

# **The Yi New Year of Zhaojue and the Tibetan New Year of Litang from the Perspective of Regional Culture: A Study on Similarities and Differences in Customs and Their Evolution**

**Jing Tian, Zaibin Sun\***

*Panzhuhua University, Panzhuhua, Sichuan, China*

*\*Corresponding Author*

**Abstract:** The Yi New Year in Zhaojue and the Tibetan New Year in Litang are core traditional festivals of the Yi and Tibetan ethnic groups, carrying profound cultural heritage and regional characteristics. From the perspective of regional culture, this paper uses a variety of research methods to sort out the origins and histories of the two festivals, compare the similarities and differences in their customs and cultural connotations, and explore the changes and causes of customs in the modern context. The study found that both consist of three stages of "pre-New Year preparation - festival celebration - closing activities", with the core being the pursuit of a better life and the inheritance of culture, but there are differences in beliefs and forms of activities; The evolution of customs is driven by factors such as economy and cultural exchange, and it is challenged by both innovation empowerment and dilution of tradition, providing references for the protection, inheritance and innovation of national festival culture.

**Keywords:** Regional Culture; Zhaojue Yi New Year; Litang Tibetan Year; Similarities and Differences in Customs; Cultural Evolution

## **1. Introduction**

National festivals are the core carriers of national culture, carrying the memories, ideas and wisdom [1] of specific ethnic groups. The Zhaojue Yi New Year and the Litang Tibetan New Year are respectively important traditional festivals of the Yi and Tibetan people, occupying a central position in their respective cultural systems: The Zhaojue Yi New Year fully inherits ancient customs and embodies the Yi people's reverence for nature and their wishes for life; The Litang Tibetan New Year combines Buddhist culture with the characteristics of

highland life and showcases the spiritual world and cultural features of the Tibetan people. In the context of globalization and modernization, the two festivals face both the challenge of inheritance and the window of cultural exchange. An in-depth study of the similarities and differences and changes in their customs can provide support [2] for the protection and inheritance of national cultures, exchanges and unity, and the development of folk tourism. In existing studies, there is a lack of specialized research on both abroad, and there is a shortage of comparative studies from the perspective of regional culture and systematic analysis of their modern evolution at home. This study employs methods such as field research, literature review, and comparative analysis to obtain data in both regions, and combines multidisciplinary theories to conduct comparative studies from dimensions such as customs and processes, cultural roots, and modern evolution. The innovation lies in exploring the cultural interaction and differences of festivals among different ethnic groups by taking regional culture as the entry point; Interpret the connotations of festivals from a multidisciplinary perspective; Focusing on the changes and innovations of modern festival customs to provide new ideas for the living inheritance of national culture.

## **2. An overview of the Yi Year in Zhaojue and the Tibetan Year in Litang**

### **2.1 The Origin and Development of the Zhaojue Yi Year**

The Yi New Year has a long history that can be traced back to the sacrificial activities [3] of the ancient Yi people. In ancient times, the Yi people revered nature and their ancestors. After the autumn harvest, they held sacrificial ceremonies to pray for favorable weather, safety of people and animals, and a bountiful harvest of food. This was the prototype of the Yi New Year.

In Chinese literature, there are records of the Yi year in the Tang Dynasty, and important clues [4] are provided for the study by the verses of the "Xinghui Festival" by Piao Xin of the Nanzhao period and the "Yuxi Compilation Affairs" of the Five Dynasties period. Some scholars believe that there may be a connection between the Xinghui Festival mentioned in the poem and the Yi year. The Yi Year is closely linked to the Yi solar calendar. The calendar observes the movement of the sun to determine winter and summer, and determines cold and heat by the direction of the handle of the Big Dipper. The year is divided into 10 months, each consisting of 36 days. The month is marked by 10 animals and the day is marked by the 12 Chinese zodiac signs. October is the end of the year and the remaining five or six days are the New Year, reflecting the Yi people's understanding [5] of the laws of astronomy and nature. The Yi people's New Year celebrations have been enriched over the course of history. While the core content remains the same, more folk elements are incorporated into the forms and details, such as the addition of recreational competitions and the enrichment of food culture. Entering modern society, the Yi New Year faces challenges. Economic globalization and urbanization have impacted the traditional culture of the Yi people. In some areas, the forms and contents of the Yi New Year have changed, and the sense of identity of the younger generation has decreased. However, in the core settlement areas such as Zhaojue, the Yi people adhere to traditions, hold activities to pass on culture, and bring the Yi New [6] Year to life.

