

# ***A Deep Comparative Study on the Cultural Tourism Image Construction of Bashu and Southeast Asia, and an Exploration of Development Strategies for the Bashu Region***

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**Abstract:** Cultural tourism, characterized by its unique historical depth, cultural allure, rich connotations, and immersive experiences, has become a major driving force in attracting tourists. As regions with abundant cultural and tourism resources, both the Bashu area and Southeast Asia have demonstrated distinct features and strategies in constructing their cultural tourism images. This paper provides a comparative analysis of multiple aspects involved in the tourism image construction of the Bashu and Southeast Asian regions. Under the framework of cultural and tourism integration, it explores the intrinsic value of cultural tourism in both areas, investigates the similarities and differences in their cultural tourism images, and offers suggestions for building a culturally rich and regionally distinctive tourism image for the Bashu region.

**Keywords:** cultural tourism image construction, cultural and tourism integration, similarities and differences, comparative analysis.

## **1. Introduction**

With the deepening of global economic integration and the rapid rise of the tourism industry, along with the continuous improvement in living standards, increased leisure time, and an increasingly diverse and personalized demand for travel, cultural tourism has emerged as a significant driving force in attracting tourists. Characterized by its unique historical depth, cultural allure, rich connotations, and immersive experiences, cultural tourism integrates elements of history, culture, nature, and society, becoming a new trend in tourism development. Cultural tourism not only allows tourists to experience the history, customs, and cultural landscape of a region but also promotes local economic prosperity and the preservation of cultural heritage. In the wave of globalization and digitalization, cultural tourism is becoming an important force for driving regional economic growth, social and cultural development, and enhancing international cultural exchange and understanding. Consequently, the construction of cultural tourism images in different regions is of particular importance, as shaping a unique and appealing cultural tourism image is a common challenge facing the tourism industry worldwide.

With their unique natural landscapes, rich histories, and folk customs, the Bashu region and Southeast Asia stand out as shining examples in the field of cultural tourism. As two regions with

abundant cultural and tourism resources, both Bashu and Southeast Asia exhibit distinct characteristics and strategies in the construction of their cultural tourism images. Focusing on the cultural tourism image construction of the Bashu region, this paper will conduct a comparative analysis across various dimensions—including geography, folk customs, and culture—by examining the well-developed tourism image of Southeast Asia. This study aims to explore the similarities and differences between the cultural tourism images of the two regions and to provide recommendations for building a culturally rich and regionally distinctive tourism image for the Bashu region.

## **2. The Unique Charm of the Geographical Environment**

### **2.1. The Picturesque Landscape of the Bashu Region**

The Bashu region, located in southwestern China, encompasses the Sichuan Basin and its surrounding areas. With terrain that slopes from the high elevations in the west to lower elevations in the east, it consists of three major geographical units: the Western Sichuan Plateau, the Sichuan Basin, and the parallel ridges and valleys of eastern Sichuan. This diverse topography endows the region with abundant natural resources and varied landscapes, creating stunning natural scenery and offering visitors a range of travel experiences. For instance, starting from the Chengdu Plain, travelers can gradually venture into mountainous areas, experiencing the natural transition from plains to high mountains. The Bashu region is known for its captivating landscapes, including majestic snow-capped mountains, magnificent gorges, vast grasslands, and networks of rivers and lakes. The rolling hills and dynamic water features form awe-inspiring natural wonders. Unique attractions such as the red-layered landforms of the Sichuan Basin, the colorful pools, waterfalls, and ancient forests of Jiuzhaigou, the calcified pools and snow-capped mountains of Huanglong, and the seas of clouds and sacred lights of Mount Emei draw countless tourists with their vibrant colors and distinctive shapes. Additionally, seismic fault zones and earthquake relics in places like Longmen Mountain reveal the movement and power within the Earth's crust.

With a humid, rainy climate and distinct seasons, the Bashu region supports a diverse range of vegetation, from wetlands to alpine meadows, and from evergreen broadleaf forests to deciduous broadleaf forests. This rich plant diversity not only provides visitors with beautiful natural settings but also offers valuable resources for ecotourism and scientific research.

