

# Current Situation and Thoughts on the Integration of Culture and Tourism Along the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang

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**Abstract:** The “Poetry Road Cultural Belt” construction is a strategic decision to promote the development of tourism in Zhejiang Province. The Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang, which is a unique cultural symbol in Eastern Zhejiang, is the first historical route concept embodying the theme “Tang poetry culture” in China. In this paper, literature on the construction of cultural tourism along the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang is reviewed, the current situation of the integration of culture and tourism along the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang is analyzed, and the problems existing in the integration process are pointed out. The development and utilization of cultural tourism resources begin not only from the formation and accumulation of culture, but also from the goal of shaping the characteristics of culture and exploring the integration of poetry culture and tourism.

**Keywords:** Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang; Integration of culture and tourism; Cultural tourism development

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## 1. Introduction

In the 2019 Zhejiang Provincial Government Report, the authorities have specifically proposed to comprehensively create a global tourism demonstration province<sup>[1]</sup>. The global tourism project is also one of the five major projects in the construction of Zhejiang Grand Garden<sup>[2]</sup>. Building the golden tourism belt along the Road of Tang Poetry is an important belt among the “seven belts and one area” of global tourism. The culture of the Poetry Road gathers the wisdom of ancient sages, displays the ecological picture of Zhejiang’s poetry, reflects the unique regional style of the south of Yangtze River, and highlights the significant historical, cultural, social, and contemporary values. It is the landmark project of “Big Garden” construction and the highlight of the times for the further implementation of “Cultural Zhejiang.” Therefore, the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang has become a hot frontier topic of academic attention and also a key project of the government to promote the cultural construction of the Poetry Road.

## 2. Research status of the cultural tourism construction of the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang

In recent years, the academic community has continued to carry out research on the cultural tourism industry with regard to the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang. In the current context of media integration, the cultural communication and industrial introduction of the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang have formed new cultural images and symbols for it, such as *The Road of East Zhejiang Tang Poetry: A poetic*

cultural route by guangming.com <sup>[3]</sup>, *How to protect and activate the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang?* by CNews <sup>[4]</sup>. *The Opening of the Construction of Zhejiang Grand Garden, Witnessing the Profound “Poetry and Painting Zhejiang”* in 2018, *Zhejiang: Jointly building the “Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang”* in 2019, and other cultural articles. More than 450 poets have visited the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang to form a chain of beads for rejuvenation <sup>[5]</sup>. Local and international conferences on the Road to Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang have expanded the brand publicity of the culture. For example, the Research Society of the Road to Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang has launched several academic seminars on it in Xinchang, invited both experts and scholars at home and abroad to participate <sup>[6]</sup>, as well as reported and introduced more than 50 newspapers and television stations at home and abroad, including People’s Daily, Guangming Daily, and 100 different websites, leaving a profound impact both at home and abroad.

(1) Development planning of the cultural industry by the provincial and municipal governments under the background of the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang

