

# The Belief of King Pan of Yao Ethnic Group in Jinxiu: the Construction of Cultural Identity Pattern

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## Abstract

In the background of modernization process, the belief of King Pan has undergone several changes and remained an important cultural identity of the Yao ethnic group to this day in Jinxiu. The aims included: 1. the changes of the belief of King Pan of the Yao ethnic group in Jinxiu; 2. the construction of cultural identity pattern of Yao ethnic group in Jinxiu. The methodology included: 1. Qualitative research methods were used; 2. Research tools such as observation, interviews, and surveys were used; Four key informants, ten general informants, and three casual informants were selected; 3. Data was collected through fieldwork and literature survey, and a research framework was used to classify the data; Structural-functional Theory, Cultural Change Theory, and Cultural Identity Concept were used to analyze the research data, and descriptive analysis methods were used to present the research results. The results included: 1. From the 1950s to the past 20 years, the belief of King Pan had undergone three changes, each with its own complex reasons; 2. The complex changes in the belief of King Pan of the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group reflected the stages, forms, and paths of constructing cultural identity pattern. The conclusion included: 1. The changes in the belief of King Pan of the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group were influenced by factors such as religious policies, production methods, and cultural education; 2. There were three stages in the construction of cultural identity pattern: gradually constructing the political identity, cultural identity, and religious identity of King Pan; There were three forms of construction: sacrificial ritual, ritual performances and cultural performances, lifestyles; The construction path was: excavated classics, interpreted culture, innovated culture, organized cultural activities, developed cultural industries and cultural tourism. The research results have certain reference value for the government to formulate cultural, economic, and educational policies, and for researchers to further study the belief of King Pan and cultural identity patterns.

**Keywords:** The Belief of King Pan; Cultural Identity Pattern; Yao Ethnic Group in Jinxiu; Construction

## Introduction

In the stories of King Pan recorded in classics such as “Sou Shen Ji” and “Guoshan Bang”, King Pan was the ancestor of the Yao ethnic group, possessing multiple identities such as warrior, hero, king’s son-in-law, ethnic leader, king, and spirits, and holding a high status. Believing in King Pan was a tradition of the Yao ethnic group. Until now, The Yao ethnic group of Jinxiu living in central Guangxi still believe in King Pan. The belief of King Pan runs through the traditional life, modern life, festival activities, and cultural performances of the Jinxiu Yao people, and is constantly constructed in them, often reflected in their clothing,

food, housing, and transportation. Compared to other beliefs of the Yao ethnic group, such as the belief of She Shen, the belief of King Gan, and the belief of Taoism, the belief of King Pan has become one of the core connotations of the cultural identity pattern of the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group due to its numerous beliefs, wide influence, and fixed worship time. However, in the modernization process of Jinxiu, the belief of King Pan has undergone repeated changes, facing problems such as the transformation of believers' values, weak awareness of belief, weak intergenerational inheritance among believers, and insufficient adaptation to modern culture. From this, two academic problems can be asked: the first problem is how the belief of King Pan of Yao ethnic group has changed in Jinxiu. The second problem is how to construct the cultural identity pattern of Yao ethnic group in Jinxiu.

The author found through literature research that the current academic research on the belief of King Pan of the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group mainly focused on the manifestations of the King Pan belief, such as the Yellow Mud Drum Dance, and King Pan Song, King Pan Festival. These research results included: "Research on the Application of Visual Elements of Yao Pan Wang Festival in Tourism Cultural and Creative Products in Jinxiu, Guangxi" by Chen Jiaming in 2023, "Study on the Design Semantics of Pan Wang Seal of Yao Ethnic Group from the Perspective Semiotics" by Gui Yaxin, Wang Jianhua in 2022, Research on the Aesthetic Identity Phenomenon of Guangxi Yellow Mud Drum Performance of Jinxiu Yao Nationality (Cai, 2017), "Pan Wang's Grand Song and folk belief of Yao people" by Wang Chaolin in 2010, etc. While the research on the changes in the belief of King Pan is obviously insufficient, and the research on the cultural identity pattern of Jinxiu is obviously neglected.

In the background of modernization process, the belief of King Pan has undergone several changes and remained an important cultural identity of the Yao ethnic group today in Jinxiu. The purpose of this study is to analyze the changes in the belief of King Pan of Yao ethnic group in Jinxiu, and explain the construction of the Jinxiu cultural identity pattern. The authors hope that this study can provide new perspectives, methods, and materials for the study of the belief of King Pan, provide new cases for the study of cultural identity patterns, and be helpful to the development of Yao culture, economy, and society.

## Research Objectives

1. To study the changes of the belief of King Pan of the Yao ethnic group in Jinxiu.
2. To study the construction of cultural identity pattern of Yao ethnic group in Jinxiu.

