

# CHENGDU USES RICH CULTURE TO INCREASE GLOBAL INFLUENCE



By YUAN SHENGGAO

As the birthplace of the ancient Shu civilization, Chengdu has not only inherited splendid Chinese civilization but breeds the unique and charming Tianfu culture, officials said.

The capital city of Southwest China's Sichuan province has given full play to its rich and unique advantages in cultural resources in recent years, making it shine on the global stage.

A series of international cultural activities — such as the 22nd General Assembly of the United Nations World Tourism Organization, the Chengdu Panda Asian Food Festival, and the 31st Summer World University Games and World Games — have highlighted the global influence of Chengdu.

Chengdu's rich cultural resources include Giant pandas,

UNESCO-listed Qingcheng Mountain scenic area and the Dujiangyan irrigation project, the Jinsha site as well as renowned Sichuan cuisine such as Sichuan hotpot, mapo tofu, and kongbao chicken.

They are becoming a fountain of creativity in the capital of Southwest China's Sichuan province.

Pandas are undoubtedly a cultural symbol of Chengdu and are famous worldwide. As Chengdu furthered its opening-up, pandas have become a feature of the city and have helped many intangible cultural heritage and cultural creativity products reach global markets.

Panda Post in Chengdu is a bear-themed post office chain. It has developed various related products and served tourists more than 10 million times since its inception in 2013.

It has become a feature for publicizing the cultures of Chengdu, its pandas and the postal service itself.

The Shuwajie flagship store opened in August. It offers postcards, domestic and foreign stamps, stamp albums on the Sichuan Basin culture and 100-plus varieties of cultural creativity products.

Cao Yalu, who is in charge of Panda Post, said: "It is not merely a popular tourist destination any more, but a synthesis of cultural creativity and life aesthetics." Shu embroidery, one of China's four major embroidery types, is a generic term of embroideries from Chengdu and its surrounding areas.

It has been inherited over generations and practitioners are noted for their wonderful skills.

The embroidery is being promoted to more people in Chengdu and has influenced some creative products.

Among the many goods based on Shu embroidery, Sheme, a local women's shoe brand, has become fashionable.

It has been showcased on the catwalks of London Fashion Week and Paris Haute Couture Fashion Week. Examples were also collected by a German leather and footwear museum for its original design.

Sheme has not only brought Shu embroidery to international fashion but promoted Chengdu cultural elements to the world. Sheme products have been exported to a few dozen countries and regions, including Italy, France, Germany, the United States and Russia.

Cultural creativity is not merely applied to physical things but digital ones too. Digital works featuring cultural creativity

have been seen in recent years, such as mobile game *Honor of Kings*, or *Arena of Valor* as its international version is called; and animated film *Ne Zha*.

To date, more than 1,000 digital cultural creativity companies are running in Chengdu. Among them are Tencent and Lifang Group.

Totally, 100-plus such enterprises have an annual output value of more than 100 billion yuan (\$13.84 billion). The industry chain is improving and its development has entered the fast lane.

Cultural creativity has become a pillar industry of Chengdu. Its proportion in GDP increased from 5.2 percent in 2017 to 10.4 percent in 2021.

The industry's added value had risen from 63.36 billion yuan to about 207.38 billion yuan during the same period.

Koung Manivong, a Lao student at Chengdu University, came to the city because of her love for Chinese culture.

"I heard a lot of Chinese stories when I was a child, which made me particularly interested in Chinese culture," she said.

She likes the character of Zhuge Liang, a military strategist of the Shu Kingdom (221-263), in the Romance of the Three Kingdoms, and feels excited to study in the same places where he lived. Zhuge is a symbol of wisdom and loyalty in traditional Chinese culture. For Three Kingdoms (220-280) culture fans, Wuhou Shrine Museum is a must-see place in Chengdu. It was built in memory of the heroes who died in that period.

In recent years, the museum has focused on the integrated development of culture and tourism, and developed China's first WeChat program of "Walking the Three Kingdoms." It is an immersive research and experience platform based on the culture of that time.

