



# A Study on the Empowerment of Poetry Culture in the Development Path of Cultural Tourism in Sichuan Province

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## Abstract

In the context of sustained national economic growth and increasing emphasis on cultural soft power, tourism has emerged as both an essential demand in contemporary society and a key driver of regional development. Sichuan Province, renowned for its rich local cultures, boasts magnificent natural landscapes, historical sites, and a wealth of poetic resources. This study focuses on the integration of poetry culture and cultural tourism within Sichuan Province, aiming to explore innovative approaches for the synergistic development of these two domains. Drawing on interdisciplinary perspectives from cultural studies and tourism management, this paper examines the feasibility of leveraging poetry culture to enhance the development of cultural tourism in Sichuan. It further proposes practical pathways for implementation based on the current development situation and future prospects of Sichuan's tourism industry, while identifying potential challenges and obstacles. The findings of this research are expected to provide valuable insights for policymakers, tourism planners, and cultural practitioners and offer strategic recommendations for the promotion of cultural tourism prosperity in Sichuan Province.

## Keywords

Poetry; Cultural tourism; Sichuan province

## 1. Introduction

In the era of 21<sup>st</sup> century, the development of China's tourism industry has stepped into the fast lane, and China has become the largest international tourism market. It has changed from a single sector to a diversified one, and from a chaotic one to an organized one, increasingly becoming a strategic pillar industry and people's well-being industry with the characteristics of the times. The positive interplay between culture and terrorism has been encouraged to represent the path of tourism with Chinese characteristics. Sichuan province, as the most favored place for refined scholars from ancient times to the present, has a rich cultural heritage of poetry. Countless poets like Li Bai and Du Fu in the Tang Dynasty, Su Shi and Lu You in the Song Dynasty, left their masterpieces in Sichuan province, making the magnificent mountains, rivers, and ancient towns of Sichuan province famous for their poems. Therefore, by conducting an in-depth analysis of the characteristics of cultural tourism development in Sichuan and integrating the province's rich poetic cultural resources, this study proposes a feasibility analysis of the pathways through which poetry culture can empower the development of cultural tourism in Sichuan, aiming to leverage the power of poetry to reinvigorate Sichuan as a sacred land of Bashu through cultural tourism.

## 2. Current Situation of Sichuan's Cultural Tourism

The National 14th Five-Year Plan urges to development of new coordinated regions of tourism in the Yangtze River Economic Belt and supports the construction of the Bashu Cultural Tourism Corridor. Sichuan's cultural tourism industry is undergoing diversified and flourishing development. Sichuan province is making multi-dimensional efforts from the aspects of policy guidance, project innovation, brand building, and technology application to promote high-quality development of the cultural tourism industry.

### 2.1 Rich Cultural Tourism Resources

Sichuan province, known as the "Land of Abundance", is the birthplace and the development center of ancient civilization in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River, the hometown of the Bashu culture, endowed with abundant, all-sided, widespread, and high-grade cultural resources. The quantity and quality of cultural tourism resources come out on top, such as Jiuzhaigou Valley, Mount Emei, and Mount Qingcheng, which are famous for their magnificent mountains, rivers, and diverse climates. According to the statistics of tourism resources issued by the Sichuan Government in 2021, by the end of 2019, there were 256 museums, 262 national key cultural relics protection units, and 1136 provincial cultural relics protection units. What's more, national intangible cultural heritage lists were up to 139, and there were 611 provincial intangible cultural heritage lists (Wu, 2017). Moreover, historical and human landscapes, such as Du Fu's thatched cottage and Zhuge Liang Memorial Hall, are also well known. Sichuan province has abundant and colorful religions and minority cultures. It is a minority inhabited area and has five major religions, including Taoism, Buddhism, Islam, Catholicism, and Christianity. What's more, it also has its own special food culture, such as Sichuan cuisine, one of the eight major Chinese cuisines, and covered-bowl tea, which reflects the traditional tea drinking customs. In addition, not only does Sichuan have characteristic modern urban scenery, but it also has pure idyllic scenery and ancient villages. Some international sports events like the World University Games, and Cultural activities such as drama and concerts have injected new vitality into Sichuan's cultural tourism resources.