## Literature Review

For the first research objective, at present, the academic circles has mostly studied the belief of King Pan from a macro perspective. These types of papers included "A Brief Discussion on the Modern Changes of Traditional Folk Beliefs: Taking Panhu Beliefs as an Example" by Li Fang's in 2022, "Ethnic Survival Strategies: A Functional Study of the Belief of King Pan of the Yao Ethnic Group" by Luo Xiaoqin in 2016, "Worship of King Pan in the Yao Religion" by Zhang Zehong in 2010, etc. However, there is currently less attention in the academic circles to case studies on the changes in the belief of King Pan of the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group. For the second research objective, at present, the academic circles has studied the formation mechanism of personal cultural identity from the perspective of developmental psychology. These types of papers included From "Cultural Exploration" to "Cultural Experience": The Formation Mechanism and Educational Path of Cultural Identity (Yan &

Dong, 2023), “On the Educational Experience Mode to Construct College Students’ Cultural Identity” by Zhao Ning in 2017. Of course, there are also papers that explore the phenomenon of Yao cultural identity, for example, “Research on the Aesthetic Identity Phenomenon of Guangxi Yellow Mud Drum Performance of Jinxiu Yao Nationality” (Cai, 2017). However, there is currently a lack of research in the academic circles on the cultural identity pattern of the Yao ethnic group.

## **Research Methodology**

### **1. Research methodology**

This study used qualitative research methods and conducted fieldwork in Jinxiu County, Laibin City, Guangxi Province. Jinxiu is known as the capital of Yao people in the world, and the Yao people in Jinxiu still hold the unique belief of King Pan with local characteristics. This helps to analyze the changes in the belief of King Pan of the Yao ethnic group in Jinxiu, and explain the construction of the cultural identity pattern of Yao ethnic group in Jinxiu.

### **2. Population and sample**

The subject of this study was the Yao people in Jinxiu. This study used targeted sampling methods to select three types of informants. The first type of informant was the key informants. Four people were selected, including two local government officials and two experts in the study of Jinxiu Yao culture. The second type of informant was general informants, with 10 Yao people selected. The third type of informant was casual informants, who selected three believers of King Pan.

### **3. Data collecting**

This study collected research data through observation, interviews, field survey, and literature survey. This study collected data on the worship ritual of King Pan, Huan King Pan Yuan, King Pan’s Festival, Yellow Mud Drum Dance, and King Pan’s Songs through observation; Collected data on the changes in the belief of King Pan, cultural identity patterns, and practical experience of the belief of King Pan through interviews; Collected data on Jinxiu’s economy, education, healthcare, and other aspects through field survey and literature survey.

### **4. Data analysis**

According to the research objectives, this study has classified and summarized the obtained data. This study analyzed the collected data guided by the conceptual framework. This study integrated data obtained from observation, interviews, and surveys to analyze the changes in the belief of King Pan and the construction of the cultural identity pattern of Yao ethnic group in Jinxiu. This study conducted descriptive analysis of the research results using functional structure theory, cultural change theory.

