# Research on the Theoretical Basis and Characteristics of Rural Design Industry in Western Hunan

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Abstract
The countryside of western Hunan has extremely rich resources of history and culture, non-foreign heritage culture and handicrafts and other advantages. However, at the same time, it faces bottlenecks such as insufficient economic development momentum, lack of collaborative innovation and lagging development of design industry. The cultural values of Tujia and Miao in rural Hunan have not been fully reflected, and the rural design industry can make full use of the rich historical culture and folk ethnic culture resources in rural Hunan and help give full play to the cultural advantages of these resources. The rural design industry is the basis for the prosperity of rural industries and the key to the comprehensive revitalisation of the countryside, as well as an important means to increase the income of rural people. Therefore, in order to revitalise the economy and culture of rural areas in western Hunan, it is necessary to build a set of design industry system suitable for the development of rural areas in western Hunan according to local conditions.

Keywords
Rural design; Design industry; Rural design industry in Western Hunan

## Basic Concepts of Countryside and Rural Design

### Formalities Cause Negative Impact

The countryside in the Regulations on Statistical Classification of Urban and Rural Areas (Trial) 2013 (code 200) issued by the National Bureau of Statistics refers to areas other than the delineated

urban areas, and the countryside includes market towns and rural areas (National Bureau of Statistics Office). In the 1980s, Yan Yangchu proposed that the masses are the main force in the transformation of the countryside. Intellectual talents should go to the countryside and participate in labor innovation activities together (Meng, 2005). According to He Xuefeng, the countryside is the area where the peasants live, which is relative to the city, and mainly refers to those "non-urbanized" areas, characterized by a relatively backward economy compared to the city and a production method mainly based on farming (He, 2003). According to Wang Shouzhi, "design" is both a noun and a verb, referring to both the activities of applied arts and engineering. The verb "design" refers to the process of conceptualizing products, structures, and systems, while the noun "design" refers to the plan with a conclusion, or the form and procedure of executing the plan (Wang, 2015).

Regarding the concept of "rural design," Cao Tian, in his article "Design Value Choices and Chinese Rural Practice in the Relationship of "Urban-Rural Interconstruction," argues that "rural design" means design for the rural. In his article "Designing for the masses", Cao Tian argues that the meaning of "rural design" is to design for the countryside, for the purpose of living and production needs, and for the style of the countryside. Rural design is a purposeful need for people to change their real lives through various methods (Cao, 2016). In the article "Jiangsu Rural Art and Design Industry Development Ideas" by Xuewei Bi, "rural design" is the design of ecological architecture and landscape in the countryside initially, and the social science and technology, cultural and economic development, rural design extends to handicrafts and crafts (Bi, 2016). With the development of social science and technology and the gradual improvement of people's living standards, rural design should serve the needs of the people, keep pace with the times, and design with cutting-edge, fashionable and meet the aesthetic requirements of modern consumers. Therefore, the countryside design should insist on inheritance protection and development, combine the countryside characteristic resources according to local conditions, reasonably develop the design by artistic design methods, and continuously derive new products in form and content.

The definition of "rural design" is not yet uniformly defined. In this paper, we believe that "rural design" involves a series of activities in which rural people conceive, plan in detail, produce or demonstrate intangible or tangible products and display forms in advance, covering all levels of production and life: (1) architecture; foundation design, architectural design including interior and exterior decoration design; (2) light textile: dyeing, fabric, clothing, clothing and home textile; (3) household utensils: toiletries, furniture, farming tools, bamboo and grass weaving, pottery and porcelain, etc.; (4) household utensils: toiletries, furniture, agricultural tools, bamboo and grass weaving, pottery and porcelain, etc. clothing and home textiles, etc.; (3) living utensils: washing utensils, furniture, farming tools, bamboo and grass weaving, pottery and porcelain, etc.; (4) handicrafts; paper-cutting, batik, embroidery and carving, etc.; (5) entertainment: dance choreography, toy making and other ranges. This topic focuses on the scope of light textile and cotton and handicraft catego-

ries according to the characteristic resources that suitable for the development of design industry in rural areas of western Hunan. Through various types of handicraft and workshop processing mode, the use of apparatus to weave, imitate or create practical, regional, ethnic and strong vernacular lifestyle products, can make the product quality and added value to be significantly improved, with technology and knowledge intensive, non-polluting and low energy consumption.