## **2.2 Origin and Development of the Litang Tibetan New Year**

The development of the Litang Tibetan Year is influenced by multiple cultures and has a unique historical context. In the early days, Tibetans determined their production, life and festival activities [7] based on natural phenomena and astronomical observations. With the increasing exchanges with neighboring ethnic groups, especially with the Han people, the Tibetan people absorbed elements of the Han lunar calendar, and the knowledge of the calendar brought by Princess Wencheng and Princess Jincheng to Xizang had a profound influence. Based on this, the Tibetan people combined their own cultural traditions and the natural features of the plateau to form a distinctive Tibetan

calendar. The Tibetan calendar uses a combination of the five elements and the Chinese zodiac to mark the years, with a 60-year cycle divided into large and small months, a common year with 12 months and a leap year with 13 months, adapting to production and life and laying the foundation [8] for the standardization and unification of the Tibetan New Year. The first day of the first month of the Tibetan calendar was set as the beginning of the New Year around the time of the Sakya Dynasty of the Yuan Dynasty in the 13th century, and this tradition has continued to this day. Since then, the celebration of the Tibetan New Year has gradually become more diverse and fixed, forming a complete set of customs, including traditional ceremonies and folk activities such as sacrifices, prayers, New Year greetings, horse races, and singing and dancing. Folk culture plays an important role in the development of the Tibetan New Year. As the whole people believe in Buddhism, the festive atmosphere is intense. Temples across the country hold events, monks chant sutras, and believers worship Buddha, adding to the sacred atmosphere and strengthening cultural identity [9]. With the passage of time, the Tibetan New Year has evolved and innovated. Today, traditional customs are preserved while incorporating modern elements such as party parties and family outings. At the same time, the development of transportation and communication has made the celebration no longer confined to the local area, and the Tibetan New Year has become an important platform for showcasing Tibetan culture and promoting ethnic exchanges [10].

## **3. Comparison of Customs and Processes of the Yi New Year in Zhaojue and the Tibetan New Year in Litang**

### **3.1 Customs and Procedures of the Yi New Year in Zhaojue**

The Yi ethnic New Year Festival is a traditional festival full of ethnic characteristics. The celebration activities are diverse, from preparation to ceremony and then to continuous celebration, forming a complete cultural experience. After breakfast, young men and women from each village dress up and gather on the hills or in the fields for entertainment. There are competitions such as pulling radishes, swinging on swings, drinking visiting wine,

looking at pork for the New Year, playing pig's feet, playing the moon lute, singing and dancing, as well as competitive activities like horse racing and wrestling, showing the brave wisdom and positive attitude towards life of the Yi people. The third day, "Boji" (sending off ancestors), is the most solemn day. Before the crowing of the rooster or the meal, the housewife makes thin buckwheat cakes, prepares wine and meat, and the offerings spin three times over the fire pit before offering to the ancestors. A bag of fried noodles is hung on the door. The host recites the blessing for the ancestors, and the housewife calls the pig with a rope, symbolizing that the ancestors will take away the pig for the New Year. Sending off the New Year marks the end of the festival, but the joy continues. After the New Year, people tidy up their belongings and wash their tableware, looking back on the past and looking forward to the future. New Year greetings are a continuation of the celebration, and it is customary to give pork and wine to elders and friends during the New Year. On the way, the group of people carrying meat invites acquaintances to have a "first drink", and the drinkers give cash gifts. During the three days of the Yi New Year, neighbors in each village greet each other and some places hold bonfire parties. After the New Year, the family will visit distant in-laws to pay New Year's greetings, bringing specific pork and sugar and wine. The Yi people are hospitable, friendly among themselves, and have friendly exchanges with other ethnic groups. Inviting friends from neighboring ethnic groups to be honored guests, the host and the guests enjoy each other, demonstrating an open, inclusive, united and friendly spirit [11].

### **3.2 Litang Tibetan New Year Customs and Procedures**

As the Tibetan New Year approaches, the Tibetan people in Litang County are busy preparing. Before the New Year, the first thing to do is to do a thorough cleaning of the "Dowapo", with the whole family doing the cleaning to get rid of bad luck and welcome the New Year. Making the "Qema" is also indispensable. It is a lucky bucket containing "baba", symbolizing a bountiful harvest. It is done by the elders with the juniors to pass on the culture and strengthen the family. "Fried fruits" are equally important. In December, Tibetans use flour to fry various kinds of fruits to entertain guests and offer to deities. Nowadays,

the technique has been innovated, and the taste and shape are more diverse. Making umbrellas is a special activity. Colorful fabrics are embroidered with auspicious patterns, symbolizing good fortune and wealth. It requires exquisite skills and imagination, and is filled with the aspiration for a better life. On the early morning of the first day of the lunar New Year, the Tibetan people in Litang "grab the first bucket of water". The first bucket of water in the New Year is regarded as auspicious water, and the family that grabs it has good luck. People take the bucket to the river or the spring, and after grabbing it, they offer it at home. The first breakfast of the New Year is "porridge of good fortune", made from rice and other ingredients, with red dates and other items symbolizing good fortune, and the whole family sits around to taste and start the New Year. Eating "Qema" is an important ritual. On New Year 's morning, people dress up and offer "qema" to their elders. The elders take "baba" and throw it to show respect to heaven and earth and ancestors, then smear it on the foreheads of the younger generation to bless them, and the younger generation offers hadas to show respect. It's not just about enjoying the food, but also about passing on the family culture and maintaining kinship. The worship of the kitchen God is a traditional custom. People believe that the Kitchen God is in charge of food and drink, and the worship can ensure family safety and peace of mind. Offerings are placed on the stove and incense is lit for prayer. After the ceremony, the whole family shares the offerings to feel the warmth and happiness [12]. During the Tibetan New Year, there is a grand cultural event to see the "ghee", which is made of ghee. Artworks in the shape of ghee, such as Buddha statues, flowers and animals, are vivid and lifelike. Making butter requires great skill and patience. The artisans shape and color it by hand at low temperatures. During the New Year, temples across the country hold ghee exhibitions to attract believers and tourists, allowing people to feel the wisdom of the Tibetan people and their devotion to Buddhist culture. The "equestrian parade" is a highly entertaining event during the Tibetan New Year. On one day of the New Year, riders, dressed in their finest, parade on elaborately decorated horses and holding colorful flags, showcasing the brave and heroic spirit of the Tibetan people. Wherever the parade goes, they are warmly welcomed. The event