## Research Conceptual Framework

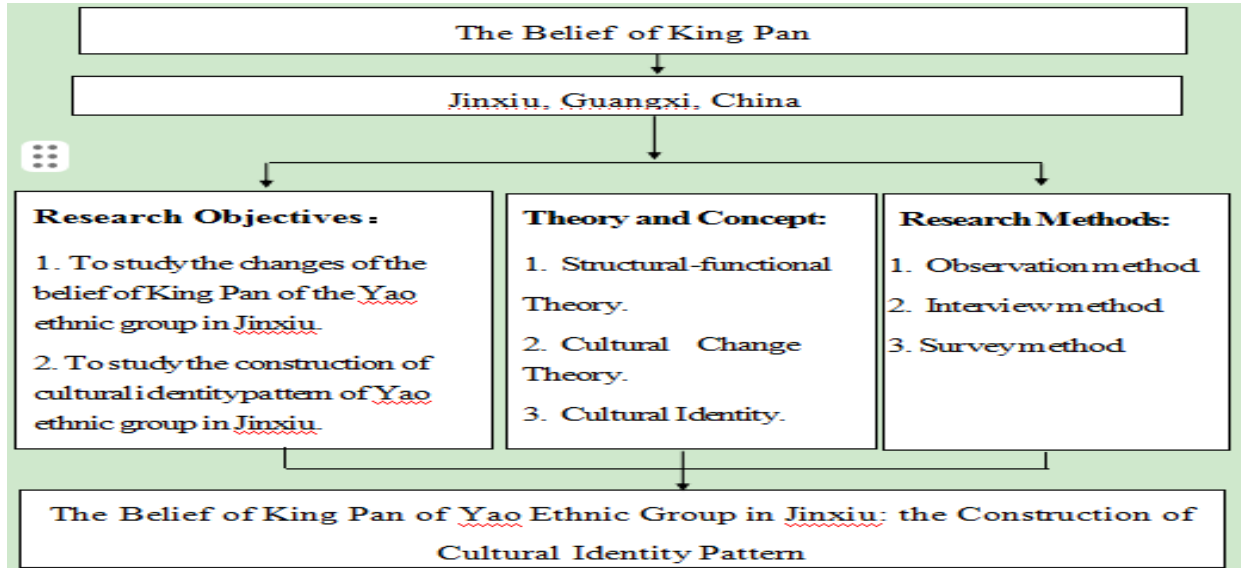


Figure 1: Research Conceptual Framework

## Results

### 1. the changes of the belief of King Pan of the Yao ethnic group in Jinxu

#### 1.1 The belief of King Pan before 1949

In traditional societies before 1949, Pan Yao and Ao Yao also commonly worshipped King Pan in Jinxu. According to the author's survey, seven villages in Jinxu, including Qiongwu Village, Guchen Village, and Luoyun Village, had built King Pan Temples and erected King Pan statues for worship. Taking the Longjun King Pan Temple in Qiongwu Village as an example, the temple had a history of about 500 years since its construction. In general, local Yao people came here alone to worship King Pan during festivals and holidays. Sometimes local Yao villages also held grand collective sacrificial ritual to worship King Pan. The most exciting part of the entire sacrificial process was jumping Yellow Mud Drum Dance to worship King Pan, commonly known as King Pan Dance. During this period, it was still common for the local Yao people to hold the ritual of Huan King Pan Yuan and thanking him for his protection. The most exciting part of the ritual was singing the King Pan Song.

#### 1.2 The belief of King Pan from the early 1950s to the late 1990s

After entering the 1950s, the frequency of the Pan Yao collective or individual family's ritual of Huan King Pan Yuan gradually decreased, and even stopped actively holding the ritual until the family encountered difficulties and sought advice from a priest, forcing them to hold the ritual.

To explore the reasons for the changes in the belief of King Pan during this period, the author conducted interviews with two local government officials, two experts in Jinxu Yao culture research, and three King Pan believers. The interview data is shown in the table 1 below.

**Table 1:** The reasons for the changes in the belief of King Pan from the early 1950s to the late 1990s

Interviewee	Viewpoint
one	Before the establishment of the People's Republic of China, Pan Yao, Shanzi Yao, and Ao Yao generally believed in King Pan in Jinxiu. At that time, Pan Yao and Shanzi Yao had no land, while Ao Yao had land. Pan Yao and Shanzi Yao need to rent land from Hualan Yao, Chashan Yao, and Ao Yao for planting .
two	Pan Yao and Shanzi Yao, who had no land, were once very poor. The land they rented for cultivation was often dry land, which they cultivated for 3 to 5 years. After the dry land became barren, they needed to choose another land for cultivation, so they were often in shifting cultivation and had no fixed abode.
three	Pan Yao and Shanzi Yao were extremely dependent on nature and often pray to King Pan for good weather, so that their harvest would be good. In times of disaster, if they could not afford the rent, they still need to offset the rent through labor.
four	Obtaining land was something that Pan Yao and Shanzi Yao ancestors have been pursuing for generations. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, Pan Yao and Shanzi Yao obtained land and their living conditions improved.
five	During the Cultural Revolution, worshipping King Pan would result in being arrested, and we were very afraid and dared not worship King Pan.
six	In the past, when we were sick, we would invite priest to come and see us. Now there is a clinic in the village where patients go to see a doctor.
seven	In the past, when there was a drought, priest would pray to King Pan for rain. Now that there is a drought, the government will organize drought relief efforts and divert water to irrigate crops.

Based on the analysis of the interview data and literature, the author believe that there are several reasons for the changes in the belief of King Pan of Jinxiu during this period. Firstly, in August 1951, land reform was carried out in Jinxiu. Pan Yao obtained land, ended their shifting cultivation, and had a fixed residence. The production and living environment of Pan Yao had been greatly improved. "The land reform movement was extremely inspiring, and the people had hope. More and more people felt that they no longer needed their gods and ancestors, and their lives were still very good. The number of believers began to decrease significantly"(Qian, 2017).

Secondly, during the period from 1966 to 1976, influenced by the Cultural Revolution, Jinxiu implemented the policy of abolishing the “Four Olds”. At that time, the belief of King Pan belonged to the scope of the “Four Olds” and was banned, experiencing a significant blow.

Thirdly, as far as the author know, in the past, the Jinxiu Yao people usually prayed for the protection of King Pan due to diseases, poor harvest, drought, and other reasons. However, these factors that gave rise to the belief of King Pan had undergone drastic changes since the 1950s.

In the 1950s to 1970s, health clinics were established in various villages of the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group, with personnel who had mastered medical knowledge responsible for medical and health work. The medical level had been improved. After 1978, the economic income of the Jinxiu Yao people increased, their living standards improved, and their living and sanitation conditions were further improved.

In the past, Pan Yao mainly planted crops such as rice, corn, and sweet potatoes in Jinxiu. Due to poor varieties, low production technology, and outdated concepts, it often led to low yields per mu and food shortages. After 1980, due to the improvement of rice varieties, the improvement of farming technology, the implementation of scientific farming, the food production was greatly improved, and the food problem was fundamentally solved.

