

# Exploration of the Development Path of Red Cultural Tourism under the Background of the Integration of Culture and Tourism

## -- Taking Gao County, Yibin City as an Example

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### Abstract

In recent years, the development of red cultural tourism has been booming and has achieved certain results. Gao County in Yibin City, Sichuan Province, as an "old red revolutionary county", is rich in red cultural tourism resources. However, in the development process, there are still problems such as insufficient exploration of cultural connotations, homogeneous development models, and a relative shortage of professional talents. Accordingly, this paper puts forward countermeasures and suggestions such as deepening the exploration of cultural connotations, extending the industrial chain, and strengthening talent cultivation, in order to provide useful reference for the development of red cultural tourism in similar regions.

### Keywords

Integration of Culture and Tourism; Red Culture; Red Tourism; Rural Revitalization; Gao County.

## 1. Introduction

The integration of red culture and tourism is not only an important means of influencing people through culture but also a practical path to achieving rural common prosperity[5]. Entering the new era, cultural confidence has been elevated to an unprecedented strategic height, and the deep integration of the cultural and tourism industries has become a crucial engine for promoting the high - quality development of the economy and society. The seventh plenary session of the 12th Sichuan Provincial Party Committee clearly proposed to "promote the in - depth integrated development of culture and tourism, and expand and strengthen the culture and tourism industry." Against this backdrop, as a special form of tourism with both social education functions and economic driving effects, the development model of red tourism is transforming from a single form of visiting and paying respects to a more diversified, experiential, and industrialized direction. How to effectively activate local red cultural resources, integrate them with other advantageous cultural and tourism resources in the region, and form cultural and tourism products with core competitiveness is the core issue facing the current development of red tourism. Yibin belongs to the Sichuan - Shaanxi - Chongqing red tourism area and is part of the two red tourism destinations, "Hometown of Great Men" and "Monument of the Long March," proposed in the Overall Plan for Red Tourism in Sichuan Province. Gao County, as an "old red revolutionary county," not only has precious red cultural heritage but is also known as the "Thousand - year Tea Township" with profound tea culture and rich rural tourism resources. In recent years, Gao County has actively explored new paths for the integration of culture and tourism. With the brand positioning of "Tea Township on the Silk Road · Red Gaoxian," it closely combines the inheritance of red culture with the development of the tea industry and the rural revitalization strategy, thus embarking on a unique development path. Therefore, this paper selects Gao County in Yibin City as the research

object, analyzes its specific practices in promoting the development of red cultural tourism through the integration of culture and tourism, aiming to summarize its successful experiences and provide a development model for other regions with similar resources.

## **2. The Development Status of Red Cultural Tourism Resources in Gao County**

Gao County boasts a profound heritage of red culture, centered primarily on the deeds of revolutionary martyrs and relics of revolutionary history. Among these, the most iconic figures are Shuoxun Li-a proletarian revolutionary and military strategist-and Hansheng Yang-a renowned dramatist and social activist.

The Shuoxun Li Memorial Hall, a designated Party History Education Base of Sichuan Province and a National Patriotic Education Demonstration Base, serves as the core carrier of red tourism in Gao County. It is not only a vital venue for honoring martyrs and conducting Party spirit education, but also a key component of the county's efforts to build the "Hometown of Shuoxun AAAA-Level Red Tourism Scenic Area"[6].

Hansheng Yang's Former Residence, located in Luochang Town, is a major red tourism resource of Yibin City, embodying profound revolutionary historical and cultural value. These red cultural resources have laid a solid foundation for the development of red tourism in Gao County, establishing it as a pivotal hub for the inheritance and education of red culture in southern Sichuan.

Driven by the strategy of integrating culture and tourism, red tourism in Gao County has evolved from a standalone scenic spot model to a regionalized and industrialized development approach. In recent years, red tourism in the county has witnessed a steady upsurge, emerging as a significant growth driver of the local tourism economy.

Relevant data shows that during the 2024 National Day holiday, the Shuoxun Li Memorial Hall received an average of over 200 visitors per day. Across the county, the total number of tourists reached 556,000, with total tourism revenue exceeding 270 million yuan. Overall, the county's tourism market presents a thriving and prosperous momentum.