celebrates the New Year and showcases the traditional Tibetan equestrian culture, reflecting the deep affection of the Tibetan people with horses and their yearning for a free life. Tibetan opera performances are an indispensable cultural feast for the Tibetan New Year. Tibetan opera is the traditional opera art of the Tibetan people. During the New Year, Tibetan opera troupes perform in various places. The actors, dressed in colorful costumes and wearing exquisite masks, interpret stories, legends and folk life through singing, reciting, acting and fighting. The audience sat around to watch and clapped from time to time. Tibetan opera performances enrich spiritual and cultural life and carry forward and promote Tibetan traditional culture. At the end of the Tibetan New Year, sending Maitreya back to life is an important event. On the last day of the New Year, people hold a grand ceremony to send off Maitreya. It is said that Maitreya Bodhisattva will come to the world in the New Year, bringing happiness and good fortune. During the ceremony, people carry the Buddha statue in a procession led by monks, holding prayer flags and reciting scriptures to express respect and gratitude. At the end of the procession, the Buddha statue was sent back to the temple, symbolizing that Maitreya Bodhisattva had fulfilled his mission and returned to the Buddha's land. The ceremony of sending Maitreya back to life is both a farewell to the New Year and an expectation for a better life in the future. People believe that the Bodhisattva will bless the New Year with peace

and smoothness.

### **3.3 Analysis of Similarities and Differences in Customs and Procedures**

There are many similarities in the customs and processes of the Yi New Year in Zhaojue and the Tibetan New Year in Litang, reflecting the inheritance of traditional culture and the pursuit of a better life by both ethnic groups. In terms of the festival process, both have three stages: preparations before the New Year, celebration of the New Year, and closing activities. Before the New Year, the Yi and Tibetan people are actively preparing, cleaning up, preparing New Year goods and sacrificial offerings to welcome the New Year; During the festival, people carry out activities to celebrate and express their love for life and their expectations for the future; At the end of the festival, there are ceremonies of sending off the New Year or the gods, symbolizing the end of the festival, bidding farewell to the past, and expressing expectations for the New Year. Sacrificial activities are important on both festivals. The Yi people offer sacrifices to their ancestors during the New Year, praying for peace and a bountiful harvest by slaughtering pigs, roasting meat, and offering wine. Tibetan people worship deities, parade Buddha statues, express reverence and gratitude, seek protection and auspiciousness, and demonstrate the two ethnic groups' adherence to traditional culture and their unique understanding of nature, life and the universe (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Comparison of Customs and Procedures for the Yi New Year in Zhaojue and the Tibetan New Year in Litang**

Stages	Zhaojue Yi Year	Litang Tibetan New Year
Preparations Before the New Year	Selecting a pig for the New Year, cutting firewood, cutting fern base grass, preparing New Year goods, helping neighbors	"Dowabao" cleaning, making "Qema", "Fried fruit", make "umbrella", prepare offerings
New Year celebrations	Radish pulling races, swinging on swings, visiting drinks, horse races, wrestling, playing the moon lute, singing and dancing, ancestral worship	"Grab the first water, eat the auspicious porridge, eat "Qema", worship of the Kitchen God, watching "butter flowers", equestrian parade, Tibetan opera performance
Epilogue Activities	"Boji" sends off ancestors, pays New Year's greetings, gives New Year pork to elders and relatives, has a bonfire party, and visits to distant in-laws	Sending Maitreya's rebirth ceremony, Buddha statue parade, monks Chanting sutras and visiting relatives and friends

However, there are obvious differences in the customs and procedures between the two. The Zhaojue Yi people celebrate the New Year with a focus on family reunion and interaction, such as sitting around the table for the New Year's

Eve dinner and exchanging gifts, emphasizing family cohesion; The Litang Tibetan New Year celebrations are more public and ritualistic, such as the Maitreya Reincarnation parade and collective chanting, highlighting community

collaboration and shared faith. This difference stems from the differences in the way of life, geographical environment and historical and cultural background of the two ethnic groups.

