

Bashu Culture and Du Fu's Poetic Space

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Abstract: Bashu culture has an important position in Chinese culture. Du Fu's poems on the theme of Bashu account for a considerable portion of his poems, due to his long-term stay in Bashu and the vital effects of Bashu culture had on him. The unique Bashu culture enriched his creativity, and greatly expanded his poetic space. Du Fu's Bashu poems show the natural scenery, human geography, local customs and practices, and the cultural personality of the Bashu people. In addition, Du Fu combined organically his care for the fate of his nation and the people with Bashu culture, to realize more abundant and profound space of his poems.

Keywords: Bashu culture; Du Fu; poetic space; abundance; profundity

Bashu sub-culture enjoys a special status in the spectrum of Chinese culture and it has had a profound impact on Chinese culture and literature. The works of writers and poets, who had a close relationship with Bashu culture, have had a major influence on Chinese literature, even world literature. Du Fu made Bashu his home over a long period of time. Bashu culture had influence on his poetry creation in many aspects, at multiple levels and perspectives. In terms of the study of his Bashu poems, there are many classifications, so it is necessary to study the Bashu poems of Du Fu from the perspective of Bashu culture. His Bashu poems have characteristics like multiplicity in theme, abundance and profundity in content and emotion. Therefore, the word "space" is selected in this paper to present the abundance, profundity and multi-faceted characteristics of his poems. The Bashu poems of Du Fu are abundant in quantity and perfect in artistic technique. They highlight the all-embracing artistic characteristics in Du Fu's poems. It can be said that the Bashu culture helped Du Fu becoming the "sage of poets".

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Chinese culture is a pluralistic river-source culture with the Yangtze River and the Yellow River as the main source, absorbing other cultures in the surrounding areas. The Yangtze River culture is composed of the Bashu culture of the upper reaches of the River, Chu-xiang culture of the middle reaches, and Wu-yue culture of the lower reaches. The cultural circle of Bashu is one of the seven cultural circles of the Bronze Age in China (Li, 2003, p. 63), and an indispensable part of Chinese culture, with a special status. Bashu culture has a long history and created a system of its own. It has continuity in both history and pattern of manifestation. Wushan man(a kind of homo habilis) and Ziyang man(a kind of homo sapiens) lived in Bashu before the birth of civilization. Then Bashu experienced the unique Grey Pottery Culture Age, Stone Culture Age, Jade Culture Age and Bronze Culture Age. A general outline of the generation and development of Bashu culture is shaped by civilizations and cultures ranging from the early city civilization of the Chengdu Baodun, Yinshang Western Zhou Dynasty of the Guanghan Sanxingdui Ruins and the Chengdu Jinsha Ruins, to the Kaiming Dynasty Wangs in the Warring States Period, the legendary Can Cong, Bo Guan, Yu Fu, Du Yu, and Kaiming. They verify the continuity in both history and the manifestation pattern of Bashu culture, and provide strong evidence of the Chengdu Plain's status as the center of the development of ancient civilizations on the upper reaches of the Yangtze River (Liu&Tan, 2003).

Bashu culture, with a long history and a system of its own features, plays an important role in the evolution of Chinese culture. Mr. Yang Yi made a brilliant exposition on this point in *The Development of Chinese National Culture* and the *Ethnic Minorities in Southwest China*. Bashu is likened to a "Tai Chi Eye" with a special role in the process of the south-north advancement of Chinese culture in a vivid and



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visible way. He said, "Since we are talking about the 'Tai Chi Movement', it is necessary to look for where the 'Tai Chi Eye' lies. The location of the 'Tai Chi Eye' is critical and is the important factor of decisive value of the pattern and the result of the movement. It is worth noting that Bashu in the west and the Taihu Basin in the east have played a special and critical role in the south-north Tai Chi movement. Apparently, it is not too outrageous to regard Bashu as a 'Tai Chi Eye'. History has repeatedly told us that in more than 2,000 years of the cultural community of the Chinese nation, 'ancient China would separate after a long time united, and also it would do the opposite after long time separated.' The powerful political groups who captured Bashu would have a good chance to unify the whole China" (Yang, 2012). Due to the special status of the "Tai Chi Eye," the ruling class of successive Chinese dynasties attached great importance to the governance and development of Bashu, and one of the important

measures is immigration. In *Han Book · Biography of Xiao He and Cao Shen* it records, “All of Qin immigrants made their home in Shu” (Ban, 2012). In *Chronicles of Huayang · Chronicles of Shu*, “After King Hui of Qin State, and Qin Shi Huang, the first emperor of Qin, conquered the six vassal states, they moved gallant people into Shu” (Liu, 1984). In the Han and Tang Dynasties, immigrants accounted for the rapid increase in population of Bashu. Zhuge Liang advised Liu Bei to capture Bashu and to bring a substantial number of talents and common people into Shu. This was immigration, as a matter of fact. “Huguang people fill Sichuan” was also a large-scale immigration in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Immigration policy objectively promoted the development of the politics, economy and culture of Bashu. Ban Gu wrote in *Ode to the Two Capitals*, “The wealth of Guanzhong (the central Shaanxi Plain) was close to Shu” (Li, 1977). Zhuge Liang praised Bashu as “Tianfu soil (Tianfu refers to self-sufficient and strategically located region)” (Pei, 1982). Chang Qu named Bashu, “Land of abundant natural resources” and “Tianfu” in the *Chronicles of Huayang* (Liu, 1984). Chen Zi’ang wrote in *Report of Military Affairs of Shuchuan*, “Our country is bestowed with Bashu, a wealth of Tianfu” (Dong et al. 2001). The economic strength of Bashu exceeded Guanzhong in the period of the Eastern Han Dynasty. In the Tang Dynasty, there was the saying “Yangzhou the first, and Yizhou the second.” Yangzhou was ranked in first place and Yizhou (Chengdu today) was ranked in second place in terms of prosperity of industrial and commercial economy. Chengdu’s economy was the most developed in China during the Song Dynasty. “Chengdu’s economic prosperity was unequalled” (Wen, 1936). Chengdu, in the Yuan Dynasty, was an international metropolis described by Marco Polo, and it was among the most prosperous cities in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Rulers of successive dynasties realized unification

of the country by occupying Bashu to continuously cultivate their strength and take advantage of geographical characteristics. The unifications were similar in the Qin, Han, Jin and Sui Dynasties. It has been repeatedly proven by history that Bashu was the decisive advantage for unification of the country.

