

# Research on Cultural Tourism Development of Yaoba Ancient Town Under the Strategy of Rural Revitalization

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## Abstract

Yaoba ancient town, located at the junction of Sichuan, Guizhou, and Chongqing, has a long, unique, and rich traditional culture. The paper mainly adopts qualitative and quantitative analysis, theory, and demonstration analysis to study the development of cultural tourism with the opportunity to implement a rural revitalization strategy. Based on a brief elaboration of the relationship between rural revitalization strategy and cultural tourism, this paper briefly summarizes the current situation of the development of cultural tourism in Yaoba's ancient town. It discusses the existing problems in its development. Finally, according to the existing issues, Development measures are proposed from the perspectives of image positioning, product development, resource protection, facility construction, residents' participation, etc.

**Keywords:** Rural Revitalization Strategy; Yaoba Ancient Town; Cultural Tourism; Cultural Protection

## Introduction

The rural revitalization strategy was proposed as a key move at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. The strategy and cultural tourism are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. On the one hand, the rural revitalization strategy provides policy support and guarantees for the development of cultural tourism; on the other hand, the development of cultural tourism can provide an inexhaustible driving force for the realization of the goal of rural revitalization.

1. The rural revitalization strategy promotes the development of cultural tourism.

Implementing the rural revitalization strategy provides policy support and institutional guarantee for developing cultural tourism, and cultural revitalization is the soul of the strategy. By each region's resource endowment and cultural foundation, cultural resources should be fully developed and utilized, the multiple functions and values of culture should be deeply tapped, and emerging cultural tourism consumption hotspots and products should be formed. We should make clear the lines of historical and cultural protection, especially strengthening the protection of cultural relics, historic sites, and traditional buildings, as well as the inheritance of folk arts and folk performance activities such as opera and lion dance. The focus is on protecting and inheriting culture through development, making creative transformation and innovative development, revitalizing local traditional culture, maintaining cultural vitality, and giving full play to the superiority of culture. Realizing cultural revitalization can also promote the sound development of local unique and different cultural tourism resources, promote the highly integrated and innovative development of culture, tourism, and other industries, and build a cultural town with characteristics.

2. Cultural tourism contributes to the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy.

The development of cultural tourism can bring about faster economic growth and promote the realization of rural revitalization. First, vigorously developing cultural tourism will inevitably promote local economic development, increase residents' income, improve people's living standards, and further promote the overall goal of a well-off society in an all-round way in the rural revitalization strategy. Second, the development of cultural tourism is conducive to the improvement of infrastructure and management level in tourist destinations, constantly improving the quality of life of local people, bringing more convenience to People's Daily lives, and thus promoting the realization of the strategic goal of rural revitalization. Third, the development of cultural tourism is also conducive to the formation of a good, stable, and harmonious social environment and an honest cultural environment, creating an excellent social condition for the effective implementation of the rural revitalization strategy. At the same time, scientific and advanced cultural ideas will also be more conducive to the rural revitalization strategy to play a broader role. In the process of the development of cultural tourism, we should pay attention to the inheritance, protection, and good use of regional historical and cultural resources, develop the cultural tourism industry with prominent characteristics, promote the reconstruction of cultural ecology, drive the adjustment and upgrading of regional economic structure, and help realize the dual realization of rural revitalization policies, plans, and goals.

## Status analysis

Yaoba Ancient Town is in Hejiang County, Luzhou City, Sichuan Province, China. It is one of the six ancient villages in Hejiang County and one of the eight ancient towns in South Sichuan. It has a long cultural history and is known as the 'Sichuan-Guizhou Corridor' and the 'Ancient Road of tea and salt.' Due to its location in the combination of Sichuan, Chongqing, and Guizhou, the ancient town can fully reflect the long and thick historical and cultural

accumulation and folk customs of Sichuan, Chongqing, and Guizhou, representing the unique Sichuan and Guizhou ancient town culture in western China, and has become a famous cultural town, film and television industry base, and Buddhist holy land. Yaoba Ancient Town has distinct local characteristics, profound cultural deposits, architecture culture, post culture, imperial examination culture, red culture, food culture, traditional handicrafts, and other diverse cultures, which have the unique value of cultural exploration, cultural relic research, and cultural tourism activities.