#### **4. Comparison of the Customs and Connotations of the Yi New Year in Zhaojue and the Tibetan New Year in Litang**

##### **4.1 Connotations of the Customs of the Yi New Year in Zhaojue**

###### **4.1.1 Ancestral worship**

Ancestor worship runs through the entire festival in Zhaojue Yi New Year customs. Before the New Year, people carefully select pigs for the New Year, not only to prepare New Year goods, but also to offer them as sacrifices to their ancestors. In the Yi people's concept, the New Year pig symbolizes family wealth and diligence. Offering a fattened pig can bring prosperity to ancestors and protect descendants. The ancestral worship ceremony is solemn on the first day of the New Year. After slaughtering the New Year pig, the host burns the liver and other items in the fire pit, sprinkles salt on high wooden MATS, and uses red-hot stones to pour water to produce steam to purify the offerings. The male host then placed the roast meat in front of the ancestral altar, reciting words of gratitude and prayer, hoping that the ancestors would bless the family with safety and a bountiful harvest. The Yi people believe that although their ancestors have passed away, their souls can influence their descendants. In Yi culture, ancestors are not only the inheritors of the bloodline, but also symbols of the family spirit. During the sacrificial ceremony, the elders tell the younger generation about the family history, enhancing the younger generation's sense of identity and belonging to the family. This kind of inheritance is profound and gives the Yi cultural tradition a unique charm and vitality in the face of modern impact.

###### **4.1.2 Worship of nature**

The Zhaojue Yi people are closely connected to nature, and there are obvious traces of nature worship in Yi New Year customs. The date of the festival is based on the Yi solar calendar of October, combined with astrology and phenology, avoiding inauspicious days and choosing auspicious days such as the monkey and the tiger to celebrate the New Year, showing reverence for the laws of nature and believing that following the laws will bring natural protection and favorable weather. The custom of

cutting firewood and ferns also implies the worship of nature. One or two months before the New Year, the whole family goes up the mountain to cut firewood, dries it and piles it into stacks, which symbolize diligence, harvest and good health. Follow the natural rhythm of getting firewood and do not cut down too much. When cutting the fern base grass, choose an auspicious day. After cutting it back, do not let livestock step on it. The fern base grass has the effect of warding off evil and disasters, reflecting respect and reliance on the power of nature. The entertainment activities of the Yi people during the New Year, such as horse racing and wrestling, are related to the natural environment and animals. The Yi people show strength and courage in the activities, express respect and love for natural creatures, regard animals as part of nature, live in harmony with them, enhance the emotional connection between people and nature, and show love and reverence for nature.

###### **4.1.3 Social interaction and mutual assistance**

The Yi New Year is an important moment for the Yi people in Zhaojue to enhance social interaction and carry forward the tradition of mutual assistance. During the preparatory stage before the New Year, neighbors help each other to prepare New Year goods, exchange experiences and share insights when picking pigs for the New Year, and carry and store rice, buckwheat noodles, etc. for each other. Mutual assistance enhances the relationship among neighbors. During the festival, the tradition of social interaction and mutual assistance is more prominently displayed. On the second day, the entertainment was rich, and young people from various villages gathered to carry out activities, where they exchanged and learned, and enhanced their understanding and friendship. Tug-of-war shows team spirit, and singing and dancing share joy. New Year greetings are an important part of strengthening family and neighborhood ties. The Yi people attach great importance to the New Year pig. It is customary to offer pork and wine to elders and relatives and friends during the New Year. When the group of people carrying the meat meets acquaintances on the way, they are asked to drink "open mouth wine", and the drinkers are given cash gifts. This way of showing respect and blessing and strengthening family ties. In the village, neighbors bow to each other, sit around drinking and eating meat, exchange feelings and enhance

mutual assistance. During the Yi New Year, people pay special attention to the elderly living alone and families in need, sending them New Year goods and inviting them to participate in activities to make them feel the warmth and care. This tradition of mutual assistance embodies kindness and friendship, makes the village harmonious and warm, and enhances the cohesion and centripetal force of the ethnic group.

## **4.2 Connotations of Litang Tibetan New Year Customs**

### **4.2.1 Folk cultural beliefs**

Folk cultural beliefs are at the core of the Litang Tibetan New Year customs, and Tibetan Buddhism has a wide influence. From the "Qema" and "umbrella offering" prepared before the New Year to activities such as offering sacrifices to the Kitchen God, watching "butter flowers", and sending Maitreya to reincarnation during the New Year, all are closely linked to culture. The "Qema" is an essential item for the Tibetan New Year and has profound implications. The items such as "baba" and roasted wheat grains represent a bountiful harvest, while butter and barley ears symbolize good fortune and happiness. On New Year's morning, people offer "qema" to their elders, who take "baba" and scatter it three times to show respect to heaven, earth and ancestors, expressing reverence for the gods of heaven and earth and ancestors, as well as respect for the idea that all things have spirits. Offering sacrifices to the kitchen god is a devout devotion to the guardian deity of the family. Tibetans believe that the kitchen god is in charge of the family's food and drink life. By offering offerings such as butter lamps, they pray for family safety and no worries about food and drink, reflecting their reliance on culture. Viewing "butter flowers" is a grand cultural event during the Tibetan New Year. The ghee, made from ghee, is beautifully shaped and brightly colored, embodying the teachings of Tibetan Buddhism. It requires great skill and patience to make. During the New Year, temples hold exhibitions where believers can both appreciate art and strengthen their faith, experiencing the vastness and depth of Buddhist culture. The ceremony of sending Maitreya back to life is held at the end of the Tibetan New Year, which is of great significance. It is said that the New Year of Maitreya Bodhisattva is coming.