In May 2018, Zhejiang Province issued the action plan for the inheritance and development of Zhejiang’s excellent traditional culture, which designated “creating a landscape cultural tourism boutique along the Road of Tang Poetry” as an important part of the key promotion project for the implementation of Zhejiang’s characteristic traditional culture and made it clear that the main theme was “Traveling Around the World,” with “Qianjiang Xiling ancient ferry – Zhedong ancient canal – Cao’e River – Shangyu – Shanxi – Shengzhou – Xinchang – Tiantai Peak, Guoqing Temple” as the axis, and the construction of Xinchang Tianmu Mountain Shili Qianxi tourist resort, Shengzhou Yuecheng, Tiantai Mountain Hehe Town, and other projects <sup>[7]</sup>. In November 2019, the General Office of the Provincial Government officially issued and implemented the development plan of Zhejiang Poetry Road Cultural Belt, proposing to take “poetry” as the main line and finishing touch as well as to strive to promote the cultural belt of “four poetry roads.” At the same time, as an important node city on the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang, Xinchang established the Research Society on the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang in 2000 to excavate, establish, and improve the thematic research database on the Road of Tang Poetry as well as to carry out academic research and exchanges on the Road of Tang Poetry <sup>[8]</sup>. In 2018, Xinchang officially issued the Opinions on Building the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang and began preparing the master plan for the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang. Taizhou established the Road of Tang Poetry Research Institute in 2018 to create a research highland for the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang. Taizhou also held the 2018 China (Taizhou) Road of Tang Poetry Tourism Festival <sup>[9]</sup>, implemented the strategic deployment of the construction of the Grand Garden in Zhejiang Province, and promoted the construction of the tourism belt of the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang. In 2019, Shaoxing established the Eastern Zhejiang Tang Poetry Road Research Association to form the essence of Shaoxing on the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang. In 2018, Shengzhou established the “Shanxi Think Tank on the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang,” which is committed to excavating the cultural connotation of Shanxi and building the core area of the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang <sup>[10]</sup>. The Road of Tang poetry in Eastern Zhejiang is rich in natural, historical, and cultural resources. It has received strong support from Zhejiang Province and local governments as well as active participation from a large number of social groups, research institutions, experts, and scholars.

(2) Development of tourism resources based on the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang

From the perspective of cultural-tourism integration along the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang, the integrated development of tourism, culture, publicity, industry, and commerce has been carried out in order to transform the culture of Poetry Road from academic research to livelihood products <sup>[11]</sup>, link the development of Poetry Road with that of cultural and creative industries, as well as drive rural

tourism, global tourism, and international exchanges and communication along the Road of Tang Poetry <sup>[12]</sup>. In Xiao and Lilian's exploration of the integrated development of culture and tourism along the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang <sup>[13]</sup>, they innovatively put forward the basic strategies for the integrated development of culture and tourism along the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang. With integrated thinking and information technology, we can integrate and promote national and world-class poetry as well as road cultural tourism resources; build an integrated community embodying poetry, road, culture, and tourism; jointly promote the Shilu Cultural Tourism project; and jointly build a new think tank for Shilu Cultural Tourism and other fields of efficient and high-quality integrated development <sup>[14]</sup>. In the article *Current Situation and Thoughts on the Development of the "Tang Poetry Road" in the Perspective of Cultural-Tourism Integration*, Zhu pointed out some thoughts on the development of the Road of Tang Poetry in the context of cultural-tourism integration, which provided a new research perspective for scholars who were studying the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang <sup>[15]</sup>. In Chen's study *Analysis on the Tourism Brand Building of the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang*, the tourism brand development of the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang was studied from the perspective of big data; however, the thought on tourism brand building was not systematic or comprehensive.

From the above, the research on the cultural tourism construction of the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang is relatively scattered. The perspective of academic research is relatively single, and it requires more depth. Some of them are popular books that require further systematic elaboration.

### **3. Current situation of cultural-tourism integration along the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang**

The Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang is not only a road of landscape poetry, but also a cultural road of cultural integration of calligraphy and painting, opera, tea ceremony, and poetry. In recent years, cities, districts, and counties have adhered to the integrated development of culture and tourism and fully activated the mass culture and tourism market. Shaoxing Tourism Administration once planned the east and west routes of the "Tang Poetry Tour." Shangyu accelerated the development of global tourism and the integration of culture and tourism, launched the New Mountain Residence Fu plan, and promoted a different style of painting and poetry in Zhejiang. Shengzhou has been positioned as the core area of Shilu with a plan of building the Shanxi Cultural Belt <sup>[16]</sup>. At the same time, it hosted the first Poetry Road intellectual property (IP) conference with the theme of "Send Me to Shanxi." On the other hand, Xinchang is striving to build a Tang poetry style village, a Tang poetry culture post station, and a reasonable layout for Tianmu Historic Trail and Tianmu Mountain Scenic Area. Tiantai is committed to building a learning and research base wholly on the integration of travel and learning by reading Xu Xiake's travels and journeying on the Road of Tang Poetry.