Since 1949, Jinxiu Yao Autonomous County had actively constructed water diversion and storage projects. By the end of 1987, there were a total of 81 water storage projects and 4751 water diversion projects in the county (The Compilation Committee of “Jinxiu Yao Ethnic Group Autonomous County Annals”, 1992), which basically ensured agricultural irrigation and rural domestic water use, and reduced the impact of drought on production and life.

In addition, during this period, holding the ritual of Huan King Pan Yuan required a significant amount of manpower, material resources, and financial resources, and also took a relatively long time. The entire process of the ceremony requires a pig, some chicken, rice, wine, candles, several priests, boys and girls, songers, chefs, and helpers. These expenses would cause enormous pressure on ordinary income families. The entire process would take from 1 day and 1 night to 2 days and 2 nights, depending on the size of the ritual.

Education had opened up alternative ways to acquire knowledge from religion and promoted the dissemination of science. The dissemination of science had seriously impacted the belief of King Pan of Yao people in Jinxiu. In 1987, Jinxiu Yao Autonomous County implemented free nine-year compulsory education and vigorously promoted night school education. By 1998, according to the assessment and acceptance of the literacy work acceptance group in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, the literacy rate in Jinxiu County was 98.82% (The Jinxiu Yao Ethnic Group Autonomous County Committee of the CPC., & the People’s Government of Jinxiu Yao Ethnic Group Autonomous County., & editorial board of Jinxiu Yao Ethnic Group Culture Series of Books, 2012b). It can be seen that the scientific and cultural knowledge level of the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group had been generally improved.

At the same time, the belief of King Pan during that period had become increasingly weak. For example, the prohibition of killing dogs and eating dog meat was a taboo in the belief of King Pan, and during this period, the society of Yao ethnic group had already broken this taboo in Jinxiu.

### **1.3 The belief of King Pan at the beginning of the 21st century**

At the beginning of the 21st century, with the acceleration of modernization and further development of the market economy, the belief of King Pan of the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group had undergone changes and has the following characteristics.

The first characteristic was that during this period, the Jin xiu Yao people believed in both King Pan and science, and the two beliefs coexisted. In Jinxiu Yao village, the author often saw Yao people both praying to King Pan and going to the hospital for diagnosis and treatment when they got sick. The crops were affected by insect infestations, and they both sought the help of King Pan to drive them away and sprayed pesticides. When encountering drought, the Yao people not only sought rainfall from King Pan, but also searched for water everywhere to resist drought, and even sought help from the government to implement artificial rainfall using scientific methods.

The second characteristic was that the ritual procedure for collective worship of King Pan had been simplified. In the past, the ritual procedure for the collective worship of King Pan by the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group was very cumbersome. The worship time was relatively long, with small-scale worship requiring 1 day and 1 night, and large-scale worship requiring at least 2 days and 2 nights. Nowadays, Yao ethnic group still maintains the collective ritual of worshipping King Pan in Jinxiu, but the collective ritual has been simplified and the entire process can be completed in just half a day. In the past, during the process of worship, other spirits such as Lei Shen, bodhisattvas, and Earth Shen were also worshipped. Nowadays, the only object of worship is King Pan. In Dazhang Township, Jinxiu County, Pan Yao used to entertain the gods by jumping long drum dance during the worship of King Pan, but now this practice no longer exists. The “King Pan Song” that was once sung during the collective worship of King Pan was a narrative poem of over 28000 words, which lasted for a long time and required several segments to be sung. Now it has been simplified into a segment, and the singing time has been greatly reduced.

The third characteristic was that there had been a significant differentiation among the followers of King Pan. From a regional distribution perspective, believers living in rural areas participated in the worship ceremony of King Pan more frequently than those living in cities. In the past rural areas, Pan Yao people would set up a wooden plaque belonging to King Pan on the high wall of their main hall for regular worship in Jinxiu. “The regular sacrificial ritual was held three times a year for a total of three days, with specific dates being Spring Festival, Lichun, and July 14th. The sacrificial ritual was relatively simple. There was only one incense burner in front of the wooden plaque of King Pan, placed high on the wall of the hall, without any idols. The sacrificial process only requires burning three incense sticks and offering meat dishes such as pork”(Hu & Fan, 1983).

Based on the age of the followers, the majority of believers in King Pan were middle-aged and elderly. These people were mostly born before 1980 and have devout beliefs, paying more attention to the happiness of the afterlife. At present, most young people born after 1980 live in cities, and their mentality towards King Pan was mostly to believe in him without causing any harm. This group of young people would participate in the collective worship ritual for King Pan. But they often did not worship King Pan in their homes in the city, and did not offer separate sacrifices during festivals and celebrations. They were relatively blind, passive, and unstable in their beliefs of King Pan. These young people were more concerned about the happiness of the present world, and their prayers were mostly about marriage, work, childbirth, and other matters.

To explore the reasons for the changes in the belief of King Pan during this period, the author conducted interviews with 2 local government officials, 2 experts in Jinxiu Yao culture research, 5 Yao people, and 3 followers of King Pan. The interview data is shown in the table 2 below.