During the ceremony, people carry the Buddha statue in a procession, and monks hold prayer flags and recite scriptures to express respect and gratitude, to show their devout faith in Buddhism, and to believe that they will be protected and bring happiness and peace.

### **4.2.2 Prayer and blessing**

The Litang Tibetan New Year customs embody the Tibetan people's prayers and wishes for a better life. Before the New Year, making "Qema" symbolizes a bountiful harvest and good fortune in the New Year; Make "umbrellas" with colorful fabric embroidered with auspicious patterns, symbolizing good fortune and wealth. These items are a symbol of good wishes. The first bucket of water in the New Year is regarded as auspicious water, and the family that gets it will have good luck. People get up early to go to the river or the spring to get the first bucket of water, expressing their yearning for a better life. Start the New Year's breakfast with "auspicious porridge", which is made from a variety of ingredients and decorated with auspicious items, symbolizing a happy and fulfilling New Year. The whole family sits around to taste and pray for a sweet life. During activities such as offering sacrifices to the kitchen God and watching butter flowers, people silently pray for the safety of their families, the success of their careers and the happiness of their lives. In temple rituals, devotees offer sacrifices to Buddha statues and recite scriptures, expressing their yearning for a better life and their expectations for the future. These blessings run through the Tibetan New Year, reflecting the Tibetan people's love for life and confidence in the future.

### **4.2.3 Cultural heritage**

Litang Tibetan New Year customs are important carriers of Tibetan cultural heritage and play a key role in the inheritance of language, art and traditional skills. During the festival, people communicate in Tibetan. Tibetan is widely used in family gatherings, daily communication, temple rituals, chanting and mantras, ensuring that the Tibetan language is passed down from generation to generation. Tibetan opera is a treasure of traditional Tibetan art. During the New Year of the Tibetan calendar, various Tibetan opera troupes perform, with actors dressed in splendid costumes and wearing masks, telling stories through singing, reciting, acting and fighting. The audience sat around to watch, and the applause and cheers never ceased.

Tibetan opera enriches people's spiritual and cultural life, carries forward traditional culture, and nurtures the interest of the younger generation in Tibetan opera, reserving talents for inheritance. Traditional skills are fully displayed and passed down during the Tibetan New Year. Making "Chema" and "umbrella" requires skills, and elders will pass on the skills to the younger generation, allowing the younger generation to master traditional skills. In addition, traditional culinary skills such as "fried fruit" are passed down through families to carry on cultural traditions.

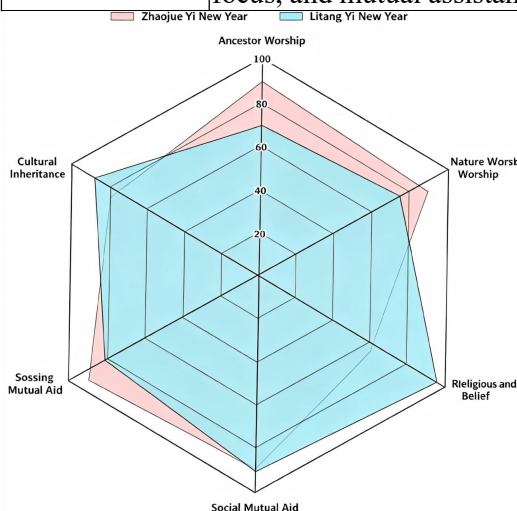
### 4.3 Analysis of Similarities and Differences in Customs Connotations

The customs of the Yi New Year in Zhaojue and the Tibetan New Year in Litang share both core commonalities and distinct differences (see Table 2): Both are supported by faith as the core, guided by the sentiment of happiness and prayer as the important mission of cultural inheritance. The Yi New Year expresses reverence for supernatural forces through ancestral and nature worship, while the Tibetan New Year, based on Tibetan Buddhist beliefs, conveys good wishes

for good weather and family safety during the festival. Through unique ritual procedures and folk activities, the core cultural elements such as the calendar, language and art of the ethnic group are passed on, and ethnic identity and cultural confidence[13] are strengthened; But in terms of specific presentation, the Yi New Year highlights the characteristics of primitive beliefs, focuses on the inheritance of family culture and traditional customs, maintains family ties and friendship through activities such as family gatherings and New Year greetings, and emphasizes family cohesion and harmony between man and nature; The Tibetan New Year, on the other hand, is steeped in a strong Tibetan Buddhist atmosphere, centered around cultural and artistic inheritance, and showcases cultural depth through temple rituals, Tibetan opera performances, and the making of "butter flowers". While expressing family and friendship, it also emphasizes reverence and gratitude towards deities. This difference stems from the different cultural traditions, historical contexts, and living environments of the two ethnic groups. Together, they form a diverse landscape of regional culture (see Figure 1).