### **2.2. The Tropical Wonderland of Southeast Asia**

Southeast Asia, located in the southeastern part of Asia, comprises two main areas: the Indochina Peninsula and the Malay Archipelago. The region's hot and humid climate, characterized by tropical rainforest and tropical monsoon climates, supports abundant natural resources. Southeast Asia's tourist attractions largely center around islands, beaches, tropical rainforests, and cultural heritage sites, with turquoise seas, golden sands, and dense rainforests forming a distinctive landscape. In Southeast Asia's tropical rainforests, visitors can observe a variety of rare wildlife species, such as Asian elephants, gibbons, rhinos, and an array of exotic birds and plants, offering an excellent opportunity to explore nature and understand biodiversity. This experience offers a climate unique from that of the Bashu region[1].

From the coral reefs of the Philippines to Bali in Indonesia, from Sabah in Malaysia to Boracay in the Philippines, and from Thailand's tropical rainforests to the Mekong Delta in Vietnam, each location exudes rich tropical charm. These tropical wonderlands enhance Southeast Asia's cultural tourism appeal, making it a major draw for visitors.

In addition to islands and tropical rainforests, Southeast Asia's natural scenery includes stunning mountains, waterfalls, and lakes. For instance, Ha Long Bay in Vietnam is renowned for its unique karst formations and beautiful maritime views, while Chiang Mai in Thailand attracts numerous

visitors with its serene pastoral landscapes and rich cultural heritage. These diverse natural landscapes offer tourists a wide variety of travel options and enriching experiences.

### **3. The Profound Heritage and Distinctive Cultural Features**

#### **3.1. The Long History of Bashu**

The Bashu region boasts a rich and ancient history, deeply rooted in culture and recognized as one of the birthplaces of early civilizations. Over its extensive historical development, Bashu has preserved numerous cultural relics and historical sites that testify to the region's ancient cultural splendor. From prehistoric ruins to modern urban landscapes, Bashu is imbued with significant historical and cultural narratives. The excavation of the Sanxingdui site unveiled the mysteries of ancient Shu civilization, showcasing the remarkable bronze casting skills and unique aesthetic sensibilities of the early inhabitants of Bashu. The Jinsha site reflects the historical prosperity of ancient Bashu, while the rich legacy of the Three Kingdoms period has left behind numerous historical relics and legendary tales, such as the Wuhou Shrine and Zhang Fei Temple, which serve as vital windows into the history of the Three Kingdoms. Ancient Shu civilization and Three Kingdoms culture form a unique cultural landscape, and sites such as Jinli Ancient Street and Kuanzhai Alley seamlessly blend historical heritage with modern life, offering tourists an immersive cultural experience.

#### **3.2. The Cultural Fusion of Southeast Asia**

The history of Southeast Asia dates back to the late Neolithic period, around the turn of the Common Era. As productivity advanced and populations grew, early states began to form in Southeast Asia. The region's strategic geographic location led to a cultural amalgamation influenced by China, India, Islam, and other cultural spheres. This fusion of diverse cultures endows Southeast Asia with a unique charm and inclusiveness. The coexistence of religions such as Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity has created a distinctive religious and cultural atmosphere[1].

In Thailand, the profound influence of Buddhism is evident, with temples scattered across the country, making them key sites for experiencing Thai culture. Bali in Indonesia is famous for its unique Hindu culture and the renowned Balinese arts. Malaysia, characterized by its harmonious coexistence of various ethnic cultures, attracts numerous visitors interested in exploring this multicultural landscape. These cultural elements contribute greatly to Southeast Asia's cultural tourism image, showcasing the region's distinctive cultural diversity and religious heritage.