### **4. Problems in the process of cultural-tourism integration along the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang**

In order to understand the types, contents, and characteristics of the cultural resources along the Poetry Road, the author visited the scenic spots along the Poetry Road several times from 2020 to 2021 to observe the natural landscape, cultural landscape, as well as the cultural and tourism development along the Poetry Road. Several problems found in the construction of cultural-tourism integration are discussed below <sup>[17]</sup>.

#### **4.1. Inaccurate analysis of the characteristics of poetry, literature, and tourism**

In recent years, cities, districts, and counties have jointly launched five Tang poetry routes, including air, mountain, land, water, and cloud, creating 12 scenic spots: Shaoxing Fushan, Yuling Nostalgia, Jinghu

Lake, Lanting Sixian, Dongshan Fuyun, Filial Piety Temple, Zhuji Seeking Fragrance, Wuxie Waterfall, Shanxi Accompanying the Moon, Dai Lake, Tianmu, and Stone City Worshipping Buddha. In addition to the five roads and 12 scenic spots, there are still many historical sites of the Poetry Road that should be protected<sup>[18]</sup>. As typical tourism resources, they are applied to the cultural display of the Poetry Road. The typical ones include Xiling, Qiantang River, Banzhu village, Yunmen Temple, Tiantai Mountain, and Guoqing Temple. Relics can be found vaguely, but there are many stories and poems left by poets. With regard to the historical sites and scenic spots currently announced along the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang, only some well-preserved historical sites are protected and developed; those that are damaged and require repairing are often neglected. Many scenic spots scattered on the land along the Poetry Road have also been buried in the mountains and forests. These objective factors have rendered the Poetry Road to lack a physical path, creating a serious flaw today.

#### **4.2. Unscientific development of the cultural tourism resources along the Poetry Road**

During the field visit, it was found that the cultural resources of Tang poetry in scenic spots are poorly utilized. There is a lack of influential and well-known large-scale cultural and creative brands in the scenic spots along the Poetry Road. The stiff implantation of its culture hinders the display of the cultural connotation of the Poetry Road. Moreover, the expression and display of the cultural atmosphere of the Poetry Road are slightly lacking.

The core value of IP is to precipitate users' emotions. Rooted in culture and commerce, it reflects the internal relationship between IP development and cultural capital. According to the analysis of the types of tourism resources of the Poetry Road culture, Tang poetry culture is the most characteristic cultural resource. Li Bai, Dufu, Bai Juyi, Wang Changling, and other famous poets of the Tang Dynasty have differentiated attraction for different needs and classes of tourist groups. Capitalization is realized as they attract fans. However, brand thinking has yet to be established for the development of tourism and cultural resources along the Poetry Road; the cultural elements of the Poetry Road are highly concentrated and lack markers that are not easily copied or replaced; the cultural content is inaccurate and does not resonate with the feelings of mainstream tourists.

#### **4.3. Weak integration of culture and tourism**

In 2018, the Guiding Opinions of the General Office of the State Council on Promoting the Development of Global Tourism proposed that culture and tourism should be integrated and developed, and rich cultural connotation should be emphasized as an important content to improve the quality of tourism products. As far as the Eastern Zhejiang Poetry Road is concerned, it is not a single node, but rather a tourism corridor composed of natural and human resources, water, and land. The protection and development of the Poetry Road includes the comprehensive development of various elements of the tourism industry, such as nodes and routes, and pays attention to the correlation and industrial integration of ecology, heritage, and surrounding urban nodes.

At this stage, the relevant cultural departments are not serious enough in excavating, integrating, and transforming the cultural resources along the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang. In the process of tourism development, the profound cultural heritage of Tang poetry has been disregarded in some places; thus, there is no integration with the cultural elements of Tang poetry; in addition, some local tourism works along the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang remain in the primary stages of concept and slogan, separating them from the actual work and resulting in the "two skins" phenomenon: separation of Tang poetry culture and tourism. The paths and means of promoting the integrated development of culture and tourism in cities, districts, and counties are lacking.