Temple of Marquis Wu and Jinli Ancient Street, both of which are scenic spots featuring the culture of the Three Kingdoms, have become important tourism business cards in Chengdu.

Xie Hui, director of the museum, said they have also tried

to carry out cross-border cooperation with schools, bookstores and companies to transform the research results of the Three Kingdoms into products spanning tourism, education and cultural creativity. Chengdu is also home to the Jinsha Site, which is believed to be one of the most significant archaeological finds in the 21st century.

The site demonstrates a thriving culture that existed in Chengdu more than 3,000 years ago.

The most famous relic is a round, golden ornament featuring the sun and immortal birds.

It is not only the main pattern of the city's logo, but is used by the State Administration of Cultural Heritage as a symbol of Chinese cultural heritage.

Since 2014, the Jinsha Site Museum has developed multilingual service platforms for mobile phones and launched several immersive exhibitions like Repeat of Jinsha, where visitors wear virtual reality glasses, and an archaeological project using digital technologies to break the boundaries of time and space.

From January 2022 to July this year, the archaeological project has received about 1.5 million visits.

Chengdu, renowned as "the city of museums", has the second-largest number of museums in the country.

In Chengdu, more old streets bearing historical features have

been turned into fashionable landmarks.

Wide and Narrow Alleys, located in the center of Chengdu, is a typical example of the successful integration of old areas with modern commerce on the basis of protecting the original buildings.

It comprises three parallel alleys called Kuan Alley (Wide Alley), Zhai Alley (Narrow Alley) and Jing Alley (Well Alley). Built during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), Wide and Narrow Alleys is one of the best-preserved ancient streets in Chengdu.

The place not only features distinctive cultural characteristics of Chengdu, but also introduces some fashion culture and entertainment brands such as Sanlian Bookstore and POP Mart to attract more young visitors.

Citang Street, another old street in downtown Chengdu, is currently under renovation and upgrading. Work-

ers are busy with construction to prepare for the opening of the street at the end of the year. It is a theme business community that retains the century-old street pattern and has the largest number of cultural preservation buildings in Chengdu.

The street will be transformed into a complex consisting of business forms including art gallery, artist space, new lifestyle tea house, immersive museum, art incubation park upon completion, providing new consumption experience for citizens.

Citang Street is an important part of Tianfu Cultural Park, which will be built into a cultural center of Chengdu and a core area to showcase the characteristics of a park city.

Qingyang district, a place that carries the essence of Chengdu's cultural roots, is speeding up the renewal projects of Tianfu Cultural Park and other tourism spots.



## MULTIMODAL TRANSPORT SYSTEM HELPS REGION WRITE NEW CHAPTER OF PROSPERITY

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Once a vital commercial center along the ancient Silk Road, Chengdu in Sichuan province is now writing a new chapter of prosperity through building a multimodal transport system, boosting its export-oriented economy and opening-up to the outside world.

On Sept 15, the first China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan road-rail combined transport international train — loaded with 30 containers of Chinese tea — departed from the Chengdu (Shuangliu) Air-Railway International Intermodal Port. It recently arrived at Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

The train, adopting the multimodal transport, went through Lanzhou in Gansu province to Kashgar in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, then transferred to the highway transport from the Xinjiang Irkistan and reached Uzbekistan through Kyrgyzstan.

"Compared with the traditional line, this multimodal train shortens the route by nearly 500 kilometers and saves three to five days of transport time," said Zheng Shuangliu, chairman of Chengdu Airport Modern Service Industry Development. Zheng added that the transportation mileage of the entire line is about 5,000 kilometers and shipping time is 15 to 20 days.

The train is the latest exploration of Chengdu's construction of an international channel system from a global perspective.

Since the initiative of jointly building the Silk Road Economic Belt

in September 2013, Chengdu has built a fast and smooth Eurasian Continental Bridge Economic Corridor and boosted the export-oriented economy.

The China-Europe (Chengdu) Railway Express was launched at Chengdu International Railway Port in 2015. After more than nine years of operation, the number of China-Europe (Chengdu) freight trains has been a priority of the country for many consecutive years.

