

A STUDY OF YAO CEREMONIAL PAINTINGS

—in order to Huangnigang Village, Lianhua Town, Gongcheng Yao Autonomous,
Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region —

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Yao is one of the 55 ethnic groups in China. It is widely distributed in the south part of China, for example, the Hunan province, Yunnan province, the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Guangdong province and the Southeast Asia (Thailand, Laos, Vietnam etc.) This article is emphasized on the Yao in Huangnigang Village, Lianhua Town, Gongcheng Yao Autonomous County, which is located in the northwest part of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region neighboring the Hunan province.

So far the Yao people in this region still inherit an ancient sacrificial offering the Youmian liturgies (還家願儀禮). The Clergy will put the scrolls which are painted with Gods in front of the Way-place in order to make an altar during the ceremony. He also requests the visit to the altar of the gods, and blesses the ceremony going smoothly. After the ceremony is completely finished, the Gods will be sent off, the scrolls will be taken off and the altar will be cleaned.

In the introduction of Zhang Jingjing (Department of Social Anthropology, Tokyo Metropolitan University), the author participated in the KingPan Festival (盤王祭) activities in Huangnigang Village during 25th-27th November, 2012. For Huangnigang Village, this was the first time to hold the KingPan Festival (盤王祭), but in Gongcheng Yao Autonomous County, it was not the first time. According to the Mao Hanling (毛漢領) and LuYe (陸葉)'s research (毛漢領/陸葉, pp 104-108, 2011), after the Sanjiang Town organized the first KingPan Festival (盤王祭) in October 1985, Lianhua Town held the second one in October 1986. Moreover, in 1988 Shuibin Village, Guanyin Yao Autonomous Town held for the third time and after that, the village organized the KingPan Festival (盤王祭) every three years and consecutively held it for 4 years. The KingPan Festival (盤王祭) is a ritual which Yao people worship their ancestors "Pan hu" (盤瓠). According to the 《Dissatisfied Gods · Origin of barbarians》 (Gan Bao / Akira Takeda, pp 260, 1964), the KingPan Festival (盤王祭) is documented as "mixed the rice and fish soup and meat together, knocking bamboo tray worship the king". However, the KingPan Festival (盤王祭) nowadays is quite different from the ancient literatures. In addition, another important purpose is to protect the ethnic culture and promote the economic development of the Yao's region. Under these context, this article will use the KingPan Festival (盤王祭) of Huangnigang Village, Lianhua Town in Gongcheng Yao Autonomous County as an example to clarify the owner of the scrolls which have been used during the ceremony, the times of their creation, the making-process and the content of these paintings etc. With the help of this information, this article will discuss the profound meaning of using these ceremonial paintings.