



# Strategies for Enhancing the Design of Cultural and Creative Products in Shizhi Qiang Village under the Context of Artificial Intelligence Technology: A Case Study of Taizi Tea

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**Abstract.** Taking the Taizi tea from Shiyi Qiang Village in Beichuan as an example, this paper explores how to design cultural and creative products, under the background of artificial intelligence technology, guided by the theory of emotional design, to further develop the characteristic resources of the village, thereby enhancing its cultural and industrial value, as well as the related development paths and practical strategies. This paper studies the concepts of emotional design theory and cultural and creative product design, systematically analyzes the current problems of serious homogenization and weak emotional connection of cultural and creative products in Shiyi Qiang Village. Based on the three-layer design framework of “instinct-behavior-reflection”, it deeply explores the cultural connotation and tea-making process behind Taizi tea, and transforms them into visual and interactive design elements to complete the design practice of the “Beiyun Taigu” series of cultural and creative products. This provides practical ideas for enhancing the popularity of Shiyi Qiang Village and promoting the diversified development of its cultural and creative products, and also offers a reference for the combination model of rural characteristic industries and emotional cultural and creative products.

**Keywords:** Shiyi Qiang Village; Emotional Design; Cultural and Creative Product Design

## 1 Introduction

Against the backdrop of artificial intelligence technology, this study takes Taizi tea of Shiyi Qiang Village in Beichuan as the research object and conducts research aiming at the prominent problems of local cultural and creative products, such as severe homogenization, insufficient design innovation and weak emotional connection. Guided by Norman’s “instinct-behavior-reflection” affective design theory, the study explores the tea-making techniques of Taizi tea as well as the local ecological and Qiang cultural symbols in Beichuan, constructs an exclusive visual system and completes its affective translation, and finally designs the “North Cloud Moss Whisper” 3D gift box for Taizi tea. Breaking the limitations of traditional gift boxes from the three dimen-

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sions of sensory attraction, practical interaction and cultural emotional connection, this design enriches the practical path of affective design theory in cultural and creative products of traditional craftsmanship, and also provides practical references for the integration of rural characteristic industries with affective cultural and creative products, and the combination of intangible cultural heritage with cultural tourism and intelligent technologies.

## 2 Issues, Materials, and Research Approaches

In August 2021, the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the General Office of the State Council issued the “Opinions on Further Strengthening the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage”, advocating for the integration of intangible cultural heritage into modern life, and encouraging the rational utilization and cultural-creative development of intangible cultural heritage resources. To implement national policies, Sichuan Province issued the corresponding “Implementation Opinions” in April 2022, further emphasizing the need to “promote the integrated development of intangible cultural heritage with tourism and cultural industries”, and “support the development of tourism commodities and cultural and cultural-creative products with Sichuan characteristics and intangible cultural heritage elements”.

However, cultural tourism industry of Shiyi Qiang Village currently faces two distinct bottlenecks. First, constraints in the “natural” sense. Due to its remote location, the village has limited visibility and influence, failing to attract visitors from outside Mianyang City. Second, existing cultural and creative products mostly remain at the initial stage of “pattern replication and pasting”, lacking effective integration of the unique cultural characteristics of the Qiang Village, such as its premium Taizicha tea.

This results in an inability to meet modern consumer’ demands for “emotional experience” and “cultural identification”. They lack emotional appeal. Based on this, this article uses emotional design as a link, utilizing the craftsmanship of Taizicha tea and the cultural essence of the Qiang Village as mediums to explore methods for transforming these elements into market-competitive cultural and creative products. Thereby contributing to the integration of culture and tourism in Shiyi Qiang Village and its rural revitalization. Furthermore, research delves into the cultural significance and production processes of tea, employing illustration to merge natural elements with tea-making techniques. This approach aims to visually convey the entire process, cultural value, and derivative products of Tiaozicha tea, with the goal of capturing public attention and enhancing the village’s visibility.