Although these figures do not separately quantify the contribution of red tourism, its role as a core attraction in driving visitor inflow and boosting related industries is self-evident. By integrating red tourism into the framework of all-for-one tourism, Gao County has formed synergies with national AAAA-level scenic spots such as Shengtian Hongyan Mountain and Laifu Dayan Ridge, effectively enhancing the overall appeal of regional tourism[1].

## **3. Dilemmas Faced by the Integrated Development of Culture and Tourism in Gao County**

### **3.1. Shallow Exploration of Cultural Connotations and Insufficient Product Innovation Ability**

Although Gao County is not short of red tourism cultural resources, the integration of local red culture with tea culture and rural tourism mostly remains at the "physical combination" stage. For example, red-themed explanatory boards are set up beside tea gardens, or red tourist attractions are added to rural tourism routes[8]. At present, the red tourism in Gao County has not formed a brand industrial chain. The competitiveness of tourism products is not strong enough, and the intensity of external publicity and promotion is insufficient. The non-localization dilemma of the local cultural tourism product supply is rather severe. There is still a shortage of cultural and creative products and immersive experience projects that can deeply reflect the in-depth integration of the spiritual cores of the two cultures and have unique IP attributes, which seriously restricts the further development of red cultural tourism in Gao

County. The development of red cultural tourism resources mainly focuses on the development of revolutionary sites. Information on specific red cultural and creative product cases, design concepts, and market response data in Gao County is very limited. Product development is single - dimensional, and the exploration of connotations is insufficient. At the same time, the forms of industrialization are relatively monotonous, mostly mainly featuring the display of pictures, cultural relics, and texts.

### **3.2. The Development Models are Homogenized, and the Level of Integration Needs to Be Enhanced.**

Against the backdrop of strict national governance, the vulgar, kitsch, and malicious phenomena in red tourism across the country have been effectively curbed. However, a homogenization trend has emerged simultaneously. Red tourism sites across different regions show similarities in construction planning and architectural design. Even in content interpretation and narrative methods, they are stereotypical and lack novelty, failing to reflect differentiation[4]. Red tourism in Gao County also faces this problem. In construction planning, it does not closely integrate with the local unique red revolutionary culture and local folk culture. In architectural design, it one - sidedly pursues restoration and a "grand and magnificent" style, without reflecting local characteristics. In content interpretation, it does not distinguish between the age levels and knowledge levels of tourists. The interpretation method is single - dimensional and formalistic, lacking characteristics. Front - line docents lack professional training, and there is a phenomenon of "rote - reciting lines". The integration of red tourism with other tourism resources is not satisfactory, and the linkage effect among various business forms has not been fully realized. A complete closed - loop industrial chain integrating resource development, product design, marketing, and tourist services has not yet been formed. For example, after tourists experience red tourism and rural tourism, there are still not many options for in - depth cultural consumption and night - time economic activities. This results in a short stay of tourists and a need to increase the per capita consumption level.

### **3.3. There is a Relative Shortage of Professional Talents, and Marketing Methods Need to Be Innovated.**

With the continuous expansion of the red tourism industry, the demand for outstanding practitioners has also increased significantly. Talent is a crucial factor influencing the development of all industries. The long - term development of the red tourism industry cannot do without the construction of a strong talent team. The in - depth development of the integration of culture and tourism requires a large number of compound talents who understand both culture and tourism, as well as business management. As a county in the western region, Gao County faces challenges in attracting and retaining high - end professionals. Many professionals in the culture and tourism fields prefer to develop in Chengdu or the urban areas of Yibin rather than stay in Gao County. In addition, currently, the local professional education and training for red tourism practitioners are scarce. Relevant practitioners rarely receive systematic training, and the job entry requirements are relatively low. Some practitioners do not have a proper understanding of red cultural tourism and are unable to better convey the connotations of red culture to tourists. At the same time, in terms of marketing and promotion, although there have been attempts to use online influencers for publicity, overall, more modern marketing methods such as digitalization, socialization, and storytelling need to be adopted to accurately reach a wider range of customer groups, especially the Generation Z[7].