### **4. The Colorful Expression of Folk Culture**

#### **4.1. Folk Culture in the Bashu Region**

The Bashu region boasts a vibrant and diverse folk culture that emphasizes both preservation and innovation, blending traditional and modern elements. The area is rich in intangible cultural heritage, including beautiful Shu embroidery, intricate paper-cutting, and unique Sichuan opera masks, as well as distinctive ethnic customs and festive activities. Traditional festivals and folk arts in the Bashu region carry strong local characteristics. For instance, temple fairs during the Spring Festival, lantern displays during the Lantern Festival, dragon boat races during the Dragon Boat Festival, dragon and lion dances during harvest celebrations, and moon-watching activities during the Mid-Autumn Festival are all expressions of Bashu's folk culture. Historically, the development of the Bashu region has been closely tied to the Central Plains of China, heavily influenced by Central Plains culture. At the same time, due to its unique geographical location and natural environment, Bashu culture has also integrated elements from neighboring ethnic minorities, forming a distinct cultural system.

Additionally, the culinary culture of Bashu is renowned, with dishes such as hotpot, spicy skewers, and Sichuan cuisine widely celebrated across China and even internationally.

#### **4.2. Folk Culture in Southeast Asia**

Similarly, Southeast Asia is known for its rich and diverse folk culture, marked by inclusivity and the convergence of different ethnic and regional cultures. Each Southeast Asian country has its unique cultural traditions and folk customs, with every aspect of life, from traditional festivals to daily customs, infused with ethnic flavor and local character. For instance, Thailand's Songkran Festival, the Bali Arts Festival in Indonesia, Tet in Vietnam, and the Cambodian Water Festival are all iconic folk cultural events in Southeast Asia. These cultural traditions, characterized by their exotic appeal and festive atmosphere, attract tourists eager to experience them. Southeast Asia's culinary culture is equally distinctive, with popular dishes such as Thailand's Tom Yum soup and Indonesia's fried rice drawing food enthusiasts from around the world[2].

### **5. Cultural Tourism Image Positioning and Brand Building**

#### **5.1. Cultural Tourism Image Positioning and Brand Building in the Bashu Region**

The Bashu region's cultural tourism image positioning emphasizes the combination of "history + nature." On one hand, it seeks to deeply explore and showcase the historical richness of Bashu culture, creating a tourism brand with profound cultural heritage. On the other hand, it leverages the region's natural landscape resources to promote ecotourism, leisure vacations, and other tourism products. Through branded experiences like the Bashu Cultural Tourism Corridor theme trains, Bashu intangible cultural heritage tourism, and "The Hometown of the Panda," the region conveys its unique cultural charm and ecological value to visitors[3].

The Bashu region, drawing on its abundant natural resources and cultural landscapes, delves into its historical heritage and folk customs to distill elements characteristic of Bashu culture. These elements are then incorporated into the design and promotion of tourism products, resulting in a variety of locally distinctive cultural tourism offerings[4]. For example, there are heritage tours exploring ancient Shu culture represented by the Sanxingdui and Jinsha sites; historical landmark tours featuring sites like Dujiangyan and the Wuhou Shrine; and scenic nature tours of Emei Mountain and Jiuzhaigou. These tourism products not only satisfy visitors' sightseeing needs but also provide opportunities for a deeper understanding of Bashu culture.

#### **5.2. Cultural Tourism Image Positioning and Brand Building in Southeast Asia**

Leveraging its unique geographical location, tropical allure, and rich cultural heritage, Southeast Asia has developed a series of culturally distinctive tourism products that highlight its tropical ambiance and diverse cultures. Through cultural tourism images like "Tropical Paradise" and "Land of Smiles," the region emphasizes its unique advantages in tropical climate and cultural heritage, attracting tourists eager to experience its exotic landscapes and cultures.

Southeast Asia fully utilizes its tropical climate and extensive island resources to create tourism products and routes with tropical appeal. For instance, Thailand's Five-Island Tour, Indonesia's Bali Vacation Tour, and Malaysia's Kuala Lumpur City Tour are popular tourism products that emphasize tropical charm and leisure, drawing numerous domestic and international visitors. Additionally, Southeast Asia boasts a wealth of cultural heritage and historical sites, including Cambodia's Angkor Wat and Preah Vihear Temple; Indonesia's Borobudur and Prambanan Temples; Vietnam's ancient town of Hoi An and My Son ruins; and Thailand's Ayutthaya Historical Park. These cultural heritage

sites and historical relics constitute key elements of Southeast Asia’s cultural tourism brand, showcasing the history and cultural diversity of Southeast Asian countries to visitors.