**Table 2:** The reasons for the changes in the belief of King Pan at the beginning of the 21st century

Interviewee	Viewpoint
one	During this period, we could often see sacrificial offerings to King Pan in rural areas, but we rarely saw sacrificial offerings to King Pan in cities.
two	There were many followers of King Pan in rural areas, and rural people needed to rely on both the government and themselves to produce food. Relying on oneself meanted trusting King Pan, who would bless with good weather.
three	During this period, people had more ways to earn money, and working and doing business outside earned more than farming.
four	During this period, people were busy earning money and only had leisure time to participate in sacrificial activities during festivals and holidays.
five	The traditional ritual procedure took too long. The young people who participated in the sacrificial ritual followed the principle that sincerity is effective. They did not understand the effect of the traditional sacrificial procedure, nor did they agree with the traditional sacrificial procedure.
six	Some young people participated in sacrificial activities because everyone was there, and they did so for not wanting to become outsiders.
seven	Usually, people without wives, children, or stable jobs went to pray for the blessings of King Pan.
eight	There was also a small group of people who prayed for the blessings of King Pan in order to get promoted and become wealthy.

Based on the above interview data and literature survey, in the author's opinion, there are several reasons for the changes in the belief of King Pan of the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group in the early 21st century.

Firstly, according to data released by the government, the total output value of the secondary and tertiary industries in Jinxiu Yao Autonomous County at the beginning of the 21st century had significantly exceeded that of agriculture as the primary industry. The economic output of the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group was diversified, and their dependence on agriculture was gradually decreasing, which meant that their dependence on the weather for



food was also decreasing, and their motivation to believe in King Pan was weakened. However, agriculture remained important in Jinxiu's economic output. Therefore, the pressure of relying on the weather for food in agricultural production still existed. The belief of King Pan, as a traditional method to solve agricultural production problems such as drought, insect infestations, and crop diseases, was still recognized and used by some Jin Xiu Yao people engaged in agricultural production.

Secondly, the traditional sacrificial ritual for King Pan was relatively cumbersome, "which was in line with the self-sufficient small-scale agricultural economy. With the rise of the market economy, this tedious, time-consuming, and complex ritual had become extremely incompatible with the fast-paced market economy, so many procedures and rituals have gradually been simplified"(Yu, 2005).

Thirdly, the number of people from the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group who moved out of rural areas to work and live in cities had increased. These Yao people who moved to cities were exposed to more modern culture and accepted more modern social lifestyles, gradually distancing themselves from traditional culture and social lifestyles, and even no longer familiar with traditional culture and social lifestyles, as well as these practices and experiences. The belief of King Pan remained weak during this period.

#### 1.4 The belief of King Pan in the past 20 years

In the past 20 years, there had been significant changes in the belief of King Pan of the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group in the following aspects.

At the government level, the Yao ethnic group's King Pan Festival, Yellow Mud Drum Dance, King Pan Song, and Huan King Pan Yuan, which originated from the worship of King Pan, had been included in the national list of representative intangible cultural heritage projects for protection since 2006. During this process, the belief of King Pan was culturally constructed at the county, city, province, and national levels through festivals, music, dance, rituals, and other forms.

At the folk level, since the King Pan Festival was designated as a unified festival of the Yao ethnic group by representatives of the Chinese Yao ethnic group in 1984, until 2006, the King Pan Festival at the township level in Jinxiu County was generally held by each village itself, once every three years. Since 2006, the King Pan Festival had been organized and hosted by township governments, entrusted to villages with conditions to hold it, marking the orderly management of the King Pan Festival in Jinxiu, avoiding disorderly competition and waste of cultural resources.

During this period, Yellow Mud Drum Dance, which served as a sacrificial dance for King Pan, also underwent changes. In the past, there were many taboos regarding the use of yellow clay drumming in sacrificial ceremonies, such as allowing only male priests to be drummers and not allowing women to be drummers. Yellow Mud Drum Dance was only secretly passed down by the priests, and was only passed down to men and not to women. Women can only acted as singers. For example, before playing, priests must fast, Yellow Mud Drum Dance must be blessed. Another example, the repertoire and formation of Yellow Mud Drum Dance, the number of performers, performance time, and performance purpose were all fixed.

However, "by simplifying the repertoire, changing the formation, increasing the number of dancers, expanding the use of dance, shortening the performance time, and adding female performances, Yellow Mud Drum Dance was endowed with a new artistic life"(Cai, 2017). For example, in November 2007, the Yao Art Troupe of Jinxiu County vividly

performed the improved Yellow Mud Drum Dance at the 11th National Traditional Minority Games, achieving a good result of winning the gold medal. Now the Yellow Mud Drum Dance has broken the taboo of only passing it on to men and not to women, and the secret inheritance of priests. Nowadays, when tourists visit Luoyun Village and Liuxiang Village in Jinxiu, they can also see ordinary villagers spontaneously performing Yellow Mud Drum Dance for tourists. The author learned that among these performers, Pan Dumei, as a female performer of Yellow Mud Drum Dance, started learning to Yellow Mud Drum Dance at the age of ten, with the aim of showcasing Yellow Mud Drum Dance to the outside world.