## **4. Countermeasures for the High - quality Integrated Development of Culture and Tourism in Gao County**

### **4.1. Deepen the Exploration of Cultural Connotations and Create Core Stories**

To address the issues of insufficient excavation of cultural connotations and weak product innovation capacity, it is necessary to empower the high-quality development of red tourism with cultural creativity, which can be promoted specifically from four dimensions: connotation refinement, product construction, form innovation, and marketing promotion[2].

Organize teams of experts, scholars and creative professionals to dig deep into the common core of the revolutionary spirit of Shuoxun Li and other revolutionary martyrs and the craftsmanship spirit embodied in Gao County's Chuanhong Gongfu Tea. Develop a series of content products such as red stories, screenplays and animations, on the basis of which create core IP images with independent intellectual property rights and a range of cultural and creative products. Promote the transformation and upgrading of Gao County's red tourism from "selling resources" to "selling culture" and "selling creativity".

Based on Yibin's six major red cultural thematic threads, such as "Pioneers of the Revolution, Exploring the Origin of the Original Aspiration" and "Beacon Fires of the Long March, Monuments to Coordinated Support", build a hierarchical and distinctive red tourism product system across the region, helping to establish Yibin's red tourism image as "a microcosm of the development history of China's red revolution".

Highlight the educational value of red tourism. Supported by a series of red tourism products, build standardized research travel bases and sites, design differentiated research themes, improve supporting hardware facilities, and construct a systematic and comprehensive research tourism product system, thus building Yibin into a nationally influential classroom for red revolutionary research and education.

To tackle the pain point of a single form of expression for red culture, enrich its artistic presentation carriers through innovative excavation and planning and design. Adopt a government-led, society-participated and township-organized model to fully explore red cultural themes. Use cultural, artistic and creative design methods to launch literary and artistic works such as red stories, red music and red plays, making the red spirit spread in a concrete and vivid way. Leverage new media platforms such as short videos and Weibo for targeted marketing. Give play to the advantages of "small yet beautiful" rural red tourism, enhance tourist attention by virtue of the celebrity effect, co-host red cultural tourism festivals with surrounding red tourist attractions, and invite travel bloggers to conduct on-site experience and promotion. Meanwhile, organize commemorative activities such as red speech contests and red photography competitions in areas with profound red heritage and beautiful natural scenery, so as to enhance the regional appeal of red tourism.

Promote the in-depth integration of red culture and rural characteristic products, create rural tourism specialty brands with cultural and storytelling elements, and reduce the homogenization of cultural and creative products. Vigorously develop intangible cultural experience and leasing projects such as folk custom experiences and red play performances. Expand revenue channels by designing personalized tourist souvenirs and compiling red story memorial albums, so as to realize the dual promotion of red cultural value and tourism economic value.

### **4.2. Extend the Industrial Chain and Foster New Industrial Formats**

According to the projections of economic and social development goals in the National Red Tourism Development Plan (2016-2020), the initiative to "vigorously develop red tourism as the leading sector, drive the rapid development of green and cultural tourism, and promote the all-round economic and social progress" has become one of the mainstream trends facilitating

the high-quality development of red tourism[3]. By integrating red and green resources and overlaying cultural connotations, we can advance the in-depth integrated development of green ecological resources and red cultural tourism. This can be promoted specifically from five dimensions:

**Infuse red gene into scenic area upgrading** Relying on existing scenic spots such as Shengtian Hongyan Mountain and Laifu Dayan Ridge, we should fully explore their profound red cultural heritage. Meanwhile, we will take red landmarks like Shuoxun Li's Former Residence and Hansheng Yang's Former Residence as the core to build a number of high-quality red tourist attractions with regional influence.

**Integrate red elements into urban and rural construction** Expand the connotation, extension and spatial carriers of red culture, organically integrate it with urban development planning and urban functional upgrading and renovation, and create landmark projects such as red tourism characteristic blocks, red-themed leisure parks and red cultural characteristic towns.

**Inject red culture into rural revitalization** Go deep into rural areas, especially former poverty-stricken villages, systematically explore local red resources, integrate farming culture, ethnic folk culture with red themes such as the profound bond between the military and civilians, build red tourism-themed villages, and construct an industrial chain featuring the integrated development of primary and tertiary industries.

