

# Research on the Design of the Zunyi Meitan Cuiya IP Image from the Perspective of Guizhou Intangible Cultural Heritage

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## Abstract

To promote the broader, more convenient, and fashionable dissemination of Guizhou's intangible cultural heritage (ICH), this study explores the application of digital media technologies in the tea product Zunyi Meitan Cuiya, a representative of Guizhou's ICH. Based on an analysis of the current state of IP image design in the inheritance of Guizhou ICH and the design requirements for Zunyi Meitan Cuiya, this study integrates product information, filters and extracts cultural elements, constructs narrative storylines, and incorporates the ICH context. These elements are translated into the visual components, emotional resonance, and cultural symbols necessary for IP image design. By empowering the Meitan Cuiya IP image with digital tools, the unique charm of Guizhou's ICH products is highlighted. This research seeks to explore the potential for traditional culture to thrive in the digital era and offers insights for the creation and dissemination of other cultural products, fostering a synergy between modern technology and traditional culture.

**Keywords:** intangible cultural heritage, tea culture, Zunyi Meitan Cuiya, IP image design

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, the intersection of cultural heritage and product design has emerged as a significant focus of academic research, particularly in the context of preserving intangible cultural heritage while simultaneously meeting the demands of contemporary consumer markets. As a design approach that integrates traditional culture with modern branding strategies, the creation of culturally meaningful product IP images offers a unique avenue for both the preservation of heritage and its commercialization. This study primarily explores the IP image design of Meitan Cuiya, a tea product from Meitan County in Guizhou Province. Meitan Cuiya is renowned not only for its distinctive production techniques but also for its deep cultural significance, closely tied to local intangible cultural heritage.

The primary objective of this research is to investigate how to transform the rich cultural connotations and traditional craftsmanship of Meitan Cuiya into a cohesive and appealing IP image. This IP image must effectively convey the cultural essence of the product while resonating with contemporary markets. The study aims to provide a framework for extracting cultural symbols from Meitan Cuiya's historical background, craft characteristics, and other cultural elements, and translating these into visual representations, thereby enhancing the product's brand value and cultural significance. By combining emotional resonance with regional characteristics, the research demonstrates how IP image design can promote the dissemination of Meitan Cuiya in the market, while offering new perspectives on the promotion and protection of Guizhou's local culture. Ultimately, this study emphasizes the role of IP image design within the context of rural revitalization, highlighting the intrinsic connection between cultural heritage preservation and economic development.

## **2. The Current Status of IP Image Design for Intangible Cultural Heritage Products in the Preservation and Transmission of Guizhou's Intangible Cultural Heritage**

Guizhou Province, with its unique geographic environment, has nurtured a diverse and vibrant cultural heritage. This rich cultural legacy has given rise to a wide range of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) practices. Current methods of ICH transmission primarily include oral traditions, master-apprentice mentorship, and digital preservation. However, oral and master-apprentice methods face certain limitations. For instance, the transmission of literary stories, folk songs, and traditional dances often suffers from inconsistencies in dialects, varying interpretations of literary content, incomplete conveyance of cultural context, and distortions of dance movements due to subtle modifications. These factors can lead to the incomplete preservation of the original ICH.

In the context of the burgeoning cultural tourism industry, leveraging ICH products to enhance cultural tourism has become a significant research focus. A distinctive and recognizable intellectual property (IP) image can play a pivotal role in the dissemination and promotion of ICH, generating substantial commercial value in the process. Such an IP image not only safeguards creative innovation but also facilitates the development of derivative products, thereby enhancing an enterprise's competitive advantage and diversifying revenue streams [1]. A creative and engaging ICH IP image, showcased through various media platforms, can attract greater public attention and participation, thereby advancing the transmission and promotion of ICH.

With the active efforts of government agencies and cultural organizations to promote ICH preservation and the growing interest in innovative approaches to ICH transmission across society [2], the application of IP image design to Guizhou's ICH has become an increasingly significant tool. Representative projects, such as Miao embroidery, batik, Dong brocade, and cultural tourism cities like Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture, have developed distinctive IP images aligned with their cultural characteristics. These IP images have proven instrumental in attracting tourist attention, enhancing destination recognition, promoting ICH, creating commercial value, and enriching tourist experiences.