Bashu is critical as political territory, as well as cultural and literary territory. Lu Xun (1995) said, “China has roots in Taoism”, while Taoism was established by Zhang Ling based on the culture of immortality of the ancient Shu. Here two points are disclosed: Taoism has a close relationship with the Shu culture and the Bashu culture has a special status in Chinese culture. The culture of immortality of the ancient Shu has its origin in the protohistory of the ancestors of the ancient Shu like Can Cong, Bo Guan, and Yu Fu, over one thousand years earlier than the origin of Taoism. Bashu culture attaches importance to “immortality,” and sufficient evidence can be discovered in the legend of the immortal Shu King, the archaeological discoveries of the Sanxingdui and Jinsha Ruins. Legends present the extraordinary imagination of the tribes of the Shu King, that is, to become immortal, like Can Cong, Bo Guan and Yu Fu, “Who became celestial beings,” the Wang King turned into a cuckoo and the Kaiming King flew to heaven and became a magical beast at the gate of heaven. The idea that “A human body can fly like a bird” is vividly demonstrated in statues like the Bronze Man Body Bird Feet Statue, the Man Face Bird Body Statue in the bronze tree No. II, and numerous cuckoo statues with an eagle’s head, particularly the bronze birds with prominent crown feathers. The priest image carved in the jade cong of the Jinsha Ruins expressed that man directly turned into a bird. The Sun and Immortal Bird Ornament and Frog-like gold wares also show the meaning of, “The sun is the soul of heaven, while the moon is the soul of earth, and they are jointly called a god.” The soul of

the human mind and the soul of the body integrated into one with the sun and the moon thus generating the god by unity of heaven and man, who flies to the sun and the moon and becomes immortal. This idea of ascending to the heaven and becoming immortal is the origin of the immortality culture of the ancient Shu. Taoism is divided into six major parts, and the six parts is briefly summarized as a word “Tao.” “Tao begets one, namely infinity; one begets two, namely *Yin-Yang*; two begets three, namely *Yin-Yang* coordination; three begets everything, namely all the things in the world.” “Tao” expresses the infinite space for imagination and development, which is the distinctive interpretation and discovery of the issue of human destiny by the thinking of the Chinese nation. “Tao” is not only an expression of the clear theme of respect for nature, quietism, life value, and harmonious development, it also provides inspiration for people’s unlimited interest in exploring the world, and their further appreciate the idea of “flying to the great pure, forgetting about power and natural law, and abandoning uncommonly flowery language.” The Chengdu people’s way of life and their life attitude are generated from the immortality culture of the ancient Shu, characterized by a leisurely and carefree state as natural and smooth as floating clouds and flowing water (Tan, 2009).

The immortality culture of the ancient Shu has had a profound influence on Chinese culture and Chinese literature. Many writers and poets had close relationships with the Bashu culture in history, and their works always exude eternal artistic charm. “Immortality has its origin in Shu” and “Taoism has its origin in Shu.” Both jointly determine “Masters of Chinese literature have their origin in Shu” (Tan, 2009). The immortality culture of the ancient Shu, as an important part of Bashu culture, stimulates the creativity and imagination of scholars to the largest extent. There is no essential difference between “Celestial beings” ascending to the heavens and

becoming immortal and writers and poets traveling in the space of art. “Tao” has similar interpretations about the world as literature’s grasp of the world. Therefore, “Celestial beings” and “Tao” play an enlightening role in the thinking and creation of writers and poets. “Masters of Chinese literature have their origin in Shu” finding the internal logical relationships between “Celestial beings” and “Tao.” The writers and poets who had relationships with the Bashu culture can be understood in the following two aspects. First, the writers and poets who were born and grew up in Bashu had long been influenced by the Bashu culture and their cultural personality was formed accordingly. “Celestial beings” and “Tao” opened the space for artistic innovation and imagination, and their literary achievements have had a significant impact on Chinese and world literature. Since the ancient times, Bashu has produced numerous gifted scholars like SimaXiangru, Yang Xiong, Chen Zi’ang, Li Bai, Su Shi, Zhang Wentao, Li Diaoyuan and Guo Moruo. They are encyclopedic cultural giants, and they had in-depth relationships with the Bashu culture. Second, they are the scholars and writers who came to Shu region and made Shu their home. Take the Tang Dynasty as an example, “Four Literary Eminences in Early Tang,” namely Wang Bo, Luo Binwang, Lu Zhaolin and Yang Jiong, had relationships with Bashu to varying degrees. In the heyday of the Tang Dynasty, there were famous poets like Du Fu, Cen Shen, Gao Shi, Zhang Shuo and others. They made Bashu their home, or secured an official position in Bashu, or visited Bashu as an envoy. Poets in the middle and late Tang Dynasty like Yuan Zhen, Liu Yuxi and Zheng Gu left famous masterpieces in Bashu.

Du Fu, undoubtedly, is the most important representative of all writers and poets who were not born or grew up in Shu, and he had profound relationships with the Bashu culture. It was his

own choice with historical inevitability for Du Fu to make Shu his home. At that time, despite of the recovery of Chang'an, the prices were soaring and there were beggars and bodies of the starved everywhere. Henan, the hometown of Du Fu, was still occupied by An and Shi rebel forces, so he had a home he could not return to. This was what Du Fu was confronted with. Where should he go? It was a practical issue rather than a philosophical proposition for the poet. The western Shu kept its temporary stability, and naturally Du Fu regarded Chengdu as an ideal place. In the poem *Departure from Qinzhou* (Qinzhou is Tianshui City of Gansu Province today), the poet wrote, "Being clumsy and lazy, I am down on my luck. I fail to feed and clothe myself, so I would like to go to well-off area (for the sake of food) and southern area (for the sake of warm climate)" (Qiu, 1979). (All the poems of Du Fu mentioned in this paper are out of this version.) "Southern area" mentioned in the poem refers to Bashu, as the poet believed that the bread-and-butter issue of the whole family could be solved there. His life was changed greatly by his entry into Shu. The "great change" is more important than the family glory and self-confidence of the poet namely "my grandfather has outstanding achievements in poetry writing," the consciousness of poetry creation namely "poetry writing is in the blood of our family," and the experience in study and poetry writing namely "read wide and you will wisely write." Thanks to this "great change," "his exploration to the essence of poems was not ruined by his position as Zuo Shi Yi (advisory proposal officer) (Feng, 2003, p.63). The magical land of Bashu provided a boundless world for the poet. His eyes were brightened, and the world of poetry creation suddenly became light and spacious with a breadth of vision.

Throughout his life-long poetry creation, the poems on the theme of Bashu take a prominent status among all his works. They are unmatched

by any works in other periods in his life due to the substantial number, rich and profound content and artistic techniques approximate to perfection. Du Fu naturally became a typical poet who entered Shu. According to the statistics, Du Fu wrote 906 poems (708 themes) when he resided in Bashu, accounting for 63% in the more than 1450 existing poems of Du Fu. Among these 906 poems, there are 30 poems on travel (24 themes), 255 poems on Chengdu (206 themes), 147 Zi Lang poems (170 themes) and 451 Yun Kui poems (331 themes). Du Fu had brilliant achievements in poetry writing, which largely benefited from Bashu culture. The Bashu land created a hitherto unknown novelty of the natural world and human world for the poet. By this stimulation, the poetic space of Du Fu developed at multiple levels and in multiple dimensions. His Bashu poetry is of diversified themes, which show the beautiful and magnificent natural world and a human world of the profound culture of Bashu, and further expresses, to the largest extent, the richness and profundity of his emotion.

