature histories of the ethnic groups were incorporated in the official history of Chinese literature, especially since China entered into modern and contemporary times. Furthermore, the history of Chinese literature set up under the shock and influence of Western culture further neglected the research on
the non-Han peoples’ literature in China, a strange phenomenon in modern and contemporary Chinese literature research as well as its research history. That is to say, the research on the literature of national minorities in China was suppressed by the said three discourse hegemonies. It is imperative for us to be soberly aware of this situation so as to strengthen the research on literature of multiple ethnic groups, criticize the discourse hegemonies, advocate the co-existence of multiple cultures, restore the original historical facts, and complement the multi-ethnic culture, thus promoting the normalized national literature ecosystem, further taking into effect the hybrid advantages of multi-ethnic culture, and ushering in the rebirth of Chinese literature.

1. Research on the multi-ethnic literature of China under the hegemony of Western discourse

The impact of the hegemony of Western discourse on the research of Chinese literature is mostly concentrated on the histories of Chinese literature subjecting to the system of Western discourse. As a multi-national country with a history of thousands of years, China is characterized by its strong historical complex. From the Chinese history recorded in the historical materials, it can be seen that China has always underlined the “history,” such as The Twenty-five Histories. Even in literature research, Chinese scholars tended to construct their own literary concepts from the perspective of “history”; for example, there are 20 chapters about stylistics in The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons, including The Definition of Poems, Yuefu (a kind of folk song in ancient China), and Comments on Ode, which may be regarded as literature history based on different literary forms. In the opinions of Liu Xie (author of The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons in the Southern and Northern Dynasty), the principle of “tracing origins to clarify evolvement, explain names to make the meaning clearer, select some representative articles for comment, summarize the basic features of all kinds of literary forms to explain the theory of writing.” (in the Chapter of My Intentions) shall be used to guide the writing of literature history based on different literary forms. For example, The Definition of Poems covers the material from the Music of Getian Clan to The Book of Songs, from the appearance of the four-character poems and the unprecedented active creation of the five-word poems at the beginning of the Han Dynasty to the emergence of the Jian’an Poetry, and from the poets in the Jin Dynasty who began to adopt the superficial and gorgeous styles to the “inheritance of literary styles of the previous periods while making improvement” at the beginning of the Song Period of the Southern Dynasty. With the history of poems as the outline, the full text “illust rates the literature in all dynasties and exemplifies the similarities and differences.” On the basis of the solid foundation of literature history based on different literary forms in the upper part, Li Xie could summarize the literary theory of “thinking deeply and thoroughly” in the latter part. The concept of literature history had in this manner been systematically summarized in such chapters as “The General Transformation” and “Time Sequence.” In “The Time Sequence,” one of the basic rules of literature development was given at the beginning. “The times keep changing and so do the literary styles, either simple and unadorned or flowery.” In “The General Transformation,” the basic rule of “things can last long if provided with change, and
only openness can lead to no lack; if you can grasp the literary trend, you will be able to create masterpieces; we shall determine the rules of writing with reference to the good works of the ancient times” was put forward. In a sense, the perspective of history advocated in The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons contains a timeless theoretical value. In a large volume of poetry theory books in ancient China, there was never a lack of literary views, which were constructed from the perspective of “history”; for example, Yan Yu’s Canglang Poetic Theory and Style held that “after the end of Feng (which includes folk songs from 15 small countries, with 160 songs in total), Ya (which includes imperial court songs which were sub-divided into Daya and Xiaoya, with a total of 150 songs) and Song (which includes songs of ancestral worship, with a total of 40 songs), the poetic style had changed into Lisao, then to the five-character poems in the Western Hang Dynasty; third, the Gexing (a seven-character poem) and mixed literary styles; and fourthly, the Lushi poems represented by Shen and Song (they refer to Song Zhiwen and Shen Quanqi, who created the Lushi, a poetic style); the five-character poem was initiated by Li Ling and Suwu, while the seven-character poem was created by Emperor Wu of the Western Han Dynasty, also called Bailiang Style” (S. Guo 44); and “if we discuss the poetic styles on the basis of time sequence, there are such styles as Jian’an, Huangchu, Zhengshi, Taikang, Yuanjia and Yongming, as well as those in the Qi and Liang, Southern and Northern dynasties, and in the beginning of the Tang Dynasty…” (S. Guo 48). These can be roughly summarized as the history of the schools of literature and their development. By conducting a general survey of poetic theory in ancient China, it can be seen that it had become a tradition to sort out the history of Chinese literature from the perspective of literary forms; for example, there exists the classification of the prose of all well-known litterateurs, the prosodies of Han, the Tang poetry, the Song poems, the Yuan Qu, and the Ming and Qing novels. As a matter of fact, this is a method of classifying the history of literature; however, in the history of modern and contemporary Chinese literature, the traditional Chinese viewpoints on literature history have not been well inherited in the Chinese literary circle. We cannot help but saying this is a pity.