### 3 Explanations of Related Concepts

#### 3.1 Basic Conditions of Resource Endowment in Shiyi Qiang Village: The Environment of Beichuan Tiaozicha Tea

Shiyi Qiang Village is located in Qushan Town, Beichuan Qiang Autonomous County, Sichuan Province. It lies 23 kilometers from the new county seat of Beichuan, 60 kilometers from Mianyang City, and approximately 150 kilometers from Chengdu. The village is situated close to the Beichuan Earthquake Memorial Museum and the Tangjiashan Barrier Lake[1]. In terms of village scale, the entire village spans approximately 20 square kilometers, with an average elevation of about 1,200 meters. It encompasses an area of 3.5 square kilometers and consists of three villager groups, totaling 103 households and 346 residents, over 90% of whom are of Qiang ethnicity. With its distinctive ethnic characteristics, it is one of the relatively well-preserved traditional Qiang settlements in China. Regarding ecological resources, the village features karst topography with a forest coverage rate of 95%, including 25% primary forest, 30% afforested areas, and 45% orchards, woodlands, and tea gardens. The area is home to over 1,000 rare plant species, such as yew and ginkgo, and more than 200 species of wild animals, including black-haired monkeys, gray-haired monkeys, and wild boars, contributing to biodiversity conservation and ecological services. The aforementioned geographical and natural environment provides an ideal growing habitat for local specialty agricultural products such as Tiaozicha tea [2](As shown in Fig. 1).

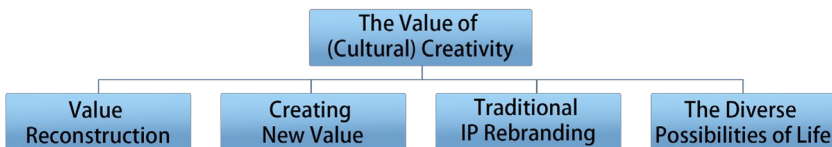


Fig. 1. The Value of (Cultural) Creativity

#### 3.2 Cultural and Creative Product Design

Cultural and Creative Product Design refers to a process centered on specific cultural connotations, where cultural resources are transformed through creative reinterpretation and design innovation into tangible products or services that integrate practical functions, aesthetic value, and emotional significance[3]. At its core, this process represents a creative transformation of cultural value: designers extract cultural symbols from traditional heritage, regional characteristics, or spiritual concepts and, through modern design methods and technological means, embed them into product forms that align with contemporary lifestyle needs and aesthetic preferences. This results in novel consumer artifacts characterized by cultural distinctiveness, emotional resonance, and market-added value. Cultural and creative products emphasize innovation built upon the foundation of cultural preservation. They serve both as physical

objects with practical utility and as cultural expressions that fulfill human needs for cultural identity and aesthetic appreciation.

### 3.3 Emotional Design Theory

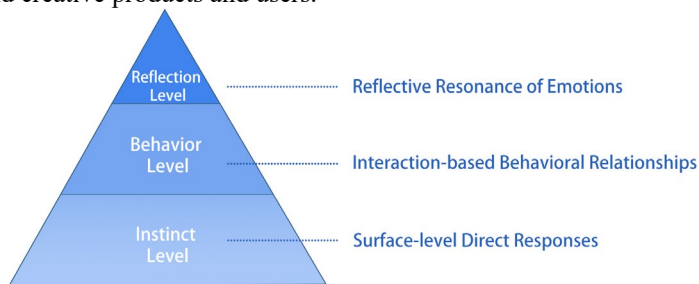
In Emotional Design, Donald A. Norman first proposed the three-level theory of “visceral–behavioral–reflective” design, establishing a systematic emotional framework as the core foundation for product design[4] . The theory can be summarized as follows(As shown in Fig. 2):

(1) Visceral-level design. Focuses on the immediate sensory experience a product delivers to users, including visual (appearance, form, color), tactile (texture, weight, feel), auditory (sounds during use, such as the scratch of a pen) etc. The key of visceral-level design is to “capture attention quickly” by stimulating instinctive interest through the sense,for instance, the minimalist appearance of an iPhone, which generates immediate appeal through visceral design.

(2)Behavioral-level design. Focuses on the functional utility and ease of use of a product, with the core goal of “solving user problems.” This approach must account for user contexts and operational habits. Examples include the scan-to-unlock feature of shared bicycles and the one-touch lid design of insulated cups, both of which simplify processes, optimize functionality, and enhance the user experience. Norman emphasizes that behavioral design must not only be “useful” but also “usable,”enabling users to gain a sense of control and pleasure through seamless interaction.