## 6. In-Depth Exploration of Cultural and Tourism Integration

In the development of the cultural and tourism industries, there is a trend of deep interconnection, mutual support, and stimulation. Tourism serves as an essential medium for cultural dissemination. Through its unique mobility and experiential nature, tourism significantly broadens the audience and market boundaries of the cultural industry, becoming a vital force for promoting cultural exchange, widespread dissemination, deep influence, and even overall cultural advancement. Conversely, culture is the core element that enhances the level and value of the tourism experience. The integration of cultural content not only enriches the spiritual core of tourism products but also significantly increases their added value, making tourism consumption more diversified and in-depth. More importantly, culture provides a continuous source of inspiration for tourism innovation, and through its innovative combination with modern technology, traditional cultural elements can be presented in more vivid and interactive forms[5].

Based on the unique development trajectories and internal motivations of the tourism and cultural industries, and aligned with the diversified trends in market demand, the “Six New” drivers—new concepts, new business forms, new technologies, new products, new services, and new models—are gradually becoming the inevitable path to guide the deep integration of culture and tourism and to drive the sustained development of the cultural tourism industry in the future[5].

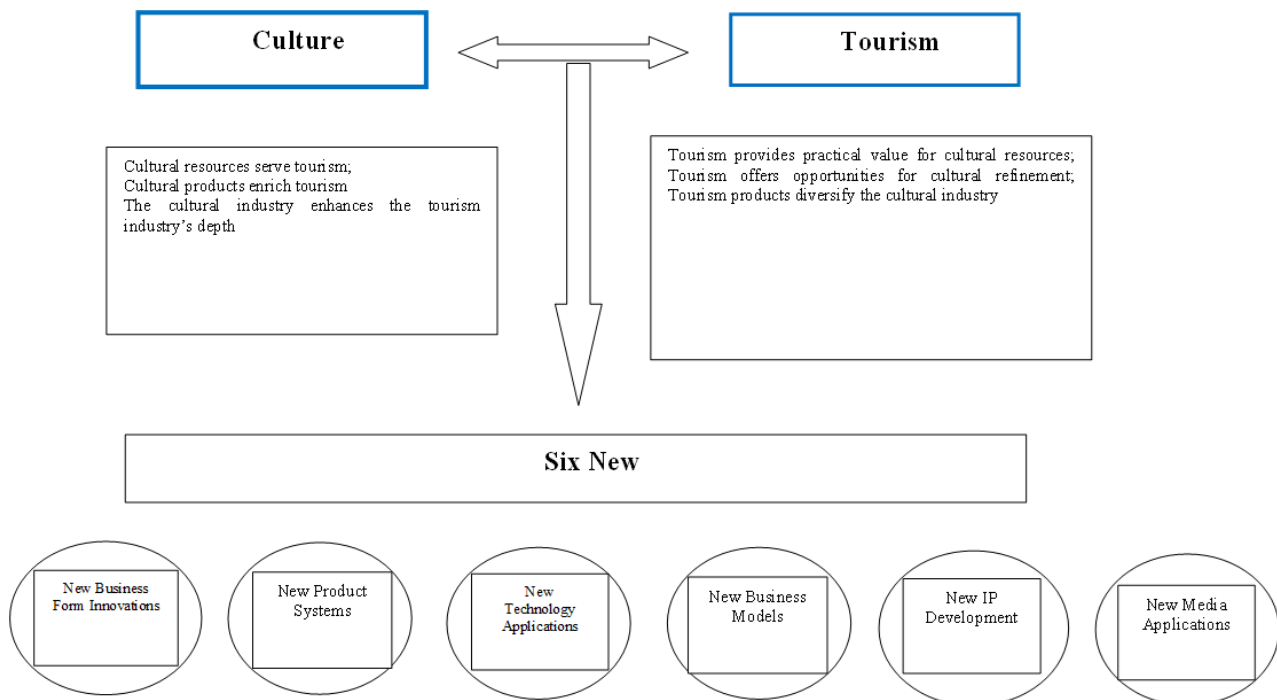


Figure 1: The “Six New” Drivers Leading Innovation in Cultural and Tourism Integration[5]