The Bashu land is the concentration of splendid China, inclusive of almost all the geographical scenery like plains, plateaus, hills, mountains, and grasslands. It has the characteristics of both the luxuriant green of graceful South China and the wide and deep plateaus of North China. In *Preface of Travel to Shu*, Wang Bo wrote, "Bashu has a stunning landscape in the world, due to its verdant and breathtaking mountains, and roaring rivers" (Dong et al., 2001). The geography of mountains and rivers, and other natural scenery in Bashu have the characteristics of "grandness, steepness, quietness and grace" in one. Pot-like mountains and rivers of Bashu and "thousands of rolls of" land of abundance (Tan, 2011). The magical natural world of Bashu inevitably opened the boundless imagination space for the poet, and stimulated his inestimable creativity. Driven by the social situation of the Tang

Dynasty, Du Fu resided in Bashu, and had intimate contact with the mountains and rivers and the land of abundance of Bashu. Consequentially, he left wonderful poems about Bashu land.

Chengdu is both the center and the essence of Bashu land. Chengdu people's way of life and their attitude towards life are leisurely and carefree just like floating clouds and flowing water, under the influence of the immortality culture of the ancient Shu. "Chengdu is a city where you never want to leave once you reside" can be discovered in many works of poets in the Tang Dynasty. In the poem of *Shu Zhong*, Fang Gan wrote, "Most of the wanderers did not return home after they visited Shu. In the breeze of spring, Shu wine gave forth a deep and fragrant flavor. They were a little bit drunken freely and leisurely humming a tune of bamboo beside Cardamom lace" (Peng et al., 1999, p.653). In the poem of Sikong Shu *Seeing Offing Liu Zhen for His Travel to Shu*, "The high walls were connected to the blue clouds, streams of bustling people busily coming into and going out of the fair. On the festival when Yi people offered sacrifices to King Bamboo, tung flowers were blooming and parent magpies fed their young in the tung trees. People drank to forecast a harvest in the coming year, and played *Gu-qin* (a musical instrument) to welcome the King Bamboo. The celebration lasted until the sun set. I always heard that visitors stayed here without homesickness" (Peng et al., 1999, p.293). In the poem *Seeing off Xu Tang to Shu of Zhang Qiao*, "In the Shu pass, there were a substantial number of apes. I drove my horse to climb the mountain and lived on the top of the mountain when it was late. When it was raining, I saw the sun was hidden behind the clouds. Despite the fine scenery of Shu, I did not want to get old in Jincheng" (Peng et al., 1999, p.638).

As a scholar who was neither born nor grew up in Shu, what was Du Fu's impression of Chengdu? It is a strangeness completely different from that

of the North. The strangeness of Chengdu was fully represented in his poem *Chengdu Fu*, "There were spreading shades of dusk, and my body was enveloped by the brilliance of the setting sun. My travel witnessed the changes of mountains and rivers, and in the twinkling of an eye I was on the other side of the sky. I came across strangers one after another, and had no idea when I would be back to my hometown. The mighty river flowed eastward, and I would reside in the strange land even longer. The high-rise stood in great numbers in the city with green trees in the severe winter. In the bustling metropolis, people played musical instruments, sang and danced to extol the good times. I was unable to adapt to this gorgeous urban life, and had no choice but to look sideways at the distant mountains. When darkness fell, the birds went home. There was not any news from the Central Plains in the flames of war. The rising moon hung in the sky with twinkling stars added radiance and beauty to each other. Lots of people had resided in a strange land as guests since the ancient times, why should I be sad alone?" "The changes of mountains and rivers," "the other side of the sky" and "strangers" are representations of Bashu's strangeness due to its "mystique." Du Fu was amazed at everything in Bashu like layer upon layer walls (big city wall, small city wall, and Zhoucheng wall) of the metropolis, the high-rise and gorgeous houses in great numbers, the hustle and bustle of the marketplace and the artistic atmosphere of "people's instrument playing, singing and dancing." Different from the severe cold in the North, it was warm and humid in Chengdu. There were verdant trees in the city even in the twelfth lunar month. Du Fu immediately found comfort in the sense of "strangeness" provided by the beautiful scenery and abundant products of Shu plus its compound human historical accumulation. Chengdu soon became Du Fu's poetic dwelling place. Chengdu was of significance for the whole

life and poetry creation of Du Fu. Feng Zhi wrote in *Biography of Du Fu*, "When people talk about Du Fu, they neglect the places of his birth and death, but will never forget about Du Fu's Thatched Cottage in Chengdu" (Qiu, 1979, p.96). The poems on the theme of Chengdu have become one indispensable wonderful movement of the magnificent symphony of Du Fu's poetry.

The leisure and laziness of Chengdu can completely dispel Du Fu's tension and anxiety brought by his wandering. The poet was natural and unrestrained, and self-adapted, as free as floating clouds and flowing water, just like Chengdu people. Du Fu was observing and appreciating everything around him and presented almost without any omission in his poems. He opened the poetic space from another direction. Centered on the thatched cottage, he slowly unfolded the beautiful and gentle natural picture scroll of Shu in his poems,

"On the west side of Wanli Bridge, there stood my shabby thatched cottage. There were few visitors to my cottage. Baihuatan Lake kept me company so that I could accommodate myself to circumstances," "Coming out of Bi Ji Fang, I departed from western suburb for my thatched cottage," "Covered with cogon grass, my thatched cottage stood against the city wall on the high land along the Jinjiang River. From the cottage, I could overlook the lush countryside scenery." "My thatched cottage was located to the west of Wanli Bridge and to the north of Baihuatan Lake," "My thatched cottage was in the west of Shisun Street," "Next to the Jinjiang River, I built a thatched cottage," "The thatched cottage was in the north of the village and in the west of the city" and so on. The poet was surprised at everything, like the dragonfly flying up and down, the waterfowl drilling in and out of the lake, the round lotus and the tiny lotus leaf and the fine wheat and light flower. In this grand picture of nature, there were birds like cormorant, swallow, gull, Oriole, young mallard,