**Table 2. Comparison of Customs and Connotations of the Yi New Year in Zhaojue and the Tibetan New Year in Litang**

Cultural dimension	Zhaojue Yi New Year	Litang Tibetan New Year
Core of Faith	Ancestral worship, nature worship	National belief
Festival Features	Family reunions, family ties, harmony between man and nature	Ceremonies, community collaboration, cultural displays
Cultural heritage	Family history, traditional skills, oral traditions	Folk art, Tibetan opera performance, traditional handicrafts
Social interaction	Interaction within the family is the main focus, and mutual assistance among neighbors	Community group activities are the main focus, with group participation



**Figure 1. Comparison of Customs Connotations**

## 5. Changes in the Customs of the Yi New Year in Zhaojue and the Tibetan New Year in Litang

### 5.1 Changes in the Customs of the Yi New Year in Zhaojue

#### 5.1.1 Changes in traditional customs

In the traditional customs of the Yi people in Zhaojue during the New Year, significant changes have occurred in both the slaughtering of the New Year pig and the sacrificial ceremonies. In the past, slaughtering the New Year pig was extremely solemn, with a strict sequence and ceremony, starting from the oldest or most senior family, the "pig-slaughtering team" had clear divisions of labor, and the host

would perform exorcism and blessing rituals before slaughtering the pig, such as burning fire to drive away and toasting to ancestors. Nowadays, due to social development and changes in lifestyle, the traditional ritual has been simplified. Some families do not slaughter pigs in order, and some young people hire professional butchers. The traditional ritual is gradually fading. There are also changes in the ritual of ancestral worship, which involves many steps and is full of reverence and gratitude. But in modern society, some young people have insufficient knowledge of traditional culture, and the process and significance of the ritual are vague in their minds. Some families simply place the offerings during the ritual and neglect important steps such as reciting the congratulatory message, which greatly reduces the cultural connotation.

#### 5.1.2 The incorporation of new elements

With the development of modern technology, new elements are constantly being integrated into the Yi New Year of Zhaojue. In terms of entertainment, traditional activities such as horse racing and wrestling used to be the main ones, but now electronic devices and the Internet have added new colors. Young people use mobile phones and other devices to play music, watch movies, play games, and some families organize to watch live online performances or video greetings, breaking geographical restrictions and making it more convenient to convey family affection. In terms of culture, the influence of foreign cultures is growing. In terms of clothing, traditional Yi costumes remain an important element, but modern and fashionable clothing also appears in the celebrations. Young people will wear modern Yi costumes that retain ethnic characteristics and are fashionable. In terms of food, in addition to traditional delicacies, foreign foods such as chocolate also appear on the festival table, enriching the dining options. Tourism development brings new changes to the Yi New Year. In recent years, Yi cultural tourism has emerged and more tourists have come to Zhaojue to experience the Yi New Year. Local tourism events such as folk culture festivals showcase traditional culture, increase interaction between tourists and residents, promote cultural exchange and dissemination, and also drive local economic development, providing new impetus [14] for the inheritance and development of Yi New Year customs.

#### 5.1.3 Analysis of the Causes of changes

Economic development is one of the important reasons for the change of the New Year customs of the Yi people in Zhaojue. With the rapid development of the social economy, people in the Zhaojue area have improved their living standards, material conditions, consumption concepts and lifestyles, and the importance attached to traditional customs has also changed. For instance, with the fast pace of modern life, people are more focused on work and career in pursuit of economic benefits and have no time to pay attention to the cumbersome rituals of traditional customs, which leads to the simplification of customs. Moreover, the increasing cultural exchanges have also had a profound impact on the customs of the Yi New Year. In the context of globalization and modernization, Yi culture collides with other ethnic cultures, and foreign cultures bring new ideas, ways of life and entertainment. Young people are receptive to new things, absorbing foreign cultures and integrating them into the Yi New Year celebrations, which gradually change customs. In addition, policy influence cannot be ignored. The government promotes economic development and cultural construction by introducing relevant policies. In terms of tourism development, support Yi ethnic cultural tourism projects, encourage tourism activities related to the Yi New Year, promote the integration of customs with modern tourism, and facilitate the transformation of customs. In terms of education, the popularization of modern education has changed the younger generation's perception of traditional culture and their awareness of inheritance. When they receive modern scientific knowledge, their sense of identity with traditional customs may decline, affecting the inheritance and development of customs.

### **5.2 The evolution of Litang Tibetan New Year Customs**

#### 5.2.1 Changes in Traditional customs

The custom of "fried fruit" in the Litang Tibetan New Year has changed in modern times. The traditional process of making "fried fruits" is complex and requires great skill and patience. The shapes of the fruits are traditional, mostly in the form of butterflies, pretzels, flower baskets, etc. Nowadays, with the accelerated pace of life and the development of modern baking techniques, some families simplify the process by using modern tools such as electric egg beaters and ovens. At the same time, to meet

market demands and changes in consumer tastes, the shapes and flavors of "fried fruit" are more diverse, with creative designs in addition to traditional shapes and new flavors such as chocolate and matcha, which are more in line with the demands of modern consumers. The traditional custom of "equestrian parade" has also evolved. In the past, it was a spontaneous celebration organized by the Tibetan people during the Tibetan New Year, with riders dressed in traditional costumes and riding simply decorated steed parades through the streets, showcasing traditional equestrian culture. Nowadays, the "equestrian parade" has become a performance-oriented event. To attract tourists and spectators, the parade varies in scale and form, with larger teams, more elaborate riders' costumes, more exquisite horse decorations, and additional equestrian skills demonstrations and dance performances, making it more visually appealing and entertaining.