### **1. The tourist source market**

The tourist market of Yaoba Ancient Town mainly includes Chengdu, Luzhou and Chongqing, Sichuan Province, Guizhou Province, cities and counties adjacent to the ancient town, and sometimes there are a small number of foreign tourists. Domestic tourists are mainly middle-aged and elderly groups and primary, middle, and high school students.

Since Yaoba Ancient Town was upgraded to a 4A level tourist attraction on January 3, 2017, the number of tourists received by the ancient town and tourism income have shown an upward trend. During the May Day holiday in 2017, the town generated more than 5.5 million yuan in tourism revenue and received 36,000 tourists. In 2019, the number of tourists received in the seven days of the Spring Festival was 224,000, and the number of tourists received increased to more than 1 million by March, bringing 70.5 million yuan of tourism income. In 2021, under the influence of the novel coronavirus epidemic, the annual comprehensive tourism economic income of 114 million yuan will still be achieved, and more than 1.4 million tourists will be received. Most tourism revenue comes from scenic spot tickets, food and accommodation, agricultural and sideline products, and handicrafts. Many scenic spots initially set tickets at 30 yuan per person per ticket, but in recent years, many scenic spots have been adjusted to open free of charge.

### **2. The tourism products**

The tourism products of Yaoba Ancient Town are mainly popular, mainly traditional sightseeing Tours and holiday Tours. Tourism products are also souvenirs of local traditional crafts and local specialties, and cultural and creative tourism products that integrate cultural creativity and modern technology are insufficient. At present, sightseeing, vacation, and special tourism products are the main ones that tourists generally love. Among them, sightseeing tourism products mainly focus on appreciating rural natural scenery and historic buildings in ancient towns, vacation tourism products choose Gulou Mountain and holiday farmhouses in various villages, and special tourism products mainly focus on traditional cultural sightseeing Tours in ancient towns. In addition, the tourism commodities in ancient towns with high sales volume are arts and crafts (such as hand-made oil paper umbrellas, bamboo woven products, wood carvings, etc.), local specialties (bacon, yellow cake, lychee, etc.), tourist souvenirs, tourist clothing (Hanfu, qipao), and tourist daily necessities.

### **3. The basic tourism facilities**

In the process of tourism development, the ancient town of Yaoba has developed and built infrastructure to meet the basic needs of tourism, and the basic tourism facilities such as food, accommodation, transportation, and health are relatively complete. The ancient town has many hotels, restaurants, farmhouses, and more than 10 hotels and homestays. There are 3 public toilets, more than 10 garbage cans, and 15 benches on the ancient street line; there are many public toilets, garbage cans, and benches in Yaobayi scenic spot. The traffic in the tourist area is more convenient; there is the Rongzun expressway nearby, Xinyao Road in the town is spacious and flat, and tourists can choose to have buses, cars, and so on. In addition, there are 2 large parking lots in the scenic spot (one is located next to Yaoba Yi, and one is located near the Jinshi Memorial), 5 temporary parking points for cars, and the tourist capacity is high.

#### **4. Concept of tourism development**

Yaoba Ancient town adopts a management system led by the county, coordinated by the township, and participated by the Jingpeople; fully implements the three-level joint management of the town, village cadres, and the person in charge of the site, and implements the "scene-town integration" management mode, carries out the "three major actions" of environmental remediation, and implements the "River chief system." Yaoba Town has done tourism work in recent years related to the rural revitalization strategy. According to the overall tourism development idea of "two mountains, one ancient town, one river, one post, and multiple points," it has accelerated the transformation of the advantages of cultural tourism resources into industrial advantages and improved the construction of tourist attractions and facilities upgrading. Yaoba Yi Project, a cultural tourism poverty alleviation industrial complex integrating functions of post-sightseeing, cultural experience, and art exchange, has been built. Since the completion of the Yaoba Yi Project, 254 registered poor families have moved into it, becoming a major source of the labor force for cultural tourism services in the ancient town. In addition, Yaoba Town, in accordance with the development orientation of "cultural tourism strong town, industry rich people", vigorously develops the characteristic cultural industry and explores the "culture + agriculture + tourism" development model.