"The number of trains opened is increasing year by year, and the operation is busier every year," said Wang Weikun, deputy general manager of Chengdu International Railway Express.

Wang said that the number of trains opened in Chengdu in 2021 was 30, and the number is now more than 3,000 a year. "We have witnessed Chengdu's continuous expansion of opening-up and deep integration into the Belt and Road Initiative."

The trains continue to ship out "Made in China" and "Made in Sichuan" goods such as electronic products, automobiles and machinery items. The trains have also brought in German cars, French wine, Russian wood, Polish beef and Italian furniture. It has changed the pattern of foreign trade in Chengdu and the western region.

For more than nine years, the China-Europe (Chengdu) freight trains have effectively guaranteed transportation of electronics, automobiles, smart home appliances, biomedicine and advanced materials. Chengdu helps to provide more than 300 key enterprises such as TCL, Dell, Lenovo and Geely with stable international logistics

solutions. Since the opening of the China-Europe freight trains, trade exchanges under the BRI have risen rapidly.

Statistics show that Chengdu's import and export to countries and regions involved in the BRI have maintained rapid double-digit growth. In the first half of this year, the foreign trade volume with countries and regions involved in the BRI reached 127.74 billion yuan (\$17.95 billion), a year-on-year increase of 13.8 percent.

The international trains departing from Chengdu are still expanding and a coordinated operation pattern of multi-dimensional trains such as the China-Europe (Asia) trains, the Western Land-Sea New Corridor trains, and the China-Laos (Vietnam) trains have been formed.

In the first half of this year, Chengdu opened four new international freight routes to Sri Lanka in Israel, Liege in Belgium, Mumbai in India and Kathmandu in Nepal. The number of regular international freight routes increased to 19.

The passenger throughput of the Chengdu Shuangliu International Airport and the Tianfu International Airport was 5.84 million, ranking first among Chinese cities. The international (regional) cargo and mail throughput was 165,000 tons, a year-on-year increase of 64.3 percent.

The passenger throughput of the Chengdu Shuangliu International Airport and the Tianfu International Airport was 5.84 million, ranking first among Chinese cities. The international (regional) cargo and mail throughput was 165,000 tons, a year-on-year increase of 64.3 percent.

With the continuous expansion of the "air plus land" channel, Chengdu is striving to build a strong open cooperation carrier and create a first-class business environment.

In the same month, the all-cargo direct flight from Chengdu to Chicago also made its maiden flight. The inaugural flight carried imported goods such as e-commerce retail items with a value of about 12 million yuan, and the outbound flight shipped Chinese-made electronic products and clothing goods with a value of nearly 10 million yuan to North America.

"The opening of the direct flight to Chicago will provide the Chengdu branches of multinationals such as Intel, Dell and Apple with greater and more efficient international aviation logistics and transportation capabilities, while further promoting the stability of the industrial chain and supply chain," said an official in charge of the Chengdu Port Logistics Office.

The company has transferred 90 percent of its European orders to Chengdu, hoping to respond more quickly to the needs of European customers through the China-Europe freight train," said Sun Xinsheng, head of TCL's Chengdu branch.

"More than 90 percent of the components required by TCL's six production lines in Poland's assembly base pass through the China-Europe freight train in Chengdu."

Relying on the Chengdu International Railway Port, the Asia-Europe Countries (Commonwealth) Perimeter has set up 19 characteristic country venues for Europe, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, Oceania and other places, of which 32 venues of Italy, Germany and France have been put into operation. A total of 14 major categories and more than 30,000 products from across the world — such as food and wine,

material and child health care, special beauty makeup and imported cars — are displayed and sold in one stop.

The Chengdu High-tech Comprehensive Bonded Zone, which has been in operation for more than 10 years, has formed a relatively complete integrated circuit industry chain consisting of IC design, wafer manufacturing, packaging, testing and supporting projects. It has attracted Fortune Global 500 companies such as Intel, Texas Instruments, Foxconn, Dell and Molex. This open area has also become the main force driving the growth of foreign trade in Sichuan.