Heron, and flower ducks, insects like butterfly, dragonfly, bee and ant, flowers and trees like clove, Rhoeadine, cape jasmine, loquat, willow, lotus, peach tree, plum tree, mulberry, pine tree, bamboo, and alder. The colorful natural sceneries were full of boundless vitality, and deeply attracted the poet. In the poems of Du Fu, the natural world is always bright, fresh and natural, as beautiful as pictures, "The willow branches were swinging and pairs of loquats were emitting fragrance" (*Farmhouse*); "The fish swayed its body in the drizzle, spitting bubbles, and happily swam to the surface of the water. The swallow's soft body, in the gentle breeze, leaned over the misty sky..." (*Against the threshold it commanded a distant view, inducing a feeling of well-being*); "With the breeze it sneaks into the tranquil night and nurtures every spring life spontaneously and silently..." (*Delighting in Rain on A Spring Night*); "The moon is hidden by the clouds, with the fragrance of spring flowers" (*Qian Yi*); "There were two or three families living in the quiet bamboo grove beside the deep river, and the red flowers were in full bloom against the white ones" (the third poem of *A Lonely Flower Seeker along the River*); "The blue river before Huang Shi Tower (a cemetery for monks) was flowing to the east. People felt sleepy and would like to rest on the breeze of spring. A cluster of bloomy peach blossom leaped to the eyes. Which one did I prefer, the deep red or the light red?" (The fifth poem of *A Lonely Flower Seeker along the River*); "The path was covered with branches of rich multicolored decorations. The branches were drooping with blooming flowers. On the petals, there were dancing butterflies. Orioles were singing merrily beside the path." (The sixth poem of *A Lonely Flower Seeker along the River*); "All the flowers came into bloom at the same time, and the petals would fall off one after another. I wanted to talk with flowers if they could bloom slowly." (The seventh poem of *A Lonely Flower Seeker along the River*). These poems added

fresh and bright, delicate and gentle paragraphs to the magnificent symphony. Throughout the poems of Du Fu, there are substantial fine pieces of writing chanting nature in a delicate and rich way only in Chengdu. This is the result of close contact and integration between Du Fu's emotional world and the beautiful natural scenery of Bashu.

The Zilang and Kuizhou poetry of Du Fu differ greatly from his Chengdu poetry, even though they were all depictions of natural landscapes and scenery. Three main reasons account for the differences. First, the poet did not have enough time to taste the natural landscape and scenery in exile, which were not exquisitely expressed in the beautiful poems; second, different from the fresh elegant mountains and rivers of Chengdu, the landscape and scenery in Zilang and Kuizhou are particularly magnificent. The poet preferred to depict the major characteristics, and represented in the broad, lofty and simple and vigorous poetic state; third, Du Fu epitomized the classic poetry of China, and constantly pursued for innovative techniques of poetic expression, and there were often changes in his techniques for varying objects. These were signs in the Zilang poetry of Du Fu. In *Song of Yuewang Tower* he sketched a map of one hundred miles of northern Sichuan, "Blue tiles and red ridges set off each other. The Yangtze River under the Yuewang Tower was deep and clear." He described in *Climbing Niutou Temple* a macroscopic view the Niutou Temple on Niutou Mountain in southwestern Zizhou, "The rolling green hills brought an endless awakening of spring. On that day, I climbed Niutou Mountain." In *Song of Langshan Mountain* grand and wide landscape painting of Langzhou was presented, "On the Tomb Sweeping Day, people of Langzhong worshipped their ancestors and gods in Lingshan Mountain. There were white flowers and white banners all over the mountain. In the meantime, Yutai Mountain was filed with green yarns in the

north of the city. Over a long period, the white flowers and green yarns were hung on the pine trees. The worship took place on the surface of the river and on the land at the same time. People blew and beat, sang and danced so loudly that the rocks were almost cracked." The poet described the great scenery even for the less well-known places like Tongquan County of Langzhou. He constructed a grand poetic picture, "The stream flew into the river from the top of the mountain, which was gorgeous scenery. It looked spectacular today."

The landform of Kuizhou best embodies the grand and magnificent mountains and rivers of Ba. Du Fu was completely engrossed in sketching the major characteristics and expressed in a broad, lofty and simple poetic state. The first poem of *Ten Quatrains of Kuizhou Song* gave a summary of the general condition of Kuizhou, "In the east of Zhongba, Kuizhou was famous for great mountains. The river had been running in the Three Gorges. Baidi City was located on the top of the natural defense of the Qutang Gorge, which was of strategic importance. The Qutang Gorge was even more breathtaking than the Bailao Pass." The historical sites and scenic spots were presented one after another in Du Fu's poetry, like Qutang Gorge, Yanyu Heap, Fish Complex, Eight Matrix Graph, Ranghe East, Ranghe West, and Gaotang Taoist Temple. The Qutang Gorge was described in *The Two Mountains of Qutang Gorge*, "Why was the Three Gorges so well-known among people? The two majestic mountains namely Chijia Mountain and Baiyan Mountain, along both sides of the Yangtze River, added magnificence to the gate of the Three Gorges. The precipices ran into the sky and went down to the bottom of the river. The aged people walked on the precipices, and the flood dragon hid itself in the Dragon Palace underwater. Lady Xi He, the Goddess of the Sun, was driving the cart of the Sun on a winter day. When she arrived at the two

mountains with steep cliffs, she was afraid that the cart would turn over, so she drove away from the mountains.” In volume 57 of *Fang Yu Sheng Lan*, it was recorded, “The Qutang Gorge was in the east of Kuizhou, previously named Xiling Gorge, which was the gate of the Three Gorges. The two mountains stood facing each other with one river in the middle, which looked like a gate.” In the poem, the poet gave an account for no sunlight on Kui Men on a winter day, as Xi He was afraid of turning over the cart and she avoided driving on the mountains. This idea was imaginative and skillfully designed. The poet intended to highlight the breathtaking mountains. It was the same in *Meditation on the Past at the Qutang Gorge*, “Thousands of ditches and rivers rushed down in the southwest of China and poured into innumerable mountains and valleys, just like a strong enemy splitting the cliff of Qutang into two parts. The land and mountain root cracked, the Yangtze River flew from the west where the moon came out. The steep Qutang Gorge and Baidi stood opposite each other, and the lofty and precipitous balcony was hidden in Kongqu. Compared with the magnificent Three Gorges dredged by Da Yu, the great power of nature was more amazing.” The poem of *Yan Yu Heap* intended to highlight the extraordinary odd risk of Yan Yu Heap, “A pile of rocks stood majestic in the strong current of Qutang Gorge. A large part of the huge rocks was above water when it was cold and the water was shallow. A head of cattle was submerged in the water to worship the mountains and rivers. Even though people were blessed by the god of mountains and rivers, they dared not drive boats when the Yan Yu Heap was as large as a horse. This was a god-made obstacle in the river, and boats had the risk of turning over on cold days, as the boats was close to the eaves of the houses, and the falling eaves may hurt people. Therefore, people untied the mooring lines of the boats.” In volume 148 of *History of Chinese*