To explore the reasons for the changes in the belief of King Pan during this period, the author conducted interviews with 2 local government officials, 2 experts in Jinxiu Yao culture research, 10 Yao people, and 3 followers of King Pan. The interview data was shown in the table 3 below.

**Table 3:** The reasons for the changes in the belief of King Pan in the past 20 years

Interviewee	Viewpoint
one	Now the government was paying more and more attention to the belief of King Pan and has formulated many policies to protect it.
two	In recent years, we have had a three-day holiday to celebrate King Pan Festival, which was unimaginable in the past.
three	In recent years, the Jinxiu government has invested a lot of manpower, material resources, and financial resources to build the King Pan Festival cultural tourism brand, attracting many tourists to come and travel.
four	At the King Pan Festival held by the government in the past, the county mayor of Jinxiu would give a speech. In Jinxiu, the standards for King Pan Festival activities were relatively high.
five	At the beginning of the 21st century, there were fewer and fewer people who believed in King Pan. In recent years, the belief of King Pan has gradually increased again. Yao people were happy to participate in the King Pan Festival activities.
six	During the King Pan Festival, tourists visiting Jinxiu were always packed. At this time, the Jinxiu Yao people would be busy receiving tourists. Many businesses were thriving as a result.
seven	Nowadays, many Yao people in Jinxiu have switched to the King Pan cultural tourism industry, such as engaging in Yellow Mud Drum Dance performances, selling Yao ethnic costumes, and operating King Pan ecological parks.
eight	Nowadays, the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group was proud of the King Pan Festival holiday, and other regions also envied it.

nine	Due to the King Pan Festival driving the development of tourism in Jinxiu, the government has attached increasing importance to the transportation construction of Jinxiu. In 2023, the expressway from Jinxiu County to Laibin City has been completed and put into operation, greatly shortening the travel time from Laibin City to Jinxiu County.
ten	Now the government has implemented the project of introducing intangible cultural heritage knowledge into schools, and many Yao students have begun to learn intangible cultural heritage knowledge such as Yellow Mud Drum Dance and Yao Weaving and embroidering craft. Many Yao students felt proud of mastering this knowledge.

Based on the above interview data and literature survey, the author believes that there were several reasons for the changes in the belief of King Pan during this period.

Firstly, since 2006, the country had strengthened the protection of intangible cultural heritage in terms of institutions, policies, systems, laws, and other aspects. For example, in 2006, a professional institution for the protection of national intangible cultural heritage was established—the China Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Center. In the same year, a representative list of intangible cultural heritage projects was established, and the inter ministerial joint meeting system for the protection of intangible cultural heritage was adjusted and improved. In 2011, the Intangible Cultural Heritage Law of the People's Republic of China was promulgated. In September 2016, the newly revised "Autonomous Regulations of Jinxiu Yao Autonomous County" listed the King Pan Festival of the Yao ethnic group as a traditional folk custom and granted it three days of holiday. Due to the government's emphasis and protection, as well as external forces, the belief of King Pan has shown new vitality.

Secondly, according to the government's released the data of Gross Domestic Product, since 2007, the output value of Jinxiu's tertiary industry had exceeded that of its primary and secondary industries, and had remained at the top for over a decade. The tourism industry was a key sector of Jinxiu's tertiary industry. With the increasing attention of the country to the protection of intangible cultural heritage, the belief of King Pan, as an intangible cultural heritage held by the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group, had become an important cultural resource for attracting tourists, developing cultural tourism, and developing the economy. The belief of King Pan of the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group was increasingly mixed with complex economic factors.

Thirdly, as the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group continued to hold cultural exhibitions such as the King Pan Festival, frequently showcasing the artistic connotations of the belief of King Pan to the outside world, such as King Pan Song and Yellow Mud Drum Dance, the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group could regain their endangered cultural beliefs and identity, and felt proud of their cultural identity.

Fourthly, with the introduction of intangible cultural heritage knowledge into campuses, the contradiction between the belief of King Pan and scientific concepts had been somewhat alleviated. In the eyes of Yao people who had received junior high school education or above, the belief of King Pan was more about cultural identity and educating people towards goodness.

## **2. The construction of cultural identity pattern of Yao ethnic group in Jinxiu**

Taking the Changes in the belief of King Pan as an example, the author believes that the cultural identity pattern of the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group has been constructed at both the conscious and practical levels.