In the western world, a complete set of viewpoints on literature history hadn’t been formed until the 18th Century; while in India, no viewpoints on “history” could be found at that time, either. The concept of literature history had not been formed until the contemporary era. In China, the viewpoints on the contemporary literature history were shaped under the influence of the West; however, it was the orthodox traditional Chinese literature which took the lead to have a dialogue with the West, rather than the literature of national minorities; that is to say, the literature of national minorities in China had missed the chance to have a dialogue with western discourse and theory.

Modern and contemporary literature, as a mode of expression for the surviving experience of modern and contemporary Chinese literature, present unique conditions in the modern and contemporary era; however, as a way of literary expression which encountered western experiences, it undoubtedly lacked an internal mechanism of discoursing the surviving experiences of our nation (namely, the Chinese nation), resulting in aphasia in the research on modern and contemporary literature. This aphasia afflicts current literature researchers, deserving their deep thinking; for example, if we tend to simply classify the literature history of thousands of years with romanticism and realism as the standard, this is the obvious embodiment of aphasia.
During its long development process, Chinese literary theory had formed its unique mode of expression. For example, we have our own evaluation criteria for our poetry, Yuan Qu and the odes of the Han Dynasty; moreover, we have formed our own explanatory system in the unique extant experiences of the Chinese literati. This explanatory system can also better interpret the unique extant experiences of the literature of our nation. As an example The Explanation to the Book of Poetry, The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons, The Art of Writing, The Realm of Poetry and The Ren Jian Ci Hua are the best examples of the Chinese literature experience successfully interpreted by Chinese literary theory. But the problem is that after the collision between Chinese and western culture, the former had nearly been destroyed by the western dominant culture, so the traditional Chinese literary experience seemed to have lost its power of expression, and the validity of expression had also disappeared accordingly. This is an extremely abnormal phenomenon. In the context that the politics and economy came closer to the western powers, the cultural surviving mechanism cannot be disconnected. Cutting it off forcibly will make Chinese literature and its theory become the follower of Western literature, and can never form the literary explanatory system unique to the surviving experience of the Chinese nation. Accordingly, the evaluation system of traditional Chinese literary theory generated under such circumstances cannot inherit the bloodline of the traditional Chinese literary theory. Consequently, Chinese literary theory will lose its basis for being recognized by the world literary theory system.

Of course, the criticism of the literature of national minorities, which survived under the westernized modern and contemporary literary theory system, did not escape adversity, which was highlighted in the fact that the evaluation of the literature of national minorities had to seek its legalized surviving identity based on the westernized evaluation system of Mandarin literature. On the verge of survival, the literature of national minorities set up its unique survival mechanism, and its evaluation criteria was also determined by such a mechanism. It is a pity that in the research of the literature of national minorities in China uniqueness of research is absent; instead, it just followed the western discourse. Typically, as for the establishment of the histories of all kinds of national minority literature, such as The History of Miao Literature, The History of Bai Literature, The History of Naxi Literature, The Abridged Edition of the History of Tibetan Literature, The Overview of the Minority Folk Literature, The Chinese National Minorities Literature, and The Outline of Chinese Contemporary National Minorities Literature, their framework and judgment criteria were also transplanted from western discourse by employing such westernized expressions as "romanticism," "modernism," and "typical image" in the interpretation. Basically, it used western discourse to reshape the literature of Chinese national minorities; however, it goes without saying that something would be lost during the process.