Geography, “Yan Yu Heap, of a circumference of twenty zhang (a unite of length), was in Qutang Kou in the center of the Shu River, two hundred paces to the southwest of Baidi City. The water was shallow in winter and the heap was exposed above water. The water rose in summer and the heap was several zhang under water. The heap was so hard that people driving boats dared not to approach it. Therefore, it was called Hesitation Heap.” Du Fu wrote many poems about the natural landscape of Kuizhou, like, “The rocks of the Qutang Gorge were too hard to drill” (*Water Diversion*). “The Baiyan Mountain stood separately from the mountains, rooted beside the deep river. Other peaks were close to the earth, while you were the unique one to be near to the high sky” (*Baiyan Water*). “The deep river imported into the sea finally. In the fascinating autumn, the cart of the sun was almost covered by the mist” (*Brushwood Gate*). “The Gorge was as long as 4,000 li, and hundreds of streams imported into the river” (*Residing as a Visitor*). “The torrents of water were thunderous, and the mist covered by trees of emerald green and rattans of deep-green dazed the sun and the moon” (*Baidi*). “The surging waves were roaring inside Wuxia Gorge. The dark clouds overhead were over the ground closely” (*Autumn Urged Poetic Mood, Poem I*). “Boundless leaves fell from the woods, rustling; the endless river was rolling everlastingly” (*Mountaineering*). Du Fu wrote these poems for the grand landscape, with a broad, lofty and deep poetic state. The poetry was of extraordinary momentum, and great power.

Bashu, the concentrated splendid China, deeply attracted Du Fu, and the poet was completely absorbed in the secluded and beautiful gardens and magnificent mountains. He put the worldly fame behind him, and acquired a tranquil, natural and unrestrained way of life. The pastoral scenery and mountains and rivers of Bashu had been always regarded as the aesthetic objects in Du Fu’s poetry

and were depicted heartily in his work, like Chengdu poetry, Zilang poetry and Yunkui poetry. It was rare in his poems of other periods in terms of the colorful content and diversified techniques of artistic expression. Bashu poetry was an important aspect of Du Fu's multi-faceted creativity. It largely enriched the content of his poetry and further expanded his poetic space.

Du Fu resided in Bashu for a long time, and had deep experiences and a thorough understanding of the cultural personality of the Ba and Shu people, and the local customs of Bashu. His Bashu poetry was largely enriched with these two aspects as performance objects. Some essentials of the cultural personality of the Ba and Shu people were vividly revealed in his poetry, and the folk customs of Bashu were displayed critically as well.

The Shu culture has its inner essence in finding contentment in poverty, the pursuit of perfection, and harmony and tolerance. This is fully reflected in the Bashu poetry of Du Fu. Chengdu people's leisurely and carefree way of life and attitude towards life like floating clouds and flowing rivers, is derived from the ancient Shu culture. As the county magistrate described in *A Neighbor in the North*, "He resigned from his post office to retire from the world. He lived in the fresh air of a bamboo forest along the clear river. How leisurely and carefree he was! When he tasted good wine, and wrote poetry, he was very satisfied. From time to time, he visited my thatched cottage." The regular visitor loved drinking and was adept at writing poetry. He visited the poet casually, and an elegant and detached image stands vividly on the paper. The poet had close associations with another neighbor as well. In the poem, *A Neighbor in the South*, "There was a gentleman in a black scarf along the Jinjiang River. He harvested many taros and chestnuts in the garden every year, so he did not live a poor life. He had visitors very often, and his children were used to the visitors. The birds often

foraged on the stairs as they were tame. The river was only four or five feet deep in autumn, and the ferry boat held just two or three people. It was late, and the green bamboo forest was gradually shrouded in darkness. Mr. Jinli saw us off at the brushwood gate when the moon was just rising." Mr. Jinli, in a black scarf, described in this poem, was content with poverty and devoted to spiritual things. He was upright, sincere and enthusiastic and not unsociable. Even the ordinary people around them would like to keep contact with him. They got along so well and casually. In the poem, *A Friendly and Kind-hearted Farmer Invited Me to His Home for Drinking Good Wine When I Took the Position of Yan Zhong Cheng*, there described the casual invitation mentioned in, "I took a leisurely walk in scandals to admire the beautiful spring. At the sight of the bright red blossoms and green willows, I was flooded by mixed feelings. A friendly and kind-hearted farmer invited me to his home to taste good wine on the day of the spring equinox," the openness mentioned in, "He asked his wife to open a big jar of wine and poured the wine into a basin for me," and the importunities mentioned in, "I arrived at the farmer's home early in the morning, and drank there the whole day from seven o'clock in the morning to seven o'clock in the evening. The farmer asked his family loudly to bring me fruits and nuts. When I stood up to take leave of his family, he grabbed me tightly on my arm. In the evening, the moon was rising, he still asked me to stay and drink more." Where he was living in this environment, he was deeply infected by the cultural atmosphere. He wrote in the poem *Arrival of My Guest*, "There was a pool of spring water around the cottage. I saw a flock of seagulls flying around and round every day. The path through the courtyard was filled with flowers, which was not cleaned for the respectable guest. The gate of my cottage was open especially for your visit. I had simple dishes at home as the market was far away. I did not have

extravagant meals to treat you due to my poor condition as you know. Would you like to drink with my neighbor? If you agree, I would call him across the fence.” In the interesting atmosphere of “spring water” and “a flock of seagulls,” the guest made a visit without prior notice and the host treated him with courtesy. Everything was as natural and as free as floating clouds and flowing rivers. This poem suggests that the poet had been infected by Shu culture.

For the Ba culture represented by Kuizhou, Du Fu had a deep understanding of the toughness and righteousness of the Ba people. As described in the *Boatman*, “The males of Kuizhou Gorge preferred driving the boat on the river to studying and taking a post. They even regarded wealth more important than their lives. The rich people drove big ships while the poor drove small boats for a living. Children just read a little and went to learn boat driving when they were older. The outstanding seamen drove skillfully and stably on the roaring waves. They departed in the morning from Baidi City and arrived at Jiangling in the afternoon. It only took one day to complete the journey of one thousand li. I could not believe it only when I saw it by myself. The Qutang Gorge and the Tiger Beach were extremely dangerous, however, the boatmen sailed across easily with skilled techniques. It was said that the people here were narrow-minded, chasing after fame and gain. There was a barrier between scholars in the south and in the north. If there were no talents in this area, why was there the former residence of the great poet Qu Yuan? It could be concluded that people had to give up study and chase for wealth forced by life.” The people of Kuizhou were familiar with water and took risks fearlessly. This was the best proof for the braveness and righteousness of the Ba people, however, it was satirized that Kuizhou people just took risks for chasing interests, and they were narrow-minded and short-sighted. Du Fu did not agree with this,