### **2.1 Construction at the level of consciousness**

The construction of the belief of King Pan in folk literature could be divided into three stages. In the first stage, through military achievements and marriage alliances, the founder of the Yao ethnic group, Panhu, obtained political identity. According to the earliest existing record of the myth of King Pan in the “Sou Shen Ji”, Panhu obtained the political status of a meritorious official and the son-in-law of King Gaoxin through his military achievements, but did not obtain the political status of a king. In later generations, Guoshan Bang added the content of King Pan being conferred the title of king. It was worth noting that in modern society, Pan Rihui from Liuxiang Village, Jinxiu Liuxiang Township once orally narrated the Legend of King Pan. This legend not only vividly described the process of Panhu marrying a princess due to his military achievements, but also provided a detailed account of Panhu’s transformation from a dog to a human and his appointment as king. The plot was similar to that of Guoshan Bang and adds a lot of mythological elements (The Jinxiu Yao Ethnic Group Autonomous County Committee of the CPC., & the People’s Government of Jinxiu Yao Ethnic Group Autonomous County., & editorial board of Jinxiu Yao Ethnic Group Culture Series of Books, 2012a). The author believes that the Jinxiu Yao people actively chose the plot of the story of King Pan among numerous classic materials, and carried out artistic re-creation before spreading it. Obviously, from Sou Shen Ji to Guoshan Bang to The Legend of King Pan, the political identity of King Pan was not only constructed by other tribes, but also actively constructed and passed down by the Jinxiu Yao tribe.

In the second stage, the Yao ethnic group changed the cultural identity of their ancestor, King Pan, through cultural adaptation. The cultural image of King Pan has changed from a dog image to a dragon dog image. Most Han Chinese classics since the Jin Dynasty’s “Sou Shen Ji” record the image of King Pan as a dog. The earliest existing version of the “Guoshan Bang” is from the second year of the Zhenguan reign of the Tang Dynasty, which records that the image of King Pan is that of a “dragon-dog”. The Guoshan Bang is held and regarded as a treasure by the Yao ethnic group, and the “dragon-dog” image of King Pan recorded in it is widely recognized by the Yao ethnic group. Regarding the two different records of “dog” and “dragon dog”, the author interviewed researcher Lei Wenbiao, an expert in Yao ethnic group studies at Guangxi Normal University of Science and Technology. Lei Wenbiao explained that dogs were totems worshipped by the Yao people, while dragons were totems worshipped by the Han people. It is understandable for Yao people to identify with the image of King Pan as a dog, and this was also recorded in Han Chinese classics. However, during the long migration process, Yao people inevitably had to come into contact with Han people and engage in cultural connections. From ancient times to the present, Han culture has been the mainstream culture in many periods of China. The appearance of the “dragon-dog” image combining dragons and dogs in Guoshan Bang indicates that the Yao people accept and identify with the dragon image in Chinese culture, and creatively combine it with the unique “dog” image in their culture. The image of “dragon-dog” combining dragons and dogs appeared in “Guoshan Bang”, and King Pan was described as a dragon dog image. This indicated that the Yao people accepted and identified with the dragon image in Han culture, and creatively combined it with the unique “dog” image in their culture. This meant that the

Yao ethnic group has achieved cultural adaptation to Han culture in the core of their ethnic culture——ancestral beliefs. This cultural adaptation was carried out from the root of culture. The Yao people have preserved the core cultural element of their culture——the dog totem. As a non mainstream culture, the Yao ethnic group has wisely absorbed the core cultural element of mainstream culture——the dragon totem, combining the dog and dragon totems to enhance their cultural identity.

In the third stage, the Yao ethnic group endowed King Pan with religious identity by summarizing their practical experience in beliefs. In the face of various disasters encountered during the long migration process, the Yao people were accustomed to seeking help from the spirits. These spirits include King Gan, She Shen, Lei Shen, and of course, King Pan. Yao people believed that a person who possessed immense energy and had blessed them during lifetime and continued to do so even after death was their protector. Therefore, after experiencing beliefs practices such as worshiping King Pan, praying to King Pan, and Huan King Pan Yuan, the Yao people believed that King Pan was their protector and incorporated their beliefs experience into myths and legends for transmission and re-practice. Therefore, King Pan was granted the religious identity of spirits by the Yao people.

## **2.2 Construction at the practical level**

Taking the belief of King Pan as an example, the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group constructed the cultural identity pattern in three forms at the practical level. The first form was to worship King Pan through sacrificial ceremonies. The sacrificial ritual was divided into three types: fixed sacrificial ritual for King Pan, emergency sacrificial ritual for King Pan, and Huan King Pan Yuan. The fixed sacrificial ritual for King Pan was held at the agreed time in each location. The notable rituals of its sacrificial process included setting up an altar, hanging a portrait of King Pan, dancing with Yellow Mud Drum Dance, and singing King Pan Song. The emergency worship ritual for King Pan was relatively simple. In the event of a major disaster, went to the King Pan Temple to burn incense and prayed for King Pan to dispel the disaster and solved the problem. The ritual of Huan King Pan Yuan responded to the prayers of the emergency worship ritual for King Pan, in order to repay the protection provided by King Pan during the process of eliminating disasters. The ritual procedure was quite similar to the fixed sacrificial ceremony for King Pan.