Data from Chengdu Customs shows the total import and export volume of the Chengdu High-tech Comprehensive Bonded Zone was 168 billion yuan last year, a year-on-year increase of 6 percent. The trade volume has ranked first among all national comprehensive bonded zones since 2018.

Through deep participation in the international division of labor, Chengdu's position in the regional industrial and value chains has been continuously improved.

The city has become a hot spot for multinational companies. By the end of 2021, 312 Fortune Global 500 companies had settled in Chengdu and the city's foreign direct investment ranks first in mid-west China. The number of foreign consulates approved to be established in Chengdu has reached 21, also ranking first in the midwest. To date, Chengdu has established friendships or cooperative relations with 104 cities from 58 countries around the world.

The number of trains opened is increasing year by year, and the operation is busier every year. We have witnessed Chengdu's continuous expansion of opening-up and deep integration into the Belt and Road Initiative."

Wang Weikun, deputy general manager of Chengdu International Railway Express

## HAPPINESS PUT FIRST BY CITY DEVELOPERS

By YUAN SHENGGAO

When talking about quality living environments, Chengdu in Southwest China's Sichuan province must be mentioned because it has topped the list of China's happiest cities for 13 consecutive years. It is also one of the most attractive cities for college graduates and young job seekers, according to Fortune magazine.

People love Chengdu not only because of its elegant, fashionable, optimistic and inclusive atmosphere. More importantly, people can enjoy a warm, high-quality and poetic life there, local officials said.

In recent years, the Chengdu government has implemented 10 major "happy life" projects.

It aims to transform the development achievements of the city into an experience that residents can feel and to improve their sense of gain and happiness.

For example, the city started the Xunxiang Road project in 2019 to recreate an outdoor plum blossom corridor depicted in an ancient poem. The "fragrance lasts for 10 kilometers from Qingyang Palace to Huanyuan", wrote Chinese poet Lu Ya in the Song Dynasty (960-1279).

Lu described the scene as he rode through Chengdu and became fascinated by the plum blossoms he could smell along the way.

Running from the Shijie Bridge on Shudu Avenue to Qinghuibei Bridge on the Second Ring Road, the Xunxiang Road project measures about 10 km.

Many varieties of plum have been planted on both sides of the road. When the blossoms are in full bloom in winter, people can enjoy the fragrance just like Lu did 800 years ago.

Other ancient poets like Li Bai, Du Fu and Su Dongpo also visited Chengdu and left famous works through the ages.

Wang Ying, who has worked in Chengdu after graduating from university, receives many friends from across the country every year. "Everyone likes to come to the city. In addition to going to famous scenic spots and landmarks, what they like most is to experience the lifestyle here, just like Chengdu people," she said.

Statistics show that in 2021, Chengdu introduced more than 100,000 young talents. The city has won the title of "one of China's best talent-attracting cities" and "one of the most attractive Chinese cities in the eyes of foreign talents" for three consecutive years.

Urban renewal is another focus of Chengdu to improve people's sense of happiness. Many old residential communities have been rejuvenated in terms of appearance and functions these past few years.

Chengdu Huanyuan community, which was built in 1998,

started renovation in 2021. "In addition to the aging infrastructure, the old community mostly lacked a variety of convenient service functions, which we have considered during the transformation," officials said. "We have added facilities suitable for the old and the young, and built part of the road into an ecological fitness trail" they added.

Since the community is close to Du Fu Thatched Cottage, where the great Tang Dynasty (618-907) poet once lived, the name, logo and some walls of the community now display this history.

In 2021, Chengdu completed renovating 313 communities, benefiting 94,000 residents. The city has continued to deepen urban renewal with renovation projects of 556 old communities started in the first half of this year.

To provide welfare for its residents, Chengdu has striven to make full use of idle land — such as under bridges and rooftops — to create new spaces integrating leisure, entertainment and sports.

Wutong Fitness Square, which is close to the Phoenix Mountain Outdoor Music Park, is one such place. The sports center has set up a number of basketball courts and table tennis spots, as well as some simple fitness equipment.

This year, Chengdu plans to develop 200 demonstration projects that utilize idle land and the construction scope will be expanded.