### **Discussing problem**

#### **1. Tourism image and positioning**

To develop a tourism economy, finding the correct development orientation and forming a unique image is important. In this respect, Yaoba Ancient Town is not perfect. Although Yaoba Ancient Town strives to develop cultural tourism, it still stays in the general ancient town sightseeing tour in publicity and marketing and does not highlight the cultural tourism image and clarify its cultural tourism positioning. The ancient town has a rich history and culture, the ancient streets and buildings are well preserved, and the cultural tourism value is high. Still, most of them are just on the surface of the architecture. They have not fully explored and displayed the deep history and culture contained in the scenic spot architecture and have not played the role and attraction of culture. Looking at the scenic spots in Yaoba Ancient town, most stay at the ornamental level without a deep sense of cultural experience. Compared with the nearby Fubao Ancient Town, there is no perfect cultural industry chain, a clear cultural tourism brand in the development mode, and no distinct cultural tourism image. The shaping of cultural tourism image is insufficient and not outstanding.

#### **2. Tourism products and innovation**

Cultural tourism in the ancient town is still dominated by a single cultural sightseeing tour, lacking interactive projects that can truly make people feel the rich culture of Yaoba Ancient town. There are fewer types of tourism and entertainment products, and the entertainment projects are also relatively single, lacking participation and experience. It is difficult for tourists to join in the cultural experience, so it is difficult to attract repeat customers. Most of the local cultural tourism commodities are ready-made handicrafts. At the same time, the more unique traditional products, such as yellow rice cake, bamboo weaving, oil-paper umbrella, root carving, wood carving, and other traditional food and traditional crafts, are difficult to innovate; some more niche crafts are gradually withdrawing from the local tourism market, such as the old-fashioned "tying monkey"; Some unique bridal sedan chair, temple fair and other folk activities are also increasingly difficult to find. Secondly, the homogenization of tourism commodities is serious, and the stores of the same type of commodities are densely distributed. Finally, the combination of local tourism products and

culture is low; no local brand has been formed, and many modern commodities have nothing to do with local culture.

### **3. Tourism resource development and protection**

#### **3.1 Improper exploitation of cultural resources.**

The incongruity of modern elements was added to the development of some cultural resources, which did not fully maintain their traditional and cultural characteristics, resulting in exploitative damage. In the planning and designing of tourism projects, the relationship between history and modernization was not properly coordinated. For example, the Dahong Rice Shop is an important material for studying the Sichuan-Guizhou architectural style, and it is also a place for residents to drink tea for leisure, which can reflect the local tea culture. However, the hot pot element added in the development process is very different from its leisurely and comfortable life atmosphere, which greatly weakens the characteristics of traditional architecture and weakens the tourists' feeling of its cultural value.

#### **3.2 The protection is insufficient.**

The main reason is that the protection system is imperfect, and some scenic spots have "protective damage." First, protecting buildings and tourists' safety is not in place. For example, the Jinshi Archway, built during the Jiaqing period, was exposed to the elements all year round and was in disrepair, often accompanied by the danger of stone falling off. However, the archway was one of the only ways to enter the ancient street. The local measure was to paste a warning message "Beware of falling stones, please pass quickly" on the pillar body. This method can solve certain safety problems to a certain extent. Still, the final analysis does not solve the problem of stone falling off because of the ancient Jinshi archway. There are still security risks for tourists here, and Yaoba Town has not actively taken measures to repair the archway. Secondly, the punishment system for the tourist destination for damaging the building is not perfect. There are no clear punishment clauses for tourists' uncivilized tourist behavior, such as damaging buildings and scribbling graffiti. Finally, many shops moved in, making the shops with unique local characteristics withdraw from the tourism market and replace the same shops with a strong commercial atmosphere, resulting in the change of the ancient town's unique life customs and culture.

#### **3.4 I Tourism facilities and services**

The first is the lack of supporting facilities. First, some auxiliary facilities of ancient streets are not perfect. However, each scenic spot is equipped with more detailed multi-language introduction signs; some introduction slogans are not updated in time, and problems such as damage, fading, and so on affect tourists' understanding of the building. Second, in terms of scenic reception service facilities, there are no large-scale and distinctive accommodation conditions, and the accommodation environment in the ancient town does not clearly distinguish between high, medium, and low-end consumption levels, which cannot better meet the accommodation needs of tourists at different levels. Third, the layout of public toilet space is unreasonable, manifested in the lack of public toilets along the ancient streets.

The second is that there is no relatively concentrated catering service and a high level of tourism service. First, the characteristic snacks of Yaoba ancient town are scattered, and there is no concentrated diet route or diet circle. Second, due to the lack of guides for in-depth explanation services, many tourists cannot understand the ancient town's architectural attractions contained in the deep culture. Third, the practitioners of scenic spots or hotel accommodations have not received systematic service training, lack a good sense of service, and the corresponding services are difficult to meet the standard, so they cannot provide a more complete, more systematic, and higher level of service.