For example, in the case of Miao embroidery, designers draw inspiration from the cultural stories embedded in embroidery patterns and techniques to create IP images that blend creativity with a sense of modern fashion. These IP images are then applied to cultural and creative products, such as clothing, bags, and accessories. Additionally, some IP image designs incorporate modern artistic techniques and popular elements, aligning with the aesthetic preferences of younger audiences. From the perspective of cultural transmission, this approach sparks the interest of younger generations in traditional culture, promoting its preservation and further development [3].

## **3. Analysis of Design Requirements for the Zunyi Meitan Cuiya IP Image**

The tea-making technique of Zunyi Meitan Cuiya has been recognized as a representative project of Guizhou Province's fourth batch of provincial intangible cultural heritage (ICH). Through IP image design, its historical origins, cultural connotations, and craftsmanship can be effectively showcased, facilitating cultural preservation, brand building, tourism development, and industrial cultivation. This approach plays a significant role in the inheritance and promotion of this ICH.

By integrating the cultural charm of Meitan Cuiya with modern life, IP image design injects new vitality and momentum into local economic and social development. It combines the unique characteristics of Meitan Cuiya with the local cultural context, emphasizing Guizhou's distinctive regional features and cultural appeal. This effort creates a unique and recognizable local brand image, enhancing the region's cultural soft power and image value.

IP image design also aligns Meitan Cuiya with the tourism industry by crafting engaging and interactive images that attract visitors for experiential activities, thus driving the growth of cultural tourism, fostering economic prosperity, and advancing social progress.

In terms of developing the cultural and creative industries, IP image design serves not only as a medium for cultural heritage preservation but also as a cornerstone for the cultural and creative sector. It stimulates the creativity and innovation potential of the local population, supporting the development and commercialization of related cultural products and handicrafts, thereby promoting local economic growth.

The analysis of design requirements for the Meitan Cuiya IP image will be elaborated from two aspects: preliminary research and pain point analysis (as shown in Figure 1).