## Rural Design Industry

Tu Lifen believes that design industry is mainly centered on satisfying users' needs, making comprehensive use of human inventions, taking into account technology, culture, resources, environment and market factors, coordinating and optimizing all aspects of product development and manufacturing, logistics and marketing, consumption and recycling, and systematically integrating and innovating product service systems to continuously provide creative activities that meet people's material and spiritual needs (Tu, 2011). Liu Guanzhong believes that design industry is an industry based on the comprehensive use of scientific and technological achievements and knowledge of engineering, aesthetics, psychology and economics to integrate, optimize and innovate the content, function, structure, form and packaging of products (Liu, 2008). Rural design industry is an emerging industry and developed based on rural cultural heritage and rural artwork, among which rural artwork is developed and designed from traditional agricultural resources and ecological resources (Bi, 2016). The deep integration of design with industry, science and technology, and culture can play its great positive role in transforming the economic development mode, focusing on people's livelihood, and focusing on ecological civilization including and urban and rural environmental construction which involving national interests and people's well-being (Xu & Chen, 2014).

The rural design industry is evolving, innovating and developing with the historical evolution of the countryside, and its production of practical, artistic and primitive products according to the production and living needs of the rural masses. Due to the geographical environment, closed information and backward technology, the design industry in the countryside is inherently deficient in a series of factors such as manpower, technology, capital, resources and market, which hinder the development of personalization, collectivization and industrialization. Therefore, this study draws on the definition of urban design industry and the characteristics, categories and needs of rural design, which defines rural design industry as: the main body of rural design industry is the rural masses, with individual or family workshop-based in small-scale production, and its industry is mostly based on a single, fragmented and variable layout, with a strong vernacular flavor of products. The main body of rural design industry creation and design resources are closely related to the production and life of rural people, which meeting the living needs of rural people and providing them with clothing, food, housing, transportation and other service business activities.

# Theory Related to Rural Design Industry

## Industry Chain Theory

Industrial chain is generally an economic system consisting of several enterprises such as suppliers, producers and sellers, based on the back and forth relationship of the industry. The product is a collection of enterprise resources which integrated with each other, and the enterprise is the foundation of the product, and the design of product development will eventually end up in the planning and layout of the enterprise, while the product is the material basis of the development of the enterprise. The industrial chain theory has an important guiding role in industrial development, and has an important driving and influencing role in industrial development. With the start and development of rural industries, industrial chain theory has been widely applied in rural industries, among which the design industrial chain has certain representativeness. Regarding the leading regional industries, Wang Yu in "Research on the benchmark of choosing the leading regional industries" establishes a regional industrial system with the leading industries as the core, coordinated and supporting industries and significant competitive advantages around the leading industries (Liu, 2006).

## Rural Revitalization Strategy

In October 2017, Xi Jinping made a report at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China and proposed the implementation of rural revitalization strategy. It is necessary to adhere to the priority development of agriculture and rural areas, establish and improve the institutional mechanism for the integrated development of urban and rural areas in accordance with the general requirements of prosperous industry, ecological livability, civilized countryside and affluent living, and recommend the modernization of agriculture and rural areas (Guan & Wang, 2002). Therefore, the countryside ushers in the historic opportunity of great development and prosperity. In accordance with the requirement of flourishing industry, promoting the mutual integration and development of rural history and culture, non-heritage culture and handicrafts, gradually forming traditional innovative industries in the countryside, and activating high-quality development of rural economy with special industries are important measures to realize rural revitalization.

## Industry–University–Research Collaborative Innovation Theory

Collaborative innovation is to collaborate on technological innovation and industrialization of scientific and technological achievements with enterprises, universities, research institutions, government and rural enterprises playing their respective strengths and integrating complementary resources to realize the complementary advantages of each party, accelerate technology promotion, application and industrialization. The countryside design industry is in a big dilemma in many

aspects such as talents, technology and market. Using the collaborative innovation mode of industry-university-research, we form a complementary advantage of integrating professional talents from scientific research institutions, technical support from enterprises, government policy support counterparts and rural micro and small enterprises, cooperatives, workshops and heritage bases. Collaborate to guide the primary issues of structure, style, color, packaging, technology and brand story of rural products, and promote products with comprehensive advantages such as fashion, modernity, beauty, durability and storytelling, so that the products meet the aesthetic, spiritual and material needs of consumers in modern society. Injecting blood-making function for rural revitalization, the excellent traditional culture of the countryside is effectively inherited and protected with sustainable development, and the rural masses have sustained economic income.

## Rural Design Industry Features in Western Hunan

The rural design industry in western Hunan is rich in resources, and one of the most complete, dense, and characteristic preserved areas of the Tujia and Miao original intangible cultural heritage, historical sites, and handicrafts, which has great resource advantages and research value. Hunan design industry based on the local (ethnic or non-ethnic areas) special natural resources, natural conditions, natural environment, as well as ethnic culture, historical basis of the generation of industrial forms with the characteristics of Hunan design (Chen & Yang, 2012).