## **5. Reflections on the construction of cultural-tourism integration along the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang**

The culture of the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang is a treasure of Chinese culture integrating Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, poetry, calligraphy, tea ceremony, opera, pottery, folk customs, dialects, myths and legends, *etc.* The natural landscape and cultural heritage along the road are rich and colorful, which have had a profound impact both at home and abroad. With regard to the development and utilization of the cultural tourism resources of the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang, we should begin not only from the formation and accumulation of culture, but also from the goal of shaping the characteristics of culture and exploring the integration of poetry culture and tourism.

### **5.1. Carry out space planning for the heritage corridor of the Poetry Road**

Based on the monographs *The Road to Tang Poetry* by Zhu and the *Road to Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang* by Zou, 60 sites involved were extracted, according to which the cultural heritage sites of the Road to Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang were obtained. The suitability of the heritage corridor was analyzed by the minimum cumulative resistance (MCR) method to generate a cost path. The cost path was optimized based on spatial distribution characteristics, the protection and utilization status of the Poetry Road cultural heritage sites, as well as the distribution status of ecological conservation space in Eastern Zhejiang.

### **5.2. Promote the integrated development of “Tang poetry + tourism”**

Competent culture and tourism departments of all cities, districts, and counties should make overall plans for the activation and utilization of the cultural resources, tourism development, and operation of the Poetry Road, focus on building a tourism brand for it, innovate fashionable tourism methods, improve tourism quality, enrich tourism products, and promote the deep integration of culture and tourism as well as the brand of “Poetry Road” in Eastern Zhejiang.

The characteristic tourism routes of “Tang poetry +” should be planned and designed as follows: landscape ecological tour of Tang poetry in Eastern Zhejiang; rural style tour of Tang poetry in Eastern Zhejiang; folk culture tour of Tang poetry in Eastern Zhejiang; health-preserving vacation tour of Tang poetry in Eastern Zhejiang; leisure ancient road tour of Tang poetry in Eastern Zhejiang; and footprints tour of Tang poetry celebrities in Eastern Zhejiang. Tourists can follow the footsteps of the Tang poets, reach out to the world of Tang poetry, and achieve the dream of “poetry and distance.”

### **5.3. Research and development of the Poetry Road intellectual property**

There are many historical and cultural resources along the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang. There is a need to tap the cultural resources with market potential in line with the development of cultural tourism and with significant value from the seemingly disordered cultural tourism resources, identify the elements and cultural symbols of Tang poetry, and then carry out research and development on Tang poetry tourism IP, build an IP matrix for it, establish an IP group, and create a distinctive IP system for Tang poetry and cultural tourism. In terms of IP operation, we should also carry out orderly planning, such as IP expression packs, IP comics, IP-themed network products, games, IP implantation in scenic spots, and IP promotion of cultural activities, so as to promote the image of Poetry Road to tourists in a vivid and interesting manner, forming positive interactions and a virtuous cycle.

### **5.4. Promote the integration of poetry, road, culture, and tourism into projects**

First, we should promote the construction of the Poetry Road Cultural Belt in the form of projects and create a number of model projects for the integration of the poetry, culture, and tourism of the Tang Dynasty.

Second, we should innovate the construction ideas of the projects along the Poetry Road and pay attention to the three-dimensional product construction of scenic spots, venues, and other projects. For key scenic spots, the scene and atmosphere embodied in the poetry writing can be restored through artificial landscaping and the use of augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), holographic projection, and other technologies, so as to provide an immersive experience for tourists. Third, we should highlight personalized design in such projects. Experience packages should be customized to fully meet the diversified needs of various audience groups, such as residents, tourists, teenagers, *etc.*, by combining the construction of the Poetry Road cultural project with food, beverage, entertainment, clothing, housing, and transportation. Therefore, research on the integration of culture and tourism along the Road of Tang Poetry in Eastern Zhejiang not only expands the field of cultural research of the Tang Dynasty, but also enriches the cultural connotation of the tourism industry, contributes to economic, spiritual, and cultural construction, as well as allows domestic and foreign tourists and the general public to truly appreciate the charm of Tang poetry, thus rendering it closer to reality and the world.

### Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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