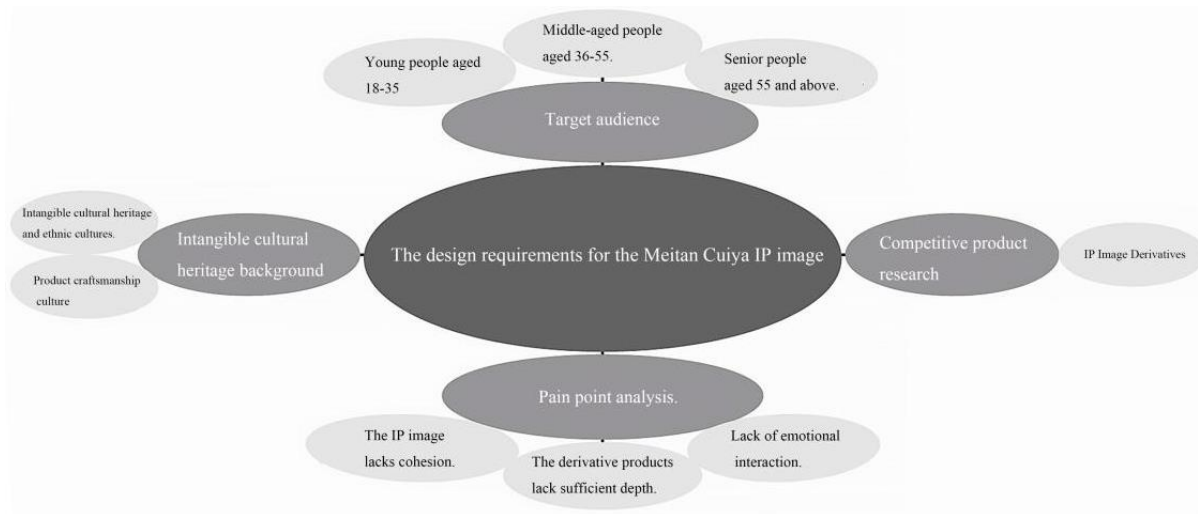


Figure 1. Analysis of Design Requirements for the Meitan Cuiya IP Image

### 3.1 Preliminary Research

#### 3.1.1 Background of Intangible Cultural Heritage

According to the population census of Meitan County in Zunyi City, the local population consists of various ethnic groups, including Han, Yi, Bai, Dai, Zhuang, Miao, and Hui, with the Han majority and ethnic minorities such as the Miao and Buyi. Generations of locals have nurtured their unique lifestyles, and the tea-making craft has a long history in the region. As early as the Tang Dynasty, Lu Yu's *Cha Jing* (The Classic of Tea) recorded that Meitan not only produced tea but also had a superior tea taste. Meitan Cuiya has evolved into a handcrafted art that carries the cultural heritage and lifestyle of the local people. Its production technique has been passed down through generations, combining the essence of Hangzhou's West Lake Longjing tea with local characteristics. The main production process involves five key steps: killing the green, cooling, and firing, among others, using ten methods, including shaking, folding, pinching, stretching, grabbing, pulling, pushing, grinding, pressing, and more.

However, with the influence of modern lifestyles, the younger generation's interest in tea has declined, leading to a loss of tea-making practitioners in Meitan Cuiya. As a result, this intangible cultural heritage faces several challenges. The integration of digital methods is, undoubtedly, imperative [4].

#### 3.1.2 Target Audience

The purpose of IP image design is the preservation and promotion of culture. Therefore, the target audience should be as broad as possible, and a detailed segmentation of the target audience is necessary. This segmentation can include age groups such as young people aged 18-35, middle-aged people aged 36-55, and seniors aged 55 and above. Within these age groups, gender differences can also lead to varying needs. For instance, young people tend to focus more on fashion and individuality, preferring IP image designs that are trendy and artistic. The middle-aged audience is more inclined toward the expression of traditional culture and historical depth. In contrast, the elderly demographic is generally more nostalgic and emotionally connected, tending to appreciate designs that resonate with their inner sentiments.

#### 3.1.3 Market Research on Similar Products

Market research indicates that there are numerous similar products in the current market. Taking the successful tea brand Cha Yan Yue Se as an example, its characteristics include a strong ancient style, a fresh and simple aesthetic, high recognition, and clear brand positioning. The brand has diversified applications (as shown in Figure 2), ranging from tea leaves and snacks to cultural and creative products such as pens, bookmarks, and fridge magnets, as well as high-value artworks, handicrafts, home goods, and customized services. This brand not only reflects a profound historical legacy but also evokes cultural identity while combining artistic appeal, uniqueness, and rarity. Despite the market recognition of Cha Yan Yue Se IP image derivatives, there remain some shortcomings in terms of personalization, emotional expression, market reach, and image diversity.