### 2.2 High-quality Development of Cultural Tourism Industry

The tourism industry in Sichuan has developed rapidly, and the tourism income has been growing sustainably so that cultural tourism has become one of the most important pillar industries of economic development in Sichuan. Firstly, tourism infrastructure has been continuously improved. The transportation is extremely convenient. Up to now, there are 16 civil airports in Sichuan Province, of which Chengdu Shuangliu International Airport and Chengdu Tianfu International Airport are ranked among the top ten in the country in terms of passenger throughput. As for the railway mileage, the railway mileage in Sichuan has reached 6,588 kilometers. Secondly, the service industry concerning tourism is supportive. The number of hotels, travel agencies, and tourist shopping spots is numerous. The distribution of them is wide, the quality of them is good, and the performance of them is standard. Thirdly, in order to meet the market demand, Sichuan's cultural tourism continuously innovates its tourist products, launching a series of new forms of business, as well as new ways of tourism and digital tours of Sichuan province to reduce the burden on tourists and improve their enjoyable experiences.

Sichuan cultural tourism industry attaches great importance to the construction and marketing of new tourist projects, creating a new model of online and offline travel. On the one hand, various large-scale cultural and tourism activities are held offline, such as the Sichuan Tourism Scenic Area Development Conference and Sichuan International Cultural Tourism Festival. On the other hand, new media platforms, such as Weibo, TikTok, and Rednote, are used for online marketing. Some relevant online departments also carry out tourism streaming training, and create digital figures to attract young tourists' attention and participation.

## 3. The Feasibility of Poetry Culture Empowering the Development of Cultural Tourism in Sichuan

Sichuan has been the eternal source of inspiration for literati and poets since ancient times. From Li Bai's *Hard is the Road to Shu* to Du Fu's *Jinguan City*, numerous excellent poems depict the magnificent natural scenery and profound human culture of Sichuan province. At the same time, the images of Sichuan contained in the poems also provide infinite space for the development of Sichuan's cultural tourism. Taking poetry as the medium, building up

a bridge that connects history and reality with its unique artistic charm and profound cultural connotation, is a way to innovate Sichuan cultural tourism, making the ancient culture blossom in the new era.

### 3.1 Abundant Poetry Resources

Many literati left a large number of literary works in Sichuan province. Among these works, poetry, as one of the most significant parts, is of great quantity and high quality. The Tang Dynasty and Song Dynasty are the booming periods of poetry, with various subjects and content, covering a wide range of fields. Li Bai traveled to Sichuan many times, leaving his footprints at Chengdu, Qianwei, Jiangyou, Emei Mountain, Jianmen Pass, and so on. Du Fu, his intimate, also lived in Sichuan, climbed Qingcheng Mountain and Wangjiang Tower, and left his thatched cottage as a treasure for modern people. According to statistics, there are over 90 poems depicting Sichuan during the Tang and Song dynasties alone.

Many cultural attractions are famous for the poetic culture, including Zhuge Liang Memorial Hall, Jinli Alley, Wangjiang Pavilion, Dujiangyan Irrigation System, and other historical cultural landscapes. Li Bai once wrote, “Jincheng Chengdu like nine days open, thousands of households and doors as beautiful as painting”. Du Fu, the Poetry Sage, wrote in the *Two Poems of the Water Sill from the Heart* that “the river almost flooded the two banks; The trees are lush with flowers in full bloom at dusk” and another poem, *Temple of the Premier of Shu*, depicting “where the famous premier’s temple is to be found? Outside the Town of Brocade with cypresses around”. Emei Mountain, Qingcheng Mountain, Jianmen Pass, Yangtze River, Minjiang River, Jinjiang River, Huanhua River, and other natural landscapes are also included in these cultural attractions. Li Bai wrote that “the road to Shu is harder than to climb the sky at Jianmen Pass” and “autumn moon over Mount Emei is so like a half wheel”. Wang Bo wrote the lines “The city walls support the Three Qins, and through mist and wind, one gazes upon the Five Ferries” by the Min River. By the Jinjiang River, Liu Yuxi wrote a poem “flowers bloom on both sides of the Jinjiang River, where the spring breeze blows and the waves wash the sand”. And Lu You also wrote “the new green color of the willows by the window brings back the fondest memories of the Jinjiang River”.