and he wrote a question at the end, expressing his profound understanding about the essence of the Ba people’s characteristics and their risky spirit. In the seventh poem of *Song of Kuizhou Ten Jueju*, “There were material exchanges in Sichuan and the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, by many business boats. The boatmen sailed rapidly on the high waves singing loudly. The businessmen were only keen on gambling in the sun.” The poet made a sharp contrast between the poor life of local people and the gambling indulged in by the businessmen, to compare their totally different living status, however, it is far from being enough to just stay at this level. The commercial transactions took place via “many business boats” in the waterway of the Yangtze River, while only the elder experienced boatmen could drive the business boats. They shouted, “a work song on the Yangtze River,” and took risks driving the boats. Their hard work provided support to the commercial transactions on the waterway of the river. This poem also suggested the tough folk customs, representing the fearless spiritual character of “the elder” and “the experienced” boatman. The women of Kuizhou were hardworking and diligent. They cut firewood in the mountains and offered it in the market for sale every day, to support the whole family. Sometimes, they even sold illegal salt. Du Fu wrote in the poem *Walking with Firewood on the Back*, “In local customs, men enjoyed a higher status than women, so women stood when men were sitting. The majority of women had to go out to collect firewood every day, to afford the whole family and pay for tax levies. They risked their lives to climb high and cut firewood. The firewood was offered for sale in the market. Besides firewood, they shouldered salt on their backs as well.” The folk custom “man sat while women stood aside” was mentioned in the poem, the diligence of women and their braveness in selling illegal salt. Everything demonstrated the spiritual characters of the Ba

women, namely hardworking, bold and risk-taking.

The local customs and practices were the special form of regional culture, best embodying the features of regional culture. They are the major objects of literary works. Du Fu resided nine years in Bashu, and had a deep understanding of the local customs. His experience and understanding was reflected in his Bashu poetry. The poem *Nan-chi* described the folk songs and dances of witch-style in front of the temple of Liu Bang beside Nanchi of Langzhou, "There was the ancestral temple of the King of the Han Dynasty, and for years people prayed as sacrifice and divination. They sang and danced in the loose clothes. How ridiculous the customs are! The King sat solemnly in the hall and his spirit was still upright. He should not enjoy the drink and food on the empty hillside. The witchcraft sacrifice had been handed down since the ancient times, and it did not have its origin in Sichuan." The first poem of *Humorous Poetry II to Dispel Boredom*, written in Kuizhou, "The customs and habits here were so strange that foreigners could not live together with them. People fed Wu Gui (tortoise) with yellow croaker in every household." The second poem, "Wizards practiced divination with tiles to deliver the will of the heaven." Both poems described the witch customs. "Wu Gui" in the poem was tortoise. Tortoise shell was a miraculous thing for divination in ancient times, so almost every household "fed tortoises." When the witch practiced divination, he would go to collect one shell. "The delivery of the will of the god by divination with tiles" was a custom for the Kui people to recover from disease and be saved from disaster. It was annotated: The wizards knocked on the tiles, and determined good or ill luck by the texture of the broken tiles. In the annotations of *Record of Natural Conditions and Social Customs of Yueyang*, "The people in Jing-xiang (Jiangnan-Dongting Lake Plain) did not visit doctors when they were ill, but requested wizards to practice

divination by knocking on tiles." In the poem of Du Fu, the scene of the Kui people praying for rain in drought seasons was described, "In drought seasons, it did not rain despite of dark clouds. In the south, farming was very hard. The people beat drums to pray for rain. The Dragon King could not hear, and it did not rain." (*Thunder*) The wizard led people to beat drums loudly, sang and danced, however, "the dragon kept silent." The people could not expect rain, so they prayed for rain by burning the mountain. "In the drought seasons, people burned Chushan Mountain. According to local customs, people burned the flood dragon for one month, and the dragon was so frightened to spray water. The monsters in the mountains cried loudly. The trees on the mountain were of one thousand years. After the fire, they were burned to ashes, and so there was no place for the clouds' habitat." The rain did not arrive as expected, but the environment was badly damaged. The poet did not stay at this shallow level describing local custom, but analyzed this custom critically.

In the *Preface of Collected Works of Li Hanlin*, "Since Pan Gu created the world, the air of the heaven and the earth remained in the southwest. The Jianmen Pass ran across the river and ended the twists and turns of Minshan Mountain, thus generated the Jinjiang River. There were numerous outstanding talents in Shu over a long period of five hundred years, like SimaXiangru, Jun Ping, Wang Bao, Yang Xioing, Chen Zi'ang, Li Bai, and others" (Wang, 1983, pp.1447-1448). This paragraph has an enlightening effect on our further understanding of Bashu culture. In the process of cultural evolution, a long-lasting and deep historical culture was accumulated on the Bashu land, and there arose many outstanding figures who played important roles in the process of Chinese historical and cultural development, like SimaXiangru, Yang Xiong, Zhuge Liang, Chen Zi'ang, Li Bai. These

figures bore the unique spirit and values of Bashu culture, and are worthy of our deep understanding and further exploration, and even concentration. Du Fu's thought about the outstanding figures brought about by the historical and culture sites of Bashu. Take poems in praise of Zhuge Liang, Chen Zi'ang, and Sima Xiangru, Du Fu focused on the statement and commended the unique spirit and values of Bashu culture borne by these historical figures. Undoubtedly, these poems are an extremely brilliant part of the Bashu poetry of Du Fu.

There are more than twenty poems in total in praise of Zhuge Liang, and the most famous ones were created by the poet's feelings triggered by historical sites in Chengdu and Kuizhou. *The Prime Minister of Shu* was one of them, written in the third year of Qianyuan. The poet evaluated from the perspective of a scholar. In his opinion, Zhuge Liang realized the "career achievement" of the values of life of Confucian "three immortals." "The former emperor made three calls at Zhuge Liang's thatched cottage and Zhuge Liang assisted two emperors in the founding and successive governance of the kingdom, with his bosom full of loyalty." In Kuizhou, he wrote several famous poems like *Walking Beside Cypress*, *Pay My Respect to the Temple of the First Emperor*, *Five Poems of Singing Historical Sites* (the fifth poem), *The Temple of Marquis Wu*, and *Eight Matrix Graph*. In *Pay My Respect to the Temple of Liu Bei*, he sighed with emotion for Zhuge Liang's unfulfilled wish and entire devotion, "He drafted a long-term strategy to recover the Han Dynasty and the recovery of the Central Plain fully relied on the old and loyal prime minister. He left his wish frustrated despite painstaking efforts". In the Temple of Marquis Wu, "The frescoes peeled off at Wuhou Temple of Kuizhou, and wild grass and trees grew and spread. Zhuge Liang bent his body and exhausted his energy, and submitted *Memorial on Sending*

out the Troops to the last emperor and did not have and intention to return to Nanyang anymore." The fifth poem of *Five Poems of Singing Historical Sites* praised the great achievements he made, and his talents in military management and dedication to his career. "Zhuge Liang left a reputation through the ages in the world. His lofty and solemn sculpture won infinite reverence of people. With his careful planning and management, the period of three kingdoms was established. Therefore, people were deeply impressed by his peerless image for hundreds of years. His achievements in assisting the Shu-han power were as great as that of Yi Yin and Lv Shang, the founding prime ministers in the ancient times. He was calm in governing and planning military forces, and even the notable subjects in the early Han Dynasty like Xiao He and Cao Shen were detracted from their glory. Despite that the empire of the East Han Dynasty could not be recovered, he was devoted to military affairs day and night and finally fell sick from overwork." The poems have something in common, namely the profound exploration and high refinement of the cultural spiritual values borne by Zhuge Liang. His loyalty, insistence in chasing ideals, and his positive life attitude has added rich connotations to the Bashu culture.