**Embed red IP into the innovation of diverse business formats** Promote the cross-industry integration of red tourism with industry, agriculture, culture, sports and other sectors, integrate diverse elements including the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression culture, folk customs, historical heritage, film and television art, creative design, and research travel, and cultivate new business formats such as red leisure home stays, red cultural performances, red camping bases, red research travel programs, red leisure farms and red cultural theme parks.

**Drive the linkage of related industries through red tourism** Take red tourism as the leading industry, drive the coordinated development of four major industries including agriculture, cultural industry, leisure and vacation industry, and commercial and trade service industry, and form an industrial integration and development pattern where red tourism drives the development of green tourism and boosts industrial prosperity.

#### **4.3. Strengthen the Construction of the Talent Team and Improve The Professional Quality.**

Taking the in - depth integration of culture and tourism as a starting point, strengthen the construction of the talent support system for red tourism, and comprehensively improve the professional qualities and service capabilities of practitioners.

**Increase efforts in cultivating, introducing and employing high - quality red tourism docents.** Carry out hierarchical and classified basic education, vocational education and skills training for existing red tour guides and docents. Innovate the presentation forms of explanations. Integrate multiple art forms such as situational dramas, speeches, folk ballads, poems, and clapper talks into the scripts, and promote the growth of docents into professionals proficient in the red culture of Gao County. Fully tap the artistic, historical, educational, scientific and commercial values of red cultural heritage.

**Relying on the resource endowment of "excellent ecology and rich red culture" in Gao County,** and taking the surrounding universities in the region as a support, combine the strength of scientific research institutions to create a number of well - equipped and rich - content on - site teaching bases for patriotism education, and build an industrial system for red research and training. At the same time, revitalize resources such as red sites and memorial sites in Gao County. Through the experiential learning model, let cadres, the masses, especially teenagers,



be influenced by red culture and inherit the red gene during the process of visiting revolutionary relics and listening to heroic stories.

In view of the problems of low cultural levels and insufficient professional knowledge among service practitioners at red tourism attractions, carry out targeted training in line with the development wishes of villagers. Rely on Party schools and university experts to offer special courses on red culture, and invite scholars researching red culture to serve as guest lecturers. Enhance the appeal of Party history education with vivid red stories, and guide practitioners to deeply explore the cultural connotations and do a good job in red inheritance.

Promote the local transfer of rural surplus labor force simultaneously. Support farmers to participate in red tourism reception services as market entities, develop related business forms such as red performances and red cultural and creative retail, and enhance the sense of gain and happiness of the farmer group in the process of "revitalizing villages through culture and tourism".

## 5. Conclusion

As a vital hub for the inheritance and education of red culture in southern Sichuan, Gao County has leveraged its high-quality red resources such as the Shuoxun Li Memorial Hall and the Former Residence of Hansheng Yang. Driven by the cultural-tourism integration strategy, it has initially transformed its red tourism from a single-scenic-spot model to a regional and industrialized one, emerging as a core growth driver of the local tourism economy.

However, research indicates that Gao County's cultural-tourism integration still faces three core challenges: shallow excavation of cultural connotations, homogenized development models, and a relative shortage of professional talents. To address these three issues, this study proposes a three-dimensional countermeasure system of "deepening cultural connotations – extending industrial chains – strengthening talent support", which provides a practical path for the high-quality development of cultural-tourism integration in Gao County. By exploring the shared core of red spirit and local characteristic culture, and building a core IP and differentiated product system, the bottlenecks of product homogenization and insufficient connotations can be resolved. Relying on cross-border integration models like "red culture + ecology", "red culture + rural revitalization" and "red culture + diversified business formats", the industrial chain can be extended, thereby increasing tourists' length of stay and consumption potential. Furthermore, cultivating interdisciplinary talents and innovating digital marketing will inject long-term impetus into the sustainable development of the industry.

The practical exploration of cultural-tourism integration in Gao County not only offers a replicable model for the development of county-level red tourism in western China, but also verifies the feasibility of transforming red cultural resources into economic and social values.

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