### 6.1. Innovative Practices in the Integration of Culture and Tourism in the Bashu Region

Under the backdrop of cultural and tourism integration, the Bashu region actively explores innovative approaches by deeply tapping into the intrinsic value of local culture and organically combining historical heritage, folk customs, and natural scenery to form a unique cultural tourism brand[6]. For example, based on Bashu’s natural landscapes and folk culture, outdoor tourism projects such as

hiking, mountain climbing, and rafting have been developed. Additionally, cultural events such as the Ancient Shu Culture Festival and intangible cultural heritage exhibitions showcase the distinctive charm of Bashu culture. The region also emphasizes blending traditional culture with modern technology, using new technological tools like AR and VR to offer visitors an immersive cultural experience. This allows tourists not only to see and hear but also to personally experience the profound heritage of Bashu culture. These innovative practices have not only enhanced the cultural tourism experience but also strengthened the appeal of Bashu's cultural tourism[7].

## **6.2. An International Perspective on Culture and Tourism Integration in Southeast Asia**

Southeast Asia, in its integration of culture and tourism, places significant emphasis on expanding its international perspective. The region actively aligns with the international tourism market by introducing advanced global tourism management expertise and technology to improve service quality. Leveraging its diverse cultural assets, Southeast Asia combines traditional culture with the modern tourism industry, hosting a variety of international cultural festivals to attract visitors interested in experiencing exotic cultures[8]. For instance, Thailand not only preserves traditional festivals and religious ceremonies but also promotes Thai culture on the global stage through international cultural festivals and art exhibitions, thereby preserving national culture while advancing the tourism industry. Thailand also offers unique experiences like Thai massage and cooking classes, allowing visitors to enjoy their travels while gaining deeper insights into Thai culture and lifestyle. Indonesia has developed Bali into a comprehensive tourism destination for sightseeing, relaxation, and vacations. The Bali Arts Festival has not only boosted Southeast Asia's visibility in the global tourism market but also fostered the dissemination and exchange of local culture. Furthermore, Southeast Asia emphasizes cultural heritage and environmental conservation to ensure the sustainable development of cultural and tourism integration.

## **7. Similarities and Differences in Cultural Tourism Image Construction**

### **7.1. Similarities**

#### **7.1.1. Abundant Resources**

Both the Bashu region and Southeast Asia possess abundant natural and cultural resources, providing a solid foundation for the development of cultural tourism.

#### **7.1.2. Cultural Diversity**

Both regions boast rich and diverse cultural traditions, offering ample material and inspiration for shaping their cultural tourism images.

#### **7.1.3. Beautiful Natural Scenery**

Both regions are blessed with exceptional natural landscapes, from the mountains and lakes of Bashu to the islands and beaches of Southeast Asia, offering visitors an excellent tourism experience.

#### **7.1.4. Emphasis on Nature and Culture**

Both Bashu and Southeast Asia focus on combining natural landscapes with cultural sites, enhancing the visitor experience through distinctive tourism routes and products. For example, Emei Mountain in Bashu and Bali in Southeast Asia incorporate extensive cultural elements into scientifically planned



tourism experiences, allowing visitors to enjoy the scenery while deeply engaging with the local culture[9].

#### **7.1.5. Focus on Cultural Heritage and Innovation**

In the integration of culture and tourism, both regions emphasize the preservation and innovation of traditional culture. Efforts are made to merge traditional culture with modern tourism through cultural festivals, the promotion of intangible cultural heritage, and the enrichment of cultural tourism with modern technology and creative industries to enhance quality and depth[9].

#### **7.1.6. Emphasis on Experience**

Both regions prioritize enhancing the tourist experience by offering diverse tourism products and services to meet visitors' individual needs.

Both regions improve the visibility and reputation of their cultural tourism images through multi-channel marketing and brand promotion activities, attracting more tourists[10].