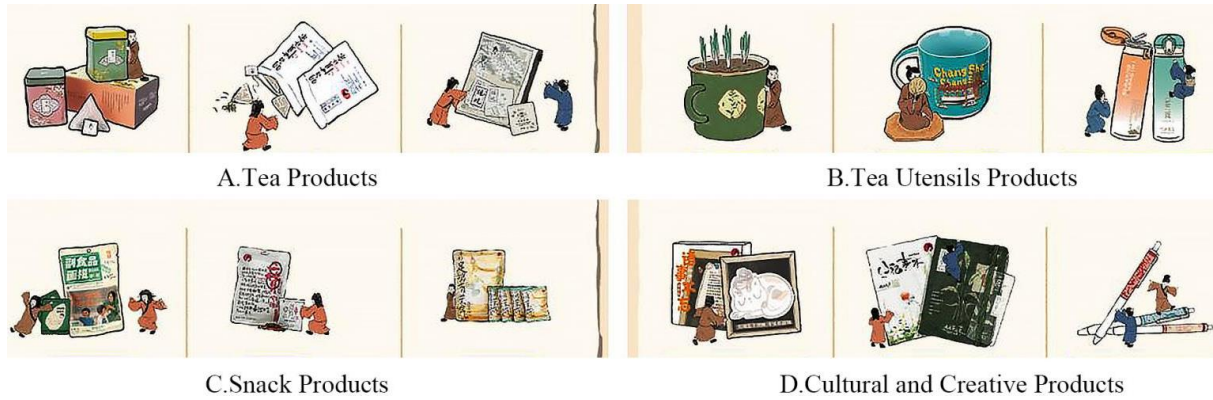


Figure 2. Diversified Product Applications of Cha Yan Yue Se

### 3.2 Pain Point Analysis

Although the tea-making technique of Meitan Cuiya has been listed as part of Guizhou's fourth batch of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) traditional craftsmanship, there is no unified IP image for its promotion. The current approach mainly combines tea leaves with text as the visual identity or uses ethnic minority figures as decorative patterns, with tea packaging serving as the primary application. However, there is a lack of a cohesive IP image for the development of derivative products (as shown in Figure 3). In light of this, the design of its IP image presents the following shortcomings.



Figure 3. Application of Meitan Cuiya IP

1) The derivative cultural and creative products based on the IP image lack coherence. The new product development process is an innovation activity that starts with idea generation and ends with market launch. It is typically divided into five stages: idea selection, business analysis, product design, product testing, and market launch [5]. When a product lacks proper positioning and planning, it can become a weakness of the brand. Without strategic thinking, the product may suffer from unclear positioning, undefined target audiences, and an inability to

meet market demands. Moreover, the image design tends to be overly simplistic, with traditional elements being piled on rather than integrated flexibly, leading to an IP image that lacks appeal.

2) The cultural connotation of the IP image and its derivatives is insufficiently deep. Other Guizhou tea brands also have IP images, but they exhibit a certain degree of homogeneity. These products may have exquisite appearances but lack distinctive recognition. Often, they appear as giveaways, but the design or selection of these products lacks value consideration. A giveaway, as an accessory to the main product, should resonate with the primary product—either by continuing its story or extending its cultural meaning. Giveaways can also reflect brand values and ethnic cultural characteristics, even serving as tokens for cultural exchange. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to how the IP image and its derivatives reflect cultural connotations [6].

3) The creation of the IP image lacks emotional connection and interaction. Many IP images focus more on aesthetic design, decoration, and functionality, neglecting emotional interaction and the establishment of an emotional connection with users. A key issue in designing cultural products is how to convey their cultural connotations and create emotional resonance with users. [7]. In this regard, sensory participation is essential. Sensory participation refers to the process of user perception and experience, and strong sensory engagement enables the user to quickly notice the product [8]. If the design of the IP image is too simplistic, lacks innovative form, or is merely static or ornamental, it will fail to engage the senses sufficiently, which will inevitably diminish the emotional resonance of the IP image.

#### 4. Practical Design of the Zunyi Meitan Cuiya IP Image from the Perspective of Guizhou Intangible Cultural Heritage

Based on the research on the background of intangible cultural heritage, target audience, analysis of similar products, and the existing pain points in IP image design, the following design practice proposal is presented.

##### 4.1 Design Strategy

Based on the preliminary research, the IP image's positioning and the core values that reflect the product's cultural connotation, along with initial conceptual ideas, have been established. Various design proposals and creative concepts are presented to lay the foundation for the subsequent macro-level image design. The theme, style, and emotional connotation to be conveyed by the image are defined based on the product's characteristics, providing theoretical support for the overall micro-level design. The design elements incorporate the characteristics of Meitan Cuiya tea, such as its leaf properties, tea color, and taste, and combine them with the rich and representative Miao ethnic costume culture. This ensures that the product is both culturally supported and able to pass down cultural heritage through various media, with the integration of both highlighting the fusion of culture and product nature.