2. Research on the literature of national minorities under Mandarin hegemony

In addition to the adoption of westernized discourse in the construction of literature history, research on the literature of national minorities in China was seriously suppressed and affected by the hegemony of Mandarin discourse. The history of poetry in China is an obvious example.
Epic is also called “heroic epic,” an important literary tradition and form in Western literature, which puts particular stress on the long literary poems of the descriptive style, with lofty and grand themes as well as an elegant style. It concentrates on the heroes who determined the destiny of a whole tribe, a nation or even mankind as a whole by his own behaviors, or other god-like figures. For example, Homer’s epic poems *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* created in ancient Greece and Vergil’s *The Aeneid* created in ancient Rome – all important epics in the West. If such criteria are used to measure the literature of Han people in the Chinese tradition, it is natural to draw a conclusion that there is no epic in China. In his *Confab of Literature*, Wang Guowei acknowledged that the development of Chinese epics was still in “the young age”(235) and even thought “no oriental ancient countries can be comparable to the Western ones in terms of epics.” In his *History of Vernacular Literature*, Hu Shi also held that “there is no long story poem” in China (Hu 75) in China. Therefore, it has become a complicated case in Chinese literature history as to whether there is the literary form of epic. However, there exist a large number of similar epics in the ethnic minority areas in the Chinese nation. Even in accordance with Western standards, such epics should certainly be classified into the category of epic; for example, *The Epic of King Gesar* of the Tibetan nationality, *The Epic of Oghuz* of the Uyghur nationality, *The Jangar* of the Mongol nationality and *The Manas Epic of the Khalkhas nationality*, are all works with the distinguished epic style. *The Epic of King Gesar* took shape in the 11th century, while *the Epic of Oghuz* was written by Unghur script in Gaochang at the end of the 13th century. All of these works should be incorporated in ancient Chinese literature history; however, they were neglected by the orthodox Chinese literature history. Why did we draw a conclusion that there is no epic in China? The answer is that such evaluation is based on the literature in Mandarin, which is the classical embodiment of the hegemony of Mandarin discourse.

Subject to the discourse hegemony of Mandarin, there is another problem in research on the literature of national minorities in China that deserves our attention: the loss of a large number of literature and documents of national minorities. Such loss represents, first, the loss of languages. The Chinese nation consists of many nationalities, and an important feature for differentiating a nationality rests with the language. The composition of the Chinese nation determines the diversification of languages therein. A nationality uses its own language to create different literary works, which could inevitably possess the unique features compared with the literary works of other nationalities; therefore, language has become an important path to research on the literature of national minorities. Meanwhile, language has also become an indispensable tool in our research on the literature of national minorities. Once a person intends to read a kind of literary work written in an unknown language, translation becomes necessary. *The Chile Song*, originally written in the Xianbei language, evolved into a poetic form of the Han people after being translated into Mandarin, despite the fact that the irregularity of sentence patterns reserved the outlook of the poem. Due to the loss of the Xianbei language, we cannot study the poem *Chile Song* based on its original outlook. According to the existing document literature, due to the difference of languages, the literature of the Han people and that of other national minorities, including Xianbei people, presented different styles, which were outstandingly embodied in the Yuefu in South and North China, in addition to the long-time stalemate.
among different regimes. By and large, the Yuefu in North China mostly depicted wars, people’s sufferings, as well as the nomadic life, northern scenery and martialism, while those in South China were mostly represented by love songs. As for the literary style, the Yuefu in North China were simple and unadorned, while those in the south were beautiful; the former was vigorous, while the latter was feminine; the former was sublime, while the latter was delicate. In the Yuefu in North China, you can find plainness in such lines as "between the vast sky and the boundless earth, flocks and herds appear as grass bends to wind" (Chile Song), and vigor and sublimity in the lines of “On the expedition of thousands of miles to the war, she dashed across mountains and passes as if in flight. In the chilly northern air night watches clanged. In the frosty moonlight mailed coats glistened.” (Song of Mulan). In the Yuefu in South China, tenderness and femininity can be found in such lines as “In the spring woods there are colorful flowers, but the songs of birds seem so sad. The spring breezes are so enthusiastic that they blow open my clothes.” (Songs of Midnights in Four Seasons). These different literary features are embodied in the languages of different people, resulting in the difference of the literary works in north and south China. In The Song of Breaking Branches of Willows in the Yuefu collection, we can find such lines: “I was a minority in the north so that I don’t know Han’s children songs.” (M. Guo 246) The influential Chile Song was originally written in the Xianbei language. According to The Broad Theme of Yuefu Folk Songs quoted from Guo Maoqian’s Collection of Yuefu Folk Songs, “In the North Qi Dynasty, Emperor Shen Wu attacked Zhouyubi, losing four to five percent of his soldiers. In deep vexation, Shen Wu caught a disease, and so the emperor of the North Zhou Dynasty gave an order, ‘Humble as a rat, how dare Gao Huan invade Yubi? Once my arrow were shot, he would be killed immediately.’ Hearing this, Shen Wu just sat down with a show of calmness just to calm down his soldiers. And then he led his officials to follow Hu Lujin, his general, to sing The Chile Song, while joining in the chorus. The song was then written in the Xianbei language, which would be converted into lines uneven in length when translated into the Qi language.” (M. Guo 736) Hu Lujin probably translated The Chile Song handed down from the previous dynasties from the Xianbei version, according to the presumption of someone. Some historical records indicated that quite a few poems written in the languages of other ethnic groups were lost due to the language barriers and the lack of understanding by other nationalities. Thus, in the current research on the literature of national minorities, language barriers must be addressed while raising the concern of the ethnic groups’ problems. Moreover, the literature of national minorities shall be treated on par, and a batch of literary scholars must foster expertise in the languages of the national minorities.