Whether it be Du Fu, Li Bai in the Tang Dynasty, Su Shi in the Song Dynasty, Lu You or Li Qingzhao in the Qing Dynasty, they all left numerous masterpieces in Sichuan province, highlighting the charm of Sichuan with their poems and providing an abundant resource for promoting the integration of poetry and cultural tourism.

### 3.2 Market Demand for the Integration of Poetry and Tourism

With the improvement of living standards and the evolution of tourism concepts, contemporary tourists’ demands for tourism products have become increasingly diversified. Traditional sightseeing tours become insufficient to meet these evolving expectations, while tourism experiences that incorporate cultural connotations and emotional resonance are gaining greater popularity. National policies advocate for the inclusion of more cultural resources in tourism routes and attractions, and promote the dissemination of excellent traditional Chinese culture. Given that poetry is a quintessential component of China’s fine traditional culture, integrating poetry into cultural tourism can significantly enrich tourists’ travel experiences. Undoubtedly, exploring Sichuan Province through the lens of poetry offers a more profound and distinctive experience. The integration of poetry and Sichuan’s tourism represents a mutually beneficial strategy, yielding positive outcomes in both economic and social dimensions. This approach not only revitalizes and promotes poetry culture but also facilitates the further development of Sichuan’s tourism sector.

## 4. The Practical Pathways of Poetry Empowering Sichuan’s Cultural Tourism

### 4.1 Enhancing the Poetry Cultural Resource Repository

Comprehensively sorting out the poetry resources in Sichuan province, collecting the poetry works left by historical celebrities, establishing the Sichuan poetry cultural resource library, and classifying poetry resources according to the poetry genre and content are needed measures to perfect poetry databases. What’s more, the historical relics and cultural landscapes related to poetry should be classified and listed in a poetry tourism manual. Poetry is not only a pile of words, but also the poets’ emotional sustenance. So, in the process of resource collation, the historical stories, cultural connotations and humanistic emotions behind the poems should be excavated, and certain characteristic tourism routes around a theme should be explored, such as “poetry tour of exploring Shu road”, “Du Fu Cottage culture experience tour”, “Li Bai’s poetry tour” and so on. Through collecting, organizing, classifying, and researching, a systematic poetry resource base is formed to provide a solid foundation for subsequent development and utilization.

## 4.2 Deepening the Integration of Poetry and Cultural Tourism

### 4.2.1 Creating “Poetry+” Cross-boundary Collaboration

Crossover cooperation that combines poetry with songs, drama, commercial products, and so on can realize the new tourism path. To be specific, integrate poetry into music, so that poems will be composed and sung, and a poetic music festival will be held. Moreover, combining poetry with drama is also a good choice. The imagery in Sichuan poems will be rewritten into stories, and poets’ lives will be recorded in a book. Then some dramas based on Sichuan poems can be arranged. Suining City in Sichuan province showcased this in recent years. Suining City launched International Poetry Week and exhibited the Sichuan opera, Poetry and Taibai Wine. In addition, incorporating poetry with tourist attractions to set up poetry stone tablets, poetry gallery, poetry museum, and other cultural facilities in the scenic area to provide tourists with an immersive experience of poetry culture. At the same time, activities such as poetry recitation, poetry composition contests, and poetry culture festivals can be launched to promote poetry culture with the popularity of the attractions, so that tourists can travel to the scenery depicted in the poems and enjoy the poems in the scenery. And also, poetry and business can be combined to launch poetry-themed hotels, restaurants, cafes, tea bars, and so on, so that it can attract tourists to come. Tourists are able to experience poetry in their daily lives, and ultimately realize a win-win situation in terms of economic and cultural benefits.