##### 4.2 Visual Elements

The visual elements of IP image design refer to the thematic elements, color schemes, stylistic shapes, patterns, textures, and other visual components that define the IP image. To ensure the uniqueness of the Meitan Cuiya IP image design, it is essential to integrate cultural symbols and traditional elements. Starting with visual elements, the design incorporates local traditional costumes, architecture, culturally significant objects, and brand products to strengthen the cultural identity of Meitan Cuiya. The use of tea culture and Miao ethnic cultural symbols in the IP image design represents cultural fusion. Due to the influence of religious culture, using mythical creatures or species believed to offer spiritual solace or divine powers as prototypes can enhance the overall image's coverage. The design should fully consider values, spiritual connotations, or specific historical contexts in its visual elements. Building on traditional cultural symbols, designers can offer modern interpretations and re-creations, making them more aligned with contemporary aesthetic needs and emotional experiences. This modern interpretation preserves the unique charm of traditional culture while infusing it with vitality and a sense of the times [9].

##### 4.3 Emotional Resonance and Cultural Symbols

###### 4.3.1 Conveying the Emotional Connotation of Meitan Cuiya IP Through Storytelling

IP image design primarily aims to strike an emotional chord, capturing the attention of consumers and establishing an emotional connection with them. Emotions have a profound impact on individual behavior and cognition, playing a central role in areas such as world perception and information processing [10]. The design of the overall character should feature a unique and lively image that evokes familiarity, often relying on non-human beings or mystical creatures, known for their kindness, justice, and positive energy, to achieve this effect. To enhance the cultural depth of the IP image, it is essential to incorporate a cultural story. By considering the taste characteristics, development history, and cultural background of Meitan Cuiya, the following story can be distilled.

The story takes place on the tea mountains of Meitan, Zunyi. There is a tea tree with particularly unique leaves—flat, smooth, with tender, uniform green undersides, a bright yellow-green color, a rich chestnut fragrance paired with floral notes, and a mellow, refreshing taste with a sweet aftertaste. The local tea farmers call it "Tea Cui Xian" (Tea Spirit). A tea spirit named Cuiya, a lively little girl with bright eyes and a radiant smile, jumps around the tea forest all day long. Her wings are flat and light, like the smoothness of tea leaves. She is round and adorable, slightly chubby, dressed in traditional Miao attire with a delicate floral ornament on her head. The flowing hem of her skirt sways in the wind. Her smile brings life back to the wilted tea leaves, turning them fresh and green again. Wherever she goes, it is like sunlight on the face or a spring breeze, bringing vitality to the tea garden.

Cuiya's family has lived on these tea mountains for generations. Every morning, when the first rays of sunlight shine on the tea mountains, they begin their work, watering and fertilizing the tea trees, tenderly caring for every young tea leaf. They are the guardians and inheritors of Meitan Cuiya tea. They nurture each leaf with love, allowing it to grow strong and showcase its unique tea fragrance and taste.

Through the creation of this story, the vitality of the IP image is brought to life, making it easier for the IP image to be integrated into specific contexts, thereby evoking emotional resonance from the audience.

#### 4.3.2 Building the Uniqueness of the Meitan Cuiya IP Image through Cultural Symbols






Based on the characteristics of Meitan Cuiya tea, which include its flat and smooth leaf shape, tender and uniform green base, bright yellow-green color, rich chestnut fragrance with floral undertones, full-bodied, refreshing taste, and sweet aftertaste, visual elements can be extracted and translated into design (see Table 1). For instance, the "rich chestnut fragrance with floral undertones" could inspire the character's gender to be set as a young girl. The description "full-bodied, refreshing taste, with a sweet aftertaste" suggests an overall image of roundness, cuteness, and a "kawaii" style. The "tender and uniform green base" could be reflected in the character's proportional body shape, with a slight baby fat, aligning with the cute, youthful image. The "bright yellow-green color of the tea broth" could set the overall color tone of the IP character to a vibrant yellow-green. Finally, the "flat and smooth leaf nature" could inspire the design of the character's wings, which should be flat and smooth.