The issue of language hereto pertains to two aspects: first, translation is required between different languages due to the difference between Mandarin and the minority languages in China, and the collision between two different cultures is first of all represented by the conflicts between the modes of language expression and thinking, bringing about dialogues and new discourse accordingly. Therefore, the issue of language hereto has another meaning, namely, the hegemony of Han culture in terms of discourse. Due to the language barriers, a large number of literature materials of national minorities have been lost. Apart from The Chile Song as mentioned above, the loss of much literature and documents has even interrupted the research on the
literature of national minorities, just as the idea expressed in *The Music II of Old Book of Tang* states that as far as the Beidi music is concerned, all music in three states of Xianbei, Tuyuhun and Tribe Ji were all associated with horse riding. In the Zhou and Sui Dynasties, these kinds of music were played together with the music of the Western Liang, 53 movements of which have been still preserved so far; six of which are *Murong Khan, Tuyuhun, Tribe Ji, Julu Princess, Fair and Clear Prince* and Qiyu, while those without a name are substituted by “Khan.” Today’s so-called Dajiao music actually refers to the so-called “Buluohui” in the Later Wei Dynasty. Most of the musical pieces were named “Khan.” According to the tradition of those ethnic groups in the north, their lords were entitled as “Khan.” Tuyuhun was a branch of the Murong people, indicating that this song of the Xianbei people was created and spread at the time of the Yan and Wei Dynasties. Its lyrics were written in the language of an ethnic group in the north. That is why it is hard to be understood by other peoples. In the period of Zhenguan, Tang Dynasty, the emperor ordered Guichang (residents in Bingzhou) to teach Yuefu folk songs in his own language. These are the records of the loyal families that were passed down from generation to generation. Even the translator could not figure out their accurate meaning, probably owing to the fact that their true meaning has been lost due to the passing of time. This paragraph shows that different languages were used in different states with different peoples, and the prosperity in Chinese art in that period was attributable to the great convergence of nationalities; moreover, it profoundly points out that the loss of a large number of literature documents of national minorities was due to the difference in languages and the discrimination against the ethnic groups. These have resulted in the difficulty in literature and arts research, as “Even the translator could not figure out their accurate meaning.” It has become more severe since “their true meaning has been lost due to the passing of time!”