The cross-boundary collaboration of “Poetry +” not only provides tourists with a more exciting tourism experience, leading tourists into the world of poetry with its unique cultural charm, but also provides a broad platform for the inheritance and development of poetry, injecting new vitality into it.

### 4.2.2 Developing Poetry-themed Tourism Products

Today, in an increasingly diversified tourism market, tourists are more and more attracted by those novel and down-to-earth cultural tourism attractions, such as wearing Hanfu to visit Jinli Alley, taking photos with Sanxingdui ice cream, hanging panda dolls in the panda reserve zone. Cultural products have the appeal of breaking boundaries, the power of immersive tourism experience, and the force to communicate cultures. Taking Sanxingdui Cultural Site Museum as an example, Sanxingdui Museum sells Sanxingdui ice cream, bronze mask replicas, Sanxingdui refrigerator stickers, mystery boxes, and so on. In addition, it created a science fiction short play “Sanxingdui: Future Apocalypse”, which attracted a large number of tourists to the museum. Since the development of cultural product design, more and more attention has been paid to the combination of spiritual connotation and functional needs of products, as well as emotional interaction with users. Integrating poetry elements into cultural tourism products and combining poetry imagery to create cultural tourism IP can greatly enhance the cultural efficacy of poetry and meet the needs of tourists. In order to develop poetry-themed cultural products, a Sichuan poetry cultural tourism IP with Sichuan characteristics should be created, and a series of products with commemorative significance and practical value should be designed. After launching poetry derivative products, promoting them widely and continuing to develop them are also crucial. The target customers can be accurately positioned according to the characteristics of the poetry cultural items and the market demand. For example, poetry lovers, culture seekers, family tourists, and young groups can be targeted by understanding their interests and consumption habits. Moreover, utilize diversified marketing methods, for instance, publicizing and promoting cultural items through social media, tourism websites, offline poetry activities, scenic shopping stores, and so on. It can also establish strategic alliances with travel agencies, hotels, scenic spots, and other partners to jointly popularize cultural items. In addition, it is necessary to pay close attention to the feedback of tourists and changes in tourists’ demand for products, constantly optimizing the cultural items.

With exquisite designs and special cultural connotations, the poetry-themed cultural products let tourists take away a poetic memory during their journey, and play a significant role in promoting the combination of poetry with cultural tourism in Sichuan.

### 4.2.3 Applying Digital Technology

As the technology gathers pace and constantly innovates, the application of new technologies such as digitalization and artificial intelligence in the tourism industry is becoming more and more common, and the in-depth integration of poetry and modern science and technology is becoming an overwhelming force in the development of cultural tourism (Jian & Du, 2019). As for the visitors’ experience, tourist attractions with the help of digital technology allow visitors to experience the culture of poetry in an immersive manner. Using approaches such as watching high-definition images, wearing virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) equipment, experiencing 5D movies to travel,

tourists will immerse themselves in the magnificent scene of the Yangtze River that the long waves flow like a stream, cutting through mountains like a split or throw themselves into the Huanhua River bank. These technological devices allow tourists to visually share the same feeling as the poets. The tourist attractions set up poetry interactive corners so that tourists can interact with the poem lines with the help of touch screens, voice recognition, and other technologies. In addition, by means of ChatGPT, AI robots, or creating a digital poet, tourists can break the time and space limitations to have a conversation with poets. Jiangyou City, for example, uses digital technology to create a digital Junior Li Bai, showing the charm of the integration of traditional poetry culture and modern science and technology, and helps the digital transformation of the cultural tourism industry in Jiangyou City (Zhang, Wang, & Zhang, 2009). With the help of big data, tourist attractions can develop a poetry creation system to encourage tourists to create their own poetry that tourists can write down their thoughts during the poetry tourism.