#### 5.2.2 Incorporation of new elements

The rise of live webstreaming has brought new ways of communication to the Litang Tibetan New Year. In the past, Tibetan New Year celebrations were limited to the local area and little was known to the outside world. Nowadays, young Tibetans are sharing the Tibetan New Year celebrations in real time through online live streaming platforms, such as making "Qema" and "fried fruits" and showcasing traditional rituals, which have enhanced the influence of the Tibetan New Year and attracted more tourists to experience it. The integration of modern tourism activities has changed the way Litang celebrates the Tibetan New Year. With the development of tourism in Litang, more tourists come here to experience the culture during the Tibetan New Year. The local area has launched related tourism activities, allowing tourists to participate in the celebration, gain a deeper understanding of Tibetan cultural customs, and at the same time promote local economic development and provide new opportunities for the inheritance and development of customs. Cultural exchanges bring new elements to the Tibetan New Year. More exchanges with other ethnic groups have led to the incorporation of foreign cultural elements. In terms of festival decorations, in addition to traditional Tibetan decorations, modern elements such as lanterns and balloons also appear in Tibetan families; In terms of food, in addition to traditional delicacies, other ethnic specialties such as dumplings and tangyuan also

appear on the table, enriching the dining options.

#### 5.2.3 Analysis of rheological causes

Social development has driven changes in the customs of the Litang Tibetan New Year. Economic development and technological progress have improved infrastructure in Litang, facilitated transportation and communication, raised living standards, changed the way of life and values of the Tibetan people, and influenced the inheritance and development of traditional customs. The fast pace of life has simplified the production and rituals of traditional customs. Ethnic integration promotes the transformation of Litang Tibetan New Year customs. Over a long history, the Tibetan people have interacted and integrated with other ethnic groups, and the cultural elements and lifestyles of other ethnic groups have been incorporated into the Tibetan New Year customs, enriching their cultural connotations and making them more diverse. Tourism development has influenced the Tibetan New Year customs in Litang. Litang is rich in tourism resources. The local government has developed tourism and exploited Tibetan culture as a resource. The Tibetan New Year has become a highlight to attract tourists. To meet the demands of tourists, the local authorities have innovated and improved the celebration activities to integrate them with modern tourism, and foreign cultures and ideas have driven the transformation of Tibetan New Year customs.

### 5.3 The impact of Custom Changes

#### 5.3.1 Positive effects

Custom evolution promotes cultural innovation. New elements are incorporated into the changing customs of the Yi New Year in Zhaojue and the Tibetan New Year in Litang, injecting vitality into traditional culture. The Yi New Year incorporates modern technology and foreign culture, prompting Yi people to innovate in clothing, food and other aspects and create cultural products [15] with the characteristics of The Times; The Tibetan New Year provides new platforms and ways for cultural dissemination and innovation through live webcasts and modern tourism activities. These innovations enrich the cultural connotations of the ethnic group, making it adaptable to modern society and enhancing its appeal and competitiveness (see Table 3). Customs change is conducive to ethnic integration. As the New Year customs of the two ethnic groups change, cultural exchanges with other ethnic groups are frequent. The

foreign cultural elements in the New Year customs reflect exchanges, promote mutual understanding and respect, and enhance ethnic feelings. The two nations learn from each other

in the process of change, promote cultural integration and consolidate the development of socialist ethnic relations.

**Table 3. Comparison of the Changes in Customs of the Yi New Year in Zhaojue and the Tibetan New Year in Litang**

Changes in customs	Zhaojue Yi Year	Litang Tibetan New Year
Changes in traditional customs	The ritual of slaughtering the New Year pig has been simplified, the sacrificial procedures have been simplified, and the participation of young people has decreased	The "fried fruit" craft is modernized, the "equestrian parade" is evolved, and the ritual is simplified
New elements incorporated	Electronic device entertainment, modern clothing, exotic food, tourism development	Weblive communication, tourism activity integration, modern decorative elements, cross-cultural food
Main influencing factors	Economic development, urbanization, foreign cultural shock, universal education	Tourism development, ethnic integration, modern science and technology, policy guidance

From the perspective of economic development, changes in customs bring about new growth points. The combination of the New Year customs of the two ethnic groups with tourism development has attracted a large number of tourists, driven the development of related industries such as catering and accommodation, and increased residents' income. Such as the Yi Ethnic New Year Folk Culture Festival and the Tibetan New Year Tourism activities, which showcase culture while promoting local economic prosperity [16].

### 5.3.2 Negative impacts

The evolution of customs may lead to the dilution of traditional culture. In the changing customs of the Yi New Year in Zhaojue and the Tibetan New Year in Litang, the simplification of traditional customs and the influx of new elements have led to the gradual neglect of the core values and connotations of traditional culture. For example, the Yi people's New Year pig slaughter and ancestral worship ceremonies are simplified, downplaying the significance of ancestral worship and family inheritance; The Tibetan New Year's customs such as "fried fruit" and the worship of the kitchen god have been commercialized and formalized, resulting in the loss of cultural connotations. If not protected, traditional culture may disappear in the process of changing customs. In addition, the change of customs brings about the problem of excessive commercialization. The Yi and Tibetan New Year, when combined with tourism development, are highly commercialized. Some businesses, driven by profit, overexploit the resources of ethnic festivals and turn traditional customs into

commercial performances and money-making tools. Tourist attractions package celebrations as commercial performances, losing their cultural charm and authenticity. This not only undermines the cultural atmosphere of ethnic festivals, but also affects tourists' genuine experience of ethnic culture, which is detrimental to the inheritance and development of ethnic culture.