### Ethnicity

Since ancient times, western Hunan has formed two major ethnic cultural ecological zones with the Tujia and Miao as the core. The design industry is closely related to the life of the ethnic groups, and the production is firstly to meet some special needs of the ethnic groups or families, which is essentially different from the ordinary mass products. The rural design industry in western Hunan manifests the profound customs and national spirit of the Miao and Tujia, and continues the national way of life, religious culture and aesthetic art. The world is only as good as its people, and each nationality has created diverse, ethnic and distinctive ethnic products based on its culture, beliefs, worship, aesthetics and lifestyle. For example, Tujia brocade “Yang Bird pattern”, “forty-eight link pattern”, “Tai Tai pattern” can be called the “living fossil” of Tujia brocade pattern. “They convey the worship and respect for the ancestors, totems and nature in terms of color, pattern, material and composition. The colorful Miao costume culture, with its mysterious fish, bird and dragon patterns, colorful and full composition, and heavy Miao silver accessories, is known as the best of the world’s costume ethnic culture. Each element contains a profound national cultural background, the stronger the national character, the more personalized, the greater the industrial competitive advantage, the more suitable for the development of characteristic national design industry.

## Historic

Western Hunan has a long history and culture, and has nurtured a mysterious Western Hunan culture. In the long history of evolution, there are ethnic cultural sites from different historical periods, and the region can be called a "natural history museum". Each product is rooted in the historical origins and cultural traditions of the region, hiding the historical and cultural background of the people. For example, the 880-year-old cradle of Tujia culture, the Laosi City site in Yongshun County, the largest and most complete Tusi dynasty city site still in existence, incorporates the economic, political, cultural and artistic focal points of other ethnic groups in western Hunan. The historical nature of the design industry in western Hunan is fully demonstrated by the excavation of the largest number of well-preserved, high-quality, more than 3,000 Qin slips, etc., in the Warring States water wells of Lier ancient town in Longshan County. It makes an important asset to support the countryside design industry in western Hunan and develop the countryside design industry with originality and historicity of western Hunan, while concentrating on innovation and development of several original and first industrial brands.

## Practicality

The design industry in rural areas of western Hunan is mainly practical, with ethnic customs and historic culture dependent on practicality. The design industry was conceived at the beginning of the creation of things, with the aim of achieving practicality and a special meaning. The design industry itself is an extension of the practical products of individual or family life needs, and the production is mainly to meet the material needs of people. Folk costumes, architecture, paper-cutting, bamboo weaving, embroidery, etc. which fully reflect this characteristic. For example, the Miao paper-cutting was originally designed to meet the practical need for "samples" of costume embroidery, on the basis of which the Miao people began to pursue a high quality of life from practical material to a spiritual and cultural need. The design industry is an important means of production and survival, and is closely related to the real life of the rural people.

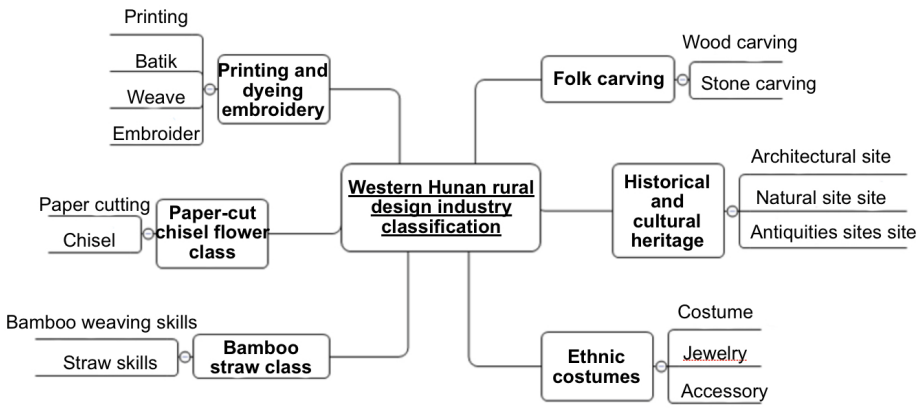



*Figure 1. Classification of Rural Design Industry in Xiangxi (Source: Drawn by the subject group)*

## Western Hunan Rural Design Industry Classification

In order to accurately construct the development planning situation of the rural design industry system in western Hunan, and to adapt to the scale, structure and needs of design industrialization development, this classification is formulated. The classification of rural design industry in western Hunan helps to clarify the scope of development of rural design industry in western Hunan, which is of great significance for the development of design industry statistics and the improvement of rural industry system, and lays a good foundation for major enterprises, cooperatives, workshops and heritage bases to conduct statistical surveys on rural industry, which will have a positive guiding effect on accelerating the development of rural design industry in the context of rural revitalization strategy.