(3) Reflective-level design. Emphasizes the cultural value, emotional resonance, and lasting memories conveyed by a product, with the core aim of “touching the user’s heart.”This design approach must align with users’ cultural backgrounds, life experiences, and emotional needs. For example, the “Court Bead Earphones”from the Palace Museum cultural and creative series combine Qing dynasty court beads with modern earphones, evoking users’ identification with traditional culture.

Among these three elements, Norman asserts that “for a product to succeed, its emotional aspects may be more critical than its practical ones.”“This establishes emotion as the foundation of the three-level emotional design theory“visceral, behavioral, reflective”,and provides a core framework for forging emotional connections between cultural and creative products and users.



**Fig. 2.** The Three Levels of Emotional Design

#### 4 Analysis of the Current Status and Issues of Cultural and Creative Products in Shiyi Qiang Village

Although Shiyi Qiang Village possesses exceptional natural and cultural resources, the development of its cultural and creative products remains at a preliminary stage, marked by the following prominent issues(As shown in Fig. 3):

First, there is insufficient product supply ,and a lack of systematic development. Currently, the cultural and creative product offerings in Shiyi Qiang Village are still in an early phase, exhibiting a noticeable structural imbalance. As of 2025, searches on mainstream e-commerce platforms such as Taobao and JD.com using“Shiyi Qiang Village” as a keyword yield only three types of products: first, cultural books such as *The Shiyi Qiang Village Above the Clouds*; second, cultural and creative products from other regions that merely borrow the geographical name; and third, products entirely unrelated to the Qiang Village. None of these items form a coherent cultural and creative product system with distinctive Shiyi Qiang Village characteristics. Offline research reveals that the product variety in local cultural and creative shops is limited, primarily consisting of mass-produced Qiang embroidery items and underdeveloped local specialties, lacking original and recognizable exclusive cultural and creative products.

From the perspective of offline channels, a field study conducted by the research team in January 2025 revealed that the existing cultural and creative shops in Shiyi Qiang Village offer a relatively limited variety of products, primarily falling into two categories: first, handicrafts, including cushions, scarves, pendants, Qiang embroidery decorative items, and car fragrance bags, most of which are homogeneous, mass-produced goods sourced from wholesale markets; second, food culture products, such as Tiaozicha tea gift boxes, packaged mushrooms, packaged fern vegetables, and alcoholic beverages (including baijiu and beer) and bottled water under the brand “Stone Chair Above the Clouds.”

Second, there is a lack of design innovation and weak visual expression. Existing products exhibit notable shortcomings in design:(1) Patterns are often simple reproductions of traditional motifs, such as Qiang embroidery ram-horn designs or straightforward photographs of tea leaves, without deeper exploration of contemporary expression or cultural meaning. (2) Color schemes are monotonous and conservative, lacking visual depth and impact, which fails to meet modern aesthetic demands. (3) Product forms remain conventional, with insufficient creative transformation of the village’s natural landscape features and ethnic cultural symbols.Current domestic research on Tiaozicha tea primarily focuses on the tea itself, industrial development, and economic impact, with little scholarly attention paid to the packaging design of tea gift boxes. Analysis of existing Tiaozicha tea gift box designs reveals that products on the market lack competitiveness: shapes are mostly conventional rectangles, and color schemes tend to rely on a single “tea green” without integrating the distinctive characteristics or cultural connotations of Tiaozicha tea. This is precisely the core issue this study aims to address(As shown in Fig. 4).

Examples of Cultural and Creative Products from Shiyi Qiang Village



Fig. 3. Examples of Cultural and Creative Products from Shiyi Qiang Village



Fig. 4. Tiaozicha Gift Box Presentation

Third, there is a lack of emotional connection and interactive experience. The most significant issue with current products lies in the deficiency of emotional engagement pathways. Functional designs only meet basic usage needs without extending the experiential dimension; There are few interactive elements for user participation during use—for instance, Taizicha tea gift boxes merely serve as packaging, while Qiang embroidery products remain limited to visual appreciation. Most critically, these products fail to effectively convey the deeper cultural values of the Qiang village, unable to evoke users' emotional resonance or cultural identification. This results in weak user retention, difficulty in establishing lasting brand connections, and challenges in fostering sustained cultural engagement.