The barriers in the minority languages and the consequential loss of the literary documents have not only resulted in the lack of many documents and materials in the research on the current literature of national minorities, but also made an impression that the literature history of the whole Chinese nation is equal to the literature history of the Han people. This is extremely abnormal. More regrettably, today’s literature researchers have not realized this. It is a much bigger point of regret. The concept of “literature history” in China was transplanted from the West systematically, as the result of the collision and dialogue between Chinese and western culture. The compilation of the literature history should be a process of re-integrating the literature history of the respective nations, and also a process of re-arranging the traditional literature, reflecting the viewpoints of today’s scholars on classical literature. It is the power possessed by the literature history, and it is just this power that has spoiled the research on the literature of national minorities. Despite the existence of the so-called literature history of a single nation or a minority, the literature of national minorities was often absent in the Chinese literature history. Despite the existence of the so-called literature history of a single nation or a minority, the literature of national minorities were often absent in the Chinese literature history. Since the appearance of “the literature history” in China, the literature of national minorities has always been absent. *The Chinese Literature History* written by Lin Chuanjia and then published in 1904 was recognized as the first literature history in China; however, it had obviously excluded the literature of national minorities in research; and this was the same case with Huangren’s *Chinese
Literature History. Following the New Literature Movement, Xie Wuliang wrote *The Grand Chinese Literature History*, with a broader viewpoint on literature history; even so, nor had it incorporated the literature of national minorities into the scope of orthodox literature research. It may be said that Hu Shi’s *History of Vernacular Literature* is a masterpiece of a new litterateur, but viewed from the writers and literary works listed in the book, it’s clear that he had not broken the barriers set up by the literature history of the Han people. This is almost the same case in *The Overview of the Ancient Chinese Literature*, which was written by Xu Jiarui and published by Ya Dong Library Press in 1924, *The Introduction to the Ancient Literature*, which was published by Beixin Publishing House in 1936, *The Modern Chinese Literature History*, which was written by Qian Jibo, *The Chinese Literature History over the Past 30 Years*, which was written by Chen Bingkun and published by Pacific Bookstore in 1937, and *The Survey of the Pure Literature History in China*, which was published by Liu Jian at a later date. The literature histories published after the founding of New China, such as Wang Yao’s *Draft of Modern Chinese Literature History*, Tang Tao’s *History of Modern Chinese Literature*, Qian Liqun’s *Modern Chinese Literature in the Past 30 Years*, and You Guoen’s *Chinese Literature History*, all neglected the existence and role of the literature of national minorities. Accordingly, most of today’s literature histories in China are incomplete, which only include poems and essays in Mandarin, without impartially placing the literature of national minorities in their proper place; hence, it is urgently required to incorporate the literary works of the national minorities into Chinese literature history; at least we should add such national epics as *The Epic of King Gesar* and *The Epic of Oghuz* into the literature history ranging from the Song Dynasty and the Ming and Qing Dynasties. This also represents the expansion and improvement in the construction of the literature history. In a word, Chinese literature history should consist of the literature history of other ethnic groups. Most researchers seem to ignore or even disregard the existence of the literary works of national minorities just because of the neglect of all kinds of literature histories of the national minorities. Therefore, only a few researchers are willing to engage in the criticism of the literature of national minorities. However, in practice, there existed a large number of poems or folk songs of national minorities in the Eastern Han Dynasty in Guo Maoqian’s *Yuefu Poetry*. When opening the histories of literary critiques today, it can be seen that nearly no paragraph is dedicated to the research on the literature of national minorities, not to mention the criticism of the critique of the national minorities’ literature. It wouldn’t be over-exaggerated to say that any work in such a field will fill the gap in Chinese literature history and boost the research on Chinese literature. Meanwhile, it will be significantly beneficial to the Chinese literature tradition and supplement existing literary theory.

3. Research on the literature of national minorities under the discourse of hegemony of elites

The interaction between China and the West was a historic certainty, and the elite intellectuals diffused the generation of new literature and literary theory discourse during their collision; however, most of such elite intellectuals were Han people. Despite the fact that some elite intellectuals were from the national minorities, such
as Lao She, they had already been assimilated by Han culture, especially the elite culture of the Han people; therefore, the final form of expressing the hegemonies of western discourse and Han culture was realized through the elite consciousness, though this mode of expression was not obvious on many occasions. Hence, the literature of national minorities in China has often been taken as the low-grade literature. Such status has reflected the fact that the literature researchers in China have neglected the research on the literature of national minorities; more fundamentally, it has exposed the truth that the hegemony and consciousness of elite intellectuals had just distorted the research on the literature of national minorities.