According to the rural design industry resources in western Hunan include various layers of clothing, food, housing, transportation, entertainment, etc. This group refers to the national intangible cultural heritage catalog and the National Bureau of Statistics on the issuance of the "Classification of Culture and Related Industries (2018)" industrial classification standards, and through the generalization of the information collected from field research in western Hunan generalization of the summary, the collation of industries that suitable for rural industrialization, design and market-oriented development.

### Printing, Dyeing, Weaving and Embroidery

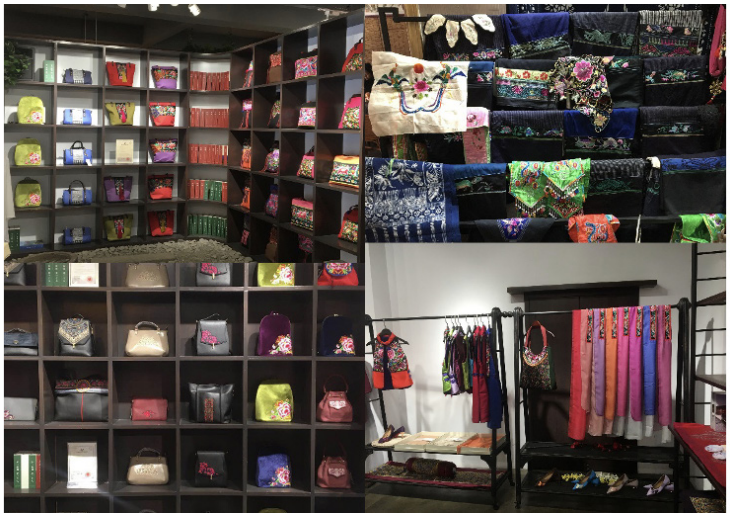


*Figure 2. Weaving and Embroidery Products of Valley Residents*

*(Source: Photographed by the subject group)*

Western Hunan printing, dyeing, weaving and embroidery handicrafts are interwoven and spoked in the countryside, widely used and exquisitely crafted, with products spreading to domestic and inter-

national markets. The Tujia brocade, Tujia flower weaving and blue print cloth produced in Longshan, Yongshun and Phoenix, and the Miao flower weaving, embroidery and flower tape produced in Baojing, Huayuan, Jishou, Luxi and Guzhang have become unique daily necessities and art collectibles. Tujia brocade and Miao embroidery originated earlier in western Hunan, and are now widely used in daily necessities and activities in ethnic festivals, with various forms, rich contents and complete categories, inseparable from rural ethnic customs. Tujia brocade, Miao picking flower and blue printing cloth have been successively included in the national intangible cultural heritage protection list, and have been effectively inherited and reasonably developed, so that the rural design industry, art design and ethnic culture development have provided a valuable resource base.

## Ethnic Costumes

The Miao and Tujia are the two major ethnic groups with a long history in western Hunan, forming a colorful system of minority costumes in western Hunan. The Miao and Tujia costumes have a strong cultural and artistic value, from the basic functions of sheltering from wind, covering shame and protecting the body to the connotations of totem records, ancestor worship, artistic aesthetics and ethnic style. Among them, the Miao costumes in western Hunan have been handed down to this day to form a variety of styles, coloring atmosphere, complex and varied content and deep and exquisite patterns and other characteristics, which are praised by historians as "the history book worn on the body", and its categories are divided into regular clothes, dresses and festive clothes.

## Historical and Cultural Heritage Category

*Table 1. Statistics of Historical Sites in Western Hunan (Source: People's Government of Xiangxi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture)*

| Number | Site Name | Site Area | Site History | Level | Serial Number |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Laosicheng Ruins | Laosicheng Village, Yongshun County | Southern Song to Qing Dynasty | National Key Cultural Relics Protection Unit | 43-1-1-0007 |
| 2 | Riyedaban Site | Daban Village, Longshan County | Qin Dynasty | National Key Cultural Relics Protection Unit | 7-0375-1-375 |
| 3 | Ruins of the Four Square City | Daban Village, Longshan County | Warring States to Han Dynasty | National Key Cultural Relics Protection Unit | 7-0370-1-370 |
| 4 | Hawan Site | Baojing County yaoba village | Middle Neolithic | Hunan Provincial Cultural Relics Protection Unit | |
| 5 | Ai'Zhai Bridge | Luxi County Puxi Town | 2008 years | National Geopark | |
| 6 | Red Rock Forest Site | Jishou Aizhai Town | 500 million years ago | National Geopark | |
| 7 | The Phoenix Ancient Town | Phoenix County | Kangxi years | National 4A Scenic Area | |