In summary, whether observed through online or offline channels, the cultural and creative products of Shiyi Qiang Village suffer from limited variety, monotonous and impoverished modes of expression, and a notable absence of deeper integration among culture (including its embedded emotions, appreciation, and aesthetics), products, and tourism. Contemporary, up-to-date expression is virtually non-existent. Against the backdrop of advancing artificial intelligence technology, this study systematically situates Shiyi Qiang Village's unique natural ecology and Taizicha tea craftsmanship within a unified context. Through the lens of emotional design theory, it examines and

seeks to enhance the competitiveness of Shiyi Qiang Village’s cultural and creative products—constituting the core starting point of this research.

## 5 Research on Design Strategy for Taizi Tea Cultural Creative Products under the Influence of Artificial Intelligence Technology

### 5.1 Design Concept: Guided by Emotional Design Theory

This study employs artificial intelligence technology as the core driver and emotional design theory as the theoretical framework to systematically develop design strategies for the cultural and creative products of Shiyi Qiang Village’s Taizicha tea. The design approach will unfold through the following three levels:

(1) **Visceral Level:** Focuses on users’ intuitive perception and visual appeal. Representative animal elements from the high-mountain forests of Beichuan, such as the clouded leopard and moose, are selected and integrated with modern illustration techniques to create a visual system that combines ecological aesthetics with cultural distinctiveness. Colors are extracted from natural tones, such as the emerald green of tea leaves and the clear yellow of tea liquor, to evoke a native visual atmosphere, thereby stimulating users’ affinity and interest.

(2) **Behavioral Level:** Emphasizes the practical functionality and interactive experience of products, adhering to the “Ten Principles of Good Design”[5]. The Tiaozicha tea gift box incorporates a unique structural design, offering a distinctive opening and usage process. Functional additions, such as detachable bookmarks, are designed to enhance interactive engagement and enjoyment.

(3) **Reflective Level:** Constructs deep emotional connections between the product and users. The six traditional tea-making processes of Tiaozicha, including “picking leaves while preserving buds,” are systematically explored and transformed into readable graphic symbols. These symbols are integrated into packaging and derivative product designs to evoke emotional resonance with Qiang village culture. When users interact with the product, these design elements allow them to uncover the cultural narratives behind the tea, fostering emotional connections to the regional culture and artisanal spirit of Shiyi Qiang Village(As shown in Fig. 5).

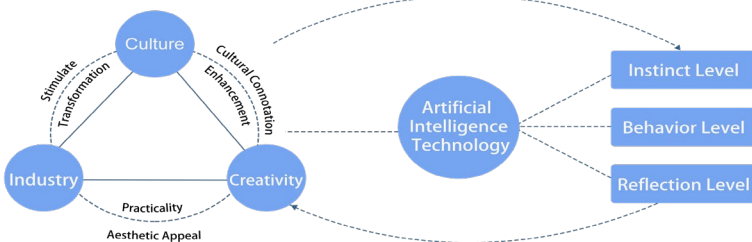


Fig. 5. Research model

### 5.2 Extraction of Cultural Elements and Construction of a Visual System

Prior to visual creation, the cultural context and ecological background of Taizicha tea were systematically organized. In terms of element extraction, the focus was placed on the complete process from tea picking to tasting, which was distilled into six core craft stages: “tea leaf picking, pan-firing and rolling, picking leaves while retaining buds, shaping, transportation, and tea tasting.” These stages form a cohesive narrative of craftsmanship.

For ecological elements, unique wildlife from the Beichuan region—such as the clouded leopard, moose, red-crowned crane, and golden snub-nosed monkey—were selected. These elements not only reflect the local biodiversity but also symbolize the ecological attribute of Taizicha tea a “originating from nature and returning to nature.”

In terms of color system construction, a natural color palette was established, centered on the emerald green of tea leaves, the clear yellow of tea liquor, and the bluish-gray of mountain ranges. Auxiliary tones were matched according to the characteristics of different animals and craft scenarios, resulting in a systematic visual expression (As shown in Fig. 6).













Tea Production Process	Reference	Illustration	Tea Production Process	Reference	Illustration
Tea Leaf Picking			Pan-firing and Rolling		
Picking Leaves, Keeping Buds Intact			Tea Leaf Shaping		
Tea Leaf Transportation			Tea Leaf Shaping		

Fig. 6. Taizicha Tea Production Process Illustration

### 5.3 Emotional Transliteration of Visual Elements

During the element idrawing stage, designers apply the following requirements based on emotional design theory: (1) At the visceral level, animal forms are artistically refined to retain their recognizable features while enhancing visual appeal. Key moments in tea-making processes are captured dynamically, highlighting the most expressive instants.