Du Fu, in total, wrote three poems, singing Chen Zi'ang. Among these poems, *The Former Residence of Chen Shiyi* was the most representative, and the creation was triggered by historical sites. As far as Du Fu was concerned, the cultural spiritual values of his existence in the world shining like the sun and moon, was "loyalism" repeatedly manifested in the poem *Inspired by My Experience*. It was written in *The Former Residence of Chen Shiyi*, "The ancient house of Chen Zi'ang would decline finally but the poetry of Du Fu embodied the loyalty of Chen Zi'ang completely. So, it was handed down for generations from the ancient times." Chen Zi'ang was a controversial historical figure, and Du Fu

evaluated him beyond the limitations of history. His evaluation criteria of “loyalism” was far beyond that of any poet of any dynasty, in which the basic judgment was heart-aligned with the safety of country and the sufferings of people. Wang Shisi wrote in *Du Yi*, “The poem *Inspired by My Experience* of Chen Shiyi had been famous for a long time. After reading his biography and his suggestions to the emperor, I can see that he made loyal and honest proposals. In the first half of the poem *Inspired by My Experience*, he wrote about the saints, and in the second part of the poem he wrote about loyal gentlemen. It can be concluded that Chen Shiyi is a man of loyalty, and that accounts for his undying image in people’s minds. Du Fu made an objective evaluation about Chen Zi’ang. After reading his evaluation, I can know better Chen Zi’ang’s values.” (Wang, 1983, p157). “Du Fu made objective evaluation about Chen Zi’ang,” referred to Du Fu evaluation of Chen Zi’ang at the height of social historical development. He proposed what others had never thought of. So to speak, the “loyalism” of Chen Zi’ang kept consistency with Du Fu’s ideas like one should be concerned about his country and his people, people are one’s brothers and sisters, and one’s appreciation as a personal favor. These poems were created after the encounter of two great spirits, and were the highly refined essence of the cultural spiritual value “loyalism,” and were more enriched the cultural meanings and upgraded state of the Bashu culture.

The broad mind of a scholar was presented through Du Fu’s feelings and experience to the final identification of Bashu culture. The meeting of SimaXiangru and Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty, as well as SimaXiangru’s love story with Wenjun, naturally became an object admired by successive scholars. The culture of Xiangru and Wenjun was becoming richer and richer with story-telling by scholars of successive dynasties. *Qin Tai*

was the representative of Du Fu’s poetic statement of Xiangru and Wenjun culture. Therefore, it was not excessive to say that Du Fu was the important carrier of Xiangru and Wenjun culture. In this poem, Du Fu visited Qin Tai and pondered on the past. He chased the distinguished and admirable, and heaped praise upon the eternal love of Xiangru and Wenjun. “When SimaXiangru was worn with age, he was still deeply attached to Zhuo Wenjun. Their feelings were not diminished.” The poet gave credit to their breaking the barriers of the common, and recalled their love story. Xiangru played *Feng Qiu Huang (Courtship)* to express his adoration for Wenjun, while Wenjun was so moved that she rushed to meet him at night. “They had to open a pub for living. I wandered on the Qin Tai and looked far to the blue sky and white clouds, admired so much.” He associated “wild flowers” and “green creeping weeds” with the good image of Wenjun. “He thought about the smile of Wenjun at the sight of a bunch of wild flowers at the Qintai, and thought about the skirt of Wenjun at the sight of bunches of green creeping weeds.” The end of the poem was his sigh with regret, “Music of stringed instruments, a faithful friend is hard to find.” “It was an eternal miracle of SimaXiangru’s pursuit of Zhuo Wenjun, never heard of before.” We find Du Fu’s identification of the Bashu culture’s characteristic of daring to be the first in the world through his poetic statement of Xiangru and Wenjun culture. Bashu, in the southwest of China, was far away from the political and cultural center, was under a comparatively light impact of Confucian culture. Its regional culture bred more factors of freedom and romance. “Shu area was remote and humble of barbarian style” (Ban, 2012, p.1923). Elopement of men and women was quite common, and even the myths and legends spreading in Shu were related to the Shu King’s lust for women. Sima Xiangru regarded this emotional experience as a story passed on with approval. “Sima Xiangru came across a

young widow in Linqiong, and he fell in love with her immediately and married her later. He regarded it a pleasing kind of love and worthy of spreading” (Sima, 1959, p.228). (*Records of Historians Biography of SimaXiangru*) *Records of Historians, Han Book and Notes of Xijing* had generally consistent records about the elopement, marriage and making a living by selling wine of Xiangru and Wenjun (Ge, 2006, pp.82–83). The culture of the Tang Dynasty was succeeding that of the Han Dynasty. Triggered by the historical and cultural sites of Chengdu, Du Fu wrote the poem *Qin Tai*, which was a poetic statement and glory for the characteristic daring to be the first in the world of Bashu culture, borne by historical figures like Xiangru and Wenjun, and had a direct impact on the positive evaluation of these two people by later generations.

The natural world and human world of Bashu had greatly enriched Du Fu’s poetry creation. With the influence of Bashu culture, his poetry was more colorful and multidimensional. In Bashu poetry, he carefully depicted the beautiful and magnificent natural world of Bashu mountains and rivers, and deeply reflected the cultural personality of the Bashu people, and critically described the local customs and practices of Bashu. He explored and expounded on the inner spirit of the Bashu culture through historical figures. As it should be, Du Fu’s Bashu poetry is not limited to this, and it has an even richer content than our understanding.

As Du Fu resided in Bashu for many years, every blade of grass and every tree of Bashu, widely different from that of the Central Plain, triggered his homesickness. Therefore, there were a large quantity of poems with a homesick theme among his Chengdu poetry, Zilang poetry and Yunkui poetry. In *Mountain with Clouds*, “Outside the Yunshan Mountain far away from the capital city, I had not received any news for a long time. Exhausting my efforts, I looked at the direction of my hometown.