### 3.5 Community residents' participation

The long-term development of tourist attractions cannot be achieved without the participation of relevant groups, especially residents. Residents of Yaoba Ancient Town have very low participation in tourism development and tourism development. Most of the local population in Yaoba are older people and young children. The government has not fully considered the role of these two groups in the overall planning of tourism development and included them in the scope of tourism development planning, thus failing to fully mobilize their enthusiasm to participate in the development of tourism destinations. On the other hand, the residents' sense of "ownership" needs to be further strengthened, and most of the residents have not established an awareness of active participation. Residents on both sides of ancient streets participate more than residents far away from tourist places. Only a few residents living far away from tourist places will bring their agricultural products to the tourism market for sale or to the tourist attractions for service work. More residents are isolated from the periphery of tourism development and do not participate in tourism development and construction and benefit from it. Some residents even question the rationality of tourism development, and some behaviors or words and deeds hinder tourism development, which will also restrict the development of cultural tourism in ancient towns.

### 4. Development measures

Implement the rural revitalization policy, develop cultural tourism, use culture to shape tourism, and use tourism to complement culture. The ancient town of Yaoba should promote economic and social development with the development of cultural tourism, improve the ecology and living environment, and adhere to the development of cultural tourism by local conditions and step by step. On the premise of adhering to the implementation principles and development requirements of the rural revitalization strategy, the following five aspects of development measures are put forward, given the existing problems in the development of cultural tourism in Yaoba Ancient town.

#### 4.1 Clarify the tourism brand positioning and image

In developing the ancient town's cultural tourism, we must first clarify the tourism development orientation of Yaoba Ancient town, establish a distinct cultural tourism image, and create a unique cultural brand. There are many similar scenic spots around the town, so to further exert its advantages, it is necessary to dig deeply into the regional cultural value according to the content of the rural revitalization strategy, take its unique history and culture as the foundation, and create a cultural tourism town with outstanding characteristics. The four principles of developing cultural tourism resources are authenticity, depth, activation, and extension. As an ancient town with a strong and rich history and culture, Yaoba Ancient Town must clarify the positioning of cultural tourism, integrate various cultural resources, explore their connotations, enrich their forms, and establish a multi-theme tourism image and an integrated image. The brand of Yaoba Ancient Town is positioned as a "Famous Sichuan and Guizhou cultural tourism town in western China." Daily publicity marketing and product activity planning emphasize "culture," highlighting cultural uniqueness and creating a cultural tourism model different from general sightseeing tourism. In addition, all tourism projects should make tourists feel the unique local culture to shape the image of cultural consumption, deepen the cultural tourism image of Yaoba Ancient town, give play to cultural advantages, form cultural brands, and enhance competitiveness.

#### 4.2 Multi-way Innovation Characteristic tourism products

The rural revitalization strategy proposes to carry forward traditional culture and, on the basis of protecting and inheriting it, creatively transform and develop it innovatively, constantly endowing The Times and enriching forms of expression. The key to the

development of cultural tourism in Yaoba Ancient Town is to innovate characteristic cultural tourism products in various ways and aspects, develop interactive tourism projects, and create high-quality tourism products.

The first is to increase the interaction of handicraft skills. The unique skills of the oil-paper umbrella, wood carving, root carving, and bamboo weaving in ancient towns can not only directly sell finished products but also carry out experience activities so that tourists can participate in making oil-paper umbrellas and bamboo weaving and carry out simple root carving and wood carving activities, improve the interaction ability between traditional skills and tourists, and create unique skills "alive." The other is to use emerging technology and necessary art design to make culture active. For example, holographic technology can make people in the background of The Times, when various cultures are produced, experience the difficulty of culture formation and the shock brought by various cultures.

The second is to resume local folk activities such as sedan chair, King Yao Festival, temple fair, and "driving to the market," which are fully open to tourists. This way, tourists can participate in the daily life of the tourist place and feel the unique cultural charm of various festivals and customs activities.

The other is to develop cultural and creative products. Learn the cultural and creative ideas of the Forbidden City and process the architectural, imperial examination, film, and television cultures of the ancient town into specific cultural and creative products, such as wooden postcards, bookmarks, calendars, architectural models, and other peripheral products, wooden "historical and cultural books," wooden action figures, and so on.