(2)At the behavioral level, composition is used to establish visual relationships, logically connecting different elements within the scene. Abstract symbols such as clouds and ribbons link various scenarios, strengthening narrative coherence. (3)At the reflective level, cultural symbolism is embedded in details,for example, the growth pattern of moose antlers echoes tea,bud sprouting, and clouded leopard spots visually mirror tea,leaf veins, creating deeper symbolic connections.

Leveraging artificial intelligence technology and from the perspective of cultural creative product development, this study demonstrates the application of Norman's emotional design theory to Taizicha tea. Taking Shiyi Qiang Village's Taizicha as the core medium, Norman's "visceral-behavioral-reflective" framework is systematically applied to guide the development of cultural creative products. Through the organic integration of these three experiential layers, the design constructs a complete pathway from sensory attraction to cultural identification, thereby enhancing the product's cultural value and market competitiveness.

#### **5.4 Tea Leaf Three-Dimensional Gift Box: "The Emotional Design Practice of "Beiyun Taiyu"**

This design breaks through the limitations of traditional tea gift boxes by introducing a three-dimensional gift box named "Whisper of Northern Clouds and Moss."Externally,the three-dimensional structure transcends flat design constraints. Through unique techniques such as folding and multi-layer nesting,it achieves a pronounced three-dimensional effect with enhanced visual impact and spatial presence. The entire design process is guided by emotional design theory.At the visceral level, the gift box simulates the mountainous landscape and tea-making scenes of the Qiang village through its three-dimensional form. Its innovative folding and sliding mechanisms create strong sensory appeal in both visual and tactile dimensions, quickly establishing product recognition and aesthetic affinity.At the behavioral level, the gift box emphasizes interactive experience during opening and use. When unfolded, it clearly presents the tea-making process across distinct layers, with key scenes designed as detachable bookmarks. This not only optimizes the fluidity of tea access and viewing but also adds lasting practical value and interactive enjoyment through the "detachable and preservable" feature.At the reflective level, the name "Whisper of Northern Clouds and Moss" and the box's form deeply integrate the regional character of Beichuan and the ecological essence of Taizicha tea. By spatially visualizing craft scenes such as tea-picking, pan-firing, and rolling, the gift box immerses consumers in the cultural narrative of Shiyi Qiang Village during the unboxing process, evoking recognition and emotional resonance with traditional tea-making wisdom and ethnic culture.

Thus, this three-dimensional gift box transcends mere packaging functionality. It serves as a core medium connecting "Qiang village culture, the tea industry, and user emotion." It effectively supports the Taizicha brand in upgrading from practical consumption to emotional consumption.

By breaking away from the flat conventions of traditional tea packaging, the design enables consumers to perceive the village's distinctive character more intuitively. This helps the Taizicha brand expand its reach and impact(As shown in Fig. 7).



Fig. 7. “North Cloud Moss Whisper”3D Gift Box Final Product Showcase

## 6 Conclusion

Against the backdrop of artificial intelligence technology, this paper focuses on the Taizi tea industry of the Qiang ethnic group in Shiyi Qiang Village, and explores the design of cultural and creative products based on its unique tea-processing techniques. The study integrates tea-making, technological aesthetics and affective design theory, establishing a complete framework from technological connotation to design expression.

Guided and practiced by affective design theory, this research enriches the practical path of affective theory in cultural and creative products of traditional craftsmanship, and also promotes the transformation of the Taizi tea industry from “selling products” to “selling culture” and “selling experiences”. In the future, further integration can be made with intangible cultural heritage techniques such as Qiang embroidery and lacquerware, so as to continuously deepen the emotional connotation and brand value of Taizi tea cultural and creative products through craftsmanship integration.

It is hoped that affective design theory, the tea-making techniques of Beichuan and Taizi tea cultural and creative products can be highly integrated into the Taizi tea industry and Beichuan tourism. Even amid the rapid development of artificial intelligence technology, the effective integration of product utility, culture and emotion can still be embodied.

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