### **7.2. Differences**

#### **7.2.1. Distinct Resource Characteristics**

The Bashu region is characterized by its beautiful mountains, pleasant climate, and rich cultural heritage. In contrast, Southeast Asia is known for its unique tropical ambiance, marine resources, and cultural diversity.

#### **7.2.2. Cultural Characteristics**

The cultural features of the Bashu region are primarily reflected in Ancient Shu culture, Three Kingdoms culture, and other historically rich, regionally distinctive elements. Southeast Asia, on the other hand, showcases a more diverse cultural profile that integrates multiple religions and ethnic cultures, including Thailand's Buddhist culture, Bali's Hindu culture in Indonesia, and the Spanish colonial heritage in the Philippines. This diversity makes each region's cultural tourism image unique and irreplaceable.

#### **7.2.3. Tourism Market Positioning**

The cultural tourism market in Bashu is relatively concentrated among domestic tourists, particularly those from the southwestern region and neighboring provinces. In contrast, Southeast Asia places a greater emphasis on expanding into international markets and building globally recognized tourism brands, attracting large numbers of tourists from Europe, the Americas, and Asia[11]. This difference in market positioning also leads to varied tourism marketing strategies and promotional approaches.

#### **7.2.4. Development Strategies**

In the integration of culture and tourism, the Bashu region focuses more on exploring and integrating local cultural resources. Meanwhile, Southeast Asia prioritizes alignment with the international tourism market and partnerships, enhancing service quality by incorporating advanced international tourism management practices and technologies.

### **7.2.5. Investment in Brand Building**

Southeast Asia invests more heavily in brand building and market promotion, resulting in a more mature tourism brand image. In comparison, there is room for improvement in brand building within the Bashu region.

### **7.2.6. Completeness of the Tourism Service System**

The tourism service system in Southeast Asia is relatively more comprehensive, providing convenient and high-quality services in areas like transportation, accommodations, and dining. The Bashu region, however, still needs to strengthen its tourism service infrastructure.

## **8. Recommendations for Building the Cultural Tourism Image of the Bashu Region**

### **8.1. Strengthening the Cultural Tourism Brand**

The Bashu region should further strengthen its cultural tourism brand by deeply exploring the cultural connotations and distinctive tourism resources, blending traditional culture with modern tourism to create tourism products unique to Bashu. A series of culturally distinctive tourism products could be developed around core cultural resources such as Ancient Shu culture and Three Kingdoms culture to create a branding effect. Examples include culture-themed tours and visits to historical sites. The region can also leverage its natural landscapes and folk culture to develop outdoor tourism projects. Additionally, Bashu's culinary culture and artisanal heritage can be integrated to offer hands-on tourism experiences, such as food-tasting events and handicraft-making activities.

### **8.2. Improving Tourism Service Quality**

Improving tourism service quality is essential to the construction of Bashu's cultural tourism image within the context of culture-tourism integration. The Bashu region should further enhance its tourism service system, elevating service quality and visitor experience. This involves strengthening the training and management of tourism industry personnel to improve their professional skills and service awareness[12], enforcing tourism market regulations, and enhancing tourism infrastructure and maintenance to provide visitors with a more convenient and comfortable travel environment, ensuring a positive service experience throughout their visit.

Moreover, it is crucial to pay attention to visitor feedback and needs, continually optimizing tourism products and service processes to boost visitor satisfaction and loyalty.

### **8.3. Promoting Innovation in Cultural and Tourism Integration Development**

Promoting the integrated development of culture and tourism is a central task for building the cultural tourism image of the Bashu region. Bashu should actively explore new models and pathways for cultural and tourism integration by developing tourism routes and products that link historical and cultural sites, folk villages, and natural landscapes to create a comprehensive, multidimensional cultural tourism experience. Hosting various cultural festivals can enrich the cultural content and experiential quality of tourism products. Additionally, using a layered spatial construction model of "virtual scene – narrative scene – application scene," Bashu can achieve "scene extension – scene interaction – scene service," offering consumers an unprecedented sense of participation and interactive experience, thereby fostering deep integration and symbiosis between the cultural and tourism industries[13]. Furthermore, Bashu can leverage internet platforms to conduct online and offline combined tourism marketing activities, expanding the reach of its tourism market.