I was sick and lay in the cottage along the river, expecting my family and friends to visit me. The white gulls would perch along the river, and why did they cry so whiningly?” This poem has of strong homesick feeling because the news and letters from family were cut off. He was extraordinary desolate and sad. He expressed his feelings in *Qian Xing*, “The country was still at war, and I had no idea where my sisters and brothers were. I cried so sadly that I could not attend to comb my hair. In the wilderness, the river was as quiet as a mirror. I was badly sick and I did not think we can meet again.” The war had not ended, and his melancholy of family dispersion and sentiment of wandering aimlessly in a strange land and aging diseases arose simultaneously. “I cried miserably with my hair scattered” was particularly profound. *Returned Geese* implied meaning in the object and expressed deep feeling of homesickness, “The spring had come, and when could I return to my hometown? The saddest is that even the wild geese could fly freely to the north, but I could not leave.” *Su Mu* expressed the poet’s misery when he stayed alone in Mufu, “The tree leaves were trembling in the autumn wind at night; only the candle residue was shining on me. The tragic horn was talking to itself; nobody enjoyed the beautiful moonlight with me. As time passed quickly, where should I enquire about the news of my family? The path to the pass was depressing, and it was hard to look for a road for home. I had endured ten years of wandering life, and I just resided here for a temporary living.” The poem revealed his sentiment of the flying time, long-term drift, cut off news and letters and hard path for return. *Spring Afar* is also a poem describing homesickness, “Flowers fell off one after another. In daytime, there were always birds as few visitors came to my thatched cottage in the remote area. Enemy of Guanzhong invaded and the Tubo forces were quartered at the foot of the West Mountain. Since I could not return to my

hometown, I had no other choice but to stay with the troops.” It described the scene of late spring, expressing his worry about the country and sighing that it was difficult to return. Du Fu, wandering in Zizhou, went wild with joy at the news that the government had recovered the regions north and south of the Yellow River. He could expect to return to his hometown Luoyang, and escaped his lips *Recapture of the Regions North and South of the Yellow River*, “When I heard in Jiannan that the government army had recovered Henan and Hebei, my happy tears wet my clothes. I looked back to my family and the sorrow of my wife and children disappeared immediately. I rolled up the books casually and I was mad with joy. I was unable to restrain myself from singing loudly and drinking to my content on the sunny day. With the company of spring sunlight, I could return to my hometown. I was ready to go through the Ba Gorge and the Wu Gorge, and then go to Xiangyang and arrive in Luoyang later.” In the poem *On the Trip at Night, Expressing My Political Ambition*, “The breeze was blowing the fine grass on the bank of river, and the boats with high masts were mooring alone on the moonlit night. The stars drawn low by the vastness of the plain. The moon rushed forward in the river’s flow. It was not due to my poetry that I won recognition. Now I should retire as I am aged and sick. What do I like? Just a seagull flying in the sky.” In the poem *Mountaineering*, “The wind was blowing hard, and the apes were crying sadly. Birds were wheeling above the river delta of clear water and white sand. The boundless leaves fell from the woods, rustling; and the endless water of the Yangtze River was rolling on in waves. I sighed with regret facing the bleak autumn scene for my years’ residing in Chengdu as a guest. I was eaten up with diseases, and my hair at the temples became white after years of difficulties and hardships. My mind was full of decadence and put away the wine glasses.” These poems are famous works deploring

exile and drift.

Although Du Fu was far away from the political center in his later years, he did not stay away from politics and his poetic creation was never away from loving all the people and animals, concerning about his country and his people. In the Chengdu thatched cottage, he wrote *The Broken Thatched Cottage Sang for the Autumn Wind*, expressing his humanistic feelings that he would rather sacrifice himself and let the poor people be free of hunger and coldness. He thought about the exploited people’s experience at the sight of dry brown wood, “The poor people were exploited just like brown wood. The dead had passed away, and how could the living ones defend themselves?” *Farewell with Resentment* represented multiple themes, “I wandered around after I left Luoyang, now I was four thousand li away from it. It had been five or six years since the rebel forces of An and Shi marched into the Central Plain. Weeds and trees turned from green to yellow. I was blocked by the rebel forces and aging gradually on the waterfront. I missed my hometown and my younger brother. I was sleepless in the cool moonlit night. In the chilly daytime, I lay down watching the clouds and fell asleep. I was happy to hear that Situ had overcome Heyang and was following up a victory, and would capture Youyan soon.” The poet had to drift in other places due to the disordered situation and social unrest. Both his pain of parting and concern about the situation were reflected in his poetry. Du Fu always had cared about the sufferings of the people, and the social unrest. In the end, it was the people who suffered from war. The poem *The Thatched Cottage* described Li Zhonghou’s killing of Chengdu people after the death of Xu Zhidao, “There were three heads in one country, and the common people became fish to be killed. The forces tyrannically abused their power and who were the innocent victims? They slaughtered people while laughing. It was the cries of the people

everywhere.” *Trip in Guanghuban, Trip in the Hard War and Trip in the Chilly Autumn* described the turmoil in Shu. *Five Poems of Feelings, Three Poems of Historical Statement, and Five Poems of the Lament on the Passing of Spring* reflected his worries about national crisis. The poet in exile was still concerned about the war between the Tang Dynasty and the Tubo. When he heard about the crisis of Song, Wei and Bao, he wrote *Emergency, Order of the Emperor, Soldiers and Three Poems of the West Mountain*, expressing his anxiety about the crisis at the border of west Shu. The poem *Soldiers* was particularly heavy hearted, “How many people were there every ten household? Most of the houses were empty. I just heard people’s cries instead of singing.” The people were suffering a lot from military service and forced labor, and the west Shu became a withered place. *Three Poems of Jueju* were created in Yun’an. The first poem described the turmoil of Shu, “the Cishi (a government post) was killed in Yuzhou, a city of one thousand years history, and the Cishi was killed this year in Kaizhou. The mobs were like fierce tigers, and who dared to leave his family there?” The second poem described the exile of people. “Twenty-one families moved into Shu at the same time, and now only one person was able to escape from Luogu. He said that his two daughters had been killed by the mobs crying with grief.” The third poem described the ruthlessness of the government forces, “Despite that they were brave and battle-wise, their brutality was like that of the nomadic forces. They slaughtered many people on

the Han River and most of the women had become captives in the military camps.” The poet wrote the poem *Night at the Loft* about the disasters brought about by years of war to the people in Kuizhou, “The daytime had been shortened gradually, the distant horizon was shrouded by the cold snow at night. I heard the tragic horn in the military camp at dawn. The shadow of stars became the ripples on the Three Gorges. Families in the wilderness cried for war, the sorrowful song of a fisherman came from afar. The great heroes like Zhuge Liang and Gongsun Shu finally backed to the earth, and why should I care about the less and less news and fewer and fewer letters from my family?”

The content of the Bashu poetry of Du Fu was extremely rich. However, the profundity could not be ignored despite its richness. His concern about the political situation and the people is the demonstration of richness and profundity of Du Fu’s Bashu poetry. Love for people, treasuring life and nature, and concerns about the country and the people are the major elements of Du Fu’s poetry, always running through of his poetry. From “the broken country and the poor government caused by war” to “people cried sadly on the street and nobody could hear any songs,” from “despite my patriotic zeal” to “I was sleepless due to worry about the situation, I had no power to devote myself to the country,” from his own experience to others’ similar experience, we can experience the deep feelings and his profound concerns about the country and the people.

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