## 6. Conclusions

### 6.1 Research Conclusions

By delving into the customs of the Yi New Year in Zhaojue and the Tibetan New Year in Litang, we see similarities and differences in the customs of the festivals of the two ethnic groups and the patterns of their changes. In terms of the customs process, both have pre-New Year preparations, festival activities and the epilogue stage, but the specific contents are different. The Yi people focus on choosing a pig and cutting firewood before the New Year, and the New Year revolves around slaughtering a pig, paying homage to ancestors and entertainment activities; Before the New Year, the Tibetan people mainly make special food and decorate the festival. During the New Year, there are rituals and cultural performances such as the first water rush and the worship of the Kitchen god. Both festivals carry faith, the aspiration for a better life and the mission of cultural inheritance in terms of their customs. The Yi New Year embodies ancestral worship, nature worship and social mutual assistance, emphasizing family continuity and harmony between man and nature;

The Tibetan New Year is centered on faith, expressing reverence for deities and blessings, and emphasizing the inheritance of culture and art. In terms of the evolution of customs, with the development of The Times, the two festivals have been influenced by economic, cultural exchange and policy, traditional customs have been partially simplified and new elements have been incorporated, such as technological products, foreign cultures and tourism development. These changes bring about positive impacts such as cultural innovation, ethnic integration and economic development, but also face challenges such as the dilution of traditional culture and the transition to commercialization.

### **6.2 Research Reflections and Implications**

This study systematically compares the similarities, differences and changes in customs of the Yi New Year in Zhaojue and the Tibetan New Year in Litang from a regional cultural perspective, enriches the case of comparative studies of ethnic festivals and provides a theoretical reference for cross-cultural exchanges across ethnic groups. However, the study still has certain limitations, such as the limited scope of field research and insufficient in-depth analysis of the changes in the concepts of the younger generation. Future research could further expand the geographical scope, focus on the dissemination and reconstruction of festivals in the digital age, and enhance the exploration of cultural identity and the driving forces of change. This study is of practical significance for promoting the protection and inheritance of ethnic cultures and for advancing cultural diversity and ethnic unity.

### **References:**

- [1] Chen Jiajia. The Synergistic Development of Intangible Cultural Heritage Inheritance and Regional Culture from the Perspective of Cultural Memory Theory: A Case Study of Dongtou Shell Carving in Wenzhou. *Shanghai Culture*, 2024, (08):83-91.
- [2] Wang Wenzhang. *Introduction to Intangible Cultural Heritage*. Beijing: Education Science Press, 2008:56-58.
- [3] Ma Changshou. *History of Ancient Yi Civilization*. Kunming: Yunnan People's Publishing House, 2015:120-125.
- [4] Guo Yu. *Draft History of the Yi People*. Chengdu: Sichuan Nationalities Publishing House, 1984:89-92.
- [5] Liu Yaohan. *Research on the Yi Solar Calendar*. Kunming: Yunnan People's Publishing House, 1985:45-50.
- [6] Qu Mutiexi. *Yi Customs in Liangshan*. Beijing: Ethnic Publishing House, 2005:76-80.
- [7] Gele. *Early History and Culture of the Tibetan people*. Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2006:134-138.
- [8] Huang Mingxin. *Tibetan Calendar Studies*. Beijing: China Tibetology Press, 2007:92-96.
- [9] Cai Rang. *Tibetan Buddhist beliefs and Folklore*. Beijing: Ethnic Publishing House, 1999:112-116.
- [10] Lin Jifu. *Tibetan Festival Culture*. Lhasa: Xizang People's Publishing House, 2003:88-92.
- [11] Bamo Ayi. *Yi Ethnic Customs*. Beijing: Press of Minzu University of China, 1992:78-82.
- [12] Chen Liming. *Research on Tibetan Folk Culture*. Beijing: China Tibetology Press, 2010:105-108.
- [13] Huang Haoxiang. *Regional culture based on the theory of the cultural identity display strategy research*. Donghua university, 2022. The DOI: 10.27012 /, dc nki. Gdhuu. 2022.000109.
- [14] Dai Ruiqi, Feng Xinqun, Weng Yixi, et al. Based on regional culture gene analysis method of IP design practice. *Journal of fujian packaging engineering*, 2024, (12): 243-251 + 259. DOI: 10.19554 / j.carol carroll nki. 1001-3563.2024.12.024.
- [15] Yin Jinqiu. *Research on Innovative Design of Gaomi Paper-cutting Based on Folk Festivals and Eight Immortals Culture*. Shandong college of arts and crafts, 2024. DOI: 10.27789 /, dc nki. Gsdgy. 2024.000033.
- [16] Han Xihong. *Case Tutorial on High-Quality Development of Rural Ecotourism*. Southwestern University of Finance and Economics Press: 202506:262.