Table 1. Extraction and Translation of Cultural Symbols for Meitan Cuiya Product

	extract	transformation
Flat and smooth texture of the tea leaves.	Flat and smooth	Design style and prop design
Tender, uniform green leaves	Tender and even	1.Young age 2.Well-proportioned physique
Bright yellow-green hue	Yellow-green, bright	1.Bright tone 2.Yellow-green color scheme
Rich chestnut aroma with floral fragrance	Rich chestnut fragrance, floral scent	1.Female gender 2.Fresh setting
Rich and smooth taste with a refreshing flavor	Rich and mellow, refreshing	1.Round body shape 2.Positioning: Cute style 3.Personality: Cheerful
Sweet aftertaste	Sweet and pleasant	Positioning: Sweet

The attire incorporates the characteristics of Miao clothing. The Miao people are diverse, and their clothing culture varies significantly among different subgroups. One subgroup is known as the "Short Skirt Miao." Historically, the male attire of the Short Skirt Miao consisted of short tunics and wide pants, while the females wore short tunics without collars, with the top stopping just above the belly and the lower body covered by a skirt instead of pants. The length of the skirt was only about 5 inches, primarily serving as a form of coverage. Today, although the Short Skirt Miao still retains much of its traditional clothing culture and lifestyle, there have been slight modifications to their attire. The distinctive features of the Short Skirt Miao clothing include: a large-collared jacket, a black pleated short skirt without patterns, tied leg bindings, and embroidered edges at the collar, cuffs, hem, and leg bindings. A large silver hoop necklace adorns the neck, and the hair is styled with a three-pronged chicken feather headpiece or floral decorations. This style, which embodies cuteness, youth, and a "kawaii" aesthetic, is well-suited to the design of the IP character. Therefore, the clothing characteristics of the Short Skirt Miao are incorporated, and cultural symbols are extracted from this attire for translation into design (see Table 2).

Table 2. "Short Skirt Miao" Cultural Symbol Extraction and Translation Approach

	Extraction	Translation
headpiece		1.Round bun hairstyle 2.Floral accessories
neck area		Necklace
upper body		Short-sleeved summer top
lower body		Knee-length embroidered pattern skirt
leg area		Leg bindings
Shoes		Cloth shoes

#### 4.3.3 Solution Presentation

Based on the above research, the IP image of Meitan Cuiya is set as follows (as shown in Figure 4).

Name: Tea Spirit·Cuiya

Gender: Female

Character: Cute, with a well-proportioned figure that has a bit of softness. Her appearance resembles an elf, with a pair of wings that resemble flat, smooth tea leaves.

Hairstyle: Miao ethnic style with hair tied in a bun, adorned with small flowers and decorative elements. She wears a large silver ring around her neck.

Clothing: A short skirt, leg bindings, flat-soled cloth shoes, and holding a sprig of tea leaves in her hand.

Overall Color Scheme (as shown in Figure 5): Primarily yellow-green, with pink and flesh-toned accents for her clothing and skin tone, enhancing her youthful and feminine appearance.



Figure 4. Various Views of the Meitan Cuiya IP Image (Created by the Author)



Figure 5. Meitan Cuiya IP Image Color Palette (Created by the Author)

## 5. Conclusion

Through the study of the Guizhou intangible cultural heritage tea product, Zunyi Meitan Cuiya, this research has translated its rich cultural connotations, unique craftsmanship, and historical origins into specific elements for IP image design. By integrating key elements derived from the context of intangible heritage and the product, the research successfully merges the product information with its cultural background. As a result, the IP image goes beyond being merely a representation of the product; it becomes a carrier of the essence and emotions of Guizhou's intangible cultural heritage.

By designing the visual elements of the IP image, fostering emotional resonance, and incorporating cultural symbols, a vivid and meaningful IP image has been constructed, capturing the attention of the audience. However, during the design and implementation process, there are challenges related to the high demands for three-dimensional digital production techniques. To overcome these challenges, continuous advancements in digital production technology and broader digital perspectives are necessary. Only by ensuring technological progress can Guizhou's intangible cultural heritage products be brought onto a larger and more brilliant historical stage, allowing the world to see and appreciate the rich historical and cultural heritage of Guizhou in new and innovative ways.

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