

## Life Timeline (1057–1101)

*For my inspiration, I chose a project that uses data visualization to introduce the life of the famous Chinese poet Su Dongpo (Su Shi)—a life full of twists and triumphs.*

*In our usual learning, we tend to remember historical figures through abstract dates and a list of achievements. However, this case connects the major events of Su Dongpo's life and his historical context—in an engaging visual way. It makes us grasp his story at a glance and understand his journey much more intuitively.*



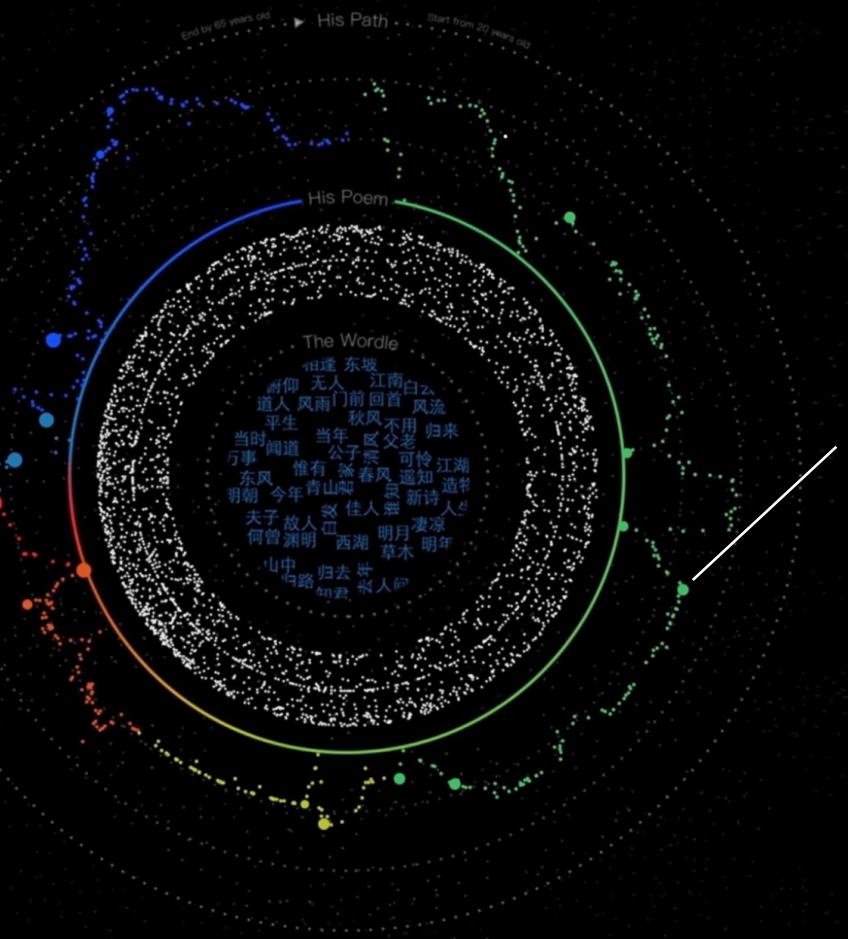
## Su Dopo's Path

Su Dongpo's life can be divided into six stages—three ascents and three declines—which we denote using six distinct colors.

*The chart is divided into three layers in total. The outermost ring represents his footprints of his entire life.*

*Over his 65 years, he experienced 485 moves and transitions—some triumphant, when he was summoned to the capital and entrusted by the emperor; others disastrous, when he was banished to remote, bitterly cold outposts.*

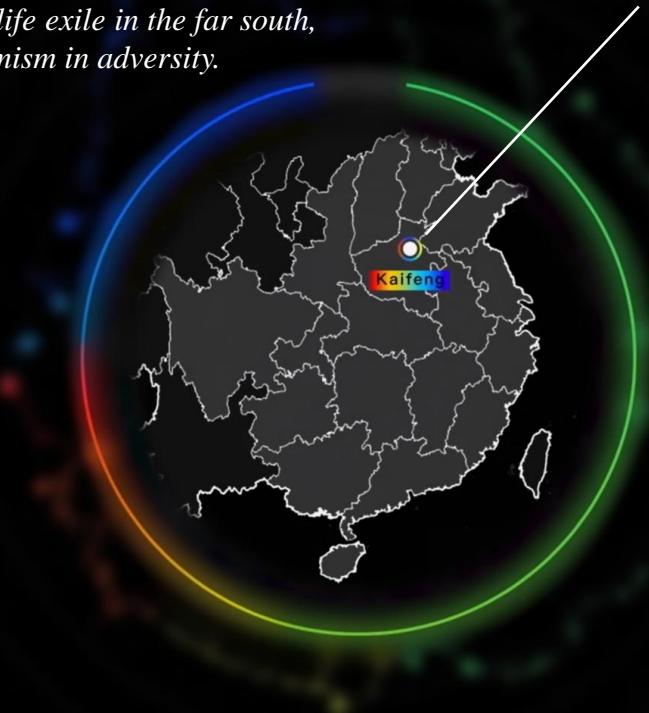
*Across these different stages of life, Su Shi left clear traces both in his official work and in his poetry.*



Stars with larger radius represent places where Dongpo held a job and it's radius represents the job's title's tier

*Su Shi's earliest major reversal came when he was wrongly ensnared in the Crow Terrace Poetry Case (Wutai Shian) and demoted to Huangzhou. There he composed the enduring "Red Cliff Rhapsody (Chibi Fu)", a work that, while elegiac, affirms his steadfast commitment to state service.*

*Likewise, the celebrated verse “Rì dàn lìzhī  
sān bǎi kē, bù cí cháng zuò Lǐgnán rén” (“I  
could eat three hundred lychees a day and  
never mind being a Lingnan man for life”)  
comes from his late-life exile in the far south,  
showcasing his optimism in adversity.*



The central colored ring represents Kaifeng—the capital of the Northern Song court in which Su Shi lived, and the radial distance between the star and the curve represents its distance to Kaifeng, inferring his political status.



Therefore, using this counterclockwise timeline, we can arrange the major events of Su Dongpo's life sequentially.

*Taken together with the chart, these examples allow us to map his oeuvre onto specific life nodes, yielding a clear, immediate grasp of both his works and spirit.*

