

YOUTH



Moseee's grandfather and grandmother pose at their home in a small village of Liangshan Yi autonomous prefecture, Xichang, Sichuan province.
PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Moseee is a singer-songwriter who grew up in the Daliang Mountains area of Liangshan Yi autonomous prefecture in Xichang, Sichuan province. Raised by his grandmother, he had a happy childhood, though his parents were busy with work and often away from home.

"My childhood memories were all connected to my grandmother. She sang Yi ethnic folk ballads while sitting near the bonfire during the night. She would hold my hand when she took me to the market, and I loved having potato that she baked," he recalls.

In October, Moseee was preparing for the graduate school entrance exam in Chengdu, Sichuan province, so he couldn't return to his hometown to be with his family for the traditional New Year of the Yi ethnic group.

"I haven't been home for the New Year celebration for about five years. I miss my family very much, especially my grandmother," says Moseee, who moved to Chengdu to study law at Chengdu University of Technology in 2017.

He decided to write a song to express his homesickness and his love for his grandmother. *A Letter to Grandma* was released on Dec 16, as a part of the compilation, *Minority, Diversity*, by Capitol Records China.

With lyrics featuring both Mandarin and the Yi ethnic language, Moseee portrays his childhood moments with his grandmother, shares things from his life now and asks about hers in the song.

With a potent sense of longing and nostalgia, the singer-songwriter raps: "I can't come home this year, grandma. It's my fifth year being away from home. How is your life? Is there someone you can talk to when you are not happy? ... Do you still like going to the market? ... Does the old TV still work?"

After the song's release, it received warm feedback from the fans.

"They left me lots of messages. Some even shared their own stories about their grandmothers, which was beyond my expectation," says Moseee, mentioning that one listener, who also came from Daliang Mountains, wrote: "Grandmother is a very special person to me. She teaches me a lot and at the same time, she is like a child."

Moseee adds that some fans who might not fully understand the Yi language showed an interest in the unique culture. "They also shared their own local culture with me, such as introducing me to folk songs performed in the dialect of southern Fujian province," Moseee adds.

"Usually, I just focus on writing and recording a song. The moment it is released, it is the end — I don't think much about what the listeners think of the song or how well it will do. But this song is very different. The feedback of the listeners touched me very much," he says.

Moseee's family also listened to the

Singing the praises of his heritage

Raised by his grandmother, rising star pays homage to his cultural background,
Chen Nan reports.



The 22-year-old singer-songwriter is inspired by his Yi ethnic background and his original songs have brought him a large and widespread fan base.

"I was exposed to a diversity of culture. But what the Yi ethnic group inspires in me is unique and is in my blood."

Moseee, singer-songwriter

song, including his 72-year-old grandmother, who told Moseee that she loves it, and that she was very surprised that he wrote such a song for her.

"I went home this January and visited my grandmother. She told me that she is very proud of me, which really matters to me," he adds.

Twenty years ago, Moseee, like many children living in the area, grew up listening to folk songs and watching Yi dancing.

He always loved singing although he never planned to pursue a full-time career as a singer-songwriter.

He recalls that he fell in love with hip-hop when he was at middle school. His father took him to a live hip-hop concert featuring local artists, which was an "overwhelming" experience.

"Although I couldn't remember the singers' names and the songs they performed that night, I can still remember how excited

I was and how much I enjoyed the show," Moseee recalls. "The music was so cool and expressive, so I tried to write my own original material and learned to rap."

At 15, Moseee joined a local hip-hop label, called CW0834. He has been releasing his original songs since he was 18. His songs, such as *Green Train* and *Hometown Chill*, were played more than 1 million times on social media.

Although he is open to a diversity of styles, and listens to both Chinese and Western music, Moseee says that bringing the elements of his hometown, such as the music and language, into his songs, is natural to him.

"I grew up with two languages — Mandarin and the Yi language. I was exposed to a diversity of culture. But what the Yi ethnic group inspires in me is unique and is in my blood," Moseee says.