Since ancient times, Western Hunan has a long history and culture, a profound ethnic culture, with

unique geological and wondrous natural landscape. The people of Western Hunan have created splendid and colorful historical and cultural treasures, and there are many rural historical and cultural heritages such as Laosi City in Yongshun County, Longshan Liye and Jishou City, which have stored sufficient original resources for the development of rural design industry. By revitalizing static historical and cultural heritage with artistic design methods and transforming it into an industrial development system, we concentrate on creating a brand of high-quality Western Hunan's historical and cultural heritage, making it a new economic growth model for rural areas.

## Bamboo and Grass Weaving Category

The natural geography of western Hunan is gorgeous, with abundant rainfall, which is suitable for the growth of bamboo, grass and other plants. Bamboo and grass are used in the daily life for rural people to weave practical utensils. The bamboo and grass weaving technique is a traditional folk craft in western Hunan, which is the result of the simple and hardworking wisdom of the people. Bamboo weaving and straw shoes in Yongshun County, Baojing County and Phoenix County are very popular among people. Rural craftsmen make use of local bamboo and grass resources to weave sturdy and non-slip straw shoes, back baskets for utensils, bamboo hats, utensils and baskets, and other household items according to local conditions. Bamboo and grass weaving skills are constantly innovated in household items, handicrafts and tourism products, and the products are sold all over the country and in Southeast Asia. Bamboo and grass plants are transformed into superb high-quality, high-quality crafts through thoughtful innovation in the hands of high-end craftsmen, and the economy is developed with low-cost, highly environmentally friendly and sustainable bamboo and grass resources. At present, the product industry of bamboo weaving cooperative in Bier Village of Baoding County has become a scale, driving the local people to get rich by employment.

## Folk Carving Category

The folk carving skills in western Hunan are exquisite, with Luxi chrysanthemum stone carving, Baojing wood carving, and Longshan Tujia foot-hanging building construction skills being famous in China and abroad. Most of the carving techniques have survived in ancient villages and are widely used in various aspects such as interior decoration, construction materials and crafts appreciation, with application and ornamental and other collection values. Among them, Luxi chrysanthemum stone carving is named after the naturally formed white chrysanthemum-like mineral aggregate inside, which was generated in the early Permian period about 270 million years ago. The chrysanthemum flower is composed of two parts: stamen and petals, with the stamen as the center, arranged radially in three degrees of space, and the flower shape is in a variety of forms. At present, it is the only region in the world that produces chrysanthemum stones. The industrial development of the product has become a scale, and the products produced are exported to overseas.

### Paper Cutting and Flower Chiseling

Paper-cutting and chiseling are mainly distributed in the traditional villages of Luxi County Tahu Township, Phoenix County Shanjiang Township and Jishou City Shorzhai Township. Among them, chiseled flowers are mainly cut and chiseled, and chiseled flowers are also called "file flowers", and Tahu Village in Tahu Township is one of the birthplaces of chiseled flowers. It has a deep historical deposit and an ancient cultural connotation, with various forms and wide uses, and is popular in western Hunan. Paper-cutting and chiseled flowers are intended to be used as "samples" and "bases" for embroidery patterns on Miao costumes, which are used on high-waisted skirts, trouser heads, cuffs, lapels and hats, respectively. The contents are mainly ethnic totems, stories and legends, ethnic activities, flora and fauna, reflecting the culture and art and exquisite craftsmanship of western Hunan ethnic groups. At present, paper-cut flowers are commonly used in cultural and creative products, embroidery and costumes, and have a certain basis for industrial development.

## Conclusion

This chapter elaborates the concept of rural design and rural design industry on the basis of previous research, discusses the relevant theories that have guiding significance with the development of design industry, clarifies the main characteristics of rural design industry in western Hunan based on field research analysis; based on the classification of the national intangible cultural heritage catalog, the National Bureau of Statistics on the issuance of the "Classification of Culture and Related Industries (2018)" industrial classification standards, combined with the subject group field based on the classification of national intangible cultural heritage catalogue and the industrial classification standard of "Culture and Related Industries Classification (2018)" issued by the National Bureau of Statistics, combined with the field research data of the research group, the research analysis and classification of rural design industry in western Hunan, the purpose and scope of industrial development are clarified, and the content and direction of rural design industry in western Hunan are guided.

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