In China, elite consciousness even existed in ancient times, which was mainly demonstrated from two aspects: the distinction between the Han people in the central part of China and the ethnic groups inside or outside the territory of such an area (Yi-Xia Distinction) and the difference between the refined culture and the popular one (Ya-su Difference). When and where did the Yi-Xia Distinction originate? It is still unclear up to now. According to the textual research, the expansion of the Zhou royal court to the surrounding areas resulted in the conflicts between the Zhou people and the neighboring nationalities or tribes, during which the Zhou people became increasingly strong. In *The Analects of Confucius* and *The Book of Mencius*, there are such sayings of “Barbarian tribes with their rulers are inferior to the Chinese states without rulers.” (Confucius 2466) In addition, the success of “honoring the king and driving off the barbarians” at the end of the Zhou Dynasty made distinction more obvious, thus preliminarily establishing the concept of the Yi-Xia Distinction. After entering the Warring States Period, the concept had become clear and distinguishable. It was further developed in the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period; in the Period of Wei, Jin and Southern and Northern Dynasties, Gu Huan in the South Qi Dynasty even wrote *The Essay about Yi and Xia*; however, the establishment of some minority regimes changed such a viewpoint. Yi at that time was converted into Xia and the minority regimes seemingly took themselves as the owners of Huaxia (an ancient name for China). This situation subsequently existed for a long period during the development of the Chinese nation, and the distinction between internal Yi (referring to barbarians within the territory in ancient China and its surrounding areas) and external Yi (referring to people from foreign countries before the collapse of the Qing Dynasty) still existed until the door of the Qing Dynasty was forced open. Above all, the issues of Yi-Xia Distinction and the Union of Yi and Xia existed in the history of the Chinese nation. Regardless of which issue had been established or when it was established, it was a discriminative concept in ancient China on the ground that the concept of the Union of Yi and Xia reflected the efforts of the minorities to seek the legalization for their ruling after setting up their own regimes. On the contrary, the concept of “Wu Hu Uprising” (five ethnic groups rose to establish regimes and disrupted the ruling of the Han regime) has been deeply rooted in the hearts of the Han people. As a result, the concept of Yi and Xia had become a kind of hegemonic cultural discourse for suppressing the literature of national minorities in ancient China.

The Yi-Xia Distinction is in essence the distinction between civilization and non-civilization, by means of which the Han regimes have always regarded the minorities as barbarian and inferior so as to deny the legality of the minority regimes, which involved another topic, namely, the Ya-su Difference. In practice, the Yi-Xia Distinction often
represented the Ya-su Difference, wherein Xia means Ya, based on which Zheng Xuan held that “Ya represents the positive side in both the present time and the ancient time, thus becoming the rule of the later generations,” so Ya, namely, positive side, had become the character of pursuit in literary creation, thus acquiring the orthodox position of Xia. The Yi-Xia Distinction and the Ya-su Difference had for a long period suppressed the literature of national minorities, consequently neglecting and disregarding making excellent literary works of the national minorities such as The Epic of King Gesar and The Epic of Oghuz. The Yi-Xia Distinction and the Ya-su Difference, which carried the ancient elite consciousness, have become more outstanding in the research on modern literature. The initiators of the new literature acquired the strong elite consciousness at the initial stage of the movement, while the Chinese new literature was faced with the conflict of Ya and Su from its inception. At the time of its emergence, new literature must firstly “legalize” its own existence so as to establish its “legal status.” So it selected the Mandarin Duck and Butterfly School, which was influential as a popular but old literature at that time. The emergence of Chinese leisure literature began from the time when foreigners started to run newspapers in China. From the perspective of citizen literature, the Mandarin Duck and Butterfly School reflected the interests of the ordinary citizens in the modern life, which agreed well with the conventional aesthetic tastes of them. Moreover, Chinese new literature made a reference to the citizen literature in the West in its establishment of the legality of the westernized authority. For example, Zhou Zuoren and Hu Shi, the initiators of the New Literature Movement criticized the Mandarin Duck and Butterfly School for representing the leisure and feudalist literature. Although the new literature had criticized the Mandarin Duck and Butterfly School as “illegal,” it failed to spoil the literature of the Mandarin Duck and Butterfly School and affect the existence of its journals. As a result, the position of the Mandarin Duck and Butterfly School had not been lowered among the ordinary citizens. Wang Dewei held that the modernity of the Chinese new literature should be traced back to the late Qing Dynasty, and the popular literature traced back to the emergence of the Mandarin Duck and Butterfly School (see Wang Dewei’s Repressed Modernity). Regardless of when the modernity of the Chinese new literature began, it has become an undisputable fact that the Mandarin Duck and Butterfly School had all the while been controlled by the elite literature of the elite intellectuals. As for the destiny of the literature of national minorities, which was rarely known at that time, you may imagine the situation. As mentioned earlier, the “new” Chinese literature history since the emergence of the concept of the new literature history has not incorporated the research on the literature of national minorities into its research system. One important factor is attributable to the notion that the Su is restrained by Ya, as the literature of national minorities was mostly deemed vulgar literature which could not be elevated to a presentable and acceptable level. Some people even thought that the literature of national minorities was only a kind of vulgar literature involving only the love stories of “brothers” and “sisters.” In the 1980s, the chance of “rewriting the literature history” gave us a ray of hope, but it was a pity that the rewritten literature history was still within the cultural scope of the Han culture, without incorporating the research on the literature of national minorities into the Chinese literature history. In a couple of seminars about the literature of national minorities, some writers from the ethnic groups ever so strongly condemned the
ignorance of the literature of national minorities and the relevant research. If there is the possibility of making some breakthroughs even in the literature history, it’s a good choice to put the literature of national minorities into the track of research, providing a good chance to make breakthroughs in the research on Chinese literature history.