The second form was to express cultural identity with King Pan through ritual performances, cultural performances, and other means. The main form of the ritual performance was performance dance, and the dances performed were mainly sacrificial dances, including Yellow Mud Drum Dance, Dance of Sending Troops, and Dance of Withdraw Troops. The main actors in the ritual performance were priest of Yao ethnic group. The forms of cultural exhibitions included drama, music, dance, sculpture, clothing and other art forms. The actors for cultural performances were mainly professional actors, priest, and extras. Whether it was a ritual performance or a cultural performance, the audience was mainly tourists. The difference was that the former's performance venues were mainly concentrated in rural areas. The latter's performance venues were mainly concentrated in cities.

The third form was to express the commemoration of King Pan through the lifestyle of the Yao people, including costume, food, architecture, public spaces, festivals, and so on. In Jinxiu, the Yao people express their commemoration of King Pan through unique ways of life such as wrapping the head, wearing a hat and covering the shins of feet, prohibiting the consumption of dog meat, constructing the King Pan Temple and Ecological Park, and

celebrating the King Pan Festival.

The author believes that the Yao ethnic group of Jinxiu has constructed the political identity, cultural identity, and religious identity of King Pan through three practical forms: sacrificial rituals, ritual performances, cultural performances, and lifestyle, effectively building cultural identity with King Pan. The author analyzes the belief of King Pan and summarizes the path of constructing cultural identity pattern for the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group at both the conscious and practical levels. The author believes that the construction path was as follows: excavated classics, interpreted culture, innovated culture, organized cultural activities, developed cultural industries and cultural tourism.

## Discussion

Based on field work and literature survey, this study collected, organized, and analyzed materials on the belief of King Pan of the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group, exploring the construction stages, forms, and paths of the cultural identity pattern of the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group. The cultural identity pattern is an understanding and summary of the laws of cultural identity. Taking the belief of King Pan of the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group as an example, the cultural identity pattern is constructed at the levels of consciousness and practice. Understanding and summarizing the cultural identity patterns of the Yao ethnic group will contribute to the cultural, economic, and social development of the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group. Qing Zhen believes that “cultural identity of ethnic group is manifested in the adherence to and maintenance of excellent cultural traditions formed in the long-term historical development of the ethnic group, and the strong emotions and even lives paid for it. Of course, it is precisely because of this strong emotional attachment to excellent cultural traditions that it does not oppose absorbing advanced cultures that are beneficial to itself at the appropriate time to strengthen the vitality of its traditional culture. In other words, identifying with one’s own ethnic group culture does not oppose selective identification with other ethnic group cultures because identifying with other cultures is based on identifying with one’s own ethnic group culture as a prerequisite and foundation”(Qing, 2010). This opinion is consistent with the viewpoint in this article that the Yao ethnic group identifies with the Han Chinese dragon totem and combines it with their own dog totem to create the dragon-dog totem, thereby achieving cultural adaptation.

From the case of the belief of King Pan, the cultural identity of the Jinxiu Yao people is a confirmation of their shared King Pan culture. This confirmation not only defends the cultural identity of the Yao people, but also corresponds to their production methods. For example, the belief of King Pan corresponds to the demand for agricultural production in traditional society, and to the demand for cultural tourism in modern society. This echoes the previous views of the academic circles. Yan Lin and Dong Beifei once believed that “the value of cultural identity lies in defending the reasonable identities of ‘me’ and ‘us’, and its basis for generation includes not only natural attributes or physiological characteristics, but also people’s social and cultural attributes”(Yan & Dong, 2023).

The new knowledge generated from this study is as follows. For the first research objective, at present, the academic circles has mostly studied the belief of King Pan from a macro perspective. This paper investigates the changes in the belief of King Pan of the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group and adds a case study of the belief of King Pan from a micro perspective. For the second research objective, at present, the academic circles has studied the formation

mechanism of personal cultural identity from the perspective of developmental psychology. This paper has studied the economic nature, social nature, and cultural nature of cultural identity, and adds a new content of studying the stages, forms, and paths of constructing cultural identity pattern from the perspective of cultural science.

**Table 4:** Synthesize the overall finding

The Construction of Cultural Identity Pattern of Yao Ethnic Group in Jinxiu	1.The stage of construction: constructed the political identity, cultural identity, and religious identity of King Pan.
	2. The forms of construction: sacrificial rituals, ritual performances, cultural performances and lifestyle.
	3.The path of construction: excavated classics, interpreted culture, innovated culture, organized cultural activities, developed cultural industries and cultural tourism.

## Recommendations

Based on the analysis of the belief of King Pan of the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group in this study, the following suggestions are proposed to all parties related to it.

1. Academic recommendation: academic circle may focus on the value and function of the belief of King Pan of the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group from new theories, perspectives, and methods.

2. Policy recommendation: the religious management department, economic management department, and cultural and educational department of the Jinxiu government may refer to the results of this research to formulate relevant policies, further promoting the integration and common development of the belief of King Pan of Yao and cultural tourism, cultural heritage protection, and ethnic cultural education inheritance.

3. Operational recommendation: researchers may further study the construction of the cultural identity pattern of the Jinxiu Yao ethnic group in mythology, art, music, dance, and other aspects, and study the impact of modernization on it.

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