## **5. Challenges**

### **5.1 Low Utilization Rate of Poetic Cultural Resources**

In Sichuan Province, a wealth of historical and cultural relics as well as natural landscapes are intrinsically linked to poetic heritage. However, the utilization rate of poetic cultural resources within these scenic areas remains exceedingly low in practical application. The depth of exploration and utilization of these poetic resources is markedly insufficient. Moreover, Sichuan has not yet engaged in a systematic collection and organization of its poetic heritage. Additionally, the current range of poetry-themed tourism products is characterized by a singular form, with a pervasive phenomenon of product homogenization, which presents a rather pessimistic outlook (Yang, 2013). Furthermore, most of the utilization of poetry in Sichuan stays at the level of superficial and simple sightseeing tours, lacking further cultural experiences and interactions with poetry. Located in Meishan City, Sichuan Province, San-Su Temple can prove it. This tourist attraction is an important site for studying the culture of San Su and learning their poetry. However, most of the utilization of poetry culture in the scenic spot only stays on the surface, which lets tourists read the poems engraved on the plaques and stone tablets. The simple utilization of poetry cultural resources is unable to meet the experiential needs of tourists. Tourists' understanding of poetry only stays on the surface of the Chinese characters. It is difficult for them to understand the stories and cultural connotations behind the poems, which leads to the utilization efficiency of poetry cultural resources being exceedingly inefficient.

### **5.2 A Dynamic Nexus Between the Inheritance and Innovation of Poetry Culture**

In approaching traditional Chinese culture, it is imperative to selectively embrace its quintessential elements while discarding its less desirable aspects, innovating upon the foundation of tradition, and perpetuating its finest attributes. This principle should be equally applicable to the development and utilization of poetic culture.

As emerging subcultures such as punk culture, K-pop culture, and special forces tourism culture gain momentum, the enthusiasm of the younger generation for poetic culture appears to be waning, which, to a certain extent, affects the market receptivity of poetry-themed tourism. Confronted with the encroachment of these nascent cultural forms, poetic culture may exhibit certain undesirable phenomena. For instance, poems may be inappropriately adapted, their true connotations may be misunderstood, or they may be trivialized for entertainment purposes. In the process of innovating the cross-boundary integration of "poetry +", poetry may also encounter numerous challenges, such as excessive commercialization and the variable quality of derivative products. It is a formidable challenge to ensure that poetic culture remains relevant and appealing to the younger generation while preserving its core essence.

## **6. Conclusion**

The prosperity of a nation hinges upon the flourishing of the culture, and the strength of a nation is predicated on the robustness of its cultural heritage. Poetry, as a quintessential component of China's excellent traditional culture, serves as a cornerstone for constructing a powerful socialist cultural nation. It acts as a bridge connecting the past and the future, and constitutes an invaluable resource for the development of cultural tourism in Sichuan Province, thereby providing a clear direction for its cultural tourism development. However, the development of cultural tourism in Sichuan also confronts a series of challenges, including how to enhance the utilization efficiency of poetic and cultural resources, how to coordinate the relationship between the inheritance and innovation of poetry and culture, and how to strengthen the marketing and promotion of poetry-themed cultural tourism. By delving into the Sichuan-

specific elements embedded in poetry, innovating the development model of cultural tourism, and balancing development with protection, people cannot only enhance the attractiveness and competitiveness of cultural tourism in Sichuan Province but also infuse ancient poetic culture with new vitality and vigor in the contemporary era. This approach ensures a steady impetus for the sustainable development of cultural tourism in Sichuan.

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