The hegemony of the elite literature in Mandarin is also embodied in their effort for understanding the literature and culture of national minorities from the novel perspective of “other people.” Such a touristy angle would often cause the misinterpretation of the literature of national minorities. Hence, it’s common for the Han people to appreciate the novelty of the minorities. Taking The Meeting at the Yurt as an example: talking of a “yurt,” many people, especially Han people, would tend to associate it with beautiful Mongolian girls, believing that a yurt was a place for love and romance, and the appearance of a yurt would usually be followed by a secret meeting of lovers. But, we have misinterpreted or misunderstood “the yurt.” The “yurt” in ancient times referred to the round-shaped architecture piled with stones, mud and willow twigs and other materials, which were usually found almost everywhere on the mountain tops, passes, lakesides or roadsides. It was taken as the symbol of the nomadic people; hence, at the beginning it served as the place for Mongolians to conduct activities of worshipping the dead, ancestors or heavenly gods. It was developed into the site for gatherings afterwards. So, it was a misinterpretation of the Han people concerning the yurt, a kind of viewpoint of “other people” under the background of seeking for novelty, and a method of the Han people in their imagination of the Mongolians. In the seventh edition of the Photo China in 2001, there appeared a group of pictures with the title of The Meeting at the Yurt, reflecting the gathering scene of the lovers. This is the collective imagination of the so-called “Meeting at the Yurt!” Actually, the yurt was not exclusive to the Mongol nationality; instead, there are the customs of worshipping the yurt in such nomads as the Altay people and Tibetan people. Therefore some “prejudice” among the Hang people in their understanding of the national minorities and their literature exists. This “prejudice” was formed by the cultural and hegemonic discourse of the elite intellectuals, and the theory and discourse formed by such “prejudice” had become the hegemonic discourse when accepting the culture and literature of national minorities. Hence, the Yi-Xia Distinction and the elite consciousness influenced the further exploration of the research on the literature of national minorities.

Historically, the prosperity of literature was attributed to the fusion of nationalities; for example, the national fusion in the Period of Wei, Jin and the Southern and Northern Dynasties generated the self-consciousness of literature and multiple new forms of literature, thus becoming “the age with the highest achievement of beauty” (quoted from Zong Baihua’s article). The national fusion in the flourishing Tang Dynasty created the extreme prosperity of the economy, culture and literature; and the prosperity of Han literature sprouted on the basis of absorbing the nutrition of the literature of national minorities, which was exemplified by the prosperity of operas in the Yuan Dynasty. Therefore, eliminating the literary hegemonies of the West and the Han people is the only pathway in the research on the literature of national minorities. The prosperity of the research on the literature of national minorities can not only enrich and improve the incomplete “Chinese” literature history, but also render the prominent theoretical and realistic significance to make our cultural career flourish,
enable Chinese literature to globalize, emerge from the dilemma of aphasia, and reconstruct the discourse of Chinese literary theory.

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**Notes on contributor**

*Cao Shunqing* teaches literary theory and comparative literature at Sichuan University and Beijing Normal University. His interests in scholarship include classic Chinese literature theory, comparative literature, comparative poetics, and world literature. In addition to numerous articles and books in Chinese and English, his recent book publications include *The Variation Theory of Comparative Literature* (2013) and the edited volume *中外文论史 (History of Chinese and Western Literary Theory)* (2012). E-mail: shunqingcao@163.com

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