#### **8.4. Promoting Green Tourism and Sustainable Development**

In building its cultural tourism image, Bashu should adhere to the principles of green tourism and sustainable development. Strengthening the protection and management of tourism resources is essential, including the preservation and utilization of historical cities, famous towns and villages, traditional settlements, historic streets, and vernacular architecture. By implementing scientifically grounded tourism planning and enhancing environmental conservation concepts, Bashu can achieve sustainable development in tourism. The region should actively promote green tourism by encouraging visitors to travel responsibly, engage in low-carbon practices, and improve resource efficiency. Environmental education for visitors is also important to guide them toward respecting nature and protecting the environment, preserving Bashu's natural landscapes to ensure that tourism development aligns with environmental conservation.

Additionally, it is crucial to consider the needs of local communities, ensuring that tourism growth benefits local residents and enhances their quality of life and well-being[14].

#### **8.5. Preserving and Passing Down Intangible Cultural Heritage**

In the integration of culture and tourism, Bashu should prioritize the preservation and transmission of intangible cultural heritage, which is a vital part of Bashu's cultural identity. Establishing funds for intangible cultural heritage preservation, creating heritage transmission centers, and organizing heritage exhibitions and performances can effectively raise public awareness and interest, fostering the continuation and development of heritage in modern society. This approach not only enriches the content of Bashu's cultural tourism but also enhances visitors' cultural experience and sense of identity.

#### **8.6. Strengthening Regional Cooperation for Win-Win Development**

The Bashu region should enhance collaboration and coordinated development with neighboring areas to jointly create a culturally distinctive regional tourism brand. For example, Bashu can work with nearby provinces and cities, such as Chongqing and Yunnan, to organize joint tourism festivals, develop collaborative travel routes, and create complementary products, forming a development pattern of shared resources and mutual strengths. Additionally, Bashu can strengthen exchange and cooperation with Southeast Asia, learning from its successful experiences and establishing mutually beneficial projects. Jointly developing cross-border tourism routes would foster cultural exchange and cooperation between the Bashu region and surrounding countries and regions[15]. Furthermore, Bashu should actively participate in international tourism organizations and exchange events, establishing partnerships with global tourism agencies and companies to jointly promote market expansion and project implementation. Strengthening connections with the international tourism market and understanding the needs and preferences of international tourists would provide solid support for the innovation and promotion of Bashu's cultural tourism products[15].

#### **8.7. Digital Transformation and Smart Tourism Development**

With rapid technological advancement, digital transformation and smart tourism have become new trends in cultural tourism development. The Bashu region should keep pace with the times and accelerate digital transformation and smart tourism initiatives. By establishing smart tourism service platforms, promoting electronic ticketing and mobile payment, and using big data and artificial intelligence to optimize resource allocation, Bashu can enhance the intelligence and convenience of its tourism services. Additionally, the region should focus on collecting and analyzing tourism data to support tourism decision-making and market strategies. Digital transformation and smart tourism

development will significantly advance the modernization and internationalization of Bashu's cultural tourism.

## 9. Conclusion

Through a comparative analysis of cultural tourism image construction in the Bashu and Southeast Asia regions, we can observe different emphases and developmental paths within the context of culture-tourism integration, each demonstrating unique charm and growth potential. The Bashu region, with its profound historical and cultural heritage, unique natural scenery, and rich folk activities, presents a distinctive allure in cultural tourism. Meanwhile, Southeast Asia, with its diverse cultures, tropical ambiance, and established tourism market, has built a prominent cultural tourism image on the international stage.

The Bashu region should fully leverage its abundant historical and cultural resources and unique natural landscapes, delving deeply into the intrinsic value of its local culture. At the same time, it can draw on Southeast Asia's successful experiences and methods in culture-tourism integration. Emphasizing service quality and sustainable development, Bashu should aim to establish a cultural tourism image that reflects its unique cultural characteristics, thereby fostering prosperity in its cultural tourism industry.

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