Now, he is waiting for the result of his graduate school entrance exam. He hopes to become a lawyer while pursuing his music dream.

Last year, Moseee was signed to Capitol Records China. According to Tang Yong, general manager of the label, the young singer-songwriter impressed him not only with his music talent, but also his love of the Yi culture.

"He has great potential and his own cultural background allows his music to be unique and creative," Tang says.

The compilation, *Minority, Diversity*, features eight original songs by eight singer-songwriters from Chinese ethnic groups, such as Yi, Tibetan, Uygur and Yao. With a goal of giving talented singer-songwriters from Chinese ethnic groups a platform, the project shows the diversity of their music, which all pays homage to their identities that are rooted in their respective ethnic cultures.

"The compilation is the realization of a longtime wish for me," Tang says. "When I travel, I am always intrigued by the ethnic groups around the country. I love going to small villages where local people live, work, sing and dance. They are close to nature and have a distinctive culture, which deeply touches me."

"When we prepared this compilation, we tried to find singers whose works show an apparent influence from their ethnic culture, as well as being contemporary and appealing to a young audience."

Tang also says that the label is working on its next project involving Chinese ethnic musicians, which will see the release of more original songs and the organization of concert tours.

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China-funded school boosts agriculture in Cameroon

YAOUNDE — Growing up in a predominantly agrarian community in Cameroon, Junior Moudina fell in love with agriculture as a child but lacked the required skills. This situation changed when China constructed a technical and professional agricultural high school in his native town of Yabassi to provide relevant training to students.

When the school became operational in 2017, the 23-year-old was among the first batch of more than 200 students to enroll. "I would like to be one of the first to modernize agriculture in Cameroon," Moudina says of his motive. "The Chinese did a good job, because it's thanks to them that we have this training, and it's also thanks to them that we have access to the latest equipment."

Yabassi Technical and Professional Agricultural High School, a modern infrastructure in Yabassi, is a pioneering professional agricultural high school in the central African nation.

"When you arrive in Yabassi, what first catches your attention is the beautiful structure of the school, which is the fruit of the cooperation between Cameroon and China," says Jean Mirabeau Eba, mayor of Yabassi Council.

Boasting 78 hectares of practice farms, the school also has classrooms, workshops, laboratories, dormitories and recreational facilities. Equipment includes tractors, excavators, training platforms for engine mechanics and incubators for chickens. It offers courses in crop and animal farming, maintenance of agricultural equipment and processing and conservation of agricultural products.

Overall, it is among the top schools in the country, according to Louis David Njenjock Bang, principal of the school.

Agriculture is the mainstay of Cameroon's economy, engaging about 70 percent of the economically active population and accounting for about 80 percent of the nation's GDP, according to the country's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Cameroon aims to become an emerging nation in 2035 and is counting on agriculture to provide jobs and food for the population. The school is helping to foster a much-needed skilled workforce, says Bang.

In most agricultural firms in Cameroon, few workers have been trained professionally, Bang adds. "We offer them trained professionals," he says.

More than 500 students have graduated from the school. One of them is Timothee Le Vainqueur Dissionbi, who now works in a plantation company. He says that the training he received in the school helped propel his integration into the company where his work is to check and confirm the quality of products. "I feel at ease in my current position," the 20-year-old says. "I wish to thank the Chinese for constructing and equipping the school."

Bang shares the optimism, noting: "Our graduates easily find jobs with good salaries."

Moudina hopes to graduate this year and is already excited about what awaits him. "After studying here, I realized that I could become my own boss, do my own things and realize my dream in agriculture."

Another student, Monthe Memba, has a more holistic dream. "Thanks to this training, we can change the world," says the 19-year-old, while watering crops at the practice farm of the school.

"Unemployed people can find employment in agriculture. We can create agricultural enterprises to provide jobs to young Cameroonians."

Such ambitions from the students are valid, but training needs to be intensified "for excellent results," says Bang.

XINHUA

International Education Column

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