#### 4.3 Develop and protect resources in a scientific way

Clarifying the regional historical and cultural protection line, protecting cultural relics and traditional buildings, and establishing and improving the intangible cultural heritage protection system are important parts of the rural revitalization strategy. Therefore, in developing cultural tourism in Yaoba's ancient town, it is necessary to develop scientifically and reasonably and establish and improve the protection system to strengthen the protection.

First, making reasonable plans and developing and improving protection and repair techniques is necessary. The first step is that the development of traditional buildings into scenic spots must be decided by the county and town governments together. These can only be developed after strict professional inspection, and private development is prohibited. The second step is to set up a special development and protection group and restoration group, send personnel to learn cultural relic restoration skills, set up a professional building repair team, and complete the development and protection of ancient buildings. The third step is to formulate subsidy policies, implement the intangible cultural heritage inheritance and development project, and train personnel to inherit traditional handicraft skills such as oil-paper umbrella, carving, and bamboo weaving.

The second step is to strengthen awareness of protection. On the one hand, it is to increase the training of managers and employees, hire experts and scholars to carry out professional education and training of ancient town protection for staff, enhance protection awareness and professional skills training, and further refine, concretize, professionalize and systemize the protection system and work. On the other hand, it is to strengthen the publicity and education of protection consciousness, which can remind tourists to maintain good quality and avoid damaging the construction behavior by pasting protection slogans. The second is to strengthen the punishment for the behavior of destroying buildings and destroying culture, which can be monetary punishment or ideological education.

#### 4.4 Improving supporting facilities in all aspects

According to the development measures of “ensuring and improving rural people’s livelihood and regional infrastructure construction, and strengthening the construction of life circle” in the rural revitalization strategy, various ways should be adopted to improve the life and tourism supporting facilities of ancient towns. As for the existing problems in the infrastructure of Yaoba ancient town can be improved in the following ways: First, update the introduction logo in a timely manner and combine modern Internet technology with the local guide's explanation. The second is to perfectly and reasonably provide public health service facilities with adequate, clean, and sanitary toilet facilities. The third is to build more characteristic high, medium, and low-grade hotels or homestays to meet the needs of tourists at different levels and provide tourists with more comfortable and convenient services. The fourth is to upgrade information facilities, build smart tourism platforms, and introduce new technologies to provide convenient tourist services. Fifth, create a food gathering place and build a special food line or circle.

The last is to improve service quality while building and improving the facilities. Pre-job service training for employees is necessary to improve their service level and service awareness so as to provide professional, systematic, and high-level services.

#### 4.5 More measures will be taken to increase residents' participation

The purpose of implementing the rural revitalization strategy is to achieve regional economic development and solve the problems of “agriculture, rural areas, and farmers,” so the development of cultural tourism in Yaoba Ancient town must fully consider its driving force and mobilize the participation of surrounding residents.

First of all, the government and the market should play a positive role, create more employment opportunities or set up some kind of reward and compensation mechanism, improve the enthusiasm of the surrounding residents to participate, and further enhance the residents' sense of gain and happiness. For example, training people who are familiar with the development history of Yaoba and then arranging for them to explain each scenic spot can not only bring residents a second income, solve the problem of the difficulty of hiring external narrators but also enable the historical culture to be inherited and the local customs to be truly displayed, which is very in line with the requirements mentioned in the rural revitalization strategy to bring the countryside with the city and improve the employment quality of rural labor.

In addition, we should strengthen the sense of “ownership” of residents. We will encourage residents to participate actively in cultural tourism and make suggestions for local development. In this way, hidden dangers in development can be solved from the side, problems such as environmental pollution can be improved, and talents can even be attracted to effectively promote the development of cultural tourism in Yaoba Ancient town.

## Conclusions

History and culture are the name cards and connotations of Yaoba's ancient town. Only by comprehensively protecting and inheriting the history and culture of Yaoba Ancient Town can the uniqueness of Yaoba Ancient Town truly be highlighted, and the cultural value, protection significance, and tourism value different from other ancient towns and surrounding scenic spots be highlighted. This article is valuable in presenting guidelines for developing cultural tourism in Yaoba's Ancient town. And it has certain reference significance for developing cultural tourism in similar ancient towns.



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